THE CRITICAL SIGNIFICANCE OF AUTOBIOGRAPHY IN THE WAY OF ALL FLESH

There has been no satisfactory explanation for a critical fact that most readers of The Way of All Flesh perceive at once: the book is extraordinarily uneven. There are perfect scenes in it—like Theobald and Christina driving away together just after being married, Theobald insisting that the terrified Christina will order his supper at the inn; or like George Pontifex arriving for his grandson Ernest's christening with some of his not-quite-finest wines and water from the river Jordan which he had spilled and then sponged up from the floor of his wine cellar. These are master scenes; they are dramatically presented, and they contain a complex, delicate mixture of satire and human understanding. But there are scenes that are as bad as these are good—like Ernest's return to his father at Battersby, gloating over having inherited his aunt's money; or Ernest's self-satisfied dismissal of Ellen, his alcoholic wife, and then of his tiresome children. In these scenes (which occur mainly in the last third of the book) it is not merely that Ernest's actions are distasteful, or even that Butler obviously approves them; it is that the scenes themselves are artistically bad: in them a flat, sermon-like quality replaces what was before a finely controlled play of intelligence. The characters do not move and speak dramatically; they serve only to illustrate some tediously argued analogy between evolutionary theory and everyday life.

The general explanation of this unevenness in The Way of All Flesh is that Butler wrote it over a period of eleven years, from 1873 to 1884, a period during which his conception of it changed radically. In 1873, when he conceived and wrote the first third of it, two circumstances combined to allow him to write at the highest artistic level he ever attained. First, after a long and largely unconscious search among various literary forms, he found, in the autobiographical novel, precisely the form which could give expression to what he had wanted to say but had not been able to say in two earlier books, Erewhon and The Fair Haven. Second, his life in 1873 provided him with the external stimulus which he needed for everything he ever wrote, a personal stimulus, which in this case was particularly appropriate to the personal novel he was about to write.

Butler's work on The Way of All Flesh is clearer, however, if seen as part of a pattern that begins with his writing of Erewhon. At first glance, Erewhon and his next book, The Fair Haven, seem sharply different from The Way of All Flesh. One takes place in a utopia—"nowhere" spelled backwards—and the other consists largely of impersonal, debate-like argument about the historical accuracy of the Gospels; but the way in which they were written forecasts the autobiographical novel to come.

In 1870, when Butler began the revision of some of his earlier essays that became Erewhon, his letters to his close friends show that he was most concerned with evaluating his past and in exposing in some way the hypocrisy of the society he had known as a young man. But he was reluctant to make his charges personally, to write about himself. For one thing, he was aware that his father controlled a substantial inheritance, and that he was easily angered; but still more important was the fact that Butler was psychologically unable to offend his family without suffering
excessively himself: despite the bravado he displayed among his friends, he had no taste whatever for an open break with his father. Thus Erewhon became an unsatisfactory resolution of his contradictory impulses, to expose the hypocrisy in his childhood and yet not speak directly about himself and his family. In it, he submerged his personal antagonism beneath what looked like impersonal, intellectual subject matter; after all, he told himself, the book was not about himself, but about abstract ideas and principles. This was an attempt to explore his own intention was out of character, and his mind lacked the kind of evolution of machines upon an imaginary society. But as he created the society of Erewhon a strange thing happened: it assumed a life of its own that did not at all proceed from it. In 1870 Butler was not yet ready to acknowledge in himself that he was the real subject matter of his writing and that his personal indignation was the energy behind it.

Just after Erewhon was published, Butler wrote to Miss Savage expressing his dissatisfaction with the obliqueness of the book and telling her that he was doubtful about writing any other novel: "I know I should regard it as I did Erewhon," he wrote, "i.e. as a mere peg on which to hang anything that I had a mind to say." He still believed then that what he had to say—his attack upon the world he had known—was not suitable subject matter. Thus he did not begin another novel, but instead began to write The Fair Haven, which he considered a further working out of another one of his early essays, this one unpromisingly entitled, "The Evidence for the Resurrection of Jesus Christ as Given by the Four Evangelists, Critically Examined." Again the apparent intellectual structure of the book stood apart from its real content, which was personal: the long ironic discussion of the Gospels is introduced by the subtly drawn character of John Owen, and there is only the slightest connection between the discussion and the character, and by far the more interesting is the character, who shares his creator's sudden and thereafter all-encompassing perception that the world is full of hypocrisy. The rationalistic discussion of the Gospels, which is attributed to Owen, is in fact just tacked on, just as the theory of machines was tacked on to the society of Erewhon.

In detail, however, Owen is much more autobiographical than Higgs in Erewhon, and one reason for this is the correlation between Butler's writing and the events in his life at this time. Though he began The Fair Haven unenthusiastically, depressed by what he considered the partial failure of Erewhon, he brightened considerably when he began to create the character of John Owen—and his invention of John Owen coincided exactly with the first real quarrel he had had with his father since he refused to enter the church fourteen years earlier. Late in the spring of 1872, he wrote to ask his father's approval of his plan to reveal his authorship of Erewhon, and his father's sharp refusal began a heated exchange which finally ended with Butler's being forbidden to visit his family ever again. It was then that he became so interested in what was previously a dull book on the Gospels. He told Miss Savage that he could "never be quiet till I have carried out the scheme that is in my head." That was in June, 1872: in July, speaking about John Owen again, he told her that his writing was then a "genuine thing, done not because someone wants me to do it, but because I am burning with it." By itself, this coincidence of his quarrel with his father and his enthusiasm for the Gospels is more obviously autobiographical character might mean nothing, but it fits into a total pattern that carries over to his work on The Way of All Flesh.

After he finished The Fair Haven, Butler again found himself at odds and ends. "I do not want to write anything in particular," he told Miss Savage, "and shall paint until an idea strikes me which I must work out or die, like The Fair Haven. I shall do nothing well unless I am sure, and under dibological inspiration." At this time he had learned that he was "dibological in inspiration." He began to turn through still other old essays, but three months later he not only had the inspiration he needed, but also the means to realize it, for what he wanted to say, that he could make viable. The result was a complete and serious undertaking. He returned to London after the funeral, full of grief and indignation, and found that it was no longer necessary to scratch around in his old essays for an idea; he found that what he wanted to say could be written in a pattern. Then on August 10 he considered the first fifteen pages of The Way of All Flesh ready for Miss Savage's criticism; several months later, when he had to abandon his writing to go to America, he had written a third and final draft.

By the time he was forced to stop writing in 1874, Butler had realized and admitted to himself that his novel was inspired by his own agitation towards his father, and that in Canada his relations with his father were so peaceful, even cordial, that though he hoped to carry on with his novel he felt that it would be necessary for his to change its tone. "Now it must be quite innocent," he wrote to Miss Savage, "for I am now reconciled to my father—and I must be careful not to go beyond scepticism of the mildest kind. I shall have to change the scheme but shall try to keep the earlier chapters." For the next four years, however, he found himself unable to "change the scheme" or to write "scepticism of the mildest kind." He lacked the dibological inspiration he had had, and unable to work on his novel, he once again looked around for impersonal ideas. In January, 1876 he told Miss Savage that he was doing very little, by exceedingly ambitious projects: "I am composing a book upon the moral and spiritual evolution of machines upon a new plan, but there is nothing for him to do but push on with Life and Habit, which he finally published in December, 1877. Afterwards, as late as February, 1878, he had not found a subject for his next book. "I am not writing a line now," he told Miss Savage, "out painting pretty hard—and doing a little watercolour landscape." In March, 1878 Butler was confident enough of his father's good graces to ask once again for his approval of his work of art—this time of his work on evolution and the same pattern repeats itself: his father's sharply worded reply touched off the first serious quarrel between them in four years; and immediately thereafter, not having touched his novel since March, 1876, he was able to work on it once more. He polished some of the early chapters, enjoyed working on Theobald again, and then carried the story forward to Ernest's unfortunate interview with Miss Maitland in Chapter 60. At this point, July, 1878, the pattern which extends from Erewhon through The Fair Haven to the first two-thirds of The Way of All Flesh is broken, for the novel had progressed so far that Butler found that the issues which previously had never failed to stir him—the tyranny of parents, the hypocrisy of churchmen and educators—were now not relevant to Ernest, who was, since he was about to go to sea, freed of the demands of conventional society, and quite apart from his father. The problem for Butler was not to present Ernest in reaction, but Ernest living by his own positive values, and he found that even a major quarrel with his father (about his allowance to Pauli) did not inspire him at all; it was simply not relevant to the mature Ernest. Finally, three years after he had written the Miss Maitland episode, he forced himself to try to finish his novel; and after three more years of desultory work it was completed in 1884. But despite of his earlier enthusiasm, he said that he had never quite finished it. (He was then a thoroughly unconvincing character; he meets John the footman who turns out luckily to be Ellen's real husband, and soon he finds a way of buying Ellen off to America and his children off to a bungalow, and both can become university graduates, a bachelor, a hardworking writer, unreared by his own generation, but aggressively content. What began as a subtle novel with finely developed insights into human nature became merely an outline of a novel a rumor of a novel, and the lack of the latter, though some of the characters are tolerably plausible. In the end he paid a visit to [the prison in] Coldbath Fields, was most politely received, stated his difficulty, and obtained all the information he required. Butler passed over the latter, preoccupied with the idea that there was a difference in quality between the parts of The Way of All Flesh that deal with Ernest's life up to his imprisonment—the parts he wrote in 1873 and 1878—and the last third of the book which he struggled through between 1881 and 1884. He offered to revise the later sections, but he was never able to finish them. Just five months before he died in 1902 he wrote: "I have never looked at my novel since I got it back from Miss Savage [in January, 1884]. I know that it wanted a great deal not only of rewriting but of reconstruction. I hope to take it up again very shortly and do the best I can with it." He did not take to it again, and it has come down to us with the several different Butlers in it uncorrected to each other. (Incidentally, though there is no direct evidence available, it is pretty clear that Butler himself published the novel while he lived not because it might offend his sisters, as in generally supposed, but simply because he did not consider it finished.) Of the three sections of the novel which he wrote at different times, the most perfect artistically is the one he wrote in 1873 dealing with Ernest as a child. This section fulfills rather to perfection the ends he had in mind in his earlier books. The novel is the one written in the 1880's by a man who had lost the ability to portray characters with delicate emotional subtilities: for in the eighties Butler grew more and more affected and stilted, anxious to state rather than to dramatize, and unfortunately during this time, when he was writing the last third of the book, he lacked the self-restraint to refrain from imposing himself in added bits upon an earlier and finer artist.

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Edward Fitzgerald’s Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam has been 1859’s second most celebrated literary centenary (that is to Darwin’s Origin of Species). There have been two attractive reprints of the first edition of the Rubaiyat, one by Professor A. J. Arberry of Cambridge, the other by Professor Carl J. Weber of Colby or, if I may say so, of the Victorian Group of the Modern Language Association. But, of the books which survived, the Rubaiyat was the least celebrated in 1859. Of twenty-five influential book-reviewing journals of the day, twenty-three reviewed Darwin’s book and twenty-two Tennant’s First Four Idylls of the King; twenty reviewed Adam Bede; there were sixteen reviews of Mill’s On Liberty, eleven of Ruskin’s Two Paths, nine of The Oracle of Richard Feverel, and eight of Balzac’s Self-Help (Welf, ‘Victorian Reviewers and Cultural Responsibility,’ 1859, p. 283). Even Arnold’s little pamphlet, England and the Italian Question, had four notices, and comments on the various parts-takes of Cities and The Virginians appeared regularly among the miscellaneous items in the literary gossip columns.

How was Fitzgerald’s poem received? According to Professor Weber it ‘dropped into the world of 1859 with no more sound than that of a feather falling into the Grand Canyon’ (p. 12). According to Professor Arberry it was ‘remarkable for the astonishing silence with which it was received.’ The story of the poem and its narrow escape from oblivion can be easily summarized. Fitzgerald had been interested in Omar’s verses since 1857. In early 1858 he had sent thirty-five quatrains to Fraser’s Magazine in answer to a request for a contribution. Not hearing from Fraser’s, he retrieved them about a year later, added more stanzas, and asked Quaritch, the bookseller, to get them privately printed. Most of the 250 copies were put on sale at 20s. About two years later, after the price had been reduced, one copy had been sold and that chapter of interest soon to become world-wide was started. Whitley Stokes, Rossetti, Swinburne, Burne-Jones were links in that chain. So was Charles Eliot Norton, who reviewed Fitz-Gerald’s second version of his poem for the North American Review in October 1862. This review has hitherto been considered the first public recognition of the poem (Arberry, p. 17), and it led in turn to a review in the June 1870 Fraser’s, thought of as the first English review. Ten years has always seemed to literary historians a long time for a poem like the Rubaiyat to have had to wait for acknowledgment, and we might briefly state what has been recorded of the circumstances immediately surrounding the poem’s publication.

On the last day of March 1859 Fitzgerald asked Quaritch to advertise the Rubaiyat in “the Athenaeum & any other Paper you think good: sending Copies of course to the Spectator &c.” A few days later he sent money to pay for advertisements in “the Saturday Review, the Athenaeum, & any other Weekly Paper you like.” Quaritch had already sent a copy to the British Museum under the provisions of the Copyright Act, and advertisements duly appeared on 9 April 1859 in all the papers mentioned by Fitz-Gerald. These have been thought to be, as Professor Arberry puts it, “the only Press notices that the Rubaiyat enjoyed for many years” (pp. 13, 24-25).

But much happened to the Rubaiyat in 1859 than has been previously recorded. In the first place, Quaritch placed advertisements not only in the Athenaeum and the Saturday Review but also in the Examiner and the Spectator. Moreover, there were some additional notes which, if their apparent neglect, the book was afforded the routine treatment of a new publication. Both important trade journals, the Publishers’ Circular and the Bookseller, listed the Rubaiyat in their April number. The locked nested copies is indicated by the heading of the Publishers’ Circular that his records were accurate because “the books themselves passed through our hands” (1 March 1859). However, the first evidence that review copies were sent out is the appearance, under the heading of a Tale of Two Cities, in the leading weekly of the age, where the Rubaiyat was briefly credited with “an abundance of gorgeous imagery” and “an excellent bibliographical introduction.” But most important of all, the topic of this paper is, in an almost three-column review in the Literary Gazette for 1 October 1859. So, although notices in the Athenaeum and the Literary Gazette were late in coming, it seems clear that all the major reviewing organs were probably given an opportunity to notice the poem. Nevertheless, only one magazine actually reviewed the Rubaiyat and that was the Literary Gazette.

What was the standing of the Literary Gazette in 1859? It had only three years to run, having long since lost the eminence it had attained under William Jorden in the 1830’s; its circulation seems to have been only one-third that of the Spectator, one-tenth that of the Athenaeum, and one-fifteenth that of the Saturday Review (Elgie, Reader of the Periodical Press in Mid-Victorian Britain, p. 22). On the other hand, it still carried more advertising than any of the other papers except the Athenaeum, and it was, according to an official list published in 1859, along with the Athenaeum and the Saturday Review, one of the only three weeklies taken in the Reading Room of the British Museum. Also in 1859, the Bookseller devoted the first two of a series of articles called “Our Literary Journals” to the Literary Gazette, so we can hardly call a review even in the pages of its volumes obscure. The Bookseller’s article for 1 March mentioned the efforts of its new proprietors, Bradford and Evans (later publishers of Punch), and its new editor, Shirley Brooks (later editor of Punch), to revive its flagging circulation. Brooks gave up in May 1859 and was succeeded by, to quote the Bookseller for 25 May, “the Rev. Professor [Henry] Christina, P.R.A., F.R.S., A.C., a gentleman of cyclopaedic information.” Then we compile this change in personnel with the fact that the magazine had been changed owners (though not editors) and that after the end of the year a new feature would be the publication of “important ecclesiastical intelligence,” we may conjecture that the Literary Gazette under Christmas editorship would not need to resort to radical editorial features. Perhaps a recommendable pamphlet like the Rubaiyat did not appeal to an editor of Brooks’ rather light-hearted inclinations, but was later taken down from some shelf by the new editor or by one of the new staff-members.

