

## CHAPTER IV

### "THE FAËRIE QUEENE" AND ITS GROUP

"Velut inter ignes luna minores"

THERE is no instance in English history of a poet receiving such immediate recognition, and deserving it so thoroughly, as did Edmund Spenser at the date of *The Shepherd's Calendar*. In the first chapter of this volume the earlier course of Elizabethan poetry has been described, and it will have been seen that, with great intention, no very great accomplishment had been achieved. It was sufficiently evident that a poetic language and a general poetic spirit were being formed, such as had not existed in England since Chaucer's death; but no one had yet arisen who could justify the expectation based on such respectable tentatives. It seems from many minute indications which need not be detailed here, that at the advent of *The Shepherd's Calendar* all the best judges recognised the expected poet. Yet they could hardly have known how just their recognition was, or what extraordinary advances the poet would make in the twenty years which passed between its publication and his death.

The life of Spenser is very little known, and here and elsewhere the conditions of this book preclude the reproduction or even the discussion of the various pious attempts which have been made to supply the deficiency of documents. The chief of these in his case is to be found in Dr. Grosart's magnificent

edition, the principal among many good works of its editor. That he belonged to a branch—a Lancashire branch in all probability—of the family which produced the Le Despensers of elder, and the Spencers of modern English history, may be said to be unquestionable. But he appears to have been born about 1552 in London, and to have been educated at Merchant Taylors', whence in May 1569 he matriculated at Pembroke Hall, Cambridge, as a sizar. At or before this time he must have contributed (though there are puzzles in the matter) certain translations of sonnets from Petrarch and Du Bellay to a book called *The Theatre of Voluptuous Worldlings*, published by a Brabanter, John van der Noodt. These, slightly changed from blank verse to rhyme, appeared long afterwards with his minor poems of 1590. But the original pieces had been claimed by the Dutchman; and though there are easy ways of explaining this, the thing is curious. However it may be with these verses, certainly nothing else of Spenser's appeared in print for ten years. His Cambridge life, except for some vague allusions (which, as usual in such cases, have been strained to breaking by commentators and biographers), is equally obscure; save that he certainly fulfilled seven years of residence, taking his Bachelor's Degree in 1573, and his Master's three years later. But he did not gain a fellowship, and the chief discoverable results of his Cambridge sojourn were the thorough scholarship which marks his work, and his friendship with the notorious Gabriel Harvey—his senior by some years, a Fellow of Pembroke, and a person whose singularly bad literary taste, as shown in his correspondence with Spenser, may be perhaps forgiven, first, because it did no harm, and secondly, because without him we should know even less of Spenser than we do. It is reasonably supposed from the notes of his friend, "E. K." (apparently Kirke, a Pembroke man), to *The Shepherd's Calendar*, that he went to his friends in the north after leaving Cambridge and spent a year or two there, falling in love with the heroine, poetically named Rosalind, of *The Calendar*, and no doubt writing that remarkable book. Then (probably very late in

1578) he went to London, was introduced by Harvey to Sidney and Leicester, and thus mixed at once in the best literary and political society. He was not long in putting forth his titles to its attention, for *The Shepherd's Calendar* was published in the winter of 1579, copiously edited by "E. K.," whom some absurdly suppose to be Spenser himself. The poet seems to have had also numerous works (the titles of which are known) ready or nearly ready for the press. But all were subsequently either changed in title, incorporated with other work, or lost. He had already begun *The Faërie Queene*, much to the pedant Harvey's disgust; and he dabbled in the fashionable absurdity of classical metres, like his inferiors. But he published nothing more immediately; and powerful as were his patrons, the only preferment which he obtained was in that Eldorado-Purgatory of Elizabethan ambition—Ireland. Lord Grey took him as private secretary when he was in 1580 appointed deputy, and shortly afterwards he received some civil posts in his new country, and a lease of abbey lands at Enniscorthy, which lease he soon gave up. But he stayed in Ireland, notwithstanding the fact that his immediate patron Grey soon left it. Except a few bare dates and doubtful allusions, little or nothing is heard of him between 1580 and 1590. On the eve of the latter year (the 1st of December 1589) the first three books of *The Faërie Queene* were entered at Stationers' Hall, and were published in the spring of the next year. He had been already established at Kilmolman in the county Cork on a grant of more than three thousand acres of land out of the forfeited Desmond estates. And henceforward his literary activity, at least in publication, became more considerable, and he seems to have been much backwards and forwards between England and Ireland. In 1590 appeared a volume of minor poems (*The Ruins of Time, The Tears of the Muses, Virgil's Gnat, Mother Hubbard's Tale, The Ruins of Rome, Muopotmos*, and the *Visions*), with an address to the reader in which another list of forthcoming works is promised. These, like the former list of Kirke, seem oddly enough to have also perished. The whole

collection was called *Complaints*, and a somewhat similar poem, *Daphnaida*, is thought to have appeared in the same year. On the 11th of June 1594 the poet married (strangely enough it was not known whom, until Dr. Grosart ingeniously identified her with a certain Elizabeth Boyle *alias* Seckers<sup>one</sup>), and in 1595 were published the beautiful *Amoretti* or love sonnets, and the still more beautiful *Epithalamion* describing his courtship and marriage, with the interesting poem of *Colin Clout's Come Home Again*; while in the same year (old style; in January 1596, new style) the fourth, fifth, and sixth books of *The Faërie Queene* were entered for publication and soon appeared. The supposed allusions to Mary Stuart greatly offended her son James. The *Hymns* and the *Prothalamion* followed in the same year. Spenser met with difficulties at Court (though he had obtained a small pension of fifty pounds a year), and had had like other Englishmen troubles with his neighbours in Ireland; yet he seemed to be becoming more prosperous, and in 1598 he was named Sheriff of Cork. A few weeks later the Irish Rebellion broke out; his house was sacked and burnt with one of his children; he fled to England and died on the 16th of January 1599 at King Street, Westminster, perhaps not "for lack of bread," as Jonson says, but certainly in no fortunate circumstances. In the year of his misfortune had been registered, though it was never printed till more than thirty years later, his one prose work of substance, the remarkable *View of the Present State of Ireland*; an admirable piece of prose, and a political tract, the wisdom and grasp of which only those who have had to give close attention to Irish politics can fully estimate. It is probably the most valuable document on any given period of Irish history that exists, and is certainly superior in matter, no less than in style, to any political tract in English, published before the days of Halifax eighty years after.

It has been said that *The Shepherd's Calendar* placed Spenser at once at the head of the English poets of his day; and it did so. But had he written nothing more, he would not (as is the case with not a few distinguished poets) have occupied as high

or nearly as high a position in quality, if not in quantity, as he now does. He was a young man when he published it; he was not indeed an old man when he died; and it would not appear that he had had much experience of life beyond college walls. His choice of models—the artificial pastorals in which the Renaissance had modelled itself on Virgil and Theocritus, rather than Virgil and Theocritus themselves—was not altogether happy. He showed, indeed, already his extraordinary metrical skill, experimenting with rhyme-royal and other stanzas, fourteeners or eights and sixes, anapæsts more or less irregular, and an exceedingly important variety of octosyllable which, whatever may have been his own idea in practising it, looked back to early Middle English rhythms and forward to the metre of *Christabel*, as Coleridge was to start it afresh. He also transgressed into religious politics, taking (as indeed he always took, strange as it may seem in so fanatical a worshipper of beauty) the Puritan side. Nor is his work improved as poetry, though it acquires something in point of quaint attractiveness, by good Mr. "E. K.'s" elaborate annotations, introductions, explanations, and general gentleman-usherings—the first in English, but most wofully not the last by hundred, of such overlayings of gold with copper. Yet with all these drawbacks *The Shepherd's Calendar* is delightful. Already we can see in it that double command, at once of the pictorial and the musical elements of poetry, in which no English poet is Spenser's superior, if any is his equal. Already the unmatched power of vigorous allegory, which he was to display later, shows in such pieces as *The Oak and the Briar*. In the less deliberately archaic divisions, such as "April" and "November," the command of metrical form, in which also the poet is almost peerless, discovers itself. Much the same may be said of the volume of *Complaints*, which, though published later than *The Faërie Queene*, represents beyond all question very much earlier work. Spenser is unquestionably, when he is not at once spurred and soothed by the play of his own imagination, as in *The Queene*, a melancholy poet, and the

note of melancholy is as strong in these poems as in their joint title. It combines with his delight in emblematic allegory happily enough, in most of these pieces except *Mother Hubbard's Tale*. This is almost an open satire, and shows that if Spenser's genius had not found a less mongrel style to disport itself in, not merely would Donne, and Lodge, and Hall, and Marston have had to abandon their dispute for the post of first English satirist, but the attainment of really great satire in English might have been hastened by a hundred years, and *Absalom and Achitophel* have been but a second. Even here, however, the piece still keeps the Chaucerian form and manner, and is only a kind of exercise. The sonnets from and after Du Bellay and others are more interesting. As in the subsequent and far finer *Amoretti*, Spenser prefers the final couplet form to the so-called Petrarchian arrangement; and, indeed, though the most recent fashion in England has inclined to the latter, an impartial judgment must pronounce both forms equally good and equally entitled to place. The *Amoretti* written in this metre, and undoubtedly representing some, at least, of Spenser's latest written work, rank with the best of Sidney's, and hardly below the best of Shakespeare's; while both in them and in the earlier sonnets the note of regret mingled with delight—the special Renaissance note—sounds as it rarely does in any other English verse. Of the poems of the later period, however (leaving *The Faërie Queene* for a moment aside), the *Epithalamion* and the *Four Hymns* rank undoubtedly highest. For splendour of imagery, for harmony of verse, for delicate taste and real passion, the *Epithalamion* excels all other poems of its class, and the *Four Hymns* express a rapture of Platonic enthusiasm, which may indeed be answerable for the unreadable *Psyches* and *Psychozoias* of the next age, but which is itself married to immortal verse in the happiest manner.

Still, to the ordinary reader, Spenser is the poet of *The Faërie Queene*, and for once the ordinary reader is right. Every quality found in his other poems is found in this greatest of them in

perfection; and much is found there which is not, and indeed could not be, found anywhere else. Its general scheme is so well known (few as may be the readers who really know its details) that very slight notice of it may suffice. Twelve knights, representing twelve virtues, were to have been sent on adventures from the Court of Gloriana, Queen of Fairyland. The six finished books give the legends (each subdivided into twelve cantos, averaging fifty or sixty stanzas each) of Holiness, Temperance, Chastity, Friendship, Justice, and Courtesy; while a fragment of two splendid "Cantos on Mutability" is supposed to have belonged to a seventh book (not necessarily seventh in order) on Constancy. Legend has it that the poem was actually completed; but this seems improbable, as the first three books were certainly ten years in hand, and the second three six more. The existing poem comprehending some four thousand stanzas, or between thirty and forty thousand lines, exhibits so many and such varied excellences that it is difficult to believe that the poet could have done anything new in kind. No part of it is as a whole inferior to any other part, and the fragmentary cantos contain not merely one of the most finished pictorial pieces—the Procession of the Months—to be found in the whole poem, but much of the poet's finest thought and verse. Had fortune been kinder, the volume of delight would have been greater, but its general character would probably not have changed much. As it is, *The Faërie Queene* is the only long poem that a lover of poetry can sincerely wish longer.

It deserves some critical examination here from three points of view, regarding respectively its general scheme, its minor details of form in metre and language, and lastly, its general poetical characteristics. The first is simple enough in its complexity. The poem is a long *Roman d'Aventure* (which it is perhaps as well to say, once for all, is not the same as a "Romance of Chivalry," or a "Romance of Adventure"), redeemed from the aimless prolixity incident to that form by its regular plan, by the intercommunion of the adventures of the several knights (none

of whom disappears after having achieved his own quest), and by the constant presence of a not too obtrusive allegory. This last characteristic attaches it on the other side to the poems of the *Roman de la Rose* order, which succeeded the *Romans d'Aventures* as objects of literary interest and practice, not merely in France, but throughout Europe. This allegory has been variously estimated as a merit or defect of the poem. It is sometimes political, oftener religious, very often moral, and sometimes purely personal—the identifications in this latter case being sometimes clear, as that of Gloriana, Britomart, and Belphœbe with Queen Elizabeth, sometimes probable, as that of Duessa with Queen Mary (not one of Spenser's most knightly actions), and of Prince Arthur with Leicester, and sometimes more or less problematical, as that of Artegall with Lord Grey, of Timias the Squire with Raleigh, and so forth. To those who are perplexed by these double meanings the best remark is Hazlitt's blunt one that "the allegory won't bite them." In other words, it is always perfectly possible to enjoy the poem without troubling oneself about the allegory at all, except in its broad ethical features, which are quite unmistakable. On the other hand, I am inclined to think that the presence of these under-meanings, with the interest which they give to a moderately instructed and intelligent person who, without too desperate a determination to see into millstones, understands "words to the wise," is a great addition to the hold of the poem over the attention, and saves it from the charge of mere desultoriness, which some, at least, of the other greatest poems of the kind (notably its immediate exemplar, the *Orlando Furioso*) must undergo. And here it may be noted that the charge made by most foreign critics who have busied themselves with Spenser, and perhaps by some of his countrymen, that he is, if not a mere paraphrast, yet little more than a transplanter into English of the Italian, is glaringly uncritical. Not, perhaps, till Ariosto and Tasso have been carefully read in the original, is Spenser's real greatness understood. He has often, and evidently of purpose, challenged comparison; but in every instance it will



be found that his beauties are emphatically his own. He has followed his leaders only as Virgil has followed Homer; and much less slavishly.

It is strange to find English critics of this great if not greatest English poem even nowadays repeating that Spenser borrowed his wonderful stanza from the Italians. He did nothing of the kind. That the *ottava rima* on the one hand, and the sonnet on the other, may have suggested the idea of it is quite possible. But the Spenserian stanza, as it is justly called, is his own and no one else's, and its merits, especially that primal merit of adaptation to the subject and style of the poem, are unique. Nothing else could adapt itself so perfectly to the endless series of vignettes and dissolving views which the poet delights in giving; while, at the same time, it has, for so elaborate and apparently integral a form, a singular faculty of hooking itself on to stanzas preceding and following, so as not to interrupt continuous narrative when continuous narrative is needed. Its great compass, admitting of an almost infinite variety of cadence and composition, saves it from the monotony from which even the consummate art of Milton could not save blank verse now and then, and from which no writer has ever been able to save the couplet, or the quatrain, or the stanzas ending with a couplet, in narratives of very great length. But the most remarkable instance of harmony between metrical form and other characteristics, both of form and matter, in the metrist has yet to be mentioned. It has been said how well the stanza suits Spenser's pictorial faculty; it certainly suits his musical faculty as well. The slightly (very slightly, for he can be vigorous enough) languid turn of his grace, the voluptuous cadences of his rhythm, find in it the most perfect exponent possible. The verse of great poets, especially Homer's, has often been compared to the sea. Spenser's is more like a river, wide, and deep, and strong, but moderating its waves and conveying them all in a steady, soft, irresistible sweep forwards. To aid him, besides this extraordinary instrument of metre, he had forged for himself another in his language. A great deal

has been written on this—comments, at least of the unfavourable kind, generally echoing Ben Jonson's complaint that Spenser "writ no language"; that his dialect is not the dialect of any actual place or time, that it is an artificial "poetic diction" made up of Chaucer, and of Northern dialect, and of classicisms, and of foreign words, and of miscellaneous archaisms from no matter where. No doubt it is. But if any other excuse than the fact of a beautiful and satisfactory effect is wanted for the formation of a poetic diction different from the actually spoken or the ordinarily written tongue of the day (and I am not sure that any such excuse is required) it is to be found at once. There was no actually spoken or ordinarily written tongue in Spenser's day which could claim to be "Queen's English." Chaucer was obsolete, and since Chaucer there was no single person who could even pretend to authority. Every writer more or less endowed with originality was engaged in beating out for himself, from popular talk, and from classical or foreign analogy, an instrument of speech. Spenser's verse language and Lyly's prose are the most remarkable results of the process; but it was, in fact, not only a common but a necessary one, and in no way to be blamed. As for the other criterion hinted at above, no one is likely to condemn the diction according to that. In its remoteness without grotesqueness, in its lavish colour, in its abundance of matter for every kind of cadence and sound-effect, it is exactly suited to the subject, the writer, and the verse.

