

Institute, and never fully written out. Though only hints and suggestions, they are, perhaps, the most penetrative and helpful Shaksperian criticisms in English. He was always forming projects and abandoning them. He projected a great work on Christian philosophy, which was to have been his *magnum opus*, but he never wrote it. He projected an epic poem on the fall of Jerusalem. "I schemed it at twenty-five," he said, "but, alas! *venturum expectat*." What bade fair to be his best poem, *Christabel*, is a fragment. Another strangely beautiful poem, *Kubla Khan*—which came to him, he said, in sleep—is even more fragmentary. And the most important of his prose remains, his *Biographia Literaria*, 1817, a history of his own opinions, breaks off abruptly.

It was in his suggestiveness that Coleridge's great service to posterity resided. He was what J. S. Mill called a "seminal mind," and his thought had that power of stimulating thought in others which is the mark and the privilege of original genius. Many a man has owed to some sentence of Coleridge's, if not the awakening in himself of a new intellectual life, at least the starting of fruitful trains of reflection which have modified his whole view of certain great subjects. On every thing that he left is set the stamp of high mental authority. He was not, perhaps, primarily, he certainly was not exclusively, a poet. In theology, in philosophy, in political thought and literary criticism he set currents flowing which are flowing yet. The terminology of criticism, for example, is in his debt for many of those convenient distinctions—such as that between genius and talent, between wit and humor, between fancy and imagination—which are familiar enough now, but which he first introduced or enforced. His definitions and apothegms we meet everywhere. Such are, for example, the sayings: "Every man is born an Aristotelian or a Platonist." "Prose is words in their best order; poetry, the best words in the best order." And among the bits of subtle interpretation that abound in

his writings may be mentioned his estimate of Wordsworth, in the *Biographia Literaria*, and his sketch of Hamlet's character—one with which he was personally in strong sympathy—in the *Lectures on Shakspeare*.

The Broad Church party, in the English Church, among whose most eminent exponents have been W. Frederic Robertson, Arnold of Rugby, F. D. Maurice, Charles Kingsley, and the late Dean Stanley, traces its intellectual origin to Coleridge's *Aids to Reflection*, to his writings and conversations in general, and particularly to his ideal of a national clerisy, as set forth in his essay on *Church and State*. In politics, as in religion, Coleridge's conservatism represents the reaction against the destructive spirit of the 18th century and the French Revolution. To this root-and-branch democracy he opposed the view that every old belief, or institution, such as the throne or the Church, had served some need, and had a rational idea at the bottom of it, to which it might be again recalled, and made once more a benefit to society, instead of a curse and an anachronism.

As a poet, Coleridge has a sure, though slender, hold upon immortal fame. No English poet has "sung so wildly well" as the singer of *Christabel* and the *Ancient Mariner*. The former of these is, in form, a romance in a variety of meters, and in substance, a tale of supernatural possession, by which a lovely and innocent maiden is brought under the control of a witch. Though unfinished and obscure in intention, it haunts the imagination with a mystic power. Byron had seen *Christabel* in manuscript, and urged Coleridge to publish it. He hated all the "Lakers," but when, on parting from Lady Byron, he wrote his song,

Fare thee well, and if forever,  
Still forever fare thee well,

he prefixed to it the noble lines from Coleridge's poem, beginning

Alas! they had been friends in youth.

In that weird ballad, the *Ancient Mariner*, the supernatural is handled with even greater subtlety than in *Christabel*. The reader is led to feel that amid the loneliness of the tropic sea the line between the earthly and the unearthly vanishes, and the poet leaves him to discover for himself whether the spectral shapes that the mariner saw were merely the visions of the calenture, or a glimpse of the world of spirits. Coleridge is one of our most perfect metrists. The poet Swinburne—than whom there can be no higher authority on this point (though he is rather given to exaggeration)—pronounces *Kubla Khan*, “for absolute melody and splendor, the first poem in the language.”

Robert Southey, the third member of this group, was a diligent worker, and one of the most voluminous of English writers. As a poet, he was lacking in inspiration, and his big oriental epics, *Thalaba*, 1801, and the *Curse of Kehama*, 1810, are little better than wax-work. Of his numerous works in prose, the *Life of Nelson* is, perhaps, the best, and is an excellent biography.