Thus the Rubaiyat in the Literary Gazette is worthy of resurrection, not only as, to date, the first critical treatment of the Rubaiyat (and probably the only one of the first edition) but for the insight shown by the reviewer. Internal evidence gives us no clue as to his identity; titulism is the only literary history for the period. It is not surprising that, while contemptuous of the creed of the Rubaiyat, to praise the beauty of the poetry unreservedly. That he was no Orientalist is indicated by one of his first remarks that “if the astronomer-poet of Persia appears as well in his native garb as he appears in Fitzgerald’s purchase, romance and verse of the Persian’s role in manipulating his original. In the light of this relative ignorance, the reviewer’s perceptive admiration is quite remarkable, especially since the fatallism of the poem meets, as we might expect, with his thoroughly confident disappointment. It was perhaps easy enough for “advanced circles such as Rossetti’s to appreciate the wonder of Fitzgerald’s verses. Sympathy with the thought, personal recognition of the mood of sophistication and quiet cynicism, would naturally lead them to cherish the pleasant harmonies of the poetry. The reviewer had no such sympathies: he talks of “crushing fatalism,” of “the Gospel of Despair,” of “reductive theories.” But his honesty even permits him to praise the poem’s sceptical tone, leading him to say that “few poets, uncertain or moderate, have given fuller utterance to the subtlest speculations with which the human intellect can be occupied.” How easily these words could have been applied in 1859 to Fitzgerald’s friend, the Tennant of In Memoriam, how narrow the dividing line at this time between the respectable poetry of questioning faith and the suspect poetry of speculative doubt!
The reviewer willingly acknowledges that, among the Persian poets of whom he has heard, none has written "so earnestly, or with so much poignancy, and richness and depth of feeling," communicating so effectively "expressions of life-long habitues of thought," and the reviewer's careful balance of praise and blame shows itself clearly in his comments that "nothing more repressive than the merit in which he seeks to drown his despair, and nothing more beautiful than the manner in which he discourses of both. What could be better expressed than the following?" he continues, citing the four stanzas beginning "Think, in this bated 'Caravansarai....."

Robert Browning's "Indisputably Fact"

In reply to "Robert Browning: 'Our Human Speech'" 2 Donald Smalley has declined to accept my interpretation of The Ring and the Book, choosing rather an interpretation which asks the most of two opposing views (Browning did, Browning did not create the poet and the leper into the Ring metaphor). Yet each of us knows that Browning was a poet, and this knowledge happily frees us from the long-standing debate on faithfulness to fact. Indeed, though our terminology and emphasis vary considerably, we are both convinced that only a breach in our conclusions is that I believe that he was explaining, interpreting, idealizing the facts of the Old Yellow Book, "enhancing" or creating the characters of the poet; whereas Professor Smalley believes that Browning "provides us with a 'glorious misinterpretation'." 3 Both he and I believe, nonetheless, that Browning at once revealed and interpreted the facts of his sources, and our common belief makes the view that the facts we discuss quite different from the poet's anomaly in which Browning was thought to be, or at least asserted he was, a historian in his treatment of fact and a poet in his treatment of truth.

It is tempting to think at this point, therefore, that the breach between Smalley and Cundiff could be closed in his acceptance of my interpretation of the Ring metaphor. But such is not the case. While in the metaphor I find Browning's own cognizance of rather broad interpretive privileges, Professor Smalley sees, first, an "admirable Ring metaphor [presumed] farther than logic would allow Browning to go;" 4 and second, if interpreted my way, a denial both of Browning's reported assertion that he found Pompilia "in the book just as she speaks and acts in my poem," 5 and of the poet's immediate use of source material. Quite by necessity, Professor Smalley's position leads to conflicting ideas: (a) in his own thought, (b) between his thought and the thought he attributes to Browning, (c) between his thought and Browning's own thought. (a) When, for example, he encounters the words of Robert Langland, 6 who obviously places too much emphasis on fact, Professor Smalley insists: "Browning is the view of a thoroughly creative artist unacquainted with facts in any way that is per" noted 'facts and figures'." 7 But when he encounters my statement, "Browning frankly admitted that his characters are 'idealized,'" 8 he becomes less intransigent. "Browning employs idealization, I think, only in the sense of getting at the essence of character, rather than in the sense of creating a character that improves upon reality." 9 (b) In one place Professor Smalley may be found stating, "'...[Browning] read into the facts of the Old Yellow Book such a drama'; in another, "There is a good deal to show... that Browning believed... he had indeed explained the truth of his objective data." 10 (c) Professor Smalley thinks: "Such 'idealization' as this seems compatible with Browning's assurances to the Reverend John W. Chadwick that he had found Pompilia in the Old Yellow Book 'just as she speaks and acts in my poem'." 11 Whereas Browning thinks: "From the book, yes; thence bit by bit I dug...[my] literal truth ["pure crude fact"]; that memorable day... but from something else surpassing that, something of which mixed up with the same; Made it bear hammer and fire to file." Professor Smalley's position is hardly more comfortable than Charles W. Nordell's, 12 and Professor Smalley does not seem to strengthen it in his initial appeal to "ambiguity." Like him, I recognize ambiguity in poetry as an essential ingredient, but unlike him, I could not expand the meaning of ambiguity to include rather clearly expressed but diametricallly opposed ideas. So in the Ring metaphor, also an essential ingredient since it dominates the whole of the poem, I thought I saw a way out of Professor Smalley's present dilemma in the metaphorical difference Browning seems to establish between surface gold (unalloyed fact) and submerged gold (alloyed fact).

What appears, however, to be the heart of Professor Smalley's objection to my interpretation deals with the "true subject of 'fact'" which I am thought to contain in the Ring and the Book, the "importance of the concrete fact of the Old Yellow Book." 13 Not to distinguish—and Professor Smalley has not distinguished—between demonstrable and indestructible fact is a serious error since "statement of fact or alleged fact." 14 "'Fact' and factual evidence," 15 weigh so heavily in Browning's The Ring and the Book, For this indivisible use of "fact" permits him to write: "In Cundiff's view, Browning... brilliantly... poetics... ideas... of any great value." 16 Of the professor's suggestions I propose to reveal to the belittlement to which blaming habitual subjects truth(fact), I think not one example concerns demonstrable fact. This ever-expanding evidence, moreover, seems to provide the key to Browning's frequent assertions on human testimony as well as substantial proof that the poem's thesis may be "the vanity of human speech." Of the many quotations

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Editorial Note: Professor Jacob Kug (University of Washington) also read a paper at this meeting entitled "Browning's View of Art: A Lie Like Truth." Unfortunately, the editor was unable to secure this paper for V/4.

II. A BROWNING SYMPOSIUM CONCLUDED

Editorial Note: In Number 15 of 151 (Spring, 1969), Professor Paul A. Cundiff (Ithaca University) published an article entitled "Robert Browning: 'Our Human Speech'," in which he entered into the knotty problem of Browning's view of fact in The Ring and the Book. In the next issue (Fall, 1969), Professor Donald Smalley (Ithaca College) published an article entitled "Browning and the Poetry of Experience," in which he proposed the hypothesis that Browning's poetry is not concerned with the "true subject of 'fact'" which Cundiff attributed to him. In the present symposium, the discussion is continued in an attempt to include comments on the point of view taken by Robert Langhalm in The Poetry of Experience. The rebuttals by Professors Cundiff and Langhalm conclude this symposium.

1. A BROWNING SYMPOSIUM CONCLUDED
Professor Smalley presents to reveal the great store Browning set by his source material, not one, I think, in concern with indemonstrable fact. As one might expect therefore, Professor Smalley, like Browning, delights in the indissoluble fact of an old yellow book, while I delight in the poet's... indissoluble fact [indemonstrable and ironic]. / Dwelled into no bigger than a book" (I.665-71). While Professor Smalley lingers over "Browning's pleasure, keen as it obviously is," in the actual sense and the ink and the actual crossed sheets folded double for more commodious use, I linger over the many alleged but indemonstrable facts, "No universal is [the world's] plague of squint" (I.670). Most "fact-facts," we may properly ask, do not demonstrate that Pomplilia actually did or did not flirt with Caspancchio? That Girolamo, Guido's brother, did or did not attempt to seduce Pomplilia? That Pomplilia did or did not look over the letter allegedly written by her to Matteo Paolo? Demonstrably the yellow book Browning enjoyed toasting into the air and calling "four-year-intemperate" is a fact. Undoubtedly Browning made a tremendous effort to transcribe the truth [demonstrable fact] of small details from his sources. But as most critics would surely concede, this act of transcribing demonstrable fact is the smallest part of his accomplishment. Professor Smalley may have had good reason for asking that "truth [fact]" be further subdivided, but he does me an injustice in concluding that I think Browning would belittle demonstrable fact more than he would belittle "God's truth" or his own artistic truth in The Ring and the Book. (I trust that he approves the constant emphasis I have placed on Browning's truth of Art.) The title of my essay, alone—"Robert Browning: Our Human Speech"—should have forestalled a questionable point of departure to which large numbers of Professor Smalley's observations may be traced. For example, he abruptly "parts company" with me when he assumes that I say: "... Browning... avowed through his ring metaphor that he meant to create characters of his own without the intention of keeping faithful to the essential truth of the characters of his source." Of course I do not so much as imply that Browning does anything without intention, but I can understand how Professor Smalley might read these into his understanding of my use of "fact." The closest I come to this ascribed but untenable position may be determined by the following: "... it is the imaginative contribution in the creation of character and in the interpretation of motive...." I have no doubt that Professor Smalley has pushed me too far away from any legitimate interpretation a reader may give to the "alloy" of Browning's mind. I consider The Ring and the Book, in W. C. DeVone's cogent phrase, "an idealized reading of life"—and though I believe one may conclude that Browning created beyond the probability of the facts before him—the anarchistic Pope, the love divine Caspancchi and Pomplilia bore each other, the analog if not implied immediate conception of Gustano—I like to believe that Browning created both his poem and his characters within the realm of possibility. If I have erred egregiously, as Professor Smalley suggests, in holding too close to textual analysis, he seems to have erred in considering the composition of The Ring and the Book a rather minor departure from poetic life. For in depreciating the importance of Browning's contribution to the uniqueness of an almost nine-century preoccupation by the poet, Professor Smalley has allowed himself, I believe, to misread the textual quotation on which he bases a more nearly proper approach to the poem, "one that is less liable to lead to equivocal results":

... But Browning does not profess to offer in his poem 'live fact' but rather
voices we call evidence
Impro in the echo, live fact daunted down... (I.633-4)
Browning intends, as I see it, to give a synthesis of fact—'live fact daunted down'—rather than live concrete fact itself.20

The "live fact daunted down" here spoken of must be the fact of Pomplilia's life which had been forgotten or "daunted down" by an unconcerned world, but which was now to be restored to life by Browning's Art. Else how shall we account for
Lovers of dead truth, did you ye hate the worse?
(L.696-7)
Lovers of dead truth, found ye false my tale?
How title I the dead alive once more?
The life in me abolid the death of things,... (I.779)
I found my live soul and that inert stuff,... (I.520)
or the poignant analogy between Browning's poetic task and Prophet Elisha's miracle:
Man, creates, no, but resurrects, perhaps,
That, although nothing which had never life
Should something dead may get to live again,... (I.649)

The following words of mine, quoted without context, appear innocent enough on the surface:
"Since so many other readers of the Old Yellow Book have quickly determined that the evidence of the case is almost equally balanced, it would be odd if Browning had not made some discovery..."

To Professor Smalley, however, these words reveal me as arguing
... (if I understand him) that Browning therefore believed there was no way of arriving at a reliable reading of the truth behind the evidence in the Old Yellow Book. It is true that Browning viewed the Old Yellow Book and the possibility of getting at the essential truth latent in its factual data in much the same way as another person might view it.21

And to show that I have misunderstood Browning's special talent at reading facts, Professor Smalley illustrates the more likely method Browning would have used to arrive "at the characters of his poem":
Browning tells us... that he has arrived at his reading [in a mass of evidence... full of ambiguities and contradictions] of Chatterton's life by 'balancing conflicting statements, interpreting doubtful passages, and reconciling divergent utterances.' The words sound curiously like those William Michael Rossetti reported Browning as employing to describe his work on The Ring and the Book, as 'a mass of equally balanced evidence,' pondering which he was able to arrive at the characters of his poem.23

The one difficulty Professor Smalley may have in maintaining this dual interpretation of "reading facts" is that my statement refers exclusively to Rossetti's words: '... this, [Browning] very truly says is not applicable: because he has had to create out of the mass of equally balanced evidence, the characters of the book as he could not do for his purposes. If Browning were to arrive, as Smalley interprets the contradictory facts of the Old Yellow Book; for my purposes, as meaning that Browning told us... that he has arrived at his reading [in a mass of evidence... full of ambiguities and contradictions] of Chatterton's life by 'balancing conflicting statements, interpreting doubtful passages, and reconciling divergent utterances.' The words sound curiously like those William Michael Rossetti reported Browning as employing to describe his work on The Ring and the Book, as 'a mass of equally balanced evidence,' pondering which he was able to arrive at the characters of his poem.23

I hope only that the insight of the last quotation may be recognized as an instance of the unscientific and fragmentary nature of man-conceived truth that seems to have propelled Browning's loyalty beyond the external truth of fact to an essential truth.22

It is the more difficult, therefore, to pursue a difference of opinion which seems to be based solely on whether or not Browning "pressed too hard" his admirable metaphor. Professor Smalley refers to The Ring and the Book as "a creative work,"23 the product of Browning's "creative imagination,"23 and to Browning as "a profoundly creative artist,"23 but he seems unyieldingly opposed to my considering the poem a creative endeavor. For example, he writes: "... Onfido also points out... passages... capable of being interpreted as evidence that Browning felt free to give his Fancy a quite loose rein in creating portions of his poem."24 This denial to me and affirmation by Professor Smalley of evidence of creativity is doubly conflicting, since I am also represented as allowing Browning to "scream" both demonstrable and indemonstrable fact, while Professor Smalley represents himself always as accepting Browning's offhand assertion that his Pomplilia is the Pomplilia of his sources. Nevertheless the denial to me affords Professor Smalley an emphasis of language, focused in "a quite loose rein," which must be disapproved. Denying Pomplilia the latitude, in my words, of being a potential historical character, "enhanced"25 by Browning's Art, Professor Smalley nevertheless accepts, in Browning's thoughts, "a permissible heightening of thought and dialogue of the sort Shakespeare practised."26 And in reply to my choice of evidence from Browning's letters on "idealized characters"—Guido, whose wickedness does... or rather, by the end, shell... rise to the limit conceivable?27—Professor Smalley prefers "to the general bettering and intended tone of the whole composition—what one calls, idealization of the characters."27 Conclusions of this tone, with most only differences in degree, were not that they run markedly counter, it seems to me, to Professor Smalley's final words: "Browning does, I believe, intend to assert that 'he has not misunderstood the facts' at the same time that he provides us with a 'glorious misinterpretation'..."

