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ENGLISH LITERATURE FROM THE MIDDLE AGES TO ROMANTICISM

Course book 2

THE STUART MASQUE

The new reign quickly accelerated the change which had already been in the air in the 1590s. In the first place England was becoming an increasingly urbanised and cosmopolitan society whose focus was an ever-expanding London with a population of a quarter of a million. Successive Stuart governments were to struggle to put a stop to endless suburban sprawl. London became a cultural capital in every sense. Not only was the court at hand but the city itself also provided a permanent round of pleasure with its theatres and other entertainments, and its luxury trades, booksellers and portrait painters, tomb-makers and silversmiths, tailors and instrument makers. In short we see the gradual emergence of fashionable life and of a leisured class apart from the court.

The new king's role as peace-maker – he cast himself as the British Solomon – meant that after the treaty with Spain in 1604 the roads were open right across the continental mainland. Even that city of the Protestants' Antichrist, Rome, could be visited. In this way travellers were not only able to see but also to import everything that had happened, and was indeed currently happening abroad back to Britain. The long isolation since the 1530s was at an end. The full impact of that was not to be felt until a new generation came to maturity in the 1630s but during the preceding decades the new became ever more intrusive. But for a time old and new were to live side by side.

A high price was to be paid, however, for the eventual triumph of the new. The Elizabethan age had produced a one nation culture, held together by the external threat of Spain and the forces of the Catholic Counter-Reformation and bound in loyalty to a Virgin Queen, a monarch whose delight lay in her people. If James I and his successor Charles I had inherited that delight in the populace and dedication to the Protestant cause the incipient cultural polarisation between the new court culture and the rest of the country might have been averted. As it was, both kings contracted out of public appearances, opting for a court which epitomised cultural isolation. In the case of James this was exacerbated by scandal and by pursuing Catholic marriages for his sons. In the case of Charles I, a Catholic queen and a return of ritual and images to the Church of England were to contribute to alienation from the population. But the full consequences of this did not begin to bite deep until after about 1615, when the new thinking enters into the ascendant. In 1603 to all intents and purposes it was business as usual, although the warning signs were to come early.

What Stuart courtly culture did signal was the exaltation of the esoteric. That was already manifest in the king's state entry into London in 1604, when seven elaborate triumphal arches stood as visual incantations to regal mystery, piled high with images which called for extreme erudition: 'And for the multitude,' wrote Ben Jonson, 'no doubt but their grounded judgements did gaze, said it was fine, and were satisfied.' Jonson was to be the ideal poet for this new closed courtly civilisation. Thoroughly imbued in the Renaissance hermetic tradition of secret ancient wisdom, transmitted over the millennia by means of arcane images (the common language of man before the Babel of tongues), he was to write the masques for the court. Jonson was an embodiment of the belief that the role of poets and artists was to make manifest not the reality of kingship but its idea as it dwelt in the Platonic realm. Thus king and courtiers were made to approximate to universally recognised ideal types and not the monuments to time-serving, sycophancy and scandals that they actually

were. Writing about his masque for 1605 Jonson states that it was not only a manifestation of the old Tudor princely virtue of magnificence but also about something else. Its aim, he says, was educative, to purvey to the onlookers 'the most high and hearty inventions to furnish the inward parts . . . which, though their voice be taught to sound to present occasions their sense doth or should always lay hold of more removed mysteries.' That was what was innovative about *The Masque of Blackness.* It was a regal mystery for pondering by the few.

But what was innovative about his collaborator, Inigo Jones, in that first masque? This was the earliest appearance of what was to develop into the picture-frame stage with the scenery concentrated at one end of a space and arranged according to the rules of Renaissance scientific perspective. Add to this moving stage machinery and a manipulation of artificial light, all things which were in use at advanced Italian courts at the close of the previous century but were totally unknown in England. This was a revolution in visual perception, replacing medieval polycentricity (a way of organising space in which things could be looked at from more than one angle at the same time) by a concept of space, reached by the application of the laws of mathematics and geometry, in which man was placed at the centre of a unified and harmonic cosmos. In particular, it cast the monarch at the focal point because in his eyes all the lines of perspective of the stage set met. It was to take time for the audience to grasp this. Even in the 1630s someone was to describe a perspective stage set as though he was looking at bookcases jutting out in a library. Like Jonson, Jones also regarded the masque as an educative vehicle, and by the 1630s perspective had invaded painting, architecture, town planning, interior decoration and gardening. The new perspective and the tide towards absolute monarchy went in tandem.

Jones's masque sets over the years were also to educate his audiences towards a taste for classical antiquity and classical architecture. At first he was to mingle the new Renaissance style with the old Elizabethan neo-medievalism but gradually that was to disappear. Jones is a key figure, more so than Jonson, for what happened to early Stuart civilisation can almost be written in terms of this astounding man who was already thirty-five in 1605 and was not to design his first complete building until ten years later. Architect, mechanic, mathematician, artist, designer, antiquary and connoisseur, he was for years virtually alone in Britain in his knowledge of the modern arts of design. As a consequence his influence was to be unparalleled. Jones had been to Italy at the close of the 1590s and was recommended to the service of the new queen by her brother, Christian IV of Denmark. What set him apart is that he was the first Englishman to lay claim to being an architect as conceived in the writings of the first century Roman, Vitruvius, and as revived by the great architects of the Italian Renaissance from Alberti onwards. In this scheme of things architecture was the queen of all the arts, whose task, by means of a series of mathematical ratios, was to reflect the proportioned cosmic harmony of the spheres in their heavenly placing, and also to be a microcosmic echo of those in the dimensions of the ideal man. Such a stance depended on the Pythagorean belief that the universe was mathematically constructed according to certain key ratios that were also the source of musical harmony. Through art, Jones brought the music of the spheres down to earth. For such a task, the architect needed also to have knowledge of mathematics, astronomy, music, geometry and philosophy (of a Platonic kind) as well as mastery of the practicalities of building. It was to take time and further study in Italy by Jones himself for the full consequences of this concept to strike root. For the most part, architecture was to

remain as it had been in the Elizabethan age, an expression of the patron realised in consultation with master craftsmen and surveyors. Jones, however, had one skill which he was again the first to turn to advantage. He could draw, and thus present to his patrons his ideas on paper.

Jonson, together with Jones, gave the Stuart court its seminal art form, the masque, an entertainment which linked poetry and moral philosophy to art. Each masque used music, dance, poetry and lavish illusionistic scenic display to translate the doctrines of divine kingship into a seductive educational experience, engaging both the senses and the emotions. They were virtually always staged at Epiphanytide or to mark a great event like a dynastic marriage. The audience was presented with a series of mechanical scenic marvels culminating in the queen or one of the princes, attended by a group of aristocratic personages, being revealed in glory as gods, seemingly let down from heaven to earth. The scenery was the action, a series of visual emblems and allegories which dissolved before the spectator's eyes like a succession of baroque altarpieces, each transformation precipitated by the power of the royal presence which could bring, for example, spring in winter or the return of the Golden Age. Within the limitations of the age the impact on the audiences must have been quite awe-inspiring as these celestial tableaux, mysteriously masked and gorgeously attired, suddenly sprang to life, processing downstage into the auditorium, attended by musicians and torchbearers, to dance.

These were secular liturgies with Jonson and Jones as the high priests. Over the years Jonson perfected and elaborated the format, introducing what was called an anti-masque, a grotesque opening scene which satirized the enemies of king and court, figures like witches, furies or troublemakers, serving to heighten the splendour

The most important early patron of the new arts was that lost figure in British history, Henry, Prince of Wales. He came of age in 1610 and was to die of typhoid fever on 6 November 1612. If he had lived to succeed, British civilisation might have been far different. Henry was a youth of quite exceptional preciosity, one who, unlike his father, not only had a political programme but a cultural one aligned to it. He revivified the mythology of the Elizabethan era, casting himself as a prince whose aspirations lay in vanquishing Rome, adopting in the tournaments and masques roles such as Meliadus, a descendant of Spenser's Red Cross Knight, or Oberon, the Fairy Prince, heir to the Faerie Queene. At the same time he embarked on an ambitious artistic programme which embraced everything from collecting old master paintings to building in the new classical style. So the prince is in a sense Janus-faced, he simultaneously revives the old while at the same time taking up the mantle of the new.

His cultural policy is conveniently summed up in one spectacle, the *Barriers* of 1610, in which he made his first public appearance before the court. Here, amidst the ruins of the House Chivalry, seen as classical, Merlin conjures the prince up as heir to King Arthur and the knight who will revive Lady Chivalry. He appears to do just that in a scene which marries Elizabethan neo-medievalism with specific ancient Roman buildings:

> More truth of architecture there was blazed
> Than lived in all the ignorant Goths have razed.

For three years the prince was to preside over a court in which old and new were brought into synthesis, both seen to be serving a united and aggressive Protestant cause.

(For further details, see, if you wish, R. Strong. The Spirit of Britain.) 4

POETRY OF THE FIRST HALF OF THE 17th CENTURY

JOHN DONNE (1572-1631)

Donne's poetry is remarkable for its **fusion of passionate feeling and logical argument**. He gave to the short lyric something of the flexibility, the urgent and profound expressiveness that came to be developed in dramatic blank verse. The play of intellect tended to become for him an emotional experience. Some of D's dialectical acuteness may have derived from his Catholic upbringing and his study of scholastic philosophy, his employment of its concepts led later to the use of the term **'metaphysical'** to define his wit and his particular type of conceit, and to its extension by Dr Johnson to describe his followers and imitators.

Conceits and **wit** were a recognized part of Elizabethan rhetorical apparatus for amplifying a theme, but D's characteristic use of them involves such an extraordinary range of ideas and experiences with such startling connections between them, the whole process seems to work at a so much higher pressure, that in comparison the general Elizabethan use of conceits appears merely superficial and ingenious. When it fails, the metaphysical conceit answers to Dr Johnson's account: "the most heterogenous ideas are yoked by violence together". When it succeeds one thinks rather of Coleridge's remark that imagination shows itself in "the balance or reconciliation of opposites or discordant qualitites".

D's style was the natural expression of his sensibility, and its originality is reflected in his choice and treatment of subject. As he rejects the melodious fluency of Spenser's verse or the decorative use of classical mythology, so he turns from the Petrarchan conventions to analyse the experience of love in a variety of moods ranging from cynical sensuality to a profound sense of union, but always with the same realistic force and eager play of mind. When he turns to religious poetry later in life there is no change of style or method: the same variety and range of experience are drawn on, and the same dramatic power expresses his mental conflicts.

BEN JONSON (1572-1637)

The other great formative influence in seventeenth-century poetry was J. It is not so much that, as some older histories of literature used to assert, there was a 'school of Donne' and a 'school of Jonson'; rather that almost any seventeenth-century poet will show signs of having learnt from both, though the proportions and the nature of the blend may differ widely.

J's non-dramatic verse does not show such an obvious originality or such a decisive breach with contemporary fashion as Donne's; yet his different modification of the Elizabethan manner is almost equally significant. His lyrics have **a greater neatness and point**, they are **more economical in method**, and the best of them achieve **a striking sureness of movement** which is different from the limpid Elizabethan flow of verse.

Apart from lyrics, including numerous songs from his plays and masques, J wrote chiefly occasional verse - epigrams, epitaphs, odes and epistles. He rejected equally the Petrarchan convention, the Spenserian fluency and 'sweetness long-drawn out', and with rare exceptions the sonnet form. For his models he turned from the French and Italian to the Latin lyric poems and epigrammatists, especially Catullus, Horace and Martial. From these he learned a **detached coolness of style** which can unite with genuine feeling to give it **restraint , stability** and **permanence**. When he fails, J can be laboured and pedantic, but his characteristic successes achieve **an urbane elegance**. Without attempting the obvious dramatic effect of Donne's broken rhythm, his detachment and **epigrammatic conciseness** combine to produce an effect of wit, though it is not of the metaphysical kind and does not

employ Donne's type of conceit. In *Discoveries*, his commonplace-book of critical notes, J remarked that 'metaphors far-fet hinder to be understood' and the kind of strength he sought for was not to be achieved through obscurity or metaphorical complexity.

THE 'METAPHYSICAL' POETS

The remarkable development of religious poetry in the seventeenth century forms a striking contrast with the previous age which has little poetry of this kind. An exception must be made for the poetry of the jesuit martyr **Robert Southwell** (c. 1561-96), which shows an odd mingling of the earlier, more naive Elizabethan rhetoric and the Counter-Reformation ardour, sensousness and love of paradox.

Much religious poetry of this period was affected by the vogue of books of **'emblems'**, sets of allegorical pictures each accompanied by verses expounding its moral. The first emblem book in English appeared in 1586, but the most significant examples of religious verse in this form were the collections of Emblems by **Francis Quarles** (1592-1644). The indirect influence of the emblem may be seen in the imagery of such poets as Herbert and Crashaw.

GEORGE HERBERT (1593-1633)

The use of the metaphysical style in religious poetry by H owes much to Donne, with whom he had early contacts, his mother being one of Donne's friends and patronesses. There are obvious contrasts: H shows neither Donne's passionate and tortured arguments nor his aggressive unconventionality of style. His **courtly urbanity of language**, **his varied and musical verse forms**, and **a certain neatness and point**, suggest the further influence of Ben Jonson. But it is from Donne that H derives his wit and his conceits. Drawing upon ordinary experience and practical affairs rather than scholastic or scientific learning, H's wit is often distinguished as **'homely'**, sometimes as 'quaint', and it does at times suggest simply the **play of an ingenious fancy**. In his best work it has imaginative intensity and the effect of surprise. Sometimes the conceit lies in a title suggesting the emblem (*The Collar, The Pulley*), or it may be extended into a short allegorical narrative, foreshadowing Bunyan (*Redemption, The Pilgrimage*). The realistic strength underlying H's grace of style is related to the maturity of his emotional and religious life. The serenity of his faith was not achieved without suffering and conflict which are finally resolved in faith and acceptance. At its most characteristic, this acceptance is not mere resignation but suggests mature choice. H's best work embodies the religious temper of the seventeenth century at its finest and most humane.

RICHARD CRASHAW (1612-49)

In his use of conceits C has neither Donne's intellectual range nor Herbert's homely realism. He **combines a fondness for paradox with sensuous warmth** in the manner of the Italian poets of the Counter-Reformation, especially Marino and the jesuit writers of Latin epigrams. Both influences lead towards a use of the conceit as **isolated ornament** rather than as an integral part of a poem's total meaning. Even before his conversion to Rome about 1645, C was writing in a vein of **voluptous mysticism** which suggest Italian and Spanish **baroque** art. He carries to extremes the traditional use of erotic metaphor to convey the ecstasies of adoration and his uncontrolled lyric fervour sometimes collapses into an exclamatory verbal haze, yet there are passages of eloquent and passionate conviction. Where there is an obvious emblematic quality, or a close relation to liturgy, or both, as in some of the later poems, the conceits and paradoxes often take on a quality of formal ritual, which lessens their general poetic force. In various ways, therefore, C's poetry moves away from the tradition of Donne and Herbert, but at times (as notably in the lines to the Countess of Denbigh) an

approximation to metaphysical wit adds strength and substance to his ecstatic lyricism.

HENRY VAUGHAN (1622-95)

Like Crashaw, V wrote some secular verse in fashionable modes, but he is chiefly remembered for the religious poetry of his collection *Silex Scintillans* (1655). Herbert's influence is marked in his work by many obvious echoes and borrowings. Where it is strongest, V usually suffers by the comparison; the effect is thinner and less concentrated. He is most memorable for his **striking opening lines** like "I saw the eternity the other night..." or "They are all gone into the world of light...". V's poetry is less social, more removed from the world of action than that of Donne or Herbert; he has neither Herbert's attachment to the Anglican Church nor Crashaw's concern with Catholic ritual and dogma. His religious intuitions belong to a wider and vaguer tradition of neoplatonic mysticism, of **solitary contemplation** which turns to images from nature - sun and stars, winds and streams, the plant and the seed - to express the soul's aspiration to God. In his best work he can still use the metaphysical conceit effectively.

The **middle years of the century** show metaphysical poetry undergoing various changes. With some poets the manner declines into eccentricity and extravagance; with others, wit takes on a different character in response to changes in contemporary sensibility. At the same time the tradition shapes its last great poet

ANDREW MARVELL (1621-78)

M's work has a central significance, **gathering together many strands of seventeenth-century thought, feeling and style**. His special blend of wit includes the imaginative surprise of Donne and the civilized grace of Jonson, the gallantry of Carew and the grave delicacy of Herbert. His temperament has both Puritan sobriety and a classical sophistication more flexible than Milton's. In no poet are levity and seriousness more subtly mingled, though something of the same quality appears in Pope. His **wit is the result of his wide-ranging play of mind which is continually making imaginative connections between different levels of experience**. The classical quality in M appears in his **smooth polished verse**, his **precision and economy of phrase**, and his balanced sense of human limitations.

Occasional examples of conceits running to fantastic extravagance can be found in almost all the metaphysical poets from Donne onwards, but they tend to multiply in the forties and fifties. Crashaw's faults in this kind are well known; the wit of Marvell himself sometimes becomes excessively self-conscious in its ingenuity. But the real decadence of the style is seen when ingenuity is pursued for its own sake, with no informing imaginative pressure, as in most of the verse of **John Cleveland**, for whom wit is a game,and much of that of

ABRAHAM COWLEY (1618-67)

C had an immense contemporary reputation, which he has never regained. His work is extraordinarily **representative of the changing taste of his age**; it shows the wit of Donne turning into the wit of Dryden. He has all the analytical and logical skill of the earlier Metaphysicals, the same striking openings, the same elaborately extended comparisons, but he lacks any profound imaginative synthesis of experience; his intellect is employed in decorating a number of fairly simple ideas and sentiments. Wit, for C, was **a matter of rational comparison**, with a common-sense basis to its ingenuity. He had no use for the 'Cobwebs of the Schoolmen's trade' which had furnished so many of Donne's conceits. He was interested in the new science and wrote odes *To Mr Hobs* and *To the Royal Society*.

These indications of Cowley's rational temper acquire an additional importance when we consider Hobbes' explicit pronouncements on current taste and the nature of poetry. In *Leviathan* Hobbes equates Imagination and Fancy as 'decaying sense'; in his *Answer* to Davenant's *Discourse* he attacks "the ambitious obscurity of expressing more than is perfectly conceived, or perfect conception in fewer words that it requires". The function of fancy is simply ornamental: "Time and Education begets experience; Experience begets memory; Memory begets Judgement and Fancy; Judgement begets the strength and structure, and Fancy begets the ornaments of a Poem." The new insistence was on directness and clarity and on poetry as a social activity. All this was part of the general movement of thought, the swing toward mathematical demonstration and scientific logic. At the same time the new society emerging from the Civil War was increasingly to encourage the public voice in poetry, whether as easy, direct statement or as lofty formal decorum, together with subject-matter of social and political interest. C was more than a decadent metaphysical: he **established the neo-classic vogue of the 'Pindaric' ode** in which lofty magniloquence is allowed a certain licence of verse form, strictly limited by convention, and in the Davideis he made the first attempt at an epic poem on classical principles.

JOHN MILTON (1608-74) ***Paradise Lost***

No English writer, except Shakespeare, has been so continuously admired. No teacher, except Bunyan has been revered by so many generations. Yet his work is today perceived as controversial for several reasons:

1) M built lengthy works out of **religious convictions which are widely despised or discarded today**. Yet without a fair understanding of these convictions and a certain amount of (at least temporary) sympathy towards them, we are likely to misread him.

2) M's **greatness** and **the nature of his topics** invite **comparisons with Shakespeare and Dante**, yet he **suffers from such comparison**, lacking Dante's vivid intimacy and Shakespeare's profound psychological insight, or even the startling phrase and packed emotion of Donne.

3) **The very nature of his themes and the great purpose he had in mind remove his poetry to a much greater extent than that of others**, even the biblical poets, **from the ordinary concerns and common experience of men.** For his material he chose the fall of man, the restoration of the human race in Christ, the destruction of God's enemies. Nobody, nor Dante nor even the great bulk of medieval religious poetry, attempts to cover the whole story **from the heavenly point of view** (for Dante, Langland etc. keep constantly in touch with the world we know). M deliberately set out to write about *"things unattempted yet in prose or rhyme"*.

4) M was convinced that **his poetry must teach**, not only instruct the mind but **purify and elevate the heart.** He also presupposes a thorough knowledge of the Bible, to an extent which is uncommon in modern man.

5) M's great purpose was to

assert Eternal Providence
and justify the ways of God to men.

Yet **his God remains mysterious and inscrutable, His light in inaccessible to men.** M's idea was not to explain what God's purpose was but rather to show that in order to comprehend his message men must purify and open their hearts.

6) *Paradise Lost* is, among other things, **a prayer addressed to God from all mankind**, though M realized that few people would understand and join him in this. He attempts to **prepare the hearts of men for the coming of the Spirit** who will then take over the job of leading men to the truth about God and themselves.

7) The estimate of the quality of his poetry is inseparable from his teachings and doctrine. The effect *Paradise Lost* can have on the reader depends very largely on **the extent the reader grasps and shares M's doctrine** but this doctrine cannot unfortunately be fully understood through the poems alone (though parts of them can be enjoyed without knowing the underlying scheme).

DONNE

THE FLEA

Mark but this flea, and mark in this,
How little that which thou deny'st me is;
It suck'd me first, and now sucks thee,
And in this flea, our two bloods mingled be;[1]
Thou know'st that this cannot be said
A sin, nor shame, nor loss of maidenhead,
Yet this enjoys before it woo,
And pamper'd swells with one blood made of two,
And this, alas, is more than we would do.

Oh stay, three lives in one flea spare,
Where we almost, yea more than married are.
This flea is you and I, and this
Our marriage bed, and marriage temple is;
Though parents grudge, and you, we're met,
And cloistered in these living walls of jet.
Though use make you apt to kill me,
Let not to that, self murder added be,
And sacrilege,[2] three sins in killing three.

Cruel and sudden, hast thou since
Purpled thy nail, in blood of innocence?
Wherein could this flea guilty be,
Except in that drop which it suck'd from thee?
Yet thou triumph'st, and say'st that thou
Find'st not thyself, nor me the weaker now;
'Tis true, then learn how false, fears be;
Just so much honour, when thou yield'st to me,
Will waste, as this flea's death took life from thee.

Love's Alchemy

Some that have deeper digged love's mine than I,
Say where his centric happiness doth lie:
I have loved, and got, and told,
But should I love, get, tell, till I were old,
I should not find that hidden mystery;
O, 'tis imposture all:
And as no chemic yet the elixir got,[1]
But glorifies his pregnant pot[2]
If by the way to him befall
Some odoriferous thing, or medicinal;
So lovers dream a rich and long delight,
But get a winter-seeming summer's night.[3]

Our ease, our thrift, our honor, and our day,
Shall we for this vain bubble's shadow pay?
Ends love in this, that my man
Can be as happy as I can, if he can
Endure the short scorn of a bridegroom's play?
That loving wretch that swears
'Tis not the bodies marry, but the minds,
Which he in her angelic finds,
Would swear as justly that he hears,
In that day's rude hoarse minstrelsy, the spheres.[4]
Hope not for mind in women; at their best
Sweetness and wit they are but mummy possessed.[5]

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DONNE

ELEGY XIX
TO HIS MISTRESS GOING TO BED

Come, Madam, come, all rest my powers defy,
Until I labour, I in labour lie.[1]
The foe oft-times having the foe in sight,
Is tired with standing though he never fight.[2]
Off with that girdle, like heaven's Zone glistering,
But a far fairer world encompassing.
Unpin that spangled breastplate which you wear,
That th' eyes of busy fools may be stopt there.
Unlace yourself, for that harmonious chime
Tells me from you, that now it is bed time.
Off with that happy busk,[3] which I envy,
That still can be, and still can stand so nigh.
Your gown going off, such beauteous state reveals,
As when from flowry meads th' hill's shadow steals.
Off with that wiry Coronet and show
The hairy Diadem which on you doth grow:
Now off with those shoes, and then safely tread
In this love's hallow'd temple, this soft bed.
In such white robes, heaven's Angels used to be
Receiv'd by men; thou Angel bring'st with thee
A heaven like Mahomet's Paradise;[4] and though
Ill spirits walk in white, we easily know,
By this these Angels from an evil sprite,
Those set our hairs, but these our flesh upright.
  Licence my roving hands, and let them go,
Before, behind, between, above, below.
O my America! my new-found-land,
My kingdom, safeliest when with one man mann'd,
My Mine of precious stones, My Empery,
How blest am I in this discovering thee!
To enter in these bonds, is to be free;
Then where my hand is set, my seal[5] shall be.
  Full nakedness! All joys are due to thee,
As souls unbodied, bodies uncloth'd must be,
To taste whole joys. Gems which you women use
Are like Atlanta's balls,[6] cast in men's views,
That when a fool's eye lighteth on a Gem,
His earthly soul may covet theirs, not them.
Like pictures, or like books' gay coverings made
For lay-men, are all women thus array'd;
Themselves are mystic books, which only we
(Whom their imputed grace will dignify)
Must see reveal'd. Then since that I may know,[7]
As liberally,[8] as to a Midwife, show
Thyself: cast all, yea, this white linen hence,
There is no penance due to innocence.
  To teach thee, I am naked first; why then
What needst thou have more covering than a man.

[1] Until I get to work at sexual intercourse, I lie in agony waiting.
[2] Note sexual double meanings. [3] Corset.
[4] The paradise of Islam was supposed to be full of fleshly pleasure.
[5] Both "impression" and "sign of ownership."
[6] Atalanta (usually so spelled) lost a race to Hippomenes because she paused three times to pick up three golden apples which Venus had given him and which he threw in her path.

[7] Both "have knowledge" and "have intercourse."

DONNE

Hymn to God My God, in My Sickness[1]

Since I am coming to that holy room
  Where, with thy choir of saints for evermore,
I shall be made thy music; as I come
  I tune the instrument here at the door,
  And what I must do then, think now before.

Whilst my physicians by their love are grown
  Cosmographers, and I their map, who lie
Flat on this bed, that by them may be shown
  That this is my southwest discovery[2]
  Per fretum febris,[3] by these straits to die,

I joy, that in these straits, I see my West;[4]
  For, though their currents yield return to none,
What shall my West hurt me? As West and East
  In all flat maps (and I am one) are one,
  So death doth touch the resurrection.

Is the Pacific Sea my home? Or are
  The Eastern riches? Is Jerusalem?
Anyan,[5] and Magellan, and Gibraltar,
  All straits, and none but straits, are ways to them,
  Whether where Japhet dwelt, or Cham, or Shem.[6]

We think that Paradise and Calvary,
  Christ's cross and Adam's tree, stood in one place;
Look, Lord and find both Adams[7] met in me;
  As the first Adam's sweat surrounds my face,
  May the last Adam's blood my soul embrace.

So, in his purple wrapped,[8] receive me, Lord;
  By these his thorns give me his other crown;
And, as to others' souls I preached thy word,
  Be this my text, my sermon to mine own:
  Therefore that he may raise the Lord throws down.

4. From loving elsewhere. The idea is, "To give me true love, you must take away my freedom to love anyone else."

1. Though Izaak Walton, Donne's pious biographer, assigns this poem to the last days of his life, it was probably written in December 1623.

2. The Strait of Magellan, or something spiritual that is analogous to it.

3. I.e., through the strait of fever.

4. Where the sun sets, hence where life ends.

5. The Bering Strait. Behind these anxious questions lie many ancient speculations about the location of Paradise—which is analogous to Heaven, as the various straits are to death.

6. Japhet, Cham (Ham), and Shem were the three sons of Noah by whom the world was repopulated after the Flood (Genesis 10). The descendants of Japhet were thought to inhabit Europe, those of Ham Africa, and those of Shem Asia.

7. I.e., Adam and Christ.

8. The purple of Christ is his blood.

CLASSICISM

Henry was also the first member of the royal family to perceive the need for an artist of a kind which had become the norm at all late sixteenth century European courts, one whose prime task was to mastermind the spectacle of monarchy, someone who was an architect and interior decorator, designer of court festivals and triumphs, painter and deviser of gardens, and whose key role was to present royalty as Platonic ideals made visible. As we have seen, Inigo Jones was to play that role later for his brother, but Henry was to recruit just such a person, Constantino de' Servi, from that mecca of the arts of the Renaissance, the Medici court. Nothing of de' Servi's work in England has survived but we know from his letters that he was active in all of those areas: designing a new palace, scenery and costumes for masques and tourneys, painting portraits and devising grottoes for gardens. Also active in the prince's employ was another artist in a similar mould, Salomon de Caus, a Huguenot hydraulic engineer who began setting about transforming the gardens of Richmond Palace into the equivalent of the Villa d'Este. This was to have been a garden in the late Renaissance mould in which art imitated nature with mysterious grottoes, islands in the form of giant river gods, and extraordinary water effects and automata, demonstrating man's harnessing of the irrational forces of untamed nature by making water spurt or figures move. De Caus was to dedicate the first book in England on perspective to the prince.

We have to add to this a huge list of other activities. Henry was the first person to systematically form an art collection, one which included pictures by Holbein and Tintoretto as well as fabulous bronzes by Giambologna, all of which were housed in a special gallery in St. James's Palace. There, too, was his collection of antique coins and medals as well as his huge library. Then there were his painters, including the miniaturist Isaac Oliver, who had mastered the arts of perspective and *chiaroscuro* and whose work had been affected by a visit to Italy, showing the influence of Leonardo.

This was a court which was committed as equally to every endeavour in the field of the sciences. Edward Wright, who set the seal on the supremacy of the English in the theory and practice of navigation, was amongst a roll-call of men in the sciences who were members of the household. The prince even maintained a friendship with that polymath Sir Walter Raleigh, in the Tower for conspiring against Henry's father, who wrote his *History of the World* for him. To Raleigh we can add other writers – George Chapman and Michael Drayton among them – and musicians – John Bull, Alfonso Ferrabosco and Angelo Notari, a Florentine who worked in the manner of Monteverdi. If Henry had not died, the cultural divide which was to emerge during the reign of his brother might have been averted.

The brilliance of that cosmopolitan court must have had a profound effect on Inigo Jones who, although the prince's surveyor, was relatively low down in the aesthetic pecking order. It was therefore hardly surprising that he left England in the aftermath of the prince's death and travelled again to Italy in the train of Thomas Howard, Earl of Arundel (to whom we shall come shortly). The purpose of the journey was an in-depth study of ancient and modern architecture, starting in Venice where he saw the works of Palladio, Scamozzi and Sansovino. In September 1613 he arrived in Vicenza, the shrine of Palladianism, passing on to Florence and thence to Rome, where he measured the ruins, down to Naples and Trevi and back again to Vicenza and Venice. The fruits of this journey were to have a profound impact on

British civilisation for over a century and a half. Inigo Jones's role model was Palladio, whose buildings were the one last expression of Renaissance humanism, an architecture based on the study of Roman models and of Vitruvius emphasising the supreme importance of symmetry and harmony of proportion. Jones's buildings were also to represent in stone the cosmic harmonies of the universe related to the human frame. On his return from Italy he again took up the post of surveyor-general to the Office of Works and began to give physical reality to all that he had learnt.

This was the turning point for all his buildings henceforth have no compromise, no neo-medieval lingerings. They represent a clean break with the past.

The prospect of a bride from one of the great Catholic courts hastened the aesthetic impulse around 1620 leading to the establishment of a tapestry works at Mortlake and to the recruitment of painters in the vanguard of the new style of the baroque, with its dramatic use of light and shade and swirl of incipient movement. The first of these was Paul van Somer followed shortly after by Daniel Mytens, both from the Low Countries. Their work heralded the death knell of the icons of Elizabethan portrait painting. For the first time the picture-frame became a proscenium arch through which the eye travelled into a world defined by linear perspective and the use of shadow to give the illusion of depth and movement. In 1621 the young Anthony Van Dyck came as prospective painter to the Crown and then promptly left to finish his training in Italy, not returning until a decade later.

These were dramatic pointers to a new era. As the 1620s progressed neo-medievalism declined so much that Jonson could dismiss it:

> Of errant Knighthood, with the Dames, and Dwarfs,
> The charmed boats, and the enchanted wharfs,
> The Tristrams, Lancelots, Turpins and Peers,
> And the mad Rolands, and sweet Oliveers.

Everywhere a new cultural scene was settling into position, one which looked back to the early Roman Empire and held up as ideals a sense of order and dynasty. A Latin aristocratic culture was rediscovered, a new ideal which Jonson set constantly before the court, one which stemmed from the Socratic dictum that virtue depends on knowledge not only of the world but of oneself. The courtier was now cast as a role model of virtue, with an image and aspirations far different from those looked to in 1600. Then the adoption of neo-medieval pageantry had established rank through conspicuous display; to be a monarch or a peer one had to be seen at a glance to be rich. Now this criterion was abandoned for a new and far more subtle and sophisticated language which expressed superiority and power through gravity of demeanour and austerity and restraint of appearance, together with a self-conscious elegance both in person and lifestyle. The shift in fashion within those years reflects this exactly. Surface glitter and display vanished in favour of wearing plain yet sumptuous fabrics and soft lace collars. Embroidery and massive displays of jewellery were dropped. At the same time the countryside began to embody an ideal as poets transmuted the English landscape into an anglicised version of the kind of rural life found in Virgil's *Georgics* or the *Odes* of Horace.

Earl of Arundel's Collection

Edward Hyde, later Earl of Clarendon, who wrote the classic account of what he designated as the 'great rebellion', paints a memorable portrait of a seminal figure in the nation's cultural history. That person was one of ancient aristocratic lineage, Thomas Howard, 2nd Earl of Arundel:

> '. . . he was generally thought to be a proud man, who always lived within himself, and to himself, conversing with any who were in common conversation; so that he seemed to live as it were in another Nation . . . it cannot be denied that he had in his person, in his aspect and countenance, the appearance of a great man, which he preserved in his gate, and motion. He wore and affected a Habit very different from that at the time, such as men only beheld in Pictures of the most considerable Men; all of which drew the eyes of most, and the reverence of many towards him, as the Image, and Representative of the Primitive Nobility, and Native Gravity of the Nobles, when they had been most Venerable.'

This is a portrait of an unlovable man, one whose *hauteur* most found insufferable although he could be not only passionately loyal but also loving to those few whom he cherished. In spite of so many off-putting characteristics this tall, gaunt man with his hooked nose and black eyes, was to set before his contemporaries a new ideal for the life of a gentleman. That side of him we catch in a far more favourable glimpse of the man afforded by his one-time secretary, Sir Edward Walker:

> 'He was the greatest Favourer of Arts, especially Painting, Sculpture, Designs [i.e. drawings], Carving, Building and the like, that this Age hath produced; his Collection of Designs being more than any Person living, and his Statues equal in Number, Value and Antiquity to those in the Houses of most Princes ... And he had the Honour to be the first Person of Quality that set a Value on them in our Nation.'

Thanks to Arundel, by the middle of the century the aristocratic and gentry classes were to seek a new ideal of civilised life.

The earl shares with his friend Inigo Jones the distinction of being the most influential person in the evolution of British civilisation during the decades which led to the outbreak of civil war in 1642. Although their origins could hardly have been more discrepant they shared certain characteristics. Both were touchy and difficult, both were isolated arrogant figures in their own particular way, traits only heightened by what many would have viewed as their promotion of an alien foreign Catholic culture, that of Renaissance Italy along with its ancestor, the world of classical antiquity. Both were to dedicate their lives to the spread of what those cultures represented, and both were to end their days clouded by defeat and tragedy.

Arundel was drawn to the circle of Henry, Prince of Wales, and it was there that he came into contact with his soul-mate, Inigo Jones. It was a friendship which lasted, more or less, both their lifetimes. By then Arundel had already acquired an eye for pictures and, indeed, had sat for the young Rubens, prime exponent of the new

flamboyant baroque style in the north, when he had visited Antwerp in 1612. Arundel was in many ways the true inheritor of the ideals of that nascent Renaissance court. Shortly after the prince's death both he and the countess were assigned the task of escorting the king's daughter Elizabeth to Germany, after her marriage to the Elector Palatine. From there, accompanied by Inigo Jones, they went to Italy for the tour which has been recognised ever since as a cultural landmark.

Great aristocrats had travelled to Italy before. Arundel's father-in-law, Shrewsbury, had been there and his houses betray knowledge of Italian villa planning. So also had, for example, Thomas Cecil, Earl of Exeter, whose great house at Wimbledon, which bore the date 1588 over the porch, had an approach modelled on the Palazzo Farnese at Caprarola. But what was to set Arundel's voyage apart was a quest which was far broader than stylistic trends and detail. It was one for the components of the civilised life, in Italian summed up in the word *virtù*, with its connotation of civility, grace, elegant manners and interest in learning. Arundel returned to England speaking Italian and adopting the living style of that country even down to its table manners. His secretary, Sir Edward Walker, realised that the earl had come back from his journey with a vision which he was to attempt to instil into the sensibilities of the educated Englishman. This was one which recognised the arts as the fullest expression of nobility of spirit. By the close of the century what he first practised was universally shared by the aristocracy and gentry, profoundly affecting how they spent their time.

Arundel and his party began their Italian tour in Venice, always welcoming to the English, where they saw the finest buildings by Palladio, Sansovino and Scamozzi and the greatest masterpieces by Titian, Tintoretto and Veronese. From there they moved on to make a private visit to Vicenza to study the architecture of Palladio in depth and where the earl purchased drawings by both Palladio and Scamozzi. They wintered in Siena in a monastery, spending their time mastering the Italian language before arriving at their cultural mecca, Rome. There they were looked after by the Marchese Giustiniani, the most discerning patron of his day. Arundel was not only given a permit to excavate but also to ship the things he found to England. (These, it transpires, were deliberately planted antiques which were more than easily unearthed.) At the same time he purchased books and commissioned four more statues in the antique manner from a Roman sculptor. There was an excursion to Naples and Trevi and then the journey back via Florence, Genoa and France.

The impact of the arrival in England of these antiquities in 1615 cannot be overestimated. Just as earlier relics from the Holy Land had made the Christian story a reality, so classical antiquities made tangible ancient Rome and her civilisation. They were to signal a decade of aesthetic change and the onset of collecting mania. Arundel was not without precursors as a collector in the broadest sense of the term. His great-uncle, John, Lord Lumley, had the greatest collection of pictures in England, over two hundred and fifty of them, including Holbein's *Christina of Denmark*. But the impulse behind it was iconographical and genealogical, the faces of ancestors and great contemporaries. By the 1590s collecting on an aesthetic basis had

One of the imitation antique statues commissioned by Arundel while he was in Rome in 1614 from the sculptor Egidio Moretti.

begun to take off and Anne of Denmark, Prince Henry, and the king's favourite the Earl of Somerset, all accumulated pictures, both Flemish and Venetian. In the case of books again Lord Lumley had the second largest library and Arundel's relative, Lord William Howard of Naworth, had formed another huge library in the north of England. What was different about Arundel's collection was not only its size and its scope but, above all, its intention. Although Charles I's collections were to surpass Arundel's in certain areas it was the earl's which was to set the pattern for future British art collections, inaugurating a tradition which was to last for three centuries until the Heirlooms Act and the introduction of death duties at the close of the nineteenth century began their dissolution.

Arundel's collections were almost entirely displayed at Arundel House which was situated between the Strand and the Thames next to the queen's residence, Somerset House. On his return from Italy, the rambling medieval residence was given an Italianate overlay of doors and windows and chimneypieces in the classical manner. A new two-storeyed gallery was built, designed by Inigo Jones and running down to the river. The gallery at ground level displayed the picture collection, that above, the sculpture. To mark this, in 1618, the earl and countess had their portraits painted by an artist who heralded the new baroque manner, Daniel Mytens, who inserted into the backgrounds idealised views of these two galleries. The classical statues can be seen standing in an elegant restrained room in the early Renaissance manner leading to a balcony overlooking the river. Every attempt during these years was made to give the impression that somehow an Italian palazzo had sprung up beside the Thames.

Arundel was a manic collector, never letting up in his pursuit of certain works even if he had to wait for years before he finally landed them. Right up until the bulk of the collection was shipped to Antwerp in 1643 it continued to grow. The full extent of it remains even today unknown; including the drawings and prints it must have run not into hundreds but thousands. An inventory drawn up in 1655, when it had passed its zenith and Arundel had already been forced to sell, lists some six hundred paintings including portraits, mythological and religious scenes by Italian, German and Flemish masters. The collection was dominated by the work of Italians and by that of Holbein: thirty-six by Titian, nineteen by Tintoretto, seventeen by Veronese, sixteen attributed to Giorgione and a dozen or so Raphaels. Arundel was open in admitting his 'foolish curiosity in enquiring for the pieces of Holbein.' He accumulated over forty of them. That inventory took no account of the huge collection of antiquities which remained in England nor did it cover the thousands of old master drawings and prints, books and manuscripts. His secretary, Walker, indicated that his passion for drawings (those sketches which recorded the creative processes of artists) was unique at the time. His passion was such that he had a special room built in which to house them. Those who came to its inaugural party in 1637 were astounded to see two hundred volumes full of drawings by Michelangelo, Leonardo, Raphael and other great masters. These were not only preparatory works for pictures but actual designs for the decorative arts in which the earl took the keenest interest. By then he had appointed a German, Hendrik van der Borcht, as keeper of this collection.

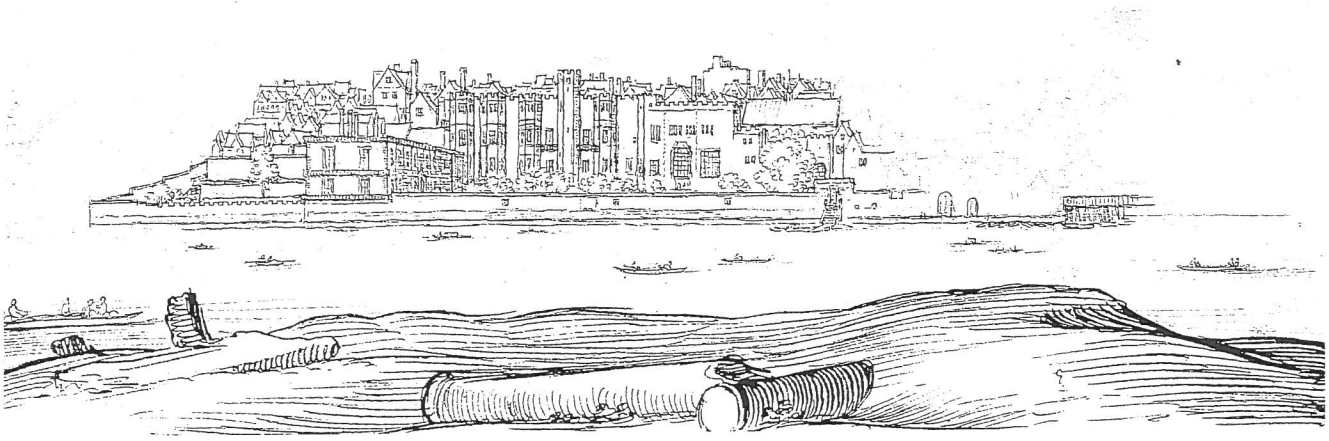
Arundel was aggressively predatory. When his enemy Buckingham was assassinated he did not hesitate to step in and secure a ship loaded with Greek codexes and two hundred antique coins as well as a huge number of statues sent by Sir Thomas Roe. There were also the opportunities presented by his ambassadorial trips. On the 1636 embassy to Vienna he purchased the library of Willibald Pirckheimer, the wealthy Renaissance humanist and friend of Dürer, which included priceless books and *incunabula*, some illustrated by the great German artist.

But the true fame of the Arundel collection was to reside in its classical antiquities. Henry Peacham, who was tutor to the earl's children, wrote in the 1634 edition of his influential handbook *The Compleat Gentleman*:

> 'To [his] liberal charges and magnificence, this angle of the world oweth its first sight of Greek and Roman Statues, with whose admired presence he began to honour the Gardens and Galleries of Arundel House about twentie yeares agoe, and hath ever since continued to transplant old Greece into England . . .'

The effect must have been startling, for no one before had created what was in effect a museum garden in the Italian Renaissance manner. Its impact on the scholar and essayist Francis Bacon is recorded thus: 'Coming into the Earl of Arundel's Garden, where there were a great number of Ancient Statues of naked Men and Women, made a stand, and as astonish'd, cryed out: "The Resurrection."'

The influence on contemporary sculpture was immediate, as evidenced in the work of Nicholas Stone. But Arundel's interest was not merely aesthetic for the great scholar, Sir Robert Cotton, had led Arundel to appreciate the significance of the antiquities as evidence of a lost civilisation. When the large consignment from Petty came in 1627 Cotton was so excited that, in spite of the fact that it was the middle of the night, he sent for John Selden, the antiquary. Selden, together with two other scholars, was to produce a year later *Marmora Arundelliana*, the first direct study of classical archaeological material by an Englishman, a book which made the collection celebrated throughout Europe.



Arundel House from across the Thames, a drawing by Wenceslaus Hollar. The flat roofed classical building to the left running down to the river contained the picture and sculpture gallery.

By 1630 it included thirty-seven statues, a hundred and twenty-eight busts, two hundred and fifty inscriptions, besides a large number of sarcophagi, altars and fragments. Together they symbolised in Roe's words Arundel's love of 'the lights and reliques of ancient learning or noble sciences.'

But what was the purpose of such a collection? To answer that question we have to turn to Francis Junius who was Arundel's librarian. Realising the criticisms which could be levelled at such an ostentatious accumulation of art treasures in the midst of Puritan London he was to write *The Painting of the Ancients* (1637). This was not only a major compendium of all that could be found in the classical writers on the visual arts but a polemic as to their status within society. Their role depended, he wrote, on their power to inspire noble and virtuous deeds. His argument was based on their moral efficacy.

In the end Arundel's collections were to fall victim to his own insolvency, divisions within his family and the tragedy of the Civil War. The pictures and drawings are scattered today among the great museums and galleries of the world. The collection of antiquities suffered appalling depredations. Nonetheless a small corpus of it survives in the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford. But it was less the reality of the collections than what they and their owner represented which was to be so important. With Arundel we see an expansion and extension of the previous century's definition of the orbit of the gentleman. To his existing sphere of activities he now had to add the role of dilettante or *virtuoso* in the arts and sciences, to be a person who was interested in, and probably take part in, experiments and inventions, was able to identify classical imagery and delight in assembling a cabinet of rarities or judge a work of art. Henry Peacham's *The Compleat Gentleman* (1622 and 1634) embodied the new educational programme for the upper classes. It includes a chapter *Of the dignitie and necessitie of Learning in Princes and Nobilitie*:

> 'Since learning then is an essential part of Nobility, as unto which we are beholden, for whatsoever dependeth on the culture of the mind; it followeth, that who is nobly born, and a Scholar withal, deserveth Double Honour being both . . .'

So a dramatic change in attitude to studies and learning has taken place. They are now billed as attributes conducive to fame and worthy of admiration. The word *virtuoso* indeed makes its debut in Peacham's work. That new concept, allied to the Horatian ideal of the quiet country life, brought about what amounted to a secularised version of the ancient ideal of the contemplative life for a Protestant society. It was to be one which would see the defeated royalist gentry through the gloomy years of the Protectorate when, cut off from either political or military activity, their energies could be absorbed in the cult of rural meditation and of the attributes of the *virtuoso*. That they owed to Arundel, designated over a century later by another great arbiter of taste, Horace Walpole, as 'the father of *virtu* in England.'

(For further details, see, if you wish, R. Strong. The Spirit of Britain.)

IX: Song: To Celia

DRINK to me only with thine eyes,
And I will pledge with mine;
Or leave a kiss but in the cup,
And I'll not look for wine.
The thirst that from the soul doth rise
Doth ask a drink divine;
But might I of Jove's nectar sup,
I would not change for thine.
I sent thee late a rosy wreath,
Not so much honouring thee
As giving it a hope that there
It could not withered be.
But thou thereon didst only breathe,
And sentst it back to me:
Since when it grows, and smells, I swear,
Not of itself, but thee.

(1616)

1. These famous lines are a patchwork of five separate passages in the *Epistles* of Philostratus, a Greek sophist of the 3rd century A.D. Jonson very carefully reworded the phrases (there are several early MS. versions of the poem) into this classic lyric.

from *The Forest*

II: To Penshurst

THOU art not, Penshurst, built to envious show,
Of touch or marble, nor canst boast a row
Of polished pillars, or a roof of gold;
Thou hast no lantern whereof tales are told,
Or stair, or courts; but standst an ancient pile,
And these grudged at, art reverenced the while.
Thou joy'st in better marks, of soil, of air,
Of wood, of water; therein thou art fair.
Thou hast thy walks for health as well as sport:
Thy Mount, to which the dryads do resort,
Where Pan and Bacchus their high feasts have made
Beneath the broad beech and the chestnut shade;
That taller tree, which of a nut was set
At his great birth, where all the Muses met.

There, in the writhèd bark, are cut the names
Of many a sylvan, taken with his flames;
And thence the ruddy satyrs oft provoke
The lighter fauns to reach thy lady's oak.

159 *Penshurst*] (home of Sir Robert Sidney, Viscount Lisle, near Tonbridge, Kent) touch] touchstone; any black stone lantern] glazed structure on the top of a building (then fashionable) marks] features Pan] Greek god of the country and fertility Bacchus] Roman god of wine and vegetation

Thy copse, too, named of Gamage, thou hast there,
That never fails to serve thee seasoned deer
When thou wouldst feast or exercise thy friends.
The lower land, that to the river bends,
Thy sheep, thy bullocks, kine and calves do feed;
The middle grounds thy mares and horses breed.
Each bank doth yield thee conies, and the tops,
Fertile of wood, Ashour and Sidney's copse,
To crown thy open table, doth provide
The purpled pheasant with the speckled side;
The painted partridge lies in every field,
And for thy mess is willing to be killed.
And if the high-swoll'n Medway fail thy dish,
Thou hast thy ponds that pay thee tribute fish:
Fat, agéd carps, that run into thy net;
And pikes, now weary their own kind to eat,
As loth the second draught or cast to stay,
Officiously, at first, themselves betray;
Bright eels, that emulate them, and leap on land
Before the fisher, or into his hand.
Then hath thy orchard fruit, thy garden flowers,
Fresh as the air and new as are the Hours:
The early cherry, with the later plum,
Fig, grape and quince, each in his time doth come;
The blushing apricot and woolly peach
Hang on thy walls, that every child may reach.
And though thy walls be of the country stone,
They're reared with no man's ruin, no man's groan;
There's none that dwell about them wish them down,
But all come in, the farmer and the clown,
And no one empty-handed, to salute
Thy lord and lady, though they have no suit.
Some bring a capon, some a rural cake,
Some nuts, some apples; some that think they make
The better cheeses, bring them; or else send
By their ripe daughters, whom they would commend
This way to husbands; and whose baskets bear
An emblem of themselves, in plum or pear.
But what can this (more than express their love)
Add to thy free provisions, far above

The need of such? whose liberal board doth flow,
With all that hospitality doth know!
Where comes no guest but is allowed to eat
Without his fear, and of thy lord's own meat;
Where the same beer and bread and self-same wine
That is his lordship's shall be also mine;
And I not fain to sit (as some, this day,
At great men's tables) and yet dine away.
Here no man tells my cups, nor, standing by,
A waiter, doth my gluttony envy,
But gives me what I call, and lets me eat;
He knows below he shall find plenty of meat,
Thy tables hoard not up for the next day.
Nor, when I take my lodging, need I pray
For fire or lights or livery: all is there,
As if thou then wert mine, or I reigned here;
There's nothing I can wish, for which I stay.

To Penshurst (cont. 2)

JONSON

That found King James, when, hunting late this way
With his brave son, the prince, they saw thy fires
Shine bright on every hearth, as the desires
Of thy Penates had been set on flame
To entertain them; or the country came
With all their zeal to warm their welcome here.
What (great, I will not say, but) sudden cheer
Didst thou then make them! And what praise was heaped
On thy good lady then! who therein reaped
The just reward of her high huswifery:
To have her linen, plate, and all things nigh,
When she was far; and not a room but dressed
As if it had expected such a guest!
These, Penshurst, are thy praise, and yet not all.
Thy lady's noble, fruitful, chaste withal;
His children thy great lord may call his own,
A fortune in this age but rarely known.
They are and have been taught religion; thence
Their gentler spirits have sucked innocence.
Each morn and even they are taught to pray
With the whole household, and may every day
Read in their virtuous parents' noble parts
The mysteries of manners, arms and arts.
Now, Penshurst, they that will proportion thee
With other edifices, when they see
Those proud, ambitious heaps, and nothing else,
May say, their lords have built, but thy lord dwells.

(1616)

[*Hymn to Cynthia*]

QUEEN and huntress, chaste and fair,
Now the sun is laid to sleep,
Seated in thy silver chair,
State in wonted manner keep:
Hesperus entreats thy light,
Goddess excellently bright.

Earth, let not thy envious shade
Dare itself to interpose;
Cynthia's shining orb was made
Heaven to clear, when day did close:
Bless us then with wishèd sight,
Goddess excellently bright.

Lay thy bow of pearl apart,
And thy crystal-shining quiver;
Give unto the flying hart
Space to breathe, how short soever:
Thou that mak'st a day of night,
Goddess excellently bright.

(1601)

Notes to Ben Jonson. *II: To Penshurst* (1612)

Penshurst (hall dating back to mid C14) came to the Sidneys in 1552. The poet Sir Philip Sidney was born there but died in Holland in 1586 before he could inherit it. In 1612 it belonged to his younger brother Sir Robert Sidney who had married Barbara Gamage, a Welsh heiress.

In the poem Penshurst is contrasted to **Hatfield House** (though it is not named) owned by Sir Robert Cecil. Sir Robert was the second son of William Cecil, Lord Burghley, who had been Elizabeth I's chief minister. The Cecils had been instrumental in the smooth succession of the Stuarts to the English throne. Sir Robert served James I first as chief secretary and from 1608 as lord treasurer. The Cecils' main seat was **Theobalds** where Lord Burghley had entertained Elizabeth I. James I fell in love with the house and asked to have it for himself. In return he gave Sir Robert a grant of land where he built Hatfield House on a grand scale to entertain the royal couple according to the latest requirements of fashion. It was a sumptuous showcase of a place in the building of which no expense was spared. Marble was brought from Italy, trees and plants imported from the continent. The house glittered with colour inside and out, all the main domes and turrets were finished off with gold leaf, so that the whole house flashed and glittered from the distance.

Jonson wrote his poem after he had dined with Sir Robert Cecil at Theobalds and thought he had been insulted there. The poem works at two levels. First, it is **realistic poetry of place**, describing the house and estate of Penshurst. Second, Penshurst for him is **an idealized location of virtue**. He offers praise to the Sidney family as embodying the kind of virtue which was being eroded under the Stuart reign. The ostentation of the Jacobean court is contrasted with the lost virtue of the Elizabethan era. The cult of the Sidneys (Sir Philip as the embodiment of every chivalric virtue of the Elizabethan age; Sir Robert as a poet in his own right and the virtuous owner of Penshurst, their sister Mary, Countess of Pembroke, who at Wilton enshrined her elder brother's memory by editing his works) fed on the nostalgia for the spirit of the Elizabethan age and served as an escape from the degenerate present.

touch – a soft black marble quarried near Tournai and used chiefly for monuments

an ancient pile – an old house which has grown organically over centuries, as opposed to the new symmetrical palazzo-style palaces

marks – features

Mount – Mount Olympus, the dwelling-place of gods

Dryads – wood nymphs

Pan – the Greek god of flocks and shepherds

Bacchus – (the Greek Dionysus) the Roman god of wine and vegetation

that taller tree – an oak planted on the day of Sir Philip Sidney's birth, still shown as 'Sidney's oak'

Muses – divinities presiding over different arts and sciences

sylvan – woodsman, Sylvanus – the Roman god of woods

flames – inspiration

satyrs, fauns – forest gods, demigods, attendants of Bacchus

lady's oak – Lady Leicester's oak, named after a lady of the house who once entered into labour under it

the copse named of Gamage – a grove near the entrance of the park named after Sir Robert Cecil's wife Lady Barbara Gamage

Ashour and Sidney's copse – little woods on the estate

open table – ancient hospitality
pheasant – faasan
partridge – põldpüü
mess – table

high-swollen Medway – the local river, flooded

carp – karpkala
pike – haug
loth – reluctant
draught – püügivõrk, heide
officiously – eager to serve
eel – angerjas

Hours – Horæ (Latin: hours, seasons) – 3 sisters who presided over spring (Eunomia = good order), summer (Dice = justice), winter (Irene = peace)

fig – viigimari
quince – küdoonia
peach – virsik
farmer - a tenant farmer (rentnik)
clown – a simple agricultural labourer (põllutööline, maamats)
suit – business
capon – kohikukk, nuumkukk

ripe daughters – 'fruit of their loins', cf. all the fruits of the earth named previously

emblem of themselves – a plum was an emblem of inaccessibility, pear the emblem of accessibility (i.e. whether they were betrothed/married or still available on the marriage market)

thy free provisions – generous hospitality to all comers, then going out of fashion for reasons of greater economy

liberal board – a generous table

lord's own food – the same food as the lord of the manor eats at the high table, not left-overs from the previous day's feast

fain – willing
dine away – in a pub/inn in the village
tells – counts
gluttony – õgardlus

below – in the kitchen on the ground floor (guests dine now in the Great Chamber which is on the first floor)

lodging – room
livery – liveried servant of the house
thou – you, Penshurst

King James – James I

the prince – Henry, Prince of Wales

Penates – household gods/guardian spirits

linen, plate, all things nigh when she was far – when moving from residence to residence, great men took their furniture, hangings, tapestries and household utensils with them (nobody was so rich as to keep all his houses fully furnished and equipped at all times). Plate – silver or gold ornamental plates and cups displayed on the sideboard when the dinner was served in the hall or later in the Great Chamber.

chaste – virtuous
morn - morning
even – evening
parts – example
proportion – compare

their lords have built, but thy lord dwells – others build for show but their greatness is empty, while the lord of Penshurst is the living embodiment of greatness without the need for outward ostentation

THE CAROLINE COURT OF LOVE

The Caroline masque

In 1629 the great baroque painter Peter Paul Rubens came to England on a diplomatic mission to mediate a peace which was to inaugurate the eleven years of the personal rule of Charles I without Parliament. The artist, honoured by the king with a knighthood, wrote of what he found here:

> 'This island . . . seems to me to be a spectacle worthy of the interest of every gentleman . . . not only for the splendour of the outward culture, which seems to be extreme, as of a people rich and happy in the lap of peace, but also for the incredible quality of excellent pictures, statues and ancient inscriptions which are to be found in this court . . .'