It is this singular and complete adjustment of worker and implement which, with other peculiarities noted or to be noted, gives *The Faërie Queene* its unique unicity, if such a conceit may be pardoned. From some points of view it might be called a very artificial poem, yet no poem runs with such an entire absence of effort, with such an easy eloquence, with such an effect, as has been said already, of flowing water. With all his learning, and his archaisms, and his classicisms, and his Platonisms, and his isms without end, hardly any poet smells of the lamp less disagreeably than Spenser. Where Milton forges and smelts, his

gold is native. The endless, various, brightly-coloured, softly and yet distinctly outlined pictures rise and pass before the eyes and vanish—the multiform, sweetly-linked, softly-sounding harmonies swell and die and swell again on the ear—without a break, without a jar, softer than sleep and as continuous, gayer than the rainbow and as undiscoverably connected with any obvious cause. And this is the more remarkable because the very last thing that can be said of Spenser is that he is a poet of mere words. Milton himself, the severe Milton, extolled his moral teaching; his philosophical idealism is evidently no mere poet's plaything or parrot-lesson, but thoroughly thought out and believed in. He is a determined, almost a savage partisan in politics and religion, a steady patriot, something of a statesman, very much indeed of a friend and a lover. And of all this there is ample evidence in his verse. Yet the alchemy of his poetry has passed through the potent alembics of verse and phrase all these rebellious things, and has distilled them into the inimitably fluent and velvet medium which seems to lull some readers to inattention by its very smoothness, and deceive others into a belief in its lack of matter by the very finish and brilliancy of its form. The show passages of the poem, which are most generally known—the House of Pride, the Cave of Despair, the Entrance of Belphœbe, the Treasury of Mammon, the Gardens of Acrasia, the Sojourn of Britomart in Busirane's Castle, the Marriage of the Thames and Medway, the Discovery of the False Florimel, Artegall and the Giant, Calidore with Melibœus, the Processions of the Seasons and the Months—all these are not, as is the case with so many other poets, mere purple patches, diversifying and relieving dullness, but rather remarkable, and as it happens easily separable examples of a power which is shown constantly and almost evenly throughout. Those who admire them do well; but they hardly know Spenser. He, more than almost any other poet, must be read continuously and constantly till the eye and ear and mind have acquired the freedom of his realm of enchantment, and have learnt the secret (as far as a mere

reader may learn it) of the poetical spells by which he brings together and controls its wonders. The talk of tediousness, the talk of sameness, the talk of coterie-cultivation in Spenser shows bad taste no doubt; but it rather shows ignorance. The critic has in such cases stayed outside his author; he speaks but of what he has *not* seen.

The comparative estimate is always the most difficult in literature, and where it can be avoided it is perhaps best to avoid it. But in Spenser's case this is not possible. He is one of those few who can challenge the title of "greatest English poet," and the reader may almost of right demand the opinion on this point of any one who writes about him. For my part I have no intention of shirking the difficulty. It seems to me that putting Shakespeare aside as *hors concours*, not merely in degree but in kind, only two English poets can challenge Spenser for the primacy. These are Milton and Shelley. The poet of *The Faërie Queene* is generally inferior to Milton in the faculty of concentration, and in the minting of those monumental phrases, impressive of themselves and quite apart from the context, which often count highest in the estimation of poetry. His vocabulary and general style, if not more remote from the vernacular, have sometimes a touch of deliberate estrangement from that vernacular which is no doubt of itself a fault. His conception of a great work is looser, more excursive, less dramatic. As compared with Shelley he lacks not merely the modern touches which appeal to a particular age, but the lyrical ability in which Shelley has no equal among English poets. But in each case he redeems these defects with, as it seems to me, far more than counterbalancing merits. He is never prosaic as Milton, like his great successor Wordsworth, constantly is, and his very faults are the faults of a poet. He never (as Shelley does constantly) dissolves away into a flux of words which simply bids good-bye to sense or meaning, and wanders on at large, unguided, without an end, without an aim. But he has more than these merely negative merits. I have seen long accounts of Spenser in which the fact of his

inversion of the Spenserian stanza is passed over almost without a word of comment. Yet in the formal history of poetry (and the history of poetry must always be pre-eminently a history of form) there is simply no achievement so astonishing as this. That we do not know the inventors of the great single poetic vehicles, the hexameter, the iambic Senarius, the English heroic, the French Alexandrine, is one thing. It is another that in Spenser's case alone can the invention of a complicated but essentially integral form be assigned to a given poet. It is impossible to say that Sappho invented the Sapphic, or Alcæus the Alcaic: each poet may have been a Vespucci to some precedent Columbus. But we are in a position to say that Spenser did most unquestionably invent the English Spenserian stanza—a form only inferior in individual beauty to the sonnet, which is itself practically *adespoton*, and far superior to the sonnet in its capacity of being used in multiples as well as singly. When the unlikelihood of such a complicated measure succeeding in narrative form, the splendid success of it in *The Faërie Queene*, and the remarkable effects which have subsequently been got out of it by men so different as Thomson, Shelley, and Lord Tennyson, are considered, Spenser's invention must, I think, be counted the most considerable of its kind in literature.

But it may be very freely admitted that this technical merit, great as it is, is the least part of the matter. Whosoever first invented butterflies and pyramids in poetry is not greatly commendable, and if Spenser had done nothing but arrange a cunning combination of eight heroics, with interwoven rhymes and an Alexandrine to finish with, it may be acknowledged at once that his claims to primacy would have to be dismissed at once. It is not so. Independently of *The Faërie Queene* altogether he has done work which we must go to Milton and Shelley themselves to equal. The varied and singularly original strains of *The Calendar*, the warmth and delicacy combined of the *Epithalamion*, the tone of mingled regret and wonder (not inferior in its characteristic Renaissance ring to Du Bellay's own) of *The Ruins of Rome*, the

different notes of the different minor poems, are all things not to be found in any minor poet. But as does not always happen, and as is perhaps not the case with Milton, Spenser's greatest work is also his best. In the opinion of some at any rate the poet of *Lycidas*, of *Comus*, of *Samson Agonistes*, even of the *Allegro* and *Penseroso*, ranks as high as, if not above, the poet of *Paradise Lost*. But the poet of *The Faërie Queene* could spare all his minor works and lose only, as has been said, quantity not quality of greatness. It is hardly necessary at this time of day to repeat the demonstration that Macaulay in his famous jibe only succeeded in showing that he had never read what he jibed at; and though other decriers of Spenser's masterpiece may not have laid themselves open to quite so crushing a retort, they seldom fail to show a somewhat similar ignorance. For the lover of poetry, for the reader who understands and can receive the poetic charm, the revelation of beauty in metrical language, no English poem is the superior, or, range and variety being considered, the equal of *The Faërie Queene*. Take it up where you will, and provided only sufficient time (the reading of a dozen stanzas ought to suffice to any one who has the necessary gifts of appreciation) be given to allow the soft dreamy versicoloured atmosphere to rise round the reader, the languid and yet never monotonous music to gain his ear, the mood of mixed imagination and heroism, adventure and morality, to impress itself on his mind, and the result is certain. To the influence of no poet are the famous lines of Spenser's great nineteenth-century rival so applicable as to Spenser's own. The enchanted boat, angel-guided, floating on away, afar, without conscious purpose, but simply obeying the instinct of sweet poetry, is not an extravagant symbol for the mind of a reader of Spenser. If such readers want " Criticisms of Life " first of all, they must go elsewhere, though they will find them amply given, subject to the limitations of the poetical method. If they want story they may complain of slackness and deviations. If they want glorifications of science and such like things, they had better shut the book at once,

and read no more on that day nor on any other. But if they want poetry—if they want to be translated from a world which is not one of beauty only into one where the very uglinesses are beautiful, into a world of perfect harmony in colour and sound, of an endless sequence of engaging event and character, of noble passions and actions not lacking their due contrast, then let them go to Spenser with a certainty of satisfaction. He is not, as are some poets, the poet of a certain time of life to the exclusion of others. He may be read in childhood chiefly for his adventure, in later youth for his display of voluptuous beauty, in manhood for his ethical and historical weight, in age for all combined, and for the contrast which his bright universe of invention affords with the work-day jejuneness of this troublesome world. But he never palls upon those who have once learnt to taste him; and no poet is so little of an acquired taste to those who have any liking for poetry at all. He has been called the poet's poet—a phrase honourable but a little misleading, inasmuch as it first suggests that he is not the poet of the great majority of readers who cannot pretend to be poets themselves, and secondly insinuates a kind of intellectual and æsthetic Pharisaism in those who do admire him, which may be justly resented by those who do not. Let us rather say that he is the poet of all others for those who seek in poetry only poetical qualities, and we shall say not only what is more than enough to establish his greatness but what, as I for one believe, can be maintained in the teeth of all gainsayers.<sup>1</sup>

The volume, variety, and vigour of the poetical production of the period in which Spenser is the central figure—the last twenty years of the sixteenth century—is perhaps proportionally the greatest, and may be said to be emphatically the most distinguished in purely poetical characteristics of any period in our

<sup>1</sup> Of Spenser as of two other poets in this volume, Shakespere and Milton, it seemed to be unnecessary and even impertinent to give any extracts. Their works are, or ought to be, in all hands; and even if it were not so, no space at my command could give sample of their infinite varieties.

history. Every kind of poetical work is represented in it, and every kind (with the possible exception of the semi-poetical kind of satire) is well represented. There is, indeed, no second name that approaches Spenser's, either in respect of importance or in respect of uniform excellence of work. But in the most incomplete production of this time there is almost always that poetical spark which is often entirely wanting in the finished and complete work of other periods. I shall, therefore, divide the whole mass into four groups, each with certain distinguished names at its head, and a crowd of hardly undistinguished names in its rank and file. These four groups are the sonneteers, the historians, the satirists, and lastly, the miscellaneous lyrists and poetical miscellanists.

Although it is only recently that its mass and its beauty have been fully recognised, the extraordinary outburst of sonnet-writing at a certain period of Elizabeth's reign has always attracted the attention of literary historians. For many years after Wyatt and Surrey's work appeared the form attracted but little imitation or practice. About 1580 Spenser himself probably, Sidney and Thomas Watson certainly, devoted much attention to it; but it was some dozen years later that the most striking crop of sonnets appeared. Between 1593 and 1596 there were published more than a dozen collections, chiefly or wholly of sonnets, and almost all bearing the name of a single person, in whose honour they were supposed to be composed. So singular is this coincidence, showing either an intense *engouement* in literary society, or a spontaneous determination of energy in individuals, that the list with dates is worth giving. It runs thus:—In 1593 came Barnes's *Parthenophil and Parthenophe*, Fletcher's *Licia*, and Lodge's *Phillis*. In 1594 followed Constable's *Diana*, Daniel's *Delia*,<sup>1</sup> the anonymous *Zepheria*, Drayton's *Idea*, Percy's *Cælia*, and Willoughby's *Avisa*; 1595 added the *Alcilia* of a certain J. C., and Spenser's perfect *Amoretti*; 1596 gave Griffin's *Fidessa*, Lynch's *Diella*, and Smith's *Chloris*, while

<sup>1</sup> *Delia* had appeared earlier in 1592, and partially in 1591; but the text of 1594 is the definitive one. Several of these dates are doubtful or disputed.



Shakespeare's earliest sonnets were probably not much later. Then the fashion changed, or the vein was worked out, or (more fancifully) the impossibility of equalling Spenser and Shakespeare choked off competitors. The date of Lord Brooke's singular *Calica*, not published till long afterwards, is uncertain; but he may, probably, be classed with Sidney and Watson in period.

Fulke, or, as he himself spelt it, Foulke Greville, in his later years Lord Brooke,<sup>1</sup> was of a noble house in Warwickshire connected with the Beauchamps and the Willoughbys. He was born in 1554, was educated at Shrewsbury with Philip Sidney, whose kinsman, lifelong friend, and first biographer he was—proceeded, not like Sidney to Oxford, but to Cambridge (where he was a member, it would seem, of Jesus College, not as usually said of Trinity)—received early lucrative preferments chiefly in connection with the government of Wales, was a favourite courtier of Elizabeth's during all her later life, and, obtaining a royal gift of Warwick Castle, became the ancestor of the present earls of Warwick. In 1614 he became Chancellor of the Exchequer. Lord Brooke, who lived to a considerable age, was stabbed in a rather mysterious manner in 1628 by a servant named Haywood, who is said to have been enraged by discovering that his master had left him nothing in his will. The story is, as has been said, mysterious, and the affair seems to have been hushed up. Lord Brooke was not universally popular, and a very savage contemporary epitaph on him has been preserved. But he had been the patron of the youthful Davenant, and has left not a little curious literary work, which has only been recently collected, and little of which saw the light in his own lifetime. Of his two singular plays, *Mustapha* and *Alaham* (closet-dramas having something in common with the Senecan model), *Mustapha* was printed in 1609; but it would seem

<sup>1</sup> He is a little liable to be confounded with two writers (brothers of a patronymic the same as his title) Samuel and Christopher Brooke, the latter of whom wrote poems of some merit, which Dr. Grosart has edited.

piratically. His chief prose work, the *Life of Sidney*, was not printed till 1652. His chief work in verse, the singular *Poems of Monarchy* (ethical and political treatises), did not appear till eighteen years later, as well as the allied *Treatise on Religion*. But poems or tracts on human learning, on wars, and other things, together with his tragedies as above, had appeared in 1633. This publication, a folio volume, also contained by far the most interesting part of his work, the so-called sonnet collection of *Calica*—a medley, like many of those mentioned in this chapter, of lyrics and short poems of all lengths and metrical arrangements, but, unlike almost all of them, dealing with many subjects, and apparently addressed to more than one person. It is here, and in parts of the prose, that the reader who has not a very great love for Elizabethan literature and some experience of it, can be recommended to seek confirmation of the estimate in which Greville was held by Charles Lamb, and of the very excusable and pious, though perhaps excessive, admiration of his editor Dr. Grosart. Even *Calica* is very unlikely to find readers as a whole, owing to the strangely repellent character of Brooke's thought, which is intricate and obscure, and of his style, which is at any rate sometimes as harsh and eccentric as the theories of poetry which made him compose verse-treatises on politics. Nevertheless there is much nobility of thought and expression in him, and not unfrequent flashes of real poetry, while his very faults are characteristic. He may be represented here by a piece from *Calica*, in which he is at his very best, and most poetical because most simple—

“ I, with whose colours Myra dressed her head,  
 I, that ware posies of her own hand making,  
 I, that mine own name in the chimnies read  
 By Myra finely wrought ere I was waking :  
 Must I look on, in hope time coming may  
 With change bring back my turn again to play ?

“ I, that on Sunday at the church-stile found  
 A garland sweet with true love knots in flowers,

Which I to wear about mine arms, was bound  
 That each of us might know that all was ours :  
 Must I lead now an idle life in wishes,  
 And follow Cupid for his loaves and fishes ?

" I, that did wear the ring her mother left,  
 I, for whose love she gloried to be blamed,  
 I, with whose eyes her eyes committed theft,  
 I, who did make her blush when I was named :  
 Must I lose ring, flowers, blush, theft, and go naked,  
 Watching with sighs till dead love be awaked ?

" I, that when drowsy Argus fell asleep,  
 Like jealousy o'erwatchèd with desire,  
 Was ever warnèd modesty to keep  
 While her breath, speaking, kindled Nature's fire :  
 Must I look on a-cold while others warm them ?  
 Do Vulcan's brothers in such fine nets arm them ?