The following words of mine, when quoted without context, appear innocent enough on the surface:
"Since so many other readers of the Old Yellow Book have quickly determined that the evidence of the case is almost equally balanced, it would be odd if Browning had not made some discovery..."

To Professor Smalley, however, these words reveal me as arguing... (if I understand him) that Browning therefore believed there was no way of arriving at a reliable reading of the truth behind the evidence in the Old Yellow Book. It is true that Browning viewed the Old Yellow Book and the possibility of getting at the essential truth latent in its factual data in much the same way as another person might view it.21
Browning saw "no way of arriving at a reliable reading of the truth behind the evidence of the Old Yellow Book." If a somewhat similar latitude may be allowed Browning, both Professor Smalley and I am carrying calls to Newcastle.

Professor Smalley's tendency to willite comparable statements, which when attributed to himself are acceptable, when attributed to me are unacceptable, may be compared with his tendency to read additional meaning rather freely into another's words. Take, for example, part of his summary of my general position on The Ring and the Book:

... Browning, in Cundiff's opinion, was aware that he was in large measure creating by means of his Fancy a new personality for the heroine of his poem rather than reactivating the Pompilla who figures in the Old Yellow Book.

With the potential qualities before him, Browning enhanced the character of Pompilla until she became a symbol of Virtue in distress (IX, 1002), but in no place can I find did he assert that another person must see in his Pompilla the Pompilla of his source.

In Cundiff's view, Browning not only felt free on principle to alter the facts of the Old Yellow Book when these hampered him in the creation of character; ... and for all.

To approximate my intended meaning, Professor Smalley's first sentence would have to read: "Browning, in Cundiff's opinion, was aware that he was creating by means of his Fancy an idealized heroine. I have nowhere written of "a new personality"; nor do I wish to accept "in large measure." Perhaps I should have been more cautious in the wording of "in no place can I find did he assert that another person must see in his Pompilla the Pompilla of his source." But surely my thought differs only in brevity from that of Professor Smalley: "Browning's explanations of fact... differ widely... from the sort of conclusions other people were likely to reach on the basis of the same evidence... he read high spiritual drama into materials that seem to the un instructed eye largely composed of honor stuff" 26 and though I gladly accept the essential meaning of "Browning... felt free on principle to alter the facts of the Old Yellow Book when these hampered him in the creation of character," it should be reported that I published the words which provide this paraphrase in 1964 and that I prefer the restraint of the original words. "They." I wrote of a particular group of critics who did not believe Browning's "fancy" disappeared with the renovating wash, "are familiar with [Browning's] method of using the material of the old book in a free manner, never allowing it to hamper his invention; they know that it is impossible for a poet's imaginative contribution to be isolated and expelled from his poetry." 27 To me if not to Professor Smalley, the latter part of this quotation constitutes a more compelling reason for a "material" that will settle the matter [interpretation of the poems] once and for all. 28

Professor Smalley's reading The Ring and the Book outside the framework of a possibly consistent Ring metaphor may enable him to follow the "general contours" 29 of interpretations similar to those of A. J. Cook and J. R. Shaw. But he should be sure, in his preference, that he is including the full significance of Professor Shaw's words, since the following statement by Professor Shaw indicates that Smalley and Cundiff are much closer together in their insistence upon Browning's probable loyalty to "the essential truth" of his source. It cannot be denied that the personalities in Browning's great poem, The Ring and the Book, are of the poet's own making, and he himself would have been the first to acknowledge them as his own creations. 30

Recognizing the excellence of all that Professor Shaw has to say on the development of Pompilla's character, I have been unable to accept, because of its internal contradiction and its external denigration of Browning's talent, his new famous phrase, "glorious misinterpretation." Consequently, I have never gone so far as to suggest that Browning's poem and characters are his own creation and his own creations.

On the last statement, Professor Smalley and I seem to be in agreement. But then he cannot believe that Browning's "conduct by conscious design, "appropriated" (I. 725) the contradictory truths (facts) of the Old Yellow Book in order "to chance upon some fragment of a whole." Butler University

Paul A. Cundiff

FOOTNOTES

1"Browning's View of Fact in The Ring and the Book," FKE, No. 16 (Fall, 1959), pp. 1-8.


3Smalley, p. 4.


6Smalley, p. 3.

7Cundiff, p. 5.

8Smalley, p. 6.

9The Old Yellow Book (Washington: Carnegie Institution, 1908).

10Cundiff, p. 5. See also for what I considered a distinguishing feature: "finally trustworthy fact" (p. 7); "much ascertained and incompletely known" (p. 11) and "man's speech--facts" (p. 6).

11Professor Smalley's "scorn of... factual knowledge" grows, apparently, out of my "truth [fact], on which Browning built his "portrait of truth" [ideal]" (p. 7). For greater clarity of my position, his statement might also be traced to "his distrust of man's splintered and incomplete knowledge" (p. 6). Holding the view that Henry Jones (Browning as a Philosopher and Religious Teacher, London, 1889), who has sounded deepest Browning's almost life-long agnosticism concerning human knowledge, is right in his statement that, in Browning's "construing knowledge" but "as yet limited only upon the limits of knowledge" (p. 5); that "both Pomplia and the Ring are the creations of the value of knowledge as well as of its inadequacy and infirmity" (p. 5); that Browning's Art "is engaged in presenting the truth through intellectual as well as intuitional and imaginative means" (p. 5). Smalley, p. 2.


13Smalley, p. 3.


15As Jean Daneau has sympathetically written: "It must have seemed to Browning that a large portion of his life had gone into making the poem" (pp. 124-25); "all the knowledge of Italy and of the Italian Renaissance, stored in through many years of unconscious preparation, rushed to his aid" (p. 328).

16Smalley, p. 6.

17Cundiff, p. 7.

18Smalley, p. 7.

19Smalley, p. 6.

20Cundiff, p. 5.

21Smalley, p. 6.

22Cundiff, p. 8.

23Cundiff, p. 8.

24As in my essay, "The Clarity of Browning's Ring Metaphor," PMLA, LXXIII (1948), 1276.

25Smalley, p. 6.


THE IMPORTANCE OF FACT IN "THE RING AND THE BOOK"

I have followed with great interest the exchange in PMLA between Professors Paul Cundiff 31 and Donald Smalley 32 on the question of Browning's fidelity to The Ring and the Book to his source, the Old Yellow Book. Since my name figures in both articles, with on both sides some misunderstanding of my position, I should like first of all to clarify my position and explain certain disputed statements of mine. 33 I should also like to contribute what little I can to a discussion which has been going on ever since the poem came out.

There are actually two questions at issue: one, whether Browning really did stick to the facts of the Old Yellow Book; two, whether he intended to stick to the facts. Mr. Cundiff thinks that Browning did not stick to the facts and did not intend to; that he had indeed contempt for the facts and introduced the whole elaborate mechanism of factuality just to dispel it, to set it at naught as a means for arriving at the truth of the poem. Mr. Smalley thinks that Browning both intended to and did go a long way toward sticking to the facts, but that he interpreted and intended to interpret the facts. Cundiff's is the novel position. Critics, like Frances Teresa Russell and Judge Gest, who thought that Browning seriously departed from the facts, have scoffed him for it as though he had committed a breach of contract. Mr. Smalley follows the main line of Browning criticism, and I would with some qualification associate myself with him. Both critics, however, impede to the surprising position that Browning stuck entirely to the facts and claimed to stick entirely to the facts. I have obviously failed to make myself clear.

In connection with the question of Browning's fidelity to his source, however, let me just
say that no one could read both the Old Yellow Book and The Ring and the Book, and suppose that they were the same. The very critics (Rexell, Cook, J. E. Allen, and W. C. DeVane), who think Browning stuck amusingly close to his source give detailed accounts of the differences between the poem and its source. The characters of the narrative, the manner of develop the two outstanding examples which I cite in my book—are pure invention, as are the private and dramatic settings of their plots; 3 and Browning admits as much when he tells us in Book I that the lawyers submitted their pleas as documents (144-67). 5 The other characters are sometimes distorted to bring out the significance of the nearest hints.

But these differences are not surprising if we remember that we are dealing after all with a poem. The amazing thing is the extent to which the other characters and almost everything in the poem—except the description of the ironclad—were based on Browning's own insistence. The question was not invented, that Browning knew this. 7 And Browning's references to Voltaire, with just the connection he makes between the anti-Nihilist and the pro-Quido position, has its source in the pro-Quido anonymous pamphlet. 8

There is not, in other words, much disagreement over the first question, whether Browning really did stick to the facts. Everyone admits that he did not stick entirely to the facts. There remains the second question, whether he intended to stick entirely to the facts. Here again everyone reads the ring metaphor to mean that Browning intended to mix fancy with fact. When later in Book I he poses the rhetorical question, "Is fiction which makes fact alive, fact too?" (705), we must infer that he is claiming some license for interpretation and even for amplification and invention.

The issue then is over the importance of the facts. Mr. Cundiff thinks they are not important, and that Browning's poem can be read like any other poem, as simply a work of the imagination. Here I disagree and cite for evidence the present controversy, as to whether Browning intended to and did stick to the facts. Is it not odd that such a controversy should seem at all relevant, and that it should have begun as soon as the poem reached the hands of one of its first readers, Browning's friend, Julis Wedgwood? Where else, after all, does a real as opposed to a fictitious source play so conspicuous a part in the internal workings of a poem? And where else does a poet feel necessary to explain that he is going to mix fancy with fact? Clearly Browning established certain novel conditions which did, as a matter of record, open his poem to historical judgment. I had these conditions in mind when I said in connection with the ring metaphor: "It is significant that Browning should have felt it necessary to justify a liberty of interpretation which has always been granted poets." He was more impressed by the gold or fact in the ring metaphor than by the alloy or fancy. Gold has the advantage over alloy (though I do not think that 'was in Browning's mind); besides we fancy, it is the emphasis on fact which is new and accounts for the present controversy.

Long standing impressions ought, as a matter of general critical procedure, to be given as weight against any contrary argument, especially when the argument hangs on small details in a poem where details must, if they are to correspond to discernible effect, be dealt with in masses. It is no good for Mr. Cundiff to cite a word here and there to prove that Browning never intended us to consider the unwrought gold precios. No poet could head against the argument, indeed the denotation of preciousness in gold without taking many more pains than Browning did to dispel the ring's usual meaning. Nor could I find in the words Mr. Cundiff cites any indication that gold is not precious. Take, for example,

Now, as the ingot, ere the ring was forged,
Lay gold, (beseech you, hold that figure fast!) 9
So, in this book lay absolutely true.
— Painless fact, the documents indeed.

Gold is worth as much in the ingot as in the ring, though the gold itself is not yet useful; so with the truth which lies, inaccessible, in the documents.

Mr. Smallay, in his reply to Mr. Cundiff, suggests that Mr. Cundiff must be reading as heavily ironical those many passages in which Browning professes "his enormous esteem for the Old Yellow Book." Mr. Smallay holds out the question of the importance of the facts takes a position between Mr. Cundiff's and mine, reads these passages as lightly ironical, and implies that I read them at face value and therefore enthusiastically overstate the importance of the facts. He cites as an example the passage describing the description of the ironclad abras among which Browning found the Old Yellow Book (1, 55-83). 10 I agree that the passage is lightly ironical, but I do not think that the irony is in the least directed against the Old Yellow Book. The ironic point, on the contrary, is that such a treasure should be found, with no external sign of its importance, in such unlikely surroundings. In the lines that preceed and follow this passage, however, I can find no irony—playfulness, yes, but no exultation.

Do you see this square old yellow Book, I toss
1 the air, and catch again, and twirl about
By the crumpled yellow covers,—pure crude fact
(33-65)

Here it is, this I toss and take again;
Small-quarto size, part print part manuscript:
A book in shape but, really, pure crude fact
REVEALED FROM MAN'S LIFE when hearts beat hard,
And brains, high-blooded, ticked centuries since.
I give it back! The thing's restorative
1' the touch and sight. (94-90)

I do not see how you can overstate the enthusiasm of those lines.

But the battle is, whether the poem is a genuine historical record, the situation is dramatized in Book I, 12 he has found in it the subject of his magnum opus. To understand Browning's exultation, we must talk for a moment not about etymology but about the subject matter of poetry. He is saying in the line I have capitalized that his source may be "a book in shape," but it is really life. He is not like other poets, especially epic poets, going to literature for his source, he is going to life. He elaborates this idea when he says later that the Pope made truth prevail for a while, separated that is good and evil; but then the two got mixed up again until "the memory of the thing,—The fact that, wolves or sheep, such creatures existed at all, UNITS INTO NO BIGGER THAN A BOOK,
and that little, left
By the roadside, 'mid the ordure, shards and weeds.
Until I haply—wondering that lone way,
Kicked it up, turned it over, and recognized,
For all the crumbleness, this ABACED
This square old yellow book,—COULD CALCULATE
BY THIS THE LOST PROPORTIONS OF THE STYLE
(1.648-78)

"Ordure, shards and weeds" and "For all the crumbleness" would seem to support my reading of the bric a brac passage. And the lines I have capitalized suggest that the book is merely an index to the much larger life situation.

It was Browning's emotion, his exultation at finding for his subject a real life situation that I had in mind when I spoke of his "naive wonder, as though he could hardly believe in his good fortune," and compared his "reverence and delight" to "the ordinary Philistine's devotion to his facts and figures." 13 The comparison was perhaps unfortunate since it led Mr. Smallay to suppose that I was calling Browning's etymology naive. Browning did not pick out these facts. I was thinking that facts could be picked up readymade like pebbles, or that they would lead just anybody to the truth; and I tried to indicate as much by showing how the Pope and the other admirable characters cut intuitively through the facts. Browning tells us that the perception of truth is a creative or imaginative act, and that fact is merely an index to the truth which is always much larger. Hence the line Mr. Cundiff quotes in support of his argument: "Do write a book shall mean beyond the facts" (XII, 866). 14

The line does not, however, lessen the importance of the facts; nor does the passage in which it appears: "Our human speech is nought! Our human testimony false, our face! and human estimation words and wind" (XII, 838-40). The false testimony and estimation are facts in that they happened; and the disparity between truth and the false or inadequate expression of it is at the heart of what I have called the poem's relativity. But the reason for Browning's exaltation over his real life subject is this: that without the jumble of true and false, good and bad, which are the raw stuff of life, there would be no meaning, no truth. If fact is important as an index to truth, truth itself cannot be known except through fact or satirical conditions. The point is made in l'Ar Spio Lipp Lippo, and in Rabbi Ben Ezra ("Now soul helps flesh more, now, than flesh helps soul") which was written just before The Ring and the Book. The point is made in The Ring and the Book, as Browning explains in one of his many letters to Julia Wedgwood. To Miss Wedgwood's objection that Browning gives more world details than are necessary to exhibit the truth of the poem, which she considers to be Pompilia's naivete, Browning answers:

But remember, first that this is God's world, as he made it for reasons of his own, and that to change its conditions is not to account for them—as you will presently find me try to do. I was struck with the enormous wickedness and weakness of the main con position of the piece, and with the incidental evil of good thereby,—good to the priest, to the poor girl, to the Old Pope, who judges ane. 15

It is only through the sordid events that Caponacchi, Pompilia, and the Pope have been able to discover and exhibit the good in themselves.
In the next sentence Browning makes what is, I think, the large and fundamental answer to Mr. Cundiff's depreciation of fact.

