

## RECENT TENDENCIES IN EUROPEAN POETRY.<sup>1</sup>

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WHEN Matthew Arnold declared that every age receives its best interpretation in its poetry, he was making a remark hardly conceivable before the century in which it was made. Poetry in the nineteenth century was, on the whole, more charged with meaning, more rooted in the stuff of humanity and the heart of nature, less a mere province of *belles-lettres*, than ever before. Consciously or unconsciously it reflected the main currents in the mentality of European man, and the reflection was often most clear where it was least conscious. Two of these main currents are :—

1. The vast and steady enlargement of our knowledge of the compass, the history, the potencies of Man, Nature, the World.

2. The growth in our sense of the *worth* of every part of existence.

Certain aspects of these two processes are popularly known as “the advance of science,” and “the growth of democracy”. But how far “science” reaches beyond the laboratory and the philosopher’s study, and “democracy” beyond political freedom and the ballot-box, is precisely what poetry compels us to understand; and not least the poetry of the last sixty years with which we are to-day concerned.

How then does the history of poetry in Europe during these sixty years stand in relation to these underlying processes? On the surface, at least, it hardly resembles growth at all. In France above all—the literary focus of Europe, and its sensitive thermometer—the movement of poetry has been, on the surface, a succession of pronounced and even fanatical schools, each born in reaction from its precursor, and

<sup>1</sup> This lecture has appeared, in a completer form, in Mr. F. S. Marvin’s *Recent Developments in European Thought* (Clarendon Press, 1920).

succumbing to the triumph of its successor. Yet a deeper scrutiny will perceive that these warring artists were, in fact, groups of successive discoverers, who each added something to the resources and the scope of poetry, and also retained and silently adopted the discoveries of the past ; while the general line of advance is in the direction marked by the two main currents I have described. Nowhere else is the succession of phases so sharp and clear as in France. But since France does reflect more sensitively than any other country the movement of the mind of Europe, and since her own mind has, more than that of any other country, radiated ideas and fashions out over the rest of Europe, these phases are in fact traceable also, with all kinds of local and national variations, in Italy and Spain, Germany and England, and I propose to take this fact as the basis of our present very summary and diagrammatic view. The three phases of the sixty years are roughly divided by the years 1880 and 1900.

The first, most clearly seen in the French Parnassians, is in close, if unconscious, sympathy with the temper of science: Poetry, brought to the limit of expressive power, is used to express, with the utmost veracity, precision, and impersonal self-suppression, the beauty and the tragedy of the world. It sought Hellenic lucidity and Hellenic calm—in the example most familiar to us, the Stoic calm and “sad lucidity” of Matthew Arnold.

The second, best seen in the French Symbolists, was directly hostile to science. But they repelled its confident analysis of material reality in the name of a part of reality which it ignored or denied, an immaterial world which they mystically apprehended, which eluded direct description, frustrated rhetoric, and was only to be come at by the magical suggestion of colour, music, and symbol. It is most familiar to us in the “Celtic” verse of Mr. Yeats and “A. E.”.

The third, still about us, and too various and incomplete for final definition, is in closer sympathy with science, but, in great part, only because science has itself found accommodation between nature and spirit, a new ideality born of, and growing out of, the real. If the first found Beauty, the end of art, in the plastic repose of sculpture, and the second in the mysterious cadences of music, the poetry of the twentieth century finds its ideal in life, in the creative evolution of being, even in the mere things, the “prosaic” pariahs of previous poetry, on which our shaping wills are wreaked. We know it in

poets unlike one another but yet more unlike their predecessors, from D'Annunzio and Dehmel and Claudel to our Georgian experimenters in the poetry of paradox and adventure.

### I. POETIC NATURALISM.

The third quarter of the nineteenth century opened, in western Europe, with a decided set-back for those who lived on dreams, and a corresponding complacency among those who throve on facts. The political and social revolution which swept the continent in 1848 and 1849, and found ominous echoes here, was everywhere, for the time, defeated. The discoveries of science in the third and fourth decades, resting on calculation and experiment, were investing it with the formidable prestige which it has never since lost ; and both metaphysics and theology reeled perceptibly under the blows delivered in its name. The world exhibition of 1851 seemed to announce an age of settled prosperity, peace, and progress.

In literature the counterpart of these phenomena was the revolt from Romanticism, a movement, in its origins, of poetic liberation and discovery, which had rejuvenated poetry in Germany and Italy, and yet more signally in England and in France, but was now petering out in emotional incoherence, deified impulse, and irresponsible caprice.

In poetry the French Parnassians created the most brilliant poetry that has, since Milton, been built upon erudition and impeccable art. Their leader, Leconte de Lisle, in the preface of his *Poèmes Antiques* (1853), scornfully dismissed Romanticism as a second-hand, incoherent, and hybrid art, compounded of German mysticism, reverie, and Byron's stormy egoism. Sully Prudhomme addressed a sterner criticism to the shade of Alfred de Musset—the Oscar Wilde of the later Romantics who had never known the stress of thought, and had filled his poetry with light, love and laughter and voluptuous despairs ; the new poets were to be no such gay triflers, but workers at a forge, beating the glowing metal into shape, and singing as they toiled. Carducci, too, derisively contrasts the “moonlight” of Romanticism—cold and infertile beams, proper for Gothic ruins and graveyards—with the benignant and fertilizing sunshine he sought to restore ; for him, too, the poet is no indolent caroller, and no gardener to grow fragrant flowers for ladies, but a forge-worker with muscles of steel. Among us, as usual, the divergence is less sharply marked ; but when Browning calls

Byron a "flat fish," and Arnold sees the poet of *Prometheus Unbound* appropriately pinnacled in the "intense inane," they are expressing a kindred repugnance to a poetry wanting in intellectual substance and in clear-cut form.

If we turn from the negations of the anti-romantic revolt to consider what it actually sought and achieved in poetry, we find that its positive ideals, too, without being derived from science, reflect the temper of a scientific time. Thus the supreme gift of all the greater poets of this group was a superb vision of beauty, and of beauty—*pace* Hogarth—there is no science. But their view of beauty was partly limited, partly fertilized and enriched, by the sources they discovered and the conditions they imposed, and both the discoveries and the limitations added something to the traditions and resources of poetry.

