

THE USE OF NATURAL DETAILS IN ENGLISH POETRY:

1645-1668

by

Robert Wilcher

[Vol 1]

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SYNOPSIS

This dissertation examines the use made of details from the natural world by English poets of the mid-seventeenth century. It is concerned with two main aspects of the subject: the function of natural imagery; and the rhetorical methods by which details from nature are exploited in poetry. It also seeks to demonstrate that the way a poet manipulates his material is influenced both by inherited literary tradition, and also by his age's changing conception of the nature of the universe and of man's relationship to it.

Part One of the thesis explores the implications of the title in the light of some early critical treatments of the subject of Nature in poetry and of more recent theories of seventeenth-century imagery and rhetoric, and surveys those changes in the thought and sensibility of the period which seem to have had a bearing on the poetic handling of natural imagery. Part Two investigates the various ways in which details from nature were employed by poets during the years 1645-1668. The material has been organized under three general headings, dictated by the function of the images in the poems in which they occur. Part Three examines the work of seven poets whose contribution is deemed to be of particular interest. Their poetry is related to the wider cultural setting discussed in Part One and to the literary background provided in Part Two. Part Four furnishes a brief survey of some of the major lines of development in the use of natural details in the poetry of the period immediately following the years studied in the main body of the thesis.

The study concludes with three appendices and a bibliography of books and articles cited and consulted in the course of its composition.

FOR MIRIAM

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Figure One, facing page 61 of Volume I, is a photograph of a plate from Robert Hooke's Micrographia (1665). Permission to include it was kindly granted by the Librarian, Birmingham University Library.

Figure Two, facing page 284 of Volume I, is a photograph of William Faithorne's engraving of Henry More taken from More's Opera Theologica (1675). It was kindly supplied by the Photographic Service of the British Museum and is British Museum Copyright.

VOLUME I

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Volume I

PART ONE: INTRODUCTORY	Page
Chapter I Introduction	2
Chapter II The Intellectual, Aesthetic, and Social Background	21
1. The Old Dispensation	23
2. All Coherence Gone	29
3. The Advancement of Learning	35
4. Divided and Distinguished Worlds	39
5. Method and Materialism	44
6. Brave New World	50
7. Nature's Watches	59
8. Space and Light	66
9. Against Materialism	71
10. Theologia Ruris	75
11. The Magnificent Fabrick	81
12. Painting and the Taste for Nature	84
13. Of Gardens	90
14. Travel and Tourism	95
15. Delightful Horror and Terrible Joy	98
16. Social and Political Change	102
Notes	107
PART TWO: ENGLISH POETRY: 1645-1668	
Chapter III Introduction	117
Chapter IV Types and Methods of Description	124
1. Periphrasis	125
2. The <u>Locus Amoenus</u> and the Bravura Season-Piece	131
3. The Earthly Paradise	142
4. The Pathetic Fallacy	146
5. The Myth of Orpheus and the Pastoral Hyperbole	152
6. "Metaphysical" Descriptions	159
7. The Topographical Poem	167
8. The Creature Poem	180
9. Conclusion	187
Notes	189
Chapter V Figurative Uses of Natural Details	196
1. Infant Buds	199
2. Carpe Florem and Memento Mori	203

3. Traditional Natural Symbolism	206
4. The School of Herbert	218
a) Weather imagery	220
b) Plant imagery	226
c) Light and darkness	232
d) Allegory	234
5. The Emblem	236
6. Nature and Female Charms	241
7. Conclusion	245
Notes	247
 Chapter VI Nature as Experience	 252
1. The Happy Man	255
2. The Ideal Day	263
3. The Cult of Solitude	269
4. The Poet in the Shade	283
5. The Rejection of the Senses and the Hortus Conclusus	285
6. God in Nature	290
7. Conclusion	300
Notes	302
 Volume II	
 PART THREE: ENGLISH POETS: 1645-1668	
 Chapter VII John Milton's Early Poems	 2
1. Early "Elizabethan" Poems	3
2. 'On the Morning of Christ's Nativity'	6
3. 'L'Allegro' and 'Il Penseroso'	11
4. <u>Comus</u>	22
5. 'Lycidas'	30
6. Conclusion	35
Notes	36
 Chapter VIII Robert Herrick	 41
1. Sensuousness and Fancy	43
2. Traditional Symbols and Stock Conceits	51
3. Images of Change	53
4. Flowers, Time, and Transience	55
5. Dull Devonshire and Arcadia	63
6. The Country Life	68
7. Conclusion	75
Notes	76

	Page
Chapter IX George Daniel of Beswick	78
1. Conventional Descriptive Techniques	79
2. The Country Life	85
3. Nature Rich and Curious	88
4. Occasional Meditations	99
5. The Muses' Bower and the Vale of Care	106
6. Conclusion	111
Notes	112
Chapter X Henry Vaughan	115
1. Description in the Secular Poems	115
2. The Night Sky in the Secular Poems	123
3. The Sympathetic Imagination in the Secular Poems	125
4. The Translations	127
5. The Redemption of Nature and the Approach of Light	131
6. The School of Nature	137
7. Types and Symbols: 'The Water-fall' and 'The Showre'	140
8. Empathy: 'The Bird' and 'The Timber'	146
9. The Seed Growing Secretly	151
10. Allegorical Landscapes	157
11. The Beholder of Nature	162
12. Conclusion	164
Notes	165
Chapter XI Edward Benlowes	171
1. Nature: Scientific and Emblematic	172
2. Plagiarism	178
3. Emblematic and Descriptive Conceits	181
4. Sweet Secess: Retirement and Regeneration	189
5. Country Walk and Garden Ecstasy	196
6. Conclusion	204
Notes	205
Chapter XII Andrew Marvell	208
1. Other Kinds of Experience	211
2. The Pastoral Perspective: 'The Gallery' and 'The Unfortunate Lover'	219
3. The Infant Love: 'The Picture of Little T.C. in a Prospect of Flowers' and 'The Nymph complaining for the death of her Faun'	226
4. The Shepherd's Conversion: 'A Dialogue between Thyrsis and Dorinda' and 'Clorinda and Damon'	233

5. Religious Allegory and Emblem: 'The Coronet', 'On a Drop of Dew', and 'Bermudas'	237
6. Thoughts more Green: The Mower Poems	245
7. Unenvy'd Greatness: 'Upon the Hill and Grove at Billborow	261
8. Scatter'd <u>Sibyls</u> Leaves: <u>Upon Appleton House</u>	265
9. Sweet and Wholesome Hours: 'The Garden'	283
10. Conclusion	291
Notes	293
 Chapter XIII <u>Paradise Lost</u>	301
1. Like and Unlike: the Function of the Similes	302
2. Traditional Symbols	311
3. The Mighty Frame: the Universe of <u>Paradise Lost</u>	319
4. <u>Hesperian</u> Fables True: the Garden of Eden	325
5. Six Days' Work, a World: The Creation	331
6. Pastoral Hyperbole and Pathetic Fallacy	334
7. Conclusion	338
Notes	340
 Chapter XIV Abraham Cowley	345
1. Figurative Conceits	347
2. Nature: Artificial and Intellectual	352
3. The Poet-Philosopher	359
4. Of Plants	363
5. The Sabine Field	366
6. Conclusion	374
Notes	376
 PART FOUR: ENGLISH POETRY AFTER 1668	
 Chapter XV Developments in the Use of Natural Details in English Poetry after 1668	380
1. Survivals of Earlier Uses of Natural Imagery in Secular Verse	381
2. Survivals of Earlier Uses of Natural Imagery in Religious Verse	387
3. The Scientific Point of View	394
4. The Real Object	400
5. The Georgic and the Physico-Theology	403
6. Descriptions of External Nature	407
7. Retirement and Solitude	416
8. Conclusion	425
Notes	427

APPENDICES		Page
Appendix A	Chronological Table of English Poetry Published 1645-1668	435
Appendix B	Alphabetical Table of Poets	438
Appendix C	The Pastoral Hyperbole	441

BIBLIOGRAPHY

A. PRIMARY SOURCES

I. Editions of Poetry	445
II. Primary Sources other than Poetry	453

B. SECONDARY SOURCES

I. General Studies of the Literature and the Period	457
II. Studies of Poets Treated in Part Three	464
1. Edward Benlowes	464
2. Abraham Cowley	464
3. Robert Herrick	465
4. Andrew Marvell	466
5. John Milton	468
6. Henry Vaughan	473

PART ONE

INTRODUCTORY

Chapter I

Introduction

"Nature" and "natural" are notoriously elusive and ambiguous terms. Not only does their significance vary considerably from age to age, but even within a single cultural epoch they have a wide semantic range.¹ For the purposes of this study, they will be taken in one of their simplest senses to denote the physical world as it exists apart from the products of human civilization. The phrase "natural details" thus refers to the fish, birds, and beasts; the plants and their fruit; such physical features as the sea, rivers, rocks, valleys, mountains; and such phenomena as the weather and the heavenly bodies - all that was brought forth in the Creation up to the point on the sixth day when God forged the final link in the great Chain of Being and breathed a living soul into the first man. The aim of this dissertation will be to examine the uses that were made of images from the physical world of nature by the poets of the mid-seventeenth century. An enquiry of this kind is both narrower and wider in scope than a study of poetic imagery in general: narrower, in that it concentrates on images derived from a limited source; and wider, in that it must take into account the forces that were reshaping contemporary attitudes to the natural world itself. An attempt will be made to relate poetic techniques and genres to the historical processes that were taking place in religious, philosophical, scientific, aesthetic, and social spheres - to illustrate the extent to which the wider movements of English culture during the period of Civil War, Commonwealth,

and early Augustan Enlightenment were reflected in the poets' handling of material from the natural environment.