The curious depth below depth of depravity here—in this chance lump taken as a sample of the soil—might well have warned another from being seduced by Browning's presuponence of 'the air so joyfully—because it permits him to say, 

"What you have or must have is not a disadvantage," he says in another letter to Miss Wedgwood, "in the fact that the whole air is yours and the poet adds nothing to the truth." 21 I say here that the "truth of what happened; also that he imposes, ostensibly at least, on preconceived theories, but more of that subject, and that thechoice must account for most things about what the poet finds the proper way to treat this particular subject—the objection still holds. Why prefer this sort of subject?"—as my conscience lets me know I do. 18

After convincing us in his P.M.E. article of 1948 that the alloy of the ring metaphor could not in the "repetitionstratagem" have entirely disappeared or we would be back where we started, Mr. Cundiff reveals in his final paragraphs a disposition to have the ring all alloy.

It is not when Browning argues or presents facts that he proves, but when he sees as a poet sees, and conveys his vision through a poetic (immortal?) medium. In poetry the fact itself is comparatively unimportant, since there is hardly any fact so insignificant that it does not grow poetic under the intensity of emotion. ... his "fancy" was capable of "lifting to very heaven." From that transcendent point of view, he was capable of feeling truths no "mortal ever in entire satyre." The emphasis does not seem right for the poet who chose the Roman murder case as the subject for his magnum opus. Mr. Cundiff does not say what is being "lifted," nor does he distinguish between the facts of the Amned or Paradise Lost and the facts of The Ring and the Book. There are poems as elevated and more elevated than Browning's, but there is no poem to my knowledge which tries to pull so much elevation out of so much. Even to this is to miss the distinctiveness of Browning's aim and achievement. G. K. Chesterton defines this distinctiveness in his paraphrase of Browning's aim: "I will show you the relations of man to heaven by telling you a story out of a dirty Italian book of criminal trials from which I select one of the meanest and most completely forgotten." 20 So does A. in his P.M.E. article of last year on "the best known" in his story of his Old Yellow Book should convince his readers that if they are to understand and to share the zest with which he wrote they must not only rise (so far as they can) as he rose; they must stoop as he stooped.

The question remains, however, whether Browning, if he were claiming as a matter of internal strategy to stick to the facts and to give the historically correct judgment of the events, has not failed—since even the critics who think he tried, and went a long way toward sticking to the facts, agree that The Ring and the Book is, in J. E. Shaw's words, "a glorious misrepresentation" though "the interpreter is sincere." 22 Mr. Cundiff has rendered us a great service by putting the question sharply and persuasively:

There is plenty of evidence in Book I that Browning is taking upon himself the historian's task, for he says many times (see the passages I have quoted above) that here was a real life situation that has been forgotten and that he is going to resurrect. Here, "I am the book," he says, and running through the story:

thus far take the truth.

The untempered gold, the fact untarnished with,

The mere ring-nettle ere the ring be made!

And what has hitherto come of it? Who preserves

The memory of this Guido, and his wife? (1. 364-68)

The interesting thing is that "the fact untarnished with" contains a judgment (the Pope's) and the right one, which indicates that the poet is arriving at is not arbitrarily imposed. Were this truth able to sustain itself in your memory, Browning goes on to say, I could throw my noose into the fire, for—"what the loss?/You know the tale already" (376-77)—I shall add nothing to the events. But in the seminal textual questions that follow, concerning motives and judgments, Browning says that we also need him to help us find the meaning in the text through the confusion of the documentary evidence. I do not think he is saying, as Mr. Cundiff suggests, that "these questions could not be answered with factual evidence from the historical source," 23 for the historical source is all he has to go by. I think he is offering to do the historian's job of restoring and interpreting the events.
of mine," the element of "fiction," these are, Browning suggests, "means to the end"—the end being to make us see the truth in and through the real life jumble of facts. "Fiction which makes fact alive," is "fact too" (I. 701-6); just as the organizing principle we bring to the fiction is the same fact the more" (I. 464). The answer then to the questions posed by the Romans and by us is that the "lovers of dead truth," the facts, and of "live truth," the meaning, ought both to be satisfied by the poem (I. 696-97). For the fiction is there just to make fully evident the truth which not every eye could find in the documents and in the life situation. But—and this is the point—Browning does not make his fiction arbitrarily, but in order to reveal the truth which he considers to be really there in the events.

"Before I die," he writes to Julia Wedgwood, "I hope to purely invent something,—here my pride was concerned to invent nothing; the minorest circumstance that denotes character is true: the black is so much—the white, no more." Yet later he admits to a certain "idealisation" of his characters, and he grants that Miss Wedgwood is not likely to meet anyone so wicked as Guido or so good as Pompilia, though the sum total of good and evil corresponds, he insists, to what it would be in any "energetic deed" in life. We can reconcile these two passages only if we understand Browning to be saying that the moral issue between absolute good and evil was really what he dramatized, to be through his "idealisation" of Pompilia and Guido. Though to the ordinary eye the issues would have been diluted in the real life jumble of events.

Browning does then open his poem to a moral measure of historical judgment. It does not matter that there are people who disagree with his interpretation and consider that he is bringing a theory to bear, for there are people who disagree with any history that has been written. Nor does it matter whether Browning saw in the events—as has been suggested by Mrs. Orr, J. E. Shaw, and W. C. DeWitt.—as St. George or Persius-Andromeda myth to which he could bring recollections of his own rescue of Elizabeth Barrett; for we cannot really know, which to say imagine, anything unless it strikes some chord within us. Every age reconstructs the past in its own image. I am not willing to grant that The Ring and the Book is a "glorious misinterpretation" unless somebody can tell me what the indisputably correct interpretation is. Browning's judgment is after all substantiated by the judgment of the court. It is also substantiated by the manuscript account of the case, which was found after Browning's death in the Royal Caxtonian Library in Rome. Since the manuscript is in an early eighteenth-century hand, it could represent the final impression left by the case.

Browning has, to be sure, got himself into a ticklish position esthetically by opening his poem to historical judgment. It is, however, the ticklish position of all those novels which try to look like something else—a history, an autobiography, a journal. The ambiguous line in the novel between fact and fiction makes for the kind of authenticity which modern taste demands; and it was that kind of authenticity that Browning was working for. Like many novelists, Browning was I think trying to make his art do what history does and more—trying to make it give, like history, the truth about the world of events, but also trying to make it give what history cannot give, or cannot give so well, the emotional and spiritual worlds. In the final passage of The Ring and the Book, he opposes to the discursive or abstract statement of truth, which comes out merely as opinion, the concrete and dramatic method of art which presents truth within the material conditions that its original habitations.

Art may tell a truth Obliquely, do the thing shall breed the thought. Nor wrong the thought, missing the mediate word. So may you paint your picture, TWICE SHOW TRUE, show, in other words, the material and spiritual truth, and "So write a book shall mean beyond the facts, [SLEEP THE EYE and save the soul beside]" (XII. 850-67). The capitalized phrases indicate that Browning does not abandon material truth for spiritual truth. That is what makes The Ring and the Book an important landmark of realistic art.

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Robert Langham

FOOTNOTES
6 "Pra Celestino's Affidavit and The Ring and the Book," MLA, XXI (May, 1943), pp. 325-60. See Footnote 6, p. 269.
7 Modell, p. 120.
8 LandshOFF, p. 109.
9 "A. T." Sealey, p. 4.
11 LandshOFF, p. 132.
14 Ibid.
15 LandshOFF, p. 133.
16 Wedgwood Letters, p. 142.
18 "Browning (1860)," p. 164.
21 "Browning (1860)," p. 171.
22 ibid., p. 169.
23 ibid., pp. 152-3.

III. NOTES AND BRIEF ARTICLES

The Art of Sartor Resartus: Two Views

1. RELATIONSHIP OF STYLE AND DEVICE IN SARTOR RESARTUS

Because Carlyle's creative impulse manifested itself in a way nearly unique in our literature, we are sometimes at a loss how to read and evaluate or even to classify the dynamic and sometimes conflicting volumes which came so flantly alive from his hand. The French Revolution, for instance, may be read simply as history, as a somewhat dated and partially inaccurate historical account; but to approach it with such a pedestrian, limited, and really unsympathetic outlook is obviously an anachronism with the artist who speaks to us through its every page. To read and judge Past and Present simply as an analysis of the ills of nineteenth-century England is also perhaps to forget or to minimize the importance of the peculiar but capably executed narrative which fills a major portion of its pages. Sartor Resartus likewise demands to be approached as an imaginative work of art. But within the wide realm of imaginative literature it is difficult to find a definite place to fix the work and therefore difficult to evaluate it according to standards employed commonly in the evaluation of less elusive creations. The late Professor C. P. Harrold has pointed out, however, that the book should be grouped with and read in the same way as the great philosophical poetry of the world, that of Dante, Milton, Goethe, Hugo, Nietzsche, Whitman, and Lucretius. From a different but not contradictory point of view, Sartor Resartus belongs in the tradition of such works as The Canterbury Tales and Gulliver's Travels, works in which the artists have employed elaborate devices or frameworks on which to build and through which the forms of the works themselves take shape. Consequently, to come to a just evaluation of Sartor Resartus, we must look closely at the elaborate device which Carlyle employed; we must examine, in addition, how effectively Carlyle was able to manipulate his style according to the demands imposed by the device around which his book is built.

The basic plan of Sartor Resartus is inescapably evident throughout the course of the book: we are continually aware of Carlyle's invention of the imaginary Diogenes Teufelsdröckh and of his pretense of piecing together the hypothetical life and philosophy of the ascetic professor for the English public. This consistently employed device functions in a variety of ways.

It is surprising that the apparent chaos of Sartor Resartus should blind many readers to the organizing principle which gives the work its peculiar form. By assuming the pose of commentator on the life and fragmentary writings of the mythic Teufelsdröckh, Carlyle certainly allowed himself a wide freedom in the production of his work; but through the device of the pose we must remember that Carlyle did find a definite way to shape his material into an unconventional but nonetheless solid form. We must remember that although there is chaos in Sartor Resartus, it is a planned chaos for which Carlyle offers a most brilliant and detailed excuse, namely, Teufelsdröckh himself. Moreover, Carlyle establishes the character of his imaginary German professor with care and supplies his
character creation with a history rich in humorous incident. Though Sartor is not a novel by any means, the narrative passages (concentrated largely in Book II) may be read and appreciated for their independent value. For a value over and above the ideological or biographical. Closely related to this function of the device—related as an effect—is the fact that Carlyle’s philosophizing is made more palatable by the intermixture of the entertaining characterization and narration. The whole, from their proverbial burden of the very philosophy of the life itself, certainly does not destroy the serious import of Carlyle’s message; but the message, set as it is in at least a semi-dramatic context, becomes more effective for the very simple reason that it is not a bleakly moralizing statement. Thus, the device serves two important functions of organizing and enlivening. Thirdly, it is commonly recognized that Teufelsdrockh’s history is at certain points the history of Carlyle; there is, in fact, a continual fusion and separation operating between the voice of Teufelsdrockh and his imaginative philosophy. In particular, the burden of love and loss, of his own thoughts and experiences Carlyle was thus able to stand outside himself and contemplate his own personality and ideals, he was able to offer, from the vantage point of the editor, numerous self-evaluations, self-criticisms, and self-directed criticisms for his own and his readers’ amusement. But even though we may recognize Carlyle’s partial identification with Teufelsdrockh, it was essential to his basic plan that there should actually be two dramatic voices in his work, the voice of the philosopher and that of the biographer-editor-critic. To what extent, however, are there actually two recognizable voices speaking to us?

The famed, even notorious style of Sartor Resartus does not suffer from a rigid uniformity and metrical crescendos which never relax into quieter and less cacophonous tones. Among all the stylistic extravagances, there are moments when the style is relatively direct and unadorned. There are, in fact, noticeable variations in Teufelsdrockh’s style, which may vary from a simple and lucid discourse to furious and gnarled rhetorical flashes. On one occasion Teufelsdrockh, with comparative simplicity, writes:

"The little green veil..." I yet keep; still more inseparably the Name, Diogenes Teufelsdrockh. From the veil can nothing be inferred: a piece of now quite faded Persian silk, like thousands of others. On the Name I have many times meditated and conjured; but neither in this lay there any clue. That it was my unknown Father’s name I must hesitate to believe. To no purpose have I searched through all the Herbals’ Books, in and without the German Empire, and through all manner of hieroglyphic and uncinnematic, Willis-Stella, and other alchemical names as we have in Germany, the name Teufelsdrockh, except as appended to my own personal name, nowhere occurs” (Book II, Ch. II).

But during the dramatic stage of the "Everlasting No" we hear an aroused Teufelsdrockh exclaim:

"In the midst of their crowded streets and assemblages, I walked solitary; and (except as it was my own heart, not another’s, that I kept devoured) savage also, as the tiger in his jungle. Some comfort it would have been, could I, like a Paunst, have fancied myself tempted and tormented of the Devil; for a Ghost, as I imagine, without Life, though only diabolic Life, were more frightful: but in our age of Doubting and Doubledoubt and Doubledoubledoubt, and his imagination, the very devil has been pulled down. To much as much as believe in a Devil. To me the Universe was all void of Life, of Purpose, of Voition, even of Hostility; it was one huge, dead, inanest-steam-engine, rushing so swiftly and indifferently, to grind me limb from limb. O, the vast, gloomy, solitary Golgotha, and Will of Death? Why was the Living banished thither companionless, cowardly? Why, if there is no devil; nay, the Devil is your God?” (Book II, Ch. vii)

In certain cases we may even find simple and brief sentences juxtaposed with others which, as Teufelsdrockh’s editor remarks, “sprawls-out helplessly on all sides, quite broken-backed and dismembered.”

"Nay, among wild people, we find tattooing and painting even prior to Clothes. The first spiritual want of a barbarous man is decoration, an indeed we still see among the barbarous classes in civilized countries. Reader, the heaven-inspiring sedulous Singer; loftiest Gerene Highness: may thy own amber-locked, snow-and-rose-bloom Maiden, worthy to glide ethereal on the air, whom thou lovest, worshippest as a divine Presence, which, indeed, symbolically taken, is she descended, like thyself, from that same bairn-tailed, flint-hurling Aboriginal Anthropophagus!” (Book I, Ch. v)

Such an extraordinary difference, however, is not totally the result of sheer eccentricity. Teufelsdrockh draws his explanation and flashes out with a contorted but dynamic exclamation. The fluctuation in style quite naturally accompanies the fluctuation in temper. In fact, although

Teufelsdrockh is given the responsibility for much of the wayward rhetoric of the book, his style is regulated according to the emotional force of the moment. Many of the editorial links which serve to patch together the opinions of Teufelsdrockh spoken in his own voice are necessarily of a summary and simple quality; frequently Carlyle introduces a new key where Teufelsdrockh is not quite to the "writing in" or "cheerful" tone; or, conversely, provides an expression where Carlyle pushes Teufelsdrockh aside to comment more extensively as editor, he draws freely on the elaborate and at times melodious metaphors which Carlyle chooses. In fact, Carlyle elaborates on his editorial rôle in the following metaphorical vein:

Daily and nightly does the Editor sit (with green spectacles) deciphering those unimaginal documents from their perplexed cursiv-schrift; collating them with the almost equally unimaginable Volume, which stands in legible print. Over such a universal volume, he is both the painter and the poet. He is the peacemaker (by union of like with like, which is Method) to build a firm Bridge for British travellers. Never perhaps since our first Bridge-builders, Sin and Death, built that stupendous Arch from Hell-gate to the Earth, did any Pontiffs, or Pontiff, undertake such a task as the present Editor. For in this Arch too, leading, as we humbly presume, far otherways than that grand prismatic one, the androgyne are to be fish-ed up from the weltering deep, and down from the simmering air, here one mass, there another, and cunningly cemented, while the elements boil beneath: nor is there any supernatural force to do it with; but simply the presence and feeble thinking Faculty of an English Editor, endearing to evoke printed Creation out of a German printed and written Chaos, wherein, as he shoots to and fro in it, gathering, clutching, piecing the Way to the far-distant Wherefore, his whole Faculty and Soul are like to be swallowed up (Book I, Ch. xi).