" Was it for this that I might Myra see  
*Washing the water with her beauties white ?*  
 Yet would she never write her love to me :  
 Thinks wit of change when thoughts are in delight ?  
 Mad girls may safely love as they may leave ;  
 No man can print a kiss : lines may deceive."

Had Brooke always written with this force and directness he would have been a great poet. As it is, he has but the ore of poetry, not the smelted metal.

For there is no doubt that Sidney here holds the primacy, not merely in time but in value, of the whole school, putting Spenser and Shakespere aside. That thirty or forty years' diligent study of Italian models had much to do with the extraordinary advance visible in his sonnets over those of Tottel's *Miscellany* is, no doubt, undeniable. But many causes besides the inexplicable residuum of fortunate inspiration, which eludes the most careful search into literary cause and effect, had to do with the production of the "lofty, insolent, and passionate vein," which becomes noticeable in English poetry for the first time about 1580, and which dominates it, if we include the late

autumn-summer of Milton's last productions, for a hundred years. Perhaps it is not too much to say that this makes its very first appearance in Sidney's verse, for *The Shepherd's Calendar*, though of an even more perfect, is of a milder strain. The inevitable tendency of criticism to gossip about poets instead of criticising poetry has usually mixed a great deal of personal matter with the accounts of *Astrophel and Stella*, the series of sonnets which is Sidney's greatest literary work, and which was first published some years after his death in an incorrect and probably pirated edition by Thomas Nash. There is no doubt that there was a real affection between Sidney (*Astrophel*) and Penelope Devereux (*Stella*), daughter of the Earl of Essex, afterwards Lady Rich, and that marriage proving unhappy, Lady Mountjoy. But the attempts which have been made to identify every hint and allusion in the series with some fact or date, though falling short of the unimaginable folly of scholastic labour-lost which has been expended on the sonnets of Shakespere, still must appear somewhat idle to those who know the usual genesis of love-poetry—how that it is of imagination all compact, and that actual occurrences are much oftener occasions and bases than causes and material of it. It is of the smallest possible importance or interest to a rational man to discover what was the occasion of Sidney's writing these charming poems—the important point is their charm. And in this respect (giving heed to his date and his opportunities of imitation) I should put Sidney third to Shakespere and Spenser. The very first piece of the series, an oddly compounded sonnet of thirteen Alexandrines and a final heroic, strikes the note of intense and fresh poetry which is only heard afar off in Surrey and Wyatt, which is hopelessly to seek in the tentatives of Turberville and Googe, and which is smothered with jejune and merely literary ornament in the less formless work of Sidney's contemporary, Thomas Watson. The second line—

“That she, dear she, might take some pleasure of my pain,”

the couplet—

"Oft turning others' leaves to see if thence would flow  
Some fresh and fruitful showers upon my sunburnt brain,"

and the sudden and splendid finale—

"'Fool!' said my muse, 'look in thy heart and write!'"

are things that may be looked for in vain earlier.

A little later we meet with that towering soar of verse which is also peculiar to the period :

"When Nature made her chief work—Stella's eyes,  
In colour black why wrapt she beams so bright?"—

lines which those who deprecate insistence on the importance of form in poetry might study with advantage, for the thought is a mere commonplace conceit, and the beauty of the phrase is purely derived from the cunning arrangement and cadence of the verse. The first perfectly charming sonnet in the English language—a sonnet which holds its own after three centuries of competition—is the famous "With how sad steps, O moon, thou climbst the skies," where Lamb's stricture on the last line as obscure seems to me unreasonable. The equally famous phrase, "That sweet enemy France," which occurs a little further on is another, and whether borrowed from Giordano Bruno or not is perhaps the best example of the felicity of expression in which Sidney is surpassed by few Englishmen. Nor ought the extraordinary variety of the treatment to be missed. Often as Sidney girds at those who, like Watson, "dug their sonnets out of books," he can write in the learned literary manner with the best. The pleasant ease of his sonnet to the sparrow, "Good brother Philip," contrasts in the oddest way with his allegorical and mythological sonnets, in each of which veins he indulges hardly less often, though very much more wisely than any of his contemporaries. Nor do the other "Songs of variable verse," which follow, and in some editions are mixed up with the sonnets, display less extraordinary power. The first song, with its refrain in the penultimate line of each stanza,

"To you, to you, all song of praise is due,"

contrasts in its throbbing and burning life with the faint and

misty imagery, the stiff and wooden structure, of most of the verse of Sidney's predecessors, and deserves to be given in full:—

- “Doubt you to whom my Muse these notes intendeth ;  
Which now my breast o'ercharged to music lendeth ?  
To you ! to you ! all song of praise is due :  
Only in you my song begins and endeth.
- “Who hath the eyes which marry state with pleasure,  
Who keeps the keys of Nature's chiefest treasure ?  
To you ! to you ! all song of praise is due :  
Only for you the heaven forgot all measure.
- “Who hath the lips, where wit in fairness reigneth ?  
Who womankind at once both decks and staineth ?  
To you ! to you ! all song of praise is due :  
Only by you Cupid his crown maintaineth.
- “Who hath the feet, whose steps all sweetness planteth ?  
Who else ; for whom Fame worthy trumpets wanteth ?  
To you ! to you ! all song of praise is due :  
Only to you her sceptre Venus granteth.
- “Who hath the breast, whose milk doth passions nourish ?  
Whose grace is such, that wher it chides doth cherish ?  
To you ! to you ! all song of praise is due :  
Only through you the tree of life doth flourish.
- “Who hath the hand, which without stroke subdueth ?  
Who long dead beauty with increase reneweth ?  
To you ! to you ! all song of praise is due :  
Only at you all envy hopeless rueth.
- “Who hath the hair, which loosest fastest tieth ?  
Who makes a man live then glad when he dieth ?  
To you ! to you ! all song of praise is due :  
Only of you the flatterer never lieth.
- “Who hath the voice, which soul from senses sunders ?  
Whose force but yours the bolts of beauty thunders ?  
To you ! to you ! all song of praise is due :  
Only with you not miracles are wonders.
- “Doubt you to whom my Muse these notes intendeth ?  
Which now my breast o'ercharged to music lendeth ?  
To you ! to you ! all song of praise is due :  
Only in you my song begins and endeth.”

Nor is its promise belied by those which follow, and which are among the earliest and the most charming of the rich literature of songs that really are songs—songs to music—which the age was to produce. All the scanty remnants of his other verse are instinct with the same qualities, especially the splendid dirge, "Ring out your bells, let mourning shows be spread," and the pretty lines "to the tune of Wilhelmus van Nassau." I must quote the first:—

" Ring out your bells ! let mourning shows be spread,  
     For Love is dead.  
 All love is dead, infected  
     With the plague of deep disdain ;  
 Worth as nought worth rejected.  
     And faith, fair scorn doth gain.  
 From so ungrateful fancy,  
 From such a female frenzy,  
 From them that use men thus,  
 Good Lord, deliver us !

' Weep, neighbours, weep ! Do you not hear it said  
     That Love is dead ?  
 His deathbed, peacock's Folly ;  
     His winding-sheet i. Shame ;  
 His will, False Seeming wholly ;  
     His sole executor, Blame.  
 From so ungrateful fancy,  
 From such a female frenzy,  
 From them that use men thus,  
 Good Lord, deliver us !

" Let dirge be sung, and trentals rightly read,  
     For Love is dead.  
 Sir Wrong his tomb ordaineth  
     My mistress' marble heart ;  
 Which epitaph containeth  
     ' Her eyes were once his dart.'  
 From so ungrateful fancy,  
 From such a female frenzy,  
 From them that use men thus,  
 Good Lord, deliver us !

“ Alas, I lie. Rage hath this error bred,  
Love is not dead.  
Love is not dead, but sleepeth  
In her unmatched mind :  
Where she his counsel keepeth  
Till due deserts she find.  
Therefore from so vile fancy  
To call such wit a frenzy,  
Who love can temper thus,  
Good Lord, deliver us !”

The verse from the *Arcadia* (which contains a great deal of verse) has been perhaps injuriously affected in the general judgment by the fact that it includes experiments in the impossible classical metres. But both it and the Translations from the Psalms express the same poetical faculty employed with less directness and force. To sum up, there is no Elizabethan poet, except the two named, who is more unmistakably imbued with poetical quality than Sidney. And Hazlitt's judgment on him, that he is “jejune” and “frigid” will, as Lamb himself hinted, long remain the chiefest and most astonishing example of a great critic's aberrations when his prejudices are concerned.

Had Hazlitt been criticising Thomas Watson, his judgment, though harsh, would have been not wholly easy to quarrel with. It is probably the excusable but serious error of judgment which induced his rediscoverer, Professor Arber, to rank Watson above Sidney in gifts and genius, that has led other critics to put him unduly low. Watson himself, moreover, has invited depreciation by his extreme frankness in confessing that his *Passionate Century* is not a record of passion at all, but an elaborate literary *pastiche* after this author and that. I fear it must be admitted that the average critic is not safely to be trusted with such an avowal of what he is too much disposed to advance as a charge without confession. Watson, of whom as usual scarcely anything is known personally, was a Londoner by birth, an Oxford man by education, a friend of most of the earlier literary school of the



reign, such as Lyly, Peele, and Spenser, and a tolerably industrious writer both in Latin and English during his short life, which can hardly have begun before 1557, and was certainly closed by 1593. He stands in English poetry as the author of the *Hecatopathia* or *Passionate Century* of sonnets (1582), and the *Tears of Fancy*, consisting of sixty similar poems, printed after his death. The *Tears of Fancy* are regular quatorzains, the pieces composing the *Hecatopathia*, though called sonnets, are in a curious form of eighteen lines practically composed of three six-line stanzas rhymed A B, A B, C C, and not connected by any continuance of rhyme from stanza to stanza. The special and peculiar oddity of the book is, that each sonnet has a prose préface as thus: "In this passion the author doth very busily imitate and augment a certain ode of Ronsard, which he writeth unto his mistress. He beginneth as followeth, *Plusieurs*, etc." Here is a complete example of one of Watson's pages:—

"There needeth no annotation at all before this passion, it is of itself so plain and easily conveyed. Yet the unlearned may have this help given them by the way to know what Galaxia is or Pactolus, which perchance they have not read of often in our vulgar rhymes. Galaxia (to omit both the etymology and what the philosophers do write thereof) is a white way or milky circle in the heavens, which Ovid mentioneth in this manner—

*Est via sublimis cælo manifesta sereno.*

*Lactea nomen habet, candore notabilis ipso.*

—Metamorph. lib. 1.

And Cicero thus in *Somnio Scipionis*: *Erat autem is splendidissimo candore inter flammæ circulus elucens, quem vos (ut a Graiis accepistis) orbem lacteum nuncupatis.*

Pactolus is a river in Lydia, which hath golden sands under it, as Tibullus witnesseth in this verse:—

*Nec me regna juvant, nec Lydius aurifer annis.*—Titul. lib. 3.

Who can recount the virtues of my dear,  
Or say how far her fame hath taken flight,  
That cannot tell how many stars appear  
In part of heaven, which Galaxia hight,  
Or number all the moats in Phœbus' rays,  
Or golden sands whereon Pactolus plays?

And yet my hurts enforce me to confess,  
 In crystal breast she shrouds a bloody heart,  
 Whic.. heart in time will make her merits less,  
 Unless betimes she cure my deadly smart :  
     For now my life is double dying still,  
     And she defamed by sufferance of such ill ;  
 And till the time she helps me as she may,  
 Let no man undertake to tell my toil,  
 But only such, as can distinctly say,  
 What monsters Nilus breeds, or Afric soil :  
     For if he do, his labour is but lost,  
     Whilst I both fry and freeze 'twixt flame and frost."

Now this is undoubtedly, as Watson's contemporaries would have said, "a cooling card" to the reader, who is thus presented with a series of elaborate poetical exercises affecting the acutest personal feeling, and yet confessedly representing no feeling at all. Yet the *Hecatopathia* is remarkable, both historically and intrinsically. It does not seem likely that at its publication the author can have had anything of Sidney's or much of Spenser's before him ; yet his work is only less superior to the work of their common predecessors than the work of these two. By far the finest of his *Century* is the imitation of Ferrabosco—

"Resolved to dust intombed here lieth love."

The quatorzains of the *Tears of Fancy* are more attractive in form and less artificial in structure and phraseology, but it must be remembered that by their time Sidney's sonnets were known and Spenser had written much. The seed was scattered abroad, and it fell in congenial soil in falling on Watson, but the *Hecatopathia* was self-sown.

This difference shows itself very remarkably in the vast outburst of sonneteering which, as has been remarked, distinguished the middle of the last decade of the sixteenth century. All these writers had Sidney and Spenser before them, and they assume so much of the character of a school that there are certain subjects, for instance, "Care-charming sleep," on which many of them (after Sidney) composed sets of rival poems, almost as definitely

competitive as the sonnets of the later "Uranie et Job" and "Belle Matineuse" series in France. Nevertheless, there is in all of them—what as a rule is wanting in this kind of clique verse—the independent spirit, the original force which makes poetry. The Smiths and the Fletchers, the Griffins and the Lynches, are like little geysers round the great ones: the whole soil is instinct with fire and flame. We shall, however, take the production of the four remarkable years 1593-1596 separately, and though in more than one case we shall return upon their writers both in this chapter and in a subsequent one, the unity of the sonnet impulse seems to demand separate mention for them here.

In 1593 the influence of the Sidney poems (published, it must be remembered, in 1591) was new, and the imitators, except Watson (of whom above), display a good deal of the quality of the novice. The chief of them are Barnabe Barnes, with his *Parthenophil and Parthenophe*, Giles Fletcher (father of the Jacobean poets, Giles and Phineas Fletcher), with his *Licia*, and Thomas Lodge, with his *Phillis*. Barnes is a modern discovery, for before Dr. Grosart reprinted him in 1875, from the unique original at Chatsworth, for thirty subscribers only (of whom I had the honour to be one), he was practically unknown. Mr. Arber has since, in his *English Garner*, opened access to a wider circle, to whom I at least do not grudge their entry. As with most of these minor Elizabethan poets, Barnes is a very obscure person. A little later than *Parthenophil* he wrote *A Divine Centurie of Spiritual Sonnets*, having, like many of his contemporaries, an apparent desire poetically to make the best of both worlds. He also wrote a wild play in the most daring Elizabethan style, called *The Devil's Charter*, and a prose political *Treatise of Offices*. Barnes was a friend of Gabriel Harvey's, and as such met with some rough usage from Nash, Marston, and others. His poetical worth, though there are fine passages in *The Devil's Charter* and in the *Divine Centurie*, must rest on *Parthenophil*. This collection consists not merely of sonnets but

of madrigals, sestines, canzons, and other attempts after Italian masters. The style, both verbal and poetical, needs chastising in places, and Barnes's expression in particular is sometimes obscure. He is sometimes comic when he wishes to be passionate, and frequently verbose when he wishes to be expressive. But the fire, the full-bloodedness, the poetical virility, of the poems is extraordinary. A kind of intoxication of the eternal-feminine seems to have seized the poet to an extent not otherwise to be paralleled in the group, except in Sidney; while Sidney's courtly sense of measure and taste did not permit him Barnes's forcible extravagances. Here is a specimen:—

“ Phoebus, rich father of eternal light,  
 And in his hand a wreath of Heliochris  
 He brought, to beautify those tresses,  
 Whose train, whose softness, and whose gloss more bright,  
 Apollo's locks did overprize.  
 Thus, with this garland, whiles her brows he blesses,  
 The golden shadow with his tincture  
 Coloured her locks, ay: gilded with the cincture.”