In the first place, they exploited the aesthetic values to be had by knowledge. They pursued erudition and built their poetry upon erudition, not in the didactic way of the Augustans, but as a mine of poetic material and suggestion. Far more truly than Wordsworth's this poetry could claim to be the impassioned expression which is in the face of science ; for Wordsworth's knowledge is a mystic insight wholly estranged from erudition ; his celandine, his White Doe, belong to no fauna or flora. When Leconte de Lisle, on the other hand, paints the albatross of the southern sea or the condor of the Andes, the eye of a passionate explorer and observer has gone to the making of their exotic sublimity. The strange regions of humanity, too, newly disclosed by comparative religion and mythology, he explores with cosmopolitan impartiality and imaginative penetration ; carving, as in marble, the tragedy of Hjalmar's heart and Angentyr's sword, of Cain's doom, and Erinnyes never, like those of Aeschylus, appeased. The Romantics had loved to play with exotic suggestions ; but the East of Hugo's *Orientales* or Moore's *Lalla Rookh* is merely a veneer ; the poet of *Qain* has heard the wild asses cry and seen the Syrian sun descend into the golden foam.

In the three commanding poets of our English mis-century, learning becomes no less evidently poetry's honoured and indispensable ally. Tennyson studies nature like a naturalist, not like a mystic, and finds felicities of phrase poised, as it were, upon delicate observation. Man, too, in Browning, loses the vague aureole of Shelleyan humanity, and becomes the Italian of the Renaissance or the Arab doctor or the Ger-



man musician, all alive but in their habits as they lived, and fashioned in a brain fed, like no other, on the Book of the histories of Souls. Matthew Arnold more distinctively than either, and both for better and for worse, was the scholar-poet ; among other things he was, with Heredia and Carducci, a master of the poetry of critical portraiture, which focusses in a few lines (*Sophocles, Rahel, Heine, Obermann Once More*) the meaning of a great career or of a complex age.

Further, in the elaboration of their vision of beauty from these enlarged sources, Leconte de Lisle and his followers demanded an impeccable artistry. "A great poet," he said, "and a flawless artist are convertible terms." The Parnassian precision rested on the postulate that, with sufficient resources of vocabulary and phrase, everything can be adequately expressed, the analogue of the contemporary scientific conviction that, with sufficient resources of experiment and calculation, everything can be exhaustively explained. The pursuit of an objective calm, the repudiation of missionary ardour, of personal emotion, of the *cri du coeur*, of individual originality, involved the surrender of some of the glories of spontaneous song, but opened the way, for consummate artists such as these, to a profusion of undiscovered beauty, and to a peculiar grandeur not to be attained by the egoist. Leconte's temperament leads him to subjects which are already instinct with tragedy, and thus in his hands assume this grandeur without effort. The power of sheer style to ennoble is better seen in Sully Prudhomme's *tours de force* of philosophic poetry—when he unfolds his ideas upon "Justice" or "Happiness," for instance, under the form of a debate where masterly resources of phrase and image are compelled to the service of a rigorous logic ; or in the brief cameo-like pieces on "Memory," "Habit," "Forms," and similar unpromising abstractions, most nearly paralleled in English by the quatrains of Mr. William Watson. But the cameo comparison is still more aptly applied to the marvellously-chiselled sonnets of Heredia—monuments of a moment, as sculpture habitually is, but reaching out, as the finest sculpture does, to invisible horizons, and to the before and after—the old wooden guardian-god recalling his former career as a scarlet figure-head laughing at the laughter or fury of the waves ; Antony seeing the flying ships of Actium mirrored in the traitorous azure of Cleopatra's eyes.

Finally, the Parnassian poetry, like most contemporary science, was in varying degrees detached from and hostile to religion, and

found some of its most vibrating notes in contemplating its empty universe. Leconte de Lisle offers the Stoic the last mournful joy of "a heart seven-times steeped in the divine nothingness,"<sup>1</sup> or calls him to "that city of silence, the sepulchre of the vanished gods, the human heart, seat of dreams, where eternally ferments and perishes the illusory universe".<sup>2</sup> Here, too, Leopardi had anticipated him.

The supreme figure, not only among those who share in the anti-romantic reaction but among all the European poets of his time, was one who had in the heyday of youth led the Romantic vanguard—Victor Hugo. Leconte de Lisle never ceased to own him his master, and Hugo's genius had since his exile, in 1851, entered upon a phase in which a poetry such as the Parnassian sought—objective, reticent, impersonal, technically consummate—was at least one of the strings of his many-chorded lyre. Three magnificent works—the very crown and flower of Hugo's production—belong to this decade, 1850-60—the *Châtiments*, *Contemplations*, and *Légende des Siècles*. I said, advisedly, one string in his lyre. Objective reticence is certainly not the virtue of the terrible indictment of "Napoleon the Little". On the other hand, the greatest qualities of Parnassian poetry were exemplified in many splendid pieces of the other two works, together with a large benignity which their austere Stoicism rarely permits, and I shall take an illustration of the finest achievement of poetry in this whole first phase, the closing stanzas of his famous *Booz Endormi* in the *Légende*, whose beauty even translation cannot wholly disguise. Our decasyllable is substituted for the always exotic Alexandrine;<sup>3</sup> otherwise the original metre is retained.

<sup>1</sup> *Midi*.

<sup>2</sup> *La Paix des Dieux*.

<sup>3</sup> For this and the other verse-translations the writer is responsible.

While thus he slumbered, Ruth, a Moabite,  
Lay at the feet of Boaz, her breast bare,  
Waiting, she knew not when, she knew not where,  
The sudden mystery of wakening light.

Boaz knew not that there a woman lay,  
Nor Ruth what God desired of her could tell;  
Fresh rose the perfume of the asphodel,  
And tender breathed the dusk on Galgala.

Nuptial, august, and solemn was the night,  
Angels no doubt were passing on the wing,

## II. DREAM AND SYMBOL.

The rise of French symbolism towards the end of the "seventies" was a symptom of a changed temper of thought and feeling traceable in some degree throughout civilized Europe. Roughly, it marked the passing of the confident and rather superficial security of the "fifties" into a vague unrest, a kind of troubled awe. As if existence altogether was a bigger, more mysterious, and intractable thing than was assumed, not so easily to be captured in the formulas of triumphant science, or mirrored and analysed by the most consummate literary art.

Of this changed outlook the growth of Symbolism is the most significant literary expression. It was not confined to France, or to poetry. We know how the drama of Ibsen became charged with ulterior meanings as the fiery iconoclast passed into the poet of insoluble and ineluctable doubt. But by the French symbolists it was pursued as a creed, as a religion. If the dominant poetry of the third quarter of the century reflected the prestige of science, the dominant poetry of the fourth reflected the idealistic reactions against it, and Villiers de l'Île Adam, its founder, came forward proclaiming that "Science was bankrupt". And so it might well seem to him, the

For now and then there floated glimmering  
As it might be an azure plume in flight.