Later, in "circumspective," Carlyle picks up the same involved figure and develops it more extensively over a series of paragraphs. But sometimes the wayward rhetoric is toned down when Carlyle speaks in his own voice; however, in such instances, the resulting contrast is never definite enough to give the illusion of two distinct and individualistic voices. Also it must be remembered that Teufelsdrockh’s style sometimes descends from its metaphorical and rhodaceous heights to more level plains. In short, there is a control of the two voices, this control is strict and in the majority of cases totally lacking. The principal which governs the variations of Teufelsdrockh’s style operates generally throughout the book: the style is modulated according to the emotional force of the moment rather than according to the particular individuals through whom the comment is supposedly refracted. Professor Harrold, writing in the brilliant Introduction to his edition of Sartor, is therefore only partially correct when he says that Carlyle, "Whenever he adopted the style with important ideas... drops his wayward rhetoric, and speaks in clear if highly metaphorical language." The stylistically simpler passages of Sartor Resartus are not exclusively limited to the expression of the most important ideas, nor are they limited to a single speaker. More significantly, several voices in Sartor Resartus, there is, in reality, a single voice which raises and lowers its tone as the occasion suits.

Carlyle’s lack of a controlled discrimination is especially apparent when we observe the brief contribution which Hofrat Heuschebecke makes to the volume. In one place Carlyle introduces a letter from the Boswellian Heuschebecke by noting that he speaks "with an eloquence which, unless the words be purloined from Teufelsdrockh, or some trick of his, as you suspect, is altogether unaccountable." In part, Heuschebecke’s letter reads:

"Did he [Teufelsdrockh] ever, in rapture and tears, clasp a friend’s breast to his... Looks he also wistfully into the long burial-sideways of the Past, where only winds, and their low harsh moan, give inarticulate answer? Has he fought duels;—good Heaven! how did he comport himself when in Love? By what singular stair-steps, in short, and subterranean passages, and sloughs of despair, and steep Pinachills, has he reached this wonderful picturesque Hebron (a true Old-Clothes Jewry) where he now dwells?” (Book I, Ch. xi).

The so-called "eloquence," for which Carlyle self-consciously offers an explanatory excuse, is unmistakably the same type of eloquence which appears throughout the book, sometimes issuing from the pen of Teufelsdrockh, sometimes from that of Carlyle. No doubt if Lichens, Teufelsdrockh’s agent and also his agent, when he was not merely, had been called on to express herself, she would have spoken in the same eloquent or, if you please, Carlylean tones. It is also informative to note here that the "Teufelsdrockh" which generally viewed by Carlyle as a humorous device, is, if anything, somewhat unsound (see the ensuing descriptive paragraphs which conclude Book I, Ch. iii and the opening of Book III, Ch. iv), is responsible for at least two remarks which will have been spoken by the actual Thomas Carlyle, but which he says in the "Teufel." It is a supporting gravity. It is a supporting gravity which explains that "eloquence is by nature the most universally profitable, universally pleasant of all things: especially Biography of
distinguished individuals." (Book I, Ch. xi); and that the "Life-Philosophy" of Teufelsdrockh cannot attain its significance "till the Author's View of the World (Weltanschauung), and how he actually and passively came by such view, are clear: in short till a Biography of him has been philosophico-poetically written, and philosophico-poetically read." (Book I, Ch. xi). Thus, it is through Weschke's reconstruction of the composition of "Sartor Resartus" and even the verbally incorrect plan for the sections of reading are expressed. There is, then, not only a lack of appropriate stylistic variations, but also a lack of discrimination in the assignment of the ideas of the book to appropriate speakers.

Carlty himself at least on two occasions in the course of the volume refers to the relationship of the author to the characters, the metaphor, with which mode of utterance Teufelsdrock unhappily has somewhat infected us..." And later in the common premise that Carlty writes more expansively:

What a result, should this plead, entangled, hyper-metaphorical style of writing, not to say of thinking, become general among our Literary men! As it might so easily do. Thus has not the Editor himself, working over Teufelsdrockh's German, lost much of his own English purity? Even as the small whirlpool is sunk into the larger, and made to whirl along with it, so has the lesser mind, in this instance, been forced to become portion of the greater, and, like it, see all things figuratively; which habit and assiduous effort will be needed to eradicate.

Obviously Carlyle himself realized that he had not varied the style of his book according to the supposed speakers. He seems to anticipate criticism and to manufacture an excuse—just as he manufactured several others through the course of the volume—which harmoniously blends into the very pattern of the work. However, if we are to judge "Sartor as a work of art, as a "philosophico-poetically written" creation set within an elaborate framework, this stylistic similarity constitutes a significant flaw. To judge the degree of the artistic failure one must recall the pains with which Carlyle developed his device and the importance of this device in giving the book its peculiar character and charm (that is, if one admits there is a charm). In failing to utilize the device in this further way, it means that Carlyle thus failed to develop his elaborate plan to its logical completion. Carpenter suspects that Carlyle should have developed the device to a greater extent in the hopes of obtaining a style more like that of the Teufelsdrockh synh. But completely more appreciable difference in the very mode of expression of Diogenes Teufelsdrockh and of Thomas Carlyle is clearly evidenced, certainly the artistry of "Sartor Resartus" would have been enhanced if the work had been developed consistently with appropriate stylistic variations. Carlyle's excuse does not excuse his.

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2. THE ARTISTIC UNITY OF SARTOR RESARTUS

It would be absurd to claim to find the unity of a novel by James in the wonderful alla

podrida that makes up "Sartor Resartus," and yet I do believe the book displays artistic form, not only of theme and style but even basically, of that sort of structure involving relationships between distinct characters participating in a series of actions and movements, of masking form and preconceived judgment about life. In short, "Sartor Resartus" deserves to be recognized as a true novel, and not just the sort of book we call a novel because no other term fits. But it is true that Carlyle discharged all of his gifts indiscriminately into the book in an effort to cover every aspect of his life and career,

in short, "Sartor Resartus" deserves to be recognized as a true novel, and not just the sort of book we call a novel because no other term fits. But it is true that Carlyle discharged all of his gifts indiscriminately into the book in an effort to cover every aspect of his life and career,

and to strike the reader who first notices the bewildering mixture of philosophy, topical and universal history, literary and historical allusion, philosophy, irony, humor, anger, and boorishness.

James Joyce has recognized the similarity of his genius to Carlyle's with the complaint of the "Sublime" and the "Dreadful" and the "Eternal" as the book's key to its great success. In a way, the book is a parody in Ulysses, and just as a critic of Ulysses has found it helpful to recalculate the action of Ulysses to prove its artistic scope, so we may begin with a simple summary of the elements in Sartor Resartus that distinguish it as a novel, leaving aside as we do all considerations of style,

and philosophy overtones except as they help define the unique form of the book.

Baldly, then, "Sartor Resartus" is the story of an orphan reared in an idyllic natural setting by doting foster-parents, bred in the dawning traditions of a formalistic educational system, dazed and confused in love, disgusted with the demands of a materialistic society, and finally driven to a renewed sense of purpose and service. Put so flatly, the story is like many popular novels of the time for which Sartor Resartus may have helped prepare the British public—Great Expectations and Henry James; perhaps—and of course its immediate literary ancestors were Nether and Meister, which last Carlyle had already translated. Sartor Resartus may be a transitional medium for the Germanic from German to English Romantik, although it does clearly reflect Carlyle's love for Fielding and Smollett. Of course I am not the first to make that claim; as. ""Hans, the pamphlet of sarcasms was but as a bookman wherein I had arrived to envelope myself: that so my poor Person might live safe there, and in all friendliness, being no longer exasperated by wounds.""

The position in Sartor Resartus where these words occur is most important, and they would not mean so much if they appeared at any other place in the structure of the book. The words are spoken in retrospect by the nature Teufelsdrockh, and he is contemplating himself as a young man forced to make his own way before the indifference of the world, just out of the university and castigating desperately about for some means of subsisting without compromising his ideals. The envelope of sarcasm around young Teufelsdrockh corresponds precisely to the unique form of Sartor Resartus.

Carlty deciding to invent it at the same stage in his career as the one at which Teufelsdrockh perfects his idiosyncratic personality in his own development.

In the structure of Sartor Resartus, those elements of the book based primarily on Carlyle's own life and with these words, almost exactly half-way through the story, and the rest of Teufelsdrockh's history becomes an explanation of his opinions, a record of religious and philosophical beliefs capable of comforting people in general as well as the individual who formed them. The chapters on religious conversion were already completed; these chapters, which give comfort to many generations of men, and represent also a climax in Carlyle's inner experience, his "way out of the Everlasting No was, by three paths: ... the way of religion, the way of Weltanschauung, the way of prophecy."

"Weltanschauung" case to be a basic conception in the function of the masking device Carlyle created in Sartor Resartus. As the critic on "Symbol" makes clear, he regarded literature as "concealment and yet revelation. . . . to Silence and Speech acting together, comes a double significance" (219). Just as literature represents the world, so the world represents the transcendent reality of the divine creative spirit, and Carlyle conceived of art as the sacred communication of divine truths. Carlyle's position is the man delusional creation and the substance of all the literature was a puppet, and traditional forms might be modified at need to express the baffling ambiguity to be seen at work in the world, both revealing and concealing Truth. Next, the unique form of Sartor Resartus both answered a deep personal need for protection from the indifference of Carlyle's audience and also gave Carlyle the necessary freedom to exploit all the latent possibilities of "a truly useful and philosophic... Essay on the number."

To discuss Carlyle's unusual treatment of the material of fiction, we may note his use of the three salient features of a novel—character, plot, and scene. We may say of these what we have said of the book—topical, formalistic, and unique. The major theme of "Sartor Resartus" is the merely general to general relevance. This general relevance is always to the transcendental theme of the work.

The main characters are Teufelsdrockh's editor—to be referred to as the Editor in order to distinguish him from Carlyle—and the Philosopher himself, Diogenes Teufelsdrockh, whose name symbolizes the ambivalence of the world as he presents it in his Clothes-Philosophy. The Clothes-Philosophy further develops the dialectical symbolism in the book by representing the created universe both masking and adumbrating its creator. We may never actually meet the Philosopher, who always appears to us in the guise of his work, the Clothes-Philosophy, and then only as the Editor's imperfect sympathy allows. For this is the only time that we get the novel's, the imperfect sympathy of the Editor for his Philosopher, and the radical inability of the Philosopher to express himself in terms acceptable to the Editor.

Between these opposite poles the Clothes-Philosophy springs into being, drawing its force
In the face of his world, which was much like ours in its quest for secure values, Carlyle was determined not to fade and leave not a wreck behind. Sartor Resartus, firm in its artistic unity, remains as the inspired vision of a magician whose labor now is ended. 

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FOOTNOTES

1"The Creed promulgated on all these things... is mine, and firmly believed."—A Letter to Fraser reprinted in Fraser's Magazine, September 1835, p. 337. Note the topocentric terms in the original, which show that the author is aware of the cultural and social context in which he is writing. All references to this edition are to the date listed in parentheses followed by page numbers.

2Consider the obvious parallels between Sosanes and Sartor Resartus—the moral education of a dissipated young man raised in comfort to respectability in the face of an adolescent's love—subsection 2.1.2.1: Sosanes vs. Sartor Resartus and the Problem of Carlyle's Conversion, NLM, LXX (1965), 609. "Charbouille Carlyle, Two Notebooks, ed. Charles Eliot Norton (New York, 1888), p. 215. "Not to last we have to see all manner of Poets and Philosophers and Sensations, and one may say generally all manner of Pastoral for misleading mankind from as good as broken and abjured... and so one... feels that there is nothing sacred... but the Speech of Do to Believing man."—Thomas Carlyle, The Correspondence of Thomas Carlyle and Ralph Waldo Emerson, 1850-1872, ed. Charles Eliot Norton (New York, 1883 and 1884), p. 265.

3Two Notebooks, p. 142. "At the end of "Natural Super自然ism." Carlyle's Italian, use of as reference to on capitalization of the life, and exclamatory point.

MILL, POETS, AND OTHER MEN

John Stuart Mill's second essay in poetic theory, entitled "The Two Kinds of Poetry," was published in the Quarterly Review for November, 1833. In it he proposes to explicate the true sense of the main "misanthrope poets." Although anyone who is suitably filled with emotion can write genuine poetry, and even become a full-time poet by culture, still there are distinctively poetic natures, Mill holds. "But 'poet' is the name also of a variety of man, not solely of the author of a particular variety of book" (223). Indeed, one need not actually write at all in order to establish one's claim to the title; Mill's definition contains no mention of literature. When, then, shall we call poets? Those who are so constituted, that emotions are the chief object of their contemplation, by which their ideas, both sensuous and spiritual, are connected together...[This] peculiarity of association... is one of the consequences of intense sensibility... (223-224).

This, although clear enough in general import, is couched in the technical language of the associationist psychologist, and to appreciate its significance in terms of Mill's intellectual development, some historical background is helpful.

In his Lectures on the Philosophy of the Human Mind (1820), the Scottish philosopher Thomas Brown, developing the theories of Hume and Berkeley, holds that all sensation by one idea of others depends on "prior coexistence" of the sensations which gave rise to them, but he amplifies this single fundamental principle into three Primary Laws of Sensation, namely, resemblance, contrast, and nearness in time and space. Furthermore, his most important contribution—he draws up nine Secondary Laws of Association in which he lists factors which modify the operation of the three Primary Laws: factors are frequency and intensity of association, and differences between individuals, and differences resulting from prior habits of life and thought.

James Mill published his Analysis of the Phenomena of the Human Mind in 1829. He proposes the following general law of the association of ideas—of ideas in mind, simply (if he writes) the order of occurrence of ideas: "If ideas spring up, or exist, in the order in which the sensations existed of which they are copies." This order can be either synchronous or successive. With this formulation Mill senior replaces the three laws of Hume (continuity in time and place, resemblance, and causality) and of Brown (quoted above), analyzing them to show that they all break down to a question of the order of sensations. He admits degrees of strength in association, but the cause of such differences are all "resolvable into two: the vivisness of the associated feelings, and the frequency of the association." Still, his central contention is that the manner in which ideas occur to the mind is governed by the order of the originating sensations.

John Stuart Mill's System of Logic came out in 1843, a chapter four of Book VI, "Of the Laws of Mind." Mill presents his version of the laws of association, showing greater flexibility
then his father. He returns to a trinity of laws: Simplicity, Contiguity (combined with Frequency), and Intensity. These are Brown's "secondary laws," but he does go on to speculate on how far the association process is modified by three kinds of individual peculiarity—physical and ultimate difference in susceptibility; second, physical differences in the organism; and third, differences resulting from prior habits." Further, another of Brown's secondary laws, Intensity, has been advanced in importance to rank of a primary law.