The concept of the "use" of natural details points in two directions: the emphasis can fall on the function of the detail in a given poetic context, or on the rhetorical device into which it is fashioned. It can be seen in terms of what it contributes to the "meaning" of a poem, or in terms of how it is manipulated in order that "meaning" may be directed or liberated. During the last quarter of the nineteenth century, a number of schemes were drawn up which aimed at categorizing the poetic uses of natural material. J.C. Shairp isolated eight different "Ways in which Poets deal with Nature", rising on a scale from "the expression of that simple, spontaneous, unreflecting pleasure which all unsophisticated beings feel in free open-air life", by way of the stage "when the heart, under the stress of some strong emotion, colours all Nature with its own hues, sees all things in sympathy with its own mood", and the stage of "purely descriptive poetry", to "the highest use to which Imagination can put this visible world [which] is to gather from it some tidings of the world invisible".² Five years later, Oskar Dolch offered a similar scheme, under seven heads, adding to Shairp's list the category of "the scientific interpretation".³ Francis Palgrave related his analysis to a concept of the progress of civilization, according to which the poetic treatment of landscape develops from simple to complex along a roughly chronological line. For him, "the simple, almost physical, delight in the scenes of the home landscape, which seized especially on the early

poets of Greece and the Middle Ages", and the employment of landscape merely as "the background to human life", were the fruits of a simple agricultural or pastoral society. Later, with the growth of cities, "the pure charm of Nature" was felt as a contrast to urban life; and the philosophical view of nature as an expression of the Divine was developed, notably by the Hebrew writers. In the poetry of Rome, "Deep interest in the landscape, a certain passion for it as such, sympathy with Nature, make themselves heard", and "landscape now at once contrasts with, and supports humanity". Christianity united and expanded the Hebrew and Roman sentiments, and poetry prepared "to be penetrated by what one may call the modern spirit". That spirit manifests itself in pure description; in topographical verse; in "the attempt to penetrate the inner soul of the landscape itself; drawing from it moral lessons or parables for encouragement, or, indeed, for warning, when before the poet's mind is the unsympathetic aspect of Nature, her merciless indifference to human life"; in the apprehension of landscape as "a symbol of underlying spiritual truths"; in the "pathetic fallacy"; and in the sense of "unity between the wonders of the world without with the wonders of the world within".⁴

These early essays are not without interest, but they suffer from being too circumscribed by the preconceptions of their age. The Wordsworthian and late-Romantic critic looks at poetry and nature exclusively in terms of man's response and relationship to the natural world, and sees the history of the poetic treatment of nature as a steady advance towards the nineteenth-century achievement of a "genuine" nature poetry.

By concentrating on his own (and his age's) understanding of "nature", and on his own predilection for a certain kind of sensibility towards the physical world, he misses or discountenances past attitudes to both poetry and nature which are of great importance. The schemes of Shairp, Dolch, and Palgrave are also restricted by their failure to recognize that art must contribute at least as much as nature or sensibility to the final product - the poem. Because of this, they do not make the basic distinction suggested above, between the function of a natural image in a wider context of meaning and the contrivances that the poet must use to ensure that it fulfills that function.

Natural details function in whole poems in one of three fundamental ways - ways which subsume all the categories of Shairp, Dolch, and Palgrave, and which allow for types of literary experience that are not accounted for in their systems.

a) Natural details, singly or combined as a landscape or "scene", may serve as the originators of "meaning", "meaning" being what emerges from the total pattern of words, syntax, concepts, and images that comprise a poem. The poet begins with a detail, or a set of details - with items which may be derived either directly from the physical environment by observation, or indirectly through a literary tradition - and allows significance to flow or be extracted from them. The natural imagery provides the initial impulse that drives the poem on to the formation of its pattern. What that pattern will be is determined by many factors quite independent of the image itself; but without the image there would be no

poem at all.

b) Natural details may be brought into a poem to express, define, or illustrate "meanings" which already, to some extent, exist independently of them. These fragments of "meaning" may be concepts, moods, emotions, experiences, human situations, or even other physical facts. The details may transform or add new dimensions to the original material, but they are not themselves the prime movers of the poem.

c) Natural details may be merely the given material which is to be worked upon by the poetic craftsman. They may have no more life of their own, no more contact with any real world of nature, than the pieces of a jigsaw puzzle or the coloured shapes in a kaleidoscope. Their function is not to generate "meaning", nor to express or modify "meaning". They are simply conventional items imbued with certain literary associations, for the poet to rearrange as he will, to form new and pleasing verbal artefacts.

Type a) provides the basis for kinds as different as the topographical poem, the emblem, the pastoral, the "ideal day" poem, the hymn of praise to the Creator, the woodland or garden reverie, and the Romantic "nature poem". The relationship between the natural details and the wider meaning may be extremely limited in imaginative scope, as in this simple emblem from the end of the sixteenth century:-

The greedie Sowe so longe as shee doth finde
 Some scatteringes left, of harvest under foote
 She forward goes and never lookes behinde,
 While anie sweete remayneth for to roote,
 Even soe wee shoulde, to goodnes everie daie
 Still further passe, and not to turne nor staie.⁵

The poet ignores the suggestiveness of the pig as a literary symbol, and restricts the image to an exclusively logical significance. The reader is required to accept pig-food as a symbol of goodness in the moral sphere, and the "greedie Sowe" as an example of man pursuing a good life. On the other hand, especially in more sophisticated works of art, there is often an interplay between a number of imaginative responses. Arnold's Dover Beach is an interesting example. The poem begins with a description of the sea, the moonlight, the cliffs, and focusses particularly on the roar of surf and shingle. This last detail evinces an emotional response from the poet, and brings "The eternal note of sadness in". This personal mood is then generalized into two emblem-like interpretations: one suggested by literary associations - Sophocles's "turbid ebb and flow/Of human misery"; and one which relates the natural phenomenon to the more specific problems of Arnold's own age and sensibility - the "Sea of Faith" which is:-

Retreating, to the breath
Of the night-wind, down the vast edges drear
And naked shingles of the world.

And finally this sense of a universal loss of faith leads the poet to ponder his personal insecurity, in a world where the individual, like a pebble tossed and impelled by the sea, is lost in the "confused alarms of struggle and flight,/Where ignorant armies clash by night".⁶

Type b) includes all the familiar variations of poetic imagery, from simile and exemplum to metaphor and symbol. Natural details may be used to illustrate a human mood, as in Keats's account of melancholy:-

But when the melancholy fit shall fall
Sudden from heaven like a weeping cloud,

That fosters the droop-headed flowers all,
 And hides the green hill in an April shroud;
 Then glut thy sorrow on a morning rose . . . 7

They may be used to describe the growth of a human relationship, as in Donne's 'Loves Growth':-

Gentle love deeds, as blossomes on a bough,
 From loves awakened root do bud out now;

or to define the metaphysical status of the souls of lovers, as in the same poet's 'The Extasie':-

A single violet transplant,
 The strength, the colour, and the size,
 (All which before was poore, and scant,)
 Redoubles still, and multiplies. 8

They may serve to illustrate some truth about the nature of existence. For example, Herrick invokes a series of images to substantiate the fact that all earthly things are transient:-

All things decay with Time: The Forrest sees
 The growth, and down-fall of her aged trees:
 That Timber tall, which three-score lustres stood
 The proud Dictator of the State-like wood:
 I meane (the Sovereigne of all Plants) the Oke
 Droops, dies, and falls without the cleavers stroke. 9

Or they may define or amplify observations of the appearances of the material world, as in Hopkins's "skies of couple-colour as a brinded cow". 10

Type c) is more elusive. Details which have lost almost all contact with nature, and which function merely as conventional items for the ingenious poet to juggle with, tend to approach and recede from the other

two general types along an indeterminate frontier. Some such division is necessary, however, to describe the rôle played by imagery taken from nature in certain kinds of Renaissance poem which find no place in the accounts of the nineteenth-century critics like Shairp and Palgrave. Two main aspects of this third type can be distinguished. Firstly, a few natural images - notably those of ice and sun, rose, lily, and violet, nightingale and bee - became the standard properties, along with Venus and Cupid, for conceited and fanciful love lyrics. The poet's task was to fashion witty and delicate variations out of this material. Secondly, in the bravura season-piece the poet aims to produce a tour de force of artificial description from a more or less prescribed set of natural details. The purpose of such exercises is not to describe or evoke an experience of nature, but rather to impress by the felicitous handling of a stereotypical formula.

So far we have looked at what natural details can contribute to the "meaning" of a poem - the functions they perform. The other side of the question must now be considered: how they can be made to contribute to the "meaning" - the ways in which they perform. Some remarks by W.K. Wimsatt open the problem up:-

Poetry, says Ruskin in criticizing Reynolds' Idlers, is not distinguished from history by the omission of details, nor for that matter by the mere addition of details. "There must be something either in the nature of the details themselves, or in the method of using them, which invests them with poetical power". Their nature, one may add, as assumed through their relation to one another, a relation which may also be called the method of using them. The poetic character of details consists not in what they say directly and explicitly (as if roses and moonlight were poetic) but in what by their arrangement they show implicitly. 11

For a study of natural imagery in the Renaissance, the crucial point in this paragraph is Wimsatt's qualification of Ruskin's dictum. It is almost certainly true of much modern poetry, and may be true of much Romantic poetry, that details from nature have no direct or explicit meaning to impart, and can only be made meaningful by the skill of the poet in arranging them and absorbing them into a comprehensive pattern, so that their significance is shown implicitly. For most poetry written before 1700, however, this qualification is not so necessary, since natural details possessed a much greater power of direct and explicit statement. Rosemond Tuve warns the reader of Elizabethan and Metaphysical poetry that "the relation of imagery to statement, including that of 'particulars' to 'meaning', can be, and then was, somewhat differently conceived than we conceive it". She explains:-

In all this poetry the extent to which the universe and the particulars within it are instinct with meaning is alarming to the modern mind; but much of the imagery turns either to naive inanity or witty bravado if one forgets to read all images with a quickened sense of what they may stand for. 'Poetry deals with universals' operated to make of images something which one must always be at least ready to read as synecdoche rather than as description.¹²

The findings of other critics substantiate this claim, and indicate that until relatively recent times poets have turned to nature for images which already possess extensions of meaning before they are incorporated into a specific poetic pattern.