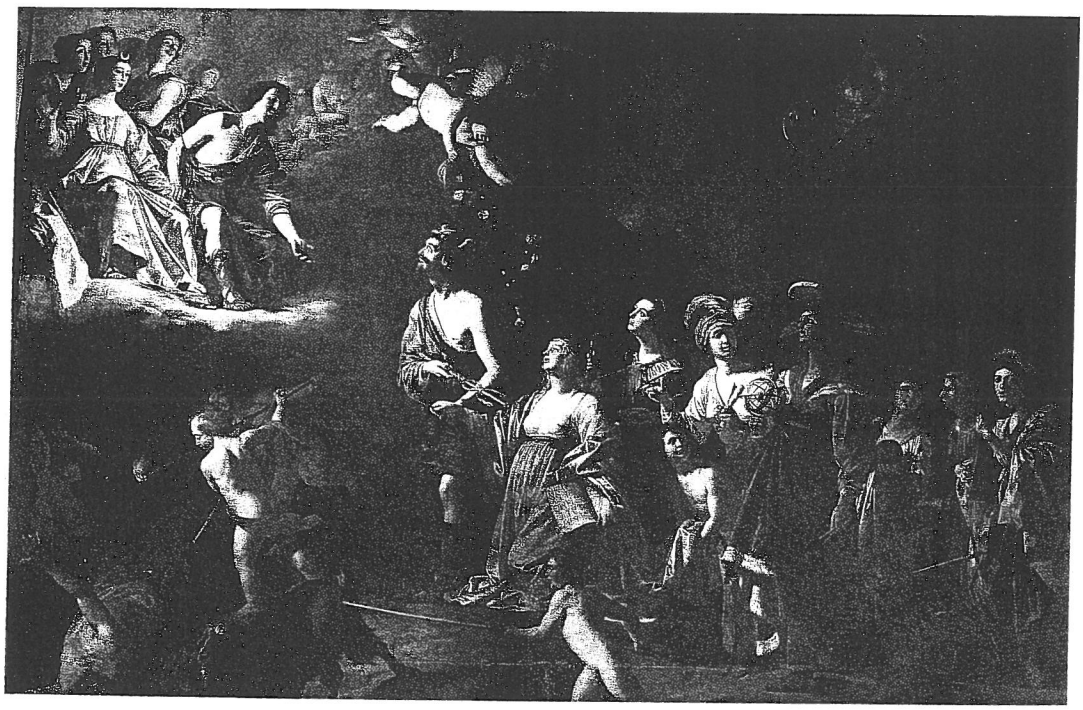
Rubens was a man of the utmost aesthetic sophistication, someone familiar with the riches of Italian Renaissance culture besides being a courtier at one of the most advanced courts in Western Europe, that of the Habsburg archdukes in Brussels. His judgement was one which could not have been passed fifteen or twenty years earlier, a huge indication of the cultural shift which had been achieved by 1630.

That shift had already been accelerated by the change of ruler in 1625. Throughout the seventeenth century politics and religion were affected by a king's character, so too was taste as refracted through his court, thus conditioning the main lines of expression not only in literature but also the visual arts. Both were to remain inextricably linked to royal apotheosis. Literature's role was to create adulatory myths to glorify the ruling dynasty as much as the task of the visual arts was to set forth its triumphs in things seen. The difference in the content and in the context whereby these aims were to be achieved between the Jacobean and Caroline courts was to be highly significant, however. The cultural ethos of the old Jacobean court was still based, as Elizabeth I's had been, squarely on contact with the real world which lay beyond the confines of Whitehall Palace. James I had been viewed as a cross between an Old Testament king and a Roman emperor. Both roles were robust and, although he could be, and indeed was, sleazy, there was in fact nothing effete about him. In the same way the tone of his court could sink into moral turpitude but it retained its intellectual vigour, thanks not only to the monarch himself but to the presence of people of the distinction of the writer and philosopher Francis Bacon. And, although James had sought Catholic brides for his sons, which was hugely unpopular with his subjects, he remained stoutly Protestant, a monarch whose learning enabled him to take part in the theological debate which raged against the Antichrist of Rome.

One of Van Dyck's most famous portraits of the king. The painter's brush transmutes the diminutive sovereign into a commanding figure, emperor of Great Britain and knightly hero rolled into one.

Now all of that was to change. Charles I was a cold and remote ruler, an aesthete whose idea of a court had been affected by his encounter with the stiff grandeur of that of the Spanish Habsburgs which he had visited in 1623. He was a virtuoso king who, although he could speak with knowledge on theology, philosophy, music and antiquities, remained first and foremost a connoisseur and collector of pictures. He liked artists and indeed was at ease visiting their studios. Even more he was preoccupied with theatre, suggesting plots for comedies and reading the texts of plays and, in the case of the court masques, not only contributing to their subject matter but acting and dancing in them.

What is more, whereas the arts under his father had paid tribute to the regal divinity of Stuart rule, their role was never a sharply defined one. Now the Muses were openly cast by the Crown as an arm of government, as promoters and sustainers of the magic of monarchy. That statement was made very early in the new reign in a painting by the Dutch artist Honthorst executed short-



The arts in the service of the Crown. The king's favourite, the Duke of Buckingham, presents the Muses to Charles I and Henrietta Maria in an allegory by Gerrit van Honthorst.

ly before the Duke of Buckingham's assassination in 1628. In it the duke appears as Mercury presenting the Liberal Arts to Charles and his French Catholic queen, Henrietta Maria, who, as Apollo and Diana, sun and moon, burst as radiances upon a night sky of ignorance. Figures representing satire and distraction are vanquished by this royal apparition in which the pair are presented as patrons of the arts and the focal point of the kingdom's intellectual activity. Time and again this interdependence of the arts and the Crown was to be reiterated through the 1630s, above all in the masques. These were inaugurated in 1631 in a new series covering the years of Charles's personal rule without summoning Parliament, annual rituals in which king and queen presented one to each other as an act of state. Both these opening spectacles were by Ben Jonson, and were to be the last he wrote, for his relationship with Inigo Jones finally broke down, ending with bitter recriminations by the poet against the architect. The arts figured in both. *Love's Triumph through Callipolis*, the king's, included a tableau in which a rock arose from the sea bearing the Muses, while the queen's, *Chloridia*, culminated with a springtime landscape encompassed by a rainbow, the emblem of peace:

> 'Here, out of the Earth, ariseth a Hill, and on the top of it, a globe, on which Fame is seene standing, with her trumpet in her hand; and on the Hill, are seated four Persons, presenting Poesie, History, Architecture, and Sculpture: who together with the Nymphs, Floods, and Mountaynes, make a full Quire; at which Fame begins to mount, and moving her wings, flyeth, singing up to Heaven.'

The court was thus staking a claim to everlasting fame through its patronage of the arts. By 1638 a masque could even take for its plot the Muses fleeing Greece to find refuge in Britain thanks 'to the divine minds of this incomparable pair.' In this way the decade and a half before the outbreak of civil war in 1642 witnessed an enmeshing of culture and political ideology on an unprecedented scale. The role of the arts in the eyes of the king was to set before his subjects noble ideals so as to strengthen the practice of virtue and direct human energy to praiseworthy ends. He and his queen, needless to say, were billed as living incarnations of these ideals.

Charles I, far more than his father, was to set the visual style of his reign as being classical, Roman imperial, appearing attired as Augustus *redivivus* in the masques, having himself depicted in his portraits as an emperor riding beneath a classical triumphal arch and even daydreaming of constructing a vast new palace in the classical style. Nothing better summed up this association of art with what was to prove to be a fatal political philosophy than Thomas Carew's masque *Coelum Britannicum* (1634). In it the court witnessed on stage a progression across time from the ruins of Romano-British classicism through the barbarism of the intervening centuries closing with a final revelation of the present age epitomised in a scene of a Renaissance villa surrounded by an elegant garden. Such were seen to be the fruits of the king's policy of peace.

And indeed peace was to be a recurring *leitmotif* animating every courtly celebration. The old themes, which had held a country together under Gloriana, ones which were fiercely patriotic, militaristic and apocalyptic, fell into abeyance while painters, poets and playwrights united to hymn the blessings of the Stuart *pax*:

> Tournies, masques, Theaters better become
> Our Halcyon Days: what though the German Drum
> Bellow for freedom and revenge, the noise
> Concerns not us, nor shall divert our joys;
> Nor ought the thunder of their Carabins
> Drown the sweet Airs of our tun'd Violins;
> Believe me friend, if their prevailing powers
> Gain them a calm security like ours,
> They'll hang their arms upon the Olive Bough
> And dance, and revel then, as we do now.

Thus Carew again, this time drawing a comparison between the seemingly halcyon days of Charles I and Henrietta Maria and a continent rent by a bloody war which was waged on a scale not to be seen again before 1914. Four years before, in 1629, Rubens had encapsulated this mythology in paint in his great canvas *A Landscape with Saint George and the Dragon*. The saint is of course Charles I, a shimmering knight rescuing the princess, his queen. What we see is an allegory of his rule, a victory of regal reason and virtue over the passions and evil humours of his realm pictured in the vanquished monster. A golden sun breaks through the clouds and touches a view of the lush and verdant English countryside from which grateful people look on in wonder and admiration.

But, alas, art can only be successful as propaganda if it at least bears some semblance to a political reality. Little in the culture fostered by the exclusive Caroline court

Caroline (4)

ever did. The truth was that the kingdom was at peace for over a decade because the king could not afford war, nor did he wish to summon Parliament, which any conflict would certainly precipitate. The only means he had whereby to raise taxes was by the exertion of the royal prerogative which, in the form of the hated Ship Money, became ever more a source of popular grievance. But none of this was seen to impede what was from the outside one long royal triumph. Everything was to proclaim the benefits showered on the island by the union of this divine couple. And this emphasis on both king and queen again set Charles's reign apart from that of his father. His mother, Anne of Denmark, had been a covert Catholic, a patron of innovation in the arts, but she and James largely went their separate ways. In the case of Charles and Henrietta Maria they were as one, a union of the son of the peace-loving James I with the daughter of the warrior Henri IV of France. Thus Heroic Virtue was fused with Love and Beauty together making a force whose power was presented as irresistible in the State. Or so they believed.

Charles I in the guise of an heroic prototype, the Emperor Albanactus, in the masque Albion's Triumph *(1632). Costume design by Inigo Jones.*

As in the previous reign the masques were at the heart of the court's cultural life. Together in these annual epiphanies king and queen were seen to reform not only humanity but nature itself, even in one the heavens, so potent was their magic. To the inherited Jacobean cult of regal divinity was now added a new element, the role of the queen as a Platonic love goddess. Henrietta Maria introduced from the French court the manners and highly artificial language of adoration and service which was the height of fashion in the closed world of that court, in which women were deified as living abstractions of beauty and goodness. Such idealised love, above all that of the king for the queen, was seen also to be a cleansing action wiping away any stains left by the debauchery of the previous reign. Britain was now ruled by a monarch whose soul was a compound of the virtues and who aspired to philosophic enlightenment and the ascent of the soul to the divine mind. In this quest the queen played a role as his chaste assistant, a living embodiment of love and beauty. Through their amorous harmony Charles was able to make his heavenly ascent and thus bring untold benefits pouring down upon his obedient and admiring subjects.

The belief in the efficacy of spectacles such as the masques was profound. They were a form of white magic. The importance attached to their effect can be gauged by their cost, for each one would have equipped a small army. Add to that the prodigious amount of time given over to rehearsing them, even when political tensions were at their height. They remain monuments to an intense belief that to see is to believe, and that art has the power to draw down the benign influences of the heavens on the monarchy in the same way as an astrological talisman. After 1631 the masques were written by a succession of tame poets, but their concept remained firmly in the hands of Inigo Jones. The most eloquent was Thomas Carew's *Coelum Britannicum* (1634) which was staged when regal confidence was at its height. In this heaven itself

was remodelled on the Caroline court. Only in the last of the masques do chinks appear in this endless self-congratulatory saga. *Salmacida Spolia* was staged in 1640 with a nation restless over what many regarded as arbitrary taxation, unhappy too over aspects of the royal religious policy, with Scotland in rebellion and a new parliament imminent. This time the secret wisdom of the divinely appointed Stuart king was seen as being unappreciated by an ungrateful people. Charles I, cast in the role of Philogenes or Lover of his People, takes on long-suffering, Christ-like attributes. The masque opened with storms and furies raging, symbols of the ingrates over which the king ruled. Then followed a landscape such as Rubens painted for the king as Saint George, a prospect 'as might express a country in peace, rich and fruitful.' To this descended the Genius of Great Britain and Concord, bewailing the ingratitude of the populace and inciting them to pass their time not in opposing royal policies but in 'honest pleasures and recreations.' The king and his companions were indeed revealed triumphant beneath victors' palm trees and with bound captives at their feet, but their setting was the remote fastness of a mountainside. The queen came down in a cloud to join her husband in their time-honoured celebration of Love and Virtue, one to be mirrored in a final tableau, a city in the new classical style. On to this the heavens descend with a tableau of deities in what was a final royal incantation to avert disaster.

This is the defensive manifestation of a court turned in on itself, caught up in the fatal belief that what could be conjured up in the pasteboard world of the masque need only be staged to be true, when it patently was not. War lay only two years away and within nine the king's head was to fall on a scaffold erected outside the very palace in which the masques had been staged. Part of that breakdown can be attributed to the fact not that two opposing cultures had come to blows but rather that the one pursued by the king and his court had drifted dramatically away from having even the remotest roots in mass popular appeal. The king was seen overtly to have abdicated his role as the leader of Protestant Europe, so much so that by 1630 the bells in churches began to peal on Accession Day of Elizabeth I once more. For the unsophisticated average Protestant every aspect of court culture smacked of Rome. The king promoted a form of Anglicanism which restored ritual and images. He filled his palaces with works of art whose subject matter could not be construed in any other way than as being Catholic. He was even to accept gifts of works of art from that Antichrist, the pope. Worse, his queen was openly Catholic and her circle attracted fashionable converts. All of this created unease and an apprehension that the cultural road taken by the king led to Rome. And nothing was done to make anyone think otherwise.

Caroline art

Charles I's art collection was to outshine in terms of sheer scale and connoisseurship any other in the rest of Europe. His aesthetic sensibilities, inherited from his mother, were sharpened by his glimpse of the Habsburg imperial collections. Art collections were now a recognised index of regal grandeur. He was to return to England from Spain with Titian's *Venus del Pardo*, a Correggio as well as Giambologna's *Cain and Abel*. The same year he purchased the Raphael Cartoons which were used by

The acquisition of the Raphael cartoons for the royal collection led to their use for the manufacture of tapestries in the workshop which was established at Mortlake late in the reign of James I.

the royal tapestry workshops at Mortlake. But his greatest *coup* came in 1627 when he acquired one of the finest of all Renaissance princely collections, that of the Gonzaga, dukes of Mantua. This included splendid works by Mantegna, Perugino, Leonardo, Giorgione, Caravaggio and Giulio Romano. Two great series seemed especially apt in the context of Stuart imperial aspirations, Mantegna's *Triumphs of Caesar* and Titian's *Emperors*. Daniel Nys, the agent who clinched the deal, wrote: 'In short, so wonderful and glorious a collection that the like will never again be met with . . .' He was to go on and add to it the Mantuan collection of classical antiquities. This one *coup* at a stroke established the status of the Caroline court as the equal of any other in Europe. The king's agents, however, never ceased to seek further acquisitions. Those who sought royal favour also knew that a gift of a great work of art was one way whereby to achieve it. Within a few years there emerged a circle of informed connoisseurs, aristocrats like the Earls of Danby and Pembroke or gentlemen such as Endymion Porter or Sir Kenelm Digby.

At last, too, the king was able to secure the services of an artist who, if not the equal of Rubens, was certainly a great master, one whose vision and virtuosity with the brush was to make his pictures the supreme apology for the reign. Anthony Van Dyck, Rubens's prime pupil, settled in England in 1633, establishing a studio which was to produce a long series of royal and aristocratic portraits which were to provide models for imitation and emulation by every generation of artists down to the reign of Queen Victoria. Van Dyck was able to put into paint the transient ideas of the masques, transforming the unprepossessing physical realities of the king and his consort by means of a series of dazzling canvases which show them as a union of true minds, elegant and gracious. Henrietta Maria is always the radiant love goddess whose presence virtually irradiates the picture space. Charles is the *imperator*, both

hero and gentleman, riding through a classical triumphal arch or staying his horse beneath a mighty oak or lingering in a woodland glade, pensive with noble thoughts. No other painter has excelled in waving a wand over reality and lifting his sitters into another world so completely. The men and women of the court are depicted as assured yet relaxed, their aristocratic dignity borne with an air of casual ease and gentle restraint.

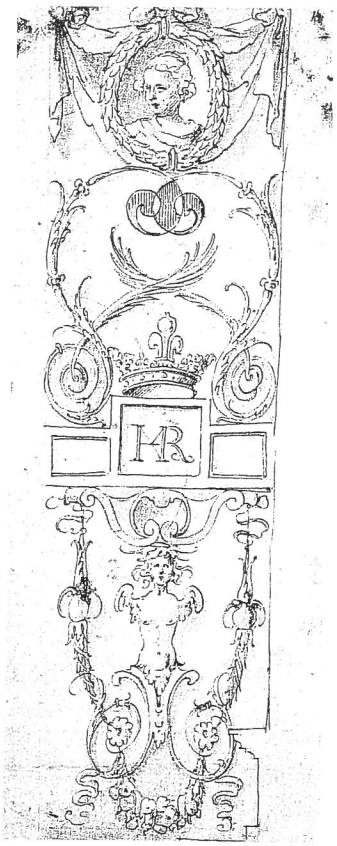
They are softly lit, posed often against massive pillars and a distant landscape. The skies above them are overcast with the light only filtering fitfully through to suggest complexity of psychological mood. Their exquisite sense of feeling and emotion is caught in their elongated hands, the fingers of which caress the silken fabrics, rest on sculpture or clasp a flower. Van Dyck's gentle baroque rhythms transmute his sitters into being a race apart, made up of superior persons invested with an aura of refinement which is almost spiritual. Nothing in these portraits could be more remote from the Elizabethan icons which had preceded them. For those who moved in the arcadia of the court, status is now seen to be inbred, natural and effortless, and no longer to be crudely asserted by overt opulence, hauteur or prowess. The change was total.

This sense of unreality was sustained by a court cult of rural simplicity. Henrietta Maria even acted in pastoral plays (much to the disgust of the Puritans) and courtiers could assume the guise of shepherds in their portraits. The nostalgia for what was left of the old pre-Reformation traditional culture was to reach its peak during these years, heightened by the steady erosion of it by Puritan Sabbatarianism. Increasingly in the royal eyes such things as May dances, midsummer watches and decking churches with greenery were viewed as innocent revelry and custom needful to the maintenance of a hierarchical, orderly church and state. English country life became its own version of classical arcady. The Caroline poets such as Thomas Carew and Richard Lovelace all celebrated such pastimes, but their supreme exponent was Robert Herrick. His poems, the *Hesperides*, were published in 1649 and opened with a verse which would have been read at the time as one defiant to those who had executed the king that year:

I sing of *Brookes*, of *Blossoms*, *Birds* and *Bowers*:
Of *April*, *May*, or *June* and *July-Flowers*.
I sing of *May-poles*, *Hock-carts*, *Wassails*, *Wakes*.
Of *Bride-grooms*, *Brides* and their *Bridal-cakes*.
I write of *Youth*, of *Love* and have Access
By these to write of cleanly-*Wantonness*.

Increasingly the rural country estate began to take on the role of a man-made paradise in which the owner sought within his own domain to recapture a primordial paradise. The survival and indeed preservation of these age-old rituals was now seen as part of the arcadia of the royalist cause in which a beneficent lord of the manor was to play his part by maintaining ancient hospitality.

Inigo Jones's lavish interiors in the French style for Henrietta Maria at Somerset House during the 1630s established new criteria for elegance in interior decoration. This design for a vertical panel includes her cipher.



Poetry was one of the arts which made up the tableau at the close of the queen's masque of *Chloridia*. That too was to be subservient to the all-pervading diktat of the court. Poets indeed received posts in the royal entourage and then there were courtiers who turned poet. Suckling, Lovelace, Carew, Waller and Davenant, the Cavalier poets, all speak with one voice celebrating the king and queen as an heroic couple, demi-gods indeed, fit subjects for a poetry of vision and miracle. Both are written of almost in terms of religious veneration. Edmund Waller's poems are dedicated to Henrietta Maria as 'Queen of Britain, and the Queen of Love.' The elevated and hyperbolic purity attributed to her spills over and embraces a whole line of other poets' heroines including, for example, Waller's Sacharissa, subject of the poem 'Go, lovely rose.' Like Van Dyck's portraits this poetry is elegant and smooth but it can at the same time be artificial and devoid of depth. Drawing on the legacy of Jonson and Donne none yet manages to eclipse them. Significantly the only innovative poet of the age, John Milton, worked away from the court.

Caroline "beauty of holiness"

That courtliness which neutered the drama and rendered so much of Caroline poetry stilted was not so inimical towards what was a golden age of sermons and religious verse. Sermons matched theatre in terms of being a public draw. This was an age of witty preaching and its chief adornments were Lancelot Andrewes and John Donne. But it was in the poetry of George Herbert that Caroline piety was to find its most profound and lasting expression. Sensitive and decorous, his verse is a monument to 'the beauty of holiness', that practice of the liturgy with good order and ritual which was the essence of the king's religious policy and the object of loathing by his Puritan opponents. Herbert began his life in the orbit of the court but turned his back on it and was ordained in 1630. His poetry was published posthumously three years later: *The Temple: Sacred Poems and Private Ejaculations*. They are the finest expression of seventeenth century high Anglican piety. Herbert celebrates all those things the Puritans wished to sweep away. He speaks of the beauty and significance of ritual, of the mystery of the sacraments offering praise to the angels, to the saints and the Virgin Mary. In them we move in a heaven which could only ever be Anglican, filled with a deep inner piety which spoke of the anguish of the heart in its search for God.

Poetry of this kind was evidence of a physical reality taking place as church buildings were put in order all over the country. By the 1620s churches had fallen into disrepair. Often they had become bowling alleys, chicken runs, places in which to loiter, even ale-houses. In the Puritan scheme of things there was no such thing as a holy place. But the Church of England with the advent of a new generation was giving expression to the ideals set forth in the work of its great apologist, Richard Hooker, in *The Laws of Ecclesiastical Politie* published at the close of Elizabeth's reign:

Caroline (9)

'The house of prayer is a Court beautified with the presence of celestial prayer; that there we stand, we pray, we sound forth hymns to God, having his Angels intermingled as our associates . . .' The saintly Bishop Andrewes set the pattern in his own chapel in which the liturgy was performed with due respect and dignity and the preservation of an atmosphere of holy reverence. In the 1620s and 1630s this new movement to observe 'the beauty of holiness' was adopted by the king and his Archbishop of Canterbury, William Laud. Order of a kind associated with Catholicism returned. The holy table was removed from the nave and set where the altar had been in the chancel, and covered with an embroidered carpet. On it stood two candlesticks, even a crucifix, and it was railed off from the rest of the church. Sacred vessels, the use of incense and copes and, in time, images and stained glass made their appearance. The church resumed its status as a holy place again, leading to a huge restoration and beautification programme in which painting and sculpture returned as aids to the liturgy. Alas, though to those who took this view these were things conducive to holiness, to the Puritans they were signs that England was drifting Romewards. The Puritans rejected the arts. Such a phenomenon as the new porch at St. Mary's, Oxford, with its twisted baroque pillars and statue of the Virgin holding the Christ Child, was anathema, the work of Antichrist.

All over England the Laudian clerics were reordering churches much to the abhorrence of the Puritans in their congregation. When the Long Parliament met in 1640 all was to be as dust. By then the civilisation which the court had created was under siege, its visions increasingly seen as pasteboard delusions which should be swept away. Both sides of the divide had viewed the monarchy as divinely appointed, but the approach to that divinity was very different. For the opposition, that was valid in the terms of the Crown occupying the position of Elizabeth I, an eschatological one of the kings of England as rulers of the Last Days preparing the way for Christ's Second Coming and the vanquishing of the Antichrist of Rome. For the king and his archbishop that divinity stemmed from an analogy of the monarchy to the cosmos, the king and queen as sun and moon raining down their blessings upon their subjects in terms of peace, justice and moral example. Both sides claimed that an imbalance had occurred. The royal view was that political order was the product of the king's power and Charles as an heroic ruler had brought order and civilisation to his people but now his power was threatened by erosion from the populace. The parliamentary view was that certain laws and liberties were derived from immemorial tradition as old and fundamental as the monarchy itself. Any king, they claimed, who attempted to violate them was dissolving the very foundations of society.

There was indeed a cultural dimension which contributed to the outbreak of civil war. It was not so much a polarity of two opposing cultures as that king and court had retreated into a self-perpetuating arcadia of their own. They beheld themselves as it were in an enchanted looking-glass. They ignored any warnings as to their isolation. There were, however, those who dared to hint at the bitter truth of things. D'Avenant's play *The Platonick Lovers* (1635) can be read as a critical burlesque on the court's Platonic love cult. So too can Richard Brome's *The Love-Sick Court* (1633-34) which opened with a warning of the impending rift:

Th'unquiet Commons fill his head and breast
With their impertinent discontents and strife.
The peace that his good love has kept them in
For many years, still feeding them with plenty,
Hath, like o'er pampered steeds that throw their Masters,
Set them at war with him. O misery of kings!

In the coming upheaval a civilisation was swept away which was to leave a legend. Van Dyck was to die in 1641 but Inigo Jones lived on to 1652, everything he had stood for seemingly gone. No one could put the clock back to regal divinity again, nor its projection through the magic of the arts. But as the war bit deeper and the gloom of first the Republic and then the Protectorate spread its chill austerity through the land, the age of Charles I began to assume a retrospective golden glow. Writing in the 1650s Andrew Marvell, in his poem 'Upon Appleton House', frames a lament for a world that had gone:

O thou, that dear and happy isle,
The garden of the world erewhile,
Thou Paradise of the four seas,
Which heaven planted us to please,
But to exclude the world did guard
With watery if not flaming sword –
What luckless apple did we taste,
To make us mortal, and thee waste?

Cavaliers and the Civil War

Sometime during the late 1640s a Welsh gentleman called Henry Vaughan put pen to paper in a poem entitled 'The Dawning'.

Ah! what time wilt thou come?
The Bridegroome's coming! fill the sky?
Shall it in the Evening run
When our words and work are done?
Or will thy all-surprising light
Break at midnight?
When either sleep, or some dark pleasure
Possesseth mad man without measure;
Or shall those early, fragrant hours
Unlock thy bowres?
And with thy blush of light descry
Thy locks crown'd with eternitie . . .

The coming of which he writes with such passion is the Second Coming when Christ will descend in glory, the great judgement follow, and then the thousand year reign of the saints begin in a reborn earthly paradise. Such were the musings of a defeated royalist as he looked around at the landscape of his native Breconshire conscious that his king had gone, executed by regicides, and so also had his church. In Vaughan's poems we walk in a visionary world where the divine is always imminent. And in his dwelling in and on transcendence he was not to be alone.

Caroline (11)

What sets the 1640s and 1650s apart is this all-pervading sense that mankind was living in the last age of the world. The apocalyptic atmosphere which was unleashed by the Civil War in 1642 cut right across society and was to ebb and flow in intensity for two decades according to the turn of events and then, in 1660, with the return of the monarchy, plunge underground. There was nothing novel in the ideas themselves, but what was new was that men and women actually believed that they were living out the prophecies of Daniel and Isaiah in the Old Testament, and also those of St John in the Book of Revelation. John Foxe's influential book *Actes and Monuments* had for decades instilled into the populace the idea that the English were God's chosen people, the successors to the Israelites, that here on this island God's truth had first been restored in the reformed Protestant faith, and that here too would take place the final battle between Christ and Antichrist. Moreover, God had chosen the English for a special role in this struggle. Antichrist was, of course, identified with Rome, Catholicism and Anglicanism of the kind promoted by Archbishop Laud. Chronologists had long since predicted that the fall of Antichrist would occur in the seventeenth century; as the Civil War progressed and the king and established church were swept away divines naturally saw these events as portents of the Second Coming. Everywhere one looks during these two tumultuous decades one is aware of a keen expectancy, that something cosmic could happen at any time. As a consequence, everything was cast into apocalyptic terms as the forces of light fought against those of darkness and the protagonists witnessed what they believed to be God's providence unfold.

Cupid arms the cavalier. Henry Mordaunt, 2nd Earl of Peterborough, in a portrait dated 1642 by William Dobson captures the spirit of chivalrous romance, typical of the Caroline court poets, which was lived out in the Civil War.

On 10 February 1642 Charles I and his family left Whitehall and headed for Oxford. Ten days earlier the painter Van Dyck had died, a symbol of an era gone. For four years a court of sorts was maintained in the colleges of Oxford, one bravely recorded in the canvases of William Dobson. Here are the handsome heroic Cavaliers of romance, caught with all their bravado in buff jerkin or shimmering breastplate. In the distance rises the smoke of the field of battle curling up towards a turbulent sky while in the foreground usually stands an attribute recalling earlier days, symbolic classical sculpture of a kind which one would have seen in the gardens at Arundel House. These are figures from a masque not of the king's peace but of his war.

That sense that the past would never return is captured also in the onrush of publications by the Cavalier poets. The collapse of censorship in 1640 led them to print what they had written earlier, realising that they ought to get it into book form while they could. The poems of Thomas Carew, Edmund Waller, Sir John Suckling, James Shirley, Robert Herrick and Richard Lovelace were all printed in the 1640s. Poems from the past many indeed were, but by no means all. Lovelace catches the lovelorn Cavalier at war, still celebrating the beauties of his graceful heroine but against a very different background, caught in titles like 'To Lucasta, going to the Wars' or 'To Althea from Prison'.

(For further details, see, if you wish,
R. Strong. The Spirit of Britain.)

ROBERT HERRICK
1591–1674

from *Hesperides* (302–342)

The Argument of His Book

I SING of brooks, of blossoms, birds, and bowers:
Of April, May, of June, and July-flowers.
I sing of May-poles, hock-carts, wassails, wakes,
Of bridegrooms, brides, and of their bridal cakes.
I write of youth, of love, and have access
By these to sing of cleanly-wantonness.
I sing of dews, of rains, and piece by piece
Of balm, of oil, of spice, and amber-Greece.
I sing of time's trans-shifting; and I write
How roses first came red, and lilies white.
I write of groves, of twilights, and I sing
The court of Mab, and of the fairy king.
I write of hell; I sing (and ever shall)
Of heaven, and hope to have it after all.

(1648)

SIR JOHN SUCKLING

[The Constant Lover]

OUT upon it, I have loved
Three whole days together,
And am like to love three more,
If it hold fair weather.

Time shall moult away his wings
Ere he shall discover
In the whole wide world again
Such a constant lover.

But pox upon 't, no praise
There is due at all to me:
Love with me had made no stay,
Had it any been but she.

Had it any been but she
And that very very face,
There had been at least ere this
A dozen dozen in her place.

(1659)

RICHARD LOVELACE

To Althea, from Prison: Song

WHEN love with unconfinèd wings
Hovers within my gates,
And my divine Althea brings
To whisper at the grates;
When I lie tangled in her hair,
And fettered to her eye,
The gods that wanton in the air
Know no such liberty.

When flowing cups run swiftly round,
With no allaying Thames,
Our careless heads with roses bound,
Our hearts with loyal flames;
When thirsty grief in wine we steep,
When healths and draughts go free,
Fishes that tipple in the deep
Know no such liberty.

When, like committed linnets, I
With shriller throat shall sing
The sweetness, mercy, majesty
And glories of my king;
When I shall voice aloud how good
He is, how great should be,
Enlargèd winds that curl the flood
Know no such liberty.

Stone walls do not a prison make,
Nor iron bars a cage;
Minds innocent and quiet take
That for an hermitage:
If I have freedom in my love,
And in my soul am free,
Angels alone that soar above
Enjoy such liberty.

ROBERT HERRICK

Delight in Disorder

A SWEET disorder in the dress
Kindles in clothes a wontonness:
A lawn about the shoulders thrown
Into a fine distraction;
An erring lace, which here and there
Enthrals the crimson stomacher;
A cuff neglectful, and thereby
Ribbands to flow confusèdly;
A winning wave (deserving note)
In the tempestuous petticoat;
A careless shoestring, in whose tie
I see a wild civility:
Do more bewitch me, than when art
Is too precise in every part.

(1648)

LOVELACE

The Grasshopper: To My Noble Friend, Mr Charles Cotton: Ode

O THOU that swingst upon the waving hair
Of some well-fillèd oaten beard,
Drunk every night with a delicious tear
Dropped thee from heaven, where now th'art reared,
The joys of earth and air are thine entire,
That with thy feet and wings dost hop and fly;
And when thy poppy works thou dost retire
To thy carved acron bed to lie.

Up with the day, the sun thou welcom'st then,
Sportst in the gilt plats of his beams,
And all these merry days mak'st merry men,
Thyself, and melancholy streams.

But ah, the sickle! Golden ears are cropped;
Ceres and Bacchus bid good night;
Sharp frosty fingers all your flowers have topped,
And what scythes spared, winds shave off quite.

Poor verdant fool! And now green ice! Thy joys,
Large and as lasting as thy perch of grass,
Bid us lay in 'gainst winter rain, and poise
Their floods with an o'erflowing glass.

Thou best of men and friends! We will create
A genuine summer in each other's breast;
And spite of this cold time and frozen fate
Thaw us a warm seat to our rest.

Our sacred hearths shall burn eternally
As Vestal flames: the north wind, he
Shall strike his frost-stretched wings, dissolve and fly
This Etna in epitome.

Dropping December shall come weeping in,
Bewail the usurping of his reign;
But when in showers of old Greek we begin,
Shall cry he hath his crown again.

Night as clear Hesper shall our tapers whip
From the light casements where we play,
And the dark hag from her black mantle strip,
And stick there everlasting day.

Thus richer than untempted kings are we,
That asking nothing, nothing need:
Though lord of all what seas embrace, yet he
That wants himself is poor indeed.

(1649)

Plate 10: (above) The flying heart, Harvey, *The School of the Heart* (1st edn 1647, 1676), p. 150. Copperplate engraving by Michel van Lochem.

Plate 11: (right) Frontispiece to *Ashrea* (1665). Copperplate engraving.

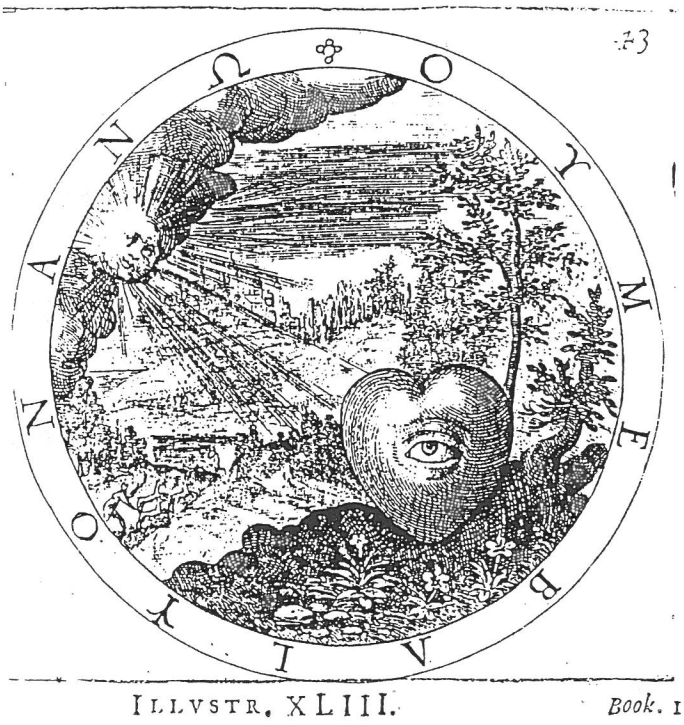


Plate 8: The meditative eye of the mind, Wither, *Emblemes* (1635), p. 43. Copperplate engraving by de Passe.

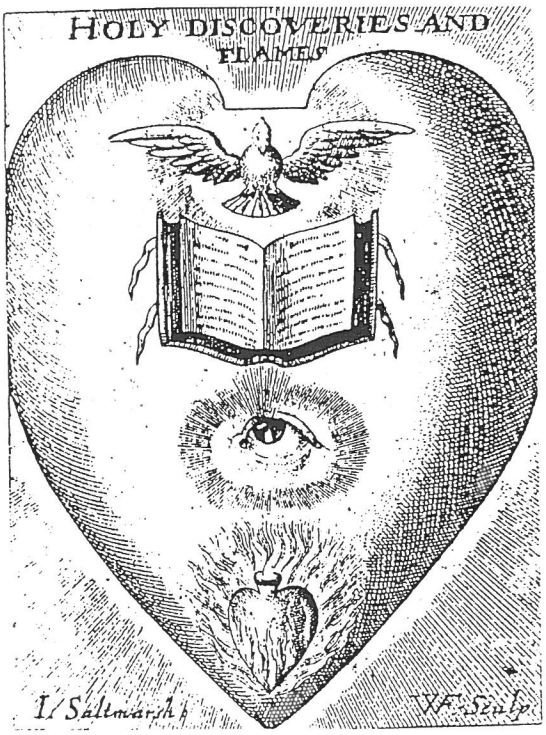


Plate 9: John Saltmarsh, *Holy Discoveries and Flames* (1640), title page. Copperplate engraving.

The soul of the Christian pilgrim is guided by the word of God:

"O that my paths may be guided/ to keep Thy laws (Psalm 118, 5)/ In the tangled maze/ With all its twists and turns/ I walk and will without fear await/ The help promised by Thy Word./ From far away I see that here and there some will fall/ Who are otherwise cautious enough and probably the boldest:/ I go blindly onwards and my arts are all in my devotion to Thee my friend!/ (...) This life is a maze;/ That the journey may be safe/ Thou must without guile wait in blind faith for God/ In pure love without artifice."

Hermann Hugo, Gottselige Begierde, Augsburg, 1622

ROTATION: Pilgrim

The Dawning

AWAKE, sad heart, whom sorrow ever drowns;
Take up thine eyes, which feed on earth;
Unfold thy forehead gathered into frowns:
Thy Saviour comes, and with him mirth:
Awake, awake;
And with a thankful heart his comforts take.
But thou dost still lament, and pine, and cry;
And feel his death, but not his victory.

Arise sad heart; if thou do not withstand,
Christ's resurrection thine may be:
Do not by hanging down break from the hand,
Which as it riseth, raiseth thee:
Arise, arise;
And with his burial-linen dry thine eyes:
Christ left his grave-clothes, that we might, when grief
Draws tears, or blood, not want a handkerchief.

(1633)

The Altar

A BROKEN ALTAR, Lord, thy servant rears,
Made of a heart, and cémented with tears:
Whose parts are as thy hand did frame;
No workman's tool hath touched the same.
A HEART alone
Is such a stone
As nothing but
Thy power doth cut.
Wherefore each part
Of my hard heart
Meets in this frame,
To praise thy name:
That, if I chance to hold my peace,
These stones to praise thee may not cease.
O let thy blessed SACRIFICE be mine,
And sanctify this ALTAR to be thine.

(1633)

The Collar

I STRUCK the board, and cried, No more.
I will abroad.
What? shall I ever sigh and pine?
My lines and life are free; free as the road,
Loose as the wind, as large as store.
Shall I be still in suit?
Have I no harvest but a thorn
To let me blood, and not restore
What I have lost with cordial fruit?
Sure there was wine
Before my sighs did dry it; there was corn
Before my tears did drown it.
Is the year only lost to me?
Have I no bays to crown it?
No flowers, no garlands gay? All blasted?
All wasted?
Not so, my heart: but there is fruit,
And thou hast hands.
Recover all thy sigh-blown age
On double pleasures: leave thy cold dispute
Of what is fit, and not. Forsake thy cage,
Thy rope of sands,
Which petty thoughts have made, and made to thee
Good cable, to enforce and draw
And be thy law,
While thou didst wink and wouldst not see.
Away; take heed,
I will abroad,
Call in thy death's head there: tie up thy fears.
He that forbears
To suit and serve his need
Deserves his load.
But as I raved and grew more fierce and wild
At every word,
Me thoughts I heard one calling, *Child!*
And I replied, *My Lord.*

(1633)

405 *Collar*] (1) clerical collar; (2) means of restraint (emblem of discipline); (3) part of rigging; (4) choler, fit of anger board] table; communion table lines] (1) courses, routes; (2) verses road] riding; highway; roadstead store] plenty still] always suit] attendance cordial] restorative corn] grain bays] laurels blasted] withered blown] (1) out of breath; (2) tainted rope of sands] impossibility; frail abstraction (proverb) wink] close the eyes

The Pilgrimage

I TRAVELLED on, seeing the hill, where lay
My expectation.
A long it was and weary way.
The gloomy cave of desperation
I left on th' one, and on the other side
The rock of pride.

And so I came to fancy's meadow strowed
With many a flower:
Fain would I here have made abode,
But I was quickened by my hour.
So to care's copse I came, and there got through
With much ado.

That led me to the wild of passion, which
Some call the wold:
A wasted place, but sometimes rich.
Here I was robbed of all my gold,
Save one good angel, which a friend had tied
Close to my side.

At length I got unto the gladsome hill,
Where lay my hope,
Where lay my heart; and climbing still,
When I had gained the brow and top,
A lake of brackish waters on the ground
Was all I found.

With that abashed and struck with many a sting
Of swarming fears,
I fell, and cried, Alas my King!
Can both the way and end be tears?
Yet taking heart I rose, and then perceived
I was deceived:

My hill was further: so I flung away,
Yet heard a cry,
Just as I went, 'None goes that way
And lives': If that be all, said I,
After so foul a journey death is fair,
And but a chair.

(1633)

QUARLES

CANTICLE

'My beloved is mine, and I am his; He feedeth among the Lillies'

Ev'n like two little bank-dividing brookes,
That wash the pebles with their wanton streames,
And having rang'd and search'd a thousand nookes,
Meet both at length, in silver-brested *Thames*;
Where, in a greater Current they conjoyne:
So I my Best-Beloveds am; so He is mine.

Ev'n so we met; and after long pursuit,
Ev'n so we joyn'd; we both became entire;
No need for either to renew a Suit,
For I was Flax, and he was Flames of fire:
Our firm united soules did more than twine;
So I my Best-Beloveds am; so He is mine.

If all those glittring Monarchs that command
The servile Quarters of this earthly Ball,
Should tender, in Exchange, their shares of land,
I would not change my Fortunes for them all:
Their wealth is but a Counter to my Coyne;
The world's but theirs; but my Beloved's mine.

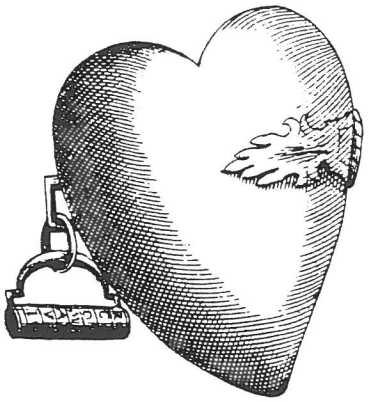
Nay, more; If the faire Thespian Ladies, all
Should heap together their diviner treasure:
That Treasure should be deem'd a price too small
To buy a minuts Lease of half my Pleasure;
'Tis not the sacred wealth of all the Nine
Can buy my heart from Him; or His, from being mine.

Nor Time, nor Place, nor Chance, nor Death can bow
My least desires unto the least remove;
Hee's firmely mine by Oath; I, His, by Vow;
Hee's mine by Faith; and I am His, by Love;
Hee's mine by Water; I am His, by Wine;
Thus I my Best-Beloveds am; Thus He is mine.

He is my Altar; I, his Holy Place;
I am his Guest; and he, my living Food;
I'm his, by Poenitence; He, mine by Grace;
I'm his, by Purchase; He is mine, by Blood;
Hee's my supporting Elme; and I, his Vine:
Thus I my Best-Beloveds am; Thus He is mine.

He gives me wealth: I give him all my Vowes:
I give Him songs; He gives me length of dayes;
With wrethes of Grace he crownes my conq'ring browes:
And I, his Temples, with a Crowne of Praise,
Which he accepts as an everlasting signe,
That I my Best-Beloveds am; that He is mine.

Richard Crashaw



Non Vi.[1]

'Tis not the work of force but skill
To find the way into man's will.
'Tis loue alone can hearts unlock.
Who knowes the WORD, *he needs not knock.*

To the Noblest & best of Ladyes, the Countesse of Denbigh.

Perswading her to Resolution in Religion, & to render her selfe without further delay into the Communion of the Catholick Church.[2]

What heaven-entreated heart is this,
Stands trembling at the gate of bliss,
Holds fast the door, yet dares not venture
Fairly to open it, and enter?
Whose definition is a doubt
'Twixt life and death, 'twixt in and out.
Say, lingering fair! why comes the birth

1. Not by force. The emblem, which expresses a moral question and answer through a picture and appended poem, was popular throughout Europe in the late Renaissance. The heart here has a hinge on the right to show that it can be opened, but it is sealed on the left with a scroll or phylactery inscribed with certain Biblical phrases, standing for the Word or the Law. Only knowledge of the Word enables one to open the heart.

2. Lords and ladies with religious doubts and scruples were the object of tremendous attention during the 17th century. Anxious conferences were held, with priests of all faiths eager to put their views before a possible influential convert; accounts of these conferences were published, disputed, analyzed, and presented to the perplexed for their guidance. Susan, Countess of Denbigh, had been widowed in 1643, when her husband was killed fighting for the king; she had gone with the queen to Paris in 1644, and there, in a thoroughly Catholic environment, had begun contemplating conversion. The queen was a lifelong Catholic, Crashaw, though simply another member of the court in exile, was a new convert; pressure on the lady was therefore very strong to abiure her Anglicanism. As is his wont, Crasnaw uses all the imagery of erotic persuasion in urging the Countess to "yield the fort and let life in."

CRASHAW (cont.)

Of your brave soul so slowly forth?
Plead your pretenses (O you strong
In weakness!) why you choose so long
In labor of your self to lie,
Not daring quite to live nor die.
Ah, linger not, loved soul! a slow
And late consent was a long no;
Who grants at last, long time tried,
And did his best to have denied.
What magic bolts, what mystic bars,
Maintain the will in these strange wars!
What fatal yet fantastic bands
Keep the free heart from its own hands!
So when the year takes cold, we see
Poor waters their own prisoners be.
Fettered and locked up fast they lie
In a sad self-captivity.
Th' astonished nymphs their flood's strange fate deplore,
To see themselves their own severer shore.
  Thou that alone canst thaw this cold,
And fetch the heart from its stronghold,
Almighty Love! end this long war,
And of a meteor make a star.
O fix this fair Indefinite;
And 'mongst thy shafts of sovereign light
Choose out that sure decisive dart
Which has the key of this close heart,
Knows all the corners of 't, and can control
The self-shut cabinet of an unsearched soul.
O let it be at last love's hour!
Raise this tall trophy of thy power;
Come once the conquering way, not to confute,
But kill this rebel-word, *irresolute*,
That so, in spite of all this peevish strength
Of weakness, she may write, *resolved at length*.
  Unfold at length, unfold, fair flower,
And use the season of love's shower.
Meet his well-meaning wounds, wise heart,
And haste to drink the wholesome dart,
That healing shaft which heaven till now
Hath in love's quiver hid for you.
O dart of love! arrow of light!
O happy you, if it hit right;
It must not fall in vain, it must
Not mark the dry, regardless dust.
Fair one, it is your fate, and brings
Eternal worlds upon its wings.
Meet it with wide-spread arms, and see
Its seat your soul's just center be.
Disband dull fears; give faith the day.
To save your life, kill your delay.

It is love's siege, and sure to be
Your triumph, though his victory.
'Tis cowardice that keeps this field,
And want of courage not to yield.
Yield, then, O yield, that love may win
The fort at last, and let life in.
Yield quickly, lest perhaps you prove
Death's prey before the prize of love.
This fort of your fair self, if 't be not won,
He is repulsed indeed; but you are undone.

The World (I)

I SAW eternity the other night
Like a great ring of pure and endless light,
All calm as it was bright,
And round beneath it, time in hours, days, years
Driven by the spheres
Like a vast shadow moved, in which the world
And all her train were hurled:
The doting lover in his quaintest strain
Did there complain,
Near him, his lute, his fancy, and his flights,
Wit's sour delights,
With gloves and knots, the silly snares of pleasure;
Yet his dear treasure
All scattered lay, while he his eyes did pour
Upon a flower.
The darksome statesman hung with weights and woe
Like a thick midnight-fog moved there so slow
He did nor stay, nor go;
Condemning thoughts (like sad eclipses) scowl
Upon his soul,
And clouds of crying witnesses without
Pursued him with one shout.
Yet digged the mole, and lest his ways be found
Worked under ground,
Where he did clutch his prey (but one did see
That policy):
Churches and altars fed him, perjuries
Were gnats and flies,
It rained about him blood and tears; but he
Drank them as free.
The fearful miser on a heap of rust
Sat pining all his life there, did scarce trust
His own hands with the dust;
Yet would not place one piece above, but lives
In fear of thieves.
Thousands there were as frantic as himself
And hugged each one his pelf;
The downright epicure placed heaven in sense
And scorned pretence,
While others slipped into a wide excess
Said little less;
The weaker sort slight, trivial wares enslave
Who think them brave;
And poor, despisèd truth sat counting by
Their victory.
Yet some, who all this while did weep and sing,
And sing and weep, soared up into the ring,
But most would use no wing.

VAUGHAN (cont.)

O fools (said I) thus to prefer dark night
Before true light,
To live in grots and caves, and hate the day
Because it shows the way,
The way which from this dead and dark abode
Leads up to God,
A way where you might tread the sun, and be
More bright than he.
But as I did their madness so discuss
One whispered thus,
'This ring the bride-groom did for none provide
But for his bride.'

John ii 16–17
All that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the father but is of the world.
And the world passeth away, and the lusts thereof, but he that doth the will of God abideth for ever.

(1650)

ANDREW MARVELL
1621–1678

The Definition of Love

My love is of a birth as rare
As 'tis for object strange and high:
It was begotten by despair
Upon impossibility.

Magnanimous despair alone
Could show me so divine a thing,
Where feeble hope could ne'er have flown
But vainly flapped its tinsel wing.

And yet I quickly might arrive
Where my extended soul is fixed;
But fate does iron wedges drive,
And always crowds itself betwixt.

For fate with jealous eye does see
Two perfect loves, nor lets them close:
Their union would her ruin be,
And her tyrannic power depose.

And therefore her decrees of steel
Us as the distant poles have placed,
(Though love's whole world on us doth wheel)
Not by themselves to be embraced,

Unless the giddy heaven fall,
And Earth some new convulsion tear;
And, us to join, the world should all
Be cramped into a planisphere.

As lines so loves oblique may well
Themselves in every angle greet:
But ours so truly parallel,
Though infinite, can never meet.

Therefore the love which us doth bind
But fate so enviously debars
Is the conjunction of the mind
And opposition of the stars.

(1681)

To His Coy Mistress

HAD we but world enough, and time,
This coyness, Lady, were no crime.
We would sit down, and think which way
To walk, and pass our long love's day.

Thou by the Indian Ganges' side
Shouldst rubies find: I by the tide
Of Humber would complain. I would
Love you ten years before the Flood:
And you should, if you please, refuse
Till the conversion of the Jews.
My vegetable love should grow
Vaster than empires, and more slow.
An hundred years should go to praise
Thine eyes, and on thy forehead gaze.
Two hundred to adore each breast;
But thirty thousand to the rest.
An age at least to every part,
And the last age should show your heart:
For, Lady, you deserve this state;
Nor would I love at lower rate.
  But at my back I always hear
Time's wingèd chariot hurrying near;

And yonder all before us lie
Deserts of vast eternity.
Thy beauty shall no more be found;
Nor, in thy marble vault, shall sound
My echoing song: then worms shall try
That long-preserved virginity:
And your quaint honour turn to dust;
And into ashes all my lust.
The grave's a fine and private place,
But none, I think, do there embrace.
  Now, therefore, while the youthful glue
Sits on thy skin like morning dew,
And while thy willing soul transpires
At every pore with instant fires,
Now let us sport us while we may;
And now, like amorous birds of prey,
Rather at once our time devour,
Than languish in his slow-chapped power.
Let us roll all our strength, and all
Our sweetness, up into one ball:
And tear our pleasures with rough strife
Thorough the iron grates of life.

Thus, though we cannot make our sun
Stand still, yet we will make him run.

(1681)

The Garden

How vainly men themselves amaze
To win the palm, the oak, or bays,
And their uncessant labours see
Crowned from some single herb or tree,
Whose short and narrow vergèd shade
Does prudently their toils upbraid,
While all flow'rs and all trees do close
To weave the garlands of repose.

Fair quiet, have I found thee here,
And innocence thy sister dear!
Mistaken long, I sought you then
In busy companies of men.

Your sacred plants, if here below,
Only among the plants will grow.
Society is all but rude,
To this delicious solitude.

No white nor red was ever seen
So am'rous as this lovely green.
Fond lovers, cruel as their flame,
Cut in these trees their mistress' name.
Little, alas, they know, or heed,
How far these beauties hers exceed!
Fair trees! wheres'e'er your barks I wound,
No name shall but your own be found.

When we have run our passion's heat,
Love hither makes his best retreat.
The gods, that mortal beauty chase,
Still in a tree did end their race.
Apollo hunted Daphne so,
Only that she might laurel grow:
And Pan did after Syrinx speed,
Not as a nymph, but for a reed.

What wondrous life in this I lead!
Ripe apples drop about my head;
The luscious clusters of the vine
Upon my mouth do crush their wine;
The nectarine and curious peach
Into my hands themselves do reach;
Stumbling on melons, as I pass,
Ensnared with flowers, I fall on grass.

Meanwhile the mind, from pleasures less,
Withdraws into its happiness:
The mind, that ocean where each kind
Does straight its own resemblance find;
Yet it creates, transcending these,
Far other worlds, and other seas,
Annihilating all that's made
To a green thought in a green shade.

Here at the fountain's sliding foot,
Or at some fruit-tree's mossy root,
Casting the body's vest aside,
My soul into the boughs does glide:
There like a bird it sits, and sings,
Then whets, and combs its silver wings;
And, till prepared for longer flight,
Waves in its plumes the various light.

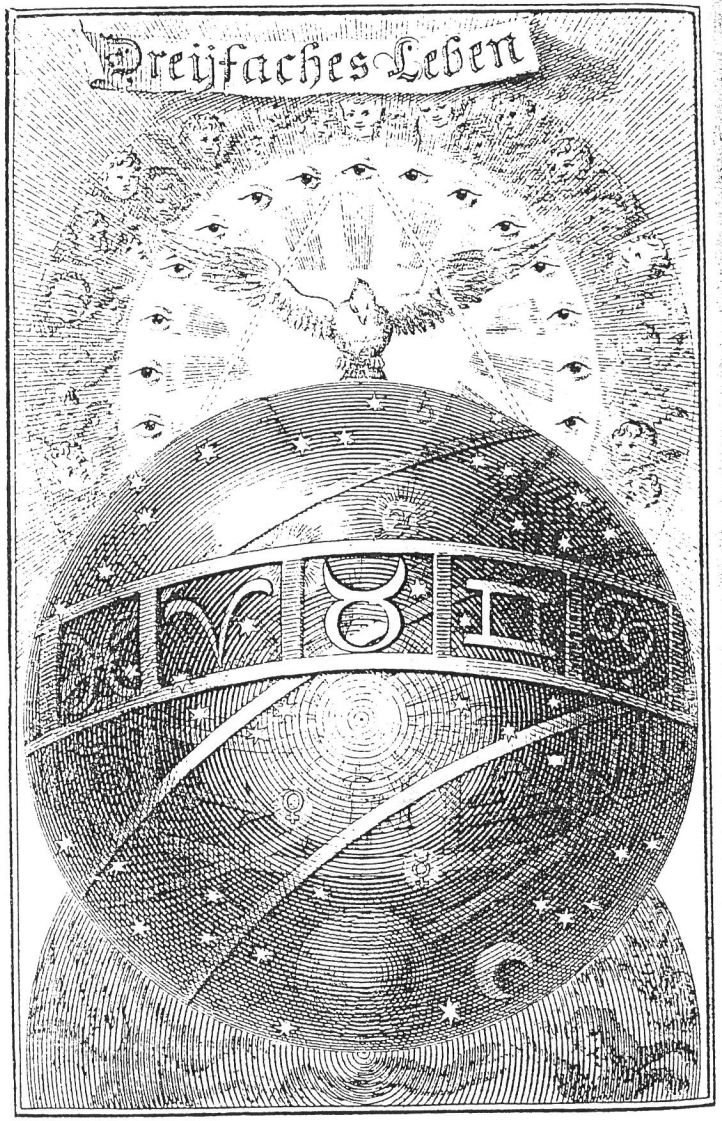
Such was that happy garden-state,
While man there walked without a mate:
After a place so pure, and sweet,
What other help could yet be meet!
But 'twas beyond a mortal's share
To wander solitary there:
Two paradises 'twere in one
To live in paradise alone.