Returning now to Mill's definition of the poet, we can see that it may be paraphrased to read that the poet is one whose constitutional differences are such that the most powerful if not the only permanent associations of his mind are governed by that of Intensity. That Mill has done in this definition of 1838 is to continue the general reaction against his father's ideas which he was going through subsequent to the mental crisis of 1826, and to revert instead to those of Brown in his attempt to assert associationism with his experience. What was in the experience which led him to suppose that poets were different in nature from other people? Why, the discovery that they were different in their disposition and in their emotional capacities: ordinary men (with whom Mill belonged) and poets. It was the latter, if anybody, who should be considered odd. But of course neither merit nor blame attaches to the accident of being born with one kind of constitution rather than another.

Mill's definition could be defended as following popular usage. That the poet is a man who is "different" because of his intense sensibility is an idea which conforms both to the poet's own usage and to common usage of the word "poet," e.g., in the phrase "a touch of the poet." But such a definition does not necessarily invalidate my suggestion of personal bias (whether conscious or not). After all, is it not "correcting" my language, as Mill implied, to define the task of "philosophy carried to its highest point" (1832)? To ask whether one has been to see and admit that lots of people have more or less intense sensibilities, or that one is not being in accordance with the usual idea that in fact it was the normal thing, and to confuse the word "poet" to those who made poetry.

Poetry, then, is an emotional activity, and has not been prepared to follow it out by 1843, though a decline in the urge and interest in poetics and no doubt also of his agitated introspection, had helped him develop in this direction, for now Intensity was given third place among the primary mental tendencies. And by 1839, when he covered the same associationistic theory in his Examination of Sir William Hamilton's Philosophy of History and of Intensity as a law of association, and makes no further mention of it, he has practically abandoned it.

Mill illustrates his distinction between the poet by nature and the poet by culture by mentioning Wordsworth and Shelley. Shelley is "perhaps the most striking example ever known of the poetic temperament" (226). Yet the ideas entirely governed by his sentiments, Wordsworth, however, the man and his description would have been the same had Brown, for he is the very type of the poet by culture. "In Wordsworth," Mill writes, "the poetry is all that always the mere setting of a thought. . . . It is never, never, never obdurate: little even of the ethical and the sentimental, with unconscious irony turns against its author the dictum that "poetry is the spontaneous overflow of powerful emotions."" Nevertheless, Wordsworth is praised far more highly than Shelley: he influence over the formation and growth of not a few of the most cultivated and vigorous of the youthful minds of our time, over whose heads poetry of the opposite kind flew, for want of an original organization, physical and mental, in sympathy with it" (237).

The different poets are thus independent of poetic merit, too, and in short the distinction functions less as a means of discriminating meaningfully among poets than as a means of discriminating meaninglessly among men.

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FOOTNOTES
2Quoted in W. P. Warren, p. 54.
3Quoted in W. P. Warren, p. 55.
6"In Examination of Sir William Hamilton's Philosophy of History (New York, 1858), I, 234-235.

ART AND REALITY IN "MY LAST DUCHESS"

As Browning explained to a literary group, the duke's "design" in mentioning Frédéric in the beginning of "My Last Duchess" is to "have some occasion for telling the story, and illustrating part of it." Although accurate when fully understood, his explanation is subtly misleading in the duke's reference to the painter as an unimportant conventional gesture. A typical example is E. R. James's recent suggestion that the "first mention of earth did it."" But because of the duke's ironic misunderstanding of the proper relationship between reality and art, (2) the natural subject of his attack on the Duchess, and (3) the degree to which, as W. C. DeVane says, "he reduces his Duchess to an object of art." In the first place, whether he actually states it or simply implies it by his reaction, the duke apparently poses his question after the duke's first mention of Frédéric, not before. The duke and his visitor, on a tour of the palace, pause in one of the rooms in the gallery where the duke remarks that he considers it "a wonder, now Frédéric's hands /Worked busily a day, and there she stands." Either at this point or immediately after he has been invited to "sit and look at her," he says, "because every stranger who has been permitted to see the glass with which you have just asked," What Mr. Jermyn calls the "duchess," then, was to be the portrait itself, and the identification of the painter a part of the duchess's answer to a question which he has fully anticipated, and (at least very nearly) she answers to.

But the question is not "Who painted it?" It is "What accounts for this expression?" We must recognize that no matter what our conception of the living duke may be, the Duke of the portrait is not laughing or even smiling. Her expression is specifically described as an "earnest" and it is a "stare" or "frown" in the "stare" or "frown" epistle's argument that his description is "intense irony, in rigidly adverse to an unphilosophical and all the portraits were in their face. There must be some something that he has not said, indeed anything less than the complex expression which the duke's second action might at any instance, by arguing that the question the fact remains that, at least, considers the case remarkable enough to justify explanation.

As the Duke fully understands, the question articulated by this intriguing glance involves
not only the relationship between the portrait and the living woman, but certain conscious or unconscious assumptions about that relationship. In making "how such a glance came there," the strangers and the envoy show that they take the portrait to be a reflection of the Duchess' total personality, of her reaction to some specific circumstance, or of both at once. They further reveal that they do not consider the portrait an end in itself: they assume (since they are, significantly, strangers who did not know her) that the living Duchess was more interesting and perhaps more persuasive to perceivers than her portrait suggests. Having anticipated this question, the Duke had begun in his first remarks to the envoy to expose what he apparently considers a remarkable irony: there was nothing in the situation nor any peculiarity of her painted personage to correspond to the complexity or the extent of its contribution to the characterization and structure of the poem. Whatever else the monologue may reveal about character, motive, and action, it is presented as the Duke’s flimsy attempt to an aesthetic objection involving the relationship between art and reality.

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FOOTNOTES


4. Mr. B. Rutter, "An Invitation to the Works of Robert Browning" (London, 1907), p. 201 avoids the issue by calling it "that earnest, impassioned, and yet smiling glance which was alike to everyone." Such an expression is difficult to imagine. Mr. Newman (p. 491) is apparently unaware of any contrast between Earnestness and smiling.


RITUAL "IN THE BISHOP ORDERS HIS TOMB"

1. Mr. Ross King’s searching analysis of Browning’s "The Bishop Orders His Tomb at St. Praxed’s Church" (in The Bow and the Lyre, Nin Arbor, 1957) represents a critical ground-breaking long overdue. It is a study of the poem that has been seen through to its conclusion. At least in part this poem (and certainly, no less an authority as King’s) points to the fact that analysis leaves untouched a number of approaches which will enrich the reading of the poem. One strand of interest in particular is the symbolic and the sacramental of Holy Communion, anticipated in the image of "fresh-poured red wine of a mighty pulse" (30).

2. The position of the poet’s utterances by which the Bishop seeks to hold the wandering attention of his sons—particularly "Draw round my bed to-night" (34). "There, leave me there" (113), and "Well, go! I bless your" (119). The movement in toward and then away from his bed provides a kind of dramatic framework within the context of which the Bishop imparts various matters to his sons. It is the imagery of the ritual which seems to me to make this movement symbolic.

3. The Bishop is manifest by his desire to be the center of attention. His sons, gathered around his bed, are implicitly compared to "those nine columns round me, two and two. The odd one at my feet where Amothe stands..." (27-28)—the columns which the Bishop hopes will surround his last resting-place, this being anticipated by the bed. In 80 ff., a second identification is made: the bed becomes an altar, and the Bishop, who has not hesitated to compare himself with God in a purely descriptive sense (47-48), now very nearly suggests himself as a possible object of worship.

And then how shall I lie thro’ centuries, And hear the bless’d winter of the mass, And see God made and eaten all day long: And feel the steady candle-flame, and taste Good strong thick stewing... And, for As I lie here hours of the dead night, Dying in state and by such slow degrees, I fold my arms as if they clasped a cross... And stretch my feet forth straight as stone can point. And let the bedclothes, for a mortice, drop Into great laps and folds and seems to stand a work. And as you tapers dwindle, and strange thoughts Grow, with a certain huming in my ears, About the life before I lived this life...
Here the Bishop sees himself not only immortalized as a shepherd (87), but as one who has already participated in a type of pagan reanimation (92). While he lies "dying by degrees" (11), the physical erosion of his body in a temporal scheme is contrasted with the spiritual breaking and eating of the sacramental bread of, in fact, God's body, in an eternal scheme. This contrast is extended in the gradual diminishing of the candles around the bed (91) which, in the ritual of the Mass, remain "steady" (83). It is interesting to note that these lines are among the most regular in the poem, where the calm repetitious use of the introductory conjunction "and" suggests the reiterated ceremony of death to be a continual witness, and in which the ceremony of breaking the bread is not only an externalization but an arresting of his own present state of gradual, irreversible decay. This present decay, in the Bishop's eyes, is hastened by the maltreatment of him by his sons, whom he regards as almost Satanic:

......Will ye ever eat my heart?
Ever your eyes were as a lizard's quick,
They glimmer like your mother's for my soul...
(103-105)

And at their hands he feels himself undergoing a pagan sacrifice: "Por ye have stabbed me with ingratitude/ To death..." (114-115).

But the Bishop, before reverting to the final outburst against Gandalph, brings this odd ritual to a close. He orders a portion of the candles to be extinguished ("Power tapers there,"
119) and commands his sons to go, giving them his blessing, and saying, "...going, turn your backs.../
Ay, like departing infernal ministers" (120-121). The Bishop has indeed become, in his own eyes, the object of worship. The approach and departures of his sons takes on, or so he would wish, an overtly religious, priestly significance. The reality of his failure to hold their attention is contrasted with the idealization of their function. This, together with the fusing of the images of bed, tomb, and altar, of pagan and Christian imagery, the contrast of religious and pagan "eating" (82, 103), and the transference of the sacramental imagery to a specific human situation, constitutes the core of the poem. In Christian terms—though I would not suggest that the poem is concerned with presenting a Christian message—the Bishop's failure is a failure to realize this ultimate disparity: that he is himself only the shadow of an enduring substance.

University of Oklahoma

Lawrence Poston, III

"MY DEAR SUMNER": THREE LETTERS FROM MATTHEW ARNOLD

In 1845 the Boston Public Library acquired three letters from Matthew Arnold to a correspondent whom he greeted as "My dear Sumner." The acquisition was noted, with a few extracts from the letters, by Evelyn Brenton in "Arnold and the Oxford Poetry Chair," More Books: The Bulletin of the Boston Public Library, XXI (June 1945), 287-288. The letters are now printed in full for the first time, and the identity of Sumner is suggested.

Like the recently published letter of April 16, 1857, to the Reverend William Henry Lucas, the letters to Sumner record Arnold's enthusiastic participation in the canvassing for his election, and they supplement the one published reference to that event retained in G. W. Russell's edition of Arnold's letters. Arnold's apprehension, his disappointment in his success in the election at the Oxford Convocation of May 5, 1857, as the new Professor of Poetry are also reflected in the letter to his mother that Mrs. Humphry Ward preserved in A Writer's Recollections:

"I had put such enthusiasm into the letter to the electors that he could not refrain...I had support from all sides. Archdeacon Denison voted for me, also Sir John Yarde-Buller, and Henley, of the high Tory party. It was an immense victory—some 260 more votes than I have ever, it is said, voted in a Parliamentary election before. It was a great lesson to Christ Church, which was rather disposed to imagine it could carry everything by its great numbers."

Perhaps the large number that participated in the election of 1857 was in some measure due to the "double contest," as The Times called it, for the Professorships of Political Economy and of Poetry on the same afternoon. Nevertheless, the interest in the Poetry Professorship was greater, for 641 votes were cast in that election as against a total of 452 in the election for the other post. Arnold's opponent was, of course, the Reverend John Ernest Bode. As the following letters to "My dear Sumner" show, Arnold himself and some of his contemporaries at Balliol worked hard to encourage non-resident members to go down to Oxford to vote.

The first letter is stationary bearing the embossed seal of the Athenaeum. The second bears the embossed crest of Judge Nightingale's house at Hampton.

I

April 11th, 1857.

My dear Sumner,

I should be extremely glad if I could prevail upon you to go down to Oxford to give me a vote, as to an old acquaintance and Balliol man, for the Poetry Professorship. The election is on the 5th of May. I am half ashamed to ask you or any one else to take so much trouble on my account; but the Christ Church people are making a very active push for their candidate, Bode, and their numbers will overpower me unless I can persuade a good many of the non-resident members of Convocation to go down and support me.

Pray do what you can for me, and believe me,

My dear Sumner.

ever sincerely yours.

M. Arnold.

My address is:
St. Albans Bank
Hampton
Middlesex.

II

Hampton
April 25, 1857

My dear Sumner,

Very many thanks for your hint—but I had written to your cousin the day before I heard from you. Some of the Balliol fellows had undertaken to canvass the Balliol men for me—all but four or five of my own contemporaries, like you, to whom I wished to write myself; but when I saw that your cousin's name was not on the list which Lake sent me of those Balliol men who had promised to go and vote, I wrote to him myself, as I am tolerably well acquainted with him. It would be a real pleasure to me to see you again, but as decorum forbids my being at Oxford on the 5th of May, I shall lose, I am sorry to say, that opportunity of seeing both you and many other old friends.

I am ever, my dear Sumner,
most sincerely yours,

M. Arnold.

P.S.

Pray do not neglect any occasion of securing a vote which may present itself to you—for Ch. Ch. is horribly strong and the censors are appealing to their non-residents "in the name of the College" to come up.

III

Hampton, May 11th, 1857

My dear Sumner,

A thousand thanks for your support before the victory and for your congratulations after it. As one seems destined never to see one's old acquaintances in the more pleasant to find on such occasions as this that they have not forgotten one. I consider that I am indebted for the splendid triumph I had above all to the faithful support of the Balliol men. I am told I had nearly 70 votes from the dear old College.

Remember me kindly to Charles Coneybeare when you meet him, who will not I am sure be sorry for my success so far as I personally am concerned, though of course he did not wish his college to be defeated. I hear they fully expected to win.

Every truly yours,

M. Arnold.

The identity of "My dear Sumner," like that of the cousin referred to in the second letter, is attended with some, though I think little, uncertainty. The probability is that the addressee is George Henry Summer (1825-1886), and the cousin Robert George Monrieff Summer (1825-1885). In support of this suggestion, I give the following data.

John Bird Summer (1780-1862), Archbishop of Canterbury, had two sons; his younger brother
THE GENESIS OF HOPKINS' "HEAVEN-HAVEN"

Students of Gerard Manley Hopkins owe much to Mr. W.H. Gardner for the work he has done on that poet. Although we may find occasion to disagree from time to time with his conclusions, we must admire the generally high quality of his work as critic, biographer, and interpreter of Hopkins. It is to one of these occasions for disagreement—his account of the genesis of "Heaven-Haven"—that I would like to draw attention in this paper.

Mr. Gardner notes that of the four stanzas (six, if we count the variants of what would be stanzas two and four, were they numbered) entered in Hopkins' notebook under the title "Rest", the first two were later revised and given the title "Heaven-Haven, or a Nun takes the veil". The last two stanzas form no part of this revision and are now printed in Poems of Gerard Manley Hopkins (1948 ed.) under the title "Defining Peace, Fragments, Light Verse, Etc." No. 78. 