The low breathing of Boaz mingled there  
With the soft murmur of the mossy rills.  
It was the month when earth is debonnaire;  
The lilies were in flower upon the hills.

Night compassed Boaz' slumber and Ruth's dreams,  
The sheep-bells vaguely tinkled far and near;  
Infinite love breathed from the starry sphere;  
'Twas the still hour when lions seek the streams.

Ur and Jerimedeth were all at rest;  
The stars enamelled the blue vault of sky;  
Amid those flowers of darkness in the west  
The crescent shone; and with half open eye.

Ruth wondered, moveless, in her veils concealed,  
What heavenly reaper, when the day was past  
And harvest gathered in, had idly cast  
That golden sickle on the starry field.

visionary mystic, inhabiting, as he did, a world of strange beauty and invisible mystery which science could not unlock. The symbolists had not all an explicit philosophy ; but they were all aware of potencies in the world or in themselves which language cannot articulately express, and which are yet more vitally real than the "facts" which we can grasp and handle, and the "respectable" people whom we can measure and reckon with. Sometimes these potencies are vaguely mysterious, as impalpable spirit speaking only by hints and tokens ; sometimes they are felt as the pulsations of an intoxicating beauty, breaking forth in every flower, but which can only be possessed, not described ; sometimes they are moods of the soul, beyond analysis, and yet full of wonder and beauty, visions half created, half perceived. Experiences like these might have been described, as far as description would go, by brilliant artificers like the Parnassians. Verlaine and Mallarmé did not discover, but they applied with new daring, the fact that an experience may be communicated by words which, instead of representing it, suggest it by their colour, their cadences, their rhythm, their verbal echoes and inchoate phrases. All the traditional artistry of French poetic speech was condemned as both inadequate and insincere. "Take eloquence and wring her neck ! Nothing but music and the nuance,—all the rest is 'Literature,' mere writing—futile verbosity !" ; that was the famous watchword of Verlaine's creed.

The strength of symbolism lay in this demand for a complete sincerity of utterance. Its revolt against science was at the same time a vindication of truth, an effort to get nearer to reality both by shedding off the incrustations of habitual phrase and by calling into play the obscure affinities by which it can be magically evoked. In the subtleties of suggestion latent in sensations the symbolists were real discoverers. But the way had already been pointed in famous verses by Baudelaire :—

Earth is a Temple, from whose pillared mazes  
Murmurs confused of living utterance rise ;  
Therein Man thro' a forest of symbols paces,  
That contemplate him with familiar eyes.

As prolonged echoes, wandering on and on,  
At last in one far tenebrous depth unite,  
Impalpable as darkness, and as light,  
Scents, sounds, and colours meet in unison.

There Baudelaire had touched a chord that was to sound loud and long ; for what else than this thought of all the senses meeting in union inspired the music drama of Wagner ?—only one of his points of kinship, as we shall see, with symbolism.

In the earlier poetry of Maurice Maeterlinck, the inner life imposes a more jealous sway. The poet sits not before a transforming mirror, where the outer world is disguised, but in a closed chamber, where it is only dreamed of, and it fades into the incoherence and the irrelevance of a dream. But the chamber is of rare beauty, and in its hushed and perfumed twilight, dramas of the spirit are being silently and almost imperceptibly enacted, more tragic than the loud passion and violence of the stage. He has written an essay on Silence, silence that, like humility, holds for him a "treasure" beyond the reach of eloquence or of pride : for it is the dwelling of our true self, the spiritual core of us, "more profound and more boundless than the self of the passions or of pure reason". And so there is less matter for drama in "a captain who conquers in battle or a husband who avenges his honour than in an old man, seated in his arm-chair waiting patiently with his lamp beside him, giving unconscious ear to all the eternal laws that reign about his house, interpreting without comprehending, the silence of door and window, and the quivering voice of the light ; submitting with bent head to the presence of his soul and his destiny".

It is on this side that symbolism discloses its kinship with the Russian novel, with the mystic quietism of Tolstoy and the religion of self-sacrifice in Dostoevsky ; and its sharp antagonism to the Nietzschean gospel of dæmonic will and ruthless self-assertion, just then being preached in Germany. The two faiths were both alive and both responded to deep though diverse needs of the time ; but the immediate future, as we shall see, belonged to the second. They had their first resounding encounter when Nietzsche held up his once venerated master Wagner to scorn as the chief of "decadents" because he had turned from the superhuman heroism of Siegfried and the boundless passion of Tristram to glorify the mystic Catholicism of the Grail and the loveliness of the "pure fool" Parzifal.

Outside France symbolism found eager response among young poets, but rather as a literary than as an ethical doctrine. In Germany, Dehmel, the most powerful personality among her recent poets, began as a disciple of Verlaine ; in Italy, D'Annunzio wove esoteric symbols

into the texture of the more than Nietzschean supermanliness of his supermen and superwomen. More significant than these, however, was the symbolism of what we call the Celtic school of poets in Ireland. For here both their artistic impressionism and their mystic spirituality found a congenial soil.

For that, the French had only the Fauns of a literary neo-classicism. The passion for France was yet indeed to find a voice in poetry. But this was reserved for the more trumpet-tongued tones of the contemporary phase to which I now turn.

### III. "CREATIVE EVOLUTION."

#### 1. *Philosophic Analogies.*

Nothing is more symptomatic of the incipient twentieth century than the drawing together of currents of thoughts and action before remote or hostile. The Parnassians were an exclusive sect, the symbolists an eccentric and often disreputable coterie ; Claudel, D'Annunzio, Rudyard Kipling, speak home to throngs of everyday readers, are even national idols, and our Georgians contrive to be bought and read without the least surrender of what is most poetic in their poetry. And the analogies between philosophic thinking and poetic creation become peculiarly striking. Merely to name Friedrich Nietzsche, Henri Bergson, and Benedetto Croce is to become vividly aware of these analogies and of the common bent from which they spring. All three—whether with brilliant rhetoric, or iron logic, or a blend of both—use their thinking power to deride the theorizing intelligence in comparison with the creative intuition which culminates in poetry. To define the scope and province of this intuition is the purport of Croce's epoch-making *Æsthetics*, the basis and starting-point of his illuminating work, in *Critica*, as a literary critic. Bergson is the dominant figure in a line of French thinkers possessed with the conviction that life, a perpetual streaming forth of a creative energy, cannot be caught in the mechanism of law, adapted to merely physical phenomena, which at best merely gives us generalizations and lets the all-important particulars—the individual living thing—slip through the meshes ; whereas intuition—the eye fixed on the object—penetrates to the very heart of this individual living thing, and only drops out the skeleton framework of abstract laws. Philosophy, in these thinkers, was deeply imbued with

the analogies of artistic creation. "Beauty," said Ravaisson, "and especially beauty in the most divine and perfect form, contains the secret of the world". And Bergson's Creative Evolution embodied a conception of life and of the world profoundly congenial to the artistic and poetic temper of his time.