Several other authors were more or less closely associated with the Lake Poets by residence or social affiliation. John Wilson, the editor of *Blackwood's*, lived for some time, when a young man, at Elleray, on the banks of Windermere. He was an athletic man of outdoor habits, an enthusiastic sportsman, and a lover of natural scenery. His admiration of Wordsworth was thought to have led him to imitation of the latter, in his *Isle of Palms*, 1812, and his other poetry.

One of Wilson's companions, in his mountain walks, was Thomas De Quincey, who had been led by his reverence for Wordsworth and Coleridge to take up his residence, in 1808, at Grasmere, where he occupied for many years the cottage from which Wordsworth had removed to Allan Bank. De Quincey was a shy, bookish man, of erratic, nocturnal habits, who impresses one, personally, as a child of genius, with a child's helplessness and a child's sharp observation. He was,

above all things, a magazinist. All his writings, with one exception, appeared first in the shape of contributions to periodicals; and his essays, literary criticisms, and miscellaneous papers are exceedingly rich and varied. The most famous of them was his *Confessions of an English Opium Eater*, published as a serial in the *London Magazine*, in 1821. He had begun to take opium, as a cure for the toothache, when a student at Oxford, where he resided from 1803 to 1808. By 1816 he had risen to eight thousand drops of laudanum a day. For several years after this he experienced the acutest misery, and his will suffered an entire paralysis. In 1821 he succeeded in reducing his dose to a comparatively small allowance, and in shaking off his torpor so as to become capable of literary work. The most impressive effect of the opium habit was seen in his dreams, in the unnatural expansion of space and time, and the infinite repetition of the same objects. His sleep was filled with dim, vast images; measureless cavalcades deploying to the sound of orchestral music; an endless succession of vaulted halls, with staircases climbing to heaven, up which toiled eternally the same solitary figure. “Then came sudden alarms, hurrying to and fro; trepidations of innumerable fugitives; darkness and light; tempest and human faces.” Many of De Quincey's papers were autobiographical, but there is always something baffling in these reminiscences. In the interminable wanderings of his pen—for which, perhaps, opium was responsible—he appears to lose all trace of facts or of any continuous story. Every actual experience of his life seems to have been taken up into a realm of dream, and there distorted till the reader sees not the real figures, but the enormous, grotesque shadows of them, executing wild dances on a screen. An instance of this process is described by himself in his *Vision of Sudden Death*. But his unworldliness and faculty of vision-seeing were not inconsistent with the keenness of judgment and the justness and delicacy of perception displayed in his

*Biographical Sketches* of Wordsworth, Coleridge, and other contemporaries: in his critical papers on *Pope*, *Milton*, *Lessing*, *Homer and the Homeridæ*: his essay on *Style*; and his *Brief Appraisal of the Greek Literature*. His curious scholarship is seen in his articles on the *Toilet of a Hebrew Lady*, and the *Casuistry of Roman Meals*; his ironical and somewhat elaborate humor in his essay on *Murder Considered as One of the Fine Arts*. Of his narrative pieces the most remarkable is his *Revolt of the Tartars*, describing the flight of a Kalmuck tribe of six hundred thousand souls from Russia to the Chinese frontier: a great hegira or anabasis, which extended for four thousand miles over desert steppes infested with foes, occupied six months' time, and left nearly half of the tribe dead upon the way. The subject was suited to De Quincey's imagination. It was like one of his own opium visions, and he handled it with a dignity and force which make the history not altogether unworthy of comparison with Thucydides's great chapter on the Sicilian Expedition.

An intimate friend of Southey was Walter Savage Landor, a man of kingly nature, of a leonine presence, with a most stormy and unreasonable temper, and yet with the courtliest graces of manner, and with—said Emerson—"a wonderful brain, despotic, violent, and inexhaustible." He inherited wealth, and lived a great part of his life at Florence, where he died in 1864, in his ninetieth year. Dickens, who knew him at Bath, in the latter part of his life, made a kindly caricature of him as Lawrence Boythorn, in *Bleak House*, whose "combination of superficial ferocity and inherent tenderness," testifies Henry Crabb Robinson, in his *Diary*, was true to the life. Landor is the most purely classical of English writers. Not merely his themes, but his whole way of thinking was pagan and antique. He composed indifferently in English or Latin, preferring the latter, if any thing, in obedience to his instinct for compression and exclusiveness. Thus, portions of his nar-