D.W. Robertson describes how, in the Middle Ages, the natural world was "an expression of God's infinite love", and offers a principle and an example:-

that when a work by an obviously accomplished mediaeval poet does not seem to make sense on the surface, one must look beneath the surface for the meaning. Frost and ice are traditional symbols of Satan, whom God permits to tempt the human spirit to fall in cupidity.¹³

Josephine Miles has studied the frequency and function of evaluative and sensory adjectives, typified by "good" and "bright", in poetry from Wyatt to the Romantics, and found that not until the work of Milton is there a shift towards the predominance of "bright" over "good". The bright objects in Donne's verse, "all in their brightness are representative of other virtues. Never do they poetize brightness as a special poetic quality for perception".¹⁴ The virtues which objects represent are nearly always fixed by custom and literary tradition before the poet comes to handle them.

Rosemond Tuve herself regards this equation of detail and significance as much more than a question of certain objects being associated with certain fixed meanings. Speaking of the Elizabethan penchant for allegory, she concludes:-

Myth used as metaphor is not at all confined to any genre or special type of poetic purpose. Minds so habituated were also trained to the double sight of very many other types of particulars. The transitory rose, the triumphant worm in the grave, the seasons, the elements, shepherd's pipe, king's crown, sun, moon, and nightingale - the 'particulars' in Elizabethan poems turn into metaphors at a touch. This is not entirely due to the fact that many of them had had a long history of metaphorical use. It is to be related to rooted habits of thought.¹⁵

These "rooted habits of thought" made possible the "poetic of correspondence", which J.A. Mazzeo sees as the basis of Marinismo and Metaphysical

poetry, and which he has found explicitly formulated in the treatises of such seventeenth-century Italians as Eduardo Tesauro. In the light of this poetic:-

Nature then was not the object of simple observation and enjoyment; it was the 'matter' in which man discovered and read the metaphors of divine wisdom, for the world itself was a 'metaphysical' poem. God created such a world for the purpose of arousing the wonder of men, and man himself made conceits because he alone of all the creatures of God needed to seek out the variety of the universe and express it. Man cannot remain on the level of plain perception and plain discourse.¹⁶

Two methods of making natural imagery serve the poem's meaning have so far emerged: firstly, the poet may introduce an image that already has a fixed significance attached to it; secondly, he may seek out correspondences in nature - correspondences which are not the invention of his own mind, but the discovery of aspects of objective truth, since God created the universe as a tissue of conceits. Both methods share a characteristic which separates them from more recent techniques, and which emphasises how changes in philosophy or "world-view" can influence the processes of art. Whether the details used by the Renaissance poet were ready-made, furnished with moral or spiritual significance by traditional usage, or whether their significance was only revealed by the perceptiveness and agility of his mind in recognizing the witty structure of the universe, they all operated as public symbols, as objective items of truth. The eagle is the king of the birds, the lion king of beasts, the oak king of the forest; the lily is the symbol of chastity, the violet of humility, the olive of peace; the mountains are proud and the valleys humble, the

rivers flow away and the blossoms fade like the life of man; the drop of dew, "Dark beneath, but bright above", is like the soul yearning for heaven. In all these cases, the analogies were "true" in an accepted objective sense; the Creation was arranged hierarchically, so that the eagle really was superior to other birds; the Creation was arranged analogically, so that facts on one plane of existence - rivers, mountains, blossoms, drops of dew - really did correspond to, and could illuminate, facts on another plane - the life, death, and morality of man. Rosemond Tuve sums up Renaissance practice as that of "using public symbols without equivocation for the conveyance of unmistakable general meanings".¹⁷ What this means in the field of aesthetics, is that the poets were not concerned with natural details in themselves, but only with the truth which they traditionally stood for, or which they could be seen to reveal. Hence Mazzeo's remark that "Nature then was not the object of simple observation and enjoyment", and N.H. Clement's that:-

The sixteenth and seventeenth centuries were not centuries of observation; they ran to synthesis, meaning here seeing things as a whole, whereas analysis, in the sense of seeing things in their details, is an essential of nature poetry.¹⁸

The problem for the modern poet lies in just this need to analyse, to take account of the particulars because there is no longer an accepted universal structure of meanings. The public symbol is no longer valid, because the area of "truth" it used to open onto has disintegrated. The poet must now create his own symbols, from his own experience and interpretation of life, and must no longer expect his readers to believe what

he says, but only to "suspend disbelief" while entering into the imaginative world of the poem. W.K. Wimsatt sets this situation in historical perspective:-

One main difference between all modern positivistic, nominalistic, and semantic systems and the scholastic and classical systems is that the older ones stress the similarity of the individuals denoted by the common term and hence the real universality of meaning, while the modern systems stress the differences in the individuals, the constant flux even of each individual in time and space and its kinetic structure, and hence infer only an approximate or nominal universality of meaning and a convenience rather than a truth in the use of general terms. A further difference lies in the view of how the individual is related to the various connotations of terms which may be applied to it. That is, to the question: What is it? the older writers seem to hold there is but one (essentially right) answer, while the moderns accept as many answers as there are classes to which the individual may be assigned (an indefinite number).¹⁹

It follows from this that the concept of originality was very different in the seventeenth century from what it is today. Until the eighteenth century, there are few examples of what Wordsworth called a "new image of external nature", or even of "a familiar one from which it can be inferred that the eye of the Poet had been steadily fixed upon his object".²⁰ When particular details are emphasised, they are not selected according to a criterion of novelty or accuracy of observation, but as representatives of general classes. As Rosemond Tuve remarks:-

The 'adornments' which Fracastoro isolates for comment do not chiefly individualize; they select such particulars as will best indicate the intended universal. Such is the common intention of Elizabethan and early seventeenth-century imagery.²¹

The element of surprise, the pleasure that one derives from originality, is to be encountered not in the detail itself but in the ingenuity with

which it is incorporated into a new or unusual context, or in the recognition of its appropriateness as illustration or metaphor.

The mention of metaphor brings us to the kinds of rhetorical device that the poet employs to direct or extract the potential or inherent meaning of his imagery. How did the seventeenth-century poet use the predominantly traditional natural details at his disposal? The enormous range of specialized devices known to Renaissance rhetoric need not be gone into here. The emblem, the conceit, the exemplum, the prosopopeia, and so on, will be dealt with as they occur in later chapters in the discussion of particular poems. A few words will suffice for the moment about seventeenth-century conceit and metaphor in general. The vital point to recognize is that it was the comparison that mattered, rather than the things compared. Both Tuve and Mazzeo insist on this. Tuve makes the basic point:-

Unlike various modern critics, Hoskins does not seem to think of the notion that anyone would find an image delightful because two items were mentioned; like other theorists, and like all the poets, he expects readers to experience greater intellectual pleasure because simultaneously some true thing is conveyed and a relatedness is seen. All Elizabethan and seventeenth-century metaphor tries, it seems to me, to provide primarily this pleasure. Consequently, poets throughout the period (including the Metaphysicals) take a very considerable responsibility toward giving the reader whatever he needs to enjoy not the content of the simile but the similarness of its two terms.²²

This ties in with what was said earlier about the difference between a synthetic and an analytic conception of meaning. Mazzeo puts a slightly different emphasis on the same matter:-

The qualities of the "metaphysical" image seem to have nothing to do with whether or not it can be visualized or with the sensory content of the image itself, although it may be prominent. The qualities of the "metaphysical" image are a function of the manner in which the analogues are related, and it is this very point that the theorists of the conceit make when they insist that the wit is in the "form" of the conceit and not in the "matter".²³

In other words, the seventeenth-century poet does not delight primarily in yoking heterogeneous items together because of what they are - because of their novelty value - but because of the skill and mental agility involved in making a connection between them. In more trivial verse, the ingenuity and skill are themselves the whole purpose of the exercise; in a more complex and serious poet - a Donne, or a Marvell in Upon Appleton House - the connections made between disparate areas of experience produce new insights into the nature of experience and life itself.

In the years studied in this thesis, and in the half-century following, a change was beginning to take place, away from the mediaeval and Renaissance views of nature and poetry and towards the scientific and Romantic versions of "nature" that have made possible the poetry of the modern era. Josephine Miles suggests the transitional character of this period by locating the shift from "good" to "bright" in the work of Milton. The choice of 1645 as the starting-date was thus largely determined by the fact that it was the year of Milton's first volume of poems - poems which retain features of an earlier Elizabethan style, and which also look forward to the eighteenth century, when such works as Comus and 'L'Allegro' and 'Il Penseroso' gave an important impetus to the new school of nature poets. 1668 seems an appropriate date at which to

terminate the more detailed part of the study, since it takes in Paradise Lost (published in 1667), and was the year in which the Works of Cowley were printed. Cowley, more clearly than any other poet of his generation, bridges the gulph between the "metaphysical" period and the scientific and rationalist outlook of the Augustan Enlightenment.

The rest of Part One will provide a certain amount of background material, against which the poetry can be examined, and to which reference can be made as aspects of changing intellectual, social, and aesthetic thought are found to be manifested in the poetic use of natural details. Although interest will be centred on the period 1645-1668, it would clearly be artificial to ignore developments leading up to and away from those dates. So whenever it has been deemed helpful for an understanding of the environment out of which the poetry grew, material of an earlier or a later date has been included in the discussion.

Part Two will deal with the bulk of the relevant minor poetry written and published between 1645 and 1668, and will furnish a general account of the various ways in which natural details were used during the period. The system of three broad types of function for natural images suggested earlier in this chapter will not be applied schematically, but will be useful as a point of reference in the exposition of particular groups of poems.

In Part Three the poets who seem to be most significant for the history of natural imagery are accorded individual treatment, so as to preserve a sense of their poetic identity. Their work will be examined

in the cultural and literary contexts established in Parts One and Two.