The idea that æsthetic experience gives a profounder clue in logical thought to the inner meaning of things was as old as Plato. It was one of the crowning thoughts of Kant; it deeply coloured the metaphysics of Schelling. And Nietzsche developed it with brilliant audacity when in his *Birth of Tragedy* (1872) he contrasted scornfully with the laboured and ineffectual constructions of the theoretic man, even of Socrates, the founder of philosophy, the radiant vision of the artist, the lucid clarity of Apollo. "His book gave the lie to a thousand years of orderly development," wrote the great Hellenist, Wilamowitz, Nietzsche's old schoolfellow, indignant at his rejection of the labours of scholastic reason. But it affirmed energetically the passion of his own time for immediate and first-hand experience.

And it did more. Beside and above Apollo, Nietzsche put Dionysus; beside vision and above it, rage. Of the union of these two Tragedy was born. And Nietzsche's glorification of this elemental creative force also responded to a wider movement in philosophy, here chiefly German. His Dionysiac rage is directly derived from that will in which Schopenhauer saw the master faculty of man and the hidden secret of the universe; and the beginning of Schopenhauer's fame, about 1850, coincides with a general rehabilitation of will as the dominant faculty in the soul and in the world, at the cost of the methodic orderly processes of understanding.

Nietzsche and Bergson thus, with all their obvious and immense divergences, concurred in this respect, important from our present point of view, that their influence tended to transfer authority from the philosophic reason to those "irrational" elements of mind which reach their highest intensity in the vision and "rage" of the poet.

## 2. *The New Freedom.*

No reader of the poetry of our time can mistake the kinship of its prevailing temper with that which lies at the root of these philosophies. Without trying to fit its infinite variety to any finite formula, we may yet venture to find it in, as Mr. McDowall has found in our Georgian

poetry in particular, a characteristic union of grip and detachment ; of intense and eager grasp upon actuality as it breaks upon us in the successive moments of the stream of time, and yet an inner independence of it, a refusal to be obsessed by its sanctions and authorities, a tacit assumption that everything, by whatever length of tradition consecrated, must come before the bar of this new century to be judged by its new mind. "Youth is knocking at the door," as it is said of Hilda in the symbolical *Master Builder*, and doubtless in every generation the philistines or Victorians in possession have had occasion to make that remark. The difference in our time is rather that instead of having to work slowly up to a final dominance against the inertia of an established literary household, it has spontaneously, like Hilda Wrangel, taken possession of the home, finding criticism boundlessly eulogistic, the public inexhaustibly responsive, and philosophy interpreting the universe, as we have seen, precisely in sympathy with its own naive intuitions. No wonder that youth at twenty is writing its autobiography or having its biography written, and that at twenty-five it makes a show of laying down the pen, like Max Beerbohm, with the gesture of one rising sated from the feast of life : "I shall write no more".

The fact that youth finds itself thus at home in the world explains the difference in temper between the new poets of freedom and the old. The wild or wistful cry of Shelley for an ideal state emancipated from pain and death is as remote from their poetry as his spiritual anarchy from their politics ; they can dream and see visions, in Scott's phrase, "like any one going," but their feet are on the solid ground of actuality and citizenship, and the actuality comes into and colours their poetry no less than their vision. When Mr. Drinkwater looks out of "his town window" he dreams of the crocus flaming gold in far-off Warwick woods ; but he does not repudiate the drab inglorious street nor the tramway ringing and moaning over the cobbles, and they come into his verse. And I find it significant of the whole temper of the new poetry to ordinary life no less than that of ordinary men and women to the new poetry, that he has won a singularly intimate relationship with a great industrial community. He has not fared like his carver in stone. But then the eagles of his carving, though capable of rising, like Shelley's, to the sun, are the Cromwells and Lincolns who themselves brought the eagle's valour and undimmed eye into the stress and turmoil of affairs.



No doubt a fiercer note of revolt may be heard at times in the poetry of contemporary France, and that precisely where devotion to some parts of the heritage of the past is most impassioned. The iconoclastic scorn of youth's idealism for the effeteness of the "old hunkers," as Whitman called them, has rarely rung out more sharply than in the closing stanzas of Claudel's great Palm Sunday ode. All the pomp and splendour of bishops and cardinals is idle while victory yet is in suspense ; that must be won by youth in arms :—

To-morrow the candles and the dais and the bishop with his clergy coped  
and gold embossed,  
But to-day the shout like thunder of an equal, unofficered host  
Who, led and kindled by the flag alone,  
With one sole spirit swollen, and on one sole thought intent,  
Are become one cry like the crash of walls shattered and gates rent :  
"Hosanna unto David's Son !"

Needless the haughty steeds marble sculptured, or triumphal arches, or  
chariots and four,  
Needless the flags and the caparisons, the moving pyramids and towers,  
and cars that thunder and roar,  
'Tis but an ass whereon sits Christ ;  
For to make an end of the nightmare built by the pedants and the pharisees,  
To get home to reality across the gulf of mendacities,  
The first she-ass He saw sufficed !

Eternal youth is master, the hideous gang of old men is done with, we  
Stand here like children, fanned by the breath of the things to be,  
But Victory we will have to-day !  
Afterwards the corn that like gold gives return, afterwards the gold that  
like corn is faithful and will bear,  
The fruit we have henceforth only to gather, the land we have henceforth  
only to share,  
But Victory we will have to-day !

In the same spirit Charles Péguy—like Claudel, be it noted, a student of Bergson at the Ecole Normale—found his ideal in the great story of the young girl of Domremy who saved France when all the pomp and wisdom of generals had broken down. And in our own poetry has not Mr. Bottomley re-written the Lear story, with the focus of power and interest transferred from the old king—left with not an inch of king in him—to a glorious young Artemis-Goneril ?

But among our English Georgians this tense iconoclastic note is rare. Their detachment from what they repudiate is not fanatical or

ascetic : it is conveyed less in invective than in paradox and irony ; their temper is not that which flies to the wilderness and dresses in camel hair, but of mariners putting out to the unknown and bidding a not unfriendly good-bye at the shore. The temper of adventure is deeply ingrained in the new romance as in the old ; the very word adventure is saturated with a sentiment very congenial to us both for better and worse ; it quickens the hero in us and flatters the devil-may-care.