Giles Fletcher's *Licia* is a much more pale and colourless performance, though not wanting in merit. The author, who was afterwards a most respectable clergyman, is of the class of *amoureux transis*, and dies for Licia throughout his poems, without apparently suspecting that it was much better to live for her. His volume contained some miscellaneous poems, with a dullish essay in the historical style (see *post*), called *The Rising of Richard to the Crown*. Very far superior is Lodge's *Phillis*, the chief poetical work of that interesting person, except some of the madrigals and odd pieces of verse scattered about his prose tracts (for which see Chapter VI.) *Phillis* is especially remarkable for the grace and refinement with which the author elaborates the Sidneian model. Lodge, indeed, as it seems to me, was one of the not uncommon persons who can always do best with a model before them. He euphuised with better taste than Lyly, but in imitation of him; his tales in prose are more graceful than those

of Greene, whom he copied ; it at least seems likely that he out-Marlowed Marlowe in the rant of the *Looking-Glass for London*, and the stiffness of the *Wounds of Civil War*, and he chiefly polished Sidney in his sonnets and madrigals. It is not to be denied, however, that in three out of these four departments he gave us charming work. His mixed allegiance to Marlowe and Sidney gave him command of a splendid form of decasyllable, which appears often in *Phyllis*, as for instance—

"About thy neck do all the graces throng  
And lay such baits as might entangle death,"

where it is worth noting that the whole beauty arises from the dexterous placing of the dissyllable "graces," and the trisyllable "entangle," exactly where they ought to be among the monosyllables of the rest. The madrigals "Love guards the roses of thy lips," "My Phillis hath the morning sun," and "Love in my bosom like a bee" are simply unsurpassed for sugared sweetness in English. Perhaps this is the best of them :—

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

"And if I sleep, then percheth he,  
With pretty flight,<sup>1</sup>  
And makes his pillow of my knee  
The livelong night.  
Strike I my lute, he tunes the string.  
He music plays, if so I sing.  
He lends me every lovely thing  
Yet cruel ! he, my heart doth sting.  
'Whist, wanton ! still ye !'

<sup>1</sup> Printed in *England's Helicon* "sleight."

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

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

1594 was the most important of all the sonnet years, and here we are chiefly bound to mention authors who will come in for fuller notice later. The singular book known as Willoughby's *Avisa* which, as having a supposed bearing on Shakespere and as containing much of that personal puzzlement which rejoices critics, has had much attention of late years, is not strictly a collection of sonnets; its poems being longer and of differing stanzas. But in general character it falls in with the sonnet-collections addressed or devoted to a real or fanciful personage. It is rather satirical than panegyric in character, and its poetical worth is very far from high. William Percy, a friend of Barnes (who dedicated the *Parthenophil* to him), son of the eighth Earl of Northumberland, and a retired person who seems to have passed the greater part of a long life in Oxford “drinking nothing but ale,” produced a very short collection entitled *Calia*, not very noteworthy, though it contains (probably in imitation of Barnes) one of the tricky things called echo-sonnets, which, with dialogue-sonnets and the like, have sometimes amused the leisure of poets. Much more remarkable is the singular anonymous collection

called *Zepheria*. Its contents are called not sonnets but canzons, though most of them are orthodox quatorzain<sup>e</sup> somewhat oddly rhymed and rhythmed. It is brief, extending only to forty pieces, and, like much of the poetry of the period, begins and ends with Italian mottoes or dedication-phrases. But what is interesting about it is the evidence it gives of deep familiarity not only with Italian but with French models. This appears both in such words as "jouissance," "thesaurise," "esperance," "souvenance," "vatical" (a thoroughly Ronsardising word), with others too many to mention, and in other characteristics. Mr. Sidney Lee, in his most valuable collection of these sonneteers, endeavours to show that this French influence was less uncommon than has sometimes been thought. Putting this aside, the characteristic of *Zepheria* is unchastened vigour, full of promise, but decidedly in need of further schooling and discipline, as the following will show:—

" O then Desire, father of Jouissance,  
 The Life of Love, the Death of dastard Fear,  
 The kindest nurse to true persèverance,  
 Mine heart inherited, with thy love's reverè. [?]  
 Beauty ! peculiar parent of Conceit,  
 Prosperous midwife to a travelling muse,  
 The sweet of life, Nepenthe's eyes receipt,  
 Thee into me distilled, O sweet, infuse !  
 Love then (the spirit of a generous sprite,  
 An infant ever drawing Nature's breast,  
 The Sum of Life, that Chaos did unnight !)  
 Dismissed mine heart from me, with thee to rest.  
 And now incites me cry, ' Double or quit !  
 Give back my heart, or take his body to it ! ' "

This cannot be said of the three remarkable collections yet to be noticed which appeared in this year, to wit, Constable's *Diana*, Daniel's *Delia*, and Drayton's *Idea*. These three head the group and contain the best work, after Shakespere and Spenser and Sidney, in the English sonnet of the time. Constable's sonnets had appeared partly in 1592, and as they stand in fullest collec-

tion were published in or before 1594. Afterwards he wrote, like others, "divin" sonnets (he was a Roman Catholic) and some miscellaneous poems, including a very pretty "Song of Venus and Adonis." He was a close friend of Sidney, many of whose sonnets were published with his, and his work has much of the Sidneian colour, but with fewer flights of happily expressed fancy. The best of it is probably the following sonnet, which is not only full of gracefully expressed images, but keeps up its flight from first to last—a thing not universal in these Elizabethan sonnets:—

" My Lady's presence makes the Roses red,  
 Because to see her lip: they blush for shame.  
 The Lily's leaves, for envy, pale became ;  
 And her white hands in them this envy bred.  
 The Marigold the leaves abroad doth spread ;  
 Because the sun's and her power is the same.  
 The Violet of purple colour came,  
 Dyed in the blood she made my heart to shed.  
 In brief all flowers from her their virtue take ;  
 From her sweet breath, their sweet smells do proceed ;  
 The living heat which her eyebeams doth make  
 Warmeth the ground, and quickeneth the seed.  
 The rain, wherewith she watereth the flowers,  
 Falls from mine eyes, which she dissolves in showers."

Samuel Daniel had an eminently contemplative genius which might have anticipated the sonnet as it is in Wordsworth, but which the fashion of the day confined to the not wholly suitable subject of Love. In the splendid "Care-charmer Sleep," one of the tournament sonnets above noted, he contrived, as will be seen, to put his subject under the influence of his prevailing faculty.

" Care-charmer Sleep, son of the sable Night,  
 Brother to Death, in silent darkness born,  
 Relieve my anguish, and restore the light,  
 With dark forgetting of my cares, return ;  
 And let the day be time enough to mourn  
 The shipwreck of my ill-adventured youth ;  
 Let waking eyes suffice to wail their scorn  
 Without the torment of the night's untruth.



Cease, Dreams, th' imag'ry of our day-desires,  
 To model forth the passions of the morrow,  
 Never let rising sun approve you liars,  
 To add more grief to aggravate my sorrow.  
 Still let me sleep, embracing clouds in vain ;  
 And never wake to feel the day's disdain."

But as a rule he is perhaps too much given to musing, and too little to rapture. In form he is important, as he undoubtedly did much to establish the arrangement of three alternate rhymed quatrains and a couplet which, in Shakespere's hands, was to give the noblest poetry of the sonnet and of the world. He has also an abundance of the most exquisite single lines, such as

"O clear-eyed rector of the holy hill,"

and the wonderful opening of Sonnet xxvii., "The star of my mishap imposed this pain."

The sixty-three sonnets, varied in different editions of Drayton's *Idea*, are among the most puzzling of the whole group. Their average value is not of the very highest. Yet there are here and there the strangest suggestions of Drayton's countryman, Shakespere, and there is one sonnet, No. 61, beginning, "Since there's no help, come let us kiss and part," which I have found it most difficult to believe to be Drayton's, and which is Shakespere all over. That Drayton was the author of *Idea* as a whole is certain, not merely from the local allusions, but from the resemblance to the more successful exercises of his clear, masculine, vigorous, fertile, but occasionally rather unpoetical style. The sonnet just referred to is itself one of the very finest existing—perhaps one of the ten or twelve best sonnets in the world, and it may be worth while to give it with another in contrast :—

"Our flood's Queen, Thames, for ships and swans is crowned ;  
 And stately Severn for her shore is praised.  
 The crystal Trent for fords and fish renowned ;  
 And Avon's fame to Albion's cliffs is raised ;  
 Carlegion Chester vaunts her holy Dee ;  
 York many wonders of her Ouse can tell.

The Peak her Dove, whose banks so fertile be ;  
 And Kent will say her Medway doth excel.  
 Cotswold commends her Isis to the Tame ;  
 Our northern borders boast of Tweed's fair flood  
 Our western parts extol their Wily's fame ;  
 And the old Lea brags of the Danish blood.  
 Arden's sweet Ankor, let thy glory be  
 That fair Idea only lives by thee !"

" Since there's no help, come, let us kiss and part !  
 Nay, I have done. You get no more of me.  
 And I am glad, yea, glad with all my heart  
 That thus so cleanly I myself can free.  
 Shake hands for ever, cancel all our vows,  
 And when we meet at any time again  
 Be it not seen in either of our brows  
 That we one jot of former love retain.  
 Now at the last gasp of Love's latest breath,  
 When, his pulse failing, Passion speechless lies ;  
 When Faith is kneeling by his bed of death,  
 And Innocence is closing up his eyes :  
 Now, if thou would'st, when all have given him over,  
 From death to life thou might'st him yet recover !"

1595 chiefly contributed the curious production called *Alcilia*, by J. C., who gives the name of sonnets to a series of six-line stanzas, varied occasionally by other forms, such as that of the following pretty verses. It may be noted that the citation of proverbs is very characteristic of *Alcilia* :—

" Love is sorrow mixed with gladness,  
 Fear with hope, and hope with madness.  
 Long did I love, but all in vain ;  
 I loving, was not loved again :  
 For which my heart sustained much woe.  
 It fits not maids to use men so,  
 Just deserts are not regarded,  
 Never love so ill rewarded.  
 But 'all is lost that is not sought,'  
 'Oft wit proves best that's dearest bought.'

" Women were made for men's relief ;  
 To comfort, not to cause their grief.

Where most I merit, least I find :  
 No marvel, since that love is blind.  
 Had she been kind as she was fair,  
 My case had been more strange and rare.  
 But women love not by desert,  
 Reason in them hath weakest part.  
 Then henceforth let them love that list,  
 I will beware of 'had I wist.'

1596 (putting the *Amoretti*, which is sometimes assigned to this year, aside) was again fruitful with Griffin's *Fidessa*, Lynch's *Diella*, and Smith's *Chloris*. *Fidessa*, though distinctly "young," is one of the most interesting of the clearly imitative class of these sonnets, and contains some very graceful poetry, especially the following, one of the Sleep class, which will serve as a good example of the minor sonneteers:—

"Care-charmer Sleep ! sweet ease in restless misery !  
 The captive's liberty, and his freedom's song !  
 Balm of the bruised heart ! man's chief felicity !  
 Brother of quiet Death, when Life is too too long !  
 A Comedy it is, and now an History ;  
 What is not sleep unto the feeble mind ?  
 It easeth him that toils, and him that's sorry ;  
 It makes the deaf to hear ; to see, the blind ;  
 Ungentle Sleep ! thou helpst all but me,  
 For when I sleep my soul is vexed most.  
 It is *Fidessa* that doth master thee  
 If she approach ; alas ! thy power is lost.  
 But here she is ! See, how he runs amain !  
 I fear, at night, he will not come again."

*Diella*, a set of thirty-eight sonnets prefixed to the "Amorous poem of Diego and Genevra," is more elaborate in colouring but somewhat less fresh and genuine ; while *Chloris*, whose author was a friend of Spenser's, approaches to the pastoral in the plan and phrasing of its fifty sonnets.

Such are the most remarkable members of a group of English poetry, which yields to few such groups in interest. It is connected by a strong similarity of feeling—if any one likes, even

by a strong imitation of the same models. But in following those models and expressing those feelings, its members, even the humblest of them, have shown remarkable poetical capacity; while of the chiefs we can only say, as has been said more than once already, that the matter and form together acknowledge, and indeed admit of, no superior.

In close connection with these groups of sonnets, displaying very much the same poetical characteristics and in some cases written by the same authors, there occurs a great body of miscellaneous poetical writing produced during the last twenty years of the sixteenth century, and ranging from long poems of the allegorical or amatory kind to the briefest lyrics and madrigals. Sometimes this work appeared independently; sometimes it was inserted in the plays and prose pamphlets of the time. As has already been said, some of our authors, notably Lodge and Greene, did in this way work which far exceeds in merit any of their more ambitious pieces, and which in a certain unborrowed and incommunicable poetic grace hardly leaves anything of the time behind it. Shakespere himself, in *Venus and Adonis* and *Lucrece*, has in a more elaborate but closely allied kind of poetry displayed less mature, but scarcely less, genius than in his dramatic and sonnet work. It is my own opinion that the actual poetical worth of Richard Barnfield, to whom an exquisite poem in *The Passionate Pilgrim*, long ascribed to Shakespere, is now more justly assigned, has, owing to this assignment and to the singular character of his chief other poem, *The Affectionate Shepherd*, been considerably overrated. It is unfortunately as complete if not as common a mistake to suppose that any one who disdains his country's morality must be a good poet, as to set down any one who disdains it without further examination for a bad one. The simple fact, as it strikes a critic, is that "As it fell upon a day" is miles above anything else of Barnfield's, and is not like anything else of his, while it is very like things of Shakespere's. The best thing to be said for Barnfield is that he was an avowed and enthusiastic imitator

and follower of Spenser. His poetical work (we might have included the short series of sonnets to *Cynthia* in the division of sonneteers) was all written when he was a very young man, and he died when he was not a very old one, a bachelor country-gentleman in Warwickshire. Putting the exquisite "As it fell upon a day" out of question (which, if he wrote it, is one of the not very numerous examples of perfect poetry written by a very imperfect poet), Barnfield has, in no extraordinary measure, the common attributes of this wonderful time—poetical enthusiasm, fresh and unhackneyed expression, metrical charm, and gorgeous colouring, which does not find itself ill-matched with accurate drawing of nature. He is above the average Elizabethan, and his very bad taste in *The Affectionate Shepherd* (a following of Virgil's Second Eclogue) may be excused as a humanist crotchet of the time. His rarity, his eccentricity, and the curious mixing up of his work with Shakespere's have done him something more than yeoman's service with recent critics. But he may have a specimen:—

" And thus it happened : Death and Cupid met  
 Upon a time at swilling Bacchus' house,  
 Where dainty cates upon the board were set,  
 And goblets full of wine to drinke carouse :  
 Where Love and Death did love the liquor so  
 That out they fall, and to the fray they go.

" And having both their quivers at their back  
 Filled full of arrows—the one of fatal steel,  
 The other all of gold ; Death's shaft was black,  
 But Love's was yellow—Fortune turned her wheel,  
 And from Death's quiver fell a fatal shaft  
 That under Cupid by the wind was waft.

" And at the same time by ill hap there fell  
 Another arrow out of Cupid's quiver ;  
 The which was carried by the wind at will,  
 And under Death the amorous shaft did shiver.<sup>1</sup>  
 They being parted, Love took up Death's dart,  
 And Death took up Love's arrow for his part."

<sup>1</sup> Not, of course = "break," but "shudder."