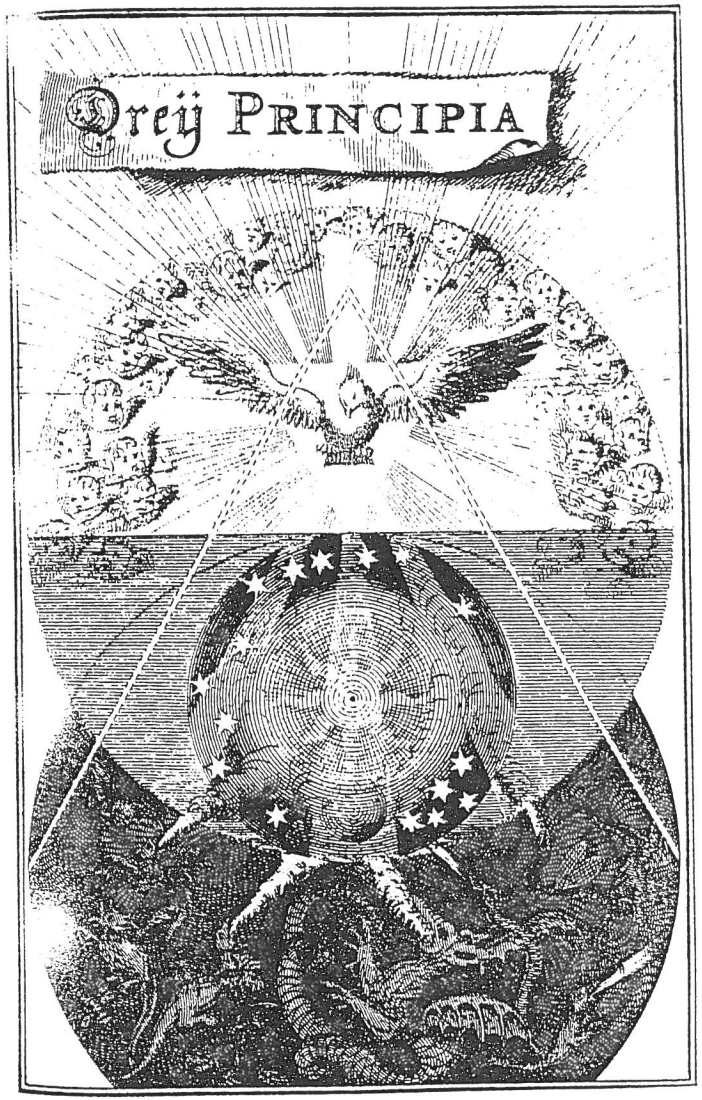
How well the skilful gardener drew
Of flowers and herbs this dial new;
Where from above the milder sun
Does through a fragrant zodiac run;
And, as it works, the industrious bee
Computes its time as well as we.
How could such sweet and wholesome hours
Be reckoned but with herbs and flowers!

(1681)

"This world stands in the confused life of time between light and darkness as an effective reflection of both." It is the third principle, and its form "has been in God's nature for ever, but invisible and immaterial". It was uttered by the spirit of God into the matrix of his wisdom (Sophia), where it can now be discerned in the light of God as his creation. And as this world is threefold and was enfolded in the divine trinity, "the human spirit (...) also has all three principia, as The Realm of God, the Realm of Hell and this Realm of the World within itself".

J. Böhme, Dreyfaches Leben, Amsterdam, 1682





The visible world of the elements, the third principle, is a monstrous product of the world of darkness as the manifestation of the raging God-the-Father and the world of light as the principle of the Son "who is his Father's Heart and Love".

We must imagine these two worlds as the interaction of two wheels, each of them consisting of the three qualities of salt, sulphur and mercury. These are expressed in the dark root principle as the astringent, the bitter and the fire of fear. Friction produces a flash of fire from them, the "firecrack". When it comes into its mother, "astringency", it becomes the source of the second principle of light, "impenetrable love".

J. Böhme, Drey Principia, Amsterdam, 1682

MILTON

From PARADISE LOST

Book 1

The Argument[1]

This first book proposes, first in brief, the whole subject, man's disobedience, and the loss thereupon of Paradise, wherein he was placed: then touches the prime cause of his fall, the serpent, or rather Satan in the serpent; who, revolting from God, and drawing to his side many legions of angels, was, by the command of God, driven out of Heaven with all his crew, into the great deep. Which action passed over, the poem hastes into the midst of things;[2] presenting Satan, with his angels, now fallen into Hell—described here not in the center (for heaven and earth may be supposed as yet not made, certainly not yet accursed), but in a place of utter darkness, fitliest called Chaos. Here Satan with his angels lying on the burning lake, thunderstruck and astonished, after a certain space recovers, as from confusion; calls up him who, next in order and dignity, lay by him; they confer of their miserable fall. Satan awakens all his legions, who lay till then in the same manner confounded. They rise: their numbers; array of battle; their chief leaders named, according to the idols known afterwards in Canaan and the countries adjoining. To these Satan directs his speech; comforts them with hope yet of regaining Heaven; but tells them, lastly, of a new world and new kind of creature to be created, according to an ancient prophecy or report in Heaven; for that angels were long before this visible creation was the opinion of many ancient fathers.[3] To find out the truth of this prophecy, and what to determine[4] thereon, he refers to a full council. What his associates thence attempt. Pandemonium, the palace of Satan, rises, suddenly built out of the deep: the infernal peers there sit in council.

1. *Paradise Lost* appeared originally without any sort of prose aid to the reader; but, since many readers found the poem hard going, the printer asked Milton for some prose "Arguments" or summary explanations of the action in the various books, and prefixed them to later issues of the poem. We reprint those for the first two books and the ninth.
2. Adapted from Horace's prescription that the epic poet should start "*in medias res*."
3. I.e., Church Fathers, the Christian writers of the first few centuries of the church.
4. I.e., what action to take upon their information.

Of man's first disobedience, and the fruit[5]
Of that forbidden tree whose mortal[6] taste
Brought death into the world, and all our woe,
With loss of Eden, till one greater Man[7]
Restore us, and regain the blissful seat,
Sing, Heavenly Muse,[8] that on the secret top
Of Oreb, or of Sinai, didst inspire
That shepherd who first taught the chosen seed
In the beginning how the heavens and earth
Rose out of Chaos: or, if Sion hill[9]
Delight thee more, and Siloa's brook that flowed
Fast[1] by the oracle of God, I thence
Invoke thy aid to my adventurous song,
That with no middle flight intends to soar
Above th' Aonian mount,[2] while it pursues
Things unattempted yet in prose or rhyme.
And chiefly thou, O Spirit,[3] that dost prefer
Before all temples th' upright heart and pure,
Instruct me, for thou know'st; thou from the first
Wast present, and, with mighty wings outspread,
Dovelike sat'st brooding[4] on the vast abyss,
And mad'st it pregnant: what in me is dark
Illumine; what is low, raise and support;
That to the height of this great argument[5]

5. Eve's apple, of course; but also all the consequences of eating it.
6. Deadly; but also "to mortals" (i.e., human beings).
7. Christ, the second Adam.
8. In Greek mythology, Urania, Muse of astronomy; but here identified, by references to Oreb and Sinai, with the Holy Spirit of the Bible, which inspired Moses ("that shepherd") to write Genesis and the other four books of the Pentateuch for the instruction of the Jews ("the chosen seed").
9. The hill of Sion and the brook of Siloa are two features of the landscape around Jerusalem likely to appeal to a Muse whose natural haunts are springs and mountains (see *Lycidas*, line 15). Milton's aim is to show that poetry is everywhere recognized as an inspiration close to that of religion.
1. Close.
2. Helicon, home of the classical Muses; Milton is deliberately courting comparison with Homer and Virgil. In the very line ("Things unattempted yet in prose or rhyme") where he vaunts his originality, Milton is translating a line in the invocation of Ariosto's *Orlando Furioso*—thus acknowledging, and challenging, another of his predecessors.
3. The Spirit is an impulse or voice of God, by which the Hebrew prophets were directly inspired.
4. A composite of phrases and ideas from Genesis 1.2 ("And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters"); Matthew 3.16 ("and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him"); and Luke 3.22 ("and the Holy Ghost descended in a bodily shape like a dove upon him"). Milton's mind as he wrote was impregnated with expressions from the King James Bible, only a few of which can be indicated in the notes.
5. Theme.

Paradise Lost (cont.)

I may assert Eternal Providence,
And justify the ways of God to men.
  Say first (for Heaven hides nothing from thy view,
Nor the deep tract of Hell), say first what cause
Moved our grand[6] parents, in that happy state,
Favored of Heaven so highly, to fall off
From their Creator, and transgress his will
For[7] one restraint, lords of the world besides?[8]
Who first seduced them to that foul revolt?
  Th' infernal serpent; he it was, whose guile,
Stirred up with envy and revenge, deceived
The mother of mankind, what time[9] his pride
Had cast him out from Heaven, with all his host
Of rebel angels, by whose aid aspiring
To set himself in glory above his peers,[1]
He trusted to have equaled the Most High,
If he opposed; and with ambitious aim
Against the throne and monarchy of God
Raised impious war in Heaven and battle proud,
With vain attempt. Him the Almighty Power
Hurled headlong flaming from th' ethereal sky
With hideous ruin and combustion down
To bottomless perdition, there to dwell
In adamantine chains and penal fire,
Who durst defy th' Omnipotent to arms.
  Nine times the space that measures day and night
To mortal men, he with his horrid crew
Lay vanquished, rolling in the fiery gulf
Confounded though immortal. But his doom
Reserved him to more wrath; for now the thought
Both of lost happiness and lasting pain
Torments him; round he throws his baleful[2] eyes,
That witnessed huge affliction and dismay,
Mixed with obdùrate pride and steadfast hate.
At once, as far as angels ken,[3] he views
The dismal situation waste and wild:
A dungeon horrible, on all sides round
As one great furnace flamed; yet from those flames
No light,[4] but rather darkness visible
Served only to discover sights of woe,
Regions of sorrow, doleful shades, where peace
And rest can never dwell, hope never comes
That comes to all,[5] but torture without end
Still urges,[6] and a fiery deluge, fed
With ever-burning sulphur unconsumed:
Such place Eternal Justice had prepared
For those rebellious; here their prison ordained
In utter[7] darkness and their portion set
As far removed from God and light of Heaven
As from the center[8] thrice to th' utmost pole.

6. First in importance; by implication, in time also.
7. Because of.
8. In every other respect.
9. I.e., at the time when.
1. His equals. The sentence mimics Satan's action, piling clause loosely upon clause, and building ever higher, till "with vain attempt" (line ~~44~~) brings the whole structure crashing down. It is a dramatic entry into "the midst of things," where epics begin. Book 6 will recount more largely the war in Heaven, in the full narrative form which Aeneas used to tell Dido of the last days of Troy (*Aeneid* 2).
2. Malignant, as well as suffering.
3. As far as angels can see.
4. Omitting the verb conveys abruptly the paradox: fire-without-light.
5. The phrase echoes an expression in Dante ("All hope abandon, ye who enter here"), but Milton expresses it as a logical absurdity. Hope comes to "all" but not to Helldwellers; they are not included in "all."
6. Afflicts.
7. "Complete" but also "outer."
8. The earth. Milton makes use in *Paradise Lost* of two images of the cosmos: (1) the earth is the center of the *created* (Ptolemaic) cosmos of ten concentric spheres; but (2) the earth and the whole created cosmos are a mere appendage, hanging from Heaven by a golden chain, in the larger, aboriginal, and less shapely cosmos.

Paradise Lost (cont. 2)

O how unlike the place from whence they fell!
There the companions of his fall, o'erwhelmed
With floods and whirlwinds of tempestuous fire,
He soon discerns; and, weltering by his side,
One next himself in power, and next in crime,
Long after known in Palestine, and named
Beëlzebub.[9] To whom th' arch-enemy,
And thence in Heaven called Satan,[1] with bold words
Breaking the horrid silence thus began:
"If thou beëst he—but O how fallen! how changed
From him who in the happy realms of light
Clothed with transcendent brightness didst outshine
Myriads, though bright! if he whom mutual league,
United thoughts and counsels, equal hope
And hazard in the glorious enterprise,
Joined with me once, now misery hath joined
In equal ruin; into what pit thou seest[2]
From what height fallen, so much the stronger proved
He with his thunder:[3] and till then who knew
The force of those dire arms? Yet not for those,
Nor what the potent Victor in his rage
Can else inflict, do I repent or change,
Though changed in outward luster, that fixed mind
And high disdain, from sense of injured merit,
That with the Mightiest raised me to contend,
And to the fierce contention brought along
Innumerable force of spirits armed,
That durst dislike his reign, and me preferring,

His utmost power with adverse power opposed
In dubious battle on the plains of Heaven,
And shook his throne. What though the field be lost?
All is not lost: the unconquerable will,
And study[4] of revenge, immortal hate,
And courage never to submit or yield:
And what is else not to be overcome?[5]
That glory never shall his wrath or might
Extort from me. To bow and sue for grace
With suppliant knee, and deify his power[6]
Who from the terror of this arm so late
Doubted[7] his empire—that were low indeed;
That were an ignominy and shame beneath
This downfall; since, by fate, the strength of gods[8]
And this empyreal substance cannot fail;
Since, through experience of this great event,
In arms not worse, in foresight much advanced,
We may with more successful hope resolve
To wage by force or guile eternal war,
Irreconcilable to our grand Foe,
Who now triùmphs, and in th' excess of joy
Sole reigning holds the tyranny[9] of Heaven."
So spake th' apostate angel, though in pain,
Vaunting aloud, but racked with deep despair;

the distance (in the created universe) from the center (earth) to the outermost sphere.
9. A Phoenician deity, or Baal (the name means "Lord of flies"); traditionally, a prince of devils and enemy of Jehovah. The Phoenician Baal, a sun god, had many aspects and so many names; most Baals were nature deities. But in the poem's time scheme all this lies in the future; Beelzebub's angelic name, whatever it was, has been erased from the Book of Life, and as he has not yet got another one, he must be called by the name he will have later on.
1. In Hebrew, the name means "Adversary."
2. Satan's syntax, like that of a man recovering from a stunning blow, is not of the clearest.
3. God with his thunderbolts.
4. Pursuit.
5. I.e., what else does it mean not to be beaten? "That glory" is the glory of hearing Satan confess himself overcome.
6. I.e., deify the power of him who. Milton sometimes writes English as if it were an inflected language.
7. Feared for. In the next line, "ignominy" is pronounced "ignomy."
8. The essence of Satan's fault is his claim to the position of a god, subject to fate but to nothing else. His substance is "empyreal" (heavenly, from the empyrean), and cannot be destroyed; but, as ruption and self-contradictions. "Fail": cease to exist.
9. The accusation is bold, but one of the aims of the poem is to show that Satan is a tyrant and God is not.

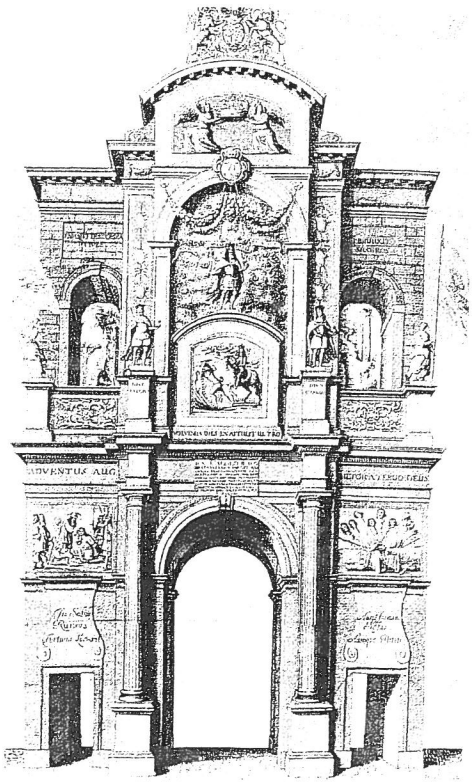
THE BAROQUE

On 22 April, 1661, John Evelyn, diarist and virtuoso, recorded the state entry into London of Charles II almost a year on from his Restoration. The splendour of it quite overwhelmed him:

> 'This magnificent Traine on horseback, as rich as *Embroidery, velvet, Cloth of Gold & Silk* & Jewels could make them & their pransing horses, proceeded through the streets strew'd with flowers, houses hung with rich *Tapistry*, Windos & *Balconies* full of Ladies, The London Militia lining the ways, & the severall Companies with their Barriers & Loud musique ranked in their orders: The Fountaines runing wine, bells ringing, with Speeches made at the severall Triumphal Arches . . .'

There had been no spectacle filling the London streets on this scale since the entry of the king's grandfather, James I, nearly sixty years before. By casting the city as Rome, the Thames as the Tiber and the king as the Emperor Augustus the pageantry took up themes perennial in Stuart eulogy, those of empire, taking the story up as it were from where it had left off in 1642. The streets were punctuated by four gigantic arches. Up to a hundred feet in height they were covered with painted decoration, each housing also a dramatic interlude which involved costumed actors, singers and musicians. As Charles approached, the first of these arches, 'Britain's Monarchy', put to flight Rebellion and Confusion. A scene on the structure depicted Charles on horseback banishing into an awaiting hell-mouth two harpies and a hydra, one of whose heads was 'like CROMWELL'S.' In this way the arts of architecture, painting, music and drama combined to present to the onlooking crowd the new king as conqueror, saviour and peace-maker. Love and Truth burst into song:

> Comes not here the King of Peace,
> Who, the Stars so long fore-told,
>
> From all Woes should us release,
> Turning Iron-times to Gold!



Here the theme of apocalypse, so potent through the previous decades, was turned to hail a royal epiphany endowing the young monarch with the attributes of Christ entering Jerusalem.

In sharp contrast to the closed world of the Caroline court masque, the arts were now to be deployed publicly to restore the mystery and magnificence of the Crown. Their style was to be epitomised in one word: baroque. That manifestation of the late Renaissance had only so far been glimpsed in England in Rubens's mighty canvases on the ceiling of the Whitehall Banqueting House, and in the stage pictures of Inigo Jones. Now, after almost twenty years of stylistic stagnation, the baroque was to burst across the scene, framing the visual presentation of the court to the populace.

The first of the four great triumphal arches erected for Charles II's state entry into London in 1661 prior to his coronation in which Monarchy was again triumphant and the regicides vanquished.

Ironically, the baroque was to prove to be the ideal style to reflect what was a deeply fissured society, one which was to remain in political and religious turbulence until the second decade of the eighteenth century. The baroque always portrayed precisely such a scenario, forces in conflict, opposites and extremes confronting each other, but at the same time, contrary to surface appearances, seen to be manifestations of an ordered whole. Its key role was to purvey to the viewer the incorruptible truths of the sphere of heaven, ones which were fixed, immovable and permanent. That was the role assigned to the arts:

> '. . .the celestial beauties above the moon being incorruptible, and not subject to change, remained for ever fair and in perpetual order. On the contrary, all things which are sublunary are subject to change, to deformity, and to decay . . . For which reason the artful painter and the sculptor, imitating the Divine Maker, form themselves, as well as they are able, a model of the superior beauties . . .'

Thus the Poet Laureate, John Dryden, in his translation of the Italian art theorist Bellori.

So it is that the art of the baroque is concerned with flux and paradox, illusion and seeming, searching through a shifting and spiralling phantasmagoria of imagery to catch a vision of the eternal truths. The baroque was always all-embracing, drawing in every art. Its most natural forms were the palace and its surrounding domain, or whole cities, or a dramatic form such as opera or ballet which called for contributions across the aesthetic spectrum. The baroque began as the vehicle for the new and intensely emotional piety of Counter-Reformation Catholicism and moved on from there to be adopted as the ideal vehicle to express absolute monarchy. Its principal exponent was the ruler Charles II most admired, Louis XIV, whose palace at Versailles summed up everything to which the English king aspired.

The Civil War and then the Interregnum had delayed the arrival of the baroque and that in itself presented problems, for craftsmen accustomed to working in this new idiom had to be recruited from abroad, men like the illusionist painters Antonio Verrio and Louis Laguerre, or the 'stuccatori' Giuseppe Artari and Giovanni Bagutti. Only in the field of wood carving did a native exponent emerge in the figure of Grinling Gibbons, whose naturalistic garlands and trophies defy the medium and still amaze, but he was born and trained abroad. In architecture it was not to be until the 1690s that England was to produce its own outstanding baroque architects in Nicholas Hawksmoor, William Talman and Sir John Vanbrugh. Baroque was also a hugely expensive style and although its role was to bestow an aura of divinity and autocracy on Charles II, nothing could conceal the fact that he was maintained in power by the will of Parliament and an unwritten constitution. Money therefore had to be voted by Parliament and although what the king was able to spend steadily rose through his reign, not one of his major projects was ever finished.

And, as in the case of earlier waves from the Continent, the criterion of selectivity was maintained. Indeed the king was to recognise that fact in his greatest baroque creation, the state rooms at Windsor Castle, astonishing essays in illusion in which every ceiling opened to a sky from which descended benevolent deities, but the whole solidly encased within the ancient walls of a Plantagenet fourteenth century castle. Windsor also typified two other insular characteristics, the liking for restraint without and richness within, and a continuing reverence for the monuments of times past.

The Eclipse of the Crown

The 1690s were to form the years of the great cultural divide even if it was not fully realised at the time. After 1688 the Crown was firmly under the rule of law and more and more the monarchy and the State became two separate entities, the State in the long term being the more significant in terms of cultural initiatives. That was increased by the new king's involvement of England in the war against France, an event which led to the rapid expansion of government and the civil service. In order to finance the war the Crown was forced to make more concessions to Parliament, although its powers of patronage were to remain considerable until the reign of Victoria. The war against France, which was to ebb and flow for over a century until the final defeat of Napoleon at the battle of Waterloo in 1815, also engendered an increasingly anti-French cultural bias and an emphasis on those things which set the island apart from Europe, rather than those which linked it.

That slippage by the Crown was not immediately apparent for the aristocracy subscribed to the monarchy as the apex of their hierarchy. On the surface there was indeed a sudden resurgence of royal activity, for William III, who suffered from asthma, could not abide the air pollution of London. As a consequence the court refocused first around a new palace, modest in scale, at Kensington and more particularly at Hampton Court, which Wren was entrusted to transform into an English Versailles with all speed. A block arose around the Fountain Court with its south front facing on to a new privy garden while the east front looked over a vast parterre with no less than thirteen fountains, which was designed by the French Huguenot, Daniel Marot, who was responsible also for much of the interior decoration. William and his queen, Mary II, both shared a passion for gardening which was to trigger the laying-out of vast formal schemes of this kind all over the country. Dutch influences percolated too, leading to the construction of canals and a fashion for huge displays of the blue and white china known as delftware. But in reality both palaces represented a retreat, for to be the hub of civilisation the monarchy needed to be in the metropolis. Much that was central to English culture had occurred within one building for a century and a half. That was Whitehall Palace and in 1698 it was burnt to the ground. Although elaborate schemes were drawn up for its rebuilding, that never happened. At one blow the Crown lost its cultural mecca and was reduced to the modest confines of St. James's Palace.

After 1688 the energy was to lie with the aristocracy which reached the summit of its authority, which was to last until the wider extension of the franchise at the close of the nineteenth century. The French wars were in fact to make the members of that aristocracy far richer, for they benefited from the other revolution of the era, the Commercial Revolution, in which the country's business potential was unleashed, overtaking on the seas the supremacy of the Dutch, and allowing London to emerge as the nation's financial heartland. The great aristocrats gained not only from this but from the perks of office-holding and rents from urban property. It was the old Tory squires who began to go under, crippled and often ruined by the punitive Land Tax which paid for the war. As a consequence their estates came on to the market and were purchased by the grandees whose domains became ever larger, a fact reflected in the creation of no less than nine dukedoms between 1688 and 1714.

Chatsworth set off an aristocratic building boom. What is so ironic is that the style of these buildings erected for a nobility which had displaced a monarch was precisely that promoted by the Stuarts after 1660 as an expression of their bid for absolute

power. Indeed the aristocracy was to employ most of the people who had worked on the royal palaces, including the illusionistic painters Antonio Verrio and Louis Laguerre, and the woodcarver Grinling Gibbons. The architects they employed were even more responsive to the baroque style, as for the most part they had been trained in the Royal Works under Wren. The presiding architectural genius was Nicholas Hawksmoor who from 1699 had an official partnership with the soldier, playwright and self-taught architect, Sir John Vanbrugh. If Vanbrugh provided the at times wayward imagination which is the essence of these extraordinary buildings, their reality in terms of draughtsmanship, practicality and administration fell to Hawksmoor.

A steady series of lavish and large country houses began to arise whose main purpose was show, externally to impress, internally to overwhelm. Comfort or convenience are words utterly foreign to these amazing piles which were conceived as monuments upon the landscape. The two greatest were Blenheim Palace and Castle Howard.

What both houses and gardens reflected was a change in attitude to the countryside itself. If the Civil War had cast it into the role of a place to retire to in time of political turbulence, after 1688 it was increasingly to be viewed as somewhere actually to live. Such houses were, of course, demonstrations of power but this desire to live in the country signalled a new attitude to Nature, which was no longer studied in search of mysterious cabalistic signs or as a means of mystic communion with God but as an aspect of the glorious machine of the universe of His making. At the same time poetry also began to join the chorus hymning Nature as evidence of God's bounty and intelligence in ordering such plenitude for the benefit of man. As the principles of the mechanistic universe took root within the educated mind, the themes of power, hedonism and pleasure which had been such a feature of Restoration verse gave way to ones which sought to locate man within God's dispensation. These celebrated an innate fellow-feeling common to all humanity, were an index of a new morality, and also dwelt on patriotic glories reflecting a new feeling of nationhood in response to the war.

Decline of the baroque

By the turn of the century the ideas upon which English baroque civilisation depended were under attack. Baroque sensibility was at its best in its ability to create an acceptable heaven through the exercise of the human imagination, to make manifest to ordinary mortals the seemingly incomprehensible. The new mechanistic view of the universe was completely at variance with the system upon which this was based, an ancient hierarchical one of correspondences. The incoming philosophy no longer stressed hidden mysteries but the existence in Nature of order and rationality, the universe being viewed as governed by the rules of a rational God. As the role of art was to imitate Nature therefore its role in this new scheme of things was to stress the order and symmetry of God's creation. Art was no longer a vehicle whereby man expressed his emotional needs and in this way was able to unite himself with the eternal, immutable truths. Instead its role was to be far more mundane, being to enable him to lead a rational life.

The new rational Christianity of the Cambridge Platonists, a group of philosophic-religious thinkers, had no time either for any form of religious devotion which was based on the senses, or on sensual impressions activating the imagination. Such inner revelations could be revealed, in their view, in the symmetry and proportion of man, the universe and Nature, and the means of discovering that was no longer by exercising the imagination but through Reason.

The baroque's central pivot had been the resolution it offered to conflict and tension. When that was achieved in the cult of Reason, it removed at one blow the *raison d'être* for baroque. This is caught vividly in the writings of Anthony Ashley Cooper, 3rd Earl of Shaftesbury. His main work, *Characteristics of Men, Manners, Opinions, Times* (1711), was to set the agenda for the opening decades of the eighteenth century. As one of the few major commentators on the aesthetics of the age he viewed art as a product of economical, social, climatic and political forces. Each nation, he believed, had its own distinctive culture, or 'Genius' or 'Spirit' as he called it. Shaftesbury had a passionate belief in the 'English Spirit of Liberty', viewing the country in its post-revolutionary phase as the reincarnation of the virtues of republican Rome. As a consequence he abhorred the baroque as a style which glorified naked power and hence led to tyranny. Any society whose moving spirit was a search for liberty and truth was one in which good government, true religion and good morals and taste would be found. He wrote: 'Nothing is so improving, nothing so natural, so congenial to the Liberal Arts, as that reigning Liberty and high spirit of a People, which from the Habit of judging in the highest Matters for themselves, makes them freely judge other Subjects, and enter thoroughly into the Characters as well as *Men* and *Manners*, as of the *Products* or *Works* of Man, in Art and Science.'

The baroque was cast into being an emblem of Stuart autocracy and the arts were seen henceforth to flower when walking hand-in-hand not with the ruler but with Liberty. To achieve this renaissance there was an urgent need for new patrons to rescue and revive native English culture: 'Well it would be indeed, and much to the Honour of our *Nobles* and *Princes* would they freely help in this Affair and by judicious Application of their bounty, facilitate this happy Birth.' And this is precisely what they were to do.

All kinds of currents converged in the second decade of the new century to render baroque culture obsolete. Baroque by then was considered Tory and, by inference, Jacobite, with hidden loyalties to the exiled Stuart dynasty. Then its prodigality and ostentation bred a sharply contrary reaction in favour of restraint and economy. Two events in the year 1715 embody what is the crossing of a divide into a new era, the Palladian. The first was the publication of the Scottish architect Colen Campbell's *Vitruvius Britannicus*. This collection of engravings of British architecture presented a mixture of styles but stressed above all the importance not of the continent but of an insular tradition which stretched back via Inigo Jones to Andrea Palladio. The great Italian baroque masters like Bernini, Fontana and Borromini were lambasted as being 'affected and licentious'. The very title of the book announces that it was published in the aftermath of the union with Scotland in 1707 and was evidence of a quest for a new national style. That style, the Palladian, was to become a test of Whig political orthodoxy and, in 1715, one year into the reign of the new Hanoverian dynasty, the Whigs came to political dominance. With the arrival of George I we enter the long decades of Whig rule, years which effectively ensured the victory of the Palladian movement. That was embodied in the curt dismissal in 1717 of the elderly Sir Christopher Wren as Surveyor of the Royal Works to be replaced by Colen Campbell. In the same way that William III's actions precipitated the end of the great court musical tradition, so the arrival of Campbell neutered the Royal Works and rendered it mediocre. The baroque lingered on into the fourth decade in the work of Thomas Archer, but even he was forced to make compromises. A great age had reached its end. The coming one was to be very different, dominated not only by the rule of the goddess Reason but also by a totally new phenomenon, the consumer.

(For further details see, if you wish, R. Strong. The Spirit of Br.)

RESTORATION (1)

From *A Poem upon the Death of His late Highnesse the Lord Protector*

I saw him dead, a leaden slumber lyes
And mortall sleep over those wakefull eys:
Those gentle Rayes under the lidds were fled
Which through his lookes that piercing sweetnesse shed:
That port which so Majestique was and strong,
Loose and depriv'd of vigour stretch'd along:
All wither'd, all discolour'd, pale and wan,
How much another thing, no more that man?
Oh human glory vaine, Oh death, Oh wings,
Oh worthlesse world, Oh transitory things!
Yet dwelt that greatnesse in his shape decay'd
That still though dead greater than death he layd.
And in his alter'd face you something faigne
That threatens death he yet will live againe.
Not much unlike the sacred Oake which shoots
To heav'n its branches and through earth its roots:
Whose spacious boughs are hung with Trophees round
And honour'd wreaths have oft the Victour crown'd.
When angry Jove darts lightning through the Aire
At mortalls' sins, nor his own plant will spare
(It groanes and bruses all below that stood
So many yeares the shelter of the wood)
The tree ere while foreshorten'd to our view
When faln shews taller yet than as it grew.
So shall his praise to after times increase
When truth shall be allow'd and faction cease,
And his own shadows with him fall. The Eye
Detracts from objects than it selfe more high:
But when death takes them from that envy'd seate
Seing how little we confesse how greate.
Thee many ages hence in martiall verse
Shall th'English souldier ere he charge rehearse:
Singing of thee inflame themselvs to fight
And with the name of Cromwell armyes fright.
As long as rivers to the seas shall runne,
As long as Cynthia shall relieve the sunne,
While staggs shall fly unto the forests thick,
While sheep delight the grassy downs to pick,
As long as future time succeeds the past,
Always thy honour, praise and name shall last.

Andrew Marvell

From *Iter Boreale*

I, he, who whileom sate and sung in Cage,
My King's and Country's Ruines, by the rage
Of a rebellious Rout: Who weeping saw
Three goodly Kingdoms (drunk with fury) draw
And sheath their Swords (like three enraged Brothers)
In one another's sides, ripping their Mother's
Belly, and tearing out her bleeding heart;
Then jealous that their Father fain would part
Their bloody Fray, and let them fight no more,
Fell foul on him, and slew him at his dore.
I that have only dar'd to whisper Verses,
And drop a tear (by stealth) on loyal Herses,
I that enraged at the *Times* and *Rump*,
Had gnaw'd my Goose-quill to the very stump,
And flung that in the fire, no more to write
But to sit down poor *Britain*'s *Heraclyte*;*
Now sing the tryumphs of the Men of Wär,
The glorious rayes of the bright Northern Star,
Created for the nonce by Heaven, to bring
The Wisemen of three Nations to their King:
MONCK! the great *Monck*!† That syllable out-shines
Plantagenet's bright name, or *Constantine*'s.
'Twas at his Rising that *Our Day* begun,
Be He the *Morning Star* to *Charles* our *Sun*:
He took Rebellion rampant, by the Throat,
And made the Canting *Quaker* change his Note;
His Hand it was that wrote (we saw no more)
Exit Tyrannus over *Lambert*'s‡ dore:

Like to some subtile Lightning, so his words
Dissolved in their Scabbards Rebels' swords:
He with success the soveraign skill hath found,
To dress the Weapon, and so heal the Wound.
George, and his Boyes (as Spirits do, they say)
Only by Walking scare our Foes away.

ROBERT WILD

*i.e. Heraclitus, the weeping philosopher of antiquity.

†George Monck (1608–70), commander of the army of Scotland and subsequently first Duke of Albermarle, was the most important single agent in bringing about the Restoration. His forces reached London in February 1660.

‡Major-General John Lambert (1619–83) had unsuccessfully tried to oppose Monck's march on London.

Song

Drink about till the Day find us,
These are Pleasures that will last;
Let no foolish Passion blind us,
Joys of Love they fly too fast.

Maids are long e're we can win'um,
And our Passions waste the while,
In a Beer-glass we'll begin'um,
Let some Beau take th'other Toil.

Yet we will have store of good Wenches,
Though we venture fluxing for't,
Upon Couches, Chairs, and Benches,
To out-do them at the Sport.

Joyning thus both Mirth and Beauty,
To make up our full Delight:
In Wine and Love we pay our Duty
To each friendly coming Night.

SIR CHARLES SEDLEY

From *Bacchanalia:*
Or a Description of a Drunken Club

But by this time Tongues 'gan to rest;
The Talking game was at the best.
A sleepy Scene beginneth to appear.
Bright Reason's ray,
By damp of Wine, within this Hemisphere,
Was quench'd before: and now dim sense, to stay
Must not expect, long after Her;

So when, Night's fairest Lanthorn, *Cynthia* bright
Is set; each little mist, or thin-spread Cloud
Sufficient is to shroud
The pink-ey'd Stars, and make a pitchy Night.
Old *Morpheus* comes, with Leaden Key,
His drowsie Office to perform:
Though some there are, that do affirm,
'Twas *Bacchus* did it; and that He
Had Legal Right, to lock up each man's Brain:
Since every Room
His own Goods did contain,
And was his proper Wine-Cellar become.

RESTORATION 2

Some down into their Seats do shrink,
As snuffs in Sockets sink;
Some throw themselves upon the Bed,
Some at Feet, and some at Head,
Some Cross, some Slope-wise, as they can;
Like Hogs in straw, or Herrings in a pan.
Some on the Floor do make their humble Bed,
(Proper effect of Wine!)
So over-laden Vine,
Prop failing, bowes its bunchy Head,
To kiss the Ground, from whence 'twas nourished.
One, stouter than the rest, maintain'd the Field,
And scorn'd to yield.
A *Roman* Emperour, standing vow'd to die,
And so, quoth he, will I;
Till nodding, as he stood, the Churlish Wall
Repuls'd his Head, and made him, reeling fall;
So with a jot,
Embrac'd the common lot,
The last, but yet the greatest, Trophy, of them all.

So slept they sound; but whilst they slept,
Nature, which all this while, had kept
Her last reserve of strength,
In Stomach's mouth, where *Helmont** saith,
The Soul its chiefest Mansion hath,
Began at length
To kick, and frisk, and stoutly strove
To throw the Liquid Rider off.
For now her Case, like Marriners, was grown,
In leaky Ship, she must or pump, or drown.
Or whether that the Wine, which, till this time,
Was wont to dwell in Cellar's cooler Clime,
Now put in Stomach's boiling-pot,
Found its new Habitation too hot?
What e're it was, the Floods gusht out
From ev'ry spout,
With such a force; they made a fulsome fray.
One who athwart his Neighbour lay,
Did right into his Pocket disembogue;
For which the other would have call'd him Rogue,
But that his forestall'd mouth (brawls to prevent)
Replenisht was with the same Element.
I'th' next Man's face Another spues,
Who doth, with nimble Repartee, retort
His own, and His Assailant's juice,
And so returns him double for't.
One with a Horizontal mouth,
Discharges up into the Air,
Which falls again in Perpendicular:
Much like those Clouds, in Sea that's South,
Which in a Lump, descend, and quite
O're-whelm the Ship, on which they chance to light:
The Floor with such a Deluge was o'reflown,
As would infallibly have ran
Quite through, and to its native Cellar gone,
As Rivers Circulate to th'Ocean:
Had it not been incrassate with a scum,
Which did, for company, from Stomach come.

*Johann Baptist van Helmont (1577–1644), Belgian chemist and medical writer.

Nor was this all: The surly Element,
With Orall Channels not content,
Reverberates; and downward finds a Vent.
Which my Nice Muse to tell forebears,
And begs, for what is past, the pardon of your Ears.

CHARLES DARBY

The Advice

Wou'd you in Love succeed, be Brisk, be Gay,
Cast all dull Thoughts and serious Looks away;
Think not with down cast Eyes, and mournful Air,
To move to pity, the Relentless Fair,
Or draw from her bright Eyes a Christal Tear.
This Method Foreign is to your Affair,
Too formal for the Frolick you prepare:
Thus, when you think she yields to Love's advance,
You'll find 'tis no Consent, but Complaisance.
Whilst he who boldly rifles all her Charms,
Kisses and Ravishes her in his Arms,
Seizes the favour, stays not for a Grant,
Alarms her Blood, and makes her sigh and pant;
Gives her no time to speak, or think't a Crime,
Enjoys his Wish, and well imploys his time.

CHARLES SACKVILLE, EARL OF DORSET

To a Lady in a Letter

Such perfect Bliss, fair *Cloris*, we
In our Enjoyment prove:
'Tis pity restless Jealousie
Should mingle with our Love.

Let us, since Wit has taught us how,
Raise Pleasure to the Top:
You Rival Bottle must allow,
I'le suffer Rival Fop.

Think not in this that I design
A Treason 'gainst Love's Charms,
When following the God of Wine
I leave my *Cloris*' Arms.

Since you have that, for all your haste,
At which I'le ne're repine,
Will take its Liquor off as fast,
As I can take off mine.

There's not a brisk insipid Spark,
That flutters in the Town:
But with your wanton Eyes you mark
Him out to be your own.

Nor do you think it worth your care
How empty, and how dull,
The heads of your Admirers are,
So that their Cods be full.

All this you freely may confess,
Yet we ne're disagree:
For did you love your Pleasure less,
You were no Match for me.

Whilst I, my Pleasure to pursue,
Whole nights am taking in
The lusty Juice of Grapes, take you
The Juice of lusty Men.

JOHN WILMOT, EARL OF ROCHESTER

RESTORATION (3)

Song from *Sir Antony Love, or the Rambling Lady* (1690)

Pursuing Beauty, Men descry
The distant Shore, and long to prove
(Still richer in Variety)
The Treasures of the Land of Love.

We Women, like weak *Indians*, stand
Inviting, from our Golden Coast,
The wandring Rovers to our Land:
But she, who Trades with 'em, is lost.

With humble Vows they first begin,
Stealing, unseen, into the Heart;
But by Possession setled in,
They quickly act another part.

For Beads and Baubles, we resign,
In Ignorance, our shining Store,
Discover Nature's richest Mine,
And yet the Tyrants will have more.

Be wise, be wise, and do not try,
How he can Court, or you be Won:
For Love is but Discovery,
When that is made, the Pleasure's done.

THOMAS SOUTHERNE

From the Latin

Enflam'd with Love and led by blind desires,
The man persues, the blushfull Maid retires.
He hopes for pleasures, but shee feares the Paine,
His Love but Ignorance is, her feares more vaine.
When e're he tast's those Joys so pris'd before
He'l love no longer and she'le feare no more.

CHARLES SACKVILLE, EARL OF DORSET

Song

Love a Woman! y'are an Ass,
'Tis a most inspid Passion,
To choose out for your happiness
The silliest part of God's Creation.

Let the Porter, and the Groome,
Things design'd for dirty Slaves,
Drudge in fair *Aurelia*'s Womb,
To get supplies for Age and Graves.

Farewel Woman, I intend,
Henceforth, ev'ry Night to sit,
With my lewd well-natur'd Friend,
Drinking, to engender Wit.

Then give me Health, Wealth, Mirth, and Wine,
And if busie Love intrenches,
There's a sweet soft Page of mine,
Does the trick worth Forty Wenches.

JOHN WILMOT, EARL OF ROCHESTER

A Wife

Since thou'rt condemn'd to wed a thing,
And that same thing must be a she;
And that same she to thee must cling
For term of life of her and thee;
I'll tell thee what this thing shall bee.

I would not have her virtuous,
For such a wife I ne'er did see;
And 'tis a madness to suppose
What never was, nor e're shall bee;
To seem so is enough to thee.

Do not desire she should be wise,
Yet let her have a waggish wit;
No circumventing subtilties,
But pretty slights to please and hit,
And make us laugh at her, or it.

Nor must thou have one very just,
Lest she repay thee in thy kind;
And yet she must be true to trust;
Or if to sport she has a mind,
Let her be sure to keep thee blind.

One part of valour let her have;
Not to return but suffer ill,
To her own passion be no slave
But to thy laws obedient still,
And unto thine submit her will.

Be thou content she have a tongue,
That's active so it be not lowd;
And so she be straight-limb'd and young,
Though not with beauty much endow'd,
No matter, so she be but proud.

Tir'd she should be, not satisfi'd,
But alwaies tempting thee for more,
So cunningly she been't espy'd.
Let her act all parts like a whore,
So she been't one, I'ld ask no more.

But above all things, let her be
Short liv'd and rich, no strong-dock'd *Jone*,
That dares to live till 53,
Find this wife, if thou must have one;
But there's no wife so good as none.

ALEXANDER BROME

A SONG

Absent from thee I languish still,
Then ask me not, when I return?
The straying Fool 'twill plainly kill,
To wish all Day, all Night to Mourn.

Dear; from thine Arms then let me flie,
That my Fantastick mind may prove,
The Torments it deserves to try,
That tears my fixt Heart from my Love.

When wearied with a world of Woe,
To thy safe Bosom I retire
Where Love and Peace and Truth does flow,
May I contented there expire.

Lest once more wandring from that Heav'n
I fall on some base heart unblest;
Faithless to thee, False, unforgiv'n,
And lose my Everlasting rest.

Rochester

LITERATURE AND SCIENCE IN THE C17 and C18

The scientific milieu

FRANCIS BACON called for a general advancement of learning in an age which was alive with new discoveries: astronomical observations of Kepler, Brahe, Galileo; voyages of exploration to new worlds overseas; experiments by Paracelsus which moved chemistry away from alchemy and magic; Vesalius and the Italian anatomies were opening up the human body, Harley described the circulation of blood.
1605 ***Advancement of Learning*** called for a co-ordinated movement of investigation across the entire frontier of knowledge. B. argued that Adam had enjoyed a Godlike completeness of understanding (God had allowed him to name the creatures). This instinctive wisdom ("natural knowledge") he had forfeited when he disobeyed God and committed the Original Sin. Learning needed to be restored to a state as near as possible to that first perfection.
Bacon's method: INDUCTIVE REASONING (INDUCTION) based on OBSERVATION and EXPERIMENT. The schoolmen had used *a priori* arguments (propositions of generalities) from which deductions about particulars were made. Bacon's experimental method gave primacy to ascertainable facts of the physical world, in accordance with the new evolving materialist view of the universe. Instead of deducing knowledge of particular phenomena from general *a priori* assumptions about whole systems, natural philosophers and other thinkers after them followed the practice of ascending gradually from observation and experiment, by way of analysis, towards general theories. This process was unending as all general principles thus found were subject to revision in the light of new discoveries.

NATURAL PHILOSOPHY was the term used for the new kind of philosophy which was directed to the **understanding of Nature**. Without rejecting the Christian faith or the refinements of classical culture, the natural philosophers broke with the authority of Aristotle and medieval scholasticism, **subjecting all beliefs and all knowledge to a rational examination based on the evidence of fact as supported by the senses**. The only real truth was that discoverable by inductive and mathematical methods. When viewed like this, the **universe** appeared as **a great machine** and the natural laws, the principles on which it worked, were taken as a demonstration of the ultimate rationality of creation. They were evidence of **God's beneficence**. The natural laws were not just statements about verifiable phenomena (such as that bodies fall at specific speeds, that heavenly globes move by predictable courses etc.) but also proof that a benevolent God directs his universe towards the best results. Thus the new philosophy seemed to confirm the assertions of the old that **an omniscient, infinitely wise and divine presence superintended the world**. The contemporaries drew a deep **moral assurance** from the fact that now the old belief in the well-ordered world taken care of by the well-meaning Providence could be **satisfactorily proved as based on demonstrable fact**. This seemed to do away with medieval superstition. The earlier world picture was felt to have been based on myths elaborated to provide life with purpose. Natural philosophy, on the other hand, seemed to provide clarification and rational conviction based on fact. The methods of Aristotelian science or of medieval theology or of pre-Restoration pseudo-science had left so much obscure. Life had remained, despite all arguments of divine wisdom, so extraordinarily mysterious and incomprehensible that irrationality and superstition could flourish in the absence of criteria by which they could be refuted. The new

intellectual technique of inquiry (science), and the discoveries it led to, the new worlds which were opened up by the telescope and the microscope, seemed to prove the universe so intelligent in cause and effect as to be admirable and reassuring because God's laws, now verifiable, were shown as directing each thing according to its nature and divine order. Because now the proof of experiment substituted scholastic logic, it was felt that **a dawn of enlightenment** was breaking on the darkness of superstition.
Faith seemed progressively to be a matter less of taking the universe on trust than of understanding it. God's wisdom and goodness seemed confirmed by such evidence, macroscopic and microscopic, as no man with eyes could fail to see and accept. Scientists like Newton revealed a limitless but systematic universe where **God in Nature** appeared as **the greatest of artists**.

ISAAC NEWTON (1642-1727) was the great intellectual hero of the age, "the Miracle of the present Age" as Addison called him in *Spectator*, No. 543. The modern scientific revolution did not start with him. He synthesized the researches of his fellow countrymen Boyle, Barrow, Hooke, Flamsteed and Wallis and such Continental natural philosophers as Descartes, Galileo, Kepler and others, but for the eighteenth-century Englishmen scientific advance was to a remarkable extent associated with his name. The triumph of his mind was so awe-inspiring, elemental and universal that it seemed comparable with Nature itself. For Pope and many others Newton personified enlightenment:

Nature and Nature's Laws lay hid in Night,
God said Let Newton be! and all was Light.

Newton's achievement was based on his coupling of **empirical observation with mathematical method**. In his great book *Philosophiae Naturalis Principia Mathematica* (1686) his method is to deduce mathematical formulae from the observed motions of bodies in the heavens and on earth and then from these formulae to deduce other motions which could be checked against further observation. Thus he applied his principles of motion to account for many hitherto unexplained natural phenomena, such as the perturbations in the moon's orbit, the rise and fall of tides, and the behaviour of light. He was also able to show by his calculations, for instance, that comets are not mysterious, haphazard, or new-created phenomena, but subject to the same law of gravitation as the planets; thus enabling Edmund Halley to plot, in 1682, the orbit of the comet that bears his name, and to prophesy its return in 1758.
Newton's greatest achievement was the formulation of the **principle of gravitation**, that every body attracts every other body with a force proportional to its mass and inversely proportional to the square of the distance between them. Now a single formula could account at once for the fall of a pebble and the movement of the stars. This mathematical proof of the old concept of unity in variety in the God-created world powerfully seized the imagination of enlightenment men, especially when investigations of astronomers, physicists and mathematicians in England and Europe throughout the eighteenth century all bore witness to the applicability of Newton's theory.
His second great success was the development of the **calculus method,** which was of great value to the evolution of mathematics and therefore to science in general.
His third great achievement was his **theory of light**, formulated in *Optics* (1704). "Newton with his prism", demonstrating the many-coloured nature of light through its refraction in the prism, caught the imagination of Englishmen for generations and infused the world for them with miraculous colours.

Having demonstrated the mechanical clockwork nature of the world, Newton nevertheless remained a deeply religious man, like his contemporaries whose feelings of religious awe and devotion he had satisfied by offering rational grounds for a belief in God. For him and others, the First Cause was not mechanical :

> The most beautiful system of the sun, planets, and comets, could only proceed from the counsel and domination of an intelligent and powerful Being … Since every particle of space is *always*, and every indivisible moment of duration is *everywhere*, certainly the Maker and Lord of all things cannot be *never* and *nowhere*. ... He is omnipresent not *virtually* only, but also *substantially*; for virtue cannot subsist without substance. In him are all things contained and moved; yet neither affects the other: God suffers nothing from the motion of bodies; bodies find no resistance from the omnipresence of God. It is allowed that the Supreme God exists necessarily; and by the same necessity he exists *always* and *everywhere*.

Newton's vision of a universe in which every act of human perception and every motion of countless suns and planets is a vibration in the ether, his revelation of a maze of colour hidden within the light of common day, and his heroic binding of the suns and planets to their orbits created wonder and excitement among his non-scientific reader, his forbidding mathematics notwithstanding.

Age of Enlightenment

The advances of science lifted a great burden of fear and superstition off the minds of men. They now had more confidence in their own unaided and restrained intellect and with increased understanding of the ways of Nature felt better able to control and dominate their environment. Science gave new freedom and new hope, and the sudden and huge growth of ordered and apparently certain knowledge seemed greatly to enlarge the possibilities of intellectual, moral and practical improvements. A belief that life in all its aspects could be improved by the use of intelligence, and the resultant belief in human progress, coloured the whole 18th century. As science continued to shed light on more and more natural phenomena, improvements were undertaken in other fields as well. Methods of commerce were improved by the provision of better quays, docks and warehouses. Manufacture could be improved by new techniques such as the application of steam power and the subdivision of labour in manufactories. Transport could be improved by the building of canals, bridges and the making of turnpike trusts. Agriculture could be improved by enclosing the land and better methods of farming. Towns could be improved by paving, lighting, straightening and widening of streets, the laying out of new districts and demolishing medieval town walls, the erection of magnificent public buildings and laying out of public walks. Country houses could be improved by being rebuilt or remodelled in a more purely Classical taste and given a new setting in a newly landscaped park. The arts could be improved by enlightened patronage and founding of academies (i.e. the Royal Society of London for the Improvement of Natural Knowledge, 1662). The condition of the poor could be improved by the profusion of schools, hospitals and better prisons. Etc.

The Polite Society

The C17 had been torn apart by religious and political strife. The society was both formal and violent. Social barriers were very high, the lords and ladies were very conscious that they were different from other people. Enmities were passionate, different social groups were at war with each other both literally (the Great Civil War)

and metaphorically afterwards. Different religious denominations passionately hated each other, members of different political parties did not talk to each other, quarrels were solved by drawing the sword.
The C18, tired of such passionate enmities and looking for social stability after a century of turmoil, reacted against what 18th-century people perceived as "zeal", i.e. undue enthusiasm, whether in politics or religion. Many people felt that the traumas of the previous century were to be avoided at all costs. Civilization for these people meant that men of learning had to learn to act together in society.
The new **polite man** was essentially **social**, and as such could distinguish himself from arrogant lords, illiterate squires and fanatical puritans. The latter, because of their "zeal" could be viewed as angular, while the polite man was polished. The ruling character of fanatics of all sorts, but especially the religious ones, was enthusiasm, which was diametrically opposed to the new desired quality of politeness and intensely disliked by polite people. It was also threatening because enthusiasm involved belief in personal inspiration and readiness to follow it, and if necessary, break up the society in the process. Polite society formed a group within society as a whole. The polite person needed sufficient property to give him the means to education, and a stake in society. It was always a minority, but a large and growing one.
Polite people needed places where to meet and a common code of behaviour by which to recognize each other. Much care and energy went into providing the proper facilities for social interaction for "people of quality". The main meeting places were assembly rooms, public walks, theatres, clubs and coffee houses. The common language included more than the spoken language, it was also the language of dress, behaviour, movement, art, architecture and decoration as well. Habitués of walks and assembly rooms learned the accepted ways of making conversation, dancing and greeting acquaintances. In the theatre provincial audiences learned about polite dress and manners from companies on tour from London. Dancing masters, teachers of elocution and finishing schools provided the proper training. Handbooks taught polite behaviour. Polite gentlemen and ladies learnt how to understand the language of classical architecture, to use it correctly, and to appreciate how it could be modulated in order to express a mood or underline importance. Resorts and spas became important means of producing polite society. Politeness was to do with breaking down social barriers. By their nature, spas attracted people to come from different backgrounds to one place in pursuit of health; and once away from their everyday context such people found it easier to shed prejudicies, mix together and (if they were not too ill) enjoy themselves in doing so. Entry to polite society was not for everyone, especially for people of the "common sort". On the other hand, entry was available to anyone who wore the right sort of clothes and could afford the money for subscription to assembly rooms and balls. The theory of polite society was evolved and especially propagated by Joseph Addison in his journal *Spectator*.

The new language
The upholders of the new learning developed a distrust of imagination which seemed too close to enthusiasm and zeal. Besides, they worked now in the plain daylight world of fact and reason, and anything lurking in the shadows, too insubstantial to be snared by observation and dragged into the light of rational processes, was derided and dismissed as fanciful. Conceptual thought found an apparently solid base in physical reality, the natural world seemed to provide an objective touchstone for speculation and hypothetical thought. It was a climate unfavourable for religion and

poetry, but very good for **prose**, the instrument of the promoters of new learning. What they required was a clear and unequivocal instrument of expression. Vernacular prose, which had hitherto been rather flamboyant and cumbersome, was now trimmed down and given a new importance in intellectual commerce by the decision of the Royal Society which declared that its members should record their experiments and conclusions in English, rather than Latin, the language of international learning so far. In this new prose no flourish was permitted to obscure reason and plain sense. The Society was most rigorous in rejecting all amplifications, digressions and swellings of style, language was to be returned to its primitive purity and shortness. All members were to adopt a close, naked, natural way of speaking, use positive expressions and bring all things as near mathematical plainness as they could. The language of artisans, countrymen and merchants was to be preferred to that of wits and scholars. The ideal new prose, as written by Dryden, sounded like the distinguished and easy talk of a clear, independent and inquisitive mind, sensitive to the tastes and prejudices of his audience. Clear statements and settled sentence forms, with a simple vocabulary became the norm. A plain, direct and workaday prose which came into being as a result could not only be employed by masters of the new style but also by anybody who wanted to write clearly and correctly without aiming at literary distinction. Also, verbal communication was everywhere improved and extended.

Poetry suffered. Strangeness, mystery, "metaphysical" exuberance were dropped, and the poets fell in line with the prose writer as a sensible instructor who, though perhaps less reliable, could temper his instruction with pleasing adornments. A new, and often rigid distinction between intellect and feeling, reason and imagination, fact and fiction prevailed throughout the century. As poetry seemed to provide no assistance in scientific enquiries but, on the contrary, dealt in deceitful fables meant for primitive people, it was to be banished with the fairies and other superstitions. Poetry was to cease its correspondence with the slavish passions and take Reason as its guide and Science as the provider of proper subject matter.