In its simplest form the temper of adventure has given us the profusion of pleasant verses which we know as the poetry of "vagabondage" and "the open road". The point is too familiar to be dwelt on, and has been admirably illustrated and discussed by Mr. McDowall. George Borrow, prince of vagabonds, Stevenson, the "Ariel," with his "Vagabond-song" :—

All I seek the heaven above,  
And the road below me,

and a few less vocal swallows, anticipated the more sustained flights and melodies of to-day, while Borrow's wonderful company of vagabond heroes and heroines is similarly premonitory of the alluring gipsies and circus-clowns of our Georgian poetry. Sometimes a traditional motive is creatively transformed ; as when Father Time, the solemn shadow with admonitory hour-glass, appears in Mr. Hodgson's poem as an old gipsy pitching his caravan "only a moment and off once again".

Elsewhere a deeper note is sounded. It is not for nothing that Jeanne d'Arc is the saint of French Catholic democracy, or that Péguy, her poet, calls the Incarnation the "sublime adventure of God's Son". That last adventure of the Dantesque Ulysses beyond the sunset thrills us to-day more than the Odyssean tale of his triumphant home-return, and D'Annunzio, greatly daring, takes it as the symbol of his own adventurous life. And Meredith, who so often profoundly voiced the spirit of the time in which only his ripe old age was passed, struck this note in his sublime verse on revolutionary France :—

Soaring France  
That divinely shook the dead  
From living man ; that stretched ahead  
Her resolute forefinger straight  
And marched toward the gloomy gate  
Of Earth's Untried.

It is needless to dwell upon the affinity between this temper of adventure in poetry and the teaching of Bergson. That the link is not wholly fortuitous is shown by the interesting *Art Poétique* (1903) of his quondam pupil, Claudel, a little treatise pervaded by the idea of Creative-evolution.

It was natural in such a time to assume that any living art of poetry must itself be new, and, in fact, the years immediately before and after the turn of the century are crowded with announcements of "new" movements in art of every kind. Beside Claudel's *Art Poétique* we have in England the New Æstheticism of Grant Allen; in Germany the "new principle" in verse of Arno Holz. And here, again, the English innovators are distinguished by a good-humoured gaiety, if also by a slighter build of thought, from the French or Nietzschean "re-valuers".

Like their predecessors in the earlier Romantic school, the new adventurers have notoriously experimented with poetic form. France, the home of the most rigid and meticulous metrical tradition, had already led the way in substituting for the strictly measured verse the more loosely organized harmonies of rhythmical prose, bound together, and, indeed, made recognizable as verse, in any sense, solely by the rhyme. With the Symbolists' "free verse" was an attempt to capture finer modulations of music than the rigid frame of metre allowed. With their successors it had rather the value of a plastic medium in which every variety of matter and of mood could be faithfully expressed. But whether called verse or not, the vast, rushing modulations of rhythmic music in the great pieces of Claudel and others have a magnificence not to be denied. And the less explicitly poetic form permits matter which would jar on the poetic instinct if conveyed through a metrical form to be taken up as it were in this larger and looser stride.

In Germany, on the other hand, the rhythmic emancipation of Whitman was carried out, in the school of Arno Holz, with a revolutionary audacity beyond the example even of Claudel. Holz states with great clearness and trenchancy what he calls his "new principle of lyric"; one which "abandons all verbal music as an aim, and is borne solely by a rhythm made vital by the thought struggling through it to expression". Rhyme and strophe are given up, only rhythm remains.

Of our Georgian poetry, it must suffice to note that here, too, the

temper of adventure in form is rife. But it shows itself, characteristically, less in revolutionary innovation than in attempts to elicit new and strange effects from traditional measures by deploying to the uttermost, and in bold and extreme combinations, their traditional resources and variations, as in the blank verse of Mr. Abercrombie and Mr. Bottomley. This, and much beside in Georgian verse, has moods and moments of rare beauty. But, on the whole, verse-form is the region of poetic art in which Georgian poetry, as a whole, is least secure.

### 3. *The New Realism.*

We see, then, how deeply rooted this new freedom is in the passion for actuality ; not the dream, but the waking and alert experience throbs and pulses in it. We have now to look more closely into this and other aspects of it. Realism is a hard-worked term, but it may be taken to imply that the overflowing vitality of which poetry is one expression fastens with peculiar eagerness upon the visible and tangible world about us and seeks to convey that zest in words. Our poets not only do not scorn the earth to lose themselves in the sky ; they are positive friends of the matter-of-fact, and that not in spite of poetry, but for poetry's sake ; and Pegasus flies more freely because "things" are "in the saddle" along with the poet.

That this matter-of-factness is loved by poets, for poetry's sake, marks it off once for all from the photographic or "plain" realism of Crabbe. But it is also clearly distinct from the no less poetic realism of Wordsworth. Wordsworth's mind is conservative and traditional ; his inspiration is static ; he glorifies the primrose on the river brink by seeing its transience in the light of something far more deeply interfused which does not change nor pass away. Romance, in a high sense, lies about his greatest poetry. But it is a romance rooted in memory, not in hope—the "glory of the grass and splendour of the flower" which he had seen in childhood, and imaginatively re-created in maturity ; a romance which change, and especially the intrusion of industrial man, dispelled and destroyed. Whereas the romance of our new realism rests, in good part, precisely in the sense that the thing so vividly gripped is not, or need not be, permanent, may turn into something else, has only a tenancy, not a free-hold, in its conditions of space and time, a "toss-up" hold upon existence, as it were, full of the zest of adventurous insecurity. A pessimistic philosophy would

dissipate this romance, or strip it of all but the mournful poetry of doom. Mr. Chesterton glorifies the dust which may become a flower or a face, against the Reverend Peter Bell for whom dust is dust and no more, and Hamlet, who only remembers that it was once Cæsar. If our realism is buoyant, if it had at once the absorbed and the open mind, this is, in large part, in virtue of the temper which finds reality a perpetual creation. Every moment is precious and significant, for it comes with the burden and meaning of something that has never completely been before ; and goes by only to give place to another moment equally curious and new.

Moreover, in this incessantly created reality we are ourselves incessantly creative. That may seem to follow as a matter of course ; but it corresponds with the most radical of the distinctions between our realism and that of Wordsworth. When Mr. Wells tells us that his most comprehensive belief about the universe is that every part of it is ultimately important, he is not expressing a mystic pantheism which feels every part to be divine, but a generous pragmatism which holds that every part works. The idea of shaping and adapting will, of energy in industry, of mere routine practicality in office or household, is no longer tabooed, or shyly evaded ; not because of any theoretic exaltation of labour or consecration of the commonplace, but merely because to use things, to make them fulfil our purposes, to bring them into touch with our activities, itself throws a kind of halo over even very humble and homely members of the "divine democracy of things".