There is perhaps more genuine poetic worth, though there is less accomplishment of form, in the unfortunate Father Robert Southwell, who was executed as a traitor on the 20th of February 1595. Southwell belonged to a distinguished family, and was born (probably) at Horsham St. Faiths, in Norfolk, about the year 1560. He was stolen by a gipsy in his youth, but was recovered; and a much worse misfortune befell him in being sent for education not to Oxford or Cambridge but to Douay, where he got into the hands of the Jesuits, and joined their order. He was sent on a mission to England; and (no doubt conscientiously) violating the law there, was after some years of hiding and suspicion betrayed, arrested, treated with great harshness in prison, and at last, as has been said, executed. No specific acts of treason were even charged against him; and he earnestly denied any designs whatever against the Queen and kingdom, nor can it be doubted that he merely paid the penalty of others' misdeeds. His work both in prose and poetry was not inconsiderable, and the poetry was repeatedly printed in rather confusing and imperfect editions after his death. The longest, but by no means the best, piece is *St. Peter's Complaint*. The best unquestionably is *The Burning Babe*, which, though fairly well known, must be given:—

“As I in hoary winter's night stood shivering in the snow,  
 Surpris'd 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,  
 Who scorched with excessive heat, such floods of tears did shed,  
 As though His floods should quench His flames which with His tears were fed;  
 ‘Alas!’ quoth He, ‘but newly born, in fiery heats I fry,  
 Yet none approach to warm their hearts or feel My fire but I!  
 My faultless breast the furnace is, the fuel wounding thorns,  
 Love is the fire, and sighs the smoke, the ashes shame and scorns;  
 The fuel Justice layeth on, and Mercy blows the coals;  
 The metal in this furnace wrought are men's defiled souls,  
 For which, as now on fire I am, to work them to their good  
 So will I melt into a bath to wash them in My blood:’  
 With these He vanished out of sight, and swiftly shrunk away,  
 And straight I callèd unto mind that it was Christmas Day.”

Something of the glow of this appears elsewhere in the poems, which are, without exception, religious. They have not a little of the "hectic" tone, which marks still more strongly the chief English Roman Catholic poet of the next century, Crashaw; but are never, as Crashaw sometimes is, hysterical. On the whole, as was remarked in a former chapter, they belong rather to the pre-Spenserian class in diction and metre, though with something of the Italian touch. Occasional roughnesses in them may be at least partly attributed to the evident fact that the author thought of nothing less than of merely "cultivating the muses." His religious fervour is of the simplest and most genuine kind, and his poems are a natural and unforced expression of it.

It is difficult in the brief space which can here be allotted to the subject to pass in review the throng of miscellaneous poets and poetry indicated under this group. The reprints of Dr. Grosart and Mr. Arber, supplemented in a few cases by recourse to the older recoveries of Brydges, Haslewood, Park, Collier, and others, bring before the student a mass of brilliant and beautiful matter, often mixed with a good deal of slag and scorixæ, but seldom deficient in the true poetical ore. The mere collections of madrigals and songs, actually intended for casual performance at a time when almost every accomplished and well-bred gentleman or lady was expected to oblige the company, which Mr. Arber's invaluable *English Garner* and Mr. Bullen's *Elizabethan Lyrics* give from the collections edited or produced by Byrd, Yonge, Campion, Dowland, Morley, Alison, Wilbye, and others, represent such a body of verse as probably could not be got together, with the same origin and circumstances, in any quarter-century of any nation's history since the foundation of the world. In Campion especially the lyrical quality is extraordinary. He was long almost inaccessible, but Mr. Bullen's edition of 1889 has made knowledge of him easy. His birth-year is unknown, but he died in 1620. He was a Cambridge man, a member of the Inns of Court, and a physician in good practice. He has left us a masque; four *Books of Airs*

(1601-17?), in which the gems given below, and many others, occur; and a sometimes rather unfairly characterised critical treatise, *Observations on the Art of English Poesy*, in which he argues against rhyme and for strict quantitative measures, but on quite different lines from those of the craze of Stanyhurst and Harvey. Some of his illustrations of his still rather unnatural fancy (especially "Rose-cheeked Laura," which is now tolerably familiar in anthologies) are charming, though never so charming as his rhymed "Airs." The poetry is, indeed, mostly in flashes, and it is not very often that any song is a complete gem, like the best of the songs from the dramatists, one or two of which will be given presently for comparison. But by far the greater number contain and exemplify those numerous characteristics of poetry, as distinguished from verse, which at one time of literary history seem naturally to occur—seem indeed to be had for the gathering by any one who chooses—while at another time they are but sparingly found in the work of men of real genius, and seem altogether to escape men of talent, accomplishment, and laborious endeavour. Here are a few specimens from Peele and others, especially Campion. As it is, an exceptional amount of the small space possible for such things in this volume has been given to them, but there is a great temptation to give more. Lyly's lyrical work, however, is fairly well known, and more than one collection of "Songs from the Dramatists" has popularised others.

*Æ.* "Fair and fair, and twice so fair,  
As fair as any may be;  
The fairest shepherd on our green,  
A love for any lady.

*Par.* Fair and fair, and twice so fair,  
As fair as any may be;  
Thy love is fair for thee alone,  
And for no other lady.

*Æ.* My love is fair, my love is gay,  
As fresh as bin the flowers in May,  
And of my love my roundelay



Concludes with Cupid's curse,  
They that do change old love for new  
Pray gods, they change for worse !

*Ambo, simul.* They that do change, etc., etc.

*Æ.* Faÿr and fair, etc.

*Par.* Fair and fair, etc.

*Æ.* My love can pipe, my love can sing,  
My love can many a pretty thing,  
And of his lovely praises ring  
My merry, merry roundelays.  
Amen to Cupid's curse,  
They that do change, etc."

PEELE.

" His golden locks time hath to silver turned ;  
O time too swift, O swiftness never ceasing !  
His youth 'gainst time and age hath ever spurned,  
But spurned in vain ; youth waneth by increasing :  
Beauty, strength, youth, are flowers but fading seen.  
Duty, faith, love, are roots, and ever green.

" His helmet now shall make a hive for bees,  
And lovers' songs be turned to holy psalms ;  
A man-at-arms must now serve on his knees,  
And feed on prayers, which are old age's alms :  
But though from court to cottage he depart,  
His saint is sure of his unspotted heart.

" And when he saddest sits in homely cell,  
He'll teach his swains this carol for a song :  
' Blessed be the héarts that wish my Sovereign well,  
Cursed be the souls that think her any wrong.'  
Goddess allow this aged man his right,  
To be your beadsman now that was your knight."

PEELE.

" Fain would I change that note  
To which fond love hath charm'd me,  
Long, long to sing by rote  
Fancying that that harm'd me :  
Yet when this thought doth come,  
' Love is the perfect sum

Of all delight !  
 I have no other choice  
 Either for pen or voice  
 To sing or write.

“ O Love, they wrong thee much  
 That say thy sweet is bitter,  
 When thy rich fruit is such  
 As nothing can be sweeter.  
 Fair house of joy and bliss  
 Where truest pleasure is,  
 I do adore thee ;  
 I know thee what thou art.  
 I serve thee with my heart  
 And fall before thee.

*Anon. in BULLEN.*

“ Turn :ll thy thoughts to eyes,  
 Turn all thy hairs to ears,  
 Change all thy friends to spies,  
 And all thy joys to fears :  
 True love will yet be free  
 In spite of jealousy.

“ Turn darkness into day,  
 Conjectures into truth,  
 Believe what th' curious say,  
 Let age interpret youth :  
 True love will yet be free  
 In spite of jealousy.

“ Wrest every word and look,  
 Rack every hidden thought ;  
 Or fish with golden hook,  
 True love cannot be caught :  
 For that will still be free  
 In spite of jealousy.”

*CAMPION in BULLEN.*

“ Come, O come, my life's delight !  
 Let me not in langour pine !  
 Love loves no delay ; thy sight  
 The more enjoyed, the more divine.  
 O come, and take from me  
 The pain of being deprived of thee !

"Thou all sweetness dost enclose  
 Like a little world of bliss ;  
 Beauty guards thy looks, the rose  
 In them pure and eternal is :  
 Come, then, and make thy flight  
 As swift to me as heavenly light !"  
 CAMPION.

"Follow your saint, follow with accents sweet !  
 Haste you, sad notes, fall at hei flying feet !  
 There, wrapped in cloud of sorrow, pity move,  
 And tell the ravisher of my soul I perish for her love.  
 But if she scorns my never-ceasing pain,  
 Then burst with sighing in her sight and ne'er return again.

"All that I sang still to her praise did tend,  
 Still she was first, still she my songs did end ;  
 Yet she my love and music both doth fly,  
 The music that her echo is and beauty's sympathy :  
 Then let my notes pursue her scornful flight !  
 It shall suffice that they were breathed and died for her delight."  
 CAMPION.

"What if a day, or a month, or a year,  
 Crown thy delights with a thousand sweet contentings !  
 Cannot a chance of a night or an hour  
 Cross thy desires with as many sad to:mentings ?  
 Fortune, Honour, Beauty, Youth, are but blossoms dying,  
 Wanton Pleasure, doating Love, are but shadows flying.  
 All our joys are but toys ! idle thoughts deceiving :  
 None have power, of an hour, in their lives bereaving.

"Earth's but a point to the world, and a man  
 Is but a point to the world's comparèd centre !  
 Shall then a point of a point be so vain  
 As to triumph in a silly point's adventure ?  
 All is hazard that we have, there is nothing biding ;  
 Days of pleasure are liæ streams through fair meadows gliding.  
 Weal and woe, time doth go ! time is never turning ;  
 Secret fates guide our states, both in mirth and mourning."  
 CAMPION.

"'Twas I that paid for all things,  
 'Twas others drank the wine,

I cannot now recall things ;  
 Live but a fool, to pine.  
 'Twas I that beat the bush,  
 The bird to others flew ;  
 For she, alas, hath left me.  
 Falero ! lero ! loo !

“ If ever that Dame Nature  
 (For this false lover's sake)  
 Another pleasing creature  
 Like unto her would make ;  
 Let her remember this,  
 To make the other true !  
 For this, alas ! hath left me.  
 Falero ! lero ! loo !

“ No riches now can raise me,  
 No want makes me despair,  
 No misery amaze me,  
 Nor yet for want I care :  
 I have lost a World itself,  
 My earthly Heaven, adieu !  
 Since she, alas ! hath left me.  
 Falero ! lero ! loo !”

*Anon. in ARBER.*

Beside these collections, which were in their origin and inception chiefly musical, and literary, as it were, only by parergon, there are successors of the earlier Miscellanies in which, as in *England's Helicon* and the celebrated *Passionate Pilgrim*, there is some of the most exquisite of our verse. And, yet again, a crowd of individual writers, of few of whom is much known, contributed, not in all cases their mites by any means, but often very respectable sums, to the vast treasury of English poetry. There is Sir Edward Dyer, the friend of Raleigh and Sidney, who has been immortalised by the famous “My mind to me a kingdom is,” and who wrote other pieces not much inferior. There is Raleigh, to whom the glorious preparatory sonnet to *The Faërie Queene* would sufficiently justify the ascription of “a vein most lofty, insolent, and passionate,” if a very considerable body of verse (independent of the fragmentary *Cynthia*)

did not justify this many times over, as two brief quotations in addition to the sonnet will show :—

“ Methought I saw the grave where Laura lay,  
 Within that temple where the vestal flame  
 Was wont to burn : and, passing by that way  
 To see that buried dust of living fame,  
 Whose tomb fair Love and fairer Virtue kept,  
 All suddenly I saw the Fairy Queen,  
 At whose approach the soul of Petrarch wept ;  
 And from henceforth those graces were not seen,  
 For they this Queen attended ; in whose stead  
 Oblivion laid him down on Laura’s hearse.  
 Hereat the hardest stones were seen to bleed,  
 And groans of buried ghosts the heavens did pierce :  
 Where Homer’s spright did tremble all for grief,  
 And curse the access of that celest’al thief.”

“ Three things there be that prosper all apace,  
 And flourish while they are asunder far ;  
 But on a day they meet all in a place,  
 And when they meet they one another mar.

“ And they be these—the Wood, the Weed, the Wag :  
 The Wood is that that makes the gallows tree ,  
 The Weed is that that strings the hangman’s bag ;  
 The Wag, my pretty knave, betokens thee.

“ Now mark, dear boy—while these assemble not,  
 Green springs the tree, hemp grows, the Wag is wild ;  
 But when they meet, it makes the timber rot,  
 It frets the halter, and it chokes the child.

“ God Bless the Child ! ”

“ Give me my scallop-shell of quiet,  
 My staff of faith to walk upon,  
 My scrip of joy, immortal diet,  
 My bottle of salvation,  
 My gown of glory, hope’s true gage ;  
 And thus I’ll take my pilgrimage.

“ Blood must be my body’s balmer ;  
 No other balm will there be given ;

Whilst my soul, like quiet palmer,  
 Travelleth towards the land of heaven ;  
 Over the silver mountains  
 Where spring the nectar fountains :  
     There will I kiss  
     The bovl of bliss ;  
 And drink mine everlasting fill  
 Upon every milken hill.  
 My soul will be a-dry before,  
 But after it will thirst no more."

There is Lord Oxford, Sidney's enemy (which he might be if he chose), and apparently a coxcomb (which is less pardonable), but a charming writer of verse, as in the following :—

- "Come hither, shepherd swain !  
     Sir, what do you require ?  
 I pray thee, shew to me thy name !  
     My name is Fond Desire.
- "When wert thou born, Desire ?  
     In pomp and prime of May.  
 By whom, sweet boy, wert thou begot ?  
     By fond Conceit, men say.
- "Tell me, who was thy nurse  
     Fresh youth, in sugared joy.  
 What was thy meat and daily food ?  
     Sad sighs, with great annoy.
- "What hadst thou then to drink ?  
     Unfeigned lovers' tears.  
 What cradle wert thou rocked in ?  
     In hope devoid of fears.
- "What lulled thee then asleep ?  
     Sweet speech which likes me best.  
 Tell me, where is thy dwelling-place ?  
     In gentle hearts I rest.
- "What thing doth please thee most ?  
     To gaze on beauty still.  
 Whom dost thou think to be thy foe ?  
     Disdain of my good will.

- " Doth company displease ?  
   Yes, surely, many one.  
 Where doth desire delight to live ?  
   He loves to live alone.
- " Doth either time or age  
   Bring him unto decay ?  
 No, no ! Desire both lives and dies  
   A thousand times a day.
- " Then, fond Desire, farewell !  
   Thou art no mate for me ;  
 I should be loath, methinks, to dwell  
   With such a one as thee.

There is, in the less exalted way, the industrious man of all work, Nicholas Breton, whom we shall speak of more at length among the pamphleteers, and John Davies of Hereford, no poet certainly, but a most industrious verse-writer in satiric and other forms. Mass of production, and in some cases personal interest, gives these a certain standing above their fellows. But the crowd of those fellows, about many of whom even the painful industry of the modern commentator has been able to tell us next to nothing, is almost miraculous when we remember that printing was still carried on under a rigid censorship by a select body of monopolists, and that out of London, and in rare cases the university towns, it was impossible for a minor poet to get into print at all unless he trusted to the contraband presses of the Continent. In dealing with this crowd of enthusiastic poetical students it is impossible to mention all, and invidious to single out some only. The very early and interesting *Posy of Gillyflowers* of Humphrey Gifford (1580) exhibits the first stage of our period, and might almost have been referred to the period before it; the same humpty-dumpty measure of eights and sixes, and the same vestiges of rather infantine alliteration being apparent in it, though something of the fire and variety of the new age of poetry appears beside them, notably in this most spirited war-song:—

*(For Soldiers.)*

- “ Ye buds of Brutus’ land, courageous youths now play your parts,<sup>1</sup>  
 Unto your tackle stand, abide the brunt with valiant hearts,  
 For news is carried to and fro, that we must forth to warfare go :  
 Then muster now in every place, and soldiers are pressed forth apace.  
 Faint not, spend blood to do your Queen and country good :  
 Fair words, good pay, will make men cast all care away.
- “ The time of war is come, prepare your corslet, spear, and shield :  
 Methinks I hear the drum strike doleful marches to the field.  
 Tantara, tantara the trumpets sound, which makes our hearts with joy  
 abound.  
 The roaring guns are heard afar, and everything announceth war.  
 Serve God, stand stout ; bold courage brings this gear about ;  
 Fear not, forth run : faint heart fair lady never won.
- “ Ye curious carpet-knights that spend the time in sport and play,  
 Abroad and see new sights, your country’s cause calls you away :  
 Do not, to make your ladies’ game, bring blemish to your worthy name.  
 Away to field and win renown, with courage beat your enemies down ;  
 Stout hearts gain praise, when dastards sail in slander’s seas.  
 Hap what hap shall, we soon shall die but once for all.
- “ Alarm ! methinks they cry. Be packing mates, begone with speed,  
 Our foes are very nigh : shame have that man that shrinks at need.  
 Unto it boldly let us stand, God will give right the upper hand.  
 Our cause is good we need not doubt : in sign of courage give a shout ;  
 March forth, be strong, good hap will come ere it be long.  
 Shrink not, fight well, for lusty lads must bear the bell.
- “ All you that will shun evil must dwell in warfare every day.  
 The world, the flesh, the devil always do seek our souls’ decay.  
 Strive with these foes with all your might, so shall you fight a worthy fight.  
 That conquest dost deserve most praise, whose vice do[th] yield to virtue’s  
 ways.  
 Beat down foul sin, a worthy crown then shall ye win :  
 If ye live well, in Heaven with Christ our souls shall dwell.”