Challenge to the new science

During the early years of the C18 a sharp and scornful challenge to the new science came from some men of letters who found much of the work of the Royal Society intellectually contemptible and culturally subversive. As scientific enquiry grew more specific and came to require specialist knowledge, amateur scientific activity shifted to the delightful observation of birds and flowers and insects. The amateur gentlemen scientists first came to be derided for triviality, pedantry and lack of practical usefulness in their studies. Their self-regarding seriousness seemed grossly disproportionate to the mean and vulgar objects of some of their inquiries. As such, they came to be derided by Pope in his *Dunciad* as gullible triflers and enemies of true learning. These men of letters, moreover, were perturbed by the way many scientists were misusing the English language. In attempting a factual plainness and conciseness, many writers had avoided the old sin of eloquence only to fall victim to the opposite errors of stilted bareness, a conventional phraseology and a low poverty of expression. Men educated in the older tradition of learning were genuinely repelled by what they saw as the aberration of intellect and the pedantry of the times ("dullness" was their comprehensive term for it).

from *To the Memory of Sir Isaac Newton*

ALL intellectual eye, our solar round
First gazing through, he, by the blended power
Of gravitation and projection, saw
The whole in silent harmony revolve.
From unassisted vision hid, the moons,
To cheer remoter planets numerous poured,
By him in all their mingled tracts were seen.
He also fixed the wandering Queen of Night,
Whether she wanes into a scanty orb,
Or, waxing broad, with her pale shadowy light,
In a soft deluge overflows the sky.
Her every motion clear-discerning, he
Adjusted to the mutual main, and taught
Why now the mighty mass of waters swells
Resistless, heaving on the broken rocks,
And the full river turning; till again
The tide revertive, unattracted, leaves
A yellow waste of idle sands behind.
  Then breaking hence, he took his ardent flight
Through the blue infinite; and every star,
Which the clear concave of a winter's night
Pours on the eye, or astronomic tube,
Far-stretching, snatches from the dark abyss,
Or such as farther in successive skies
To fancy shine alone, at his approach
Blazed into suns, the living centre each
Of an harmonious system: all combined,
And ruled unerring by that single power
Which draws the stone projected to the ground.
  O unprofuse magnificence divine!
O wisdom truly perfect! thus to call
From a few causes such a scheme of things,
Effects so various, beautiful and great,
An universe complete! And O beloved
Of heaven! whose well-purged penetrative eye,
The mystic veil transpiercing, inly scanned
The rising, moving, wide-established frame.
  He, first of men, with awful wing pursued
The comet through the long elliptic curve,
As round innumerous worlds he wound his way,
Till, to the forehead of our evening sky
Returned, the blazing wonder glares anew,
And o'er the trembling nations shakes dismay.
  The heavens are all his own, from the wild rule
Of whirling vortices and circling spheres
To their first great simplicity restored.
The schools astonished stood; but found it vain
To keep at odds with demonstration strong,
And, unawakened, dream beneath the blaze
Of truth. At once their pleasing visions fled,
With the gay shadows of the morning mixed,
When Newton rose, our philosophic sun.
  Th' aerial flow of sound was known to him,
From whence it first in wavy circles breaks,
Till the touched organ takes the meaning in.
Nor could the darting beam, of speed immense,
Escape his swift pursuit and measuring eye.
Even light itself, which everything displays,
Shone undiscovered, till his brighter mind
Untwisted all the shining robe of day;
And, from the whitening undistinguished blaze,
Collecting every ray into his kind,
To the charmed eye educed the gorgeous train
Of parent-colours. First the flaming red
Sprung vivid forth; the tawny orange next;
And next delicious yellow; by whose side
Fell the kind beams of all-refreshing green.
Then the pure blue, that swells autumnal skies,
Ethereal played; and then, of sadder hue,
Emerged the deepened indigo, as when
The heavy-skirted evening droops with frost;
While the last gleamings of refracted light
Died in the fainting violet away.
These, when the clouds distil the rosy shower,
Shine out distinct adown the watry bow;
While o'er our heads the dewy vision bends
Delightful, melting on the fields beneath.
Myriads of mingling dyes from these result,
And myriads still remain—infinite source
Of beauty, ever-flushing, ever-new!
  Did ever poet image aught so fair,
Dreaming in whispering groves by the hoarse brook?
Or prophet, to whose rapture heaven descends?
Even now the setting sun and shifting clouds,
Seen, Greenwich, from thy lovely heights, declare
How just, how beauteous the refractive law.
  The noiseless tide of time, all bearing down
To vast eternity's unbounded sea,
Where the green islands of the happy shine,
He stemmed alone; and, to the source (involved
Deep in primeval gloom) ascending, raised
His lights at equal distances, to guide
Historian wildered on his darksome way.
  But who can number up his labours? who
His high discoveries sing? When but a few
Of the deep-studying race can stretch their minds
To what he knew: in fancy's lighter thought,
How shall the Muse then grasp the mighty theme?
  What wonder thence that his devotion swelled
Responsive to his knowledge? For could he,

Whose piercing mental eye diffusive saw
The finished university of things
In all its order, magnitude and parts,
Forbear incessant to adore that Power
Who fills, sustains and actuates the whole?

(1727)

PALLADIANISM

Richard Boyle, 3rd Earl of Burlington

No one at the time or since has challenged the earl's incalculable influence on eighteenth century culture. Indeed Pope's tribute is less flattery than a rehearsal of fact. George Vertue, who was to chronicle the arts of the early Georgian age, refers to Burlington as 'The noble Maecenas of the Arts' and, later in the century, that other notable trendsetter, Horace Walpole, was likewise to eulogise him: 'Never was protection and great wealth more generously and more judiciously diffused than by this great person, who had every quality of a genius and artist, except envy.' It would seem that in this single figure we have the fulfilment of the 3rd Earl of Shaftesbury's call for 'Princes and Great Men' to lead people in the arts and sciences towards a new national culture. And as Burlington's tutor Lord Somers was familiar with Shaftesbury he could almost be said to have been reared with this role in view.

Nonetheless Burlington emerges as one of the most enigmatic and mysterious figures in the history of British civilisation. This was a man with a keen and perceptive mind and eyes, endowed also with remarkable taste and a relentless sense of direction. And yet he was cold, austere, ascetic, in short a loner who reveals little about himself. His letters are few, almost one senses deliberately, for he might give something away in putting pen to paper. And yet he was to be the pivotal figure in a revolution in the arts, which was to leave a mighty legacy affecting not only this country but Europe and the United States.

Burlington came from an old royalist family, succeeding his father at the age of ten in 1704 as third earl. His inheritance was a substantial one with estates in Ireland, Yorkshire (centred on the family seat at Londesborough), a magnificent town house in Piccadilly and a country villa at Chiswick along the Thames. The London estate was a particularly valuable one in an age when the city was rapidly expanding and much could be exploited by aristocratic developers. His mother was musical and music was to be his own earliest overriding passion; his first appearance in terms of the arts is as the dedicatee of the libretto for Handel's opera *Teseo* first performed on 10 January 1713 at the Queen's Theatre. Burlington was then nineteen. A year later he was to leave the family house in Piccadilly with two coaches and an immense retinue of outriders and liveried servants bound for the continent, seemingly on that quintessential element of any great aristocrat's education, the Grand Tour.

The earl travelled in the company of two painters, Charles Jervas and a Frenchman, Louis Goupy. The tour was far from the normal length, indeed it was almost cursory. Two months were spent visiting towns in Belgium and the Netherlands before the party headed south down through Germany and Switzerland reaching Rome on 31 September, having crossed the Alps via Chambéry and Modane. Burlington was then it appears unwell until Christmas, although he was already indulging in the purchase of pictures for his collection. On 5 February he left Rome travelling north to Venice and home via Paris, arriving in England on 2 May. Far from architecture being the prime purpose of the trip he arrived back with the cellist and composer, Filippo Amedei, and the violinist, Pietro Castrucci. Music still clearly dominated his thoughts, although while in Rome he met the person who was to be a major figure in his life, William Kent.

On his return nothing on the surface dispelled the illusion that here was a member of the prevailing Whig ascendancy, indeed he was referred to as such by his contemporaries. The new king expressed confidence by making him a Privy Councillor and Lord Treasurer of Ireland the year after his accession. Four years later Burlington made a second journey to Italy, this time in the company of Kent who wrote that his lordship was 'going towards Vicenza and Venice to get Architects to draw all the fine buildings of Palladio . . .', the purpose being to introduce into England a 'better gusto [i.e. taste] than the damn'd gusto that's been for this sixty years past.' So the aim of this expedition was clearly stated, to study the works of Palladio in order to inaugurate an architectural revolution in England. But, one should add, music was again to the fore. In 1719 a company had been established to introduce Italian opera to England and Burlington was one of the three major aristocratic sponsors who put up £1,000. And it was to be on this second Italian journey that the earl was to negotiate for the services of the famous composer, Giovanni Bononcini, who arrived in London the following year.

Shortly after his return Burlington married Lady Dorothy Savile, daughter of the 2nd Marquess of Halifax, by whom he was to have three daughters, one alone surviving as sole heiress. Lady Burlington shared her husband's taste for music and theatre and also for the visual arts. Kent gave her drawing lessons. On the accession of George II the couple continued to enjoy royal favour and Burlington was made a Knight of the Garter in 1730 and Captain of the Gentlemen Pensioners the year after. His wife became a lady-in-waiting to the queen. Then, in 1733, their relationship with the court collapsed. That seems to have related to the king's failure to appoint Burlington to the next vacant high office, but could also have been influenced by the fact that he joined a number of other aristocrats in opposing the Excise Bill, a customs tax on wine and tobacco. After this fissure little is heard of them, although the earl began to run into serious debt problems. He died on 3 December 1753 and was buried in the family vault at Londesborough on his Yorkshire estate.

Ostensibly Burlington was a Whig, albeit an independent one, a man seemingly at the heart of the new political establishment ushered in by George I and his chief minister, Sir Robert Walpole. But recent research has questioned that assumption, so much so that it has produced to replace it a man whose lifetime was in fact spent covertly working for a second Stuart Restoration. What this startling reinterpretation does emphasise is that the upper echelons of society remained as sharply divided after 1714 as they had been before. The Jacobite rebellions of 1715 and 1745, let alone other plots in the intervening years, were far more dangerous to the political status quo than it would seem. The Stuarts had returned in 1660 and many people continued to believe that there was no reason why this should not happen again. Burlington it seems was one of these, a clandestine Jacobite whose true loyalty was to James III across the water, but someone who at the same time always took good care to distance himself from anyone too transparently linked to the cause. The secret Jacobite cipher for Burlington was 'Mr. Buck' and his journeys abroad can also be explained as making more sense in connection with Stuart intrigues than as campaigns for the arts. The composition of the Burlington circle was riddled with Jacobite sympathisers with, for instance, a sister married into one of the oldest of recusant Roman Catholic families, the Bedingfields. In the aftermath of the 1715 rebellion, when attacks were made on Catholics, it was Burlington who took into his house Alexander Pope and his family. The earl's first architectural commission for the dor-

mitory of Westminster School also came from the official leader of the Jacobites in England, Francis Atterbury, Bishop of Rochester and Dean of Westminster. Then there were the earl's debts amounting by 1737 to £167,000, indicating perhaps that money was slipping across the Channel.

So we are confronted by a mystery man, a kind of double agent. To that we can add his role as a freemason, belonging to a line of descent of secret societies going back to the Rosicrucians at the beginning of the previous century. These societies were inextricably linked with the Stuart cause and in the post-Restoration period a new higher degree of membership emerged, the Royal Arch, to which it seems Burlington belonged. But in the mid-1720s Jacobite freemasonry went underground, adding to the mystery.

So what light do these revelations shed on one of the great revolutions in taste in the country's history, one for which Burlington was the self-appointed leader? The Palladian revival now emerges as being less the symbol of a political triumph than as an expression of a period of continuing religious and political debate. Those who rejected or criticised the new regime, of whom there were many, expressed their scorn for its shortcomings by a cult of Ancient Virtue, that is by a celebration of the moral example set by the Romans in antiquity. The revival of ancient architecture for them carried with it a wider ethical critique of a revival also of ancient virtue. For Burlington that may have included the restoration of the Stuarts whose martyr king, Charles I, had been a great patron of Inigo Jones, whose work the earl set about deliberately reviving, restoring, imitating and publishing.

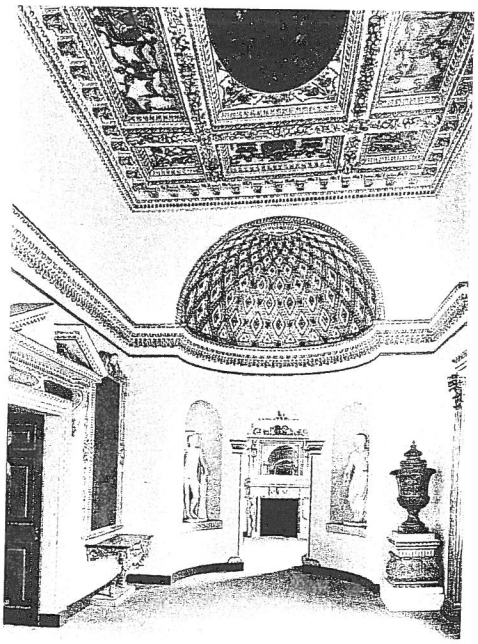
No one in 1714, when the Hanoverians succeeded, could have foreseen that the late sixteenth century architect, Andrea Palladio, and his English disciple, Inigo Jones, were to be the dominant influences on building through the century. That turning back to the Caroline court of the 1630s had already been underway earlier in Tory Oxford, as evidenced in the Peckwater Quadrangle of Christ Church dating from 1706. In fact the influence of Palladio and Jones can be traced through the work of the great baroque architects, but neither Burlington nor Kent would admit to it as it would have detracted from their 'revolution'. The need for change was also signalled by Pope's *Essay on Criticism* (1711) calling for a national reformation in taste and ideas and by Lord Shaftesbury's *Letter Concerning the Art and Science of Design* dedicated to Burlington's tutor, Lord Somers. So the way was already prepared for Burlington to assume the mantle in 1715 when Colen Campbell published *Vitruvius Britannicus*, as a manifesto launching a new style of 'the antique simplicity', and in the same year Nicholas Dubois published a translation into English of Palladio's *Four Books of Architecture*.

What set Burlington apart was both his position as an aristocrat and his unique understanding of both architects, for he realised that their work was deeply rooted in the architecture of classical antiquity. As a nobleman he could not be seen to soil his hands with any of the practicalities of the profession, although he belonged to a long and still flourishing line of gentlemen amateur practitioners. Not only did he comprehend the tradition that he was reviving, in a sense he almost owned it. In 1720 he purchased virtually the entire architectural drawings of Inigo Jones, those of his nephew and successor, John Webb (whose work was misattributed to Jones by then) and of Palladio himself. To these he added Palladio's drawings of Roman baths which were to have a seminal influence. In this way he assembled a paper museum which he was to use as a quarry in his role as an architect. But everything had to be achieved at a lordly remove in order to preserve caste, so he was to make use of various amanuenses to draw up his designs or to see through certain publications such as William Kent's *The Designs of Inigo Jones with some Additional Designs* (1727), which made available the architect's work.

paid for the restoration of St. Paul's, Covent Garden, and rescued the architect's gateway for Beaufort House, re-erecting it in the grounds of Chiswick.

Burlington's campaign for a reformed architectural style was at its height in the decades between 1720 and 1750. Vertue bracketed him with Lord Pembroke as not only 'great and true judges of those sciences [geometry and architecture], but real practitioners of it in a fine degree and taste, equal and above the professions . . .' The earl's earliest work was at his villa in Chiswick, the Bagnio, an elegant classical pavilion which closed a vista. But he went on to revive the architecture of Caroline England as typified by Wilton in Tottenham Park for his brother-in-law, Lord Bruce. He advised Thomas Coke on his vast house at Holkham, and in 1730-36 the extraordinary Assembly Rooms at York went up. As a result the style was to spread and we can see evidence of it everywhere in the use of Palladian Venetian windows, coffered vaults and semi-domes, of vaulted spaces and niches. Underlying it all was a strong feeling for Roman antique severity without concealing the gilded splendour within.

Under Burlington's aegis Palladianism was to become a national style, triumphing over the insular baroque of Wren and Hawksmoor. It was, it should be added, just as insular, but it was also unique, for it was a forerunner of the neo-classical style which was only to seize the rest of Europe much later in the century. Although Burlington was obsessed by Palladio and Jones he was even more obsessed by antiquity and any study of his buildings reveals this. That he was able single-handed to achieve this revolution, in which he established by the time he died what was in effect a national vernacular still admired today, was thanks to his ability to place his own nominees in the office of the Royal Works. It also owed much to his prestigious social position with influence over a wide circle of like-minded aristocrats and gentry, and to his own example in both Burlington House and his villa at Chiswick. But Burlington also profoundly realised that to achieve a Palladian revival called for moving beyond mere imitation and pastiche to originality of invention. In that lay his genius.



The Gallery at Chiswick House. William Kent's sumptuous interiors made use of contrasting room shapes and ceiling treatments, the latter here looking back to Inigo Jones's Whitehall Banqueting House. They were to be hugely influential.

It was in his own houses that he set the pace. In 1717 he brought in Colen Campbell to remodel Burlington House, transforming it into a *palazzo* lifted from Palladio's Vicenza. Its most striking feature was the graceful Doric colonnade which linked its courtyard. But it was to be Chiswick which was to be the most admired, visited and emulated. Here he inherited an old Jacobean family house which he only transformed after a fire in 1725 led him to build a small villa close to it, ultimately to be linked back to the old house by a corridor.

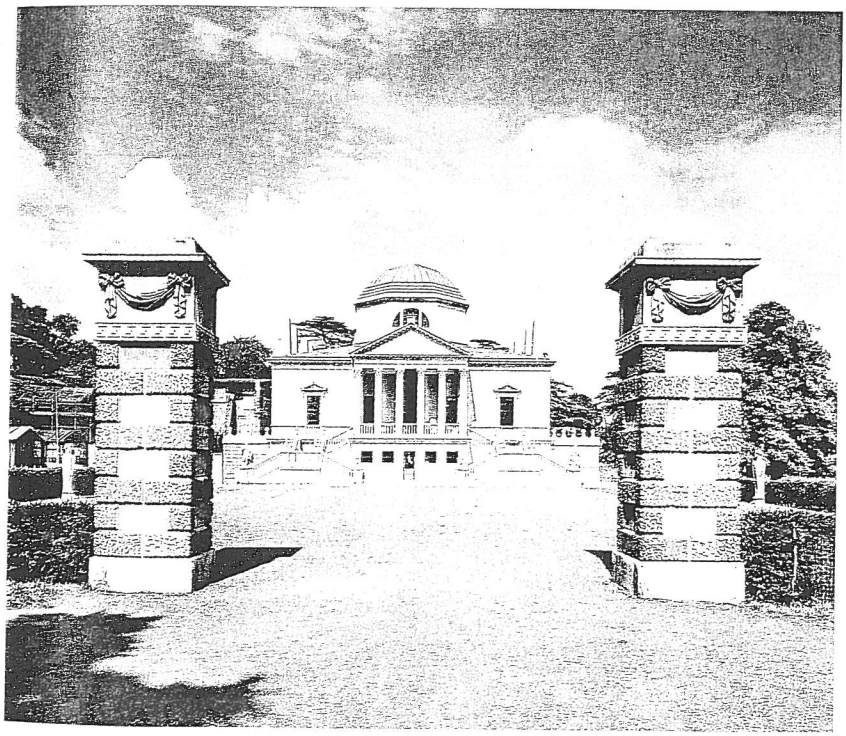
Nothing quite like Chiswick had ever been seen before. Lord Hervey, the memoir writer, remarked that 'the house was too small to inhabit, and too large to hang on one's watch.' It is only seventy feet square with each front conceived in isolation from the other (an English trait). Its inspiration was one of Palladio's villas along the Brenta, the Villa Rotonda, but transmuted into something quite other by dint of raiding his paper museum. So it is a unique synthesis of both antique and modern precedents, the first house whose actual ground-plan is based on Roman antiquity. But its

Palladian 5

most daring feature was its deployment of interior space, a combination of room shapes, square, circular, octagonal, as well as an abundant use of niches and apses, columns and screening. This was to be the villa's most influential legacy. And for those who could read its emblematics this was a shrine to the exiled imperial Stuart dynasty. The visitor entered under an archway topped by a bust of the Emperor Augustus to be confronted by that archetypal icon of loyalty, a copy of Van Dyck's vast canvas depicting Charles I with his family.

But a villa as it existed in classical antiquity was not only the building but even more the land around it. As early as the summer of 1716 the earl's friend, Alexander Pope, could write: 'His Gardens flourish, his Structures rise, his Pictures arrive.' For at Chiswick we are at the fount of another cultural revolution, this time a horticultural one. The new ideal was to create a domain modelled on that described by Pliny the Younger in his letters about his villas outside Rome and in Tuscany. In those there was an interplay between cultivated areas and ones which were left seemingly in a state of nature as meadow or woods. Even before Chiswick there had already been some breaking-down of the old formal style which stemmed from Versailles in the work of Charles Bridgeman, who introduced the ha-ha as a link between garden and landscape as well as deploying meandering serpentine walks. Alexander Pope's garden at nearby Twickenham, which Burlington certainly knew, developed this even further, the garden being conceived as a landscape painting, the terrain and its planting arranged in perspective, making calculated use of light and shade.

Pope was to be a major influence on the Chiswick garden. So too was William Kent. Work began in 1716 with three avenues converging on a single point, each one terminated by a different building. For over twenty years Burlington and Kent were to expand and develop this initial statement with additions drawn from what was known of Pliny's villas, like the exedra and a hippodrome and the placing of antique statuary. In this way Burlington presented a new aristocratic ideal, a garden which was a series of pictures made up of terrain, plants, water, architecture and sculpture arranged in emulation of Ancient Rome.



In Chiswick House Inigo Jones's translation of the villa style of Palladio along the Brenta to England is revived.

Alexander Pope

To Richard Boyle, Earl of Burlington

ARGUMENT TO EPISTLE IV

OF THE USE OF RICHES

The vanity of expense in people of wealth and quality. The abuse of the word taste, ver. 13. That the first principle and foundation in this, as in everything else, is good sense, ver. 39. The chief proof of it is to follow Nature, even in works of mere luxury and elegance. Instanced in architecture and gardening, where all must be adapted to the genius and use of the place, and the beauties not forced into it, but resulting from it, ver. 47. How men are disappointed in their most expensive undertakings for want of this true foundation, without which nothing can please long, if at all; and the best examples and rules will be but perverted into something burden-some or ridiculous, ver. 65, etc., to 98. A description of the false taste of magnificence; the first grand error of which is to imagine that greatness consists in the size and dimensions, instead of the proportion and harmony of the whole, ver. 99; and the second, either in joining together parts incoherent, or too minutely resembling, or in the repetition of the same too frequently, ver. 105, etc. A word or two of false taste in books, in music, in painting, even in preaching and prayer, and lastly in entertainments, ver. 133, etc. Yet Providence is justified in giving wealth to be squandered in this manner, since it is dispersed to the poor and laborious part of mankind, ver. 169 (recurring to what is laid down in the *Essay on Man*, Epistle II., and in the epistle preceding, ver. 159, etc.). What are the proper objects of magnificence, and a proper field for the expense of great men, ver. 177, etc.; and finally, the great and public works which become a prince, ver. 191 to the end.

EPISTLE IV

'Tis strange, the miser should his cares employ
To gain those riches he can ne'er enjoy:
Is it less strange, the prodigal should waste
His wealth to purchase what he ne'er can taste?
Not for himself he sees, or hears, or eats;
Artists must choose his pictures, music, meats:
He buys for Topham drawings and designs,
For Pembroke statues, dirty gods, and coins;
Rare monkish manuscripts for Hearne alone,
And books for Mead, and butterflies for Sloane.
Think we all these are for himself? no more
Than his fine wife, alas! or finer whore.

For what has Virro painted, built, and planted?
Only to show how many tastes he wanted.
What brought Sir Visto's ill-got wealth to waste?
Some demon whisper'd, 'Visto! have a taste.'
Heaven visits with a taste the wealthy fool,
And needs no rod but Ripley with a rule.
See! sportive Fate, to punish awkward pride,
Bids Bubo build, and sends him such a guide:
A standing sermon, at each year's expense,
That never coxcomb reach'd magnificence!

You show us Rome was glorious, not profuse,
And pompous buildings once were things of use.
Yet shall (my lord) your just, your noble rules
Fill half the land with imitating fools;
Who random drawings from your sheets shall take,
And of one beauty many blunders make;
Load some vain church with old theatric state,
Turn acts of triumph to a garden-gate;
Reverse your ornaments, and hang them all
On some patch'd dog-hole eked with ends of wall;
Then clap four slices of pilaster on't,
That, laced with bits of rustic, makes a front.
Shall call the winds through long arcades to roar,
Proud to catch cold at a Venetian door;
Conscious they act a true Palladian part,
And, if they starve, they starve by rules of art.

Oft have you hinted to your brother peer
A certain truth, which many buy too dear:
Something there is more needful than expense,
And something previous even to taste – 'tis sense:
Good sense, which only is the gift of Heaven,
And, though no science, fairly worth the seven:
A light, which in yourself you must perceive;
Jones and Le Nôtre have it not to give.

To build, to plant, whatever you intend,
To rear the column, or the arch to bend,
To swell the terrace, or to sink the grot,
In all, let Nature never be forgot,
But treat the goddess like a modest fair,
Nor over-dress, nor leave her wholly bare;
Let not each beauty everywhere be spied,
Where half the skill is decently to hide.
He gains all points, who pleasingly confounds,
Surprises, varies, and conceals the bounds.

Consult the genius of the place in all:
That tells the waters or to rise or fall;
Or helps the ambitious hill the heavens to scale,
Or scoops in circling theatres the vale;
Calls in the country, catches opening glades,
Joins willing woods, and varies shades from shades;
Now breaks, or now directs, the intending lines;
Paints, as you plant, and, as you work, designs.
Still follow sense, of every art the soul,
Parts answering parts shall slide into a whole,
Spontaneous beauties all around advance,
Start ev'n from difficulty, strike from chance;
Nature shall join you; Time shall make it grow
A work to wonder at – perhaps a Stowe.

Without it, proud Versailles! thy glory falls;
And Nero's terraces desert their walls:
The vast parterres a thousand hands shall make,
Lo! Cobham comes, and floats them with a lake:
Or cut wide views through mountains to the plain,
You'll wish your hill or shelter'd seat again.
Even in an ornament its place remark,
Nor in an hermitage set Dr Clarke.
Behold Villario's ten years' toil complete;
His quincunx darkens, his espaliers meet;
The wood supports the plain, the parts unite,
And strength of shade contends with strength of light;
A waving glow the bloomy beds display,
Blushing in bright diversities of day,
With silver-quivering rills meander'd o'er –
Enjoy them, you! Villario can no more:
Tired of the scene parterres and fountains yield,

He finds at last he better likes a field.
Through his young woods how pleased Sabinus stray'd,
Or sate delighted in the thickening shade,
With annual joy the reddening shoots to greet,
Or see the stretching branches long to meet!
His son's fine taste an opener vista loves,
Foe to the Dryads of his father's groves;
One boundless green, or flourish'd carpet views,
With all the mournful family of yews:
The thriving plants, ignoble broomsticks made,
Now sweep those alleys they were born to shade.
At Timon's villa let us pass a day,
Where all cry out, 'What sums are thrown away!'
So proud, so grand: of that stupendous air,
Soft and agreeable come never there.
Greatness, with Timon, dwells in such a draught
As brings all Brobdignag before your thought.
To compass this, his building is a town,
His pond an ocean, his parterre a down:
Who but must laugh, the master when he sees,
A puny insect, shivering at a breeze!
Lo, what huge heaps of littleness around!
The whole, a labour'd quarry above ground,
Two cupids squirt before: a lake behind
Improves the keenness of the northern wind.
His gardens next your admiration call,
On every side you look, behold the wall!
No pleasing intricacies intervene,
No artful wildness to perplex the scene:
Grove nods at grove, each alley has a brother,
And half the platform just reflects the other.
The suffering eye inverted Nature sees,
Trees cut to statues, statues thick as trees;
With here a fountain, never to be play'd;
And there a summer-house, that knows no shade:
Here Amphitrite sails through myrtle bowers;
There gladiators fight, or die in flowers;
Unwater'd see the drooping sea-horse mourn,
And swallows roost in Nilus' dusty urn.

My Lord advances with majestic mien,
Smit with the mighty pleasure to be seen:
But soft – by regular approach – not yet –
First through the length of yon hot terrace sweat;
And when up ten steep slopes you've dragg'd your thighs,
Just at his study-door he'll bless your eyes.
His study! with what authors is it stored?
In books, not authors, curious is my Lord;
To all their dated backs he turns you round;
These Aldus printed, those Du Sueïl has bound.
Lo, some are vellum, and the rest as good
For all his Lordship knows, but they are wood.
For Locke or Milton 'tis in vain to look,
These shelves admit not any modern book.
And now the chapel's silver bell you hear,
That summons you to all the pride of prayer:
Light quirks of music, broken and uneven,
Make the soul dance upon a jig to Heaven.
On painted ceilings you devoutly stare,
Where sprawl the saints of Verrio or Laguerre,
Or gilded clouds in fair expansion lie,
And bring all Paradise before your eye.
To rest, the cushion and soft dean invite,
Who never mentions Hell to ears polite.

But hark! the chiming clocks to dinner call;
A hundred footsteps scrape the marble hall:
The rich buffet well-coloured serpents grace,
And gaping Tritons spew to wash your face.
Is this a dinner? this a genial room?
No, 'tis a temple, and a hecatomb.
A solemn sacrifice, perform'd in state,
You drink by measure, and to minutes eat.
So quick retires each flying course, you'd swear
Sancho's dread doctor and his wand were there.
Between each act the trembling salvers ring,
From soup to sweet-wine, and God bless the king.
In plenty starving, tantalised in state,
And complaisantly help'd to all I hate,
Treated, caress'd, and tired, I take my leave,

Sick of his civil pride from morn to eve;
I curse such lavish cost, and little skill,
And swear no day was ever pass'd so ill.
Yet hence the poor are clothed, the hungry fed;
Health to himself, and to his infants bread,
The labourer bears: what his hard heart denies,
His charitable vanity supplies.
Another age shall see the golden ear
Imbrown the slope, and nod on the parterre,
Deep harvest bury all his pride has plann'd,
And laughing Ceres reassume the land.
Who then shall grace, or who improve the soil? –
Who plants like Bathurst, or who builds like Boyle.
'Tis use alone that sanctifies expense,
And splendour borrows all her rays from sense.
His father's acres who enjoys in peace,
Or makes his neighbours glad, if he increase:
Whose cheerful tenants bless their yearly toil,
Yet to their lord owe more than to the soil;
Whose ample lawns are not ashamed to feed
The milky heifer and deserving steed;
Whose rising forests, not for pride or show,
But future buildings, future navies grow:
Let his plantations stretch from down to down,
First shade a country, and then raise a town.
You too proceed! make falling arts your care,
Erect new wonders, and the old repair;
Jones and Palladio to themselves restore,
And be whate'er Vitruvius was before:
'Till kings call forth the ideas of your mind
(Proud to accomplish what such hands design'd),
Bid harbours open, public ways extend,
Bid temples, worthier of the god, ascend;
Bid the broad arch the dangerous flood contain,
The mole projected break the roaring main;
Back to his bounds their subject sea command,
And roll obedient rivers through the land;
These honours Peace to happy Britain brings,
These are imperial works, and worthy kings.

Notes to Alexander Pope. *'To Richard Boyle, Earl of Burlington'*

Topham – a gentleman famous for his collection of drawings

8th Earl of Pembroke – a collector of statues and medals

Hearne – an antiquary and editor of valuable early English chronicles

Mead – a doctor who had a library of 10,000 volumes, plus medals and paintings

Sloane – a physician who had the largest collection of natural curiosities in Europe

Virro, Sir Visto – rich but misguided men

Ripley – a carpenter and architect of Sir Robert Walpole's country residence Houghton. He owed his success to marrying a servant of Walpole's.

Bubo – probably Bubb Dodington, Lord Melcombe, the builder of Eastbury

'You show us Rome was glorious…' – Burlington had just published *The Designs of Inigo Jones* and *The Antiquities of Rome* by Palladio

'Imitating fools' – For Burlington Palladianism meant a return to the architecture of antiquity and he avoided Palladio's Neo-classical and Mannerist features which his less discerning imitators did not know to avoid. Burlington's emphasis was on the rigorous following of the classical standards.

Jones – Inigo Jones

Le Nôtre – the French landscape gardener whose formal baroque gardens at Versailles had a tremendous influence on garden designs all over Europe

Stowe – one of the most influential gardens in English landscape garden history. From 1715 to 1749 **Viscount Cobham**, one of the Duke of Marlborough's generals, continuously improved his estate, calling in leading designers of the day to lay out his gardens, and commissioning several leading architects – Vanburgh, Gibbs, Kent and Leoni – to decorate them with garden temples. From 1750 to 1779 **Earl Temple**, his nephew and successor continued to expand and embellish both garden and house. The house is now a major public school. Around the mansion is one of Britain's most magnificen landscape gardens, now in the ownership of the National Trust, covering 325 acres and containing no fewer than 6 lakes and 32 garden temples. During the 1730s William Kent laid out the Elysian Fields at Stowe, one of the first 'natural' landscapes and inititated the style known as **'the English garden'**. **'Capability' Brown** worked here for 10 years as head gardener.

'Or cut wide views…' – Benjamin Styles did so at enormous expense, by cutting down his wood he opened his house to the north wind

Dr Clarke – a well-known philosopher then whose bust was put in a hermitage (a kind of garden temple) by Queen Anne while the man was still alive

Villario – 'Capability' Brown

'he better likes a field' – Brown in later life preferred to lay out wide expanses of grass instead of formal parterres

Sabinus – a brother of emperor Vespasian, a man of distinguished and unspoilt character. Here a wise patriarch?

Dryads – tree nymphs

Timon – a magnate who epitomises all that is wrong in the use of riches

Brobdignag – a fabulous country of giants in Swift's *Gulliver's Travels*

'Trees cut to statues...' – topiary

Amphitrite – wife of Poseidon, goddess of the sea

Nilus – River Nile

Aldus, Du Sueïl – early printers of now rare books

Locke – an English philosopher

Verrio, Laguerre – Italian illusionist baroque painters who had extensive commissions in England (see 'The Baroque' handout)

Tritons – Poseidon's sons, half men half fish

hecatomb – a public sacrifice of 100 oxen in ancient Greece

Ceres – Roman goddess of agriculture

Bathurst – the Earl of Bathurst's vast landscape garden at Cirencester, laid out with Pope's help, produced a valuable crop of timber

Vitruvius – the only Roman architect whose writings have survived and thus his 10-volume *De Architectura* serves as the only authoritatvie source of Roman building principles

NEOCLASSICISM

The Battle of the Books

There was a very famous and very long-drawn-out dispute in the C17 and C18 which agitated not only the world of literature but the worlds of science, religion, philosophy, the fine arts, and even classical scholarship. It was never decided; it involved a number of comparatively trivial personal enmities, temporary feuds; the issues were not always clearly stated on either side; and there was far too much emotion involved, so that the entire dispute became a subject for laughter, and is now remembered under the satiric title of the Battle of the Books. It started in Italy but the real fighting took place in France and an interesting but secondary struggle went on in England. Other European countries remained spectators. It concerned literature and criticism but the main problem addressed was really the relationship between tradition and modernity, between originality and authority.

The chief issues were the following:

Ought modern writers to admire and imitate the great Greek and Latin writers of antiquity? or have the classical standards of taste now been excelled and superceded? Must we only follow along behind the ancients, trying to emulate them and hoping at most to equal them? or can we confidently expect to surpass them? Or more broadly, in the fine arts, in civilization generally, have we progressed beyond the Greeks and Romans? or have we gone ahead of them in some things, and fallen behind them in others? or are we inferior to them in every respect, half-taught barbarians using the arts of truly civilized men?

Since the Renaissance many admirers of classical literature, charmed by the skill, beauty and power of the best Greek and Roman writing, had assumed that it could never be really surpassed, and that modern men should be content to respect it without hope of producing anything better. After the rediscovery of Greco-Roman architecture this assumption was broadened to include other arts; and it took in law, political wisdom, science, all culture. It was now attacked by the moderns on many grounds. The most important of the arguments they used were:

1. *The ancients were pagans; we are Christians. Therefore our poetry is inspired by nobler emotions and deals with nobler subjects. Therefore it is better poetry.*

It is interesting to note that the three greatest modern poems are all blends of pagan and Christian thought, dominated by Christian ideals – Dante's *Divine Comedy*, Tasso's *The Liberation of Jerusalem* and Milton's *Paradise Lost.* In them all, the Christian religion is the essential moving factor. But in none of them could Christianity have been so well expressed without the pagan vehicle.

2. *Human knowledge is constantly advancing. We live in a later age than the Periclean Greeks and Augustan Romans: therefore we are wiser. Therefore anything we write, or make, is better than the things written and made by the ancient Greeks and Romans.*

The emotional pressure towards accepting this argument was strong in the Renaissance, when worlds which the ancients had never seen were being discovered every generation, every decade: worlds in the far west, in the antipodes, in the sky. But in the Renaissance the discovery of the great classical books was still too new to allow men to vaunt the achievement of thought and will above the other. All the discoveries were equally wonderful: the new world of unknown nations and strange animals, the new worlds revealed by science, the new world of subtle writing and glorious myths created by antiquity. In the baroque age, on the other hand, the classics were growing familiar, especially the Latin ones. Their thought had so long been

current that their majesty had become customary and their daring had been equalled. Meanwile the science of the ancients had been examined, equalled, surpassed and discarded; while the modern experimental science was asserting itself more emphatically every year.

3. *Nature does not change; therefore the works of men are as good today as they were in classical times.*
4. *As a reaction to the exaggerated admiration of the classics some modernists said that they were badly written and fundamentally illogical, either silly or vulgar, or sometimes both.*

(For an excellent survey of how the battle raged see Gilbert Highet. *The Classical Tradition. Greek and Roman Influences on Western Literature*.)

Neoclassical/Augustan style

The literature between 1660 and 1785 in Britain can be divided into three periods:
1660-1700 (death of Dryden) – neoclassical literature comes into being and its principles are being formulated;
1700-1745 (death of Pope in 1744, of Swift in 1745) – the culmination of the movement;
1745-1785 (death of Johnson in 1784, the publication of Cowper's *The Task* in 1785) – the established ideas are confronted with new ideas which contain the elements of the later Romantic movement.

The term **"Augustan"** refers to the first Roman emperor Augustus Caesar whose peaceful reign witnessed a great flowering of the arts and the writings of Virgil, Horace and Ovid. To the English eyes the events of 1660 suggested a parallel between the glories of the Augustan age and what the restoration of Charles II seemed to presage. These hopes had evaporated by 1700 but the term persisted, as did the admiration for the great Roman predecessors.

Another overwhelming influence was the contemporary literature of France (Corneille, Rapin, Boileau), its simplicity and elegance was combined with the native classical tradition stretching back to Ben Jonson.

The new style aimed at **giving pleasure to the common reader, to write about passions that everyone could recognize, in a language that everyone could understand.** The poets were to affect the readers' senses so that, by exercising their own imagination, they would cooperate with the author in **creating pictures in the mind**. Horace's dictum "ut pictura poesis" (as in painting, so in poetry) was taken to mean that poetry ought to be a visual as well as a verbal art.

The poets strove to represent **"Nature"** in a number of its aspects. The most important of them was Nature as the universal, permanent, representative in human experience. External Nature served as a source of aesthetic pleasure and was an object of scientific enquiry. When Neoclassicists "follow Nature" they usually have human nature and human experience in mind. Nature stands for the enduring, general truths that have been, are, and will be true for everyone in all times, everywhere. If human nature was held to be uniform, human beings as such were recognized as being infinitely varied, so it befell to the artist to treat the particular in the manner that would rend it representative. Nature as a collection of eternal truths had been most perfectly expressed by the ancients, so to study Nature was also to study the ancient authors of Greece and Rome. One could also perfect one's skills by imitating the superior craft of ancient writers whose method could be summed up by a set of "rules" for every genre (epic, tragedy, comedy, pastoral, satire, ode) to facilitate the

adoption of the right language and rhetorical figures when writing in a particular genre.

"Wit" likewise had many meanings. It implied the quickness and liveliness of mind, inventiveness, a readiness to perceive resemblances between things apparently unlike and so to enliven literary discourse with appropriate images, similes and metaphors. It could also mean "fancy" or "imagination" which was thought to be notably irregular, extravagant and wayward and needed restraining. The sober faculty of **"judgment"** was called upon to perform the task of taming the wilfulness of wit to achieve a sense of **"decorum"** or appropriateness. The aim of a literary work was a well-balanced and harmonious union of wit and judgment. The desire to emulate the easy elegance of ancient writers brought into being a vogue to use a special poetic language or "diction" when speaking about lofty things to set them apart from the vulgarity of everyday life. When used with discretion it could produce magnificent results but when ill used it could deteriorate into stilted mannerisms of style.

The prevailing poetic form was **the "closed" heroic couplet** – i.e. a pentametre couplet which more often than not contains within itself a complete statement and so is closed by a semicolon, period, question mark, or exclamation point. Within these two lines it was possible to attain certain rhetorical or witty effects by the use of parallelism, balance, or antithesis within the couplet as a whole or the individual line. The second line of the couplet might be made closely parallel in structure and meaning to the first, or the two could be played off against each other in antithesis; taking advantage of the fact that normally a pentametre line of English verse contains at some point a slight pause called a "caesura", one part of a line so divided can be made parallel or antithetical to the other or even to one of the two parts of the following line. Alliteration and assonance could be used to strengthen this effect. Another option was to use **the Miltonic blank verse** which was deemed especially suitable for philosophical poems, descriptive poems, meditative poems and translated epics.

(For a more detailed account see *The Norton Anthology of English Literature*)

Alexander Pope on writing well (1)

AN ESSAY ON CRITICISM

I

'Tis hard to say, if greater want of skill
Appear in writing or in judging ill;
But, of the two, less dangerous is the offence
To tire our patience, than mislead our sense.
Some few in that, but numbers err in this,
Ten censure wrong for one who writes amiss;
A fool might once himself alone expose,
Now one in verse makes many more in prose.
'Tis with our judgments as our watches, none
Go just alike, yet each believes his own.
In poets as true genius is but rare,
True taste as seldom is the critic's share,
Both must alike from Heaven derive their light,
These born to judge, as well as those to write.
Let such teach others who themselves excel,
And censure freely who have written well.
Authors are partial to their wit, 'tis true,
But are not critics to their judgment too?
Yet, if we look more closely, we shall find
Most have the seeds of judgment in their mind:
Nature affords at least a glimmering light;
The lines, though touch'd but faintly, are drawn right.
But as the slightest sketch, if justly traced,
Is by ill colouring but the more disgraced,
So by false learning is good sense defaced;
Some are bewilder'd in the maze of schools,
And some made coxcombs Nature meant but fools.
In search of wit these lose their common sense,
And then turn critics in their own defence:
Each burns alike, who can, or cannot write,
Or with a rival's, or an eunuch's spite.
All fools have still an itching to deride,
And fain would be upon the laughing side.
If Mævius scribble in Apollo's spite,
There are who judge still worse than he can write.
Some have at first for wits, then poets pass'd,
Turn'd critics next, and proved plain fools at last.
Some neither can for wits nor critics pass,
As heavy mules are neither horse nor ass.
Those half-learn'd witlings, numerous in our isle,
As half-form'd insects on the banks of Nile;
Unfinish'd things, one knows not what to call,
Their generation's so equivocal:
To tell them would a hundred tongues require,
Or one vain wit's, that might a hundred tire.
But you who seek to give and merit fame,
And justly bear a critic's noble name,
Be sure yourself and your own reach to know,
How far your genius, taste, and learning go;
Launch not beyond your depth, but be discreet,
And mark that point where sense and dulness meet.

Essay on Criticism (2)

Nature to all things fix'd the limits fit,
And wisely curb'd proud man's pretending wit.
As on the land while here the ocean gains,
In other parts it leaves wide sandy plains;
Thus in the soul while memory prevails,
The solid power of understanding fails;
Where beams of warm imagination play,
The memory's soft figures melt away.
One science only will one genius fit:
So vast is art, so narrow human wit:
Not only bounded to peculiar arts,
But oft in those confined to single parts.
Like kings we lose the conquests gain'd before,
By vain ambition still to make them more:
Each might his servile province well command,
Would all but stoop to what they understand.

First follow Nature, and your judgment frame
By her just standard, which is still the same:
Unerring Nature, still divinely bright,
One clear, unchanged, and universal light,
Life, force, and beauty, must to all impart,
At once the source, and end, and test of Art.
Art from that fund each just supply provides,
Works without show, and without pomp presides:
In some fair body thus th' informing soul
With spirits feeds, with vigour fills the whole,
Each motion guides, and every nerve sustains;
Itself unseen, but in th' effects remains.
Some, to whom Heaven in wit has been profuse,
Want as much more to turn it to its use;
For wit and judgment often are at strife,
Though meant each other's aid, like man and wife.
'Tis more to guide, than spur the Muse's steed;
Restrain his fury, than provoke his speed:
The winged courser, like a generous horse,
Shows most true mettle when you check his course.

Those rules of old discover'd, not devised,
Are Nature still, but Nature methodised:
Nature, like liberty, is but restrain'd
By the same laws which first herself ordain'd.

Hear how learn'd Greece her useful rules indites,
When to repress, and when indulge our flights:
High on Parnassus' top her sons she show'd,
And pointed out those arduous paths they trod;
Held from afar, aloft, the immortal prize,
And urged the rest by equal steps to rise.
Just precepts thus from great examples given,
She drew from them what they derive from Heaven.
The generous critic fann'd the poet's fire,
And taught the world with reason to admire.
Then criticism the Muse's handmaid proved,
To dress her charms, and make her more beloved:
But following wits from that intention stray'd,
Who could not win the mistress, woo'd the maid;
Against the poets their own arms they turn'd,
Sure to hate most the men from whom they learn'd.

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Essay on Criticism (3)

Know well each Ancient's proper character:
His fable, subject, scope in every page;
Religion, country, genius of his age:
Without all these at once before your eyes,
Cavil you may, but never criticise.
Be Homer's works your study and delight,
Read them by day, and meditate by night;
Thence form your judgment, thence your maxims bring,
And trace the Muses upward to their spring.
Still with itself compared, his text peruse;
And let your comment be the Mantuan Muse.
When first young Maro in his boundless mind
A work to outlast immortal Rome design'd,
Perhaps he seem'd above the critic's law,
And but from Nature's fountains scorn'd to draw:
But when to examine every part he came,
Nature and Homer were, he found, the same.
Convinced, amazed, he checks the bold design;
And rules as strict his labour'd work confine,
As if the Stagyrite o'erlook'd each line.
Learn hence for ancient rules a just esteem;
To copy Nature is to copy them.
Some beauties yet no precepts can declare,
For there's a happiness as well as care.
Music resembles poetry, in each
Are nameless graces which no methods teach,
And which a master-hand alone can reach.
If, where the rules not far enough extend,
(Since rules were made but to promote their end)
Some lucky licence answer to the full
The intent proposed, that licence is a rule.
Thus Pegasus, a nearer way to take,
May boldly deviate from the common track.
Great wits sometimes may gloriously offend,
And rise to faults true critics dare not mend;
From vulgar bounds with brave disorder part,
And snatch a grace beyond the reach of art,
Which, without passing through the judgment, gains
The heart, and all its end at once attains.
In prospects thus, some objects please our eyes,
Which out of Nature's common order rise,
The shapeless rock, or hanging precipice.
But though the ancients thus their rules invade,
(As kings dispense with laws themselves have made)
Moderns, beware! or if you must offend
Against the precept, ne'er transgress its end;
Let it be seldom, and compell'd by need;
And have, at least, their precedent to plead.
The critic else proceeds without remorse,
Seizes your fame, and puts his laws in force.
I know there are, to whose presumptuous thoughts
Those freer beauties, even in them, seem faults.
Some figures monstrous and misshaped appear,
Consider'd singly, or beheld too near,
Which, but proportion'd to their light, or place,
Due distance reconciles to form and grace.

Essay on Criticism 4

A prudent chief not always must display
His powers, in equal ranks, and fair array,
But with the occasion and the place comply,
Conceal his force, nay seem sometimes to fly.
Those oft are stratagems which errors seem,
Nor is it Homer nods, but we that dream.
  Still green with bays each ancient altar stands,
Above the reach of sacrilegious hands;
Secure from flames, from envy's fiercer rage,
Destructive war, and all-involving age.
See from each clime the learn'd their incense bring!
Hear in all tongues consenting pæans ring!
In praise so just let every voice be join'd,
And fill the general chorus of mankind.
Hail, bards triumphant! born in happier days;
Immortal heirs of universal praise!

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A little learning is a dangerous thing;
Drink deep, or taste not the Pierian spring:
There shallow draughts intoxicate the brain,
And drinking largely sobers us again.
Fired at first sight with what the Muse imparts,
In fearless youth we tempt the height of arts,
While from the bounded level of our mind,
Short views we take, nor see the lengths behind;
But more advanced, behold with strange surprise
New distant scenes of endless science rise!
So pleased at first the towering Alps we try,
Mount o'er the vales, and seem to tread the sky,
The eternal snows appear already passed,
And the first clouds and mountains seem the last:
But, those attain'd, we tremble to survey
The growing labours of the lengthen'd way,
The increasing prospect tires our wandering eyes,
Hills peep o'er hills, and Alps on Alps arise!

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  Some to Conceit alone their taste confine,
And glittering thoughts struck out at every line;
Pleased with a work where nothing's just or fit;
One glaring chaos and wild heap of wit.
Poets, like painters, thus, unskill'd to trace
The naked Nature and the living grace,
With gold and jewels cover every part,
And hide with ornaments their want of art.
True wit is Nature to advantage dress'd;
What oft was thought, but ne'er so well express'd;
Something, whose truth convinced at sight we find,
That gives us back the image of our mind.
As shades more sweetly recommend the light,
So modest plainness sets off sprightly wit.
For works may have more wit than does 'em good,
As bodies perish through excess of blood.

Others for Language all their care express,
And value books, as women men, for dress:
Their praise is still, – The style is excellent;
The sense, they humbly take upon content.
Words are like leaves; and where they most abound,
Much fruit of sense beneath is rarely found.
False eloquence, like the prismatic glass,
Its gaudy colours spreads on every place;
The face of Nature we no more survey,
All glares alike, without distinction gay:
But true expression, like th' unchanging sun,
Clears and improves whate'er it shines upon,
It gilds all objects, but it alters none.
Expression is the dress of thought, and still
Appears more decent, as more suitable;
A vile conceit in pompous words express'd
Is like a clown in regal purple dress'd:
For different styles with different subjects sort,
As several garbs, with country, town, and court.
Some by old words to fame have made pretence,
Ancients in phrase, mere moderns in their sense;
Such labour'd nothings, in so strange a style,
Amaze the unlearn'd, and make the learned smile.
Unlucky as Fungoso in the play,
These sparks with awkward vanity display
What the fine gentleman wore yesterday;
And but so mimic ancient wits at best,
As apes our grandsires, in their doublets dress'd.
In words, as fashions, the same rule will hold;
Alike fantastic, if too new, or old:
Be not the first by whom the new are tried,
Nor yet the last to lay the old aside.
But most by numbers judge a poet's song:
And smooth or rough, with them, is right or wrong:
In the bright muse, though thousand charms conspire,
Her voice is all these tuneful fools admire;
Who haunt Parnassus but to please their ear,
Not mend their minds; as some to church repair,
Not for the doctrine, but the music there.
These equal syllables alone require,
Though oft the ear the open vowels tire;
While expletives their feeble aid do join;
And ten low words oft creep in one dull line:
While they ring round the same unvaried chimes,
With sure returns of still expected rhymes;
Where'er you find 'the cooling western breeze,'
In the next line, it 'whispers through the trees':
If crystal streams 'with pleasing murmurs creep':
The reader's threaten'd (not in vain) with 'sleep.'
Then, at the last and only couplet fraught
With some unmeaning thing they call a thought,
A needless Alexandrine ends the song,
That, like a wounded snake, drags its slow length along.
Leave such to tune their own dull rhymes, and know
What's roundly smooth, or languishingly slow;
And praise the easy vigour of a line,
Where Denham's strength, and Waller's sweetness join.
True ease in writing comes from art, not chance,
As those move easiest who have learn'd to dance.

AUGUSTAN REFLECTIVE POETRY

JOHN DENHAM (1615-69)
Apart from Milton, the poet the Augustans unequivocally admired and actively imitated.
Cooper's Hill (1642-88) – established **the exact standard of good writing, a due obedience to decorum and correctness of form, imagery and vocabulary, set a pattern for the English poetry of place** which combines the celebration of place with reflections on politics, history, morals with associations national and from classical mythology.

Denham's mode was much copied. It inspired **Pope's *Windsor Forest*** (1713) and **John Dyer's *Grongar Hill*** (1726).

The presentation of an idealized rural idyll as an aid to reflection, philosophical meditation and personal introspection in the Augustan period served as a counterbalance to the urban satire. Both the urban satire and rural meditation derive their inspiration from Horace, who excelled in both and is the predominant influence of the age.

HORACE (65-8 BC) was most admired for his **temper**, which is **balanced**, **mature** and **manly** and his **grave, generalized phrasing** which flows from it. He was pre-eminently a poet of **general themes**.
His **odes**, apart from those on political subjects, treat the pleasures of friendship and of rural solitude, the transcience of human happiness, the folly of ambition etc., i.e. the themes that have formed **the common stock of reflection for the ordinary man in every age.** These themes he treats with **a remarkable delicacy of language** and **clarity of definition,** giving the casual meditation the stamp of **permanence.** What the Augustans found most valuable for their own age was his **decorum – a delicate adjustment between language, metrical emphasis, thought and feeling,** which creates **a sense of harmony** between the poet and the reader.

Horace's poetry, and that of the Horatian tradition, is not dramatic, it is essentially **reflective** – it means that the experiences which he treats are not presented for their immediate impact but for the sake of **generalized reflections which flow from a balanced presentation of different emotional states.** The remoteness in them is thus calculated. The poet merges his own individuality in the general consciousness of his readers, pointing to what he has in common with the reader and ignoring what separates them. The reader, in his turn, looks for what he already knows rather than searches for unknown realms of experience. This kind of poetry demands from both the reader and the poet an understanding of how **much personal emotion a poem can bear without disturbing the desired balance.** Both parties are here to exercise their faculty of **'judgement'**. This insistence on **proportion** allows little scope for the presentation of the unique nature of emotional experience. But while the range of sensitivity is thus limited in one way, it is extended in another – the poet's emotion has been so framed that it implies **all situations in which such an emotion might arise**. This is coupled with **a strong awareness of tradition** and the relevance of past literature to contemporary experience. The newness of the poem consists in the subtle relationship which the poet establishes between the experience of the past and that of

his own day, creating thereby a sense of **timelessness**. (See **Countess of Winchilsea's** ***A Nocturnal Réverie*** – observation for the sake of general reflection)

Augustan poetry is always aware of its **social** context. While in the 17C tradition a retreat to nature meant retirement from practical business to ideal contemplation (see **Pope's** ***Ode to Solitude*****, Winchilsea's** ***The Petition for an Absolute Retreat*** **and Hughes's** ***A Thought in a Garden,*** all inspired by Horace's 2nd Epode), in the 18C a retreat came to mean **turning from ambition to usefulness** (on the Horatian model), asking thus for the best of both worlds – to have life's pleasures and immortality. This also resolves the old conflict between Nature and Art – Nature is still the antithesis of the artfulness of the courtier (like it was in the pastoral) but she is now "Nature methodized" (Pope), "Nature taught Art", Nature which has benefited from man's civilizing hand. (See **Pomfret's** ***The Choice*** advocating the Horatian 'golden mean')

Thomas Gray's ***Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard*** (1751) represents the highest achievement of the Augustan reflective tradition. It intermixes the poetry of country retirement with self-reflective nocturnal reveries on the egalitarian nature of Death the Great Leveller (probably modelled on the 24th ode of Horace's 1st book of odes). Its influence persists until the end of the century. But from 1750 onwards there is a significant shift of emphasis – from moral and social issues to the cultivation of feeling for its own sake.

SIR JOHN DENHAM

from *Cooper's Hill*
[*The Thames*]

My eye, descending from the hill, surveys
Where Thames amongst the wanton valleys strays.
Thames, the most loved of all the Ocean's sons,
By his old sire to his embraces runs,
Hasting to pay his tribute to the sea,
Like mortal life to meet eternity;
Though with those streams he no resemblance hold,
Whose foam is amber, and their gravel gold;
His genuine, and less guilty, wealth t'explore,
Search not his bottom, but survey his shore,
O'er which he kindly spreads his spacious wing,
And hatches plenty for the ensuing spring.
Nor then destroys it with too fond a stay,
Like mothers which their infants overlay;
Nor with a sudden and impetuous wave,
Like profuse kings, resumes the wealth he gave.
No unexpected inundations spoil
The mowers' hopes, nor mock the ploughman's toil;
But godlike his unwearied bounty flows:
First loves to do, then loves the good he does.
Nor are his blessings to his banks confined,
But free and common as the sea or wind,
When he to boast or to disperse his stores,
Full of the tributes of his grateful shores,
Visits the world, and in his flying towers
Brings home to us, and makes both Indies ours;
Finds wealth where 'tis, bestows it where it wants;
Cities in deserts, woods in cities plants;
So that to us no thing, no place is strange,
While his fair bosom is the world's exchange.
Rome only conquered half the world, but trade
One commonwealth of that and her hath made,
And, though the sun his beam extends to all,
Yet to his neighbour sheds most liberal:
Lest God and nature partial should appear,
Commerce makes everything grow everywhere.
Oh could I flow like thee, and make thy stream
My great example, as it is my theme!
Though deep, yet clear, though gentle, yet not dull,
Strong without rage, without o'erflowing full.