In order to achieve a more complete historical perspective on the period under review, Part Four traces, in much less detail, some of the developments which took place in the poetic use of natural imagery between the death of Cowley and the early years of the eighteenth century.²⁴

NOTES

- 1 See Arthur O. Lovejoy, "'Nature' as Aesthetic Norm", Modern Language Notes, XLII, No. 7 (1927), 444-450; and Harold S. Wilson, "Some Meanings of 'Nature' in Renaissance Literary Theory", Journal of the History of Ideas, II, No. 4 (1941), 430-448. Lovejoy isolates eighteen senses of "nature", mostly from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, in "an analytical enumeration of the purely aesthetic uses of the term" (p. 444); and Wilson records thirty-five distinct senses of the word as used in the literary theory of the Renaissance.
- 2 J.C. Shairp, On Poetic Interpretation of Nature (Edinburgh, 1877), pp. 93-115.
- 3 Oskar Dolch, The Love of Nature in Early English Poetry (Dresden, 1882), p. 9.
- 4 Francis T. Palgrave, Landscape in Poetry from Homer to Tennyson (London, 1897), pp. 6-9.
- 5 Geoffrey Whitney, A Choice of Emblems (1568), p. 53.
- 6 Matthew Arnold, 'Dover Beach', Poetry and Prose, ed. John Bryson, "The Reynard Library" (London, 1954), pp. 144-5.
- 7 John Keats, 'Ode on Melancholy', Poetical Works, ed. H. Buxton Forman (London, 1908), p. 247.
- 8 John Donne, Complete Poetry and Selected Prose, ed. John Hayward, "The Nonesuch Library" (London, 1955), pp. 24 and 38.
- 9 Robert Herrick, Poetical Works, ed. L.C. Martin (Oxford, 1956), p. 23.
- 10 Gerard Manley Hopkins, 'Pied Beauty', Poems, ed. W.H. Gardner and H.H. MacKenzie, 4th. ed. (London, 1967), p. 69.
- 11 W.K. Wimsatt, The Verbal Icon (Kentucky Paperbacks, Lexington, 1967), p. 77.
- 12 Rosemond Tuve, Elizabethan and Metaphysical Imagery (Phoenix Books, Chicago, 1961), p. 77.
- 13 D.W. Robertson, "The Doctrine of Charity in Medieval Literary Gardens", Speculum, XXVI (1951), pp. 32 and 33.
- 14 Josephine Miles, "From Good to Bright: A Note in Poetic History", PMLA, LX, No. 3 (1945), 766-774.
- 15 Rosemond Tuve, p. 161.
- 16 Joseph Anthony Mazzeo, Renaissance & Seventeenth-Century Studies (New York, 1964), pp. 55-6.
- 17 Rosemond Tuve, p. 13.
- 18 N.H. Clement, "Nature and the Country in Sixteenth and Seventeenth Century French Poetry", PMLA, XLIV (1929), p. 1024.
- 19 W.K. Wimsatt, p. 70.
- 20 William Wordsworth, Poetical Works, ed. E. De Selincourt, 2nd. ed. (Oxford, 1952), Vol. II, pp. 419-420.
- 21 Rosemond Tuve, pp. 42-3.
- 22 *ibid.*, pp. 122-3.

- 23 J.A. Mazzeo, "A Critique of Some Modern Theories of Metaphysical Poetry", in Seventeenth-Century English Poetry, ed. William R. Keast (Galaxy Books, New York, 1962), p. 70.
- 24 For a fuller treatment of the subject of nature in the poetry of the early eighteenth century see Myra Reynolds, The Treatment of Nature in English Poetry between Pope and Wordsworth (Chicago, 1896); C.E. De Haas, Nature and the Country in English Poetry of the First Half of the Eighteenth Century (Amsterdam, 1928); C.V. Deane, Aspects of Eighteenth Century Nature Poetry (Oxford, 1935); and Alan Dugald McKillop, The Background of Thomson's Seasons (Archon Books, Hamden, Connecticut, 1961).

Chapter II

The Intellectual, Aesthetic, and Social Background

What men see in Nature is a result of what they have been taught to see - lessons they have learned in school, doctrines they have heard in church, books they have read. They are conditioned most of all by what they mean by Nature, a word that has gathered around itself paradox and ambiguity ever since the fifth century B.C. (Marjorie Hope Nicolson),₁

There are . . . implicit or incompletely explicit assumptions, or more or less unconscious mental habits, operating in the thought of an individual or a generation. It is the beliefs which are so much a matter of course that they are rather tacitly presupposed than formally expressed and argued for, the ways of thinking which seem so natural and inevitable that they are not scrutinized with the eye of logical self-consciousness, that often are most decisive of the character of a philosopher's doctrine, and still oftener of the dominant intellectual tendencies of an age. (Arthur O. Lovejoy)₂

The purpose of this chapter is not to attempt a comprehensive account of the intellectual, aesthetic, and social movements of the period, but to furnish a background against which the use of natural imagery by the poets can be studied.³ Man's interpretation of the universe in which he lives and of his own relationship to it - the aspect of thought which determines his personal response to experience, and the collective expressions of human nature in a given culture and society - is always in a state of flux. Throughout great stretches of history, the changes that have taken place have been the result of minor adjustments: shifts of emphasis, new syntheses, fresh attempts to resolve the contradictions inherent in an established body of information and belief about the nature of things. But in certain periods a crisis occurs, and the settled

assumptions no longer appear satisfactory. The lessons and doctrines and books of the past are felt to be at odds with the experience of what life is like, and men begin to seek for a new interpretation of existence, to evolve a new body of theory that will harmonize with the new set of facts and with the unconscious mental habits that the new facts are breeding. The process of coming to terms with a radical change in circumstances is neither easy nor rapid. It may take centuries for men even to recognize the causes of their uneasiness, and the need for a re-thinking of their intellectual position. And it may take centuries more for successive generations to bring about the transformation of basic assumptions. The new world-picture that emerges will not be independent of the past, but will be a combination of fresh discoveries and of ancient ideas reorientated in accordance with the different conception of man and nature.⁴

The century of Milton and Cromwell and Newton saw the climax of one of these great crises in human thought. New developments set in motion during the Renaissance (using that term loosely to indicate the movement of mind that produced the Reformation, the rise of Humanism, and the advances in the physical sciences) had radically altered the intellectual and imaginative horizons of Christendom, and ~~in~~ the seventeenth century witnessed the working out of the implications of these changes. What was acceptable as "fact" tended more and more to be that which was demonstrable according to scientific laws discovered by Reason. But one should avoid making too definite a distinction between such different areas of intellectual activity as "science", "theology", and "philosophy". For, although

the century saw an acceleration of the modern movement towards specialization, some of the most significant minds of the period still managed to hold these various aspects of knowledge in solution, and for many the three disciplines still had a vital relationship with each other. Indeed, in any age, the findings of science and philosophy/theology, even though ostensibly divided off as discrete spheres of study, contain important consequences for each other.⁵ In the years covered by this study, one finds the philosophers formulating the principles on which the scientific advances have been achieved, the scientists moving forward to further discoveries with an increasing sense of confidence and clarity of purpose, and the theologians adjusting traditional religious attitudes to accommodate newly available information about the nature of the physical universe. An important fact to remember is that in many cases the philosopher, the scientist, and the theologian were the same man.

1. The Old Dispensation.

By the middle of the seventeenth century, the conflict caused by the fundamental changes which were reshaping Europe's conception of the nature and meaning of existence was nearing resolution. In order to understand more completely the crucial phase of this transformation from the mediaeval to the modern view of the universe and man, and consequently to appreciate more fully the poetry that grew from it, it is necessary to know something of the intellectual situation that went before. The mediaeval world-picture, which, in a form modified by the Renaissance, was inherited by the seventeenth century, was an amalgam of classical

Greek ideas and new concepts issuing from Christianity. Professor A.O. Lovejoy, who has demonstrated the continuing vitality of certain aspects of Greek thought throughout the Middle Ages and the early modern period, argues that the contradictions evident in mediaeval systems of philosophy were inherent from the start in the work of Plato. There was a tension in Plato's thought between what Lovejoy calls "otherworldliness" and "this-worldliness".⁶ According to the first of these principles, the world of things in which we live is no more than a shadow, an imperfect realization of a higher realm of ideas. One strain in Western philosophy emphasises man's quest for this other world. But opposed to the desire to escape into a more real sphere of being is man's obstinate sense of the reality and importance of the world disclosed by the senses, the material world in which he must pass his everyday life. The consequences of this dualism are evident in Plato's conception of a supreme Being and of the creatures. The supreme Being is absolutely self-sufficient, which implies that the creatures of this world, all that is other than God, are of no significance or worth. But he is also good, which implies that he cannot be envious of the existence of other beings, however unlike himself they may be in kind or excellence. Rather than impeding their existence, the supreme Being must in fact be active in their realization, otherwise he would lack a positive element of perfection, would be less complete than the very definition of a good and self-sufficient God requires.⁷ Lovejoy sums up his analysis of the Platonic explanation of the nature and existence of the universe, stressing the dualism that was

to be inherited by Christian metaphysics:-

The concept of Self-Sufficing Perfection, by a bold logical inversion, was - without losing any of its original implications - converted into the concept of a Self-Transcending Fecundity. A timeless and incorporeal One became the logical ground as well as the dynamic source of the existence of a temporal and material and extremely multiple and variegated universe. The proposition that - as it was phrased in the Middle Ages - omne bonum est diffusivum sui here makes its appearance as an axiom of metaphysics. With this reversal there was introduced into European philosophy and theology the combination of ideas that for centuries was to give rise to many of the most characteristic internal conflicts, the logically and emotionally opposing strains, which mark its history - the conception of (at least) Two-Gods-in-One, of a divine completion which was yet not complete in itself, since it could not be itself without the existence of beings other than itself and inherently incomplete; of an Immutability which required, and expressed itself in, Change; of an Absolute which was nevertheless not truly absolute because it was related, at least by way of implication and causation, to entities whose nature was not its nature and whose existence and perpetual passage were antithetic to its immutable subsistence.⁸

There was an inevitable corollary to this conception of God, or the "Idea of the Good", as the ground of being other than itself:-

To the . . . question - How many kinds of temporal and imperfect beings must this world contain? - the answer follows by the same dialectic: all possible kinds. The "best soul" could begrudge existence to nothing that could conceivably possess it, and "desired that all things should be as like himself as they could be".⁹

Lovejoy calls this assertion "the principle of plenitude".