Rupert Brooke draws up a famous catalogue of the things of which he was a "great lover". He loved them, he says, simply as being. And no doubt, the simple sensations of colour, touch, or smell counted for much. But compare them with the things that Keats, a yet greater lover of sensations, loved. You feel in Brooke's list that he liked doing things as well as feasting his passive senses ; these "plates," "holes in the ground," "washen stones," the cold graveness of iron, and so forth. One detects in the list the Brooke who, as a boy, went about with a book of poems in one hand and a cricket-ball in the other, and whose left hand well knew what his right hand did. That takes us far from the dream of eternal beauty which a Greek urn or a nightingale's song brought to Keats, and the fatal word "forlorn," bringing back the light of common day, dispelled. The

old ethical and æsthetic canons are submerged in a passion for life which finds a good beyond good and evil, and a beauty born of ugliness more vital than beauty's self. "The worth of a drama is measured," said D'Annunzio, "by its fulness of life," and the formula explains, if it does not justify, those tropical gardens, rank with the gross blooms of "superhuman" eroticism and ferocity, to which he latterly gave that name. And we know how Maeterlinck has emerged from the mystic dreams and silences of his recluse chamber to unfold the dramatic pugnacities of birds and bees.

In the work of Verhaeren, the modern industrial city, with its spreading tentacles of devouring grime and squalor, its clanging factories, its teeming bazaars and warehouses, and all its thronging human population, is taken up triumphantly into poetry. Verhaeren is the poet of "tumultuous forces," whether they appear in the roar and clash of "that furnace we call existence," or in the heroic struggles of the Flemish nation for freedom. And he exhibits those surging forces in a style itself full of tumultuous power, Germanic rather than French in its violent and stormy splendour, and using the chartered licence of the French "free verse" itself with more emphasis than subtlety.

#### 4. *The Cult of Force.*

In Verhaeren, indeed, we are conscious of passing into the presence of power more elemental and unrestrained than the civil refinement of our Georgians, at their wildest, allows us to suspect. The tragic and heroic history of his people, and their robust art, the art of Rembrandt, and of Teniers, vibrates in the Flemish poet. He has much of the temperament of Nietzsche, and if not evidently swayed by his ideas, or even aware of them, and with a generous faith in humanity which Nietzsche never knew, he thinks and imagines with a kindred joy in violence :

I love man and the world, and I adore the force  
Which my force gives and takes from man and the universe.

And it is no considerable step from him to the poets who in this third phase of our period have unequivocally exulted in power and burnt incense or offered sacrifice before the altar of the strong man. The joy in creation which, we saw, gives its romance to so much of the realism of our time, now appears accentuated in the fiercer romance

of conflict and overthrow. Thanks largely to Nietzsche, this romance acquired the status of an authoritative philosophy—even, in his own country, that of an ethical orthodoxy.

In poetry, the contributory forces were still more subtly mingled, and the Nietzschean spirit, which blows where it listeth, often touched men wholly alien from Nietzsche in cast of genius and sometimes stoutly hostile to him. Several of the most illustrious were not Germans at all. Among the younger men who resist, while they betray, his spell is the most considerable lyric poet of the present generation in Germany. Richard Dehmel's vehement inspiration from the outset provoked comparison with Nietzsche, which he warmly resented.

He began, in fact, as a disciple of Verlaine, and we may detect in the unrestraint of his early erotics the example of the French poet's *fureur d'aimer*. But Dehmel's more strongly-built nature, and perhaps the downright vigour of the German language, broke through the tenuities of *la nuance*. It was not the subtle artistry of the Symbolists, but the ethical and intellectual force of the German character, which finally drew into a less anarchic channel the vehement energy of Dehmel. Nietzsche had imagined an ethic of superhuman will "beyond good and evil". The poet, replied Dehmel, had indeed to know the passion which transcends good and evil, but he had to know no less the good and evil themselves of the world in and by which common men live. And if he can cry with the egoism of lawless passion, in the *Erlösungen*, "I will fathom all pleasure to the deepest depths of thirst. . . . Resign not pleasure, it waters power,"—he can add, in the true spirit of Goethe and of the higher mind of Germany, "Yet since it also makes slack, turn it into the stuff of duty!"

If Nietzsche provoked into antagonism the sounder elements in Dehmel, he was largely responsible for destroying such sanity as the amazing genius of Gabriele D'Annunzio had ever possessed. He let loose all the Titan, and all consequently that was least Hellenic, in the fertile genius of the Italian; his wonderful instinct for beauty, his inexhaustible resources of style are employed in creating orgies of superhuman valour, lust, and cruelty like some of his later dramas, and hymns intoxicated with the passion for Power, like the splendid Ode in which the City of the Seven Hills is prophetically seen once

more the mistress of the world, loosing the knot of all the problems of humanity.

If D'Annunzio emulates Nietzsche, the two great militant poets of Catholic France would have scorned the comparison. Charles Péguy's brief career was shaped from his first entrance, poor and of peasant birth, at a Paris Lycee, to his heroic death in the field, September, 1914, by a daemonic force of character. His heroine, glorified in his first book, was Jeanne d'Arc, who attempted the impossible, and achieved it. In writing, his principle—shocking to French literary tradition—was to speak the brutal truth *brutalement*. As a poet he stood in the direct lineage of Corneille, whose *Polyeucte* he thought the greatest of the world's tragedies. As a man, he embodied with naive intensity the unsurpassed inborn heroism of the French race.

And if we look for corresponding phenomena at home, we find them surely in the masculine, militant, and, in the French sense, brutal poetry of W. E. Henley and Rudyard Kipling. If any modern poets have conceived life in terms of will, and penetrated their verse with that faith, it is the author of "I am the Captain of my Soul," the "Book of the Sword," and "London Voluntaries," friend and subject of the great kindred-minded sculptor Rodin, the poet over whose grave in St. Paul's George Wyndham found the right word when he said—marking him off from the great contemplative, listening poets of the past—"His music was not the still sad music of humanity; it was never still, rarely sad, always intrepid". And we know how Kipling, after sanctioning the mischievous superstition that "East and West can never meet," refuted it by producing his own "two strong men".

### 5. *The New Idealism.*

#### (1) *Nationality.*

We have now seen something of that power, at once of grip and of detachment with which the dominant poetry of this century faces what it thinks of as the adventure of experience, its plunge into the ever-moving and ever-changing stream of life. How then, it remains to ask, has it dealt with those ideal aspirations and beliefs which one may live intensely and ignore, which in one sense stand "above the battle," but for which men have lived and died?