(1642–68)

ALEXANDER POPE

from *Windsor Forest*

To the Right Honourable George Lord Lansdowne

THY forests, Windsor! and thy green retreats,
At once the Monarch's and the Muses' seats,
Invite my lays. Be present, sylvan maids!
Unlock your springs, and open all your shades.
Granville commands; your aid, O Muses, bring!
What Muse for Granville can refuse to sing?
The groves of Eden, vanished now so long,
Live in description, and look green in song:
These, were my breast inspired with equal flame,
Like them in beauty, should be like in fame.
Here hills and vales, the woodland and the plain,
Here earth and water seem to strive again;

Not chaos-like together crushed and bruised,
But, as the world, harmoniously confused:
Where order in variety we see,
And where, though all things differ, all agree.
Here waving groves a chequered scene display,
And part admit and part exclude the day;
As some coy nymph her lover's warm address
Nor quite indulges, nor can quite repress.
There, interspersed in lawns and opening glades,
Thin trees arise that shun each other's shades.
Here in full light the russet plains extend:
There, wrapped in clouds the bluish hills ascend:
Ev'n the wild heath displays her purple dyes,
And midst the desert fruitful fields arise,
That crowned with tufted trees and springing corn,
Like verdant isles the sable waste adorn.
Let India boast her plants, nor envy we
The weeping amber or the balmy tree,
While by our oaks the precious loads are borne,
And realms commanded which those trees adorn.
Not proud Olympus yields a nobler sight,
Though gods assembled grace his tow'ring height,
Than what more humble mountains offer here,
Where, in their blessings, all those gods appear.
See Pan with flocks, with fruits Pomona crowned,
Here blushing Flora paints th' enamelled ground,
Here Ceres' gifts in waving prospect stand,
And nodding tempt the joyful reaper's hand;
Rich Industry sits smiling on the plains,
And peace and plenty tell, a Stuart reigns.

(1713)

JOHN DYER

Grongar Hill

SILENT Nymph, with curious eye!
Who, the purple ev'ning, lie
On the mountain's lonely van,
Beyond the noise of busy man,
Painting fair the form of things,
While the yellow linnet sings;
Or the tuneful nightingale
Charms the forest with her tale;
Come with all thy various hues,
Come, and aid thy sister Muse;
Now while Phoebus riding high
Gives lustre to the land and sky!
Grongar Hill invites my song,
Draw the landscape bright and strong;
Grongar, in whose mossy cells
Sweetly-musing Quiet dwells;
Grongar, in whose silent shade,
For the modest Muses made,
So oft I have, the evening still,
At the fountain of a rill,
Sat upon a flow'ry bed,
With my hand beneath my head;
While strayed my eyes o'er Towy's flood,
Over mead and over wood,
From house to house, from hill to hill,
Till Contemplation had her fill.

About his chequered sides I wind,
And leave his brooks and meads behind,
And groves and grottoes where I lay,
And vistoes shooting beams of day:
Wide and wider spreads the vale,
As circles on a smooth canal.
The mountains round, unhappy fate!
Sooner or later, of all height,
Withdraw their summits from the skies,
And lessen as the others rise:
Still the prospect wider spreads,
Adds a thousand woods and meads,
Still it widens, widens still,
And sinks the newly-risen hill.
Now I gain the mountain's brow,
What a landscape lies below!
No clouds, no vapours intervene,
But the gay, the open scene
Does the face of nature show,
In all the hues of heaven's bow!
And, swelling to embrace the light,
Spreads around beneath the sight.
Old castles on the cliffs arise,
Proudly tow'ring in the skies!
Rushing from the woods, the spires
Seem from hence ascending fires!
Half his beams Apollo sheds
On the yellow mountain-heads!
Gilds the fleeces of the flocks,
And glitters on the broken rocks!

Below me trees unnumbered rise,
Beautiful in various dyes:
The gloomy pine, the poplar blue,
The yellow beech, the sable yew,
The slender fir that taper grows,
The sturdy oak with broad-spread boughs.
And beyond the purple grove,
Haunt of Phillis, queen of love!
Gaudy as the op'ning dawn,
Lies a long and level lawn,
On which a dark hill, steep and high,
Holds and charms the wand'ring eye!
Deep are his feet in Towy's flood,
His sides are clothed with waving wood,
And ancient towers crown his brow,
That cast an awful look below;

Whose ragged walls the ivy creeps,
And with her arms from falling keeps;
So both a safety from the wind
On mutual dependence find.
'Tis now the raven's bleak abode;
'Tis now th' apartment of the toad;
And there the fox securely feeds;
And there the pois'nous adder breeds,
Concealed in ruins, moss and weeds;
While, ever and anon, there falls
Huge heaps of hoary mouldered walls.
Yet time has seen, that lifts the low,
And level lays the lofty brow,
Has seen this broken pile complete,
Big with the vanity of state;
But transient is the smile of fate!
A little rule, a little sway,
A sunbeam in a winter's day,
Is all the proud and mighty have
Between the cradle and the grave.
And see the rivers how they run,
Through woods and meads, in shade and sun;
Sometimes swift, sometimes slow,
Wave succeeding wave, they go
A various journey to the deep,
Like human life to endless sleep!
Thus is nature's vesture wrought
To instruct our wand'ring thought;
Thus she dresses green and gay,
To disperse our cares away.
Ever charming, ever new,
When will the landscape tire the view!
The fountain's fall, the river's flow,
The woody valleys, warm and low;
The windy summit, wild and high,
Roughly rushing on the sky!
The pleasant seat, the ruined tow'r,
The naked rock, the shady bow'r;
The town and village, dome and farm,
Each give each a double charm,
As pearls upon an Ethiop's arm.
See on the mountain's southern side,
Where the prospect opens wide,
Where the evening gilds the tide;
How close and small the hedges lie!
What streaks of meadows cross the eye!

Dyer's 'Grongar Hill' (cont.)

A step methinks may pass the stream,
So little distant dangers seem;
So we mistake the future's face,
Eyed through hope's deluding glass;
As yon summits soft and fair,
Clad in colours of the air,
Which to those who journey near,
Barren, brown and rough appear;
Still we tread the same coarse way,
The present's still a cloudy day.
O may I with myself agree,
And never covet what I see:
Content me with an humble shade,
My passions tamed, my wishes laid;
For while our wishes wildly roll,
We banish quiet from the soul:
'Tis thus the busy beat the air,
And misers gather wealth and care.
Now, ev'n now, my joys run high,
As on the mountain-turf I lie;
While the wanton Zephyr sings,
And in the vale perfumes his wings;
While the waters murmur deep;
While the shepherd charms his sheep;
While the birds unbounded fly,
And with music fill the sky,
Now, ev'n now, my joys run high.
Be full, ye courts, be great who will;
Search for Peace with all your skill:
Open wide the lofty door,
Seek her on the marble floor,
In vain you search, she is not there;
In vain ye search the domes of care!
Grass and flowers Quiet treads,
On the meads and mountain-heads,
Along with Pleasure, close allied,
Ever by each other's side:
And often, by the murm'ring rill,
Hears the thrush, while all is still,
Within the groves of Grongar Hill.

(1726)

ALEXANDER POPE
1688–1744

Ode on Solitude

HAPPY the man whose wish and care
A few paternal acres bound,
Content to breathe his native air,
In his own ground.

Whose herds with milk, whose fields with bread,
Whose flocks supply him with attire,
Whose trees in summer yield him shade,
In winter fire.

Blest! who can unconcernedly find
Hours, days, and years slide soft away,
In health of body, peace of mind,
Quiet by day,

Sound sleep by night; study and ease
Together mixed; sweet recreation
And innocence, which most does please,
With meditation.

Thus let me live, unseen, unknown;
Thus unlamented let me die;
Steal from the world, and not a stone
Tell where I lie.

(1717)

A Thought in a Garden

WRITTEN IN THE YEAR 1704

Delightful mansion! blest retreat!
Where all is silent, all is sweet!
Here Contemplation prunes her wings,
The raptured Muse more tuneful sings,
While May leads on the cheerful hours,
And opens a new world of flowers.
Gay Pleasure here all dresses wears,
And in a thousand shapes appears.
Pursued by Fancy, how she roves
Through airy walks, and museful groves;
Springs in each plant and blossomed tree,

And charms in all I hear and see!
In this elysium while I stray,
And Nature's fairest face survey,
Earth seems new-born, and life more bright;
Time steals away, and smooths his flight;
And Thought's bewildered in delight.
Where are the crowds I saw of late?
What are those tales of Europe's fate?
Of Anjou, and the Spanish crown;
And leagues to pull usurpers down?
Of marching armies, distant wars;
Of factions, and domestic jars?
Sure these are last night's dreams, no more;
Or some romance, read lately o'er;
Like Homer's antique tale of Troy,
And powers confederate to destroy
Priam's proud house, the Dardan name,
With him that stole the ravished dame,
And, to possess another's right,
Durst the whole world to arms excite.
Come, gentle Sleep, my eyelids close,
These dull impressions help me lose:
Let Fancy take her wing, and find
Some better dreams to soothe my mind;
Or waking let me learn to live;
The prospect will instruction give.
For see, where beauteous Thames does glide
Serene, but with a fruitful tide;
Free from extremes of ebb and flow,
Not swelled too high, nor sunk too low:
Such let my life's smooth current be,
Till from Time's narrow shore set free,
It mingle with th'eternal sea;
And, there enlarged, shall be no more
That trifling thing it was before.

ANNE FINCH, COUNTESS OF WINCHILSEA
1661–1720

from *The Petition for an Absolute Retreat: Inscribed to the Right Honourable Catharine Countess of Thanet, Mentioned in the Poem under the Name of Arminda*

GIVE me, O indulgent fate,
Give me yet, before I die,
A sweet, but absolute retreat,
Mongst paths so lost and trees so high
That the world may ne'er invade,
Through such windings and such shade,
My unshaken liberty.
No intruders thither come!
Who visit but to be from home;
None who their vain moments pass,
Only studious of their glass:
News, that charm to listening ears;

That common theme for every fop,
From the statesman to the shop,
In those coverts ne'er be spread,
Of who's deceased or who's to wed;
Be no tidings thither brought,
But silent as a midnight thought,
Where the world may ne'er invade,
Be those windings, and that shade.
Courteous fate! afford me there
A table spread without my care,
With what the neighbouring fields impart,
Whose cleanliness be all its art:
When of old the calf was dressed
(Though to make an angel's feast)
In the plain, unstudied sauce
Nor truffle, nor morillia was;
Nor could the mighty patriarch's board
One far-fetched ortolan afford.
Courteous fate, then give me there
Only plain, and wholesome fare.
Fruits, indeed (would heaven bestow),
All that did in Eden grow,
All but the forbidden tree,
Would be coveted by me:
Grapes, with juice so crowded up,
As breaking through the native cup;
Figs, yet growing, candied o'er
By the sun's attracting power;
Cherries, with the downy peach,
All within my easy reach;
Whilst creeping near the humble ground
Should the strawberry be found
Springing wheresoe'er I strayed,
Through those windings and that shade.

morillia] morels patriarch's] Abraham's (Gen. 18: 7)

JOHN HUGHES

ANNE FINCH, COUNTESS OF WINCHILSEA

1661–1720

A Nocturnal Reverie

In such a night, when every louder wind
Is to its distant cavern safe confined;
And only gentle Zephyr fans his wings,
And lonely Philomel, still waking, sings;
Or from some tree, famed for the owl's delight,

She, hollowing clear, directs the wand'rer right;
In such a night, when passing clouds give place,
Or thinly veil the heaven's mysterious face;
When in some river overhung with green,
The waving moon and trembling leaves are seen;
When freshened grass now bears itself upright,
And makes cool banks to pleasing rest invite,
Whence springs the woodbind and the bramble-rose,
And where the sleepy cowslip sheltered grows;
Whilst now a paler hue the foxglove takes,
Yet chequers still with red the dusky brakes;
When scattered glow-worms, but in twilight fine,
Show trivial beauties, watch their hour to shine;
Whilst Salisb'ry stands the test of every light,
In perfect charms and perfect virtue bright;
When odours, which declined repelling day,
Through temp'rate air uninterrupted stray;
When darkened groves their softest shadows wear,
And falling waters we distinctly hear;
When through the gloom more venerable shows
Some ancient fabric, awful in repose,
While sunburnt hills their swarthy looks conceal,
And swelling haycocks thicken up the vale;
When the loosed horse now, as his pasture leads,
Comes slowly grazing through th' adjoining meads,
Whose stealing pace and lengthened shade we fear,
Till torn-up forage in his teeth we hear;
When nibbling sheep at large pursue their food,
And unmolested kine rechew the cud;
When curlews cry beneath the village walls,
And to her straggling brood the partridge calls;
Their short-lived jubilee the creatures keep,
Which but endures whilst tyrant man does sleep;
When a sedate content the spirit feels,
And no fierce light disturbs, whilst it reveals,
But silent musings urge the mind to seek
Something too high for syllables to speak;
Till the free soul to a compos'dness charmed,
Finding the elements of rage disarmed,
O'er all below a solemn quiet grown,
Joys in th' inferior world and thinks it like her own:
In such a night let me abroad remain,
Till morning breaks, and all's confused again:
Our cares, our toils, our clamours are renewed,
Or pleasures, seldom reached, again pursued.

(1713)

JOHN POMFRET

1667–1702

The Choice

If heav'n the grateful liberty would give,
That I might choose my method how to live,
And all those hours propitious Fate should lend
In blissful ease and satisfaction spend:
  Near some fair town I'd have a private seat,
Built uniform, not little, nor too great:
Better, if on a rising ground it stood,
Fields on this side, on that a neighbouring wood.
It should within no other things contain
But what were useful, necessary, plain:
Methinks 'tis nauseous, and I'd ne'er endure
The needless pomp of gaudy furniture.
A little garden, grateful to the eye,
And a cool rivulet run murm'ring by,
On whose delicious banks a stately row
Of shady limes or sycamores should grow;
At th' end of which a silent study placed
Should be with all the noblest authors graced:
Horace and Virgil, in whose mighty lines
Immortal wit and solid learning shines;
Sharp Juvenal, and am'rous Ovid too,
Who all the turns of love's soft passion knew;
He that with judgement reads his charming lines,
In which strong art with stronger nature joins,
Must grant his fancy does the best excel,
His thoughts so tender, and expressed so well;
With all those moderns, men of steady sense,
Esteemed for learning and for eloquence.
In some of these, as fancy should advise,
I'd always take my morning exercise:
For sure no minutes bring us more content
Than those in pleasing, useful studies spent.
  I'd have a clear and competent estate,
That I might live genteelly, but not great:
As much as I could moderately spend;
A little more, sometimes t' oblige a friend.
Nor should the sons of poverty repine
Too much at fortune, they should taste of mine;
And all that objects of true pity were
Should be relieved with what my wants could spare:
For what our Maker has too largely giv'n
Should be returned in gratitude to heav'n.
A frugal plenty should my table spread,
With healthy, not luxurious, dishes fed:
Enough to satisfy, and something more
To feed the stranger, and the neighb'ring poor.

Pomfret's 'The Choice' (cont.)

Strong meat indulges vice, and pampering food
Creates diseases, and inflames the blood.
But what's sufficient to make nature strong,
And the bright lamp of life continue long,
I'd freely take; and, as I did possess,
The bounteous Author of my plenty bless.
  I'd have a little vault, but always stored
With the best wines each vintage could afford.
Wine whets the wit, improves its native force,
And gives a pleasant flavour to discourse;
By making all our spirits debonair,
Throws off the lees, the sediment of care.
But as the greatest blessing heaven lends
May be debauched, and serve ignoble ends;
So, but too oft, the grape's refreshing juice
Does many mischievous effects produce.
My house should no such rude disorders know,
As from high drinking consequently flow.
Nor would I use what was so kindly giv'n
To the dishonour of indulgent heav'n.
If any neighbour came, he should be free,
Used with respect, and not uneasy be
In my retreat, or to himself or me.
What freedom, prudence, and right reason give,
All men may with impunity receive:
But the least swerving from their rule's too much;
For what's forbidden us, 'tis death to touch.
  That life may be more comfortable yet,
And all my joys refined, sincere, and great,
I'd choose two friends, whose company would be
A great advance to my felicity:
Well-born, of humours suited to my own,
Discreet, and men as well as books have known;
Brave, gen'rous, witty, and exactly free
From loose behaviour, or formality;
Airy and prudent, merry, but not light,
Quick in discerning, and in judging right.
Secret they should be, faithful to their trust;
In reas'ning cool, strong, temperate, and just;
Obliging, open, without huffing brave,
Brisk in gay talking, and in sober, grave;
Close in dispute, but not tenacious; tried
By solid reason, and let that decide;
Not prone to lust, revenge, or envious hate,
Nor busy meddlers with intrigues of state;
Strangers to slander, and sworn foes to spite,
Not quarrelsome, but stout enough to fight;
Loyal, and pious, friends to Caesar; true,
As dying martyrs, to their Maker too.
In their society I could not miss
A permanent, sincere, substantial bliss.

Pomfret's "The Choice" (cont. 2)

Would bounteous heav'n once more indulge, I'd choose
(For who would so much satisfaction lose,
As witty nymphs, in conversation, give?)
Near some obliging, modest fair to live;
For there's that sweetness in a female mind,
Which in a man's we cannot hope to find;
That, by a secret but a pow'rful art,
Winds up the springs of life, and does impart
Fresh vital heat to the transported heart.
I'd have her reason all her passions sway:
Easy in company, in private gay;
Coy to a fop, to the deserving free,
Still constant to herself, and just to me.
A soul she should have for great actions fit;
Prudence and wisdom to direct her wit;
Courage to look bold danger in the face,
No fear, but only to be proud, or base;
Quick to advise, by an emergence pressed,
To give good counsel, or to take the best.
I'd have th' expression of her thoughts be such,
She might not seem reserved, nor talk too much:
That shows a want of judgement, and of sense;
More than enough is but impertinence.
Her conduct regular, her mirth refined,
Civil to strangers, to her neighbours kind;
Averse to vanity, revenge, and pride,
In all the methods of deceit untried;
So faithful to her friend, and good to all,
No censure might upon her actions fall:
Then would e'en envy be compelled to say,
She goes the least of womankind astray.
To this fair creature I'd sometimes retire;
Her conversation would new joys inspire,
Give life an edge so keen, no surly care
Would venture to assault my soul, or dare
Near my retreat to hide one secret snare.
But so divine, so noble a repast
I'd seldom, and with moderation, taste.
For highest cordials all their virtue lose
By a too frequent and too bold an use;
And what would cheer the spirits in distress,
Ruins our health when taken to excess.
I'd be concerned in no litigious jar;
Beloved by all, not vainly popular.
Whate'er assistance I had power to bring
T' oblige my country, or to serve my king,
Whene'er they called, I'd readily afford,
My tongue, my pen, my counsel, or my sword.
Law-suits I'd shun, with as much studious care,
As I would dens where hungry lions are;
And rather put up injuries than be
A plague to him, who'd be a plague to me.
I value quiet at a price too great
To give for my revenge so dear a rate:
For what do we by all our bustle gain,
But counterfeit delight for real pain?
If heav'n a date of many years would give,
Thus I'd in pleasure, ease, and plenty live.
And as I near approached the verge of life,
Some kind relation (for I'd have no wife)
Should take upon him all my worldly care,
While I did for a better state prepare.
Then I'd not be with any trouble vexed,
Nor have the ev'ning of my days perplexed;
But by a silent and a peaceful death,
Without a sigh, resign my aged breath:
And when committed to the dust, I'd have
Few tears, but friendly, dropped into my grave.
Then would my exit so propitious be,
All men would wish to live and die like me.

(1700)

AUGUSTAN SATIRE

Satire was the only literary form invented by the Romans and the Romans gave the genre its modern sense and purpose.

In **Latin** there were two main groups of satirists:

1) the **satiric poets** who specialized in **the invective against clearly identifiable or thinly disguised personalities**. The inventor of this type of poetry was **Lucilius** (150-102 BC) whose works have not survived. His follower was **Horace** (65-8 BC) who began his career writing sour social criticism and, gradually mellowing, turned to philosophical and aesthetic questions; towards midlife he gave up satires for gentler epistles. After him came **Persius** (AD 34-62), an admirer of stoicism, who wrote remarkably realistic satires in a vivid and strange slangy style. The last and greatest of Roman satirists was **Juvenal** (Juvenalis) (c. AD 55-130) who produced the most bitter and eloquent social satires ever written. His best-known and most often imitated satires are Satire 3 (on the horrors of metropolitan life), Satire 6 (a vicious attack on women) and Satire 10 (a sombre meditation on the vanity of human hopes).
2) **Menippean satirists**, writing in **prose**, with short interludes of verse, often parodic. This style was invented by the Greek (or rather Syrian) Cynic philosopher **Menippus of Gadara** (3rd century BC) who used it to make fun of his political opponents. Cicero's friend **Varro** introduced the style in Latin literature, but his work is now lost.

In the Roman satire there are traces of certain **Greek influences**:

a) the **desire to improve society and purge its abuses by attacking notorious fools and villains** derives from **Athenian Old Comedy** whose only surviving representative is **Aristophanes**. Since the Romans had no equivalent to this kind of comedy, they used satire for the same purpose.
b) **Greek street-preachers**, usually Cynics and Sceptics, who gave ostensibly improvised sermons (called '**diatribes**') on themes drawn from their own doctrines – usually on paradoxes which would attract a crowd, and they would illustrate them using anecdotes, character-sketches, fables, dialogues against imaginary opponents, topical references, parodies of serious poetry, obscene jokes and slang phrases. However, the moral seriousness, the direct violence and the cruelty of satire are rather more Roman than Greek.
c) the prose of **Lucian** (Lukianos) (2nd century AD), who contributed a tone of **amused disillusionment**, displaying a kinder and more gentle temperament than is usual in Roman satirists. (His fabulous travel-tales served as models for Swift's *Gulliver's Travels.*)

Satire based on the Roman model is a continuous piece of verse, or of prose mingled with verse, of considerable size, with great variety of style and subject, but generally characterized by the free use of conversational language, the frequent intrusion of its author's personality, its predilection for wit, humour, and irony, great vividness and concreteness of description, shocking obscenity in theme and language, an improvisatory tone, topical subjects, and the general intention of improving society

by exposing its vices and follies. Its essence is summed up in words *ridentem dicere uerum* = joking in earnest.

Most modern satirical prose owes little directly to any classical satirist except Lucian. Indirectly the writers, though, gained additional force and variety of expression from the study of Greco-Roman satire in general, being stimulated by their immense moral energy, and encouraged to emulate their ironic amusement, their vigorous brevity and their surgical economy of effort.

Most modern verse satire, on the other hand, was directly inspired by the form, or the matter, or both the form and the matter, of the Roman verse-satirists.

Mock heroic episodes do occur in Roman satire, but they are only a few dozen lines long, with the exception of Juvenal's description of an imperial council held by Domitian on a ridiculously trivial subject, related in grandiose terms appropriate to Homeric or Virgilian heroes. But there is no mock epic on the scale of **DRYDEN's** (***Absalom and Achitophel, The Medal, MacFlecknoe***) in classical literature (Dryden claimed to have been influenced by Tassoni's *Ravished Bucket* and Boileau's mock heroic poem on an ecclesiastical dispute *The Lectern*). Juvenal had provided some character sketches, but none so independent and full as those in Dryden's satires. His satires are **good-tempered**, but capable at times of **devastating scorn**. He has a **genius for verse rhythm** and **an exceptional expressiveness of language**.
He is surpassed in range of interest amd vitality of expression by

POPE who is the greater poet in virtue not only of immediate accessbility but of his **crystallization of the Augustan world** in a style not less animatedly vernacular but more subtle in its complex of sense-and-feeling. He produced the prettiest of all mock heroic satires, and one of the earliest rococo poems, **in *The Rape of the Lock***. His best satires are his ***Moral Essays***, the ***Epistle to Augustus***, ***The Epilogue to the Satires***, parts of ***The Dunciad*** and, best of all, the ***Epistle to Dr Arbuthnot***. One obstacle to the modern reader is Pope's dependence on contemporary references which necessitates elaborate lists of explanatory notes. His greatness lies in his **deeply responsible concern for taste, intelligence and humanity, expressed with an artistic intensity and personal passion which fuse into vividness, and often into beauty, the raw material of contemporary life.** He shares with the finest writers of the time **an original force, a power and a daring of conception, a genius of expression and an exceptional richness of feeling.**

The term "**imitation**" was first given currency by Dryden when he distinguished among three kinds of translation: metaphrase, or word-by-word literal translation; paraphrase, or a translation that retains the meaning of the original but does so by departing from strict literalness; and finally imitation which departs freely from the original text to create a new poem in its spirit using the experience of the new age to take the place of earlier material. (**SWIFT's *A Description of a City Shower*** (an imitation of Virgil's *Georgics*, **JOHNSON's *London*** (an imitation of the 3rd Satire of Juvenal), ***The Vanity of Human Wishes*** (an imitation of the 10th Satire to Juvenal)

A Description of a City Shower

CAREFUL observers may foretell the hour
(By sure prognostics) when to dread a show'r:
While rain depends, the pensive cat gives o'er
Her frolics, and pursues her tail no more.
Returning home at night, you'll find the sink
Strike your offended sense with double stink.
If you be wise, then go not far to dine,
You spend in coach-hire more than save in wine.
A coming show'r your shooting corns presage,
Old aches throb, your hollow tooth will rage.
Saunt'ring in coffee-house is Dulman seen;
He damns the climate, and complains of spleen.

Meanwhile the South, rising with dabbled wings,
A sable cloud athwart the welkin flings,
That swilled more liquor than it could contain,
And like a drunkard gives it up again.
Brisk Susan whips her linen from the rope,
While the first drizzling show'r is borne aslope;
Such is that sprinkling which some careless quean
Flirts on you from her mop, but not so clean.
You fly, invoke the gods; then turning, stop
To rail; she singing, still whirls on her mop.
Not yet the dust had shunned th' unequal strife,
But aided by the wind, fought still for life;
And wafted with its foe by violent gust,
'Twas doubtful which was rain, and which was dust.
Ah! where must needy poet seek for aid,
When dust and rain at once his coat invade?
Sole coat, where dust cemented by the rain
Erects the nap, and leaves a cloudy stain.

Now in contiguous drops the flood comes down,
Threat'ning with deluge this devoted town.
To shops in crowds the daggled females fly,
Pretend to cheapen goods, but nothing buy.
The Templar spruce, while ev'ry spout's a-broach,
Stays till 'tis fair, yet seems to call a coach.
The tucked-up sempstress walks with hasty strides,
While streams run down her oiled umbrella's sides.
Here various kinds, by various fortunes led,
Commence acquaintance underneath a shed.
Triumphant Tories and desponding Whigs
Forget their feuds, and join to save their wigs.

Boxed in a chair the beau impatient sits,
While spouts run clatt'ring o'er the roof by fits;
And ever and anon with frightful din
The leather sounds, he trembles from within.
So when Troy chair-men bore the wooden steed,
Pregnant with Greeks impatient to be freed
(Those bully Greeks, who, as the moderns do,
Instead of paying chair-men, run them through),
Laocoön struck the outside with his spear,
And each imprisoned hero quaked for fear.

Now from all parts the swelling kennels flow,
And bear their trophies with them as they go:
Filth of all hues and odours seem to tell
What streets they sailed from, by the sight and smell.
They, as each torrent drives, with rapid force
From Smithfield or St. Pulchre's shape their course,
And in huge confluent join at Snow Hill ridge,
Fall from the Conduit prone to Holborn Bridge.
Sweepings from butchers' stalls, dung, guts, and blood,
Drowned puppies, stinking sprats, all drenched in mud,
Dead cats and turnip-tops come tumbling down the flood.

depends impends
sink sewer
aches pronounced "aitches"
spleen melancholy, "vapours"

South south wind
dabbled splashed, soiled with mud
athwart the welkin across the sky (deliberate use of archaic-pastoral diction.)
quean wench
contiguous drops a deliberate latinate elevation of diction
devoted doomed (again heroic diction)
daggled mud-splashed

cheapen bargain for
templar law student
abroach gushing
chair closed sedan chair
leather the roof of the chair
Laocoon who questioned the value of the Trojan Horse and tested it (*Aeneid* II)

Smithfield the cattle market
St. Pulchre's the church of St. Sepulchre on Snow Hill
sprats small fish
Dead cats . . . flood The last three lines are Swift's parody of the triplet (which Dryden and others favored, especially in poetry of a high style) and the last line a parody of the extended (twelve-syllable) Alexandrine, with which the triplet often concluded.

SAMUEL JOHNSON

From London: A Poem

In Imitation of the Third Satire of Juvenal°

Prepare for death, if here at night you roam,
And sign your will before you sup from home.
Some fiery fop, with new commission vain,
Who sleeps on brambles till he kills his man;
Some frolic drunkard, reeling from a feast,
Provokes a broil, and stabs you for a jest.
Yet even these heroes, mischievously gay,
Lords of the street, and terrors of the way;
Flushed as they are with folly, youth, and wine,
Their prudent insults to the poor confine;
Afar they mark the flambeau's bright approach,
And shun the shining train, and golden coach:

In vain, these dangers past, your doors you close,
And hope the balmy blessings of repose:
Cruel with guilt, and daring with despair,
The midnight murderer bursts the faithless bar;
Invades the sacred hour of silent rest,
And leaves, unseen, a dagger in your breast.

Scarce can our fields, such crowds at Tyburn die,
With hemp° the gallows and the fleet supply.
Propose your schemes, ye Senatorian band,
Whose Ways and Means support the sinking land;
Lest ropes be wanting in the tempting spring,
To rig another convoy for the k—g.

A single jail, in ALFRED'S golden reign,
Could half the nation's criminals contain;
Fair Justice then, without constraint adored,
Held high the steady scale, but deeped° the sword;
No spies were paid, no special juries known,
Blest age! but ah! how different from our own!

. . .

1738

Imitation . . . Juvenal For the meaning of "imitation" see the Headnote on Pope, Imitations of Horace. This passage in Johnson's version corresponds to the closer translation by Dryden; Johnson adapts Juvenal's satire more fully to a London setting.
hemp the material for the hangman's rope (used in the gallows at Tyburn) or for the ship's ropes necessary for the frequent journeys of George II to Hanover and his mistress there (ll. 246–47), an expense supported by the House of Commons, whose "Ways and Means" are methods of raising money
deeped turned down

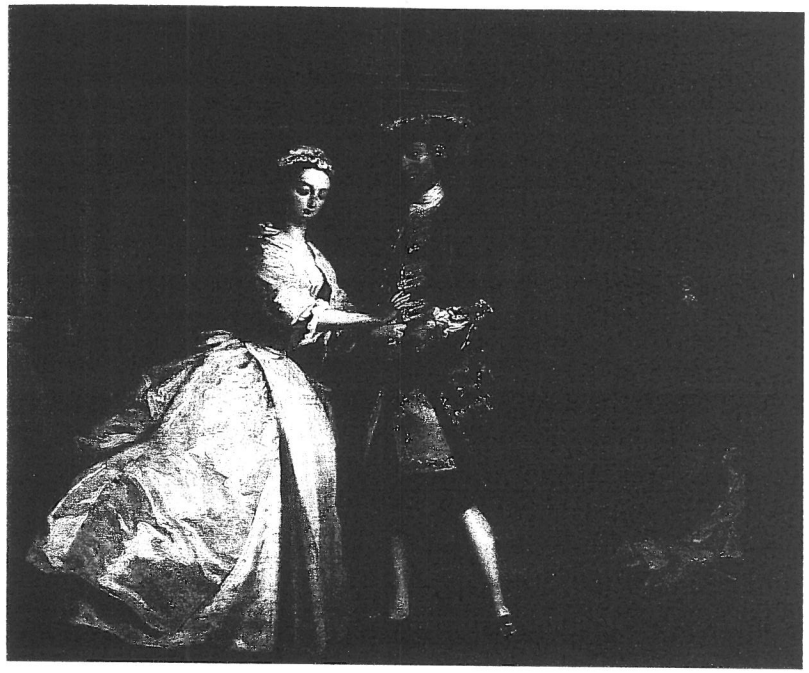
Chapter Twenty-Five

BABYLON

In *A Tour of the Whole Island of Britain* (1724-26) Daniel Defoe expresses his astonishment at the rapid expansion of what was to be the cultural mecca of the Augustan age, London: 'New squares, and new streets rising up every day to such a prodigy of buildings that nothing in the world does, or ever did equal it, except old Rome in Trajan's time.' The equation of the capital with the Rome of the emperors was not a new one, but it neatly pinpoints a mental association which, during an age in which the literate classes were nurtured on the Latin classics, moved naturally from the one to the other. By 1750 the population of London had reached some 675,000, 11% of the entire country, and that figure excluded those who were drawn to it from every region on account of sitting in Parliament, transacting business, or enjoying the delights of the capital's increasingly important social season.

No urban development on this scale had been seen before in Western Europe. London literally sprawled out in every direction and the approach to it, initially by way of villages and market gardens, quickly gave way to new streets and squares which were to continue to encroach across open land for the rest of the century. The main expansion was to the west and the north as the great urban landowners, like Lord Burlington, Edward Harley, 2nd Earl of Oxford, and Sir Richard Grosvenor, set in train Cavendish and Grosvenor Squares, Clifford Street and Savile Row. These, with their wide streets, pavements, and elegant symmetrical architecture were where the rich and fashionable resided on account of the cleaner air. To the east lay the rebuilt old city, its narrow streets huddled around the soaring splendour of Wren's St. Paul's, and the once smart Covent Garden area which was now given over to sleazy brothels, bagnios and gaming dens. Soho, St. Martin's Lane and the Strand acted as a bridge linking the old part of London with the new. Here congregated a teeming population of artisans, craftsmen and retailers, for London was the home of the luxury trades and the fount of every kind of conspicuous consumption.

Never before had there existed such a kaleidoscope of streets, houses, squares, churches, gardens, parks, theatres and markets, such a concentration of humanity thrown pell-mell together, rich and poor, idle and industrious, young and old, virtuous and depraved, grand and humble. For the first time there had come into existence a whole society whose entire life could be nothing other than urban, for whom the world of nature and the cycle of the seasons was something only dimly apprehended as they struggled to live amidst the appalling pollution caused by the burning of coal fires, the filth which filled both the streets and the river Thames, not to mention the deafening noise caused by the creaking of the carriages, the clatter of horses' hooves and the shrill voices of the street criers plying their wares.



A scene from a series painted by Joseph Highmore of incidents in Samuel Richardson's bestselling novel Pamela *(1740). Here the rake, Mr B., reveals his true colours in an unsuccessful attempt on the heroine's virtue.*

Early eighteenth century culture was about and for London and Londoners. The city was ten times larger than any other in the country and although it was awash with the impoverished it also had an unparalleled concentration of those with an increasing amount of disposable income, the aristocracy and gentry and the ever-expanding professional classes. Everywhere one looks London recurs as the *leitmotif* of the age. John Gay's *The Beggar's Opera* is set in Newgate prison, Green Park was to provide the

setting for Handel's mighty *Music for the Royal Fireworks* while Henry Fielding's novel *Tom Jones* is the story of a young man who makes that classical progress from the country to seek his fortune in London. It is at the Bell Inn in Cheapside that William Hogarth's harlot begins her progress, while his rake is arrested where St. James's Street meets Piccadilly. Hardly surprising that visitors from abroad were stunned into wonder at the phenomenon. For them London was *the* city of the Enlightenment. Here uniquely freedom of the press, freedom of political debate, and freedom of religious observance reigned. Proud, Protestant and ever more prosperous, London was the lodestar of the age.

That prosperity stemmed from the city's heart, no longer its cathedral church of St. Paul's but the Royal Exchange and the burgeoning stock market. The wars with Louis XIV had brought huge commercial and colonial gains and London replaced Amsterdam as Europe's financial capital. The arrival of the House of Hanover in 1714 signalled an alliance of the Crown and the Whig party under the aegis of Sir Robert Walpole which was to last forty years. Its network of patronage endured even longer, until the accession of George III in 1760. Walpole's government presided over a period of unusual stability and prosperity, even though there were two Jacobite invasions in 1715 and 1745. For the opposition Tories and those with Jacobite sympathies Walpole embodied squalid mercantilism and materialism, the dethronement of the old landed aristocracy and gentry to whom power should naturally belong. To writers of their side of the political spectrum, like Jonathan Swift and Alexander Pope, Walpole was the incarnation of the worst kind of corruption. The waters of Augustan England were far from tranquil ones, for this remained a society still deeply divided, not only in terms of wealth and opportunity but also in those of religious belief and party loyalty. Nonetheless not even these factors could conceal what was a new and overriding feeling of confidence and possibility.

The bulk of the population remained as it always had been, in want and poverty eking out a rural existence, lacking opportunity and often the victim of a callous system of justice. The gap between the haves and have-nots continued to widen giving birth to feelings of guilt in those more fortunate, leading to acts of benevolence. For the first time there was non-landed wealth on a huge scale, the result of the Commercial Revolution. Fortunes were made (and lost, as in the notorious South Sea Bubble) through the stock market, whose operations were now essential to the working of government. Society remained hierarchical, peppered with infinite gradations between the titled and the merely rich, but the way from the latter to the former was always open. City daughters married into the aristocracy and aristocratic younger sons entered the professions, the army, the church and the law. The cultural efflorescence

of the era is directly linked with this remarkable economic and financial boom whose effect filtered quite far down the social scale. Ordinary people were better off than in any other European country.

The monarchy had passed into cultural eclipse with Queen Anne whose only real sympathy lay with music, being a strong supporter of composers like John Blow, Jeremiah Clarke and the young George Frederick Handel. George I continued to patronise Handel, had indeed a taste for opera, but his son George II was a dedicated philistine. The traditional court ceremonial survived but was now rarely enacted, the Hanoverians retreating into a closed domestic existence. The old baroque alliance of art and power had gone for ever, and if the arts figured at all as part of the monarchical pantheon it was for their role as being commercially beneficial and morally uplifting for the nation. The Crown in fact was devoid of the resources whereby to play a dominant role even if it had wished to do so. In order, for example, to put on the great firework display in Green Park for the Peace of Aix-la-Chapelle in 1749 Jonathan Tyers, the man who ran the pleasure gardens at Vauxhall, had to be brought in. He exacted in recompense for his services a public rehearsal of Handel's music at Vauxhall which drew twelve thousand people and made him a small fortune. The actual royal event was a flop.

With the monarchy no longer the leader of taste and the fount of patronage, where did men look? Aristocratic patrons still existed. The writer and satirist John Gay had a whole series of them from the Duchess of Monmouth to the Duke and Duchess of Queensberry. So too did the poet Matthew Prior who was rescued by a group of his noble friends when he fell on hard times. But Prior had only sunk into poverty after the Tories fell from power in 1715, when he lost office and was sent to the Tower for two years. Up until then he had occupied a series of government posts. Such sinecures came of course at a price. Joseph Addison was enrolled for the Whig cause for a pension of £300 p.a. and became Secretary of State in 1717 with an income of £10,000 and payments from the secret service funds. Writers were literally bought and sold. Daniel Defoe changed political sides more than once merely to survive. In spite of this there emerged for the first time the professional writer, someone whose whole living was made by the pen. At the lower end of the scale came the hacks of Grub Street while at the upper presided the formidable figure of Alexander Pope, who was the first person successfully to make a career entirely out of writing with no other means of financial support.

That he could do so was because there was an audience for what he wrote as never before. In today's terms it was still narrow, reaching even by the 1780s no more than a quarter of the population. Culture did not come cheap. What a novel cost would

have fed a cottager's family for a week or a fortnight. The vast bulk of the new audience was made up of what was referred to at the time as the 'middling sort', the merchant and professional classes. The truth of that is captured in the shift in attitude towards them. Writers like Defoe began deliberately to cultivate the commercial classes while Joseph Addison bestowed on them the accolade of his contributions to the *Tatler*. By 1710 the sanctity of trade and the virtue of the merchant was an established fact.

The majority of this new cultural activity depended on paper. And it could never have happened without the role played by printers, publishers, engravers and print-sellers. The turning point which produced this proliferation was the lapse of the Licensing Act in 1695. Although the laws against blasphemy, seditious libel and obscenity remained in place censorship effectively ceased and the Stationers' Company lost its monopoly. The effect of this was that a publishing industry, which had previously been confined to St. Paul's Churchyard and Pater Noster Row, had, by the middle of the 1720s, over seventy printing presses scattered through the city. The provincial press also expanded with twenty-six printers in towns outside the metropolis by the same period. It was these events which made possible the emergence of magazines like the *Tatler* (1709-11) and the *Spectator* (1711-12 and 1714), foundation stones of early Georgian cultural attitudes. In the 1730s they were followed by the *Gentleman's Magazine* and the *Monthly Magazine* and, in 1747, the *Universal Magazine*. By then journals like the *Connoisseur* and the *Critical Review* had also sprung into existence, catering for specialised sections of the reading public. Everywhere newspapers came into being. In 1724 London had sixteen, covering every shade of political opinion. As a result of the lapse of the Licensing Act copyright came under threat as unscrupulous booksellers cornered the market. In 1709 their power was to an extent curtailed by a Copyright Act, which conferred a period of twenty-one years on existing titles and fourteen on new ones.

A paper culture was not only about words but images. The publishing explosion released an extraordinary flood of prints, trade cards, and illustrated books. To them we must add the huge numbers of imported prints, particularly after works of art. As a consequence more and more people had seen a place or a work of art than ever before, even if their experience was at a remove. By the 1730s it was even possible for a minor artist like Arthur Pond to execute some seventy prints after Old Master drawings. Paper was the essential element which gave this emergent bourgeois culture its means of expression, one which was for the first time outside the constraints of the court.

The intellectual substructure upon which this new culture was built came directly

out of the Scientific Revolution of the previous century. Newton's *Principia* was accepted as its model, one which could explain the complex phenomena of the earth and sky in terms of a single, ordered mathematical system. Alexander Pope's *Essay on Man* (1733-34) states 'Order is Heaven's first law':

> The gen'ral Order, since the Whole began,
> Is kept in Nature, and is kept in Man . . .

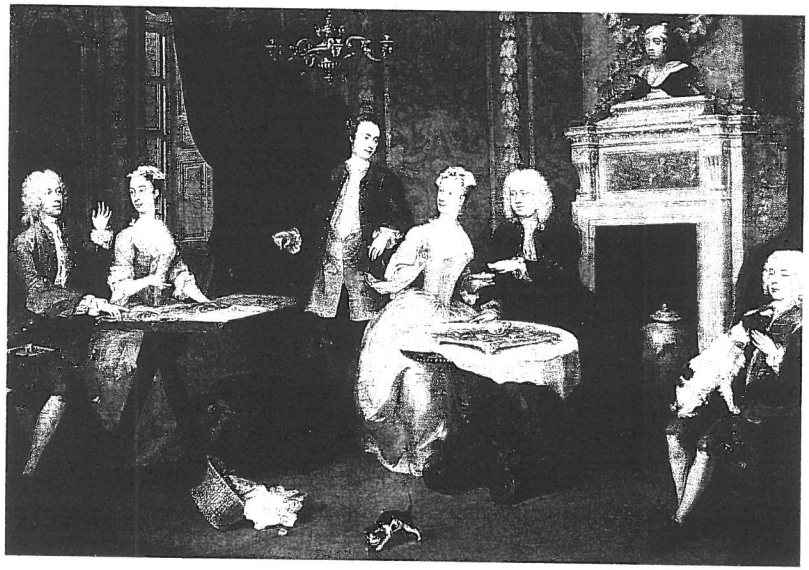
Such order validated an hierarchical society in which all creatures had their proper sphere, a scheme in which mankind, endowed with superior faculties, exercised legitimate control over Nature's lower orders. The old Aristotelian and occult traditions gave way to the Newtonian mechanistic one, thus setting the tone for the century, which was in general one of hope, energy, creativity and optimism for mankind.

Newton's belief in the immutable laws of science went hand-in-hand with the philosophy of John Locke, whose *Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (1690) was to change the direction of European thought. For him the ways in which we perceive the world depended on our sensory experience of it, and he was to fit the new physics into a less theological, more sense-based and naturalistic theory of knowledge. Locke's optimistic attitude to human nature led him to believe in mankind's essentially benign disposition. His view of the world was to be the century's credo, one of moderation, flexibility, reasonableness and toleration. In such a scheme of things the arts were destined to play a healing and uniting role in the new culture of what was called 'politeness'.

The agenda was set by the two magazines previously mentioned, Richard Steele's *Tatler* and Joseph Addison and Steele's *Spectator*. These publications were a mélange of short pieces, letters, essays and poems commenting on contemporary manners, morals and events. Their general thrust was that the religious bigotry and division of the previous century should be put aside and replaced by mutual tolerance and understanding. That new balance in society was to be achieved through a commitment to a new way of life, which aimed at understanding oneself and the world. Such a way of life could no longer focus on the venues which had embodied division, like the court, the church and the universities, but on new ones like the coffee house, the club, the theatre and the tavern, where this new interplay based on mutual conviviality could take place. The *Spectator* was to shape the views of men and women for its era and also those for the next generation. Its articles provided a short cut to 'polite' opinions and the world of taste. Its tone was comic, Whiggish and sceptical but its pages exuded an urban security. The subjects it dealt with cut across educated society, aristocracy, gentry, trade and the professions, thus producing a shifting

accord between them as they were gradually welded into 'polite society', albeit access to that world depended on birth, connection, money, patronage and talent. What might be described as the aesthetic side of politeness demanded a new physical grace and elegance of personal presentation in terms of movement and dress, as well as ease of social manner and wit and polish in conversation. Politeness was above all an art which should be exercised in company.

The role assigned to the arts in this new ideal was the one inherited from the theorists of the previous century. Art was seen to have a persuasive power which could



Delight in domestic conviviality and social encounter typical of the codes of the new polite society is reflected in the vogue for conversation pictures in which groups, such as this family, engage in conversation and dalliance. William Hogarth catches such an animated scene in a painting of c.1735 in which tea is taken and a young lady is at her embroidery frame.

set a person on the path to virtue. To understand oneself not only called for self-examination as demanded by the tenets of Christianity but for exercising what Steele categorised as 'The Commerce of Discourse'. Literature and the arts regulated and refined the passions thus fashioning a polite identity, one of whose prime purposes was to exercise these attributes. The result of this was an ever-proliferating raft of etiquette manuals as well as teachers of the 'polite' arts, dancing, music and

drawing. Knowledge and some skill in such spheres fitted a young lady or gentleman to make an entrance on to the new stage of polite society.

Taste in the arts became an essential sign of refinement and cultivation. It was an indispensable attribute of the new 'sociable man' as he was delineated by Steele and Addison. Taste came through the exercise of the senses but not of course the sensual or carnal ones. The senses called upon were passive and intellectual, the exercise of higher perceptions. Such a way of life assumed both the time and the financial resources. It called for buying works of art and antiquities, books and musical instruments, let alone attendance at performances in the theatre and concert hall. For those who could lead such a privileged existence it was the fulfilment of a Newtonian ordered ideal, which brought with it other lauded virtues, those of unity, harmony, balance, correctness and rationality and, therefore, beauty. Society, it was argued, should not only be humane, acts of philanthropy reflecting man's inborn benevolence, but also more cultured, taste revealing his true judgement. The programme of the *Spectator* and the *Tatler* was designed to bring about precisely such a union of art and morality. On launching the former, Steele and Addison had told Lord Somers that its aim was to endeavour 'to Cultivate and Polish Human Life, by promoting Virtue and Knowledge, and by recommending whatsoever may be either Useful or Ornamental to Society.' In their eyes the pursuit of what they categorised as 'The Pleasures of the Imagination' contributed to a person's moral obligation to lead a virtuous life.

One of the effects of this sudden elevation of cultural activity was to hive off what we now call the Fine Arts, painting, music, poetry, literature, sculpture and the dance, later described by Edmund Burke as the 'works of the imagination and the elegant arts.' Such arts were regarded as appealing to the imagination and the aim of their creators was seen to be that of producing emotions of taste in their audience. These were the arts which stimulated refined sensations away from the social and sexual pleasures of the passions. The rest were deemed the necessary or mechanical arts and relegated to a lower sphere.

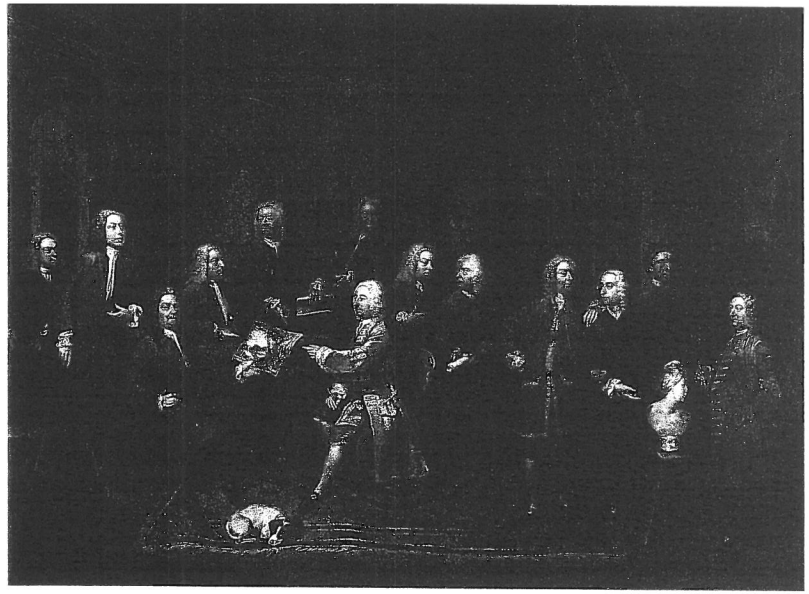
This was a fundamental turning point in the definition of what constituted cultural activity. Like most things in the eighteenth century it came out of the Scientific Revolution which for the first time divided the arts from the sciences. But as the century progressed a further striking division of another kind took place and this one was social. The consequence of the hiving off of the Fine Arts by the upper sections of society was to demote the old popular culture of seasonal festivities, folk songs and tales to the margins. Indeed it increasingly began to be dismissed as vulgar, particularly as the polite classes built up and explored their new cultural domain. By the

end of the century popular lower class culture had become so far removed that it began to be viewed as the survival of some earlier, more primitive phase in man's development, and as such worthy of study. But for those in the vanguard of polite society the sun shone and the new cultural dispensation was increasingly seen as something heaven bestowed on the island, along with its liberty and economic prosperity.

Whatever vicarious delights such pursuits brought they remained ones whose ostensible aim was to morally edify. And anywhere in which morality and social responsibility was part of the scheme of things involved sooner or later the State. Britain being a secular state had a role to play as the guardian of social values through the organ of a State church. The new polite arts were not only seen as an indictment of the licence and lewdness of their predecessors in Restoration England but their moral mission was viewed as an exaltation of the State. Not that this new cultural world was devoid of its detractors, clerics and others, who took the time-honoured view that such pursuits were vehicles for indulgence in vanity and lust, leading to a neglect of both work and duty. They were, however, to be on the losing side during an age which witnessed an unprecedented expansion in sociability.

The polite arts needed to be practised within society. In order to cater for this demand old venues were recast and new ones created. London had some two thousand taverns and coffee houses. The *Spectator* assigned to these the role of being centres for polite conversation. Rank was laid aside on entering and once inside newspapers could be read or letters written and received. Many attracted particular groups of people. Men of letters went to Will's and the Bedford coffee houses in Covent Garden, actors flocked to Wright's hard by, while Old Slaughter's Coffee House in St. Martin's Lane drew members of the artistic fraternity including Hogarth, Jonathan Richardson and Francis Hayman.

Then there were the clubs of which the most pre-eminent was the Kit-Kat Club which took its name from Christopher Cat, the keeper of the Cat and Fiddle tavern and later of the Fountain, where the club met. The club flourished between 1696 and 1720 with a membership of fifty-five including ten dukes but also the men of talent who fashioned the new polite world, Addison and Steele. Its politics were Whig but it also had a cultural agenda to shape the arts by creating a sympathetic climate of opinion for the writers it supported. To its members was owed the first theatre to move westwards, the Queen's (soon to be the King's) which opened in the Haymarket in 1705. The Kit-Kat Club helped publishers like Jacob Tonson, the most powerful bookseller of the day, the publisher of Milton, Dryden and Pope, as well as being the cradle and forcing house for the introduction of Italian opera to the country. The Tories had their club too, the Brothers, founded in 1711 to which belonged Bolingbroke, Swift, Gay and Pope. Specialising in pamphlets and political squibs it evolved into the Scriblerus Club whose focus was wholly literary.



Clubs were another aspect of the desire for social intercourse. This artists' club met at the King's Arms and included the architect James Gibbs, the landscape gardener Charles Bridgeman, the sculptor Michael Rysbrack, the architect and designer William Kent and the painter John Wootton. Painting by Gavin Hamilton, c.1734-35.

Clubs were exclusive, but other venues, such as the theatres, were accessible to any member of society who could pay the price of the entrance ticket. There were two concert halls in London in 1700, Hickford's Rooms in Panton Street and York Buildings off the Strand. In the 1720s and 30s Hickford's Rooms were enlarged to meet the demand for their subscription concerts. Later, in 1771, came the Pantheon in Oxford Street and four years later the Hanover Room which could accommodate nine hundred. Even more crucial for the city's musical life were to be the pleasure gardens. These had existed in the previous century but their nature changed in 1728 when Jonathan Tyers reopened Vauxhall as a place in which citizens could play the urban pastoral. Undesirable elements were purged and society was offered

Pleasure gardens brought people together to share each other's company as well as social delights. The great Venetian painter Antonio Canaletto catches Vauxhall Gardens in their heyday, about 1750, recording the view first encountered on entry. Vauxhall was a vehicle for the latest rococo style, a setting for everything which was considered avant-garde in the arts.

genteel entertainment with elaborate décor and lighting. Music was an essential ingredient and there was a raised orchestra building and an organ. In 1738 the sculptor Roubiliac's famous statue of Handel in the guise of a latter day Apollo or Orpheus (now in the Victoria & Albert Museum) was installed as if to emphasise Vauxhall's musical commitment. Four years later the even more exclusive Ranelagh opened with its vast indoor rotunda, fifty-two supper boxes, orchestra and organist.

And so the stage was set, one, it should not be forgotten, which also embraced the home, where books and musical instruments, prints and pictures, began to proliferate. Polite culture calls for a certain kind of architecture and an elaboration of living space. Georgian houses not only had space for entertaining but increasing privacy achieved through more rooms, which in addition had doors with locks. The increase in letter writing indicated not only the time to indulge in such an activity but also the desire to develop personal relationships, which in a vast urban setting like London demanded private space. This was the age of the closet and the study to which a lady or a gentleman might retire in order to read and write. In 1714 probably 45% of the male population could read. That had risen to 60% by 1760. The corresponding figures for women were 25% and 40%. To be able to read did not necessarily bring with it the ability to write. Nonetheless this was a substantial section of the population and reading was by far the century's most important leisure activity.

This expansion in literacy explains the escalating demand for reading matter which resulted in the advent of magazines and newspapers and a growth in the numbers of full-time professional authors (aristocrats and gentry who wrote distanced themselves from the fact, as writing for money was viewed as tainted). Books were not only sold but could be borrowed for a fee. In 1742 the first subscription library opened and by 1800 there were some thousand of them. At the same time a library became an essential feature of any country house. There were many books published, more than ever before and on a far wider range of subjects, religious and theological, poetry and classics (often in translation) as well as imported books in French, a language universally read and spoken by the educated classes. Books had previously been few, usually the Bible and a handful of pious works, which were studied intensely. Now there were many, enabling reading to be far more extensive. Works on religion, especially sermons, were the most widely read of all. Books, like radio and television later, bound a family together in a shared intellectual and pleasurable experience offering both entertainment and instruction.

The Scientific Revolution also left its mark on how people wrote. The new mechanistic culture resulted in a dramatic change in prose style which now sought the virtues of concision and clarity of the kind found in the writings of John Locke.

The old traditional sources of language and imagery were invalidated and the analogy of the new literary style was seen to be mathematics. The former complexity of language typical of the wits and scholars of the Restoration gave way to the more factual prose characteristic of a society whose focus was on business transactions. The result was the simple positive style of the Augustan age, an exact reflection of the new scientific and rational outlook of the Enlightenment.

This is the period usually given the blanket label of Augustan. Although recent research has lifted the curtain revealing its raffish and deprived underworld the term still pertains, accurately describing certain of its identifying motifs. This was a vernacular literature whose roots lay in the schoolroom to which more people than ever before went. And these establishments were stocked with the same Greek and Roman authors, Virgil, Ovid, Horace, Lucretius, Cicero, Martial, Homer, Pindar, Aesop, Juvenal and Persius. Along with them there were the classical historians like Tacitus, Plutarch and Livy. As a consequence of spreading education and through translations, more people than ever had a mind furnished with a classical frame of reference. Georgian writing works from that premise and much of it is an exercise in translating into the vernacular one or other classical precedent. Just as Lord Burlington's architectural programme transported Ancient Rome to Augustan Britain or Kent's new landscape gardens evoked classical arcady, so a poem like James Thomson's *The Seasons* recast the Latin pastoral idyll for those who lived in northern climes.