Of the same date, or indeed earlier, are the miscellaneous poems of Thomas Howell, entitled *The Arbour of Amity*, and

<sup>1</sup> I print this as in the original, but perhaps the rhythm, which is an odd one, would be better marked if lines 1 and 2 were divided into sixes and eights, lines 3 and 4 into eights, and lines 5 and 6 into fours and eights as the rhyme ends.



chiefly of an ethical character. Less excusable for the uncouthness of his verse is Matthew Grove, who, writing, or at least publishing, his poems in 1587, should have learnt something, but apparently had not. It has to be said in excuse of him that his date and indeed existence are shadowy, even among the shadowy Elizabethan bards; his editor, in worse doggerel than his own, frankly confessing that he knew nothing about him, not so much as whether he was alive or dead. But his work, Howell's, and even part of Gifford's, is chiefly interesting as giving us in the very sharpest contrast the differences of the poetry before and after the melodious bursts of which Spenser, Sidney, and Watson were the first mouthpieces. Except an utter dunce (which Grove does not seem to have been by any means) no one who had before him *The Shepherd's Calendar*, or the *Hecatompithia*, or a MS. copy of *Astrophel and Stella*, could have written as Grove wrote. There are echoes of this earlier and woodener matter to be found later, but, as a whole, the passionate love of beauty, the sense—if only a groping sense—of form, and the desire to follow, and if possible improve upon the models of melodious verse which the Sidneian school had given, preserved even poetasters from the lowest depths.

To classify the miscellaneous verse of 1590-1600 (for the second decade is much richer than the first) under subjects and styles is a laborious and, at best, an uncertain business. The semi-mythological love-poem, with a more or less tragic ending, had not a few followers; the collection of poems of various character in praise of a real or imaginary mistress, similar in design to the sonnet collections, but either more miscellaneous in form or less strung together in one long composition, had even more, while the collection pure and simple, resembling the miscellanies in absence of special character, but the work of one, not of many writers, was also plentifully represented. Satirical allegory, epigram, and other kinds, had numerous examples. But there were two classes of verse which were both sufficiently interesting in themselves and were culti-

vated by persons of sufficient individual repute to deserve separate and detailed mention. These were the historical poem or history—a kind of companion production to the chronicle play or chronicle, and a very popular one—which, besides the names of Warner, Daniel, and Drayton, counted not a few minor adherents among Elizabethan bards. Such were the already-mentioned Giles Fletcher; such Fitz-Geoffrey in a remarkable poem on Drake, and Gervase Markham in a not less noteworthy piece on the last fight of *The Revenge*; such numerous others, some of whom are hardly remembered, and perhaps hardly deserve to be. The other, and as a class the more interesting, though nothing actually produced by its practitioners may be quite equal to the best work of Drayton and Daniel, was the beginning of English satire. This beginning is interesting not merely because of the apparent coincidence of instinct which made four or five writers of great talent simultaneously hit on the style, so that it is to this day difficult to award exactly the palm of priority, but also because the result of their studies, in some peculiar and at first sight rather inexplicable ways, is some of the most characteristic, if very far from being some of the best, work of the whole poetical period with which we are now busied. In passing, moreover, from the group of miscellaneous poets to these two schools, if we lose not a little of the harmony and lyrical sweetness which characterise the best work of the Elizabethan singer proper, we gain greatly in bulk and dignity of work and in intrinsic value. Of at least one of the poets mentioned in the last paragraph his modern editor—a most enthusiastic and tolerant godfather of waifs and strays of literature—confesses that he really does not quite know why he should be reprinted, except that the original is unique, and that almost every scrap of literature in this period is of some value, if only for lexicographic purposes. No one would dream of speaking thus of Drayton or of Daniel, of Lodge, Hall, Donne, or Marston; while even Warner, the weakest of the names to which we shall proceed to give separate notice, can be

praised without too much allowance. In the latter case, moreover, if not in the first (for the history-poem, un'til it was taken up in a very different spirit at the beginning of this century, never was a success in England), the matter now to be reviewed, after being in its own kind neglected for a couple of generations, served as forerunner, if not exactly as model, to the magnificent satiric work of Dryden, and through his to that of Pope, Young, Churchill, Cowper, and the rest of the more accomplished English satirists. The acorn of such an oak cannot be without interest.

The example of *The Mirror for Magistrates* is perhaps sufficient to account for the determination of a certain number of Elizabethan poets towards English history; especially if we add the stimulating effect of Holinshed's *Chronicle*, which was published in 1580. The first of the so-called historians, William Warner, belongs in point of poetical style to the pre-Spenserian period, and like its other exponents employs the fourteener; while, unlike some of them, he seems quite free from any Italian influence in phraseology or poetical manner. Nevertheless *Albion's England* is, not merely in bulk but in merit, far ahead of the average work of our first period, and quite incommensurable with such verse as that of Grove. It appeared by instalments (1586-1606-1612). Of its author, William Warner, the old phrase has to be repeated, that next to nothing is known of him. He was an Oxfordshire man by birth, and an Oxford man by education; he had something to do with Cary, Lord Hunsdon, became an Attorney of the Common Pleas, and died at Amwell suddenly in his bed in 1609, being, as it is guessed rather than known, fifty years old or thereabouts. *Albion's England* was seized as contraband, by orders of the Archbishop of Canterbury—a proceeding for which no one has been able to account (the suggestion that parts of it are indelicate is, considering the manners of the time, quite ludicrous), and which may perhaps have been due to some technical informality. It is thought that he is the author of a translation of Plautus's *Menæchmi*; he certainly produced in 1585? a prose story, or rather collection of stories, entitled *Syrinx*, which,

however, is scarcely worth reading. *Albion's England* is in no danger of incurring that sentence. In the most easily accessible edition, that of Chalmers's "Poets," it is spoilt by having the fourteeners divided into eights and sixes, and it should if possible be read in the original arrangement. Considering how few persons have written about it, an odd collection of critical slips might be made. Philips, Milton's nephew, in this case it may be hoped, not relying on his uncle, calls Warner a "good plain writer of moral rules and precepts": the fact being that though he sometimes moralises he is in the main a story-teller, and much more bent on narrative than on teaching. Meres calls him "a refiner of the English tongue," and attributes to him "rare ornaments and resplendent habiliments of the pen": the truth being that he is (as Philips so far correctly says) a singularly plain, straightforward, and homely writer. Others say that he wrote in "Alexandrines"—a blunder, and a serious one, which has often been repeated up to the present day in reference to other writers of the seven-foot verse. He brings in, according to the taste and knowledge of his time, all the fabulous accounts of the origins of Britain, and diversifies them with many romantic and pastoral histories, classical tales, and sometimes mere *Fabliaux*, down to his own time. The chief of the episodes, the story of Argentile and Curan, has often, and not undeservedly, met with high praise, and sometimes in his declamatory parts Warner achieves a really great success. Probably, however, what commended his poem most to the taste of the day was its promiscuous admixture of things grave and gay—a mixture which was always much to the taste of Elizabeth's men, and the popularity of which produced and fostered many things, from the matchless tragi-comedy of *Hamlet* and *Macbeth* to the singularly formless pamphlets of which we shall speak hereafter. The main interest of Warner is his insensibility to the new influences which Spenser and Sidney directed, and which are found producing their full effect on Daniel and Drayton. There were those in his own day who compared him to Homer: one of the most remarkable instances

of thoroughly unlucky critical extravagance to be found in literary history, as the following very fair average specimen will show :—

“Henry (as if by miracle preserved by foreigners long,  
 From hence-meant treasons) did arrive to right his natives' wrong :  
 And chiefly to Lord Stanley, and some other succours, as  
 Did wish and work for better days, the rival welcome was.  
 Now Richard heard that Richmond was assisted and ashore,  
 And like unkenneled Cerberus, the crooked tyrant swore,  
 And all complexions act at once confusedly in him :  
 He studieth, striketh, threats, entreats, and looketh mildly grim,  
 Mistrustfully he trusteth, and he dreadingly did dare,  
 And forty passions in a trice, in him consort and square.  
 But when, by his consented force, his foes increased more,  
 He hastened battle, finding his co-rival apt therefore.  
 When Richmond, orderly in all, had battled his aid,  
 Inringed by his complices, their cheerful leader said :  
 ‘Now is the time and place (sweet friends) and we the persons be  
 That must give England breath, or else unbreathe for her must we.  
 No tyranny is fabled, and no tyrant was in deed  
 Worse than our foe, whose works will act my words, if well he speed :  
 For ill to ills superlative are easily enticed,  
 But entertains amendment as the Gergesites did Christ.  
 Be valiant then, he biddeth so that would not be outbid,  
 For courage yet shall honour him though base, that better did.  
 I am right heir Lancastrian, he, in York's destroyed right  
 Usurpeth : but through either ours, for neither claim I fight,  
 But for our country's long-lack'd weal, for England's peace I war :  
 Wherein He speed us ! unto Whom I all events refer.’  
 Meanwhile had furious Richard set his armies in array,  
 And then, with looks even like himself, this or the like did say :  
 ‘Why, lads, shall yonder Welshman with his stragglers overmatch ?  
 Disdain ye not such rivals, and defer ye their dispatch ?  
 Shall Tudor from Plantagenet, the crown by cracking snatch ?  
 Know Richard's very thoughts’ (he touch'd the diadem he wore)  
 ‘Be metal of this metal : then believe I love it more  
 Than that for other law than life, to supersede my claim,  
 And lesser must not be his plea that counterpleads the same.  
 The weapons overtook his words, and blows they bravely change,  
 When, like a lion thirsting blood, did moody Richard range,  
 And made large slaughters where he went, till Richmond he espied,  
 Whom singling, after doubtful swords, the valorous tyrant died.”

Of the sonnet compositions of Daniel and Drayton something has been said already. But Daniel's sonnets are a small and Drayton's an infinitesimal part of the work of the two poets respectively. Samuel Daniel was a Somersetshire man, born near Taunton in 1562. He is said to have been the son of a music master, but was educated at Oxford, made powerful friends, and died an independent person at Beckington, in the county of his birth, in the year 1619. He was introduced early to good society and patronage, became tutor to Lady Anne Clifford, a great heiress of the North, was favoured by the Earl of Southampton, and became a member of the Pembroke or *Arcadia* coterie. His friends or his merits obtained for him, it is said, the Mastership of the Revels, the posts of Gentleman Extraordinary to James I., and Groom of the Privy Chamber to Anne of Denmark. His literary production besides *Delia* was considerable. With the first authorised edition of that collection he published *The Complaint of Rosamond*, a historical poem of great grace and elegance though a little wanting in strength. In 1594 came his interesting Senecan tragedy of *Cleopatra*; in 1595 the first part of his chief work, *The History of the Civil Wars*, and in 1601 a collected folio of "Works." Then he rested, at any rate from publication, till 1605, when he produced *Philotas*, another Senecan tragedy in verse. In prose he wrote the admirable *Defence of Rhyme*, which finally smashed the fancy for classical metres dear even to such a man as Campion. *Hymen's Triumph*, a masque of great beauty, was not printed till four years before his death. He also wrote a History of England as well as minor works. The poetical value of Daniel may almost be summed up in two words—sweetness and dignity. He is decidedly wanting in strength, and, despite *Delia*, can hardly be said to have had a spark of passion. Even in his own day it was doubted whether he had not overweighted himself with his choice of historical subjects, though the epithet of "well-languaged," given to him at the time, evinces a real comprehension of one of his best claims to attention. No writer of the period has such a command of pure

English, unadulterated by xenomania and unweakened by purism, as Daniel. Whatever unfavourable things have been said of him from time to time have been chiefly based on the fact that his chaste and correct style lacks the fiery quaintness, the irregular and audacious attraction of his contemporaries. Nor was he less a master of versification than of vocabulary. His *Defence of Rhyme* shows that he possessed the theory: all his poetical works show that he was a master of the practice. He rarely attempted and probably would not have excelled in the lighter lyrical measures. But in the grave music of the various elaborate stanzas in which the Elizabethan poets delighted, and of which the Spenserian, though the crown and flower, is only the most perfect, he was a great proficient, and his couplets and blank verse are not inferior. Some of his single lines have already been quoted, and many more might be excerpted from his work of the best Elizabethan brand in the quieter kind. Quiet, indeed, is the overmastering characteristic of Daniel. It was this no doubt which made him prefer the stately style of his Senecan tragedies, and the hardly more disturbed structure of pastoral comedies and tragi-comedies, like the *Queen's Arcadia* and *Hymen's Triumph*, to the boisterous revels of the stage proper in his time. He had something of the schoolmaster in his nature as well as in his history. Nothing is more agreeable to him than to moralise; not indeed in any dull or crabbed manner, but in a mellifluous and at the same time weighty fashion, of which very few other poets have the secret. It is perhaps by his scrupulous propriety, by his anxious decency (to use the word not in its modern and restricted sense, but in its proper meaning of the generally becoming), that Daniel brought upon himself the rather hard saying that he had a manner "better suiting prose."

The sentence will scarcely be echoed by any one who has his best things before him, however much a reader of some of the duller parts of the historical poems proper may feel inclined to echo it. Of his sonnets one has been given. The splendid Epistle to the Countess of Cumberland is not surpassed

as ethical poetry by anything of the period, and often as it has been quoted, it must be given again, for it is not and never can be too well known:—

“ He that of such a height hath built his mind,  
 And reared the dwelling of his thoughts so strong,  
 As neither fear nor hope can shake the frame  
 Of his resolvèd powers ; nor all the wind  
 Of vanity or malice pierce to wrong  
 His settled peace, or to disturb the same :  
 What a fair seat hath he, from whence he may  
 The boundless wastes and wealds of man survey !

“ And with how free an eye doth he look down  
 Upon these lower regions of turmoil !  
 Where all the storms of passion mainly beat  
 On flesh and blood : where honour, power, renown,  
 Are only gay afflictions, golden toil ;  
 Where greatness stands upon as feeble feet  
 As frailty doth ; and only great doth seem  
 To little minds, who do it so esteem.

“ He looks upon the mightiest monarch's wars  
 But only as on stately robberies ;  
 Where evermore the fortune that prevails  
 Must be the right : the ill-succeeding wars  
 The fairest and the best fac'd enterprise.  
 Great pirate Pompey lesser pirates quails :  
 Justice, he sees (as if seducèd) still  
 Conspires with power, whose cause must not be ill.

“ He sees the face of right t' appear as manifold  
 As are the passions of uncertain man ;  
 Who puts it in all colours, all attires,  
 To serve his ends, and make his courses hold.  
 He sees, that let deceit work what it can,  
 Plot and contrive base ways to high desires,  
 That the all-guiding Providence doth yet  
 All disappoint, and mocks the smoke of wit.

“ Nor is he mov'd with all the thunder cracks  
 Of tyrants' threats, or with the surly brow  
 Of Power, that proudly sits on others' crimes ;  
 Charg'd with more crying sins than those he checks.



The storms of sad confusion, that may grow  
 Up in the present for the coming times  
 Appal not him ; that hath no side at all,  
 But of himself, and knows the worst can fall.