It must be noted that Mr. Gardner's account raises two problems: the first is the relationship of the first two stanzas, destined to become "Heaven-Haven", to the last two, destined to become "No. 78", the second in the source of inspiration for these verses. Implicit is still a third problem: the full relationship of "Rest" to "Heaven-Haven". Let us examine the problems in order.

Concerning the last two stanzas, Gardner writes that "although obviously belonging to the same emotional idea, (they) were judiciously omitted in the revised version. The title of Heaven-Haven is a nun takes the veil, and the additional stanzas were apparently intended to symbolize the dangers and hardships of the religious vocation". This position rests, however, upon the assumption that from the time of its conception "Rest" was intended to describe the thoughts, hopes and emotions of a young nun who was about to take the veil. That this was probably not the case, I hope to demonstrate shortly. For the moment let me say only that I find it difficult to understand how the present stanzas can be called part of "the same emotional idea": the tone, the imagery, and the action in these stanzas seem to me totally inappropriate, even symbolically, for the life of a nun. A second objection in the fact that the violent action described in these stanzas is utterly incompatible with the title "Rest". This inconsistency both in content and in mood leads me to conclude that the last stanzas are merely further exercises in the meter of "Rest" and by no means a part of the "same emotional idea" or poem.

An examination of the second problem—the source of inspiration for "Rest" and, subsequently, "Heaven-Haven"—must further light on the first. Gardner writes: "...as Mr. R.M. Howarth of Sydney has pointed out, Rest and its pendant stanzas may owe their conception to the last lines of that address to Fortune which (according to Roper) Sir Thomas More composed while awaiting execution. Trust shall I, God, to enter in a while His haven of heaven sure and uniform. Ever after thy calm, looke I one for a storme."

The ultimate original of both More's verses and Rest was probably the "storm-calme-haven" passage in Psalms CVII (20-30). Mr. Gardner's error here is that he fails to distinguish at all times "Rest" from "Heaven-Haven". It is, of course, quite possible that the Psalms gave Hopkins the idea of "Heaven-Haven", but a comparison of these "sources" with "Rest" fails to disclose any close relationship. In fact, a much stronger case can be made for the influence of Tennyson's "Worte D'Arthur", especially in the third stanza. In these lines the wounded king, waiting to be taken to Avalon, speaks to Bedivere on the efficacy of prayer and concludes with this description of his intended destination: "I am going a long way With these thou seest—indeed I go— (For all my mind is clouded with a doubt) To the island-valley of Avalon; Where falls not hail, or rain, or any snow, Nor ever wind blows loudly; but it lies Deep meadowed, happy, fair with orchard-laws And bowery hollows crown'd with summer sea, Where I will heal me of my grievous wound."

These lines bear comparison with "Rest", which, since it may not be readily at hand, is quoted here in full with my own numbering of the stanzas.
lines of this passage were quite un-protestant for mid-nineteenth century England. And for Hopkins, whose natural bent was already leading him along the road to Rome, these Catholic sentiments would have had a special attraction.

There remains the third problem: the ultimate relationship of "Rest" to "Heaven-Haven." Although Gardner is correct in showing that every change Hopkins made in these poems was a striking improvement, it seems that more verbal revision is involved for neither the poet nor the pen-dent stanzas contain positive indications of the central theme of "Heaven-Haven." If we accept, however, the probability that "Rest" was inspired by the conclusion of Tennyson's poem, we can attempt to reconstruct the genesis of "Heaven-Haven" with hope of at least partial success. This is a plausible account: Some time after reading "Morte D'Arthur" Hopkins consciously or unconsciously adopted the theme of the Arthurian legend and welded the pen-dent stanzas of "Rest" probably not as a part of "Rest" but either as a further experiment with the same verse form or perhaps as an attempt to construct an active life with the passive one of the first stanzas. This latter conjecture is attractive in that it opens up the possibility of a typically Tennysonian occupation: surveying and contrasting ways of life open to a man. In either case, it is probably that the idea of the urn was not yet in Hopkins' mind.

Then, some time between the writing of "Rest" and its final revision, the poet connected the retreat from the world with the entrance of a man into convivial life and attached to it the heaven-of-heaven image. From this final version Hopkins naturally excluded the pen-dent stanzas because they obviously had even less to do with his revised conception than they had with his original one. As I have noted above, this account has the virtue of plausibility, although we can be sure that it is not complete (perhaps not even completely accurate as far as it goes) in its details. But the study of the genesis of a good poem is always worthwhile, and we can hope that further evidence will be adduced to complement or correct this account of the writing of one of Hopkins' best.

St. Bonaventure University

FOOTNOTES

2 Tbid., p. 17.
3 Tbid., p. 79.
4 The version of 1843 is referred to. The revision of "Morte D'Arthur" meant to fit the scheme of Tennyson's Idylls was published in 1869, some five years too late to have affected Hopkins' poem.
8 Notes-Books and Papers, p. 49.

THE SPECTATOR RECORDS, 1874-1897

Despite the fact that the Kelvinside Index to Victorian Periodicals as now constituted is not concerned with weekly periodicals, scholars working on problems connected with the last quarter of the nineteenth century will be interested to hear that it is possible to identify many of the contributors to the Spectator during the famous partnership of Townsend and Hutton.

Wendy White Townsend bought the Spectator early in 1861 and in June of that year engaged Richard Holt Hutton as co-proprietor and literary editor. For thirty-six years they conducted a journal whose influence became increasingly more powerful. On 26 June 1867, however, Hutton made his final contribution, and his share in the paper was sold to J. St. L. Girachey. Townsend retained his editorial chair for a few months after Hutton's death on 9 September 1867, but then gave up his proprietorship to Girachey, though he continued to contribute to the Spectator's pages. Townsend wrote of Hutton's death that it terminated "an unbroken friendship of thirty-six years, and a literary alliance which, at one in its duration and completeness, is probably without a precedent."

In the course of my researches on Hutton I have learned through the courtesy of the present editor of the Spectator the discovery of a few notebooks which record the names of scores of contributors during the Townsend-Hutton regime. With the editor's generous permission I am able to give here an indication of what the notebooks disclose.

The first Record of Articles—the title Hutton himself gave the notebooks—begins with 16 November 1874, and ends with 10 November 1877. There is then a three-year gap, and the second surviving Record commences with 20 November 1880. The entries are thereafter continuous, each notebook covering a period of three years, with the seventh Record beginning at 2 January 1897, and continuing to 30 December 1899, more than two years after Hutton's death. (Additional records cover subsequent years down to the present day.) Except during his holidays and illnesses, Hutton kept the Records himself up to his death in 1899.

The Records make known the authors of all the leading articles, subeditors, letters, and reviews for nearly twenty of the thirty-six years of the great partnership. The writers of the "News of
the Week" paragraphs, however, and of the short reviews in "Current Literature" are only occasionally identified in any specific fashion. Nevertheless, the bulk of the contents are identified in this fashion during the Townsend-Hutton regime and are now identifiable. The present article aims at making known the contribution of the Records up to the termination of the famous alliance, since Sir William of the London Journal in The Story of the Spectator 1875-1879, and in the Supplement, 1879-1881, 1879, 1881, 1881. The second poem is "Looking Back," 15 October 1881. The reviews, the number of which Moore exaggerated, are, "Mr. Swinburne's 'Studies in Song,'" 5 March 1881; "The New Playwright," 7 May 1881; and "A Medieval Poet," 24 December 1881.

The poems contribute more than fifty articles during the period covered by the Records. Like Hughes, he had begun contributing heavily during the early 1870s, his signed review, "The Leopards on the American Crisis," 14 September 1861, is probably his first. Since neither this review nor the first one listed as his in the Records ("Bancroft's History of the United States," 21 November 1874) is mentioned in Ludlow's manuscript bibliography in the Cambridge University Library, scholars interested in this Christian Socialist would do well to examine both the Spectator and its Records with more care.

Mrs. Oliphant dedicated her collection of stories, Neighbours on the Green (1869), to R. H. Hutton. Of her forty-three identifiable Spectator writings, contributing to the decade of 1872-1882—two are poems. The bulk of the remainder is made up of her well-known series, "A Commentary in an Easy Chair," which ran from 7 December 1879 to 8 November 1880. But she also wrote reviews ("Memorial of the Spectator 1879-1882," 20 February 1880), portraits ("Buckingham," 23 February 1881), and editorials ("The Principal Tudor," 26 February 1880).


Julia Wood and her husband contributed nearly seventy articles. Although she later reprised some of them (there are eleven in Seventeen Century Subjects), most of the Spectator writings of this blue-blooded educator and her friend of Robert Browning lie buried in the pages that are not accessible to the public. She reviewed The Works of Sir Robert Southey in 1872, and Methods of Ethics, 13 and 20 March 1875; English and German biographies of Carlyle, 12 November 1881; Aea Gray on evolution, 22 April 1882; Darwin's Life (third notice), 10 December 1882; and a history of violation legislation, 9 March 1884. She wrote editorials social, literary, philosophical, and religious problems: "Reserve," 20 November 1880; "Morale Purpose in Fiction," 25 February 1882; "The Relation of History to Politics," 8 July 1882; "The Misleading Character of Language," 29 August 1883; Shakespeare as a Historian, 1882; and "The Church in Danger," 13 August 1882. Occasionally, she contributed leading articles: "Democracy and Justice," 12 April 1880; "Rosen and Politics," 17 May 1880; and "Experimental Legislation," 12 March 1882.


Well-known Victorians who contributed only a handful of articles to the Spectator include A. V. Dicey, 12 December 1882; and W. H. Smithson, 12 December 1882.


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A. C. Swinburne. "Mr. Swinburne's 'Erechtheus'" 1 January 1876; "Mr. Swinburne's 'Tristram,'" 12 August 1882; "Mr. Swinburne's 'Locrine,'" 7 January 1888.


London, England

Robert H. Tener

FOOTNOTES

2. He is currently preparing a biographical and critical study of Giotto, which will be supplemented with a bibliography of his political, religious, and philosophical, as well as his literary, writings—more than 5,000 items in all.
3. "William Meade ('The Story of the Spectator' 1829-1898) (London, 1928), pp. 231-7. It is plain that Thomas had no knowledge of the records described in the present article.

IV. REVIEWS


James R. Ogden, a native of Maine and a graduate of Bowdoin College in the class of 1854, began his career as a publisher with Ticknor & Fields of Boston, the principal house of New England specialists in the production of belles-lettres. In 1871 he became the principal partner of its successor, James R. Ogden & Co. but was soon forced by the need for capital to ally himself with Henry O. Houghton, a printer whose name still survives in that of a prominent publishing firm. A second phase of his career began when he left Houghton to establish himself with Clarence McClure as an independent publisher with headquarters in London. There he renewed and expanded his connections with a network of English writing, which was then cut off by death, at the age of fifty-six. Thomas Hardy and William Black were among the chief mountains in his funeral at Kensington, and among the company there gathered were Bret Harte, Edwin Abbey, George du Maurier, and T. P. O'Connor.

Hough Ogden had been buried in Boston the assembly would doubtless have been more considerable, for few ideas of the galaxy of New Englanders had failed to see at least one of their books published under his auspices—and indeed the same could be said of men like Whistman, Mark Twain, Howells, and even the author of Uncle Tom's Cabin, Harriet Beecher Stowe. Ogden's services to Tennyson, Browning, Fitzgerald, and Dickens, for example, were almost as notable, for the various companies with which he was allied all featured British literature—almost always in authorized editions which paid royalties. Invariably, however, he seems to have run into financial grief in spite of the brilliance of his list—a fact which makes one somewhat suspicious of attempts to assign the difficulties to his partners or to himself.

Mr. Weber's book is the first study to deal with its subject, and, compared with most biographies of British or American publishers of the period, is an eminently rare. The scholar might have been better served if footnotes and a bibliography had been added to enhance the careful presentation of information. Offen might be raised as to the lack of proportion in detailing Ogden's relations with Kate Field, his adventures as a companion of Dickens on his second American tour, his trip with Mark Twain down the Mississi River, but the handicaps imposed by the paucity of letters and the correspondence of the publisher to the publisher are explanation enough. There are in existence certain business records that have added here and there to the record of Ogden's firm, but such material is likely to be dusty stuff. Mr. Weber, perform, round out his book with anecdotes and details of the activities of famous authors, and when in distress over the lack of information on his subject's last days has Thomas Hardy to help him manufacture a silk purse.

America's like the cost of a year at Bowdoin ($157 in 1884) and a fairly substantial picture of the publishing practices of the time. There are valuable adjuncts to history, but Mr. Weber's chief contribution centers on the very important matter of author—publisher relations. From his study of Ogden's new evidence of the intimate relationships between American book trade and the Victorian poet or novelist—a relationship fostered not only by the scarcity of the excellent supply but also by the absence of an international copyright act prior to Congressional action in 1886. There was a very special reason why Hardy, Dickens, and Tennyson were more widely read in the United States than in England, and the biography of an intermediary like Ogden thus assumes an importance beyond that of the record of a pleasant business man whose literary reach extended his financial grasp.

Duke University

Clarence Gokhale


The title of Professor Thomas Flanagan's book—the Irish Novelists 1830-1850—is misleading because this is not a historical survey of the period and because it deals with the work of only five novelists instead of the ten or eleven one might expect. Moreover, Professor Flanagan's sensitive and lively style, and his aptitude for appreciating the delightful ironies in the careers of the novelists he studies, make it unthinkable that he could have devised such an inelegant and inaccurate title. University press books operate against enough difficulties as it is to make sure that nobody but the specialists will read them. Actual The Irish Novelists 1830-1850 is a perceptive and beautifully written critical study of the work of five interesting novelists—Maria Edgeworth, John Banville, Gerald Griffin, and William Carleton—and of the peculiar and complex world they lived in.

One of these five in the author of a masterpiece—Castle Rackrent—and needs neither easy nor unelastic. Lady Augusta Gifford and John Banville, on the other hand, are forgotten and not even Professor Flanagan's book is likely to resurrect them. Gerald Griffin, whose natural inspiration is Boucicault's The Colleen Bawn—is still read in Ireland and its author has been the subject of some recent study by Ethel Mannin. The last of the five is the most interesting and the one most likely to be studied, and we hope reprinted, if the current interest in Irish literature studies continues to broaden itself. William Carleton, whose Yeats praised elaborately to no avail,
had genius of a peculiarly Irish vintage, which is to say that he was a story-teller, born in rural Ireland where the Gaelic tradition was still alive and where story telling was thought of as essentially an oral art. It was a country of remnants—a place where the practice of a living language was guaranteed by the presence of an artist's discipline and to have lived half a century before the right audience for his art has disappeared.

"Ireland of the nineteenth century," writes Professor Flanagan, "was a fragmented culture, a dismaying and complicated tangle of classes, creeds, loyalties, and aspirations." It was a country of dialects, of languages—many as many as fifteen—of these people living during that period was frequently incisively tragic. The period, which was immediately preceded by the uprisings of 1798, began with the glorious extinction of the Irish Parliament— Ireland henceforth to be represented at Westminster. After that it was revolution in 1803, agitation under O'Connell for the emancipation of the Roman Catholic majority and for the repeal of the Act of Union of 1801 and the act of the Young Ireland and the revolution of 1848. In fact, we may say that there was a terrible memory for all Irishmen—the great potato famine of the middle '40's, which killed a million people and sent three million more into exile to the new world.