In the new scheme of things satire as a literary genre fitted in with Addison's wider objective of trying to avoid the extremes of either Puritan enthusiasm or Restoration libertinism. Satire could contribute to fashioning a new national temperament by using laughter as the prime vehicle against fanaticism and vice. In the view of the authors of the *Spectator* any satire which made use of personal or political invective or contributed to what was known as 'the spirit of party' was by definition 'impolite'. Politeness called for the satirist to use his weapons not against individuals as such but against vice in general. In practice this was largely ignored. For Addison that middle way was epitomised by the satires of Horace and Juvenal which were now reworked into the vernacular and transposed from Rome to London. Satire by its very nature was based on the events and personalities of the moment. Parody was central to its working and the satirist was to develop a whole battery of new devices for setting off one thing against the other: contrasting ideas, values, principles, attitudes, style and identities. Its vehicles were the mock-panegyric and the mock-heroic, the burlesque and travesty as well as simple imitation.

Jonathan Swift, who by turning Tory was to lead most of his life in exile as Dean of St. Patrick's in Dublin, wrote the greatest of the satires, *Gulliver's Travels* (1726).

Cast in the fashionable guise of a travel book it recounts four journeys by a ship's surgeon to fantastic locations like the island of Lilliput where human beings are little bigger than ants. In it the rational Swift subjects the power of reason to merciless criticism. The result is a book in which moderation is equated with impotence and where the sane observer turns out by the end to be far madder than anyone else. Beneath what is a sober, placid text there lurks a desperation as human relations are revealed to be brutal and oppressive and men's institutions manipulable and corrupt. *The Battle of the Books* (1704) mimics the style of excitable journalism in a debate on the relative merits of the ancients as against the moderns in literature, while in *A Tale of a Tub* (1704) Swift personates a madman in the most alarming of all eighteenth century visits to Bedlam used for a satire on 'corruption in religion and learning'.

Alexander Pope was at heart a satirist, producing two great mock-heroic poems, a brilliant series of Horatian imitations and four verse epistles on moral themes. The greatest without doubt is *The Rape of the Lock* (1712 and 1714), a poem based on a piece of real-life gossip, the snipping off of a lock of a young girl's hair. This he used for a mock-epic in which so much waffle is apotheosised by him into high art but with a disturbing subtext lurking beneath its surface steely glitter. Strange areas of the subconscious are touched upon in this poem of magical transformations. Pope also parades a whole range of allusions to both the great writers of the classical heritage and also those, like Milton, within the native tradition. The *Aeneid* above all is parodied in this account of the severance of Arabella Fermor's hair by a young aristocrat:

> He takes the Gift with rev'rence, and extends
> The little Engine on his Fingers' Ends,
> This just behind *Belinda*'s Neck he spread,
> As o'er the fragrant Streams she bends her Head:
> Swift to the Lock a thousand Sprights repair,
> A thousand Wings, by turns, blow back the Hair,
> And thrice they twitch'd the Diamond in her Ear,
> Thrice she look'd back, and thrice the Foe drew near.
> The Peer now spreads the glitt'ring *Forlex* wide,
> T'inclose the Lock; now joins it, to divide.
> Ev'n then, before the fatal Engine clos'd,
> A Wretched *Sylph* too fondly interpos'd;
> Fate urg'd the Sheers, and cut the *Sylph* in twain,
> (But Airy Substance soon unites again)
> The meeting Points the sacred Hair dissever
> From the fair Head, for ever and for ever!

The Rape of the Lock remains Pope's most perfect achievement.

The Dunciad (1728 and 1743) is also a mock-heroic, this time a savage attack on hacks and booksellers, told in the form of a celebration of the progress of an empire, that of Dullness. Again this is a Virgilian epic, this time set in eighteenth century literary London with swipes at the Hanoverians, the corruption of Walpole's government and what Pope saw as the cultural malaise of the era. It remains vivid still with its misapplied lyricism and coruscating wit. No one could equal Pope's parody of Milton's *Paradise Lost* in presenting his arch-villain, the Poet Laureate, Colley Cibber:

> High on a gorgeous sea, that far out-shone
> Henley's gilt tub, or Fleckno's Irish throne . . .
> Great Cibber sate: the proud Parnassian sneer,
> The conscious simper, and the jealous leer,
> Mix on his look . . .
> Lift up your gates, ye Princes, see him come!
> Sound, sound ye Viols, be the Cat-call dumb!

William Kent's witty evocation of Alexander Pope in his mysterious grotto, c.1725-30.

Pope's *Epistles* form a sharp contrast. Addressed in the main to friends they delineate a world of men and events, telling stories, cracking jokes and pointing morals. That 'To a Lady', his life-long friend Martha Blount, has a brilliance which is at once relaxed and easy, witty and conversational.

Pope, however, took no part in what was to be the major literary innovation of the period, the novel. This emerges for the first time as a recognisable genre, albeit still at the fringes of literature. A quite exceptional convergence of circumstances gave birth to it. Like much else the novel could never have happened without John Locke. A novel works from the Lockeian view that truth can only be discovered by the individual through his own senses. For Locke the pursuit of truth is a matter for the individual independent of past thought. A novel's prime criterion is truth to a single person's experience, recognising the fact that each individual's experience is unique. Plots were no longer derived from previous literature, from history or classical mythology, but from that unique individual experience. Locke also defined human personal identity as an identity of consciousness through time. And the means whereby an individual remained in touch with his own identity was through

memory. Time as the agent of change was seen as the force shaping man's individual and collective history, which is in essence the substance of the novel.

The novel also comes out of an aspect of the Scientific Revolution with its emphasis on the role of individual human effort. It also owed much to the Puritan tradition with its preoccupation with self-scrutiny leading on to self-analysis. In addition the Puritan conception of the dignity of ordinary human labour led directly to the novelist's general belief that daily life was of sufficient interest to be worth writing about at all. The result was a unique form that brought life as lived through time and art together. But this could not have occurred without certain changes in society, which made it worth reading about the experiences of a single human being. That could only have come about in a milieu which was highly secularised, for the action of a novel depends not on divine intervention but on the exercise of choice by ordinary human beings. Personal relationships, which are integral to the form, could only move centre stage in a society which had enough time and security in which to indulge them.

Early eighteenth century England witnessed just such social change. Under the aegis of the Puritan ethic courtly love, which within the medieval and Renaissance tradition had always been adulterous, was transferred to marriage. For the first time women began to be able to exert a small degree of choice in their partner. Once married a new and separate family unit was created. All of this needed to be in place before a genre could develop which took as its pivot courtship leading to marriage. Female chastity which ended in a virtuous marriage, in which both a financial and property settlement were involved, was central to the Protestant ethic. It was to be the *leitmotif* of every novel into the twentieth century. But that is not to say that such sagas of virtue were not also a means whereby the sexual imagination could freely range in a way denied by the etiquette of life. And the novel had the advantage of exploring matter which could never be put on stage.

The earliest creators of the novel had all the exhilaration of starting with a clean slate. What is astonishing is that its three greatest exponents, Daniel Defoe, Samuel Richardson and Henry Fielding, between them established every element of the genre within a few decades. Daniel Defoe created in *Robinson Crusoe* (1719), the story of a man cut adrift from civilisation, a masterpiece. In Crusoe he fashioned a new heroic archetype, one who could be read and re-read in many ways. Rugged economic individualism and the record of an inner life animate a secular and spiritual fable in which providence ensures both deliverance and survival. Survival is indeed the key theme which binds other Defoe novels together: *Moll Flanders* (1722), as Moll spirals both up and down driven by a desire for money and the maintenance of her genteel

status, and *A Journal of the Plague Year* (1722), which graphically reconstructs the terrible events of 1665.

Defoe was a journalist. Samuel Richardson was a successful bookseller. *Pamela: or Virtue Rewarded* (1740) transformed the role of women in fiction. Richardson not only got inside the heads of his characters but into their houses too. In *Pamela* he used the form of the letter in which to recount the tale of a maidservant whose defence of her sexual virtue was rewarded by a genteel marriage. In England the book ran into five editions and it also swept through the mainland of Europe. Richardson created a female prototype, the pale and delicate heroine who wilts at the least sign of a sexual advance and whose descendants in Victorian fiction pass out at even the hint of an indiscretion. *Clarissa* (1747-48), his greater masterpiece, has the dubious distinction of being the longest novel in the English language. This is the story of an innocent country girl who is corrupted by the city and ultimately dies a saintly death. If *Pamela* might be said to have represented one aspiration of the social scene, the ability for a woman to marry up, *Clarissa* opened out on its pages what passed through the subconscious mind, touching deep into the moral and social preoccupations of the age. Richardson's attempts to do the same for a virtuous hero in *Sir Charles Grandison* (1753-54) ended in failure, but his work overall had set in place the two directions which could be taken by future novelists, the first the exploration of an individual's psychological and moral awareness, the second to purvey vicarious sexual experience and thus fulfil adolescent fantasies.

Henry Fielding was a feckless spendthrift who started out as a brilliant writer of satirical plays until his stage career was cut short by Walpole's clamp-down on the theatre. As a result he turned to the novel and in doing so opened the highway to comedy, establishing thereby a pattern for the comic novel which was to lead directly to Dickens. Of his three novels, *Joseph Andrews* (1742), *Tom Jones* (1749) and *Amelia* (1751), it is the second which is regarded as his most enduring masterpiece. Divided into three parts it traces the eponymous hero's life from a childhood and youth spent in Somerset through an unstable period on the road, peopled by a motley cast of characters, ending in London. Fielding brought to his novels a vivid narrative technique and a wide knowledge of the ways of the world. As a consequence of this he paints a sweeping panorama of mid-Georgian society in what he conceived as an epic within the classical tradition.

These were the heroic decades of the novel to which Laurence Sterne was to make a very individual contribution. *A Sentimental Journey* (1768) is a fictionalised account of Sterne's travels in Italy and France but *Tristram Shandy* (1713-68) is something else, a gloriously chaotic yet great comic work with a mastery of the realistic presentation

of fleeting thoughts, feelings and gestures, and a flexible handling of time which prefigures the break with the tyranny of chronology which came in the twentieth century. In this way, within virtually a single generation, the novel had made an incredible journey from being a narrative of adventure to one exploring man's inner life.

It is important to remember that the novel lay on the fringes of literature. At its heart lay poetry. No successors of the stature of Dryden were to emerge before the second decade. The only poet of significance before that date was Matthew Prior, an impressive practitioner of a variety of verse forms and the author of two major poems: *Solomon on the Vanity of the World* (1718), an elevated Augustan exercise on a moral theme, and *Alma: or The Progress of the Mind* (1718), a mock treatise on the seat of the soul. But the century was to be dominated by the work of two other writers, James Thomson and Alexander Pope. Thomson's *The Seasons*, which came out in stages between 1728 and 1730, captures the way Newtonian optics led poets to appreciate colour within the universe. The poetry of the eighteenth century is indeed suffused with this emphasis on the varied hues of nature. *The Seasons* is at once scientific and descriptive, partly too an imitation of a Miltonic epic with Nature in the role of hero. This is a British countryside attuned to the ideals of a new urban bourgeoisie, patriotic, pastoral, classical and sentimental. In this way the post-Newtonian universe was incorporated into the poetic mode.

No single writer could, however, measure up to Pope. Pope is the first really successful writer who made a fortune from his powers and created and retained a reading public to support him. Only four feet five inches tall and suffering from tuberculosis of the spine, Pope was undoubtedly a genius. He was endowed with quite extraordinary powers of observation and he was hugely ambitious. He was, in addition, an outsider, a Catholic, whose faith excluded him from a university education as well as public office. As a consequence he was self-taught and self-created. This was a man with an agenda. The age was Augustan and he cast himself as its Virgil. His overriding aim was to introduce a new 'correctness' to English poetry. In his *Imitations of Horace* (1735) he places himself exactly:

> . . . Britain to soft refinements less a foe,
> Wit grew polite, and Numbers learn'd to flow.
> Waller was smooth; but Dryden taught to join
> The varying verse, the full resounding line,
> The long majestic march, and energy divine.
> Tho' still some traces of our rustic vein
> And splay-foot verse, remain'd, and will remain.
> Late, very late, correctness grew our care . . .

Pope's summons was for a revolution casting off the country's literary insularity. For him that new ease, order and correctness was enshrined in his adoption of the heroic couplet. Symmetrical, stately, ordered and yet lyrical it worked for every poetic form and was an ideal machine for thinking in, being logical, sequential, clear as well as polite. Pope became the master of the heroic couplet which far from being an easy option called rather for immense skill in order to achieve a subtle and carefully modulated rhythm.

He made his living through translations. The *Iliad* (1720) was undertaken 'purely for want of money' but it was a translation done in the full Augustan spirit of transmitting a foundation stone of the western poetic tradition to this island. The *Odyssey* (1725-26), which he did in collaboration, was to fall short. These were his breadwinners which brought him not only fame but a fortune, enabling him to set himself up as a country gentleman on a mini-estate at Twickenham and create one of the first gardens in the new landscape style. Pope was an astute businessman and also a master of publicity maintained through endless portraits of himself and through his letters, in which he cast himself as a latter day Pliny or Cicero. Ironically his prosperity depended on what he most despised, the new mercantilism and urban culture. Pope may have been both Catholic and Tory but paradoxically for him his mind was urban.

Through exploring the Greek, Roman and English classics (he edited Shakespeare to conform to Augustan ideals) he discovered both himself and his poetry. His output in the form of satire, already touched upon, was prolific. Pope was a prodigy who produced his first poems, the *Pastorals* (1709), before he was twenty and whose first collected works were already issued at twenty-nine. *The Rape of the Lock* and his *Essay on Criticism* (1711) established him overnight as a major figure with a total mastery of versification and form, a familiarity with tradition and an awareness of new combinations. *An Essay on Man* (1733-34), now looked upon as shallow, was at the time his most influential work. No other writer in the century made such an indelible impression on the age, his writings so perfectly crystallising its ideals, so much so that his works make up a complete archive of its culture, one so monumental that it had to be repudiated by the Romantics before poets could once again move on. Pope's achievement lay in harnessing the new rationality to the powers of the creative poetic imagination and in applying the perspective of Greek and Roman literature to modern manners. He stands unchallenged as *the* man of letters of the age.

Whereas in the case of literature the lapsing of the Licensing Act precipitated a renaissance, the passing of the Stage Licensing Act in 1737 was to stultify theatrical invention for a generation and more. Theatre entered the new century with all the

traditional legacies which made government and the city authorities chary of it. For them the stage was always a potential threat to public order, both what was acted on it and the often riotous behaviour of audiences, not to mention its ancient alliance with prostitution. It was, however, an age of great actors: Thomas Betterton, James Quin, Peg Woffington, Colley Cibber and Elizabeth Barry. Initially theatres multiplied. Betterton, gaining a temporary royal licence, set up in Lincoln's Inn Fields and the King's Theatre opened in the Haymarket. Richard Steele's attack on the decadent drama of the Stuarts reached its climax in his sentimental comedy *The Conscious Lovers* (1722), but by then the theatres were already suffering from the aristocratic mania for Italian opera. Theatre managers hit back with the pantomime, an afterpiece combining dance and mime, music and spectacle with the added attraction of the greatest harlequin of the century, John Rich. And then in the very year that Italian opera foundered, 1728, came John Gay's *The Beggar's Opera*. This broke every record in theatrical history by running sixty-two nights at the Lincoln's Inn Fields theatre, then managed by John Rich. Nothing like it had ever been staged before and its appeal cut right across the social spectrum. It took satire on to the stage with an unparalleled brilliance attacking the depravity of the Walpole government, the absurdity of Italian opera, and the general venality of early Georgian society. The actors dressed in the mock finery of their rival, the opera, replaced its arias with parodies of Handel and Bononcini, intermingled with lyrics set to popular ballads and folksongs. The story of Macheath the highwayman's passion for Polly Peachum set in Newgate prison had zest, guts, sex and sentiment. The discrepancy between its words, which depicted the Whig oligarchy and the commercial classes as rogues, and the music came as delight to audiences who were utterly seduced by its charm. The production has gone down in history in the phrase that it made 'Gay rich and Rich gay.'

The effect of this was to unleash a decade of theatrical expansion culminating in a whole series of scathing political satires by Henry Fielding at the Little Theatre in the Haymarket. The old patent theatres responded too, with drama that was also politically charged. The result was that in 1737 Walpole got the Stage Licensing Act through Parliament whereby all plays had to be submitted to the Lord Chamberlain fourteen days before performance. The impact on the theatre was devastating. Drama was henceforth confined to the two historic patent theatres only. Worse, the Lord Chamberlain reserved the right even to ban a play which he had passed should he so wish. The spoken drama was to be the only art form subject to such rigorous government control, one which was not to be relinquished until the 1960s.

Fielding turned to the novel and he was not the only playwright to abandon the stage. As for the theatres themselves there was no choice but to opt either for bland

William Hogarth's rendering of the last act of John Gay's The Beggar's Opera *(1728) in which Lucy Lockit and Polly Peachum entreat their fathers, the gaoler and the informer, for the life of the highwayman, Macheath, whom each supposes to be her husband. Hogarth's painting includes a send-up of what he regarded as the pomposity of Italian opera.*

new plays which eschewed politics or to rummage through the inherited repertory of the past. One of the direct consequences of the Act was to be the cult of Shakespeare. But the damage to the spoken drama was to be immense and long lasting.

What was unaffected was the contribution theatre continued to make to musical life. In 1715 J.C. Pepusch, who had arranged the music for *The Beggar's Opera*, was appointed music director at Drury Lane, thus inaugurating a new era of musical spectacle. He revived the masque, and in the 1720s came the pantomime which contained airs, recitatives, ensembles and choruses interspersed with small orchestral pieces. A huge quantity of music was produced by William Boyce, Maurice Greene and Thomas Arne including the latter's setting for Milton's masque of *Comus* (1738). Arne was indeed the most wide-ranging and important composer of theatre music, but he was not to achieve his greatest successes until later, *Thomas and Sally* (1760),

an entertainment which combined the traditions of *opera buffa* with the English ballad opera, the first true English *opera seria*, *Artaxerxes* (1761) and a new form, the ballad opera, *Love in a Village* (1762), which mingled music from Italian opera with folk tunes and specially composed pieces.

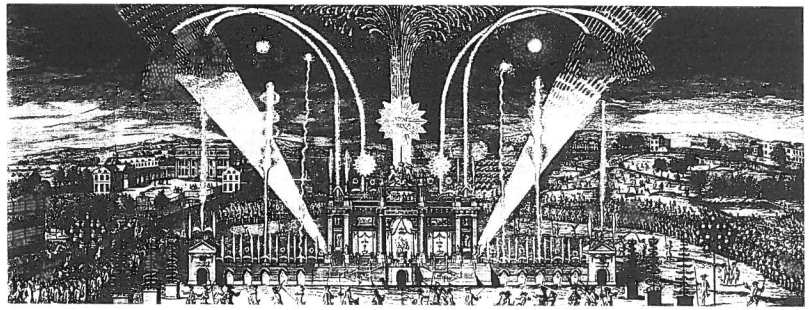
The abundance of theatre music by English composers is some indication that they were able to hold their own in this genre, but they equally held it in the composition of odes, songs and cantatas, concerti grossi and trio sonatas. There was a burgeoning as music-making moved away from the court and new societies were founded, festivals inaugurated and concert rooms and pleasure gardens opened. In 1710 the Academy of Ancient Music was set up at the Crown and Anchor tavern in the Strand with its aim 'the study and practice of vocal and instrumental harmony.' The Academy was devoted to the performance of the works of composers such as Byrd, Palestrina, Tallis and Purcell. In 1726 an Academy of Vocal Music followed, to perpetuate the tradition of English church music. Subscription concerts began at Hickford's Room in 1729 and ten years later they moved to Brewer Street where concerts were to continue for the next four decades. Such performances included orchestral pieces, vocal music and instrumental solos. From 1739 Vauxhall became a major centre for every kind of musical event and Ranelagh followed not long after. To these must be added St. Paul's Cathedral and Westminster Abbey with their choirs as well as the music heard in other churches and in private houses, not to mention that sung and played in the streets. Everything was in place for London to become the musical capital of Europe, a position signalled by the arrival of the composer who was to dominate music in the same way that Pope dominated literature, George Frederick Handel.

Handel was born in Halle in Germany on 25 February 1685, in the same year as Bach. A musical prodigy virtually from birth, his first opera was staged in Hamburg in 1705 when he was just twenty. From there, under the patronage of a Medici, he went to Italy, seminal not only for opera but every aspect of musical education, being the home of all the various baroque forms both vocal and instrumental. There he learnt the art of opera and his first Italian opera *Rodrigo* was staged in Florence in 1709, followed a year later by the resounding success of *Agrippina* in Venice. Handel was offered a post at the Hanoverian court, with the freedom to travel, and in 1710, he arrived in a London hungry for opera and, what was more important, with the wealth to pay for it. In 1711 *Rinaldo* was performed to acclaim and he attracted the patronage of Queen Anne who gave him a pension and commissioned him to write the *Te Deum* on the occasion of the Peace of Utrecht (1713).

Handel settled permanently in England in 1712 and took out citizenship in 1726. He was to remain court composer for his entire life contributing, for example, music

for the coronation of George II in 1737 which is still used at coronations today. But the bulk of his work lay away from the court, for the theatre and the concert halls of London in the form of operas, instrumental music and oratorios. He began with the patronage of Lord Burlington followed by that of the Duke of Chandos (for whom he composed the *Chandos Anthems*), then came his appointment as composer for the Royal Academy of Music. By that date he had already achieved an unassailable position on the musical scene, one which continued to grow until, by the middle of the century, he took on the guise of a national monument. He died aged seventy-four on 14 April 1759, and was buried in Westminster Abbey.

Handel was an overwhelming personality, an impatient and excitable man, and there was to be no sphere of music-making into which he did not breathe new life. His orchestral music included the *Water Music* (1717), the *Music for the Royal Fireworks* (1749), and two sets of *Concerti Grossi*. They all remain as vivid today as at their first performance. The sense of occasion which any new work by Handel brought is beautifully caught in a contemporary account of the first performance of the famous *Water Music* on a July evening in 1717 when George I and the court went by water from Whitehall to Chelsea:



'A View of the Public Fire Works' to celebrate the Treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle staged in Green Park on 27 April 1749, for which Handel wrote one of his grandest scores.

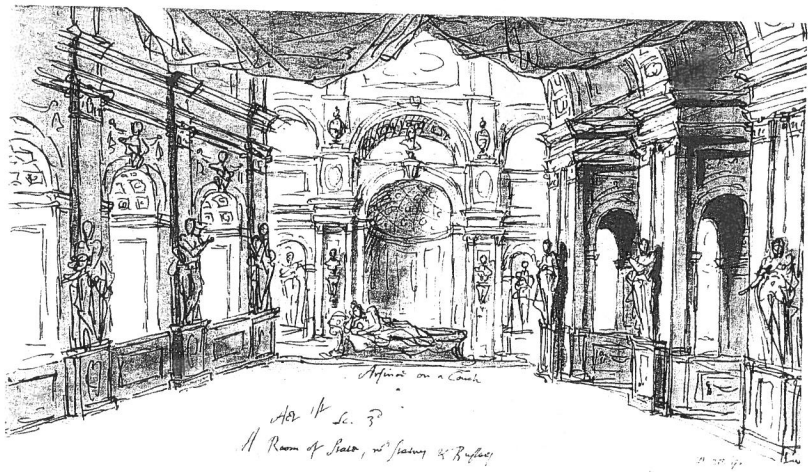
'Many other Barges with Persons of Quality attended, and so great a Number of Boats, that the whole River in a manner was cover'd; a City Company's Barge was employ'd for the Musick, where were 50 Instruments of all Sorts, who play'd all the Way . . . the finest symphonies, compos'd express for this Occasion, by Mr Hendel; which his Majesty liked so well, that he caus'd it to be plaid over three times in going and returning.'

But his impact on the arrival of Italian opera was to be far greater. That was an

importation of an art form which had evolved in Italy during the previous century, one which had been seen by members of the English aristocracy on the Grand Tour. Italian baroque opera was largely a vehicle for beautiful melody and ravishing singing. The action was described in the recitatives while long *da capo* arias conveyed the general mood and emotions. Italian singers were of an unrivalled virtuosity, both those with a soprano voice and the famous *castrati*, men who had been castrated in childhood in order to prevent their voices from breaking. The result was an extraordinary quality of high voice which was deployed for emotional utterances in the masculine roles. This was what was known as *opera seria*. The plots dealt with the conflicting demands of love and duty among the aristocracy, utilising stories from classical mythology, history and medieval romance. Great singing was central to the experience but it was set within visual spectacles on the grand scale with elaborate transformation scenes and magical ascents and descents. It was very, very expensive.

The earliest attempt to import Italian opera to England was made by Thomas Clayton who returned from Italy with a libretto and songs for an opera entitled *Arsinoe, Queen of Cyprus* (1705): 'An opera, after the Italian manner: All sung.' A period followed with bilingual opera and then in 1710, Italian opera won with Francesco Mancini's *Idaspe* in which sang the great *castrato* Nicolini. Fashionable society was entranced, the Purcellian tradition of semi-opera promptly collapsed and London became the mecca for hundreds of immigrant singers and musicians. The 1712-13 opera season included Handel's *Teseo* which inaugurated the composer's long relationship with John James Heidegger who took care of the management side of the operation, an arrangement which was to last thirty years.

Design for 'A Room of State' by Sir James Thornhill for the earliest opera in the Italian style, Arsinoe, Queen of Cyprus, *to be staged in England in 1705.*



The Royal Academy of Music, set up in 1719, was a joint-stock company to back the opera company financially in the absence of a court. Three of the leading singers of the day were recruited, Senesino, the celebrated *castrato*, Francesca Cuzzoni, one of the most splendid sopranos of the century, and, in 1726, Faustina Bordoni, another great singer but one whose attractions led to her exchanging blows on stage with her rival, contributing to the collapse of the Academy. The cost was huge: Senesino commanded a fee of 3,000 guineas for his first season. Besides Handel there were two other composers recruited, Giovanni Bononcini and Attilio Ariosti. The Academy opened at the Haymarket in April 1720 with Handel's *Radamisto*, the first of a long series of successes culminating in *Giulio Cesare* (1724), *Tamerlano* (1724) and *Rodelinda* (1725).

When the Academy collapsed in 1728, Handel and Heidegger leased the King's Theatre for five years and staged a whole new series of operas including *Ariodante* (1735) and *Alcina* (1735). Meanwhile the aristocracy, with whom Handel had fallen out, forced him out of the Haymarket to make way for their own new company, the Opera of the Nobility. Handel and Heidegger went to Covent Garden but London had simply not the resources to support two major opera companies and eventually both of them failed. It was not the end of Italian opera in England but opera never effectively recovered until the 1760s.

All of this led to Handel finally abandoning opera in 1741 for oratorio. The shift had begun earlier with a highly successful revival of an early work, *Esther*, at the Crown and Anchor tavern in the Strand in 1732. The

Caricatures of Italian opera singers, above, the soprano Faustina Bordoni with the castrato Senesino; below, the soprano Francesca Cuzzoni and the castrato Farinelli with, in the background, the impresario, Joseph Heidegger.

decision was taken to re-stage it in the King's Theatre. As the Dean of Westminster refused to allow the Abbey choristers to wear stage costume the performance took the form of a concert. Unlike his operas, which remained resolutely Italianate, in the case of the oratorio Handel evolved a musical format which was strikingly different from its European counterparts, so much so that it took on a character which remains resolutely insular. Such oratorios were usually staged during Lent, combining as they did both piety and entertainment. The subject matter made use of religious and patriotic themes from the Bible and the works of Spenser, Milton and Dryden. Appealing equally to both Anglicans and dissenters they crossed the religious divide. What they represented was a fusion of the drama of opera, the oratorios similarly being divided into three acts, with the native choral tradition. The role of the chorus in *opera seria* was minimal but in the oratorios Handel was able to develop its full potential. In addition, between the acts the orchestra played a concerto, Handel eventually composing special organ concertos which he performed himself.

Handel's oratorios, like *Saul* (1739), were as dramatic as his operas. But it was to be his *Messiah* (1742) which was to place him at the heart of the British musical inheritance. Its initial performance in Dublin was not auspicious and its ascent into cult status only began in the 1750s when it began to be staged annually for the benefit of the new Foundling Hospital. Written in twenty-four days it managed to be both theatrically colourful and also deeply conducive to spiritual meditation. But *Messiah* was only one of a whole series of oratorios which the composer wrote during the 1740s all of which were vivid, powerful, original and resourceful. Boyce, Greene and Arne all followed but never emulated him. His achievement was neatly summed up by his early biographer, Mainwaring: 'His Oratorios . . . being in our own language, have chiefly endeared him to the nation.'

That turn of phrase catches a mood which was increasingly to permeate the cultural scene by the middle of the century, patriotism. The Jacobite invasions of 1715 and 1745 fed it, so did the wars with France. In addition it was played upon by opposition parties to the long hegemony of the Walpole regime. English history was recast as a struggle of liberty against faction (Walpole), the former finding heroes in the Ancient Britons and the freemen of Saxon England. It was no coincidence that Thomas Arne's 'Rule Britannia', with words by the poet James Thomson, was first heard in the *Masque of Alfred* performed before the Prince of Wales in 1740. Augustan Rome began to lose ground to Elizabethan England as the yardstick whereby to measure the triumphs of contemporary culture. In no sphere of activity was that pull more powerfully registered than in the visual arts where for the first time there was a deliberate effort to create a British school of painting to rival the Italian and French schools.

Ever since the Reformation, outside of the court the visual arts had never quite lost the stigma of popery. That fear is caught in the extremely restricted range of subject matter open to artists; virtually all were portraits, of people, their houses, their estates and their animals. Art in the Great Tradition, that is art which took as its subject matter heroic, historical and mythological themes, was viewed as something foreign. In England that kind of painting was the province of immigrants to the country or something which could be purchased in what was the beginning of a market in old master paintings. By 1700 there was already in existence a network of highly professional dealers who organised the import of over a thousand pictures annually into England. As in the case of publishing this had meant sweeping away a monopoly, in this instance that of the Painter Stainers Company who had made it illegal to import foreign art. By the opening years of the eighteenth century all of this had been dismantled and by 1750 five to ten major picture sales were held each year in London. This was to be the collecting century.

In one sense this only aggravated the situation as far as it concerned native artists, who were not only up against foreign competition but also the increasing cult of old masters. Aristocrats who had been on the Grand Tour naturally looked down on English painters as somehow inferior, being neither genteel nor in possession of a classical training. The problem was how to raise the status of native artists and their work. The general consensus was that this had to be achieved by the artists essaying works within the Great Tradition. Shaftesbury had cast art, reflective as it was of the order, proportion and harmony of God's universe, into the role of being a pathway to virtue. The subjects which artists chose should be those which would instil thoughts of civic virtue into the onlooker, scenes of classical history and mythology, stirring patriotic moments and mythological allegories. In this he subscribed to what the continental academies recognised as the hierarchy of genres, in which history painting as it was designated was recognised as the summit of artistic achievement. Everything else occupied a lower niche. British artists therefore needed to graft their work on to the Great Tradition as enshrined in the works of the masters of the Renaissance and of classical antiquity, a theme which the *Spectator* echoed in its papers on 'The Pleasures of the Imagination'. It was a view also popularized by the writings of the influential theorist Jonathan Richardson who joined the chorus calling for an elevated native art in the Great Tradition. This did not depict what was actually seen but rather '. . . a painter must raise his eyes beyond what he sees, and form a model of perfection in his own mind which is not to be found in reality.' In a series of essays (1715-19) Richardson produced the standard works on art criticism which were to set the agenda for the century, leading to the triumph of those who advocated the adoption

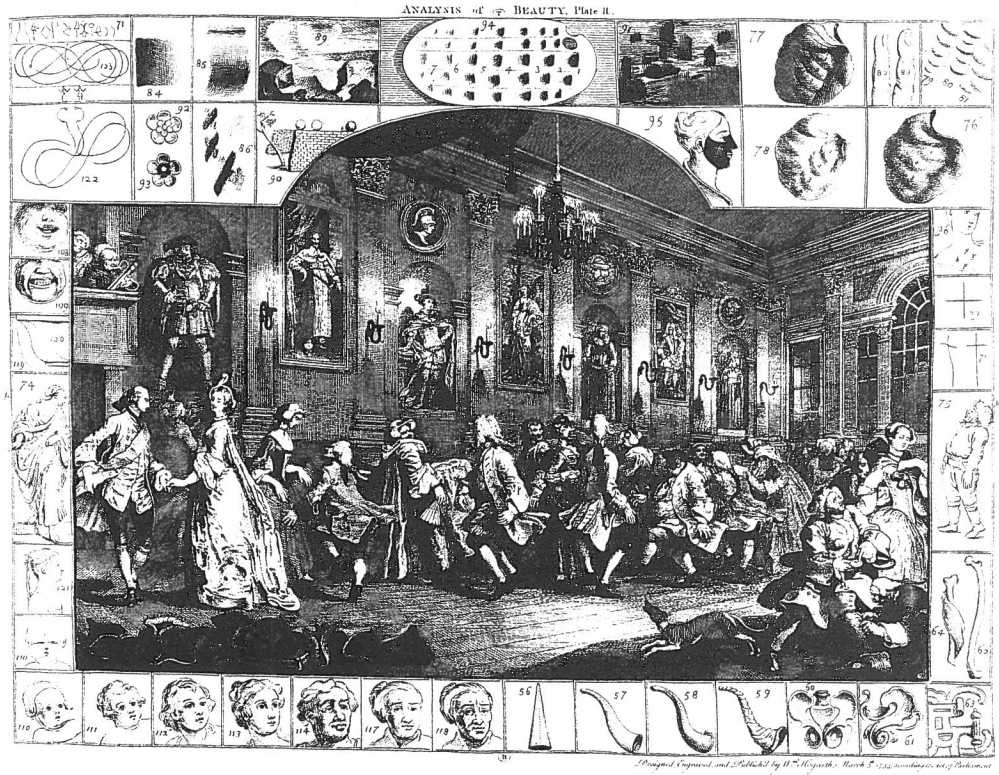
of the Great Tradition and to the founding of the Royal Academy.

Inspired by Richardson one group of painters, headed by Arthur Pond, came together and started the Roman Club to discuss and promote Italian art. Members of the club went to Italy in 1725 and that voyage henceforth was seen more and more to be indispensable for any painter with aspirations. Not everyone went along with this viewpoint and one painter in particular, William Hogarth, was to spend his entire career attacking everything he considered smacked of abroad. The Palladian style, the Italian opera and the worship of the old masters were all anathema to him. He was, of course, as any analysis of his work reveals, keenly aware of the heritage of the past, but his chief pride lay in being resolutely British. He drew around himself a contrary group of painters who met at Old Slaughter's Coffee House in St. Martin's Lane forming an imbalanced, anarchic, anti-academic off-beat group. Hogarth's programme for the future of British art was a very different one and he summed it up in *The Analysis of Beauty* (1753), in which he attacked the tyranny of academic rules and advocated a British school that did not look either to antiquity or Italy. Instead he directed the artist to look at what he saw in the streets of London. In this he was a pure disciple of John Locke, basing his arguments not on the authority of the past but on personal observation and on rational enquiry into the working of the human mind. Beauty for Hogarth was founded not on ideal but empirical principles, its perception part of the Lockeian realm of sensation. Sadly Hogarth compromised his dismissal of the world of academe by substituting for it a rule of his own, 'the serpentine line', something which was to make the young Joshua Reynolds's attack on Hogarth in *The Idler* (1759) all the easier. Later Reynolds dismissed the painter's work as not even worthy of a place in the academic hierarchy of genres since Hogarth was an artist, in his opinion, who had expended his powers 'on low and confined subjects.'

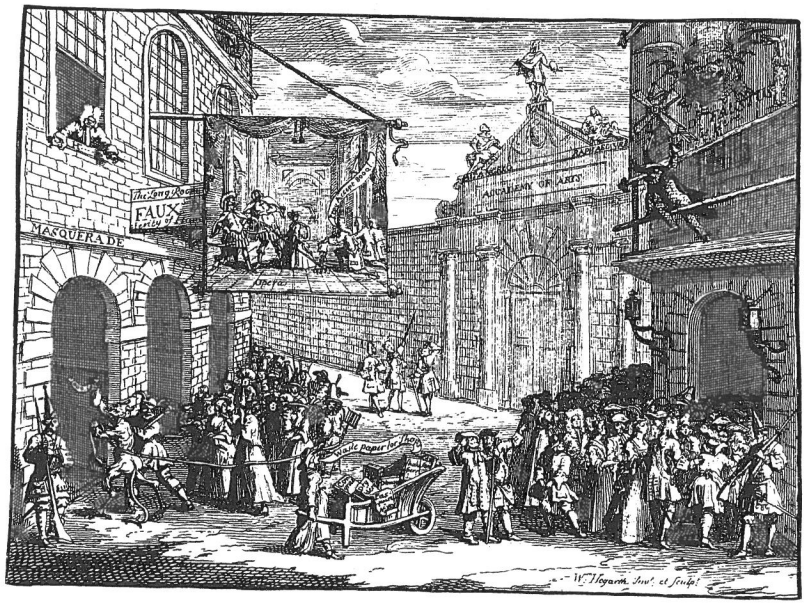
Hogarth is the great maverick of the age, radical and pugnacious, a man who had fought his way up from poverty and the social exclusion of dissent. In that sense he had much in common with the other native giant, Pope, with whom he also shared a hunger for status, money, the high life and social acceptance. Most of it he got, although not on Pope's exalted level, for Hogarth was touchy, envious and angry and most of his work was aimed at tearing into shreds the official vision of Augustan England. Beneath the patina of frothing lace, stiff brocade and rustling silks his eye spied not only the dirty linen but worse. His was an acutely literary turn of mind which revelled in meanings and double-meanings making him fit more naturally into the gallery of the novelists than in that of the painters of the day.

Hogarth was the son of an impoverished classics teacher. Brought up in the Smithfield area of London he was familiar from childhood with the popular culture

of the streets and with the seamier side of urban life. When he was seventeen he was apprenticed to an engraver and decided that his way up would be by learning copperplate engraving so that he could respond to the boom in prints. In 1720, when he was twenty-three, he joined the new artists' academy in St. Martin's Lane (the only place where artists could draw from the nude model and receive instruction) where he learned to draw and paint. His first major print appeared in 1724, *Masquerades and Operas* or *The Taste of the Town*, a scathing attack on the vogue for Italian opera, the fashion for fancy dress masquerades and pantomimes, as well as a swipe at William Kent and Lord



A country dance, a plate from William Hogarth's The Analysis of Beauty *(1753), the painter's treatise in which he argues in favour of the serpentine Line of Grace as the formal basis of aesthetic theory.*



Hogarth's satire Masquerades and Operas *(1724) attacks fashionable fads for both. To the left the opera impresario Heidegger leans out of a window welcoming those who flock to the Italian opera, a scene from which is on the billboard, while, to the right, another crowd presses to get into a masquerade while someone trundles away the works of Shakespeare and other playwrights as so much rubbish. In the background atop a Palladian arch Michelangelo and Raphael 'worship' another of Hogarth's* bêtes noires, *William Kent.*

Burlington's promotion of the Palladian style. His next eruption on to the scene came as the painter of no less than five versions of *The Beggar's Opera* which brought together everything which obsessed him most, from low life to another tilt at Lord Burlington.

The mainstream of his work during this period, however, was conversation pictures, a new form of group portrait which had its origins on the Continent but which mirrored exactly the new conviviality of polite society. Hogarth had a natural skill for catching a likeness but in the end he was to view these pictures as 'a kind of drudgery'. By that time he had hit upon the format which was to ensure him immortality. He decided, in his own words, 'to turn my thoughts to a still more new way of proceeding, viz painting and Engraving modern moral Subjects, a Field unbroke up in any Country or any age . . .' 'My picture,' he wrote, 'was my stage and men and women were my actors . . .'

A Harlot's Progress (1730) appeared in engraved form in 1732. It had attracted over twelve hundred subscribers and made the artist a small fortune. Hogarth was an astute businessman, executing and marketing the engravings himself, cutting out the middlemen. The idea of a series of pictures on a moral theme as a story sequence was absolutely innovative and in them Hogarth revealed himself to be both a storyteller and a satirist in the great tradition. He also had the rare judgement to be able to indulge in narrative social comedy of a kind which could also be enjoyed by its victims. And *A Harlot's Progress*, which told the story of a country girl's arrival in London and downward spiral into prostitution, had plenty of recognisable people in it. Resembling in a way a medieval morality play recast for Georgian London, these were ambivalent images which could be read many ways by the viewer. In them Hogarth was able to indulge in displays which were prurient but set within a framework which was unanswerably edifying.

A Rake's Progress (c.1733) repeats the formula. Hogarth's Tom Rakewell is a bourgeois who is seduced into a way of life he cannot possibly afford. Beneath it all he retains a sensibility so that in the end his mind snaps and he ends in the madhouse. With *Marriage à la Mode* (c.1743) these sequences reach their highest point in the story of the consequences of an arranged match between an alderman's daughter and the syphilitic son of a bankrupt earl. Others followed, but only in the form of engravings aimed at reforming the apprentice classes, among them *Industry and Idleness* (1747) and *The Four Stages of Cruelty* (1751). By that date Hogarth had become a survivor from an earlier age.

Hogarth was a mass of contradictions but he remains a genius, a great humanitarian, a man who cared about the fate of his fellow artists, of foundlings left on the London streets, and animals. It was Hogarth who was instrumental in persuading Jonathan Tyers to commission canvases by contemporary British painters for Vauxhall and who offered his services free to St. Bartholomew's Hospital to decorate its staircase, rather than see the commission go to an Italian. Although a failure as a history painter himself, he executed works as gifts for the new Foundling Hospital and set in motion its role of bringing together works by British painters in a venue which was visited and patronised by everyone of note of the day. His portrait of the hospital's founder, Thomas Coram, depicts a warm-hearted merchant endowed with the trappings of a baroque prince. It was Hogarth, too, who fought for a copyright act for artists which he got in 1735. Like Shakespeare his name has become an adjective evoking at once a whole world, one of telling details, from a cosmeticised face to a cat climbing up the back of a chair. Nothing escaped his unerring eye for the follies of this world and the sad reality of human weakness. From him was to stem the mighty stream of British caricature and cartoon but in the case of painting he was to

A scene from one of Hogarth's modern moralities, Marriage à la Mode *(c.1743), a series which attacks property marriages, a daughter of a wealthy businessman being sacrificed for a title. Here, the new countess is depicted at her toilette, with her lover suggesting a visit to a masquerade of the kind depicted on the screen. To the left an Italian castrato sings.*

be on the losing side against those who advocated the Great Tradition.

The opening decades of the eighteenth century make up some of the most complex and exhilarating in the country's cultural history. Everywhere one looks there is an extraordinary energy and drive, a feeling as to the possibility of things. At the same time the temptation to view the era solely through the eyes of hindsight has to be resisted. At its most misleading it presents a picture of a calm, united and triumphant Augustan age, the consequence of the Revolution of 1688 and the Hanoverian succession of 1714. The reality was that the country in the half century after 1688 was not only politically but culturally divided. Large swathes of the population would have welcomed a Stuart restoration which remained a possibility until the defeat of the Young Pretender in 1745. Up until then and beyond, above all in Scotland, there existed a vigorous Jacobite sub-culture expressed in a coming together of elements of Stuart high culture with folk elements such as songs and ballads.

In the case of the former we can trace Jacobitism in a range of symbols and references from Virgil's Aeneas, the exiled, wandering prince of the *Aeneid*, to allusions to that old Elizabethan myth of the return of Astraea and the golden age. Scholars argue as to how widespread that sentiment was, for it calls for an ability to read between the lines. Early Georgian government kept a firm lid on political dissent, so that those who opposed learned how to write in such a way as to be seemingly inoffensive and yet for those who recognised the signs and signals the meaning would be far different. In the higher cultural reaches Lord Burlington was not alone (there are other instances of 'Jacobite architecture'), for in the case of writers' works as diverse as Thomas

Otway's *Venice Preserved* and, later, Thomas Gray's 'The Bard' have been argued to be crypto-Jacobite. Pope's affinity, through his Catholicism, with the Stuart cause is at times only thinly concealed. In the case of England much of this must remain conjectural; in that of Scotland, Scottish nationalism and a cult of the Stuarts became inextricably linked.

In spite of this, as the decades of Hanoverian rule progressed there were accelerating moves towards creating a culture which was British, increasingly so after the Act of Union of 1707 which united England and Scotland. That consciousness was slow to develop but in 1750 the pace was beginning to quicken. Until the third quarter of the eighteenth century the cultural primacy of France was unchallenged. The court, the aristocracy and upper classes all read and spoke French as the *lingua franca* of European polite society. A period in France learning the language and a visit to Versailles were as important as a sojourn in Italy for those who made the Grand Tour. Figures of the stature of Voltaire and Rousseau enjoyed a European fame as representatives of the culture of the country which was the acknowledged home of the Enlightenment. In England it was only the middle classes who saw the French as the enemy and, worse, Roman Catholic, and who fostered a suspicion of all things foreign. Only with the outbreak of the French Revolution in 1789 were all the various elements to come together to create a coherent national cultural tradition, one to which all members of the educated classes could subscribe. Until then all cultural roads led first to Paris and then onwards to Rome.

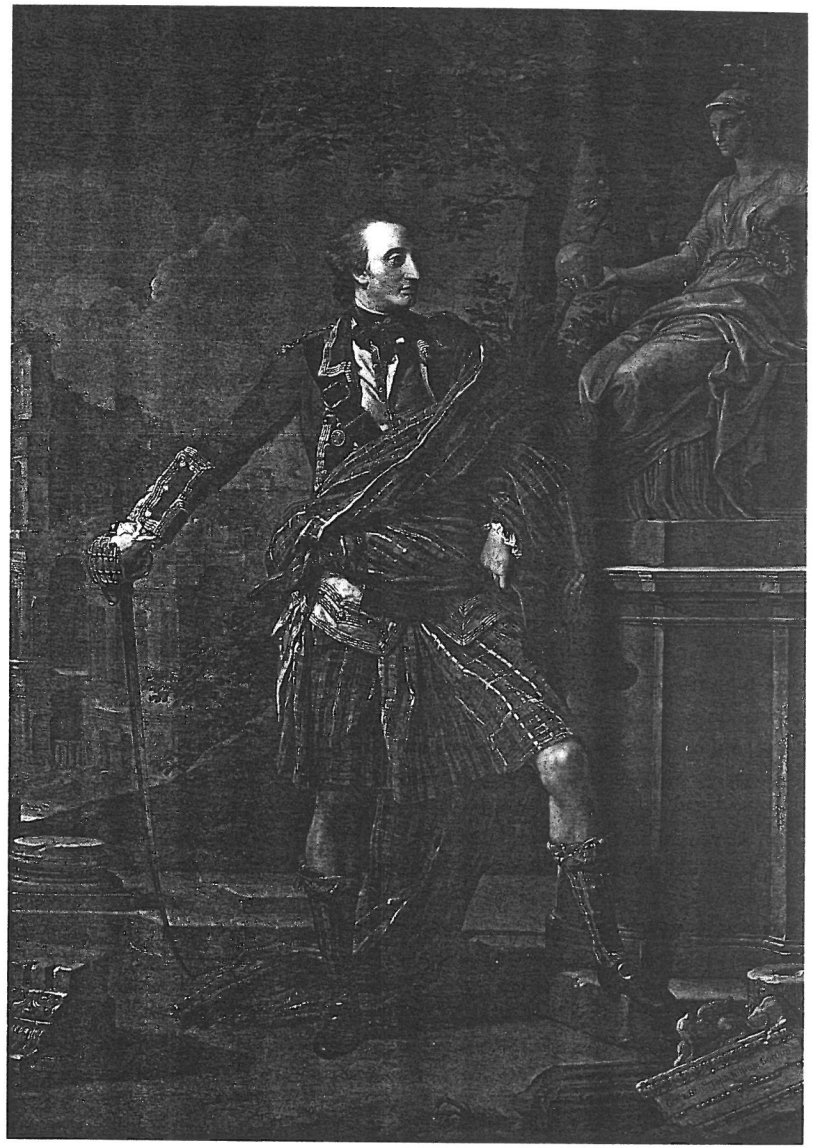
Hogarth's own engraved trade card.

Chapter Twenty-Six

THE GRAND TOUR AND AFTER

In 1711 John Talman, the virtuoso son of the architect William Talman, suggested to Lord Cornbury, then in Rome on the Grand Tour, that he should commission a picture. The subject matter was to be as follows: 'Learning and Arts as the Chief accomplishments of a Nobleman in order to render himself an ornament to his Country, showing Queen Anne receiving a group of Grand Tourists returning from Italy, surrounded by works of art and led by Minerva.' In this way Talman was depicting in allegorical terms what was to be a recurring theme of eighteenth century English culture, the transference of the classical tradition from the seat of its Latin origins, Italy, to the island of Britain. The great Whig aristocracy, who were in the political ascendant for the first half of the century, saw themselves as grave Roman senators. Indeed, often in their portraits and on their tombs they chose to be depicted thus, clad in toga, cuirass and sandals, although still bewigged. It was Ancient Rome that they identified with, both republican and early imperial. In the case of the former it was as representatives of a free democratic system as against the absolutism which prevailed on the Continent; in that of the latter it was the reign of the Emperor Augustus, a cultural golden age of patronage and creativity. And just as the Romans then had voyaged to Greece to seek inspiration for their own cultural renaissance so now it was the turn of the British to travel to Italy to accomplish the same end for their own country. Britain was seen not only as inheriting this cultural mantle but also the one of empire, as her victories spread her colonies and her commercial dominance across the globe. This was an age which had a deep-seated belief in the role of individual creative genius, in man's ability to scale the heights through academic study, industry and rational discourse. As a consequence, for the first time, the classical world was there not only as a source of inspiration but to be emulated and hopefully surpassed.

'After the manner of the Ancients' is a phrase which reverberates through the era. Up until the eighteenth



The Italian artist Pompeo Batoni painted virtually everyone of note who made the Grand Tour. Colonel William Gordon of Fyvie was a younger son of the Earl of Aberdeen. He sat in Rome in 1766 for this portrait in which Batoni arranged the tartan drapery as though it were a toga, surrounding the sitter as usual with items to evoke antiquity: a seated figure of Roma and a panorama of the Colosseum.

century knowledge of the classical world was sparse, confined in the main to what could be garnered from texts and illustrated books. Those, like the great Earl of Arundel and John Evelyn, who had actually seen the ruined reality of Ancient Rome through travel were few. Now all of that was to change as continental travel became one aspect of the consumer revolution which swept through not only the social élite but also extended more and more to those designated 'the middling sort', men of the new professional classes. As a result what was called the Grand Tour became a common experience shared by a vast swathe of the British ruling classes, so much so that those who had not experienced it, like the painter William Hogarth, were to be bitterly resentful of those who had, and of what they imported and represented.

But what was the Grand Tour? It was an acknowledgement of what Dr. Johnson was to put so eloquently: 'All our religion, all our arts, almost all that sets us above savages, has come from the shores of the Mediterranean.' Travelling abroad to view foreign countries in order to study their politics and customs was established as far back as the Elizabethan era. Indeed Francis Bacon in his essay *Of Travel* (1615) regarded it as an essential part of the education of any ambitious young man. But those who actually went were few because of wars, and more especially because of the theological divide which virtually closed Italy to Englishmen. The actual expression 'Grand Tour' was first used in the French translation of the *Voyage or Compleat Journey through Italy* written by a Catholic, Richard Lassels, published in 1670.

After the long wars against Louis XIV peace came at last, and although the first half of the century was not devoid of conflict travel became easier than ever before, and Enlightenment attitudes to religious belief began to thaw the religious divide. The golden decades were those following the Treaty of Paris in 1763. In that year Johann Winckelmann, the great German classical scholar, recorded that there were three hundred Englishmen in Rome simultaneously. This was the period when Brit-ain became the richest country, with an ever-expanding empire opening up new commercial opportunities around the globe. There was money to spend on an unprecedented scale, one which, in the past, had rarely passed beyond royalty or the richest members of the aristocracy. As a consequence over six hundred country houses were built between 1760 and 1800, virtually all of them in the classical style and the majority during the two decades after 1760. Britain's cultural status also began to ride high, lifted internationally by the unparalleled prestige of Newton within the intellectual circles of the European Enlightenment. The idyll was only shattered by the loss of the American colonies and the French Revolution. The latter effectively put an end to the Grand Tour.

Peace having come, the British set out to cross the Channel and view the home of

the classical heritage which, through their education, they had come to cherish. That they did so was also prompted by the poor education offered at both Oxford and Cambridge, then in a state of decline. After Eton or Westminster the universities were replaced or supplemented by a sojourn of up to five years on the Continent. In the case of Thomas Coke, 1st Earl of Leicester, it lasted as long as six. No other country matched Britain in the sheer numbers of people who went on the Grand Tour, so much so that it became in essence a British phenomenon. It also covered a remarkably wide spectrum of society including both aristocrats and commoners, patrons and collectors, artists and designers, and, in addition, many women. Taken together those who went made up what has been described as a 'virtual' or 'invisible' academy.

The serious side involved learning foreign languages, studying the history, politics and laws of each country. That also embraced looking at architecture, art and antiquities. A young man was expected to return endowed with all the attributes that would enable him to move with assurance in international courtly aristocratic society, being fluent in at least French, graceful in his deportment and polished in his manners. Such a young person did not of course embark on the tour ill-equipped, for he would have been reared on classical texts and could even have read the works of writers such as Dante, Boccaccio and Tasso. He would also have been familiar with Italian music and opera. Such young men travelled either singly or in groups, under the supervision of what was called a bear-leader. For great aristocrats who travelled alone there was a governor. In either instance, these people tended to be antiquarians, often fussy incompetent clergymen, pedagogues or place-seekers; they had great difficulty in controlling their charges who were not only their social superiors but more often than not were far more bent on savouring the women of a town than visiting its distinguished buildings.

The route that was taken became a more or less fixed one. Over the Channel to Calais it began in the Low Countries and France, passing south to cross into Italy either by mountain pass, over Mont Cenis, to Turin or by sea from Marseilles to Genoa or Livorno. Then followed the *giro d'Italia*: Florence, Rome, Naples, back to Rome and up over the Apennines to Venice. Then Vicenza, Verona, Milan and thence to Switzerland, Germany and back to Calais and home. Travelling was not easy and contemporary accounts, of which there are many, form an unending hymn of complaints about bad roads, poor inns, coaches devoid of springs, fear of plague, awful food and venal customs officials. French being the *lingua franca*, some months were usually passed at an academy in the Loire area learning the language as well as being instructed in social graces like dancing and fencing. To appear in Paris a man had to re-dress himself from head to toe. Visits to the great buildings, libraries and art col-

lections there were *de rigueur* but no one seemed to have much time for the city which was regarded as filthy. Versailles, the seat of the French court, was also deemed an essential experience but liked even less, pronounced by Smollett to be 'a dismal habitation' and by Horace Walpole a 'lumber of littleness.'

Italy, however, was something quite different. It was Parnassus, the Elysian Fields and the Garden of the Hesperides all wrapped into one. Travellers arrived with a preconceived notion of the country, a nexus of ideas, often vague and inaccurate, which, to the generation which came of age in the unique liberal political regime which emerged after 1688, made Italy a kind of paradise. But only in retrospect, for the country was now visited with minds and eyes firmly fixed on the past, on Ancient Rome and the Renaissance. The Italy of that time, a series of self-contained weakly governed states, was looked upon with a withering condescension. In vain will one look for references to many of the great living artists, an architect like Juvarra or a painter like Tiepolo. Nonetheless, as Joseph Addison wrote in his *Remarks on Several Parts of Italy* (1750): 'There is certainly no place in the World where a Man may Travel with greater Pleasure and Advantage than in Italy.' That pleasurable vision was largely formulated by pictures, the harmonious classical landscapes of Claude with their idyllic calm and diffused golden sunlight or the soul-stirring grandeur of the sublime scenes of Salvator Rosa with their sinister mountains, jagged rocks and shattered trees. To that they were to add the architectural fantasies of the artists Pannini and Piranesi and the perpetual pageant of Venice as caught by Canaletto and Bellotto. And at the heart of it all lay the lure of actually seeing the reality of classical antiquity, known about virtually only from literary texts.

The time of the year to reach Italy was autumn, the visitor heading south for warmth during the winter months. Movement was also conditioned by the need to catch certain great festivities and spectacles, carnival in Rome, Venice or Naples, Holy Week in Rome and Ascension Day in Venice. Four cities were critical to every traveller: Florence, Rome, Naples and Venice. Even more than in the previous century Italy was seen to be the fount of art, literature, philosophy and music. This was therefore the Grand Tourist's cultural mecca.

These tours were greatly facilitated by diplomatic representatives and other British residents in Italy. Such people were able to open doors, arrange for licences to visit and excavate archaeological sites, and also introduce travellers to dealers in old master paintings and antiquities. Horace Mann, for example, was resident in Florence for half a century entertaining everyone who passed through the city to view its fabulous art collections, both old master paintings and legendary classical statues such as the 'Venus de'Medici', 'The Dancing Faun' and 'The Wrestlers.' This experience of the

British connoisseurs in Rome, c.1750, responding with animation to the relics of classical antiquity, the Colosseum and the Arch of Constantine.

classical world would reach its climax in Rome which was one long series of visits to historic sites as well as tours of the great sculpture collections in the Capitoline Museum and the Museo Pio-Clementino. Then there were excursions to Tivoli to view Hadrian's Villa and along the Appian Way to inspect the tombs of the Roman nobility as well as to Lakes Nemi and Albano. Direct contact with the Jacobite court had to be avoided and also with the papal court, although its art treasures, headed by the greatest works of Michelangelo and Raphael, had to be seen as the summit of painterly achievement. And of course many sat for their portraits, for it was cheap. Some two hundred sat for Pompeo Batoni, giving us a unique gallery of these young men endowed by his brush with a sensuous high glamour as they posed nonchalantly amidst the ruins of imperial Rome.