rative poem, *Gebir*, 1798, were written originally in Latin and he added a Latin version, *Gebirius*, to the English edition. In like manner his *Hellenics*, 1847, were mainly translations from his Latin *Idyllia Heroica*, written years before. The Hellenic clearness and repose which were absent from his life, Landor sought in his art. His poems, in their restraint, their objectivity, their aloofness from modern feeling, have something chill and artificial. The verse of poets like Byron and Wordsworth is alive; the blood runs in it. But Landor's polished, clean-cut *intaglios* have been well described as "written in marble." He was a master of fine and solid prose. His *Pericles and Aspasia* consists of a series of letters passing between the great Athenian demagogue; the hetaira, Aspasia; her friend, Cleone of Miletus; Anaxagoras, the philosopher, and Pericles's nephew, Alcibiades. In this masterpiece, the intellectual life of Athens, at its period of highest refinement, is brought before the reader with singular vividness, and he is made to breathe an atmosphere of high-bred grace, delicate wit, and thoughtful sentiment, expressed in English "of Attic choice." The *Imaginary Conversations*, 1824-1846, were Platonic dialogues between a great variety of historical characters; between, for example, Dante and Beatrice, Washington and Franklin, Queen Elizabeth and Cecil, Xenophon and Cyrus the Younger, Bonaparte and the president of the Senate. Landor's writings have never been popular; they address an aristocracy of scholars; and Byron—whom Landor disliked and considered vulgar—sneered at him as a writer who "cultivated much private renown in the shape of Latin verses." He said of himself that he "never contended with a contemporary, but walked alone on the far Eastern uplands, meditating and remembering."

A school-mate of Coleridge at Christ's Hospital, and his friend and correspondent through life, was Charles Lamb, one of the most charming of English essayists. He was a bachelor, who lived alone with his sister Mary, a lovable and

intellectual woman, but subject to recurring attacks of madness. Lamb was "a notched and cropped scrivener, a votary of the desk;" a clerk, that is, in the employ of the East India Company. He was of antiquarian tastes, an ardent playgoer, a lover of whist and of the London streets; and these tastes are reflected in his *Essays of Elia*, contributed to the *London Magazine* and reprinted in book form in 1823. From his mousing among the Elizabethan dramatists and such old humorists as Burton and Fuller, his own style imbibed a peculiar quaintness and pungency. His *Specimens of English Dramatic Poets*, 1808, is admirable for its critical insight. In 1802 he paid a visit to Coleridge at Keswick, in the Lake Country; but he felt or affected a whimsical horror of the mountains, and said, "Fleet Street and the Strand are better to live in." Among the best of his essays are *Dream Children*, *Poor Relations*, *The Artificial Comedy of the Last Century*, *Old China*, *Roast Pig*, *A Defense of Chimney-sweeps*, *A Complaint of the Decay of Beggars in the Metropolis*, and *The Old Benchers of the Inner Temple*.

The romantic movement, preluded by Gray, Collins, Chatterton, Macpherson, and others, culminated in Walter Scott (1721-1832). His passion for the mediæval was excited by reading Percy's *Reliques* when he was a boy; and in one of his school themes he maintained that Ariosto was a greater poet than Homer. He began early to collect manuscript ballads, suits of armor, pieces of old plate, border-horns, and similar relics. He learned Italian in order to read the romancers—Ariosto, Tasso, Pulci, and Boiardo—preferring them to Dante. He studied Gothic architecture, heraldry, and the art of fortification, and made drawings of famous ruins and battle-fields. In particular he read eagerly every thing that he could lay hands on relating to the history, legends, and antiquities of the Scottish border—the vale of Tweed, Teviotdale, Ettrick Forest, and the Yarrow, of all which land he became the laureate, as Burns had been of