Aristotle's system of philosophy gave rise to another fertile idea that later combined with the Platonic principle of plenitude. This was his conception of continuity. He did not himself formulate the theory "that all organisms can be arranged in one ascending sequence of forms",¹⁰ but it was from him that natural historians subsequently derived this

principle, which later became fused with the Platonic assumption of the fulness of natural existence, with momentous consequences:-

The result was the conception of the plan and structure of the world which, through the Middle Ages and down to the late eighteenth century, many philosophers, most men of science, and, indeed, most educated men, were to accept without question - the conception of the universe as a "Great Chain of Being", composed of an immense, or - by the strict but seldom rigorously applied logic of the principle of continuity - of an infinite, number of links ranging in hierarchical order from the meagerest kind of existents, which barely escape non-existence, through "every possible" grade up to the ens perfectissimum - or, in a somewhat more orthodox version, to the highest possible kind of creature, between which and the Absolute Being the disparity was assumed to be infinite - every one of them differing from that immediately above and that immediately below it by the "least possible" degree of difference.¹¹

These ideas, which were embryonic in the thought of Plato and Aristotle, were developed by such neo-Platonist philosophers as Plotinus in the third century A.D. and Macrobius in the fifth century A.D., and by such Christian thinkers as St. Augustine, Abelard, and St. Thomas Aquinas, and the "Scale of Being" was destined to become the essential conception of Christian and neo-Platonic cosmology. The Scholastic philosophers of the Middle Ages looked upon the world of nature not simply as an orderly arrangement of physical objects, but as a metaphysical entity, deriving both existence and value from its relationship with God.¹² This view of the universe clearly constituted an impediment to scientific progress, since the phenomena of nature were not examined so as to discover their immediate physical causes in relation to other phenomena, but were evaluated according to their place in an all-embracing structure of existence, in which all was to be explained by reference to a Final Cause.¹³ This view

of the universe and God, and of man's relationship to both, permeated all departments of intellectual activity. If everything in the natural and spiritual worlds had a metaphysical connection with everything else, and ultimately with the Creator, then one part of the Creation could be used as a means of understanding another part. In its widest form, this method of speculation led to the conception of Nature as a revelation of God - a revelation which at first provided a supplement, and eventually a fully sufficient alternative, to the revelation of the Scriptures.

Douglas Bush notes certain consequences of this for the imagination:-

For Aquinas and for Calvin alike, God revealed himself first through his word and secondarily through his works; and the unphilosophic St. Francis could, as one of a great family, praise the Lord God and all his creatures, our brother the sun and our sister the moon, our brothers the wind and fire, our sister the water, our mother the earth.

Of great importance for poetry was a special development of the religious view of nature and, in some sense, of the scientific view as well: that was the allegorical or emblematic conception. Because God maintains an active and intimate connection with his works, because all creatures and things and ideas flow from and back to one divine source, there is an unlimited network of correspondences binding together the physical and spiritual, the earthly and the human and the celestial. Everything, concrete or abstract, is related, directly or by analogy, to everything else. . . . Because of this general belief in the divine unity of all creation, natural objects were seen not so much in themselves but as emblems or allegories of moral, religious, and metaphysical truth.¹⁴

E.M.W. Tillyard, in his book The Elizabethan World Picture, has shown that these assumptions about the essential unity and order of the universe were still fundamental to the men of the sixteenth century, whose conception of nature was based on various analogies: the Chain of Being, the hierarchy of corresponding planes, the great Cosmic Dance.¹⁵ Analogy

is common to human thought in all periods, but in the modern world it is employed only figuratively, as illustration. Marjorie Hope Nicolson makes the important point that for many men in the seventeenth century it was still understood as an expression of the true nature of things.¹⁶

The world-view evolved by the Elizabethans was a result of Reason applied to the phenomena of nature. But the faculty denoted by that word was not the same as the Reason which became so important a factor in later seventeenth-century philosophy. S.L. Bethell has defined it as follows:-

Reason to the Elizabethans may thus be said to have included faith, intuition, feeling, as well as the more strictly rational processes. Beauty, goodness, love, were a part of truth.¹⁷

Reason of this kind was the direct result of the analogical way of thinking. In the "total complex picture" produced by the co-operation of reason and faith, the:-

. . . hierarchical order is arrived at, not by observation, measurement or other purely cognitive devices, but by evaluation: the sun is the greatest of the planets, the lion of animals, the oak of trees, through a process partly of utilitarian calculation but even more of aesthetic appreciation: why otherwise should the lion excel the ox? Thus, feeling enters into the very heart of the reasoning process.¹⁸

Although this unified approach to experience, by which moral, physical, metaphysical, aesthetic, emotional aspects of life could be conceived as vitally relevant to each other, was very fruitful for works of imagination, it had an adverse effect on the development of science. The scientific method depends on an exclusively factual, dispassionate treatment of

physical cause and effect. Any intrusion from other areas of experience will obscure the clarity of the issues involved, and lead to irrelevant speculation and distorted reasoning.

This brings us to a consideration of the origins of the scientific revolution which reached a crucial stage in the seventeenth century. Before the scientific movement could get under way, it was necessary for philosophers to modify their attitude to the physical world. As long as "this world" was regarded as a material impediment set between man and the spiritual realm that was his goal (one strain in the Platonic dualism, and a feature of Christian asceticism), it could have no interest or value in itself. But fairly early in the Middle Ages, the other side of the dualism began to assert itself, and Christian thinkers could legitimately concern themselves with "Nature".¹⁹ Philosophies of Nature were formulated by such later Renaissance figures as Telesio, Campanella, and Giordano Bruno, many of which tended towards pantheism.²⁰ Even while the fifteenth and sixteenth century philosophers of Nature were devising their virtually pantheistic schemes of Nature as an organism actuated by principles of love and hate, pleasure and pain, another force was at work, replacing this conception with one of Nature as a machine.²¹ With the idea of Nature as a machine, functioning according to fixed mathematical laws, we are on the threshold of seventeenth-century science.

2. All Coherence Gone.

The Circle of Perfection, from which man for so long deduced his ethics, his aesthetics, and his metaphysics, was broken during the seventeenth century.²²

So says Professor Nicolson in the introduction to her book The Breaking of the Circle, which examines the impact of the New Science on the thought of the seventeenth century. The Ptolemaic system of the universe, according to which the earth stood at the centre of Creation and the various heavenly bodies moved about it on strictly circular courses, was replaced during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries by theories of Copernicus, Tycho Brahe, and Kepler. It gradually came to be accepted that the earth and the other planets travelled along elliptical paths round the sun. A new star appeared in the sky in 1572, and in 1610 Galileo looked through his new telescope and discovered that there were spots on the sun, mountains on the moon, and other moons revolving about Jupiter, and that the Milky Way was made up of myriads of stars, stretching for inconceivable distances into space. The mediaeval universe which, though vast, had definable limits, being encased by the outermost sphere of the Primum Mobile, was shattered. Man found himself in a universe of possibly infinite extension, in which there was no easily identifiable regularity or pattern. What was more, the comforting belief that the mutability and transience of the things of this earth ceased at the circle of the moon was put in question by the new star and the evidences of irregularity on the surface of the sun and moon. If the stars of the Milky Way were each a sun, with its own system of planets, then man could no longer assert his central position in the scheme of nature - there would almost certainly be living (and perhaps intelligent) creatures elsewhere in the universe.

These changes in the factual information about the world perceived by the senses made necessary some serious modifications to the accepted intellectual position. This is not to suggest that there was any immediate widespread reaction to the new cosmic discoveries and hypotheses, which after all were cumulative in effect, nearly a century separating the births of Copernicus and Kepler. But the achievements of the astronomers, and of such men as Gilbert and Harvey in other fields of science, did add to the momentum of movements whose origins lay deep in the philosophical and religious traditions of Europe. We have seen that mediaeval Christianity inherited from Greece a contradictory set of attitudes towards physical nature. Nature was a revelation of the Creator, a way of ascending to God, or even in some sense divine; or nature was either irrelevant in the ultimate scheme of reality, or an impediment placed in the way of man's union with the One. These ideas fused, in the Christian tradition, with the doctrines of the Creation and the Fall of Man. The dispute about the value of the physical world took the form of conflicting interpretations of the consequences of man's sin for the rest of Creation. Luther, for example, believed that "The original earth had been a model of beauty. But beauty began to fade from external nature at the time of the Fall of Adam and continued to disappear in progressive stages of degeneration".²³ While Calvin held that "Nature is changed to man, but Nature herself is not fundamentally changed, because Nature is the work of God".²⁴ For the moment, we are concerned with the former of these: the pessimistic view.