What is the distinctive note of this new poetry of nationality ? And for the moment I speak of the years before the War. May we not say that in it the ideal of country is saturated with that imaginative grip of reality in all its concrete energy and vivacity which I have called the new realism ? The nation is no abstraction, whether it be called Britannia or Deutschland uber Alles. It is seen, and felt ; seen in its cities as well as in its mountains, in the workers who have made it, as well as in the heroes who have defended it ; in its roaring forges as well as in its idyllic woodlands and its tales of battles long ago ; and all these not as separate strands in a woven pattern, but as waters of different origin and hue pouring along together in the same great stream.

Emile Verhaeren, six years before the invasion, had seen and felt his country, living body and living soul, with an intensity which made it seem unimaginable that she should be permanently subdued. He well called his book *Toute la Flandre*, for all Flanders is there. Old Flanders,—Artevelde and Charles Temeraire—whose soul was a forest of huge trees and dark thickets,

A wilderness of crossing ways below,  
But eagles, over, soaring to the sun,—

Van Eyck and Rubens—"a thunder of colossal memories" ; then the great cities, with their belfries and their foundries, and their warehouses and laboratories, their antique customs and modern ambitions ; and the rivers, the homely familiar Lys, where the women wash the whitest of linen, and the mighty Scheldt, the Escaut, the "hero sombre, violent and magnificent," "savage and beautiful Escaut," whose companionship had moulded and made the poet, whose rhythms had begotten his music and his best ideas.

None of our English poets have rendered England in poetry with quite this supple and plastic power. Wordsworth wrote magnificently of England threatened with invasion, and magnificently of the Lake Country, Nature's beloved land. But the War sonnets and the lake and mountain poetry come from distinct strains in his genius, which our criticism may bring into relation, but our feeling insists on keeping apart. His Grasmere is a province of Nature—her favourite province—rather than of England ; it is in the eye of Nature that the old Cumberland beggar lives and dies ; England provides the obnoxious

workhouses to which these destitute vagrants were henceforth to be consigned. Is it not this that divides our modern local poetry from his? Mr. Belloc's Sussex is tenderly loved for itself; yet behind its great hills and its old-world harbours lies the half mystic presence of historic England. And in Edward Thomas's wonderful old Wiltshireman Lob, worthy, I think, to be named with the Cumberland Beggar,

An old man's face, by life and weather cut  
And coloured,—rough, brown, sweet as any nut,—  
A land face, sea-blue eyed,—

you read the whole lineage of old, sterling English yeoman and woodlanders from whom Lob springs.

Sometimes this feeling is given in a single, intense, concentrated touch. When Rupert Brooke tells us of

Some corner of a foreign field  
That is for ever England. There shall be  
In that rich earth a richer dust concealed;  
A dust whom England bore, shaped, made aware,  
Gave, once, her flowers to love, her ways to roam,—

do we not feel that the solidarity of England with the English folk, and of the English folk with the English soil, is burnt into our imaginations in a new and distinctive way?

#### (2) *Democracy.*

The growth of democratic as of national feeling during the later century naturally produced a plentiful harvest of eloquent utterance in verse. With this, merely as such, I am not here concerned, even though it be as fine as the socialist songs of William Morris or Edward Carpenter. But the Catholic socialism of Charles Péguy—itsself an original, and, for most of his contemporaries, a bewildering combination—struck at a no less original poetry, a poetry of solidarity. Péguy's socialism, like his Catholicism, was single-souled; he ignored that behind the one was a Party and behind the other a Church. It was his bitterest regret that a vast part of humanity was removed beyond the pale of fellowship by eternal damnation. It was his sublimest thought that the solidarity of man includes the damned. In his first vision of the Jeanne d'Arc mystery already referred to, he tells how Jesus crucified,

Saw not his Mother in tears at the Cross-foot  
 Below him, saw not Magdalene nor John,  
 But wept, dying, only for Judas' death.  
 The Saviour loved this Judas, and tho' utterly  
 He gave himself, he knew he could not save him.

It was the dogma of damnation which for long kept Péguy out of its fold, that barbarous mixture of life and death, he called it, which no man will accept who has won the spirit of collective humanity. But he revolted, not because he was tolerant of evil ; on the contrary, to damn sins was for him a weak and unsocial solution ; evil had not to be damned but to be fought down. Whether this vision of Christ weeping because he could not save Judas was unchristian, or more Christian than Christianity itself, we need not discuss here ; but I am sure that the spirit of Catholic democracy as transfigured in the mind of a great poet could not be more nobly rendered.

### (3) *Catholicism.*

But Péguy's powerful personality set its own stamp upon whatever he believed, and though a close friend of Jaures, he was a Socialist who rejected almost all the ideas of the Socialist School. As little was his Catholicism to the mind of the Catholic authorities. And his Catholic poetry is sharply marked off from most of the poetry that burgeoned under the stimulus of the remarkable revival of Catholic ideas in twentieth century France. I say of Catholic ideas, for sceptical poets like Rêmy de Gourmont, played delicately with the symbols of Catholic worship, made "Litanies" of roses, and offered prayers to Jeanne d'Arc, walking dreamily in the procession of "Women saints of Paradise," to "fill our hearts with anger". The Catholic adoration of Women-saints is one of the springs of modern poetry. At the close of the century of Wordsworth and Shelley, the tender Nature-worship of Francis of Assisi contributed not less to the recovered power of Catholic ideas in poetry, and this chiefly in the person of two poets in France and in England, both of whom played half-mystically with the symbolism of their names, Francis Thomson and Francis Jammes. The childlike naivete of St. Francis is more delicately reflected in Jammes, a Catholic W. H. Davies, who casts the idyllic light of Biblical Pastoral over modern farm life, and prays to "his friends, the Asses" to go with him to Paradise, "for there is no hell in the land of Bon Dieu".

But the most powerful creative imagination to-day in the service of Catholic ideas is certainly Paul Claudel. At the altar of some great French Church at noon, where the poet, not long after the first decisive check of the invaders on the Marne, finds himself, alone, before the shrine of Marie. Here, too, his devotion finds a speech not borrowed from the devout or from their poetry :—

It is noon. I see the Church is open. I must enter.  
Mother of Jesus Christ, I do not come to pray.

I have nothing to offer, and nothing to ask.  
I came only, Mother, to gaze to you.

To gaze at you, to weep for happiness, to know  
That I am your son and that you are there.

Nothing at all but for a moment when all is still,  
Noon ! to be with you, Marie, in this place where you are.

To say nothing, to gaze upon your face,  
To let the heart sing in its own speech.