"Although his heart (so near allied to Earth)  
 Cannot but pity the perplexèd state  
 Of troublous and distress'd Mortality,  
 That thus make way unto the ugly birth  
 Of their own sorrows, and do still beget  
 Affliction upon imbecility :  
 Yet seeing thus the course of things must run,  
 He looks thereon not strange, but as fore-done.

"And whilst distraught ambition compasses,  
 And is encompass'd ; whilst as craft deceives,  
 And is deceiv'd : whilst man doth ransack man  
 And builds on blood, and rises by distress ;  
 And th' inheritance of desolation leaves  
 To great-expecting hopes : he looks thereon,  
 As from the shore of peace, with unwet eye,  
 And bears no venture in impiety."

In sharp contrast with this the passage from *Hymen's Triumph*,

"Ah, I remember well. and how can I,"

shows the sweetness without namby-pambyness which Daniel had at constant command. Something of the same contrast may be found between the whole of *Hymen's Triumph* and the *Queen's Arcadia* on the one side, and *Cleopatra* and *Philotas* on the other. All are written in mixed blank and rhymed verse, much interlaced and "enjambèd." The best of the historical poems is, by common consent, *Rosamond*, which is instinct with a most remarkable pathos, nor are fine passages by any means to seek in the greater length and less poetical subject of *The Civil Wars of York and Lancaster*. The fault of this is that the too conscientious historian is constantly versifying what must be called mere expletive matter. This must always make any one who speaks with critical impartiality admit that much of Daniel is hard reading ; but the soft places (to use the adjective in no

ill sense) are frequent enough, and when the reader comes to them he must have little appreciation of poetry if he does not rejoice in the foliage and the streams of the poetical oasis which has rewarded him after his pilgrimage across a rather arid wilderness.

Michael Drayton was much better fitted for the arduous, and perhaps not wholly legitimate, business of historical poetry than Daniel. If his genius was somewhat less fine, it was infinitely better thwed and sinewed. His ability, indeed, to force any subject which he chose to treat into poetry is amazing, and can hardly be paralleled elsewhere except in a poet who was born but just before Drayton's death, John Dryden. He was pretty certainly a gentleman by birth, though not of any great possessions, and is said to have been born at Hartshill, in Warwickshire, in the year 1563. He is also said, but not known, to have been a member of the University of Oxford, and appears to have been fairly provided with patrons, in the family of some one of whom he served as page, though he never received any great or permanent preferment.<sup>1</sup> On the other hand, he was not a successful dramatist (the only literary employment of the time that brought in much money), and friend as he was of nearly all the men of letters of the time, it is expressly stated in one of the few personal notices we have of him, that he could not "swagger in a tavern or domineer in a hothouse" [house of ill-fame]—that is to say, that the hail-fellow well-met Bohemianism of the time, which had led Marlowe and many of his group to evil ends, and which was continued in a less outrageous form under the patronage of Ben Jonson till far into the next age, had no charms for him. Yet he must have lived somehow and to a good age, for he did not die till the 23d December 1631. He was buried in Westminster Abbey, a fact which drew from Goldsmith, in *The Citizen of the World*, a gibe showing only the lamentable ignorance of the best period of English poetry, in which Gold-

<sup>1</sup> Drayton has been thoroughly treated by Professor Oliver Elton in *Michael Drayton* (London, 1905), enlarged from a monograph for the Spenser Society.

smith was not indeed alone, but in which he was perhaps pre-eminent among contemporaries eminent for it.

Drayton's long life was as industrious as it was long. He began in 1591 with a volume of sacred verse, the *Harmony of the Church*, which, for some reason not merely undiscovered but unguessed, displeased the censors, and was never reprinted with his other works until recently. Two years later appeared *Idea, The Shepherd's Garland*—a collection of eclogues not to be confounded with the more famous collection of sonnets in praise of the same real or fancied mistress which appeared later. In the first of these Drayton called himself "Rowland," or "Roland," a fact on which some rather rickety structures of guesswork have been built as to allusions to him in Spenser. His next work was *Mortimeriados*, afterwards refashioned and completed under the title of *The Barons' Wars*, and this was followed in 1597 by one of his best works, *England's Heroical Epistles*. *The Owl*, some *Legends*, and other poems succeeded; and in 1605 he began to collect his Works, which were frequently reprinted. The mighty poem of the *Polyolbion* was the fruit of his later years, and, in strictness, belongs to the period of a later chapter; but Drayton's muse is eminently one and indivisible, and, notwithstanding the fruits of pretty continual study which his verses show, they belong, in the order of thought, to the middle and later Elizabethan period rather than to the Jacobean.

Few poets of anything like Drayton's volume (of which some idea may be formed by saying that his works, in the not quite complete form in which they appear in Chalmers, fill five hundred of the bulky pages of that work, each page frequently containing a hundred and twenty-eight lines) show such uniform mixture of imagination and vigour. In the very highest and rarest graces of poetry he is, indeed, by common consent wanting, unless one of these graces in the uncommon kind of the war-song be allowed, as perhaps it may be, to the famous and inimitable though often imitated *Ballad of Agincourt*, "To the brave Cambro-Britons

and their Harp," not to be confounded with the narrative "Battle of Agincourt," which is of a less rare merit. The Agincourt ballad,

" Fair stood the wind for France,"

is quite at the head of its own class of verse in England—Campbell's two masterpieces, and Lord Tennyson's still more direct imitation in the "Six Hundred," falling, the first somewhat, and the last considerably, short of it. The sweep of the metre, the martial glow of the sentiment, and the skill with which the names are wrought into the verse, are altogether beyond praise. Drayton never, unless the enigmatical sonnet to Idea (see *ante*) be really his, rose to such concentration of matter and such elaborate yet unforced perfection of manner as here, yet his great qualities are perceptible all over his work. The enormous *Polyolbion*, written in a metre the least suitable to continuous verse of any in English—the Alexandrine—crammed with matter rebel to poetry, and obliging the author to find his chief poetical attraction rather in superadded ornament, in elaborately patched-on passages, than in the actual and natural evolution of his theme, is still a very great work in another than the mechanical sense. Here is a fairly representative passage:—

" The haughty Cambrian hills enamoured of their praise,  
 (As they who only sought ambitiously to raise  
 The blood of God-like Brute) their heads do proudly bear :  
 And having crown'd themselves sole regents of the air  
 (Another war with Heaven as though they meant to make)  
 Did seem in great disdain the bold affront to take,  
 That any petty hill upon the English side,  
 Should dare, not (with a crouch) to veil unto their pride.  
 When Wrekin, as a hill his proper worth that knew,  
 And understood from whence their insolency grew,  
 For all that they appear'd so terrible in sight,  
 Yet would not once forego a jot that was his right,  
 And when they star'd on him, to them the like he gave,  
 And answer'd glance for glance, and brave for brave :  
 That, when some other hills which English dwellers were,  
 The lusty Wrekin saw himself so well to bear

Against the Cambrian part, respectless of their power ;  
 His eminent disgrace expecting every hour  
 Those flatterers that before (with many cheerful look)  
 Had grac'd his goodly sight, him utterly forsook,  
 And muffled them in clouds, like mourners veiled in black,  
 Which of their utmost hope attend the ruinous wrack :  
 That those delicious nymphs, fair Team and Rodon clear  
 (Two brooks of him belov'd, and two that held him dear ;  
 He, having none but them, they having none but he  
 Which to their mutual joy might either's object be)  
 Within their secret breast conceivèd sundry fears,  
 And as they mix'd their streams, for him so mix'd their tears.  
 Whom, in their coming down, when plainly he discerns,  
 For them his nobler heart in his strong bosom yearns :  
 But, constantly resolv'd, that dearer if they were)  
 The Britons should not yet all from the English bear ;  
 'Therefore,' quoth he, 'brave flood, tho' forth by Cambria brought,  
 Yet as fair England's friend, or mine thou would'st be thought  
 (O Severn) let thine ear my just defence partake.'''

Happy phrases abound, and, moreover, every now and then there are set pieces, as they may be called, of fanciful description which are full of beauty ; for Drayton (a not very usual thing in a man of such unflagging industry, and even excellence of work) was full of fancy. The fairy poem of *Nymphidia* is one of the most graceful trifles in the language, possessing a dancing movement and a felicitous choice of imagery and language which triumphantly avoid the trivial on the one hand, and the obviously burlesque on the other. The singular satirical or quasi-satirical poems of *The Mooncalf*, *The Owl*, and *The Man in the Moon*, show a faculty of comic treatment less graceful indeed, but scarcely inferior, and the lyrics called *Odes* (of which the *Ballad of Agincourt* is sometimes classed as one) exhibit a command of lyric metre hardly inferior to the command displayed in that masterpiece. In fact, if ever there was a poet who could write, and write, perhaps beautifully, certainly well, about any conceivable broomstick in almost any conceivable manner, that poet was Drayton. His historical poems, which are inferior in bulk only to the huge *Polyolbion*, contain a great deal of most admirable work. They consist of three

divisions—*The Barons' Wars* in eight-lined stanzas, the *Heroic Epistles* (suggested, of course, by Ovid, though anything but Ovidian) in heroic couplets, *The Miseries of Queen Margaret* in the same stanza as *The Barons' Wars*, and *Four Legends* in stanzas of various form and range. That this mass of work should possess, or should, indeed, admit of the charms of poetry which distinguish *The Faërie Queene* would be impossible, even if Drayton had been Spenser, which he was far from being. But to speak of his "dull creeping narrative," to accuse him of the "coarsest vulgarities," of being "flat and prosaic," and so on, as was done by eighteenth-century critics, is absolutely uncritical, unless it be very much limited. *The Barons' Wars* is somewhat dull, the author being too careful to give a minute history of a not particularly interesting subject, and neglecting to take the only possible means of making it interesting by bringing out strongly the characters of heroes and heroines, and so infusing a dramatic interest. But this absence of character is a constant drawback to the historical poems of the time. And even here we find many passages where the drawback of the stanza for narrative is most skilfully avoided, and where the vigour of the single lines and phrases is unquestionable on any sound estimate.

Still the stanza, though Drayton himself defends it (it should be mentioned that his prose prefaces are excellent, and constitute another link between him and Dryden), is something of a clog; and the same thing is felt in *The Miseries of Queen Margaret* and the *Legends*, where, however, it is again not difficult to pick out beauties. The *Heroical Epistles* can be praised with less allowance. Their shorter compass, their more manageable metre (for Drayton was a considerable master of the earlier form of couplet), and the fact that a personal interest is infused in each, give them a great advantage; and, as always, passages of great merit are not infrequent. Finally, Drayton must have the praise (surely not quite irrelevant) of a most ardent and lofty spirit of patriotism. Never was there a better Englishman, and as his love of his country spirited him up to the brilliant effort of the *Ballad of Agincourt*,

so it sustained him through the "strange herculean task" of the *Polyolbion*, and often put light and life into the otherwise lifeless mass of the historic poem. Yet I have myself no doubt that these historic poems were a mistake, and that their composition, though prompted by a most creditable motive, the burning attachment to England which won the fight with Spain, and laid the foundation of the English empire, was not altogether, perhaps not by any means, according to knowledge.

The almost invariable, and I fear it must be said, almost invariably idle controversy about priority in literary styles has been stimulated, in the case of English satire, by a boast of Joseph Hall's made in his own *Virgidemiarum*—

"Follow me who list,  
And be the *second* English satirist."

It has been pleaded in Hall's favour that although the date of publication of his *Satires* is known, the date of their composition is not known. It is not even necessary to resort to this kind of special pleading; for nothing can be more evident than that the bravado is not very serious. On the literal supposition, however, and if we are to suppose that publication immediately followed composition, Hall was anticipated by more than one or two predecessors, in the production of work not only specifically satirical but actually called satire, and by two at least in the adoption of the heroic couplet form which has ever since been consecrated to the subject. Satirical poetry, of a kind, is of course nearly if not quite as old as the language, and in the hands of Skelton it had assumed various forms. But the satire proper—the following of the great Roman examples of Horace, Juvenal, and Persius in general lashing of vice and folly—can hardly trace itself further back in England than George Gascoigne's *Steel Glass*, which preceded Hall's *Virgidemiarum* by twenty years, and is interesting not only for itself but as being ushered in by the earliest known verses of Walter Raleigh. It is written in blank verse, and is a rather rambling commentary on the text *vanitas vanitatum*, but it expressly calls itself a satire and answers sufficiently well to the

description. More immediate and nearer examples were to be found in the Satires of Donne and Lodge. The first named were indeed, like the other poetical works of their marvellously gifted writer, not published till many years after; but universal tradition ascribes the whole of Donne's profane poems to his early youth, and one document exists which distinctly dates "John Donne, his Satires," as early as 1593. We shall therefore deal with them, as with the other closely connected work of their author, here and in this chapter. But there has to be mentioned first the feebler but chronologically more certain work of Thomas Lodge, *A Fig for Momus*, which fulfils both the requirements of known date and of composition in couplets. It appeared in 1595, two years before Hall, and is of the latest and weakest of Lodge's verse work. It was written or at least produced when he was just abandoning his literary and adventurous career and settling down as a quiet physician with no more wild oats to sow, except, perhaps, some participation in popish conspiracy. The style did not lend itself to the display of any of Lodge's strongest gifts—romantic fancy, tenderness and sweetness of feeling, or elaborate embroidery of precious language. He follows Horace pretty closely and with no particular vigour. Nor does the book appear to have attracted much attention, so that it is just possible that Hall may not have heard of it. If, however, he had not, it is certainly a curious coincidence that he, with Donne and Lodge, should all have hit on the couplet as their form, obvious as its advantages are when it is once tried. For the rhyme points the satirical hits, while the comparatively brief space of each distich prevents that air of wandering which naturally accompanies satire in longer stanzas. At any rate after the work (in so many ways remarkable) of Donne, Hall, and Marston, there could hardly be any more doubt about the matter, though part of the method which these writers, especially Donne and Marston, took to give individuality and "bite" to their work was as faulty as it now seems to us peculiar.

Ben Jonson, the least gushing of critics to his contemporaries,



said of John Donne that he was "the first poet of the world in some things," and I own that without going through the long catalogue of singularly contradictory criticisms which have been passed on Donne, I feel disposed to fall back on and adopt this earliest, simplest, and highest encomium. Possibly Ben might not have meant the same things that I mean, but that does not matter. It is sufficient for me that in one special point of the poetic charm—the faculty of suddenly transfiguring common things by a flood of light, and opening up strange visions to the capable imagination—Donne is surpassed by no poet of any language, and equalled by few. That he has obvious and great defects, that he is wholly and in all probability deliberately careless of formal smoothness, that he adopted the fancy of his time for quaint and recondite expression with an almost perverse vigour, and set the example of the topsy-turified conceits which came to a climax in Crashaw and Cleveland, that he is almost impudently licentious in thought and imagery at times, that he alternates the highest poetry with the lowest doggerel, the noblest thought with the most trivial crotchet—all this is true, and all this must be allowed for; but it only chequers, it does not obliterate, the record of his poetic gifts and graces. He is, moreover, one of the most historically important of poets, although by a strange chance there is no known edition of his poems earlier than 1633, some partial and privately printed issues having disappeared wholly if they ever existed. His influence was second to the influence of no poet of his generation, and completely overshadowed all others, towards his own latter days and the decades immediately following his death, except that of Jonson. Thomas Carew's famous description of him as

"A king who ruled as he thought fit  
The universal monarchy of wit,"

expresses the general opinion of the time; and even after the revolt headed by Waller had dethroned him from the position, Dryden, his successor in the same monarchy, while declining to

allow him the praise of "the best poet" (that is, the most exact follower of the rules and system of versifying which Dryden himself preferred), allowed him to be "the greatest wit of the nation."

His life concerns us little, and its events are not disputed, or rather, in the earlier part, are still rather obscure. Born in 1573, educated at both universities and at Lincoln's Inn, a traveller, a man of pleasure, a law-student, a soldier, and probably for a time a member of the Roman Church, he seems just before reaching middle life to have experienced some religious change, took orders, became a famous preacher, was made Dean of St. Paul's, and died in 1631.