The concept of history as a long process of degeneration from an

originally perfect state was not a strange one to Western thought: it is found in the classically-derived myth of a Golden Age, to which have succeeded ages of increasing imperfection, down to the present Age of Iron. But the emphasis on the decay of the physical world became more and more insistent in the later decades of the sixteenth century. The various and complex causes which combined to encourage the growing sense of pessimism about the state of the world have been analysed by Victor Harris in All Coherence Gone. Political and social unrest and a theological concern to defend Christian dogma against the Aristotelian doctrine of the world's eternity played a significant part, but Harris insists that there was a definite connection between the new science and the increasing acceptance of the decay theory:-

The awakening interest in the physical universe in general helps to explain the spectacular increase, through the next forty or fifty years [i.e. after the 1570s], of the belief in the decay of nature. In the last quarter of the sixteenth century the Copernican theory is often discussed as a physical, rather than as a mathematical, hypothesis.²⁵

The implications of astronomy and the prevailing pessimism about physical nature soon began to engage the attention of the poets. Spenser made some use of the concept of a decaying world, but it was in the decade after Galileo's observations that poetry reflected it most distinctly.²⁶ Of all the poets who recorded some reaction to the changing universe, Donne was the most passionately involved. John Davies, his contemporary, could still look on the universe as regulated by the divine harmony of a great cosmic dance, "And see a just proportion every-

where".²⁷ For him, the suggestions of the astronomers could be regarded with equanimity, and then dismissed from thought:-

Only the earth doth stand forever still:
 Her rocks remove not, nor her mountains meet,
 Although some wits enrich'd with learning's skill
 Say heaven stands firm and that the earth doth fleet
 And swiftly turneth underneath their feet;
 Yet, though the earth is ever steadfast seen,
 On her broad breast hath dancing ever been.²⁸

But for Donne, Copernicus and Tycho Brahe and Galileo were to be taken more seriously. The first of the Anniversary poems gives succinct and powerful expression to the theory of decay:-

Then, as mankinde, so is the worlds whole frame
 Quite out of joynt, almost created lame:
 For, before God had made up all the rest,
 Corruption entred, and deprav'd the best:
 It seis'd the Angels, and then first of all
 The world did in her cradle take a fall,
 And turn'd her braines, and tooke a generall maime,
 Wronging each joynt of th'universall frame.
 The noblest part, man, felt it first; and then
 Both beasts and plants, curst in the curse of man.
 So did the world from the first houre decay. . .²⁹

If Donne gives the doctrine of decay its great imaginative treatment, the most complete theoretical exposition is given by Godfrey Goodman, in The Fall of Man (1616). Goodman begins his thesis by pointing to the evidence of common experience. He sets out to conduct the reader "from sensible objects by the light of his owne reason, to the knowledge of things spirituall".³⁰ His evidence is gathered together in the following passage:-

To conclude this one poynt, considering, first, that nature so much aboundeth in euill; secondly, and is so much enclined vnto

suill; **thirdly**, considering how the heauens stand affected to the earth; **fourthly**, how elements amongst themselues; **fifthly**, how mixt creatures one to another; **sixthly**, and in themselues what defects and imperfections there are; **seuenthly**, how Art serues like a cobbler, or tinker, to peece vp the walles, and to repaire the ruines of nature: I hope it wil sufficiently appeare that she is **corrupted**, and much declined from her first perfection, which certainly was intended by the founder, and by all probable coniec-
ture was imparted to her, in her first institution.³¹

He then turns to man, and devotes most of his book to demonstrating the corruption that is rife in the human world. Fundamental to his argument is the analogy of the microcosm and the macrocosm, for only the essential relationship between man and nature can account for the general decay that followed the sin of Adam.

There were men (Francis Bacon among them) who did not hold Goodman's view of the Fall of Nature, but a systematic attack on his position was not made until 1627, when George Hakewill published his Apologie or Declaration of the Power and Providence of God in the Government of the World. This will be discussed in more detail later, since it belongs to a significant tradition of optimism that developed towards the middle of the century.

Donne and Goodman represent one kind of reaction to the predicament created by the breakdown of an ancient structure of knowledge and values. But another course was open. The next section will consider the work of the man who, more than any other in the early part of the seventeenth century, pointed the way forward to a new attempt to come to terms with Nature by the method of scientific investigation.

3. The Advancement of Learning.

Francis Bacon (1561-1626) did not share the pessimism of those who saw only further degeneration ahead for the social and natural orders. He was a humanist, in his faith in the potentialities of man; a realist, in his understanding of the problems that hindered human advance; and an optimist, in his conviction that the difficulties could be overcome, and a new age of achievement inaugurated. His first task was to rescue knowledge from the superstition of the past. According to one side of the mediaeval dualism with regard to nature, the physical world had passed under the control of Satan after the Fall. To enquire too closely into natural phenomena was to turn from the spiritual knowledge necessary to salvation and follow the dangerous path of Dr. Faustus.³²

Bacon begins by asserting that the danger of Atheism lies not in too much enquiry into nature, but in too little. To consider only isolated second causes, "which are next unto the senses", may well deflect a man from concern with "the highest cause":-

but when a man passeth on farther, and seeth the dependence of causes, and the works of Providence; then, according to the allegory of the poets, he will easily believe that the highest link of nature's chain must needs be tied to the foot of Jupiter's chair.³³

Moreover, he finds evidence in the Bible that God intends man to take an interest in nature: Adam's first acts in Paradise were "the view of creatures, and the imposition of names";³⁴ and the Book of Job "will be found pregnant and swelling with natural philosophy; as, for example, cosmography, and the roundness of the world".³⁵ We should not be content

merely with admiring the Creation in ignorance. Man has a direct obligation to investigate the workings of nature, since only by doing this can he fully appreciate the attributes of his Maker, and the teaching of the Scriptures. Thus there are two benefits to be derived from philosophy and human learning:-

The one, because they are an effectual inducement to the exaltation of the glory of God: for as the Psalms and other Scriptures do often invite us to consider and magnify the great and wonderful works of God, so if we should rest only in the contemplation of the exterior of them, as they first offer themselves to our senses, we should do a like injury unto the Majesty of God, as if we should judge or construe of the store of some excellent jeweller, by that only which is set out toward the street in his shop. The other, because they minister a singular help and preservative against unbelief and error: for our Saviour saith, You err, not knowing the Scriptures, nor the power of God; laying before us two books or volumes to study, if we will be secured from error; first, the Scriptures, revealing the Will of God; and then the creatures expressing His Power; whereof the latter is a key unto the former: not only opening our understanding to conceive the true sense of the Scriptures, by the general notions of reason and rules of speech; but chiefly opening our belief, in drawing us into a due meditation of the omnipotency of God, which is chiefly signed and engraven upon His works.³⁶

This passage provided arguments that were to be used time and time again by supporters of science as the century wore on.

In The Advancement of Learning (1605) Bacon sets up various distinctions between the different branches of knowledge. The idea that there were two revelations of God - the Book of Nature and the Book of the Scriptures - enabled him to argue for a division between science and theology. He splits philosophy into three parts: "divine philosophy, natural philosophy, and human philosophy or humanity".³⁷ Divine philosophy "is that knowledge or rudiment of knowledge concerning God, which may be obtained by the

contemplation of His creatures".³⁸ This is not sufficient in itself as a basis for religion in the full sense of Christianity, because "The bounds of this knowledge are, that it sufficeth to convince atheism, but not to inform religion".³⁹ Natural religion, or the conviction of Pagans that a God must exist, is as far as the revelation of the creatures can go:-

But on the other side, out of the contemplation of nature, or ground of human knowledge, to induce any verity or persuasion concerning the points of faith, is in my judgment not safe.⁴⁰

He makes a further distinction between physics and metaphysics, which are the study of the causes of things: the former "inquireth and handleth the material and efficient causes"; the latter "handleth the formal and final causes".⁴¹ "Metaphysique" thus has two aspects. Firstly, it is concerned with the "invention of Forms" or the discovery of natural laws. This leads to the conception of science as a pyramid:-

So of natural philosophy, the basis is natural history; the stage next the basis is physique; the stage next the vertical point is metaphysique.⁴²

Secondly, it is concerned with final causes, which, declares Bacon, are no part of natural philosophy, but belong to the domain of theology. He has already demonstrated that the study of nature cannot, by itself, establish religion. For that, the direct revelation of God in the Bible is necessary. So it is to the advantage of both science and theology that they should be kept as distinct disciplines. Bacon is careful not to disparage theology. He wishes to sever it from natural philosophy:-

Not because those final causes are not true, and worthy to be

inquired, being kept within their own province; but because their excursions into the limits of physical causes hath bred a vastness and solitude in that track. For otherwise, keeping their precincts and borders, men are extremely deceived if they think there is an enmity or repugnancy at all between them.⁴³

But in spite of his diplomacy, the impression is left that the advancement of secular learning is what really matters to him.

Another important feature of Bacon's campaign to free science from the trammels of the past was his attack on the methods of scholasticism, which were still prevalent in the universities. The Schoolmen had fallen into "the first distemper of learning, when men study words and not matter".⁴⁴ Instead of going directly to the physical world for their evidence in forming philosophical and scientific opinions, they had relied on their own ingenuity or on the unverified authority of previous writers. The result was that:-

knowing little history, either of nature or time, [they] did put of no great quantity of matter and infinite agitation of wit spin out into those laborious webs of learning which are extant in their books.⁴⁵

Bacon's own method of discovering truth is inductive, being based on observation and experiment. From the evidence of facts verified by close scrutiny and scientifically performed experiment, the natural philosopher can arrive at the natural laws which govern the material universe.