There the nationalist passion of Claudel animates his Catholic religion, yet does not break through its confines. But sometimes the strain of suffering and ruin is too intense for Christian submission, and he takes his God to task truculently for not doing his part in the contract ; we are his partner in running the world, and see, he is asleep ! There is a great alliance, willy-nilly, between us henceforth—there is bread that with no trembling hand  
We have offered you, this wine that we have poured anew,  
Our tears that you have gathered, our brothers that you share with us leaving the seed in the earth,  
There is this living sacrifice of which we satisfy each day's demand,  
This chalice we have drunk with you !

Yet the devout passion emerges again, with notes of piercing pathos :—

#### LE PRECIEUX SONG.

Lord, who hast promised us for one glass of water a boundless sea,  
Who knows if thou art not thirsty too ?  
And that this blood, which is all we have, will quench the thirst in Thee,  
We know, for Thou hast told us so.  
If, indeed, there is a spring in us, well, that is what is to be shown.  
If this wine of ours is red,  
If our blood has virtue, as Thou sayest, how can it be known  
Otherwise than by being shed ?

Thus the great Catholic poet could sing under the pressure of the supreme national crisis of his country. Poetry at such times may become a great national instrument, a trumpet whence Milton or Wordsworth, Arnold or Whitman, blow soul-animating strains. The War of 1914 was for all the belligerent peoples far more than a stupendous military event. The psychical upheaval was most violent in the English-speaking peoples, where the military shock was least direct ; for here a nation of civilians embraced suddenly the new and amazing experience of battle. Here too, the imaginatively sensitive minds who interpret life through poetry, and most of all the youngest and freshest among them, themselves shared in the glories and the throes of the fight, as hardly one of the singers of our most stirring battle poetry had ever done before. How did this new and amazing experience react upon their poetry ? This, our final question, is perhaps the crucial one in considering the tendencies of recent European poetry.

In the first place, it enormously stimulated and quickened what was deepest and strongest in the energies and qualities which had been apparent in our latter-day poetry before. They had sought to clasp life, to live, not merely to contemplate, experience ; and here, indeed, was life, and death, and both to be embraced. Here was adventure, indeed, but one whose grimness made romance cheap, so that in this war poetry, for the first time in history, the romance and glamour of war, the pomp and circumstance of military convention, fall entirely away, and the bitterest scorn of these soldier-poets is bestowed, not on the enemy, but on those contemplators who disguised its realities with the camouflage of the pulpit and the editorial armchair. Turn, I will not say from Campbell or from Tennyson, but from Rudyard Kipling or Sir H. Newbolt to Siegfried Sassoon, and you feel that you have got away from a literary convention, whether conveyed in the manners of the barrack-room or of the public school, to something intolerably true, and which holds the poet in so fierce a grip that his song is a cry.

But if the War has brought our poets face to face with intense kinds of real experience, which they have fearlessly grasped and rendered, its grim obsession has not made them cynical, or clogged the wings of their faith and their hope. I will not ask how the war has affected the idealism of others, whether it has left the nationalism of our press or the religion of our pulpits purer or more gross than it found them. But of our poets, at least, that cannot be said. In Rupert

Brooks the inspirations of the call obliterated the last trace of dilettante youth's professions, and he encountered darkness like a bride, and greeted the unseen death not with "a cheer" as a peril to be faced, but as a great consummation, the supreme safety. How his poetry would have reacted to the actual experience of war we can only guess. But in others, his friends and comrades, the fierce immersion in the welter of ruin and pain and filth and horror and death brought only a more superb faith in the power of man's soul to rise above the hideous obsession of his own devilries, to retain the vision of beauty through the riot of foul things, of love through the tumult of hatreds, of life through the infinity of death. True this was not a new power : poetry to be poetry must always in some measure possess it. What was individual to the poets was that this power of mastering actually went along in them with the fierce and eager immersion in it ; the thrill of breathing the

Calm and serene air  
Above the smoke and stir of this dim spot  
Which men call Earth,

with the thrill of seeing and painting in all its lurid colouring the volcanic chaos of this "stir and smoke" itself. Thus the same Siegfried Sassoon who renders with so much close analytic psychology the moods that cross and fluctuate in the dying hospital patient, or the haunted fugitive, as he flounders among mire and stumps, to feel at last the strangling clasp of death, can as little as the visionary Shelley overcome the insurgent sense that these dead are for us yet alive, made one with Nature.

He visits the deserted home of his dead friend :—

#### THE LAST MEETING.

Ah, but there was no need to call his name,  
He was beside me now, as swift as light . . .  
For now, he said, my spirit has more eyes  
Than heaven has stars, and they are lit by love.  
My body is the magic of the world,  
And dark and sunset flame with my spilt blood.

Further, this war poetry, while reflecting military things with a veracity hardly known before, is yet rarely militant. We must not look for explicit pacifist or international ideas ; but as little do we find jingo patriotism or hymns of hate. The author of the German hymn of hate was a much better poet than anyone who tried an English

hymn in the same key, and the English poets who could have equalled its form were above its spirit. Edith Cavell's dying words "Patriotism is not enough" cannot perhaps be paralleled in their poems but they are continually suggested. They do not say, in the phrase of the old cavalier poet, We should love England less if we loved not something else more, or that something is wanting in our love for our country if we wrong humanity in its name. But the spirit which is embodied in these phrases breathes through them; heroism matters more to them than victory, and they know that death and sorrow and the love of kindred have no fatherland. They "stand above the battle" as well as share in it, and they share in it without ceasing to stand above it.

Finally, the poet himself glories in his act; he knows that he can beat into music even the crashing discords that fill his ears; he knows too that he has a music of his own which they cannot subdue or debase:

I keep such music in my brain  
No din this side of death can quell;  
Glory exalting over pain,  
And beauty garlanded in hell.

To have found and kept and interwoven these two musics—a language of unflinching veracity and one of equally unflinching hope and faith—is the achievement of our war-poetry. May we not say that the possession of these two musics, of these two moods, springing as they do from the blended grip and idealism of English character, warrants hope for the future of English poetry? For it is rooted in the greatest and the most English of the ways of poetic experience which have gone to the making of our poetic literature—the way, ultimately, of Shakespeare and of Wordsworth. Beauty abounds in our later poets, but it is a beauty that flashes in broken lights, not the full-orbed radiance of a masterpiece. To enlarge the grasp of poetry over the field of reality, to larger range, is not at once to find consummate expression for what is apprehended. The flawless perfection of the Parnassians—of Heredia's sonnets—is nowhere approached in the less aristocratically exclusive poetry of to-day. But the future, in poetry also, is with the spirit which founds the aristocracy of noble art not upon exclusion, negations, and routine, but upon imaginative discovery and catholic openness of mind.