It has been said that tradition and probability point to the composition of most, and that all but certain documentary evidence points to the composition of some, of his poems in the earlier part of his life. Unless the date of the Harleian MS. is a forgery, some of his satires were written in or before 1593, when he was but twenty years old. The boiling passion, without a thought of satiety, which marks many of his elegies would also incline us to assign them to youth, and though some of his epistles, and many of his miscellaneous poems, are penetrated with a quieter and more reflective spirit, the richness of fancy in them, as well as the amatory character of many, perhaps the majority, favour a similar attribution. All alike display Donne's peculiar poetical quality—the fiery imagination shining in dark places, the magical illumination of obscure and shadowy thoughts with the lightning of fancy. In one remarkable respect Donne has a peculiar cast of thought as well as of manner, displaying that mixture of voluptuous and melancholy meditation, that swift transition of thought from the marriage sheet to the shroud, which is characteristic of French Renaissance poets, but less fully, until he set the example, of English. The best known and most exquisite of his fanciful flights, the idea of the discovery of

"A bracelet of bright hair about the bone"

of his own long interred skeleton : the wish—

" I long to talk with some old lover's ghost  
Who died before the god of love was born,"

and others, show this peculiarity. And it recurs in the most unexpected places, as, for the matter of that, does his strong satirical faculty. In some of his poems, as the *Anatomy of the World*, occasioned by the death of Mrs. Elizabeth Drury, this melancholy imagery mixed with touches (only touches here) of the passion which had distinguished the author earlier (for the *Anatomy* is not an early work), and with religious and philosophical meditation, makes the strangest amalgam—shot through, however, as always, with the golder veins of Donne's incomparable poetry. Expressions so strong as this last may seem in want of justification. And the three following pieces, the "Dream," a fragment of satire, and an extract from the *Anatomy*, may or may not, according to taste, supply it:—

" Dear love, for nothing less than thee  
Would I have broke this happy dream.

It was a theme

For reason, much too strong for fantasy :  
Therefore thou wak'dst me wisely ; yet  
My dream thou brok'st not, but continued'st it :  
Thou art so true, that thoughts of thee suffice  
To make dreams true, and fables histories ;  
Enter these arms, for since thou thought'st it best  
Not to dream all my dream, let's act the rest.

" As lightning or a taper's light  
Thine eyes, and not thy noise, wak'd me ;  
Yet I thought thee  
(For thou lov'st truth) an angel at first sight,  
But when I saw thou saw'st my heart  
And knew'st my thoughts beyond an angel's art,  
When thou knew'st what I dreamt, then thou knew'st when  
Excess of joy would wake me, and cam'st then ;  
*I must confess, it could not choose but be  
Profane to think thee anything but thee.*

" Coming and staying show'd thee thee,  
But rising makes me doubt that now  
Thou art not thou.

That love is weak where fears are strong as he ;  
 'Tis not all spirit, pure and brave,  
 If mixture it of fear, shame, honour, have.  
 Perchance as torches which must ready be  
 Men light, and put out, so thou deal'st with me.  
 Thou cam'st to kindle, goest to come : then I  
 Will dream that hope again, or else would die."

" O age of rusty iron ! some better wit  
 Call it some worse name, if ought equal it.  
 Th' iron age was, when justice was sold ; now  
 Injustice is sold dearer far ; allow  
 All claim'd fees and duties, gamesters, anon  
 The money, which you sweat and swear for 's gone  
 Into other hands ; so controverted lands  
 'Scape, like Angelica, the striver's hands.  
 If law be 'n the ju'ge's heart, and he  
 Have no heart to resist letter or fee,  
 Where wilt thou appeal ? power of the courts below  
 Flows from the first main head, and these can throw  
 Thee, if they suck thee in, to misery,  
 To fetters, halters. But if th' injury  
 Steel thee to dare complain, alas ! thou go'st  
 Against the stream upwards when thou art most  
 Heavy and most faint ; and in these labours they  
 'Gainst whom thou should'st complain will in thy way  
 Become great seas, o'er which when thou shalt be  
 Forc'd to make golden bridges, thou shalt see  
 That all thy gold was drowned in them before."

" She, whose fair body no such prison was  
 But that a soul might well be pleased to pass  
 An age in her ; she, whose rich beauty lent  
 Mintage to other beauties, for they went  
 But for so much as they were like to her ;  
 She, in whose body (if we dare prefer  
 This low world to so high a mark as she),  
 The western treasure, eastern spicery,  
 Europe and Afric, and the unknown rest  
 Were easily found, or what in them was best ;  
 And when we've made this large discovery  
 Of all, in her some one part then will be

Twenty such parts, whose plenty and riches is  
 Enough to make twenty such worlds as this ;  
 She, whom had they known, who did first betroth  
 The tutelar angels and assigned one both  
 To nations, cities, and to companies,  
 To functions, offices, and dignities,  
 And to each several man, to him and him,  
 They would have giv'n her one for every limb ;  
 She, of whose soul if we may say 'twas gold,  
 Her body was th' electrum and did hold  
 Many degrees of that ; we understood  
 Her by her sight ; *her pure and eloquent blood*  
*Spoke in her cheeks, and so distinctly wrought*  
*That one might almost say, her body thought ;*  
 She, she thus richly and largely hous'd is gone  
 And chides us, slow-paced snails who crawl upon  
 Our prison's prison earth, nor think us well  
 Longer than whilst we bear our brittle shell."

But no short extracts will show Donne, and there is no room for a full anthology. He must be read, and by every catholic student of English literature should be regarded with a respect only "this side idolatry," though the respect need not carry with it blindness to his undoubtedly glaring faults.

Those faults are not least seen in his Satires, though neither the unbridled voluptuousness which makes his Elegies shocking to modern propriety, nor the far-off conceit which appears in his meditative and miscellaneous poems, is very strongly or specially represented here. Nor, naturally enough, is the extreme beauty of thought and allusion distinctly noteworthy in a class of verse which does not easily admit it. On the other hand, the force and originality of Donne's intellect are nowhere better shown. It is a constant fault of modern satirists that in their just admiration for Horace and Juvenal they merely paraphrase them, and, instead of going to the fountainhead and taking their matter from human nature, merely give us fresh studies of *Ibam forte via sacra* or the Tenth of Juvenal, adjusted to the meridians of Paris or London. Although Donne is not quite free from

this fault, he is much freer than either of his contemporaries, Regnier or Hall. And the rough vigour of his sketches and single lines is admirable. Yet it is as rough as it is vigorous; and the breakneck versification and contorted phrase of his satires, softened a little in Hall, roughened again and to a much greater degree in Marston, and reaching, as far as phrase goes, a rare extreme in the *Transformed Metamorphosis* of Cyril Tourneur, have been the subject of a great deal of discussion. It is now agreed by all the best authorities that it would be a mistake to consider this roughness unintentional or merely clumsy, and that it sprung, at any rate in great degree, from an idea that the ancients intended the *Satura* to be written in somewhat unpolished verse, as well as from a following of the style of Persius, the most deliberately obscure of all Latin if not of all classical poets. In language Donne is not (as far as his Satires are concerned) a very great sinner; but his versification, whether by his own intention or not, leaves much to desire. At one moment the ten syllables are only to be made out by a Chaucerian lengthening of the mute *e*; at another the writer seems to be emulating Wyatt in altering the accent of syllables, and coolly making the final iambus of a line out of such a word as "answer." It is no wonder that poets of the "correct" age thought him in need of rewriting; though even they could not mistake the force of observation and expression which characterises his Satires, and which very frequently reappears even in his dreamiest metaphysics, his most recondite love fancies, and his warmest and most passionate hymns to Aphrodite Pandemos.

These artificial characteristics are supplemented in the Elizabethan satirists, other than Donne, by yet a third, which makes them, I confess, to me rather tedious reading, independently of their shambling metre, and their sometimes almost unconstruable syntax. This is the absurd affectation of extreme moral wrath against the corruptions of their time in which they all indulge. Marston, who is nearly the foulest, if not quite the foulest writer of any English classic, gives himself the airs of the most sensitive

puritan; Hall, with a little less of this contrast, sins considerably in the same way, and adds to his delinquencies a most petulant and idle attempt to satirise from the purely literary point of view writers who are a whole head and shoulders above himself. And these two, followed by their imitator, Guilpin, assail each other in a fashion which argues either a very absurd sincerity of literary jealousy, or a very ignoble simulation of it, for the purpose of getting up interest on the part of the public. Nevertheless, both Marston and Hall are very interesting figures in English literature, and their satirical performances cannot be passed over in any account of it.

Joseph Hall was born near Ashby de la Zouch, of parents in the lower yeoman rank of life, had his education at the famous Puritan College of Emanuel at Cambridge, became a Fellow thereof, proceeded through the living of Hawstead and a canonry at Wolverhampton to the sees of Exeter and Norwich, of the latter of which he was violently deprived by the Parliament, and, not surviving long enough to see the Restoration, died (1656) in a suburb of his cathedral city. His later life was important for religious literature and ecclesiastical politics, in his dealings with the latter of which he came into conflict, not altogether fortunately for the younger and greater man of letters, with John Milton. His Satires belong to his early Cambridge days, and to the last decade of the sixteenth century. They have on the whole been rather overpraised, though the variety of their matter and the abundance of reference to interesting social traits of the time to some extent redeem them. The worst point about them, as already noted, is the stale and commonplace impertinence with which their author, unlike the best breed of young poets and men of letters, attempts to satirise his literary betters; while they are to some extent at any rate tarred with the other two brushes of corrupt imitation of the ancients, and of sham moral indignation. Indeed the want of sincerity—the evidence of the literary exercise—injures Hall's satirical work in different ways throughout. We do not, as we read him, in the least believe in his attitude of

Hebrew prophet crossed with Roman satirist, and the occasional presence of a vigorous couplet or a lively metaphor hardly redeems this disbelief. Nevertheless, Hall is here as always a literary artist—a writer who took some trouble with his writings; and as some of his satires are short, a whole one may be given:—

“ A gentle squire would gladly entertain  
 Into his house some trencher-chaplain ;<sup>1</sup>  
 Some willing man that might instruct his sons  
 And that would stand to good conditions.  
 First, that he lie upon the truckle bed,  
 Whiles his young master lieth o'er his head.  
 Second, that he do, or, no default,<sup>2</sup>  
 Ever presume to sit above the salt.  
 Third, that he never change his trencher twice.  
 Fourth, that he use all common courtesies ;  
 Sit bare at meals, and one half rise and wait.  
 Last, that he never his young master beat,  
 But he must ask his mother to define,  
 How many jerks she would his breech should line.  
 All these observ'd he could contented be  
 To give five marks and winter livery.”

John Marston, who out-Halled Hall in all his literary misdeeds, was, it would appear, a member of a good Shropshire family which had passed into Warwickshire. He was educated at Coventry School, and at Brasenose College, Oxford, and passed early into London literary society, where he involved himself in the inextricable and not-much-worth-extricating quarrels which have left their mark in Jonson's and Dekker's dramas. In the first decade of the seventeenth century he wrote several remarkable plays, of much greater literary merit than the work now to be criticised. Then he took orders, was presented to the living of Christchurch, and, like others of his time, seems to have forsworn literature as an unholy thing. He died in 1634. Here we are concerned only with two youthful works of his—

<sup>1</sup> “Chaplain”—trisyllable like “capellan.”

<sup>2</sup> Missing syllable.



*Pigmalion's Image* and some Satires in 1598, followed in the same year by a sequel, entitled *The Scourge of Villainy*. In these works he called himself "W. Kinsayder," a pen-name for which various explanations have been given. It is characteristic and rather comical that, while both the earlier Satires and *The Scourge* denounce lewd verse most fullmouthedly, *Pigmalion's Image* is a poem in the *Venus and Adonis* style which is certainly not inferior to its fellows in luscious descriptions. It was, in fact, with the *Satires* and much similar work, formally condemned and burnt in 1599. Both in Hall and in Marston industrious commentators have striven hard to identify the personages of the satire with famous living writers, and there may be a chance that some at least of their identifications (as of Marston's Tubrio with Marlowe) are correct. But the exaggeration and insincerity, the deliberate "society-journalism" (to adopt a detestable phrase for a corresponding thing of our own days), which characterise all this class of writing make the identifications of but little interest. In every age there are writers who delight in representing that age as the very worst of the history of the world, and in ransacking literature and imagination for accusations against their fellows. The sedate philosopher partly brings and partly draws the conviction that one time is very like another. Marston, however, has fooled himself and his readers to the very top of his and their bent; and even Churchill, restrained by a more critical atmosphere, has not come quite near his confused and only half-intelligible jumble of indictments for indecent practices and crude philosophy of the moral and metaphysical kind. A vigorous line or phrase occasionally redeems the chaos of rant, fustian, indecency, ill-nature, and muddled thought.

" Ambitious Gorgons, wide-mouth'd Lamians,  
Shape-changing Proteans, damn'd Briarians,  
Is Minos dead, is Radamanth asleep,  
That ye thus dare unto Jove's palace creep?  
What, hath Ramnusia spent her knotted whip,  
That ye dare strive on Hebe's cup to sip?

Ye know Apollo's quiver is not spent,  
 But can abate your daring hardiment.  
 Python is slain, yet his accursed race  
 Dare look divine Astrea in the face ;  
 Chaos return and with confusion  
 Involve the world with strange disunion ;  
 For Pluto sits in that adorèd chair  
 Which doth belong unto Minerva's heir.  
 O hecatombs ! O catastrophe !  
 From Midas' pomp to Trus' beggary !  
 Prometheus, who celestial fire  
 Did steal from heaven, therewith to inspire  
 Our earthly bodies with a sense-ful mind,  
 Whereby we might the depth of nature find,  
 Is ding'd to hell, and vulture eats his heart  
 Which did such deep philosophy impart  
 To mortal men."

The contrast of this so-called satire, and the really satiric touches of Marston's own plays, when he was not cramped by the affectations of the style, is very curious.

Edward Gilpin or Guilpin, author of the rare book *Skialetheia*, published between the dates of Hall and Marston, is, if not a proved plagiarist from either, at any rate an obvious follower in the same track. There is the same exaggeration, the same petulant ill-nature, the same obscurity of phrase and ungainliness of verse, and the same general insincerity. But the fine flower of the whole school is perhaps to be found in the miraculous *Transformed Metamorphosis*, attributed to the powerful but extravagant dramatist, Cyril Tourneur, who wrote this kind of thing:—

" From out the lake a bridge ascends thereto,  
 Whereon in female shape a serpent stands.  
 Who eyes her eye, or views her blue-vein'd brow,  
 With sense-bereaving glazes she enchants,  
 And when she sees a worldling blind that haunts  
 The pleasure that doth seem there to be found,  
 She soothes with Leucrocutanized sound.

" Thence leads an entry to a shining hall  
 Bedecked with flowers of the fairest hue ;

The Thrush, the Lark, and night's-joy Nightingale  
 There minulize their pleasing lays anew.  
 This welcome to the bitter bed of rue ;  
 This little room wili scarce two wights contain  
 T' enjoy their joy, and there in pleasure reign.

" But next thereto adjoins a spacious room,  
 More fairly fair adorned than the other :  
 (O woe to him at sin-awhaping doom,  
 That to these shadows hath his mind given over)  
 For (O) he never shall his soul recover :  
 If this sweet sin still feeds him with her smack  
 And his repentant hand him hales not back."<sup>1</sup>

We could hardly end with anything farther removed from the clear philosophy and the serene loveliness of *The Faërie Queene*.

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Churton Collins is "tolerably confident," and perhaps he might have been quite certain, that Leucrocutanised refers to one of the Fauna of fancy,—a monster that spoke like a man. "Minulise," from *μινυσιζω*, "I sing." "To awhape" = "to confound."