Bacon rejected the scepticism of those who "denied any certainty of knowledge or comprehension" and who held that human knowledge "extended only to appearances and probabilities".⁴⁶ These men made one fundamental mistake:-

They charged the deceit upon the senses; which in my judgment, notwithstanding all their cavilations, are very sufficient to certify and report truth though not always immediately, yet by comparison, by help of instrument, and by producing and urging such things as are too subtile for the sense to some effect comprehensible by the sense, and other like assistance. But they ought to have charged the deceit upon the weakness of the intellectual powers, and upon the manner of collecting and concluding upon the reports of the senses.⁴⁷

There is a bar to human aspiration, a limit beyond which the mind of man cannot reach. But this does not affect natural philosophy. It is "sacred theology" which "is grounded only upon the word and oracle of God, and not upon the light of nature".⁴⁸ For the understanding, and ultimately the control, of the physical world, man's senses, aided by the instruments which his own ingenuity can devise, are adequate. The "light of nature", and native human inventiveness, are equal to the task, provided it is systematically planned and executed along the lines laid down in Bacon's work. He looks optimistically to an impending Golden Age which "will far surpass that of the Grecian and Roman learning".⁴⁹

4. Divided and Distinguished Worlds.

Sir Thomas Browne (1605-1682) was infected by the scientific spirit that was beginning to pervade the intellectual atmosphere, but imaginatively he was still linked with the past. His "unconscious assumptions" belonged to the old world of order and proportion, in which truth was to be found in analogy and correspondence, rather than to the new world of mechanical second causes and mathematical laws. There is none of Donne's sense of uneasiness in his contemplation of nature. He can accept the evident mutability of terrestrial things, and believe that "the World

grows near its end", without embracing the defeatist doctrine that all is decaying. The mediaeval scheme of cosmic history - from Genesis to Last Day - provides a unifying framework for his personal philosophy. Everything is in the hands of God:-

As the work of Creation was above Nature, so is its adversary, annihilation; without which the World hath not its end, but its mutation.⁵⁰

In his declaration of faith, the Religio Medici (written about 1635, first authorized edition 1643), the physical universe is seen as the Book of God, from which even those who have not been vouchsafed the revelation of the Scriptures can "suck Divinity from the flowers of Nature".⁵¹ Browne follows Bacon in asserting that the study of nature is not only permissible, but a duty entailed upon us by our special position as rational beings, midway between brute and spirit:-

There is no danger to profound these mysteries, no sanctum sanctorum in Philosophy. The World was made to be inhabited by Beasts, but studied and contemplated by Man: 'tis the Debt of our Reason we owe unto God, and the homage we pay for not being Beasts. Without this, the World is still as though it had not been, or as it was before the sixth day, when as yet there was not a Creature that could conceive or say there was a World. The Wisdom of God receives small honour from those vulgar Heads that rudely stare about, and with a gross rusticity admire His works: those highly magnifie Him, whose judicious inquiry into His Acts, and deliberate research into His Creatures, return the duty of a devout and learned admiration.⁵²

The man who looks attentively about him will discover that the universe is a Great Chain, "a Stair, or manifest Scale of creatures, rising not disorderly, or in confusion, but with a comely method and proportion";⁵³

and a web of relationships:-

Studious Observators may discover more analogies in the orderly book of nature, and cannot escape the Elegancy of her hand in other correspondences. 54

In The Garden of Cyrus (1658), Browne mentions an instance of God's providence which later became a stock piece of evidence for the composers of the theodicies, who developed the influential belief that this is the best of all possible worlds. He has been explaining how the perspective and shade afforded by an avenue of trees is soothing to the eyes, similar to the effect of shading them with a hollowed hand:-

And therefore providence hath arched and paved the great house of the world, with colours of mediocrity, that is, blew and green, above and below the sight, moderately terminating the acies of the eye. 55

Also important for the future doctrine of "optimism" about the Creation is Browne's opinion that everything is given the form most appropriate to it, and that this appropriateness is the criterion of both beauty and goodness:-

I hold there is a general beauty in the works of God, and therefore no deformity in any kind or species of creature whatsoever. I cannot tell by what Logick we call a Toad, a Bear, or an Elephant ugly; they being created in those outward shapes and figures which best express the actions of their inward forms, and having past that general Visitation of God, Who saw that all that He had made was good, that is, conformable to His Will, which abhors deformity, and is the rule of order and beauty. 56

The emphasis on the wisdom of God, as well as on his power and goodness, became more pronounced as the scientists and naturalists inquired

ever more closely into the intricate workmanship of nature. Browne was among the first of many who delighted in the minuter phenomena:-

Indeed, what Reason may not go to School to the wisdom of Bees, Ants, and Spiders? what wise hand teacheth them to do what Reason cannot teach us? Ruder heads stand amazed at those prodigious pieces of Nature, Whales, Elephants, Dromidaries and Camels; these, I confess, are the Colossus and majestick pieces of her hand; but in these narrow Engines there is more curious Mathematicks; and the civility of these little Citizens more neatly sets forth the Wisdom of their Maker.⁵⁷

The interesting thing about this passage is that, although it begins with the traditional moral implications of Scripture, it then turns from the behaviour to the physical structure of the insects. This Baconian element in Browne's approach to nature found its fullest embodiment in Pseudodoxia Epidemica (1646). This work sets out to expose the many fallacies, or "Vulgar Errors", that were current in popular natural history. The book begins with an analysis of the ways in which the mistakes have been conceived and transmitted. The average run of people are too credulous, both of the deceptive evidence of their senses (for example, the earth appears to be motionless) and the fabulous reports of others. The most pernicious barrier to true understanding, however, has been the docile acceptance of such ancient authors as Pliny.⁵⁸ The remedy is the Baconian method of observation followed by rational induction.

But where reason fails, in the sphere of metaphysics (in the second of Bacon's senses), the mind falls back on faith and revelation. In spite of his delight in the scientific observation and explanation of physical phenomena, Browne is happiest in this submission of the mind to the

incomprehensible. There is no suggestion of unwilling resignation as he abandons the rational pursuit of truth for the other certainty of the believer:-

I love to lose my self in a mystery, to pursue my Reason to an O altitudo! 'Tis my solitary recreation to pose my apprehension with those involved Aenigmas and riddles of the Trinity, with Incarnation, and Resurrection. I can answer all the Objections of Satan and my rebellious reason with that odd resolution I learned of Tertullian, Certum est, quia impossibile est. I desire to exercise my faith in the difficultest point; for to credit ordinary and visible objects is not faith, but perswasion.⁵⁹

~~Sir~~ Thomas Browne was most at home in the mediaeval state of mind of contemptio mundi. Man is the centre of things - for his sake the divine scheme of salvation was devised - and the rest of the six days' work is for his use and recreation during the passage to a better life:-

For the World, I count it not an Inn, but an Hospital; and a place not to live, but to dye in. The world that I regard is my self; it is the Microcosm of my own frame that I cast mine eye on; for the other, I use it but like my Globe, and turn it round sometimes for my recreation.⁶⁰

Perhaps his position can be best summed up in his own vindication of the analogy of the microcosm:-

For first we are a rude mass, and in the rank of creatures which onely are, and have a dull kind of being, not yet priviledged with life, or preferred to sense or reason; next we live the life of Plants, the life of Animals, the life of Men, and at last the life of Spirits, running on in one mysterious nature those five kinds of existences, which comprehend the creatures, not onely of the World, but of the Universe. Thus is Man that great and true Amphibium, whose nature is disposed to live, not onely like other creatures in divers elements, but in divided and distinguished worlds: for though there be but one to sense, there are two to reason, the one visible, the other invisible.⁶¹

Bacon had separated religion from science in the interests of the latter; Browne, for all his scientific learning and enthusiasm for the Book of Nature, was in the last resort an advocate of traditional religious attitudes. Standing on the brink of the period covered by this thesis, he belongs with those who could accept the new science while maintaining intact the mental habits of a vanishing age - inhabitants of "divided and distinguished worlds".

5. Method and Materialism.

Bacon had done much to create an atmosphere in which science could flourish; he had provided a survey of the state of knowledge in his day, and suggested the branches of it that could most readily and profitably be extended; and he had laid down a method by which research should be undertaken to get the best results. All this was the work of an organizer and propagandist of genius - in some sense even of a prophet. But it was not the work of a philosopher. Bacon had not formulated the metaphysical and logical principles on which the scientific achievements of his age were being made. His thinking was largely founded on the new assumptions that were ousting the traditional habits of mind, but he did not crystallize those assumptions out into a self-contained philosophy - indeed, he excluded such fundamental questions as final causes from his programme. He also failed to recognize the central position of mathematics in the evolution of modern thought, dismissing it as "not much material", because it prejudiced knowledge by delighting "in the spacious liberty of generalities, as in a champain region, and not in the inclosures of particularity"⁶².

The new science was, in fact, coming to rely more and more on mathematics in its quest for the laws that underlay the material world. Galileo himself had declared:-

Philosophy is written in that vast book which stands forever open before our eyes, I mean the universe; but it cannot be read until we have learnt the language and become familiar with the characters in which it is written. It is written in mathematical language, and the letters are triangles, circles and other geometrical figures, without which means it is humanly impossible to understand a single word.⁶³

The man who made the real break with the past, and worked out systematically the implications of what the scientists were doing, was Descartes. He recognized, first of all, that the Scholastic logic of the syllogism was no longer relevant to the needs of the modern age. For the syllogistic method of reasoning can only satisfy the demands of a science that sees its purpose as the classification of nature according to a hierarchy of kinds of creature, distinguished by essential qualitative differences.⁶⁴ It was Descartes' achievement to set European philosophy on the new basis of clear abstract argument, conducted along mathematical lines. The search for truth must start from simple, self-evident facts (the simplest and surest being cogito ergo sum), and move forward step by step, with indisputable reasoning, towards more complex realities. In a period beset by uncertainties, the Cartesian method (set out in the Discours sur la Méthode in 1637) must have seemed to many to be the solution to all problems. Here was a system for arriving at certainty in science, philosophy, and divinity. The troublesome and conflicting authorities of the past could be set aside, and each man make his own approach to truth by means

of Reason (no longer the rich Elizabethan amalgam of faith, intuition, and rational power, but the abstracting, deductive faculty of the geometer). In the field of pure philosophy, the Cartesian method gave rise to the school of Continental Rationalists, the greatest members of which were Descartes himself, and Spinoza and Leibniz. Common to all three was the attempt to deduce an entire system from a priori principles.⁶⁵

Descartes passed on to later thinkers a systematic working out of an assumption that had been the basis for many sixteenth-century philosophies of Nature: this was the distinction between mind and matter or extension. For the Greeks, mind was in nature, an aspect of physical bodies. R.G. Collingwood underlines the changes in Western thought: for the men of the Renaissance, mind and body were felt to be different substances:-

Each works independently of the other according to its own laws. Just as the fundamental axiom of Greek thought about mind is its immanence in body, so the fundamental axiom of Descartes is its transcendence.⁶⁶