Travelling south the visitor entered the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies with its capital Naples. Naples at that date was the third most populous city in Western Europe. With its miraculous climate and its breathtaking bay, not to mention the threatening backcloth of Mount Vesuvius, Naples offered the traveller astonishing contrasts. And, in 1768, Sir William Hamilton arrived as ambassador. He was to remain for almost

thirty years, a presence rendered legendary by his liaison with Emma Hart whom he married in 1791. To him this stunningly beautiful young girl was a maiden from classical antiquity returned to earth, a living art object parallel to items in his fabled collection of antique vases. His first collection he sold to the British Museum in 1772 with the object of informing not only antiquaries but also artists. The great potter, Josiah Wedgwood, and his partner, Thomas Bentley, were to make a fortune manufacturing reproductions of them. For the serious visitor Naples was the home of the poet Virgil and it was possible to visit what was thought to be his tomb and grotto at Posillipo. They were also able to see the Temple of the Cumaean Sybil and Lake Avernus where Aeneas, the hero of the *Aeneid*, had made his descent to Hades. Later in the century they pushed further south to inspect the temples at Paestum. Earlier they had all the excitement of the excavations at Herculaneum (1731) and Pompeii (1748), seeing more of classical life than had ever been seen before. And there was always the terrifying ascent of Vesuvius to be made when soles of shoes were scorched by the heat of the lava.

Venice had maintained continuous relations with England for over a century. The republic was admired for its political stability and seeming prosperity. There the consul, John Smith, and others acted as dealers and brokers for works of a school of painting for which the English had long had a passion. In the great public buildings and churches they could drink their fill of Titian, Tintoretto and Veronese. Along the Brenta were dotted the villas of Palladio and in Vicenza they could savour the major concentration of his work including the Teatro Olimpico. Venice must always have been an extraordinary revelation, contradicting as it did everything that epitomised English upper class life, for there were no country houses as such, no horses and no outdoor field sports.

Italy was shopping. In spite of the consignments of old master paintings, works in *pietra dura* and *scagliola*, bales of rich textiles and Venetian glass, the greatest prize of all was the acquisition of classical antiquities: sculpture, vases, cameos, gems, coins and medals. Gavin Hamilton, the Scottish painter and dealer, wrote to the collector, Charles Townley, in 1779: 'Never forget that the most valuable acquisition a man of refined taste can make is a piece of fine Greek sculpture.' The purchase of antiquities obsessed the British. In Rome it was in the control of two men, Thomas Jenkins and James Byres, who saw to it that the flow, for example, of antique cameos never quite dried up nor that of antique busts and statues which were 'restored.' The papacy moreover was anxious, in the aftermath of the collapse of the Jacobite cause, to restore relations with Britain and so granted licences to excavate, always with the proviso that the pick of what was found went into the papal collections.

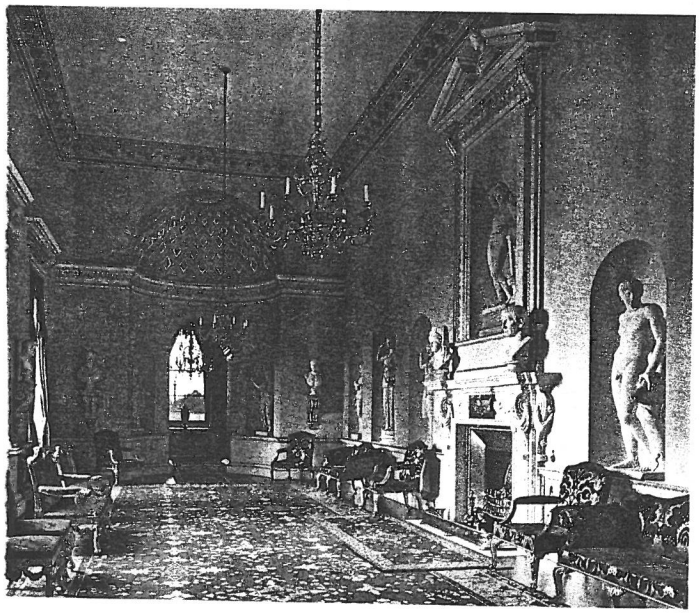
As a result the British took a leading part in what was a renaissance in archaeological scholarship. A whole series of grand publications appeared which provided measured drawings and views of what had been discovered. The consequence was to change people's perception of the classical past. Suddenly antiquity ceased to be part of a single stream flowing down to the present. It became instead another country as periods began to be compartmentalised one from the other: Antiquity, the Dark Ages, the Middle Ages and the Renaissance. Books which came out from the 1750s onwards were to fuel a dramatic change in visual style, one which we associate with the word neo-classical. The earliest was Robert Wood's *Ruins of Palmyra* (1753) followed four years later by his *The Ruins of Baalbeck*. James 'Athenian' Stuart and Nicholas Revett went to Greece and in 1762 produced the first volume of their *The Antiquities of Athens*. Two years later followed Robert Adam's *Ruins of the Palace of the Emperor Diocletian at Spalatro* [Split] *in*

Classical antiquity transported. Charles Townley's house in Westminster was open to those who wished to inspect his collection of antiquities. It contributed greatly to the emergence of the neo-classical style.

Dalmatia. These and others by both English and foreign writers recorded not only the Roman world as it had manifested itself in places hitherto unrecorded but began to push back in time and begin the rediscovery of Greek civilisation.

Such a ferment could only have major repercussions at home. Many of course may have returned from the Grand Tour with only confused memories and a sigh of relief or, as Lady Mary Wortley Montagu tartly put it: 'The boys only remember where they met with the best Wine and the prettyest Women.' But a minority responded, returning with their minds enriched, bringing to English culture a cosmopolitan influence, a refinement of manner and an intellectual curiosity which in fact brought about a lasting change in English art, architecture, music and manners.

Although the greatest age of collecting had yet to come, the Grand Tour began to fill the country and town houses of Georgian Britain with works of art. In houses like Saltram (Devon), Corsham Court (Wiltshire), and Felbrigg Hall (Norfolk), special cabinet rooms were built to accommodate what their owners had brought back. An aristocrat like the 2nd Marquess of Annandale returned in 1720 with over three hundred pictures for his great house at Hopetoun. These often included copies of some of the most famous Italian works by Raphael, Titian, Guido Reni and Correggio which were far more valued than originals by lesser artists. Then there were the sculpture collections. Here interest focused less on fragments, whatever their quality, than on complete pieces. To purchasers the subject matter of a piece of classical sculpture



The Statue Gallery at Holkham Hall, Norfolk, built during the 1750s was designed to display the collection of Greek and Roman sculpture acquired by Thomas Coke, 1st Earl of Leicester.

was of far more importance than any claim to its authenticity. Restoration and general fakery in response to demand was rife. But now the sculpture galleries of Arundel and Burlington were to spawn their progeny in houses like Holkham (Norfolk), Petworth (Sussex), Chatsworth (Derbyshire), Woburn (Bedfordshire) and Newby Hall (Lincolnshire). In these cases special galleries were built for their display. In most houses the gesture made was to relegate the family portraits to back passages and transform the entrance hall into a classical pantheon.

Such collections were evidence of something else, the evolution of the virtuoso into the connoisseur. The virtuoso of the previous century had filled his cabinet with curiosities which could range from medals and gems to minerals and shells. A collection was viewed as assembling a compendium of God's miraculous creation of the natural world and its transmutation at the hands of art. The connoisseur in the eighteenth century was someone far different. His eye was able to differentiate the work of the master from the hand of his assistant or studio in the case, for instance, of a painter. Collections now became assemblies of the new fine arts, painting, sculpture, drawings, classical antiquities, prints, gems and medals. The prize exhibits of the virtuoso's cabinet, items like a unicorn's horn, were relegated, evidence of the old world picture which the Enlightenment had banished. To be a connoisseur moreover proclaimed that one had been on the Grand Tour, for only through that could such pronouncements of the discerning eye be cultivated.

In no area was that vision of Britain as Ancient Rome reborn more evident than in architecture and interior decoration. This was the classical century as houses were either built or rebuilt by owners who had been on the tour. Everywhere one looks the same neo-classical vocabulary occurs of anthemion and patera, winged griffin and tripod urn. The classical style and repertory of decoration swept its way through interior design embracing every artefact from door furniture to carpets, from plaster ceiling to the plates on the dinner table. Once taken up it was to change the living style of members of the 'middling class' who would never even have the chance of foreign travel.

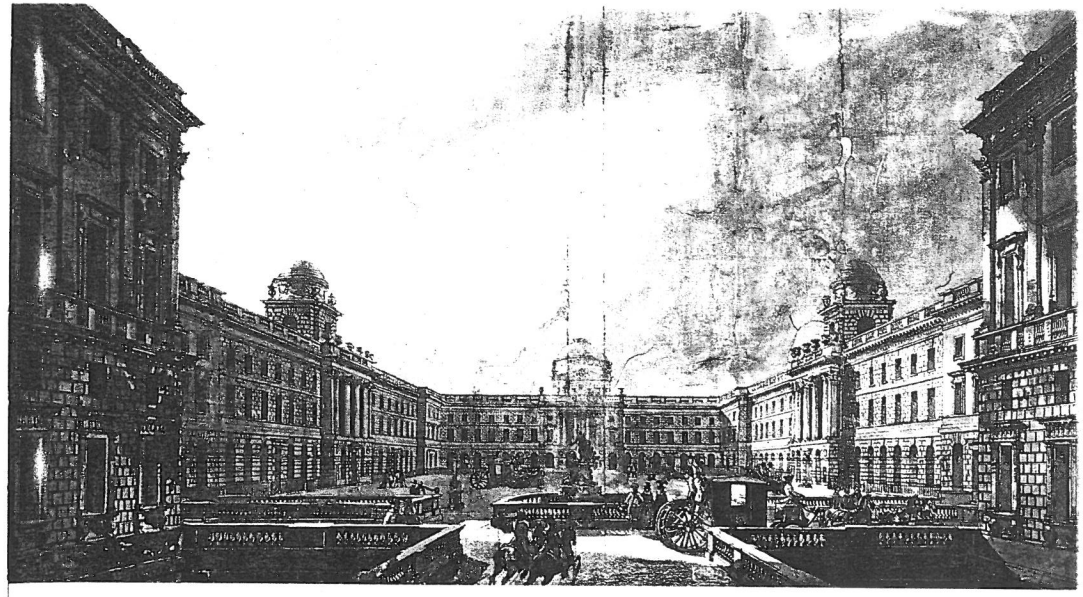
Rome in the 1750s was full of young British architects studying the remains of antiquity, among them the two men who were to dominate the architectural scene during the decades following the 1760s, Sir William Chambers and Robert Adam. Both were exponents of the emerging neo-classical style which had been initially pioneered by French and Italian architects in a quest to peel away the later accretions of the Renaissance and baroque periods in a search for first principles. The new attitude to the past brought about through the recent archaeological discoveries meant that architectural style ceased to be part of an historical continuum but instead

became a choice from one of a series of period compartments. Both Chambers and Adam in their separate ways were to wrestle with the consequences of this in their respective careers. Both were fundamentally classicists and their work, symptomatic of a vast array of new building which went on all over the country in the classical manner, seemed to stem from the assumption that a nation which was the focus of an empire exceeding in scale that of Ancient Rome called for a style which spoke of imperial grandeur.

Chambers studied in both Paris and Italy, where he spent five years. In 1755 he returned to England gaining an introduction to the future George III, thus securing royal favour. Throughout the 1760s and 1770s Chambers was responsible for a whole series of town and country houses, but he was unique in having the opportunity to design the only major public building of the century, Somerset House. That its predecessor was Greenwich Palace, begun in the 1660s, is some indication of the absence of royal initiatives. Elsewhere in absolutist Europe the palace was still the major vehicle. In Britain that role had been passed to the aristocratic country house. The Hanoverians never built a great palace, failed even to rehouse Parliament, although the schemes were many. In 1775, however, the idea of putting various government departments under a single roof was mooted. Old Somerset House was razed to the ground and the present building arose, magnificent in parts, monumental in scale but always somehow falling short. Perhaps the very multiplicity of functions that it was meant to fulfil (including housing the Royal Academy of Arts in its early stages) eroded its focus. It is nonetheless Chambers's masterpiece, thoughtful, sensitive, yet episodic. Its courtyard has been likened rightly to that of a Georgian town square.

Chambers ended a knight of the realm and that reflected the shift in status which was affecting the professions. In the past, in the case of architects, they had either been carpenters or masons or they had been gentlemen, like Lord Burlington, who practised architecture at a remove. But with the new polish and learning acquired by the Grand Tour the architect was seen gradually to take on the status of gentleman in his own right. On the tour these young hopefuls would have mingled with and met their future patrons on virtually equal terms. That the divide was only gradually eroded can be learnt from a letter written by Robert Adam while he was still studying: 'If I am known in Rome to be an Architect, if I am seen drawing or with a pencil in my hand, I cannot enter into genteel company . . .' Adam was to be one of the men who was to change all of that.

Adam has given his name to a style which conjures up a whole epoch. It is one which is instantly recognisable, a unique synthesis uniting columns and carpets,



The courtyard of Sir William Chambers's masterpiece, Somerset House in the Strand, built from 1775 onwards, epitomises the triumph of neo-classicism.

pedestals and porticos in a single visual evocation of the world of Greece and Rome. Adam, the son of a landed Scottish architect, had only one ambition in life, to dominate the architecture of his age. He embarked on his career with the advantages of a good education and of foreign travel and study in Italy. Even while in Rome in the 1750s he knew that his only possible rival was Chambers, categorised at that date as a 'formidable foe.'

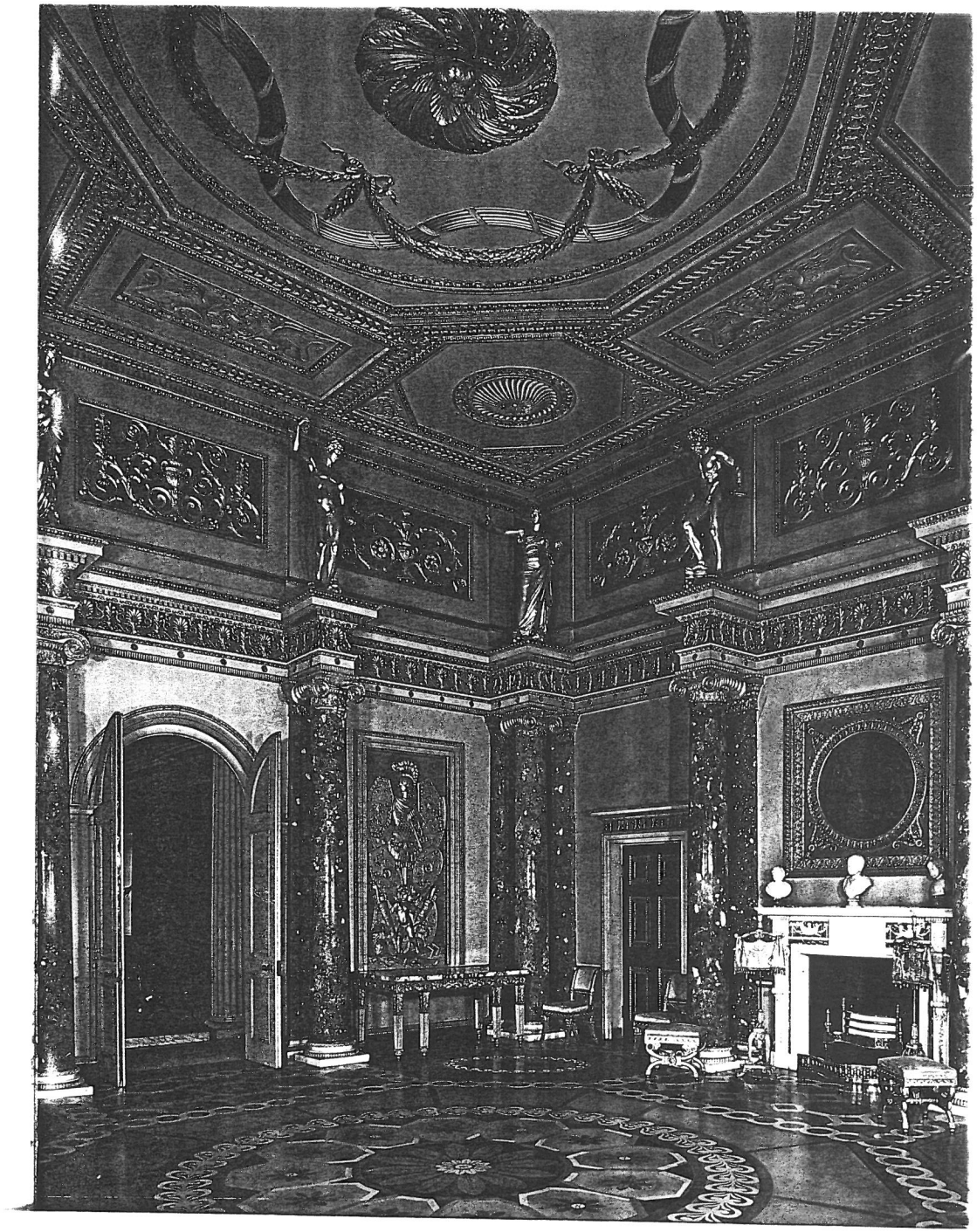
Adam arrived in London in 1758 setting himself up jointly with his brother James in the grand manner as the social equal of his clients. His publicity machine knew no bounds, he himself proclaiming: '. . . to have brought about in this country, a kind of revolution in the whole system of this useful and elegant art.' His was a vision of a new architecture based on his own response to the public and domestic building of imperial Rome as revealed through the new archaeology. There was no lack of wealthy patrons to whose demands he responded by providing a living style which now called for contrasting enclosures for specific social purposes, dining, playing cards, conversation or dancing. His style was to work from the fundamental idea that the Romans did not adhere to rules but that such rules as they had were elastic, to be adapted as the architect thought fit. Drawing on a wide mélange of sources Adam formed a style unique for its richness of variety and its sense of movement. The roll call of great houses from the 1760s alone is breathtaking: Harewood House (York-

shire), Croome Court (Worcestershire), Kedleston (Derbyshire), Bowood (Wiltshire), Syon and Kenwood (Middlesex). Then, in the 1770s, followed a series of splendid town houses of which his surviving masterpiece is Home House, Portman Square. Such houses responded to the elaboration in entertaining as hostesses outvied each other in the ostentation and elegance of their interiors. In addition he embarked on a series of property developments, including the Adelphi, which was to prove a disaster and nearly bankrupted him.

The war with the American colonies and the French Revolution brought an end to the boom. Also, taste changed, and Adam became the target of criticism as tastemakers like Horace Walpole began to label him as a purveyor of 'gingerbread' and 'sippets of embroidery.' Money was tighter too, so Adam looked northwards to Scotland. In his later years he worked on Charlotte Square in Edinburgh, and, surprisingly, on a series of Scottish castles. Culzean for the Earl of Cassilis remains his masterpiece in that seemingly puzzling genre. Within, its rooms are neo-classical but outside, at first glance, it would seem to have little connection with what had gone before. But in Adam's view of history castle architecture was a direct descendant of the architecture which the Romans had brought to Britain. In his squaring of the medieval castle into the classical tradition he is in fact touching something central to the age, the desire to reconcile the two as twin aspects of a single civilisation.

The significance of Adam was to be far wider than any other architect of the period because he gave birth to what we know as the 'Adam Style', one still recognisable at a glance and one also which crossed not only this country but Europe and the United States, where it is known as the 'Federal Style'. The reason that this was so is because Adam's work coincided with the building boom of the 1760s and 1770s. His influence was huge because he provided a synthesis of the latest fashions, drawing on old and new, which could be applied to all manner of buildings, both public and private as well as large and small. His *Works in Architecture* (1773) gave everyone access to the ingredients of the style in which ponderous Palladianism was banished as well as the fripperies of the Frenchified rococo which had enjoyed some success in the 1740s and 1750s. Adam was the first architect to devise an overall integrated look to a house which ran through everything in it, from its façade to the silver on the table. The gospel of neo-classicism stemming from the British archaeologists and turned into a reality for the present by Adam was copied by countless imitators.

Although the Adelphi terraces had been a near disaster for the architect they set new standards in urban housing, for it was the first development in which



All the magnificence of imperial Rome was evoked by Robert Adam for this ante-room at Syon Park, Middlesex, for the 1st Duke of Northumberland. The twelve Ionic columns veneered with verd-antique scagliola *were purchased in Rome in 1765 by Robert's brother, James.*

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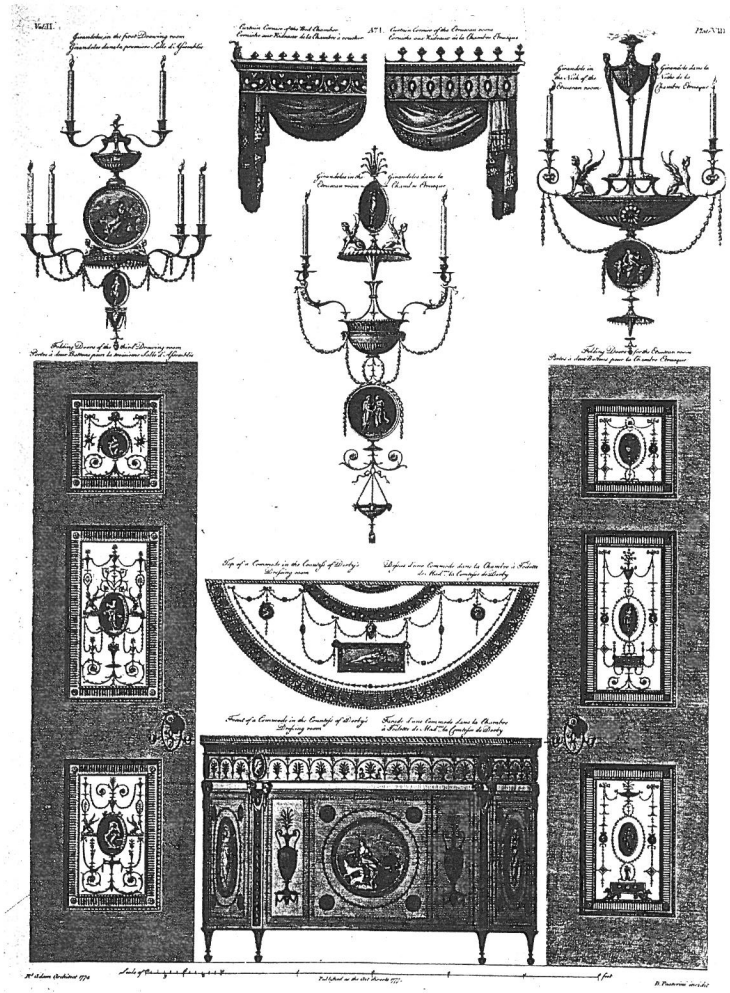
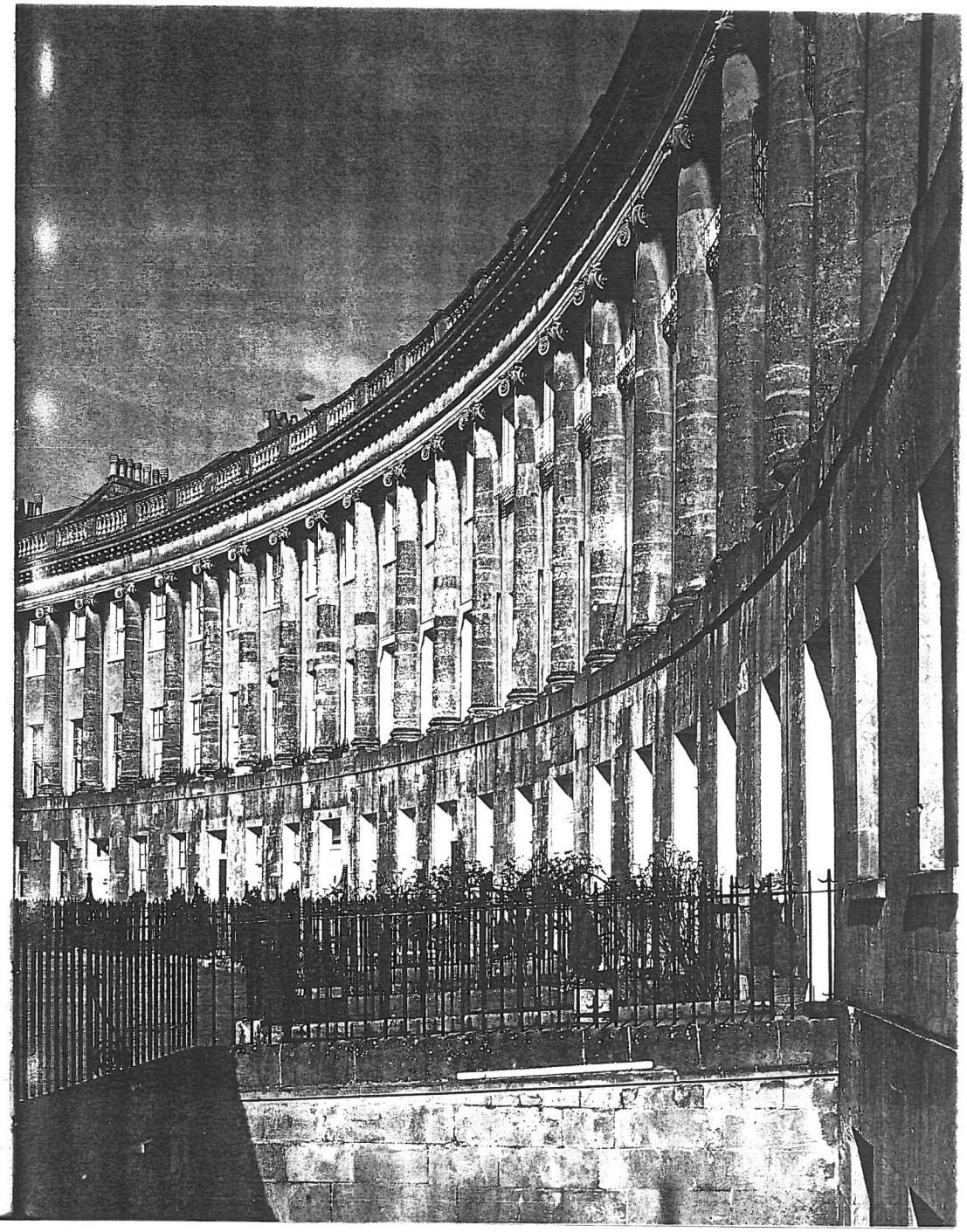


Designs for decorations for interiors from Robert Adam's Works in Architecture *(1773-78). Strong architectural forms are set off by delicacy of line combined with the use of a repertory of neo-classical motifs such as vases and griffins. Such a publication was a public relations exercise and spread the highly adaptable style.*



The Royal Crescent, Bath, by John Wood the Younger, 1767-75, showing how vertical town houses were united to form a single sweeping classical composition which became the model for the next half century.

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houses were conceived as a single architectural composition, striking the eye at first glance from afar as a single Italian palazzo rather than a separate series of houses. All over Britain squares, crescents and terraces arose in the new neo-classical manner, designed by far lesser architects or just put up by jobbing property speculators from pattern books which spread the style across country and down the social scale. In the 1760s Edinburgh New Town arose, and in the fashionable spa resort of Bath the earlier speculative building by John Wood of Queen Square and the Circus (begun 1754) reached a climax in Royal Crescent (1767-1775). With its monumental sweeping curve this became the model for every grandiose housing project for over half-a-century. In London Bedford Square (completed 1783) scaled new heights of elegance as each side of the square assumed the mantle of a palace façade. What set these town houses apart from their European counterparts was that they were vertical and that however modest the façades, orders and other items from the repertory of the Adam style of decoration were used in order to give both emphasis and a sense of movement. The result was a style of house unequivocally British.

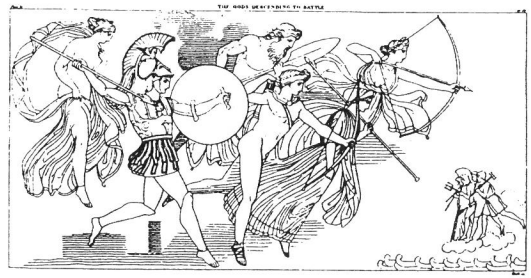
The Adam style was to be linked with two other great names, Thomas Chippendale and Josiah Wedgwood. Chippendale, like Adam, was an adept publicist. Born in Yorkshire he set up shop in London in 1753. Although he produced the first edition of his famous *Gentleman and Cabinet-Maker's Director* in 1754 it was to be the third edition in 1762 which promoted the neo-classical style. For thirty years Chippendale ran a team of some fifty craftsmen producing pieces from these designs in a range of styles which also included the rococo and chinoiserie, ones which were also copied by a host of minor workshops. His influence was to be European and stretched also into America. Chippendale furnished some of Adam's finest interiors and remained true to the neo-classical ideal.

Just as Chippendale fused the increasing demand for furniture to match the new neo-classical taste so the Staffordshire potter Josiah Wedgwood met the demand for ceramics in the same manner. With Thomas Bentley he opened his new works at Etruria in 1769. This was

Ceramics in the neo-classical style. Josiah Wedgwood's 'Homer Vase'. Such pieces were factory produced taking the new style into more homes than ever before.

factory production in a village specially built for the workmen. Wedgwood was to be the first ceramicist to harness the new simplicity and purity of the neo-classical style to everyday china. Through that and mass production what had hitherto been regarded as unattainable luxuries became generally accessible. What is so striking about the Adam Style is that it became the first to be taken up by the increasingly prosperous middle classes. It was one which could be adapted for the most modest of domestic interiors and as a consequence it has retained its hold to the present day.

Architects were not the only British artists studying in Rome in the 1750s. Painters and sculptors were too, and the impact of direct contact with the art of classical antiquity and of the 16th and 17th centuries was to be as profound on them also. Sculpture in England had been dominated by foreign artists, in the first half of the century by Michael Rysbrack and Louis François Roubiliac, the former an exponent of the baroque and the latter of a far more rococo style. Both had responded to the Augustan demand for works in the antique manner, particularly portrait busts. Joseph Wilton who had been in Rome in the 1750s returned to England with a zeal like Robert Adam's to raise the status of the artist. Wilton signals the advent for the first time of a native school of sculptors. Its greatest exponent was yet to come, the effect of contact with Italy being far less immediate than in the case of painting. That man was to be John Flaxman. He was a rare phenomenon, a British sculptor who enjoyed European fame, being praised by the great German writer Goethe, and the French neo-classical painter Ingres. Although he was not to get to Italy until he was nearly forty, Flaxman saturated himself in antiquity from youth onwards, devouring all the great archaeological volumes and studying the Greek vases from the Hamilton collection in the British Museum. The result of this was his extremely refined and elegant linear style of drawing, which eschewed the use of any shadow, and which he used for his illustrations to Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, published in 1793. These were known and acclaimed all over Europe and were re-issued many times. The same style was used by him for the many commissions which he received from the Wedgwood

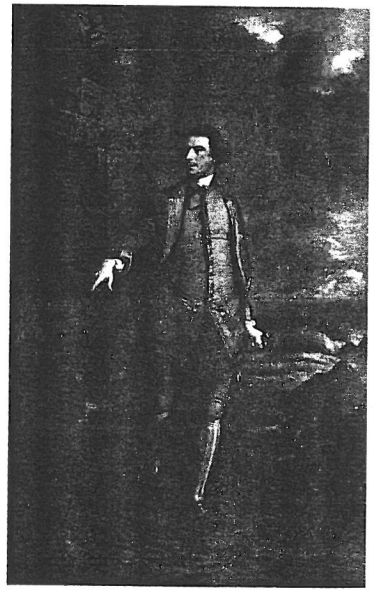


The neo-classical style in graphics. A plate from the sculptor John Flaxman's hugely influential Outline Drawings to Homer *(1793).*

pottery during the 1770s and 1780s. In Italy he deliberately set out to emulate antiquity in a series of works including *The Fury of Athamas* (1790) which was commissioned by the Earl Bishop of Bristol (almost a permanent Grand Tourist and the man after whom all the hotels are named) for his house at Ickworth, Suffolk where it remains. Back in England Flaxman embarked on a series of monumental tombs in the neo-classical manner taking the style through into the 1820s.

The effect of the Grand Tour on painting was to be accomplished with remarkable rapidity in the figure of one man, Joshua Reynolds, who arrived in Rome in 1750. He also, like Adam, was bent on lifting the status of his profession, inspired by the writings of Richardson and therefore wishing to see painting as a liberal art, recognised as the visual equivalent of tragic or epic poetry. The son of a Devon cleric, Reynolds had learnt his trade, for such it then was largely viewed, in the studio of the fashionable portrait painter, Thomas Hudson. Reynolds, however, knew that he could not succeed in his mission unless he had studied antique sculpture and the great works of the Renaissance. He remained in Italy for two years and arrived in London in 1753.

His earliest portrait, painted on his return as a demonstration piece, was designed to exhibit his revolutionary powers. Nothing quite like it had ever been seen before. He depicted the naval commander, Admiral Keppel, in a pose based on the famous 'Apollo Belvedere' striding, windswept, along a stormy foreshore, the whole rendered with a rich dark chiaroscuro effect derived from studying the work of Titian and Tintoretto. From that moment on Reynolds's career was one long triumph. Up to a hundred and fifty sitters came to him in any one year and his success was such by 1760 that he moved to a large house in Leicester Square with liveried servants. But his ultimate ascent to establishment fame was to come with the creation of an academy along the lines of those usual in other European countries.



Sir Joshua Reynolds's advertisement for his talents: the naval commander, Augustus Keppel, strides along the seashore in the pose of the famous classical statue, the Apollo Belvedere.

An informal academy of some kind had existed in Rome among British artists who aspired to painting history and mythology in what was called the Grand Style, that is a style modelled both on a study of antiquity and

of the great masters of the past. But it had languished. That the idea was revived was owed to an influential gentlemen's dining club, the Society of Dilettanti, which had been founded in 1734 for men who had been on the Grand Tour and which was to be responsible for some of the major publications devoted to the new archaeological discoveries. In 1755 the notion of an academy resurfaced leading to a tortuous history involving two rival groups of artists, the Free Society of Artists and the Incorporated Society of Artists, of which Reynolds was a leading light. The latter was granted a royal charter in 1765; three years later a group seceded from it and, with the aid of Sir William Chambers, gained the patronage of George III. The Royal Academy of Arts was the result and Reynolds was elected its first President with the accolade of knighthood bestowed the following year. Not only did the Academy guarantee an annual exhibition of its members' works but it set out to provide 'well-regulated schools of design' with a cast collection, a library, life classes, prizes and lectures. Reynolds became a leading member of a new cultural establishment, moving with ease in society and including among his closest friends Dr Johnson and Oliver Goldsmith. When he died in 1792 he had achieved what he had set out to do, elevate the insular and empirical tradition of British art to a more universal realm through becoming a living reincarnation of the old masters he worshipped. He was also to leave in his *Discourses on Art*, lectures delivered at the Academy to students and to 'people of fashion and dilettanti', a coherent body of practice so distinguished in thought and prose style that they were to earn a major place in the history of aesthetics.

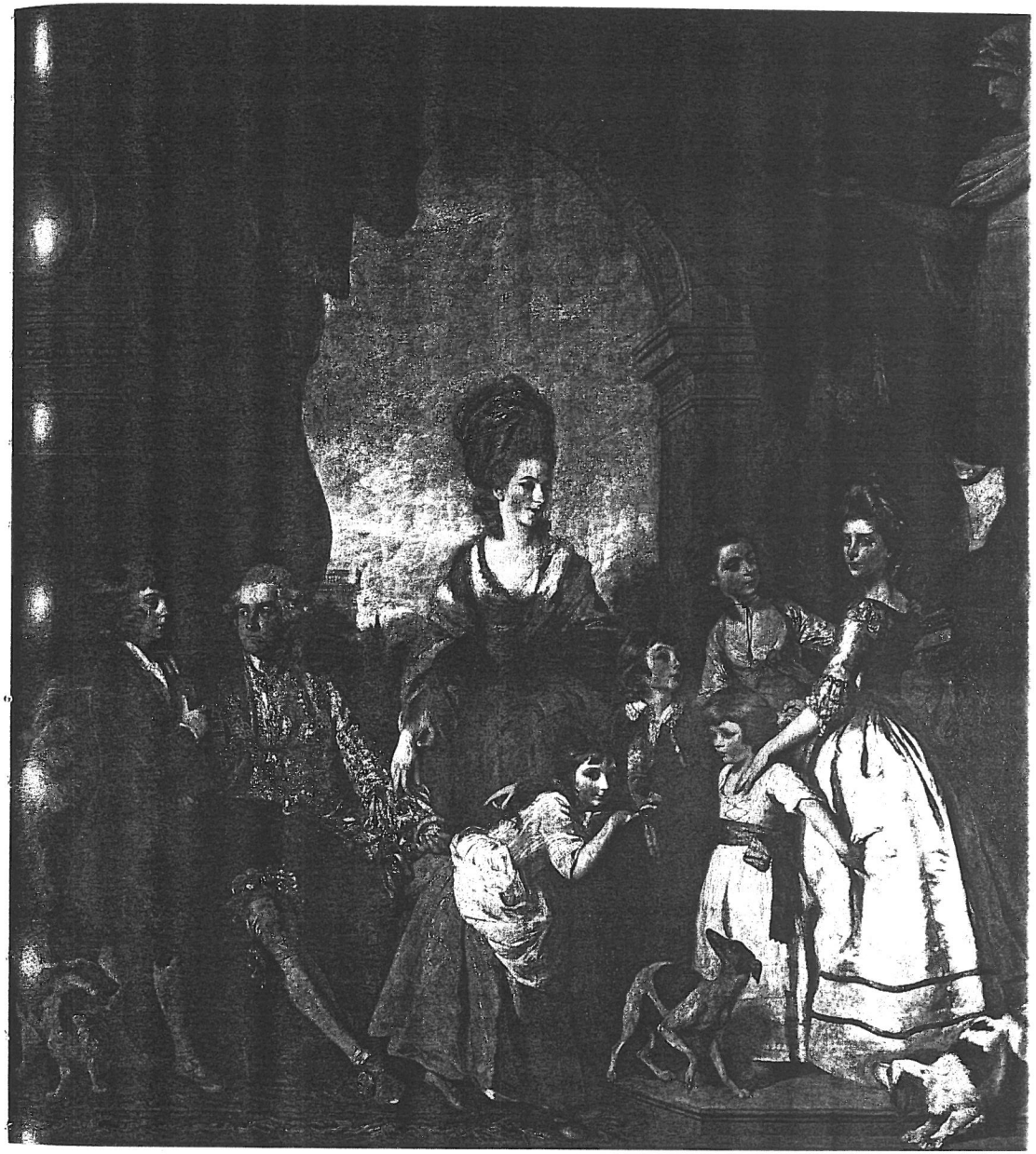
Reynolds's portrait of Lady Sarah Bunbury sacrificing to the Graces, painted probably in 1763, epitomises aristocratic taste for the antique.

That elevation should have come as the result of painting what was universally recognised as the only true form of high art worthy of the Grand Style, historical scenes and allegories. Reynolds, it is true, occasionally painted such pictures but today we view them almost as travesties of the old masters they sought to emulate. The quest to paint this kind of picture was to haunt British painters into the twentieth century. The problem resided in the lack of demand and the uniquely British obsession with portraiture, which came out of an élite culture whose focus was no longer the royal

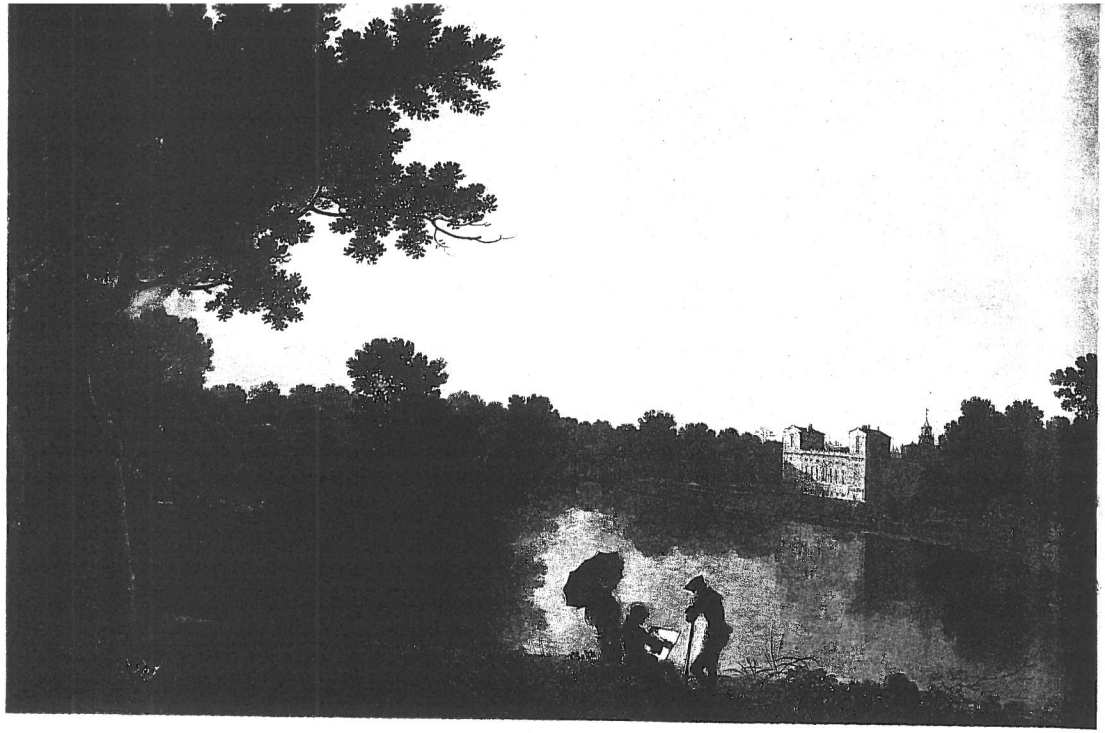
palace but the great private house. British sitters were depicted with almost unrivalled princely splendour in a way that continually astonished foreigners. Reynolds's solution to practising the Grand Style therefore was to elevate his portraits by casting his sitters into impressive roles, transforming them, whatever the reality, into heroic and poetic personages. Solemn rich colour and dramatic lighting effects enhanced sitters presented with a relaxed grandeur. The men command authority in their heavy ceremonial robes, the women exude good breeding, intelligence and sensibility. Time and again poses and effects derived from the antique and the old masters are used to glamorise them, although nothing is permitted which might erode an aura of high seriousness. In the case of female portraits contemporary dress was modified into 'something with the general air of the antique for the sake of dignity.'

Reynolds's greatest masterpiece, the family group of the 4th Duke of Marlborough, sums up in one magisterial image the fruits of this new classical civilisation born of the Grand Tour. In it the younger members of the family group romp and engage the spectators' attention, providing a foil to the reticent and dignified bearing of the parents and their eldest son and daughter. The duke's heir carries to him cases containing items from the fabled ducal collection of antique gems while the duke himself holds a magnificent cameo of the Emperor Augustus. The game the children play is indeed derived from an antique gem and a final classical gesture is bestowed in the figure presiding over the scene proffering a winged Victory. Here in one outstanding image Reynolds has gathered together the ideals of an age, combining the transference of the classical inheritance from Italy to Britain with a tribute to the splendour and taste of her ruling classes. It is a picture which speaks of the domestic virtues and of humour alongside powerful reminders of the duties incumbent upon those with a great heritage.

This classical high point with its resonances of the Grand Tour is also caught potently in the work of another artist, Richard Wilson. There again are the same impulses to lift not only himself socially but also the art of landscape painting which he practised to another sphere. He too studied the antique and the works of the old masters, in his case those of Claude Lorraine and Gaspard Dughet, in order to formulate a Grand Style. Returning from Italy in the middle of the 1750s he found, like Reynolds, little demand for mythology and history but a ready market first for views of Roman ruins and also for landscapes of his own country rendered in terms of the classical tradition. Wilton House, for instance, is glimpsed as a Romanised



Eighteenth century aspirations distilled in one image. Reynolds's group portrait of George, 4th Duke of Marlborough and his family, painted during the 1770s, records aristocratic classical culture at its most assured. The statue of Victory and the cameo of the Emperor Augustus brought to the duke by his son are just two motifs that draw on antiquity in a composition of monumental grandeur.



Richard Wilson's painting transforms Wilton House into a classical villa set amidst a landscape evocative of the Roman campagna, *c.1758-60.*

rural ideal, a vision in paint parallel to what the Augustan poets depicted in words. This is the island recast as a classical arcady caught in an unfading and effulgent golden light. The great house looms almost incandescent as the seat of this new classical civilisation. Pliny's Tuscan villa has been transported to Britain.

In the decades after 1760 one sees evidence everywhere of the consequences of the British obsession with classical antiquity, the result of the Grand Tour. It was carried out in the spirit of a transference of both a political and cultural empire to the island of Great Britain. At the same time the island's own ancient cultural traditions were being rediscovered. The progressive urgency was to create out of these two streams a single British culture, one that could simultaneously look back to Greece and Rome but equally to the Anglo-Saxons, the barons of the Middle Ages and the heroes of Gloriana's England. And it is to that quest that we must now turn our attention.

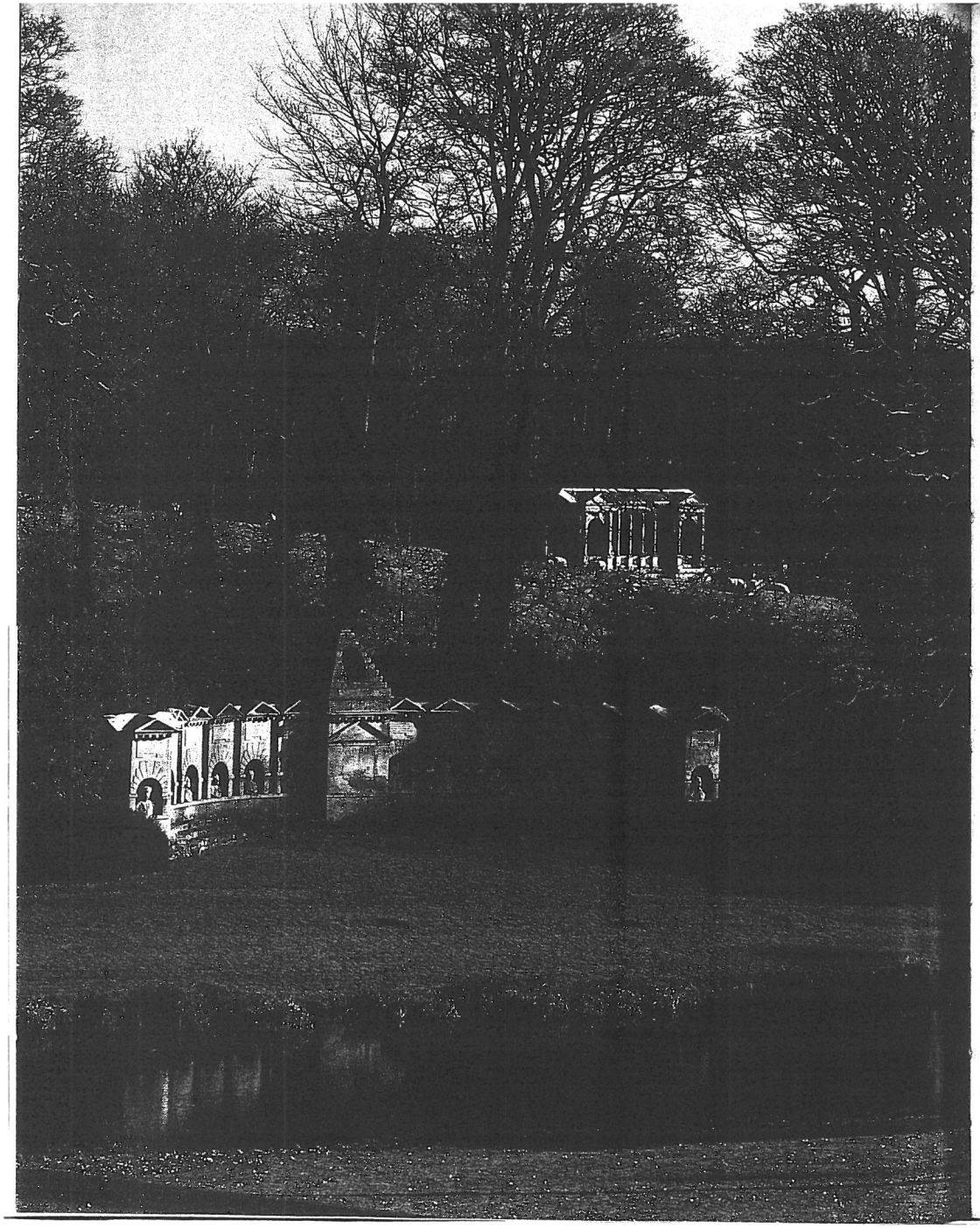
Chapter Twenty-Seven

FORGING A CULTURE

Stowe is the largest, grandest and most important landscape garden in England. Situated on a south-facing hillside in mild, undulating country to the north of the town of Buckingham, it stretches over some four hundred acres. Its owners were the Grenville-Temples, one of the most powerful of Whig families, a network of connection which was to remain a dominant political force for over a century during which its owners ascended in rank from baronet to viscount, from viscount to marquis and, finally, from marquis to duke. Every phase of landscape garden style is encapsulated at Stowe, from the early formality of the turn of the century, with its stately walks and avenues, clipped evergreens and geometric ponds, to the sweeping informality of the genius Lancelot 'Capability' Brown (who became head gardener here in 1741), in which it seems that the native British countryside has been ordered by the artist's brush to accord to a perfection of pastoral paradise.

But Stowe is much more than a monument to garden style, for it catches vividly a particular moment in time when the notion of a common national culture began to take on substance. That it did so here came out of the politics of the 1730s as they affected one man, Richard Temple, Viscount Cobham. Cobham had been one of Marlborough's officers, married to a rich heiress, who had honours heaped upon him by the new Hanoverian dynasty. But in 1733 he fell out with Sir Robert Walpole over the Excise Bill and went into opposition, leading a coalition loosely known as the Patriots. That event was to precipitate the creation of a new scenic landscape at Stowe, the Elysian Fields, based, it seems, on an article written by Joseph Addison:

> 'The great road lay in a direct line, and was terminated by the temple of Virtue . . . The persons who travelled up this great path were such whose thoughts were bent upon doing eminent services to mankind, or promoting the good of their country . . . The edifices at the extremity of the walk were so construed, that we could not see the temple of Honour, by reason of the temple of Virtue, which stood before it . . .
>
> Having seen all that happened to this band of adventurers, I repaired to another pile of building, that stood within view of the temple of Honour . . .



> I found that the stones were laid together without mortar, and that the whole fabric stood upon so weak a foundation, that it shook with every wind that blew. This was called the temple of Vanity . . . [and] was filled with hypocrites, pedants, free-thinkers, and prating politicians . . .'

This is in fact exactly what we still see today. The Temple of Virtue contained statues of Greek heroes, role-models for the Whig politicians, while that of Vanity, which lay in ruins, had within it a headless statue which some said was Walpole. The Temple of Honour, or the Temple of British Worthies, contained a series of portrait busts of those 'members of the British nation thought worthy of being set in such exalted company.' These were in two groups, representing the classical division of human life into the active as against the contemplative. Those embodying the *vita activa* included figures such as Alfred the Great, Elizabeth I and Sir Francis Drake. Those who represented the *vita contemplativa* were Inigo Jones, Shakespeare, Milton, Francis Bacon, John Locke, Sir Thomas Gresham (a gesture towards mercantilism), and, from among the living, Alexander Pope. Cobham was to go on and erect other buildings which filled out this initial message of his political principles. These included one of the earliest in the revived Gothic style, the Temple of Liberty, which was decorated with Saxon heraldry and scenes celebrating the freedoms and ancient British liberties which Walpole, by inference, had violated.

This was a tableau designed to inspire those who saw it and many did, for Stowe's gardens enjoyed a European fame and were the most visited of all the great landscape ensembles. In them the visitor was confronted with what was in effect a representation in three dimensions of a theme which was to dominate the century, the creation of a British national cultural tradition, equal to if not surpassing that of Greece and Rome. What is striking about the Temple of British Worthies is that it was an expression not of the court, nor of the government of the day, but of the opposition. Secondly, that, apart from Pope, its heroes were all located firmly in the past and, although it was three decades on from the Act of Union there was no Scot. This pantheon was firmly English in spite of its British label.

That such a cultural configuration could be staged at all stemmed directly from the Scientific Revolution of the previous century, which had demonstrated the superiority of the Moderns as against the Ancients in proving that what had been accepted as immutable truths for centuries were, in fact, not so. This celebration of the achievement of later ages explains the presence of Bacon, Newton and Locke but not at first glance that of the poets. It was, however, inevitable that once this emulation of the distant by

A pantheon of national heroes. William Kent's Temple of British Worthies in the garden at Stowe, Buckinghamshire, constructed in the 1730s, includes in its gallery cultural figures such as Shakespeare, Milton and Inigo Jones.

the more recent past had been established in the scientific sphere it should equally affect the cultural. So Shakespeare, Milton and Inigo Jones are made to take their place in this new starry firmament, one invoked on behalf of a political opposition claiming that it was the true guardian of ancient virtue.

But it was not only the political opponents of Walpole who were to stimulate this drive towards a national cultural identity: it was also a deep desire to establish the country's cultural credentials against France. This was a period during which Britain was at war on and off with France, culminating in the decades of the Napoleonic wars at the close of the century. It was indeed the defeat of France in the Seven Years War, which came to an end in 1763, that prefaced what can only be described as an unprecedented efflorescence reflecting what was a new-found confidence in the country's cultural potential. The war had also seen for the first time Scottish and English troops fighting side by side in what was a common British cause. The division of Scotland and England did not so easily vanish. The old Stuart concept of the multi-kingdoms lingered on, fuelled by the Jacobite cause which was not finally laid to rest until after 1745. In the second half of the century Scotland was both politically and socially drawn more and more into the network of England, a development which in the long run was also to have a cultural dimension. That was to be found, as it had been in the case of England, by looking backwards towards an antiquity which could be shared north and south of the border.

What emerges as the century progresses is the firm belief that the strength of British culture lay not in a monolithic uniformity but in its very diversity. A people of mixed descent governed by a mixed constitution was seen to call for a culture which drew on elements from each part of its historic generic make up. Ancient British, Celtic, Roman, Anglo-Saxon, Norman, Huguenot, Jewish and Flemish antecedents could bring a cornucopia of cultural gifts embracing such attributes as the elegance of Latinity, the sense of liberty which fuelled the Germanic races, French grace and the sublimity of the Celtic bards. All of these strands were held together not only by the geographical confines of the island but by a common Christian tradition, predominantly Protestant and firmly based on the Old Testament. A vision which had long equated England with Israel was now extended to embrace the whole of Britain. All of this coincided too with a recognition of the racial origins of the country. In the past it had been accepted that Britain was founded by Brutus, the grandson of Aeneas, the founder of Rome. By 1700 that myth had given way to the reality that its roots lay in a variety of peoples who had crossed the Channel and settled here, or as Daniel Defoe, in his *True Born Englishman* (1701), neatly put it:

> . . . a Race uncertain and unev'n,
> Deriv'd from all the Nations under Heav'n.

As a result at the same time that it seemed that all roads led to Rome, others were firmly thrusting back in time into the island's past, questioning whether a classically based culture was indeed the ideal one for a modern nation. This concern was heightened as Britain moved to imperial greatness. The British Empire was billed as a very different phenomenon from its Roman predecessor, basing itself firmly on trade and not on brutality. The new *Pax Britannica* was cast not as an aggressor but as a liberator and guardian of peace, bringing to its subject peoples friendship and commerce, practical science and the benefits of Christianity. The false values of the Roman Empire were contrasted with the benevolent mercantile virtues of the British. The poet William Cowper in his poem 'Charity' catches the ethos:

> . . . the band of commerce was design'd
> T'associate all branches of mankind;
> And, if a boundless plenty be the robe,
> Trade is the golden girdle of the globe.

Those who wished further confirmation that the British Empire was an act of divine providence, a belief which was fervently held, need only turn to Edward Gibbon's *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* (1776-81). In this, the greatest historical work of the age born of a Grand Tour visit, could be discerned the fate of an empire which had based itself on the false values of brutality and degradation as well as untold vice and violence.