Professor Flanagan might have selected other novelists—Davis, Lever, and Lever would have served his purpose well but he could never have left out Carleton, that "great Irish historian" as Yeats called him. Carleton lived through the whole period and saw it all in a way that none of the other novelists Professor Flanagan selects saw it. Professor Flanagan's three chapters on Carleton show how well he has read and how shrewdly and justly he has estimated the uneven work of that natural genius. Carleton, he writes, was the product of "the lost, splendid, terrible world of the Celtic pastness, and his life has the charm of his own enigmatic story," an splendid opening estimate. He was priest, scholar, and hodge podge all rolled into one and thus represented in his own person three of the figures which dominate the landscape of rural Irish society of the period. He had grown up in the bosom of the Gaelic oral tradition and consequently his stories are about people who reveal themselves more by what they say than what they do. They have, as Professor Flanagan observes, "a serious delight in the thing said," because Carleton knew that this was basic to their character. His stories not only deal with every aspect of the miserable and the gay in the lives of the peasantry but achieve a cumulative effect on the reader by recreating a "screaming, tumultuous countryside."

Yet Professor Flanagan observes that Carleton was not himself a simple peasant but "deeply ambivalent," and that this ambivalence gives his work a dynamic quality so that one finds in it not only the life of its own time and place but the values that have exploded tradition in modern Europe—alienation, social injustice, and individual conflict in addition to poverty and the irreligiousness of its life. He lived in a society which insisted upon personal loyalty and demanded a literature that would extoll the values of the past. This Carleton accepted because he had to, but it served to help him organize his experiences and the terrible things he had seen into the material of art. But it also forced him into an alliance which he himself, in his art—propaganda in the form of novels moral toward the point of view whose loosely structured novels nearly collapsed. His attempts to declare his independence from the "pseudo-patriots" were sporadic, ineffective, and eventually ceased altogether.

Professor Flanagan concludes that this is the great flaw of Carleton's art, but at the same time, and his originality, is that he thinks that it makes Carleton a better writer than Synge, who didn't seem to know as Carleton did the "language had moral sources and moral consequences." Citing Carleton's weakness as the factor which makes his "better writer," than Synge may be made in so much about for some readers who may say that the Playhouse's exposition of "the villainy of Mayo and the foils in his home" shows more art appreciation of the moral sources and consequences than Synge's one thing can find in Carleton. I find it harder, however, to argue with Professor Flanagan's judgment that Carleton's vision was essentially pagan, pantheistic, and that his "comparison of his people to the people of his art" and that he does something more than metaphorically as visual representation of that verse. Carleton may be compared more meaningfully with Synge and, to a lesser degree, with Yeats.

Professor Flanagan's judgments on Maria Edgeworth, Lady Morgan, John Banin, and Gerald Griffin are not only amusing but at least as valid as his treatment of Carleton. The case of Lady Morgan they are a little too ingenious, but who has read enough of her to judge them? In three introductory chapters Professor Flanagan describes the historical background and describes the society his novelists lived in. Since his approach to each of the novelists is a comprehensive affair, each preparation for the reader is vitally necessary. Finally, Professor Flanagan tries to define the forces which made the Irish novel of the period what it was before it turns to each of the five novels.

The book is not only a considerable critical achievement but a delight to read.

New York University
David H. Greene

Philip Appleman, William Madden, and Michael Wolff, eds. 1859: Entering An Age of Crisis, Indiana University Press, 1859: Entering An Age of Crisis (Indiana University Press) is a collection of essays covering various aspects of British cultural and political life a century ago. The contributors include nine Americans, six Englishmen, and one Canadian. Their general purpose is to take a series of soundings at this point in the flow of history and thereby to measure the strength and direction of the currents. The book makes no claim to being an exhaustive study of mid-Victorian England; little is said about economic developments, the new non-literary arts, scientific and social thought (the Darwinian theory), or the British place in world affairs. The essays deal mainly with literature and criticism, religion and the movement of ideas, and mid-Victorian politics. These subjects, however, are analyzed in considerable depth, and the book suggests various ways of understanding mid-Victorian century culture and society.

Of course, this was an unusually significant year. It saw the publication not only of Origin of Species but also Mill's On Liberty, of major works by Tennyson, Dickens, Thackeray, George Eliot, and Meredith, and of several influential, though more ephemeral, books of religious controversy. In short, a year of great complexity, a year of literature that made a difference. In 1859 the Victorian mind, in political history the year was less important. Much of the fifties and sixties, in fact, was a period of relative political quiet. It was a turning point, a period of national complacency, symbolized by the figure of Palmerston, who became Prime Minister in 1859. The reforming energies of the generation responsible for the first Reform Bill had subsided, and those associated with Gladstonian liberalism had not yet acquired impetus. But the calmness of the political weather was conducive to cultural activity. The highest achievements of the Victorian mind occurred during this interlude of relative harmony and stability.

The editors of this book do not justify their subtitle. All ages of European history have been ages of crisis. Why should the period following 1859 be singled out as in some way peculiarly critical? In reality, the following half-century was probably the most peaceful and the most progressive era that Europe has ever known. It is true that it ended an age of world cataclysm some of the causes of which can be traced back into the nineteenth century; but we cannot fairly consider the warring and totalitarian states of the twentieth century as inevitable results of what the Victorians did or failed to do. Nor do any of the contributors of the book trace much connection between the Victorian achievement and the problems of 1859. They write, however, with an awareness of the direction of cultural change and with a recognition that some of these changes cannot be regarded as improvements.

Perhaps the most striking aspect of Victorian culture, as described in this book, is that men of letters and creative imagination could address themselves to an audience of cultivated general readers in the confidence that their works would be appreciated and understood by the most readers. There was yet any sense of mutual incomprehension and divorce between the intellectual class and the general public. The greatest scientific work of 1859 was written in the form of a technical vocabulary, and found a large audience. The novels that were most widely reviewed and appreciated in 1859 are those which still seem outstanding to the critics of 1959. With the exception of Thackeray's Balzac, all the important works published in 1859 achieved immediate recognition. By contrast, the most striking and distinctive feature of the modern cultural situation is that academic scholars, and artists are no longer in communication with the general public. Most modern intellectuals in all fields now address themselves to each other as specialists or people interested enough to establish contact with a public whose tastes are either middle-brow or frankly illiterate. The great literary and philosophic revival of the nineteenth century, unlike that of the eighteenth, has been written for small coteries and have only generally achieved an wider fame. While much might be said about the relationship of the Intellectual, the main values for this change are, no doubt, on the one hand, a necessary qualification of the old doctrine of the artist as the pillar of society. The lowering of audience standards through the extension of popular education, the application of educational qualifications to areas where they are inappropriate, and the consequent temptation of cultural commercialism.

If, however, we extend our observations to 1859 (as suggested by Michael Wolff in his essay on Victorian Reviews and Cultural Responsibility), then we become aware that the changes which have occurred during the past two centuries, though they had not yet produced overt results. The Victorian audience was already well-informed, less disciplined, and less cultivated than the audience to which Dr. Johnson could address himself. The more obvious weaknesses of Victorian literature in general can, in fact, be ascribed to its attempt to cater to an extensive middle-class clientele with narrow moral standards, sentimental tastes and clichés, and no coherent system of religious or philosophical beliefs. Writers such as Tennyson and Dickens, to cite the two most obvious examples, failed to achieve their full potentialities because they were partially corrupted by trying to meet the expectations of their readers. In consequence, the Victorian age cannot be ranked as one of the world's great literary periods, and its products have survived chiefly as sources of entertainment rather than as enlightenment. Throughout past history many audiences have usually been willing to support great art only
when it served religious functions, as in classical Greece and medieval Europe. Very rarely, the Elizabethan drama being the most notable example, a popular art form has been capable of achieving the highest distinction. These illustrations do not suggest that the dilemmas of the modern intellectual is likely to find any easy solution. A study of artist-audience relations during the past hundred years might, however, do much to illuminate it.

New York University

H. B. Parkes

V. ENGLISH X NEWS

* The deadline for submission of papers for consideration for the 1960 program is June 1. The chairman of the Program Committee for 1960 is Professor G. Robert Stange, Department of English, University of Chicago, Chicago 37, Illinois.

* In the name of all subscribers to VXL, the editor wishes to express his deepest gratitude to Professor Oscar Maurer (University of Texas) for five years of faithful service as bibliographer of the Victorian Newsletter. His job has been a thankless one, which he has carried on with the meticulous efficiency with which his name is identified in Victorian studies. It is with regret that the editor accepts his resignation, but is pleasant to know that his time will thus be freed for other, more exciting projects.

* According to word received from Professor Lionel Stevenson (Duke University), the Harvard University Press has expressed a wish to publish Victorion Fiction: A Guide to Research in a format similar to that of its predecessor, The Victorian Poets.

* Peak attendance at the English X meeting in Chicago was 270. Upwards of 50 were required to stand.

* Our congratulations to Professor Gordon N. Ray on his appointment as Associate Secretary General of the Organzien Foundation. We understand that Professor Ray will be leaving his present post as Vice President and Provost of the University of Illinois at the end of the current academic year and will take up residence in New York City.

* Miss Aletta Morrison (The University, Edmond Street, Birmingham 3, England) writes: "Can anyone give me information as to the location of the library of Edmund Clarence Stedman, (1833-1908), the banker-poet of New York. I am anxious to find the copy of Le Tombeau de Théophile Gautier published by Lemercier, Paris, 1873, which A. C. Swinburne sent to Stedman on 23rd February 1874. I am editing the five Greek epigrams which Swinburne contributed to this volume. Swinburne had himself corrected some of the misquotations etc., which had occurred in the printing of his epigrams, in the copy he sent to Stedman."

* P. H. Leaves' New Bearings in English Poetry will join the growing list of Ann Arbor Paperbacks (University of Michigan Press) on March 25.

* Professor Sarah Youngblood (University of Minnesota) and Professor Donna Gerstenberger (University of Colorado) are preparing a Yeats Handbook. The book is intended to be a source of scholarly and critical information on all aspects of Yeats' work, and the authors would welcome any unpublished material or biographical information, especially information on performances, professional or amateur, of Yeats' plays.


* John Hagan (William and Mary College) and Albert J. Pyfe (Indiana State Teachers College, Terre Haute) write as follows:

"After conducting a preliminary survey of existing resources, we have decided to prepare an annotated edition of all the writings of John Stuart Mill (exclusive of personal correspondence) which have never been collected and published in book form. We would therefore greatly appreciate hearing from anyone who can help us (a) identify any of Mill's published works not listed in existing bibliographies; (b) discover the whereabouts of any extant MS. of Mill's works, published and unpublished alike; and (c) locate obscure reprints of articles, speeches, official reports, and the like, which may have been issued under Mill's supervision. We are especially anxious to hear from persons who now own or know the whereabouts of any of the Mill papers (or copies of such) which were formerly in the possession of the late Professor Harold J. Laski."

ENGLISH X OFFICERS

Chairman, Carl E. Woodring (University of Wisconsin) Secretary, George H. Ford (University of Rochester).

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VI. RECENT PUBLICATIONS: A SELECTED LIST

September, 1959 - February, 1960

1. General


CRITICISM AND LITERARY HISTORY. Brightfield, Byron F. "America and the Americans, 1840-1860, as Depicted in English Novels of the Period." American Literature, November, pp. 306-324. Lack of familiarity with America prevented even the "realistic" Victorian novelists from dealing fully and fairly with Americans.


Owen, Edgworth, Lady Morgan, John Harte, Gerald Griffin, and William Carleton.


A new edition, with supplementary notes and adds to the hand-list of late nineteenth-century plays.


On the author of the notorious review of June Eyre.


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Malat on, D. G. Doctor in the Romes. Christopher Johnson.


Individual Authors


An articulate liberal's distrust of "mass democracy."


A valuable study of Browning's shift from the subjective and personal to the dramatic.

DARWIN, The flood of existential and mystical books and articles continues: --


New Hardy used his historical sources in The Dynasts.


A perceptive note on the symbolic structure of the novel.


A Jesuit critic compares the devotional poetry of Hopkins and Donne.


The New Republic's "honest attempts to translate into fiction the greatest problems of the time."


Seven novels by the author of The New Republic. This novel is the first of a series of biographies of Macaulay's life and work as part of that material of eighteenth-century tradition of liberal thought to which we are increasingly returning."


Evans, Joan, ed. The Lamp of Beauty: Writings on Art by John Pisces. Phaidon Press.

STEVENS, Balfour, Richard. "How the Biography of Robert Louis Stevenson Came to be Written." TSL, 15, 22 Jan., pp. 37, 52. In the origins of what Hardy called a "barley-sugar" biography, by the biographer.


continued on page 52

HARRETT MARTINEAU, A RADICAL VICTORIAN

By R. K. Webb

A biography of Harriet Martineau (1802-76), a dedicated reformer of Victorian times. A woman of many enthusiasms, Miss Martineau first became famous in 1832 with a series of tales popularizing the science of political economy. After visiting America in 1842-46, she wrote two highly controversial books about the social life of this country. She also wrote a few novels and a history of England. In telling the story of her life, the author answers two questions: what forces in the early nineteenth century formed and were reflected in this woman, and what can a study of her consistently consistent attitudes tell us about early Victorian society?

$5.00

THE THEORY OF THE NOVEL IN ENGLAND 1600-1760

By Richard Stang

A valuable study of criticism of fiction in the mid-Victorian era. This important body of criticism has been generally neglected because much of it appeared in long-forgotten periodicals. In his book, Dr. Stang reveals and analyzes brilliant discussions of the techniques and subject matter of novels by such critics as W. C. Roscoe, R. H. Hutton, George Brimley, Walter Stanwood, and G. H. Lewes. He also adds two of Dickens' novels and a history of England. In telling the story of her life, the author answers two questions: what forces in the early nineteenth century formed and were reflected in this woman, and what can a study of her consistently consistent attitudes tell us about early Victorian society?

$5.00

COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY PRESS

2000 Broadway

New York 27
Essay and bibliography, in "Writers and their Work" series. 


Harris's wildly imaginative biography, first published in this form in 1916, is here reprinted.

PROJECTS

WALTER BAGEHOT. Norman St. John-Stevas is preparing a collected edition of Bagehot's writings, at the request of the *Economist*. He asks particularly for information as to the whereabouts of Bagehot's private papers. *TLS*, 2 Oct., p. 561.

EDWARD CARPENTER. E. F. Carpenter is writing a biography. *TLS*, 15 Jan., p. 33.

EDWARD FITZGERALD. Joanna Richardson has been commissioned to edit the letters. *TLS*, 22 Jan., p. 49.

GARIBALDI. Peter de Polnay is engaged on a life. *TLS*, 22 Jan., p. 49.

MARK LEMON. Arthur A. Adrian is gathering materials for a biography. *TLS*, 16 Oct., p. 593.

CARDINAL WISEMAN. Brian Fothergill is preparing a biography and will make use of the Wiseman archives at Archbishop's House, Westminster. *TLS*, 6 Nov., p. 643.

University of Texas

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**THE VICTORIAN NEWSLETTER** is edited for the English X Group of the Modern Language Association by William E. Buckler, 737 East Building, New York University, New York 3, New York. Subscription rates in the United States and Canada are $1.00 for one year and $2.00 for three years. All checks should be made payable to William E. Buckler, personally, so that they may be easily negotiated. The subscription rates for the United Kingdom are 7/6 for one year and 15/ for three years. Checks should be made payable to K. J. Fielding, C. F. Mott Training College, Prescot., The Hazels, Lancs., England. Mr. Fielding is the British Representative of VNl.