Ayrshire and the "West Country." Scott, like Wordsworth, was an outdoor poet. He spent much time in the saddle, and was fond of horses, dogs, hunting, and salmon-fishing. He had a keen eye for the beauties of natural scenery, though "more especially," he admits, "when combined with ancient ruins or remains of our forefathers' piety or splendor." He had the historic imagination, and, in creating the historical novel, he was the first to throw a poetic glamour over European annals. In 1803 Wordsworth visited Scott at Lasswade, near Edinburgh; and Scott afterward returned the visit at Grasmere. Wordsworth noted that his guest was "full of anecdote, and averse from disquisition." The Englishman was a moralist and much given to "disquisition," while the Scotchman was, above all things, a *raconteur*, and, perhaps, on the whole, the foremost of British story-tellers. Scott's Toryism, too, was of a different stripe from Wordsworth's, being rather the result of sentiment and imagination than of philosophy and reflection. His mind struck deep root in the past; his local attachments and family pride were intense. Abbotsford was his darling, and the expenses of this domain and of the baronial hospitality which he there extended to all comers were among the causes of his bankruptcy. The enormous toil which he exacted of himself, to pay off the debt of £117,000, contracted by the failure of his publishers, cost him his life. It is said that he was more gratified when the Prince Regent created him a baronet, in 1820, than by the public recognition that he acquired as the author of the Waverley Novels.

Scott was attracted by the romantic side of German literature. His first published poem was a translation made in 1796 from Bürger's wild ballad, *Leonora*. He followed this up with versions of the same poet's *Wilde Jäger*, of Goethe's violent drama of feudal life, *Götz Von Berlichingen*, and with other translations from the German, of a similar class. On his horseback trips through the border, where he studied

the primitive manners of the Liddesdale people, and took down old ballads from the recitation of ancient dames and cottagers, he amassed the materials for his *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border*, 1802. But the first of his original poems was the *Lay of the Last Minstrel*, published in 1805, and followed, in quick succession by *Marmion*, the *Lady of the Lake*, *Rokeby*, the *Lord of the Isles*, and a volume of ballads and lyrical pieces, all issued during the years 1806-1814. The popularity won by this series of metrical romances was immediate and wide-spread. Nothing so fresh or so brilliant had appeared in English poetry for nearly two centuries. The reader was hurried along through scenes of rapid action, whose effect was heightened by wild landscapes and picturesque manners. The pleasure was a passive one. There was no deep thinking to perplex, no subtler beauties to pause upon; the feelings were stirred pleasantly, but not deeply; the effect was on the surface. The spell employed was novelty—or, at most, wonder—and the chief emotion aroused was breathless interest in the progress of the story. Carlyle said that Scott's genius was *in extenso*, rather than *in intenso*, and that its great praise was its healthiness. This is true of his verse, but not altogether so of his prose, which exhibits deeper qualities. Some of Scott's most perfect poems, too, are his shorter ballads, like *Jock o' Hazeldean*, and *Proud Maisie is in the Wood*, which have a greater intensity and compression than his metrical tales.

From 1814 to 1831 Scott wrote and published the *Waverley* novels, some thirty in number; if we consider the amount of work done, the speed with which it was done, and the general average of excellence maintained, perhaps the most marvelous literary feat on record. The series was issued anonymously, and takes its name from the first number: *Waverley*, or *'Tis Sixty Years Since*. This was founded upon the rising of the clans, in 1745, in support of the Young Pretender, Charles Edward Stuart, and it revealed to the

English public that almost foreign country which lay just across their threshold, the Scottish Highlands. The *Waverley* novels remain, as a whole, unequalled as historical fiction, although here and there a single novel, like George Eliot's *Romola*, or Thackeray's *Henry Esmond*, or Kingsley's *Hypatia*, may have attained a place beside the best of them. They were a novelty when they appeared. English prose fiction had somewhat declined since the time of Fielding and Goldsmith. There were truthful, though rather tame, delineations of provincial life, like Jane Austen's *Sense and Sensibility*, 1811, and *Pride and Prejudice*, 1813; or Maria Edgeworth's *Popular Tales*, 1804. On the other hand, there were Gothic romances, like the *Monk* of Matthew Gregory Lewis, to whose *Tales of Wonder* some of Scott's translations from the German had been contributed; or like Anne Radcliffe's *Mysteries of Udolpho*. The great original of this school of fiction was Horace Walpole's *Castle of Otranto*, 1765; an absurd tale of secret trap-doors, subterranean vaults, apparitions of monstrous mailed figures and colossal helmets, pictures that descend from their frames, and hollow voices that proclaim the ruin of ancient families.