Parallel, therefore, to the all-pervasive cult of politeness as a bridge crossing the previous century's religious and political divide, came this exploration of the nation's cultural past seeking further common cultural ground. It was to be found in one supreme figure, William Shakespeare, whose ultimate apotheosis was to be one of the most astonishing phenomena of the Georgian age. Shakespeare's plays had, of course, never ceased being performed from the moment that the theatres reopened after the Restoration, and indeed after the Licensing Act of 1737 were even more in evidence, establishing what was a nascent canon of national dramatic classics. That Shakespeare was able to take on this role as the supreme artistic hero of a nation was due to his ability to be a cultural chameleon. His plays were cheerfully altered and rewritten as both dramatic taste and the political scene changed. As a consequence they could be made to coincide with the views of whoever happened to be in power or, for that matter, out of power. In addition what was added or omitted enabled the

plays to conform to every shift in taste and fashion. To Alexander Pope's generation Shakespeare's low comedy characters were an offence against classical decorum, so Pope in his edition of the plays blamed their appearance on 'the ignorance of the Players' and relegated whole passages to the footnotes. But during the 1740s and 1750s the comedies enjoyed huge popularity as a result of having been cut and rewritten to be monuments to patriotism, celebrating both trade and national glory. In this way Shakespeare became an icon of middle class mercantilism, a poet who gave voice to the heroic age of Elizabeth I. The virtues Shakespeare was seen to extol were those now billed as the essence of any true-born Englishman, ones diametrically opposed to those cultivated by decadent French aristocrats subject to an absolute monarch.

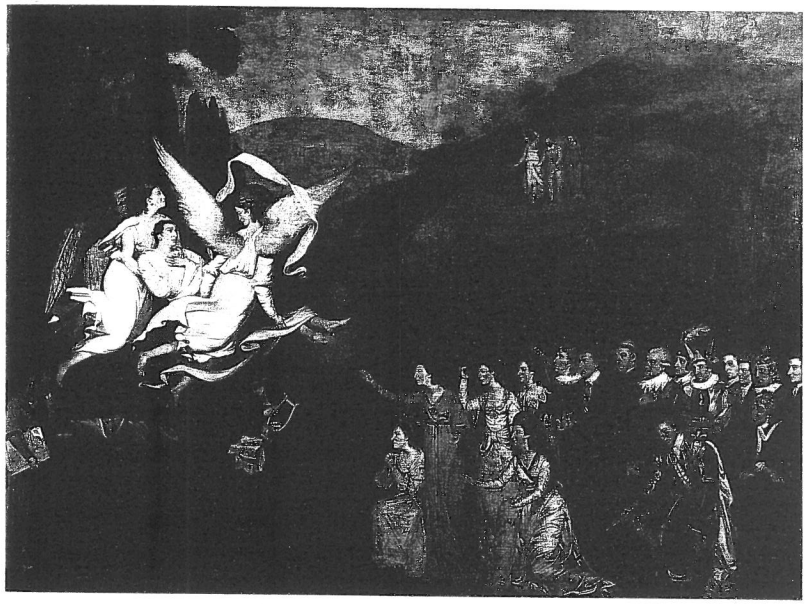
In 1734, the year before William Kent's Temple of British Worthies at Stowe, a campaign was launched to commemorate Shakespeare in Westminster Abbey. That too was an anti-Walpole project by those anxious to establish a shrine to one now presented as the quintessential embodiment of the nation's values. Nothing initially came of this until, in 1737, a supporter of the government subscribed to the erection of a bust of John Milton in Poets' Corner. Then the campaign for a monument to Shakespeare was revived by the opposition Patriots with Lord Burlington as a leading proponent and Kent as the designer. In 1741 Peter Scheemakers's elegant rococo statue of the playwright was unveiled, which almost instantly supplanted in the popular imagination every previous image of the poet. Here was Shakespeare, the man of letters, the British Worthy, who had immortalised a nation's golden age when true liberty had reigned. A national icon had been successfully launched.

Peter Scheemakers' monument to Shakespeare in Westminster Abbey, 1740, launched what was to become a major cult of the bard as a national political and cultural symbol.

This was Shakespeare sanctified within a church when, in reality, it was to the theatre that he belonged. He was not to wait long for his recapture. In 1741, the same year that the Scheemakers statue was revealed, a young actor, David Garrick, made his debut on the London stage. For almost forty years Garrick was to dominate the theatre as the greatest actor of the age (a subject to which we will return), a position he occupied as a man with a mission, to elevate his profession and along with it that of the drama within society. To do this he cast himself as the guardian of a sacred inheritance, that

of Shakespeare, claiming to have restored his true words to the stage. In fact he did what his predecessors had done, re-edited them to accord with current taste. In 1755 Garrick signalled his arrival as an establishment figure by purchasing a villa on the Thames at Hampton and erecting in its grounds a temple to the glory of Shakespeare or rather to Garrick as Shakespeare, for he posed for the statue himself to the sculptor Roubiliac. Garrick's Shakespeare is a very different one from the sinuous figure in Poets' Corner. Here the playwright takes on the role of the presiding deity of bourgeois morality, one whose plays, tidied up, were beginning to take their place on the shelves of virtually anyone who claimed to belong to the educated classes.

Then came the canonisation. Garrick's Shakespeare Jubilee, staged in Stratford-upon-Avon in 1769, is remarkable amongst other things for the fact that not one line of the poet's works was uttered. Amidst a barrage of publicity the actor presented a statue of Shakespeare, along with a portrait of himself with a bust of him, to the town. There were balls, a masquerade, a horse race, not to mention the Grand Procession of Shakespeare's Characters which had to be cancelled due to torrential rain. No matter, for the disastrous Jubilee was restaged at Drury



The great actor David Garrick joins the man he idealised. Shakespeare, attended by Tragedy and Comedy, awaits to welcome Garrick as he is borne heavenwards. Seventeen actors, each in a Shakespearean role, bid him farewell in this picture painted three years after his death in 1779.

Lane and became one of the greatest theatrical hits of the century. At Stratford, however, the climactic moment was Garrick's unveiling of the bard's statue. He had arranged for an actor in the role of a Grand Tour aristocrat to spring up from the audience and protest at the apotheosis of this low-born provincial. Garrick then stepped on stage banishing such ignorance and delivered an ode to full orchestral and choral accompaniment with music specially composed by Thomas Arne. In Garrick's ultimate lines we witness the birth of bardolatry:

> 'Tis he! 'tis he! – that demi-god!
> Who Avon's flow'ry margin trod,
> While sportive *Fancy* round him flew,
> Where *Nature* led him by the hand,
> Instructed him in all she knew
> And gave him absolute command!
> 'Tis he! 'Tis he!
> The god of our idolatry!'

This is Shakespeare cast as the universal man inspired by Nature to voice the truths of humanity enshrined as a national cultural deity.

Shakespeare, however, was not to be alone for long. In 1757 the poet Thomas Gray, in his *The Progress of Poesy*, had charted the progress of poetry from Greece to Rome and thence to Britain, enshrined not only in the works of immortal Shakespeare but in those of Milton and Dryden. Until the 1770s the transmission of that literary heritage was in the hands of the booksellers who controlled the copyrights. The Tonson family owned, amongst others, those of Spenser, Milton, Waller, Dryden and Congreve. Admittedly in 1709 Tonson's great series of critical editions began to appear, but the widespread reading of that heritage could not take off until the booksellers' control was challenged in the courts. That happened in the 1760s resulting in a flood of cheap editions in response to what was a spreading literacy. The effect of this on booksellers was to make them turn publisher and for a new type of bookseller to emerge, one epitomised by Hatchards in Piccadilly, which opened in 1797.

The putting together of the literary heritage was a piecemeal affair. In the Temple of British Worthies there was Shakespeare, Milton and Pope. By the middle of the century Chaucer had joined them as a paternal ancestor, a rough but natural British voice. Edmund Spenser was re-cast as a master of a quasi-Gothic, allegorical epic which was now viewed as a pure expression of the native moral and religious imagination. The political aspects of Milton were quietly forgotten about as he was remoulded into the blind seer who wrote a sublime modern epic. Alexander Pope

and James Thomson were designated as the present-day inheritors of this mighty mantle. So by the third quarter of the century side-by-side with the classical pantheon filled with the likes of Homer, Virgil and Ovid there emerged a parallel one in which figured Shakespeare, Spenser, Milton and Dryden. In order to achieve that called for abandoning long held classical criteria of judgement and replacing them instead with criteria judging the works on their own merits. So, for example, Spenser's imaginative vigour was seen as being more important than his failure to observe classical form. In the case of Shakespeare, being Nature's darling and the model of genius, the classical canons were simply abrogated. This movement was summed up in the magisterial editions of Samuel Johnson, *Prefaces Biographical and Critical to the Works of the English Poets* (1779-81), the introductions to which were printed separately as *Lives of the Poets*. This was a milestone in literary history placing the poets into the political and social context of their age and attempting to relate their private lives to their work.

What had begun as an antiquarian quest into early literature was to have major implications for contemporary writing, in effect loosening and finally demolishing the Augustan canon. By the middle of the century the fascination with earlier native literature had taken a strong hold. In 1754 Thomas Warton published his *Observations on the Faerie Queene of Spenser* and a decade later Thomas Percy produced his *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry* (1765). So far the literary heritage was firmly English but to be British it needed to pull in the Celtic fringes. That necessity was recognised by Thomas Gray in his ode 'The Bard' (1757) which tells the story of Edward I's attempts to kill all the Welsh bards after the conquest of Wales and how that free-born native poetic tradition was to survive and be reborn in Tudor England. That was written a decade on from 1745, memories of which had to fade before the Celtic fringe could finally be brought into the cultural fold. And that was to be achieved by the publication of the works of Ossian (1760-65) under the aegis of James Macpherson.

Macpherson claimed to have translated the works of an early Celtic bard, Ossian. The result is a mixture of orally transmitted Gaelic originals held together by bridging passages by Macpherson. In it some genuine pieces of Highland poetry were refashioned to meet the growing interest in early primitive poetry. The result was quite unlike anything else at the time and Ossian naturally took on the dimension of a literary sensation. A passage from the opening book of *Temora* is sufficient to capture how different it was:

> '. . . There Moriath stood with darkened face. Hidalla's long hair sighs in the wind. Red-haired Cormar bends on his spear, and rolls his side-looking eyes.

> Wild is the look of Malthos from beneath two shaggy brows. Foldath stands, like an oozy rock, that covers his dark sides with foam. His spear is like Simora's fir, that meets the wind of heaven. His shield is marked with the strokes of battle. His red eye despises danger. These and a thousand other chiefs surrounded the king of Erin, when the scout of ocean came . . .'

The public was suddenly presented with an epic set in a distant and heroic past of a totally different kind from that offered by either Homer or Virgil. Its heroes were noble, not brutal, champions of truth and justice. Its womenfolk were sentimental and virtuous. The impact of Ossian was to be European in extent, being translated into German, French and Italian. Through it a door was opened into an unknown mythic Celtic past and its effect was hypnotic. Ossian painted a picture of a Scotland which was proud and independent but, as it was set in the misty past, there was no problem in accommodating it within the new British cultural pantheon. It also appeared at a moment when, as culture became more and more metropolitan, a nostalgia set in for a past which had either gone or was going. That glance over the shoulder across the centuries enshrined in Ossian was to prove a liberating force on poetry itself, driving it towards the romantic age.

If the creation of a national literary culture was summed up in the Shakespeare Jubilee of 1769, the establishment of a musical one was to be epitomised in the Handel Commemoration in Westminster Abbey in 1784. As in the case of literature that heritage also came out of an exploration of the past. But the story in respect of music was to be a rather different one from that of either plays or poetry which remained in print to be read or performed. In sharp contrast there was no tradition or ostensible reason for continuing to play old music. Up until the eighteenth century music was occasional, written for a specific event and then discarded. The idea of a canon of classics did not exist and England was the first country in Western Europe where such a notion was to emerge. By the close of the eighteenth century there was no other country where such a diversity of old music could be heard or where it had assumed such a major role as part of the ritual of national culture.

As in the case of literature it was to be the quite unique political circumstances which were to bring this about. The role of the Chapel Royal and of the musical network which stretched out from it across country to the cathedrals was to be crucial. The Chapel musicians cherished their musical heritage from Byrd and Tallis down to Purcell because it was one the Puritans had almost succeeded in destroying. Church music had been wiped out for two decades during the previous century. So, after the Restoration in 1660, the Chapel Royal acted as guardian of a precious musical tradition which now symbolised also the Stuart monarchy and loyalty to the Church of England. By 1700 that body of music was known as 'ancient music' and, with the advent of the House of Hanover in 1714, it was to assume an even greater ideological potency. Just as in the Elizabethan age, when much of the music by the Chapel Royal's composers was a cryptic lament for the loss of pre-Reformation Catholicism, so the music composed for the Tudors and Stuarts was cultivated by a broad spectrum of the opposition, Tories, High Anglicans and Jacobite sympathisers. This movement, which originated in Oxford, was to find institutional form in the antiquarian Academy of Ancient Music (1710).

Other developments were to assist this drift towards the performance of 'ancient music'. One was the abdication by the court as the focal point of musical innovation. As it provided few splendid occasions for the composition of music the inevitable result was to play what already existed. And, also as a consequence of the court's abdication, the greatest annual musical event ceased to be a royal but a City one, the service held in St. Paul's Cathedral to raise funds for the charity, the Sons of the Clergy. This had begun in the aftermath of the Restoration to provide for children of clergy who had suffered during the Interregnum but it gradually escalated into a magnificent musical occasion to which all the musicians of the Chapel Royal contributed, and where a full orchestra provided accompaniment. Each year its focal point was the performance of Purcell's *Te Deum* and *Jubilate*.

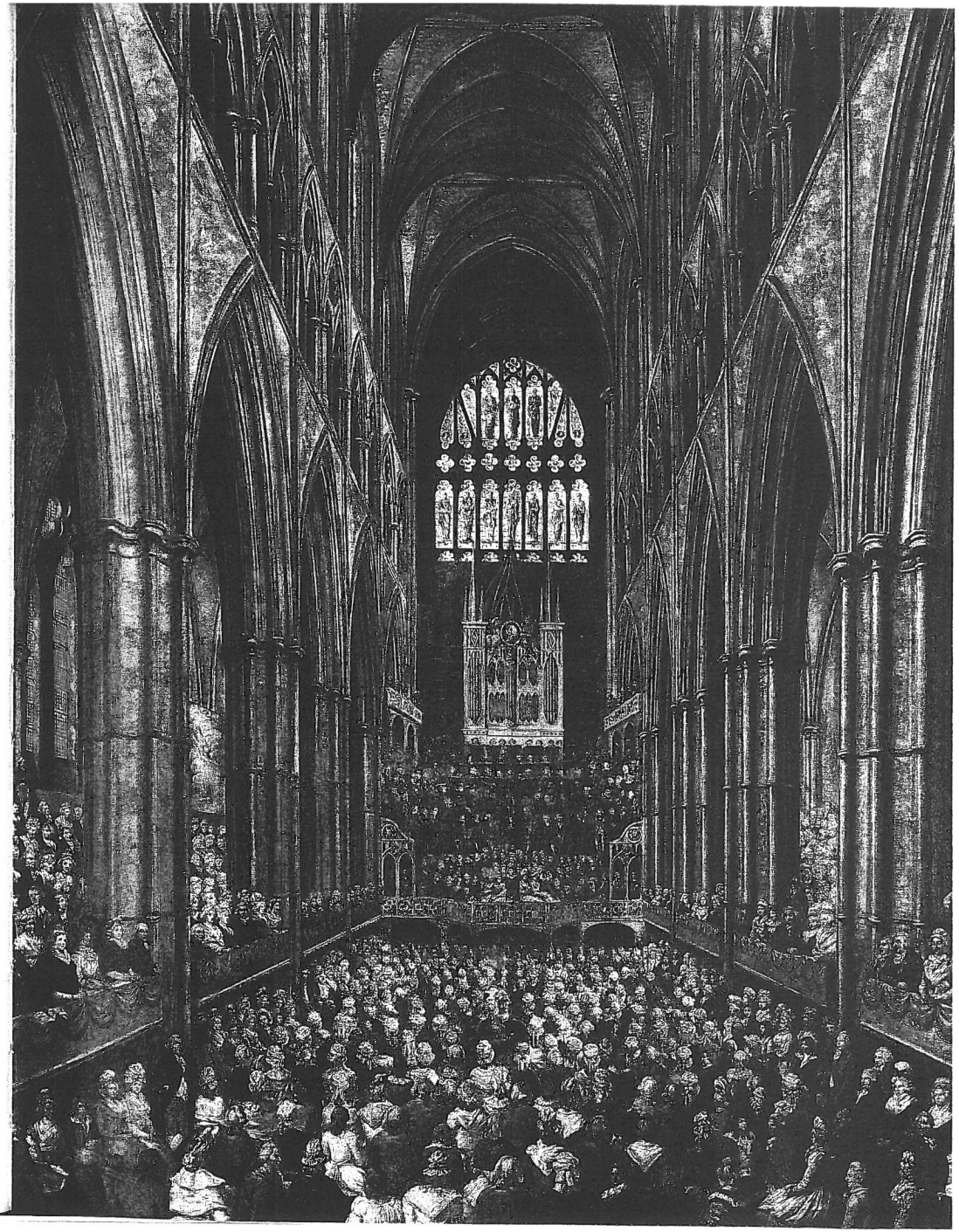
Such an event, as it crossed into the Georgian age, took on political overtones for it was seen as a celebration of the Church of England and its clergy within a framework of music composed in the Stuart era. The Three Choirs Festival, alternating between Gloucester, Hereford and Worcester, was a provincial imitation of this event, a fund-raising and again basically Tory celebration where the music of Purcell dominated.

That indeed was the problem, because for any truly national canon to emerge called for a composer who was not so doctrinally and politically committed, one whose work, like Shakespeare's, could be read in more ways than one, according to changing times and circumstances. This role was to be more than amply fulfilled in the figure of Handel. His political affiliations were never very definite and the fact that his oratorios were given concert performances in theatres and not in churches meant that he bridged the divide between the Church of England and dissent. The libretti, however much they may have had a special context on their first performance, were like Shakespeare's plays, adaptable to every situation. Their subject matter in the main dealt with the triumphs and deliverances of the Hebrew nation which by long tradition was equated with the English and by extension the British.

By the 1750s, as the Jacobite cause faded, the Three Choirs Festival and others which proliferated across the country began increasingly to stage oratorios by Handel. At the same time these events began to spill over to several days and the local aristocracy and gentry not only attended but took on particular roles. In this way 'ancient music', primarily that of Purcell and increasingly that of Handel, became the means whereby the English fashioned a musical ritual which stood outside the liturgy and conflicting church traditions. The performance of old music gradually became part of an upper class ritual expressive of a new-found cultural unity.

The association of aristocracy with what were viewed as the virtues of antiquity was a long one. It formed part of the argument for maintaining the hierarchical status quo. However, in the third quarter of the century, that came under threat not only from ideas of equality seeping into England from the thinkers of the French Enlightenment but, more particularly, from demands from below for parliamentary reform and an extension of the franchise. At the same time the defeat of Britain in the American War of Independence severely dented establishment confidence, engendering a drawing together of the aristocratic classes. Cultural solidarity was to be one manifestation of the reassertion of aristocratic status and music was where it found its earliest concrete expression. In 1776, the year of the Declaration of Independence, John Montagu, 4th Earl of Sandwich, was the moving force behind the foundation of the Concert of Ancient Music. This man, unpleasant in so many aspects, was yet not only the most distinguished amateur musician of his day but also a powerful innovator. At these concerts 'ancient music' was finally defined as that which was more than twenty years old and that alone was to be played before an audience which was a display of caste. In 1785 the entire court attended, and admittance to concerts was reserved virtually exclusively to those of aristocratic descent. As a result of this time embargo a canon of classics was for the first time established in Europe. Old music and the *ancien régime* were interlocked together in an annual musical ritual which was also viewed as having a role in the moral regeneration of the upper orders, for many who came were committed evangelicals. The Concert of Ancient Music in effect created Britain's musical establishment, one which was to hold on to its dominance until the 1840s.

The Handel Commemoration of 1784, organised by the Concert of Ancient Music, was the composer's canonisation. The event followed the end of the disastrous American war which lost the colonies, and the aftermath of a general election which was a royalist triumph and in which the younger Pitt came to power. The Royal Family and



Handel apotheosised as a national symbol. The Handel Commemoration of 1784 was without precedent in the nation's musical history. The painter, Edward Edwards, records the scene in Westminster Abbey as it would have been viewed by the king.

the entire establishment, regardless almost of political stance, came together in Westminster Abbey to listen to Handel's sacred music. Music for his operas was staged at the Pantheon, but it was the Abbey gathering which was the significant one, a national musical ritual in which all could join. George III was himself deeply involved in the whole affair which cast the monarchy into a role of being protector of the civic virtues. The commemoration was a huge success and went on being repeated for a few years until it was finally abandoned. By then, however, the notion of the performance of a canon of old music, classics, as an expression of civic order had been firmly put in place. It is still going strong today, as the building of a concert hall at the heart of any urban configuration and the maintenance of an orchestra bears testimony.

All of this went hand-in-hand with something else which was to be a *leitmotif* of Britishness, the landscape. Indeed the link between national identity and the British landscape first became fixed in the eighteenth century, a vision brought about by literature and art rather than direct perception. As in the case of literature there was a move away from looking towards classical antiquity turning instead towards an appreciation of native beauties. The landscape gardens of William Kent early in the century had transformed nature into a series of pictures inspired by Ancient Rome. That still pertained in the 1740s when, for instance, William Hoare laid out his grounds at Stourhead in Wiltshire. He cast its central lake as Avernus, the lake across which Aeneas in the *Aeneid* had passed to Hades, and the scenes Hoare constructed around its perimeter were designed to recall events in Virgil's epic poem. But that approach was to change dramatically after the middle of the century. If a landscape garden was to be a series of pictures it presupposed a role for Nature as a painter. The result of that equation was for people to look increasingly at the untouched countryside in pictorial terms, as examples of Nature's pencil at work. The other change was that just as the first landscape gardens had appealed through the intellect to the imagination now that appeal was to be transferred to the passions.

Edmund Burke's *A Philosophical Inquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas on the Sublime and the Beautiful* (1756) was to be hugely influential and innovative, contributing to this new perception of things which stressed the primacy of psychology in artistic response. A new valuation was given to emotions such as awe and terror which gave status for the first time to negative qualities like darkness and solitude, silence and immensity of scale. This was a radical shift from Augustan ideals of harmony and proportion. In the case of landscape it opened the way to an appreciation, for example, of mountains and all kinds of other wild terrain hitherto regarded as horrendous aberrations.

The change in the aesthetic perception of Nature coincided with the Agricultural

Revolution which in effect created the English landscape of today. That entailed massive enclosure and the creation of our present field system with hedges and clumps of trees. Common land vanished and, as a result, an underclass of agricultural labourers emerged. But the enclosure movement meant that estates could be arranged on an even more gigantic scale to accord with the emotional response now called for from landscape. That immensity of vision was to be met in the work of Lancelot 'Capability' Brown who set up his own practice in 1751. In the 1750s he was to remodel the huge parkland areas of Burghley, Northamptonshire, Longleat, Wiltshire and Wrest, Bedfordshire. In the 1760s he moved on to places like Blenheim, Oxfordshire, where some two thousand acres were rearranged to his diktats. During his thirty-five years of professional practice he improved up to a hundred estates of the aristocracy and gentry, leaving thereby an indelible mark on the landscape. And he had, of course, many imitators.

No more was England rearranged as though it were the Roman *campagna* imported. Instead it was a proudly British terrain of a kind which could stir the passions of a man of feeling, a Nature perfected with flowing hills capped by irregular groves of trees and watered by serpentine rivers exuding a gentle timeless serenity. For the aristocratic classes who could afford such magnificent private elysiums they were British liberty in landscape form. It was an image of the nation as gentle and pastoral, peopled by contented rural workers happy with their lot. The reality was far different but gazing through their rose-tinted quizzing glasses the aristocracy saw what it wanted to see, a vision which accorded perfectly with the presentation of the country's imperial might as essentially peace-giving and benevolent.

Such a reassessment of the rural landscape led to what is known as the 'discovery of Britain.' Faster horses, better coaches, proper signposting, not to mention an ever-expanding network of turnpike roads, made travel easier than it ever had been. The new emotional aesthetic responses outlined by Burke could be found by touring through Britain's countryside along the dramatic scenery of the Wye Valley or in the Lakes of Cumberland and Westmorland or, even further afield, in the Scottish Highlands. Guidebooks, which began to appear during the 1770s, told travellers not only *what* to look at, but *how* to look at it. Highlights were picked out, attracting the words 'romantic', 'sublime' or 'picturesque'. Those who voyaged often took with them what was called a Claude glass, a slightly convex mirror about four inches in diameter which could capture any picturesque view in the palm of the hand. This experience was the reverse of that at the beginning of the century. Then Nature had been recast to look like a painting. Now Nature was investigated to see where she had painted her own pictures unassisted.

Such a view in the long term was to tell against the manipulations of 'Capability' Brown, whose work could not survive the onslaught of the new picturesque aesthetic as expounded by William Gilpin in his *Observations on the Wye and South Wales* (1782), in which he demonstrated the picturesque nature of that terrain reflected in its natural wildness and ruined abbeys and castles, scenes unpolluted by the hand of the improver. By the 1780s and 1790s increasing urbanisation, together with the tidying up of the countryside due to the Agricultural Revolution, rendered that which had not been so, more and more alluring. These early tourists came in search of a lost primitive world, a journey back in time. In doing so they simultaneously eroded what they had come to experience.

By about 1790 a British culture had been forged. This is caught in a roll-call of books which traced the history and celebrated the achievements of the native tradition: Horace Walpole's *Anecdotes of Painting in England* (1762), Thomas Warton's *History of English Poetry* (1774-78), Samuel Johnson's *Works of the English Poets* (1779-81), Sir John Hawkins's *A General View of the Science and Practice of Music* (1776) and Charles Burney's *A General History of Music from the Earliest Ages to the Present Period* (1776-89). A cultural identity was firmly in place to meet the challenge of the French Revolution and the decades of war with France. The British State and all it represented was to find itself under siege from without as never before. Edmund Burke's *Reflections on the French Revolution* (1790) was a powerful attack on what had happened across the Channel arguing against sudden innovation and for organic evolution. It was to be the foundation stone of British conservatism. The cultural unity which had been fabricated during the previous decades now acquired a new urgency as one aspect of a programme which would pull people together to stave off the ideology of revolutionary France and the threat of radicalism from below. The success of this young national culture, which was in essence élite and aristocratic, would depend on how long its various partners would acquiesce in the dominance of England. But its ability to hold was to lie in the acknowledgement from its inception that its strength lay in unity in diversity.

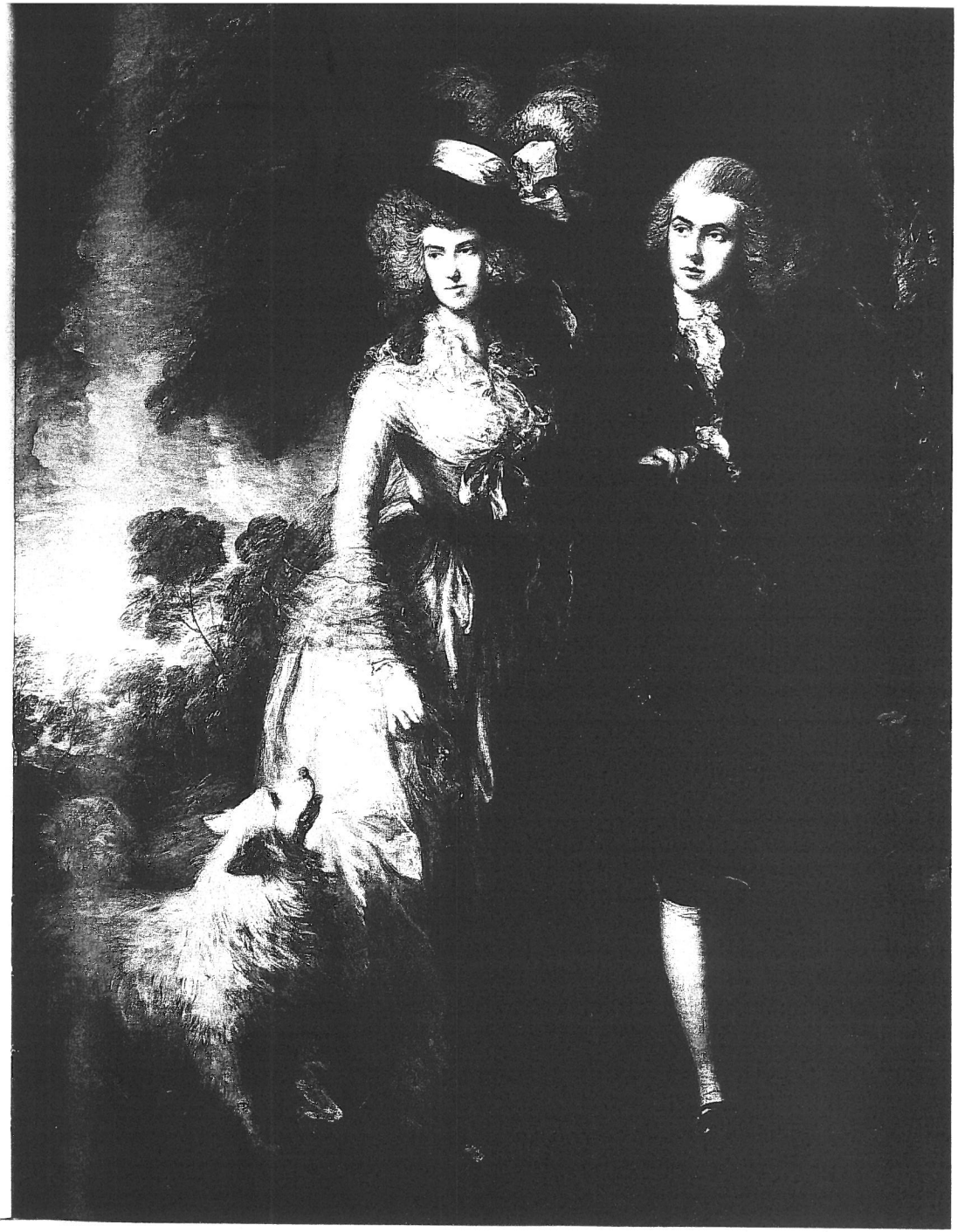
A British landscape. The grounds of Longleat House, Wiltshire, were transformed by 'Capability' Brown from 1757 onwards with his characteristic mixture of undulating hills, clumps of trees and serpentine lake.

Chapter Twenty-Eight

SENSIBILITY

The Morning Walk, a portrait of a handsome young couple, Mr and Mrs William Hallett strolling in the countryside was painted in the autumn of 1785. It is one work among the many which proclaimed that the art of painting had come of age, and is recognised as one of Thomas Gainsborough's masterpieces. The paint is thin, in places almost transparent, in order to capture the gauzes, rustling silks and nodding ostrich plumes of the couple as well as the landscape which enfolds them, its feathery trees shimmering in the morning light. The blissful marital pair are presented as ideals, his a young and serious face, hers, in contrast, modest, with eyes slightly downcast, averted from the onlooker. The gravity of their affection is dispelled by the white dog which bounces up at them adoringly. Gainsborough's control of his chosen palette range is total, a symphony of blues and greens and whites with only a few touches of creamy gold. As a consequence the couple virtually dissolve into the landscape around, Nature as it were taking them in her embrace. Husband and wife, elemental man and woman, are as one in a paradisal vision. In one radiant image the artist has transmuted into paint the ethic of an age, that of sensibility.

By the middle of the eighteenth century sensibility was used to describe the expression of heightened, intense human feelings, ones which embodied a new kind of refinement of response by the educated classes. This attribute was to establish the credentials of a different type of human being, the man or woman of 'feeling'. The nervous heroines of Richardson's novels, above all *Clarissa*, portray exactly this new feminine ideal. In Laurence Sterne's *A Sentimental Journey* (1768) sensibility is a badge of moral and aesthetic refinement. Such a return to emotion could only happen once the extremes of religious enthusiasm, which had been such a marked feature of the previous century, had become a distant memory. This made it possible for refined persons to be judged by their emotional responses to both art and nature, a reaction which was to find support not only in Burke's exposition of the sublime and the beautiful but also in an earlier work, David Hume's *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding* (1739), in which he demonstrated that the mind oper-



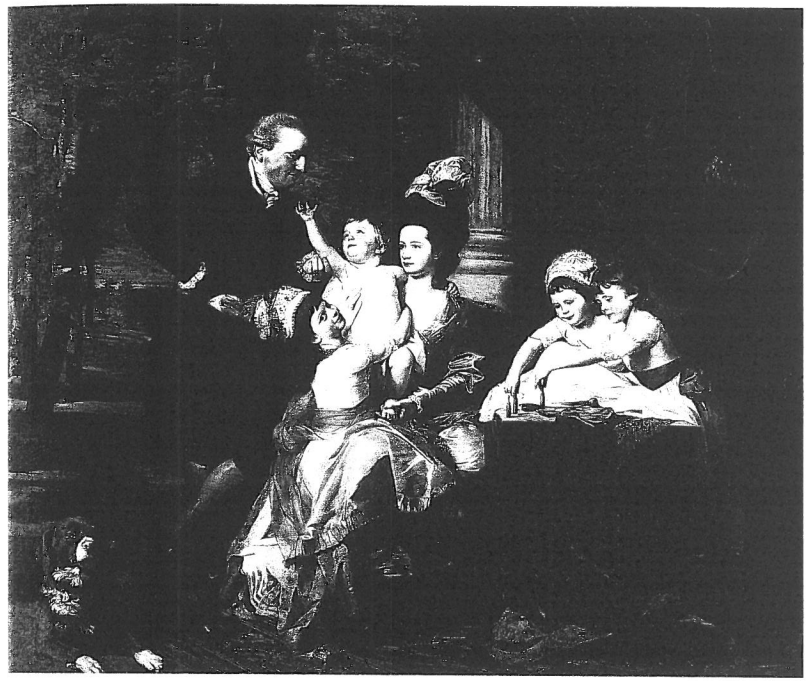
At one with the world of Nature. Gainsborough's famous portrait of a young couple known as 'The Morning Walk', painted in 1785, captures exactly the mood of unpretentious relaxed sensibility adopted by the leisured classes during the decades preceding the French Revolution.

ated from patterns of association and juxtaposition rather than from Reason. Together Burke and Hume contributed to a conception of mankind which showed that man was ruled not by Reason but by feelings and by the passions.

This shift in ideals was to have a profound effect on the cultural ethos of the generation which preceded the French Revolution. The 'man of feeling' was a person in whom courage and good nature mingled, whose tender heart and benevolence was overt. Sensibility was above all a spontaneous characteristic and, at first glance, quite contrary to the etiquette of politeness. The irony is that both were found to be compatible. Sensibility released eighteenth century man to give rein to a whole range of emotions such as grief and pity, joy and love. This perception of natural and moral beauty was held to be divinely implanted by God in the soul, expressly in order that it might give man happiness and evoke his most noble passions.

These internal currents were reinforced by ones from abroad. The great French philosopher of the Enlightenment, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, was widely read in England. Rousseau argued that mankind had been corrupted by civilisation. In his philo-

Robes of state and coronet are put aside in favour of being depicted as a country gentleman hugging his dog. Gainsborough's portrait of Henry, 3rd Duke of Buccleuch, painted in 1770, shows him to be a 'man of feeling'.



Men and women 'of feeling' took joy in family life, childhood for the first time being seen as a separate phase. The American painter John Singleton Copley's group portrait of Sir William Pepperell and his family was exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1778.

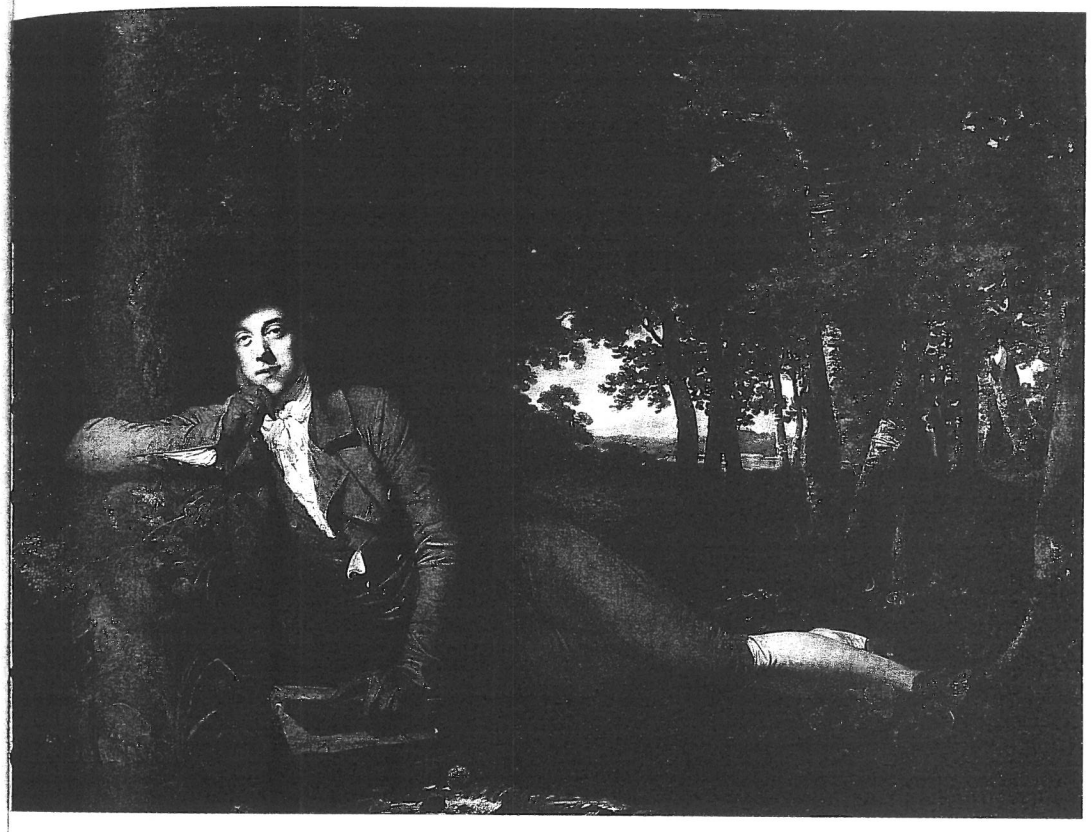
sophy the passions and affections could be improved by an education which was founded on contact more with things than words. Priority should be accorded to the expression of natural feelings and emotions above any official code of morality. In his novel *Émile* (1762), which was translated into English in 1763, Rousseau believed that children should be nurtured naturally, just as one might cultivate a tree. The effect was a revolution in child-rearing among the upper classes where children ceased to be regarded as miniature adults. Instead childhood was recognised as a distinct segment of life which demanded, for example, different, loose-fitting clothes and the freedom to roam. Nothing was to disturb Rousseau's influence in England until 1789. He was seen as the epitome of the French Enlightenment, a man opposed to decadent French absolutism.

These ideas gained acceptance simultaneously with the coming to maturity of two

dazzling generations of British painters, Reynolds, Gainsborough, Francis Cotes, George Stubbs, Joseph Wright of Derby, John Opie, George Romney and Thomas Lawrence. Although many of them were openly to curse the British obsession with the genre, their livelihood lay in portraiture however much their aspirations were to scale the heights of history. That frustration was not, however, to be a negative force, for the consequence of it was an age of quite outstandingly innovative portrait painting, one which was unparalleled anywhere else in Europe. Gradually the inherited French-inspired conventions were displaced by compositions designed to reflect the unique nature of British society.

The portraits by these artists trace the emergence of informality. Men of social rank were no longer posed in an assertive manner but depicted wearing country attire, often with gun and dog, in what was seen as the antithesis of French court dress and therefore viewed as expressive of British liberty. Gainsborough, who began his life in Suffolk followed by Bath and who finally settled in London in 1774, gives supreme expression to this changing ideal. His sitters almost conceal their social rank. Even the Order of the Garter star, which it was obligatory to wear at all times, could virtually be hidden beneath a coat lapel. His male sitters' faces are depicted open, often smiling, a visual testament to a recognition that nobility was no longer only a matter of birth but a principle of virtue. In the case of women rank is also discarded, choosing rather to be presented as monuments to the female virtues which extolled not only purity but domesticity. Time and again Rousseau's new concept of motherhood and childhood is celebrated as infants fondle, play and tumble across aristocratic canvases. These are 'women of feeling' and feelings, according to Burke, become more acutely excited as the scenery becomes wilder and more remote. So often the grandest of ladies is discovered attired in a simple dress seated, pensive, her dog at her side, amidst nature untamed.

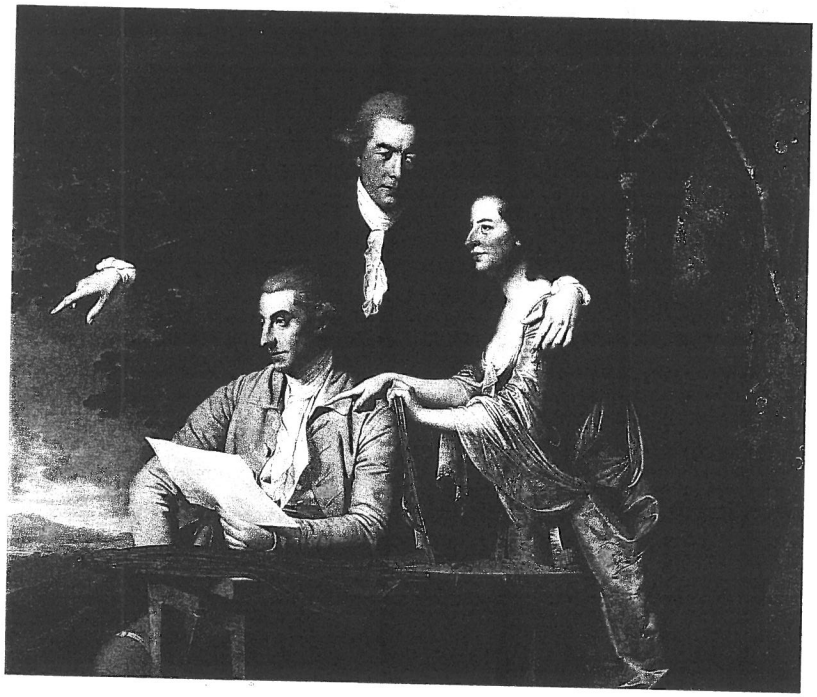
Joseph Wright of Derby, who passed his life in the regions, is another artist who responded fully to the cult of sensibility. His famous portrait of Sir Brooke Boothby (1781) shows an elegantly dressed young man who does not hesitate to embrace Nature to the full, casting himself on the ground and clutching a volume of Rousseau in one hand. In his portraits Wright captures this new philosophical and sentimental enjoyment of the countryside, as well as recording what is clearly pride in ownership by the sitter. But Wright also recorded something else which was more disturbing about the cult of sensibility, that it was not unifying but in a sense divisive. In his group portraits, like that depicting the progress of an experiment with an air-pump, the reactions of those gathered around are not the same but different, each face registering separate aspects of private emotion and sensation. Like Gainsborough,



Joseph Wright of Derby's portrait of Brooke Boothby commemorates his friendship with the French philosopher Jean-Jacques Rousseau, a volume of whose works lies by his side. He epitomises in his casual elegance the new ideal of the gentleman with references not only to contemporary sensibility but to a long tradition of the thinking man seeking the shade of the greenwood tree.

Wright was able to respond to the discovery of the British landscape, moving away from painting views of Italy to ones of Matlock and Dovedale.

Stubbs is another painter whose subject matter could only have come about through the uniqueness of English society with its passion for the open air, for field sports and racing. The love of animals, along with the realm of Nature, was one aspect of sensibility as the ever attendant horse and dog testify, but in Stubbs's case



Wright of Derby's portrait masterpiece depicting the Rev. D'Ewes Coke, his wife Hannah and his cousin Daniel Parker Coke was painted about 1781-82. In it we see sensibility in action as an affectionate family group respond to the landscape as they consider what may be either a design for altering the park or a drawing of the view by Mrs. Coke.

these creature assume an importance of their own, demanding separate canvases. The pictures in which these adored animals are celebrated by their owners form a sharp contrast to the painter's unerring delineation of the lower classes who wait upon them. His observation confirms the suspicion that sensibility was as much as anything the attribute of an élite.

The cult of sensibility undoubtedly liberated painters. Its effect on writers was to be less dramatic. All the time there is a sense that they were being constrained by the sheer weight of the classical inheritance. The result is a kind of frustration because the existing forms of poetic expression were inadequate for what the poets increasingly wanted to say. Thomas Gray's famous *Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard* (1751), inspired by the one at Stoke Poges, draws together the attitudes of an era. This is a poem permeated with a sense of isolation and a withdrawal into the inner self, the

poet indeed as that 'man of feeling' meditating on obscurity and death, time and history, fame and passion. At its close he imagines his own epitaph:

> Fair Science frowned not on his humble birth,
> And Melancholy marked him for her own.
> Large was his bounty, and his soul sincere,
> Heaven did a recompense as largely send:
> He gave to Misery all he had, a tear,
> He gained from Heaven ('twas all he wished) a friend.

Other poets like William Shenstone, William Collins, William Cowper and Christopher Smart articulate the new sincerity but not without stress. Collins had a mental breakdown and both Cowper and Smart had periods of insanity. Together they represent a movement away from the public themes which dominated the Augustan age towards a poetry which was more domestic and personal. Although banality too often creeps in, such lyrics can even now be delicately moving, like Cowper's 'Friendship' which reads almost as a handbook to the new masculine ideals:

George Stubbs's picture of Captain Samuel Sharpe Pocklington with his wife Pleasance and his sister, painted in 1769, offers another microcosm of people of feeling at one with the landscape which they own, sensitive and sincere not only to each other but equally to the horse.

Who seeks a friend, should come disposed
To exhibit in full blood disclosed
The graces and the beauties,
That from the character he seeks,
For 'tis an union that bespeaks
Reciprocated duties.
Mutual attention is implied,
And equal faith on either side,
And constantly supported . . .

Christopher Smart, like Cowper, was a man of deep religious sensibility who began his life as a Cambridge classicist and then moved to London, where he was overtaken by several bouts of madness from which he finally recovered in 1763. The impact of that on his work led him to break the Augustan mould, first in *Song to David* (1763) and secondly in the even more radical *Jubilate Agno* which, although written in 1760, was considered unpublishable until the twentieth century. This is less poetry than prose run berserk but it includes passages of quite startling originality, like the one on his cat, Jeoffry. What the poem appears to be is a series of antiphonal prayers whose exact meaning is quite opaque but whose general drift is a hymn to the Almighty from a universe in which the cat too finds his place:

For he is of the Lord's poor and so indeed is he
called by benevolence perpetually – poor Jeoffry!
poor Jeoffry! the rat has bit thy throat.
For I bless the name of the Lord Jesus that Jeoffry is better.
For the divine spirit comes about his body to sustain it in compleat cat.

These are poets besieged by melancholy, anguish and affliction. Their plight is caught in the tragedy of Thomas Chatterton whom poverty drove to suicide at the age of eighteen. His fame was to rest on what was eventually unmasked to be a forgery, a series of fifteenth century poems written in the Chaucerian style supposedly by a Bristol monk which were published in 1777. Many were taken in by them, but for the Romantic generation that followed Chatterton was cast as the youthful poetic genius in the making whose life was cut short by the indifference of the world around him. What he also represented, however, was poetic liberation of a different kind kindled not by madness, like Smart, but through going back in time and responding to the rediscovery of medieval and Renaissance poetry.

One figure towers above every other and that is the awkward bulk of Dr. Samuel Johnson. He was the supreme literary lion of the age and he too was a man of sensibility, for feeling in his case ultimately counted more than abstract reasoning. Even more than Alexander Pope, whom he defended, Johnson was a man of letters in his own right, able to retain a gentlemanly status and respectability in spite of being paid for his labours. As in the case of Garrick and Reynolds this arose from the acknowledgement of his genius. In the long run his achievement was to help free the writer from the burden of patronage. Johnson's energy was such that he contributed to every form of literature: drama, poetry, moral essays, travel, satire and the novel. He arrived in London from Lichfield with David Garrick but fame only came his way from the essays he wrote in the *Rambler* (1750-52). It was cemented by his monumental *Dictionary* (1755) which he undertook virtually single-handed and which was the earliest critical account of the English language as a means of thought and communication. Three years later came his edition of Shakespeare, one of the great pieces of

Dr Johnson in his travelling dress as described by Boswell in his Journey to the Western Isles of Scotland *(1775).*

criticism which challenged contemporary views on plays like *Antony and Cleopatra*, which went unperformed because it defied the classical unities. Johnson was universally looked upon as a quite extraordinary figure, farouche, lonely, sympathetic to the afflicted and attuned to the young. He was supremely a humanitarian whose humanity radiates across the centuries as it was fortunately caught by his friend James Boswell in his *Life of Samuel Johnson* (1791), regarded at the time of its publication as scandalous, but now seen as uniquely capturing Johnson's personality and brilliant flow of conversation. That was given a forum all of its own in the Literary Club which was formed in 1764 precisely for that purpose and in which came together the worlds of art, literature and politics including Reynolds, Garrick, Gibbon, Burney, Burke and Sheridan. Johnson's *Journey to the Western Islands of Scotland* (1775), which he made with Boswell, is a great work, fascinating for delineating a meeting between a representative of a highly sophisticated metropolitan culture and members of one regarded as a primitive survival.

Oliver Goldsmith, like Johnson, was a polymathic writer of prose, plays, history, poetry, biography and novels, of which the most notable was *The Vicar of Wakefield* (1768). He again was an exercise in tender sensibilities lamenting, in *The Deserted Village* (1770), the social and economic woes inflicted on the countryside by the enclosure movement. The creators of the great landscape ensembles were viewed not as improvers but destroyers of a time-honoured way of life, the death knell of a society. The fate of 'Sweety Auburn! loveliest village of the plain' is a dismal one:

> Thy sports are fled, and all thy charms withdrawn;
> Amidst thy bow'rs the tyrant's hand is seen,
> And desolation saddens all thy green . . .
> While, scour'd by famine, from the smiling land
> The mournful peasant leads his humble band;
> And while he sinks, without one arm to serve,
> The country blooms – a garden and a grave.

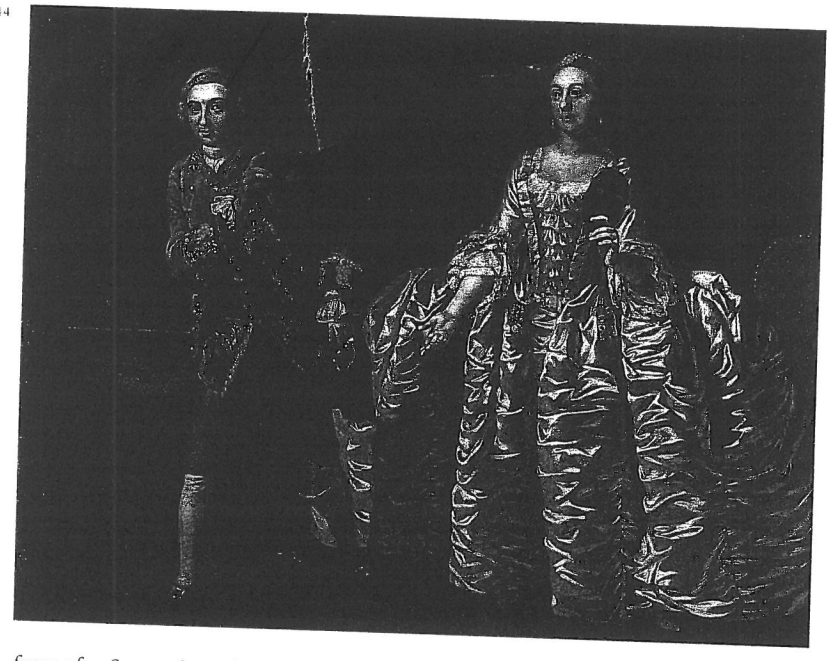
Goldsmith also wrote one of the great comedies of the century, *She Stoops to Conquer* (1773), where the debt to Shakespeare is amply evident and in which he parodies in the lovers the extremes of sensibility.

Sensibility too was to pervade the theatre during the long reign of David Garrick, who had taken the London stage by storm in 1741 in the role of Richard III. Six years later he teamed up with James Lacy as joint proprietor-managers of Drury Lane. For twenty-nine seasons Garrick was to dominate the theatre, retiring finally in 1776 and dying three years later. He stood unchallenged as the greatest actor of his age. Endowed with strong expressive features and a bone structure which responded to artificial lighting, his eyes were large and dark, his voice flexible and his movements both graceful and powerful. These physical attributes were brought into play in achieving a revolution in acting style. That in its own way was a response to sensibility, for his approach to any role was a psychological one, replacing the heavy and slow delivery of the older generation of actors with one in which the words he uttered matched as closely as possible to what looked like natural movement and emotional reaction. Here was an actor who pointed his lines and used his face, as any of his numerous portraits in character reveal.

Garrick was always a man with a mission. Through his alliance with Shakespeare he set out to create a dramatic inheritance divorced from politics and religion. This he achieved by means of a blaze of publicity, making himself a thespian archetype who was to be emulated down to Laurence Olivier, an actor-manager who was also a public figure. Garrick posed as a gentleman of taste and saw that his repertory complied with contemporary sensibilities with plays that extolled the domestic virtues and patriotism. As a result the theatre began to be viewed less as a threat to social order, becoming instead part of a new establishment culture which crossed the political and religious divide. Garrick believed that plays only truly existed in performance, and both press and public were gradually educated to appreciate individual qualities of acting, especially in the great Shakespearean roles.

Garrick's contribution did not end there for he initiated significant practical reforms, banishing spectators from the stage and taking away the hooped chandeliers which had lit the acting forestage. To compensate for their loss he increased the number of footlights and introduced batteries of lights on poles in the wings. Although the auditorium continued to be lit during the performance, the cumulative effect was a move towards the peepshow. By bringing in the painter Philip de Loutherbourg stage scenery gave the audience all the emotional experiences sensibility extolled. Garrick may have failed in lifting the status of his profession overall but he certainly lifted himself. Edmund Burke was to declare that Garrick had 'raised the character of his profession to the rank of a liberal art.' But for the most part those on stage were regarded as the incarnation of what the audience had come to see, wit and beauty but also lasciviousness.

Garrick's acting style called for a degree of intimacy but as the market for the theatre expanded the two licensed playhouses were rebuilt on a vastly extended scale. By the 1790s Covent Garden held some three thousand people and Drury Lane three thousand five hundred. The result was the end of the theatre of the Enlightenment as these vast spaces demanded an acting style full of grand gesture which could be seen



David Garrick in one of his favourite roles, the rake in Benjamin Hoadly's The Suspicious Husband *first produced in 1747. The actress is Mrs. Pritchard who began by playing comedy moving later to tragedy. Painting by Francis Hayman, c.1747.*

from afar. Spectacle took over as the theatre of the word went into abeyance for virtually a century. Richard Brinsley Sheridan's updatings of Restoration comedy, *The Rivals* (1775), *The School for Scandal* (1777) (which included a parody of sensibility in the relationship of the two Surface brothers) and *The Critic* (1779) lowered a curtain in the history of the drama which was not to rise again until Oscar Wilde.

London continued to maintain its place as the musical capital of Western Europe, concerts taking over from opera in offering the most *avant garde* musical experiences. In 1765 Johann Christian Bach, known as the London Bach, together with Carl Friedrich Abel began the long series of subscription concerts at Carlisle House in Soho Square, importing dazzling foreign virtuoso performers like the young Mozart. There they introduced to the London public the latest music in the new lighter 'galant' style. A decade later they built a new concert room in Hanover Square. In the 1770s the Pantheon opened in Oxford Street, a magnificent venue for balls, masquerades and music-making. Joseph Haydn's concerts there during the 1790s caused a sensation. In music too the attributes of sensibility also manifested themselves. The audiences

which had previously moved around and chatted during concerts now sat responding in rapt silence.

But by 1790 London was no longer alone in having the monopoly of an élite culture. The second half of the century witnessed a huge surge of urbanisation caused by the stirrings of the first phases of the Industrial Revolution. Liverpool, Manchester, Newcastle, Birmingham, Nottingham, Bath and Brighton were boom towns, each sustaining a cultural life dominated by the local gentry and professional classes. This they modelled closely on that in the metropolis to which they were linked by easy means of communication. Gradually each acquired its own assembly rooms, theatre, concert hall, lending library and pleasure gardens. Bath had led the way earlier in the century where Richard Nash had introduced a code of behaviour based on politeness in which the nobility, gentry and middle classes could mingle freely. By the 1780s even the wearing of swords had vanished.

Such a significant shift in the pattern of urban life was reflected in architectural change, in elegant streets, squares and crescents in the new classical style as well as places of public assembly. Each town developed its own season of cultural activities and engendered its own clubs and associations which covered the wide variety of topics typical of the Enlightenment. In Birmingham it was the Lunar Society, in Manchester the Literary and Philosophical Society and in Edinburgh the Dilettanti. These emphasised yet again that refinement no longer came from birth but through knowledge and wisdom. They also crystallised the faith of the age in collective endeavour, the belief that those who held varying views could come together united by a creed committed to moral, technical and cultural improvement. Culture, science and philosophy harnessed by Reason and disseminated in print, it was believed, would lead the nation to enlightenment.

Not all of this was by any means to be lost in the turbulent decades ahead, but the French Revolution spelt the end of sensibility. It was seen as linked to politically dangerous ideas of social levelling and equality. In the 1790s it was condemned as being self-indulgent, anti-social, effeminate, vicious and, worst of all, foreign. But it did not vanish. Jane Austen could still censure it in the character of Marianne Dashwood in *Sense and Sensibility*, published in 1811.