Scott used the machinery of romance, but he was not merely a romancer, or an historical novelist even, and it is not, as Carlyle implies, the buff-belts and jerkins which principally interest us in his heroes. *Ivanhoe* and *Kenilworth* and the *Talisman* are, indeed, romances pure and simple, and very good romances at that. But, in novels such as *Rob Roy*, the *Antiquary*, the *Heart of Midlothian*, and the *Bride of Lammermoor*, Scott drew from contemporary life, and from his intimate knowledge of Scotch character. The story is there, with its entanglement of plot and its exciting adventures, but there are also, as truly as in Shakspeare, though not in the same degree, the observation of life, the knowledge of men, the power of dramatic creation. No writer awakens in his readers a warmer personal affection than Walter Scott,

the brave, honest, kindly gentleman; the noblest figure among the literary men of his generation.

Another Scotch poet was Thomas Campbell, whose *Pleasures of Hope*, 1799, was written in Pope's couplet, and in the stilted diction of the 18th century. *Gertrude of Wyoming*, 1809, a long narrative poem in Spenserian stanza, is untrue to the scenery and life of Pennsylvania, where its scene is laid. But Campbell turned his rhetorical manner and his clanking, martial verse to fine advantage in such pieces as *Hohenlinden*, *Ye Mariners of England*, and the *Battle of the Baltic*. These have the true lyric fire, and rank among the best English war-songs.

When Scott was asked why he had left off writing poetry, he answered, "Byron bet me." George Gordon Byron (1788-1824) was a young man of twenty-four when, on his return from a two years' sauntering through Portugal, Spain, Albania, Greece, and the Levant, he published, in the first two cantos of *Childe Harold*, 1812, a sort of poetic itinerary of his experiences and impressions. The poem took, rather to its author's surprise, who said that he woke one morning and found himself famous. *Childe Harold* opened a new field to poetry: the romance of travel, the picturesque aspects of foreign scenery, manners, and costumes. It is instructive of the difference between the two ages, in poetic sensibility to such things, to compare Byron's glowing imagery with Addison's tame *Letter from Italy*, written a century before. *Childe Harold* was followed by a series of metrical tales, the *Giaour*, the *Bride of Abydos*, the *Corsair*, *Lara*, the *Siege of Corinth*, *Parisina*, and the *Prisoner of Chillon*, all written in the years 1813-1816. These poems at once took the place of Scott's in popular interest, dazzling a public that had begun to weary of chivalry romances with pictures of Eastern life, with incidents as exciting as Scott's, descriptions as highly colored, and a much greater intensity of passion. So far as they depended for this interest upon the novelty

of their accessories, the effect was a temporary one. Seraglios, divans, bulbuls, Gulistans, Zuleikas, and other oriental properties deluged English poetry for a time, and then subsided; even as the tide of moss-troopers, sorcerers, hermits, and feudal castles had already had its rise and fall.

But there was a deeper reason for the impression made by Byron's poetry upon his contemporaries. He laid his finger right on the sore spot in modern life. He had the disease with which the time was sick, the world-weariness, the desperation which proceeded from "passion incapable of being converted into action." We find this tone in much of the literature which followed the failure of the French Revolution and the Napoleonic wars. From the irritations of that period, the disappointment of high hopes for the future of the race, the growing religious disbelief, and the revolt of democracy and free thought against conservative reaction, sprang what Southey called the "Satanic school," which spoke its loudest word in Byron. Titanic is the better word, for the rebellion was not against God, but Jupiter; that is, against the State, Church, and society of Byron's day; against George III., the Tory cabinet of Lord Castlereagh, the Duke of Wellington, the bench of bishops, London's gossip, the British constitution, and British cant. In these poems of Byron, and in his dramatic experiments, *Manfred* and *Cain*, there is a single figure—the figure of Byron under various masks—and one pervading mood, a restless and sardonic gloom, a weariness of life, a love of solitude, and a melancholy exaltation in the presence of the wilderness and the sea. Byron's hero is always represented as a man originally noble, whom some great wrong, by others, or some mysterious crime of his own, has blasted and embittered, and who carries about the world a seared heart and a somber brow. Harold—who may stand as a type of all his heroes—has run "through sin's labyrinth," and feeling the "fullness of satiety," is drawn abroad to roam, "the wandering exile of