This dualism in Descartes' analysis of reality led to the recognition of two orders of certainty: objective and subjective, based on the mathematical demonstration of natural law and the principle of inner conviction at the bar of Reason. Such a position is inherently unstable, as Basil Willey argues:-

Probably any system which dichotomizes reality in this kind of way is likely to invite attempts to resolve the divided worlds into one, and the uncomfortable antithesis of matter and mind in the Cartesian scheme seems to have made inevitable both the materialist and the idealist solutions. Either all is 'really' matter, or all is 'really' mind. Hobbes chose the first alternative.⁶⁷

A passage from the penultimate chapter of Leviathan (1651) embodies the extreme materialist view which Thomas Hobbes developed concerning the nature of existence:-

The World, (I mean not the Earth onely, that denominates the Lovers of it Worldly men, but the Universe, that is, the whole masse of all things that are) is Corporeall, that is to say, Body; and hath the dimensions of Magnitude, namely, Length, Breadth, and Depth: also every part of Body, is likewise Body, and hath the like dimensions; and consequently every part of the Universe, is Body; and that which is not Body, is no part of the Universe: And because the Universe is All, that which is no part of it, is Nothing; and consequently no where. Nor does it follow from hence, that Spirits are nothing: for they have dimensions, and are therefore really Bodies.⁶⁸

Hobbes arrived at this materialist conception by a process of deduction from incontrovertible first principles:-

For there can be no certainty of the last Conclusion, without a certainty of all those Affirmations and Negations, on which it was grounded, and inferred.⁶⁹

This sets him in the opposite camp to Bacon, who urged the inductive method of generalizing from observation and verifying by experiment. Hobbes, like Descartes, differed from Bacon largely as a result of his dedication to mathematics. He claimed to have discovered the relevance of mathematical reasoning to philosophy independently, but once found it led him into the same quest for an all-embracing system that occupied the Rationalists in Europe.

Although Hobbes's chief interest was socio-political (the "Leviathan" of his most famous book was a figure of the State), his system took in all aspects of knowledge. Applied to physiology, the materialist explan-

ation produces the notion of the human machine:-

For what is the Heart, but a Spring; and the Nerves, but so many Strings; and the Joynts, but so many Wheeles, giving motion to the whole Body, such as was intended by the Artificer?⁷⁰

Applied to epistemology, it produces the concept of the mind as a storehouse of sense-impressions - matter acted upon by matter:-

All which qualities called Sensible, are in the object that causeth them, but so many several motions of the matter, by which it presseth our organs diversely. Neither in us that are pressed, are they any thing else, but divers motions; (for motion, produceth nothing but motion.)⁷¹

The faculties of imagination and memory are defined in the same terms, as varieties of "decaying sense". In this way, Hobbes can dispense with the Cartesian hypothesis that mind is essentially a substance distinct from body.

The mechanical view of mind entails an unavoidable scepticism about the scope of human understanding. If all knowledge is derived from sense-impressions, then the facts we know are already in the past. These we can submit to rational discourse by imposing names upon them. Science is the art of knowing "all the Consequences of names appertaining to the subject in hand".⁷² That is, science can go beyond the facts which are merely the records of past sense-impressions, and discern patterns of cause and effect, by means of which it can predict the future behaviour of matter under given conditions. But even this is a limited activity. The conclusion must be that absolute knowledge is impossible:-

No Discourse whatsoever, can End in absolute knowledge of Fact, past, or to come. For, as for the knowledge of Fact, it is originally, Sense; and ever after, Memory. And for the knowledge of Consequence, which I have said before is called Science, it is not Absolute, but Conditionall. No man can know by Discourse, that this, or that, is, has been, or will be; which is to know absolutely: but onely, that ~~if~~ This be, That is; if This has been, That has been; if This shall be, That shall be: which is to know conditionally; and that not the consequence of one thing to another; but of one name of a thing, to another name of the same thing.⁷³

Hobbes goes further than Bacon in dismissing the spiritual side of life. God is reduced to being the final step in a rational "pursuit of causes" - "that is, a First, and an Eternall cause of all things; which is that which men mean by the name of God".⁷⁴ Faith is merely an acquiescence in the dogmas of the Church, which is conceived largely as a social or political institution. He accepts that the Scriptures are the word of God because the Church says so, but he reserves the right to believe them only in a sense conformable to Reason. There is no need to regard them as literally true:-

The Scripture was written to shew unto men the kingdome of God, and to prepare their mindes to become his obedient subjects; leaving the world, and the Philosophy thereof, to the disputation of men, for the exercising of their naturall Reason.⁷⁵

Bacon, Browne, Descartes, and Hobbes were all involved to some extent in one of the central issues of the seventeenth century: how to resolve the conflict between the two world-views they had inherited. Bacon, and in a more extreme degree Hobbes, made a distinction between the new physics and the old theology, and justified themselves in ignoring the latter; Browne's flexible sensibility could accommodate both, though his

ultimate allegiance was to the past; and Descartes attempted to reconcile the two by means of a dualistic interpretation of existence. But the problem, as Basil Willey formulates it, remained:-

Two principle orders of Truth were present to the consciousness of the time: one, represented by Christianity, which men could not but reverence, and the other, represented by science, which they could not but accept. 76

The second half of the century witnessed a resolution of this problem. Science came to serve as a handmaid to religion, offering proof of what had previously been taken on trust; and religion sanctified the activities of the scientists, raising their discoveries to the eminence of revelation.

6. Brave New World.

We saw in section two that one widespread reaction to the discoveries of the scientists was to retreat into a theological stronghold, and preach the decay of nature and the end of the world. George Hakewill had launched the first offensive against this doctrine in 1627. The third edition of his Apologie (1635) contained an additional book in which he and Goodman argued their positions point by point. This seems to have been decisive, or at least to have caught the changing mood of the time, for thereafter few advocates of the decay theory appeared, and the way was clear for popular attitudes to develop in a new optimistic direction. Michael Macklem, in his book The Anatomy of the World, indicates what that direction was:-

The revision of assumptions in the second half of the seventeenth century created new possibilities of belief. It permitted the supposition that the creation is representative not of disorder

but of order, and made it possible to believe that both the heavens and the earth testify not to the sin of Adam but to the wisdom of God.⁷⁷

The aspirations of the generation that was reaching maturity during the years of the Civil War and the Commonwealth were centred not, as of old, in the Church and the State, but in the Royal Society. The founding of the Society in 1660, and the granting of the royal charter by Charles II in 1662, marked the fulfilment of a dream that had been cherished for more than half a century. Gresham College had been a centre of practical and theoretical science since the end of the sixteenth century, and Francis Bacon had stressed the need for a College of Natural Philosophy, where scientists could work together in a community. His vision of the New Atlantis contained an institution called Solomon's House or the College of the Six Days' Works. One of the founder-members of the Royal Society, Dr. John Wallis, had long been interested in just such a project. A.R. Humphreys mentions one abortive attempt to establish a centre of scientific learning, described in Wallis's Account of Some Passages in his own life:-

In 1645, Wallis relates, he met several men interested 'in what hath been called the New Philosophy, or Experimental Philosophy', who met weekly in London 'to consider of Philosophical Enquiries'.⁷⁸

Even the Protector contributed to the progressive spirit of the times, by evicting the Royalist professors from Oxford and replacing them with forward-looking scientists like Wallis.⁷⁹ By the time Abraham Cowley published his pamphlet A Proposition for the Advancement of Experimental



Philosophy in 1661, things were already afoot to put the proposals into practice.

Baconian empiricism was to be the watchword of the adherents of the new foundation, as they eagerly set about the tasks that he had appointed to the heirs of his vision. Cowley, in his ode 'To the Royal Society', saw Bacon as the Moses who had brought his followers to the boundaries of the new Canaan:-

The barren Wilderness he past,
 Did on the very Border stand
 Of the blest promis'd Land,
 And from the Mountains Top of his exalted Wit,
 Saw it himself, and shew'd us it.
 But Life did never to one Man allow
 Time to Discover Worlds, and Conquer too.⁸⁰

The argument put forward by both Bacon and Browne, that the study of the natural world was an express duty entailed upon man by his Maker, was echoed by some of the most eminent members of the Royal Society. Robert Boyle, in the second essay of The Usefulness of Experimental Natural Philosophy (1663) - written, he claims in the Author's Advertisement, ten or twelve years previously - almost certainly had the actual passage from The Advancement of Learning in mind:-

And indeed so farre is God from being unwilling, that we should Prye into his Works, that, by divers Dispensations he imposes on us little lesse then a necessity of studying them. For first he begins the Book of Scripture with the Description of the Book of Nature; of which he not only gives us a general account, to informe us that he made the World; since for that end the very first Verse in the Bible might have suffic'd: But he vouchsafes us by retaile the Narrative of each Day's Proceedings, and in the two first Chapters of Genesis, is pleas'd to give nobler hints of Natural Philosophy, then men are yet perhaps aware of.⁸¹

The naturalist John Ray, in 1691, takes the argument from Genesis a stage further. He considers the possibility that it may be part of our business in Heaven to contemplate the works of God, and praise Him for them:-

I am sure it is part of the Business of a Sabbath-day, and the Sabbath is a Type of that Eternal Rest; for the Sabbath seems to have been first instituted for a Commemoration of the Works of the Creation, from which God is said to have rested upon the Seventh Day.⁸²

Many of the preoccupations of the men of the Royal Society can be traced back to Bacon. The quarrel about the supremacy of the Ancients or the Moderns, which broke out violently in the 1690s, had been a constant undercurrent in the stream of ideas rising from The Advancement of Learning. For the scientists, it centred on two main issues: freedom from the constraints of ancient authority, and the need for definitions and a language uncluttered with rhetorical devices. In The Vanity of Dogmatizing (1661), Joseph Glanvill urged the new men to have faith in their own abilities:-

Another thing, that engageth our affections to unwarrantable conclusions, and is therefore fatal to Science; is our dotting on Antiquity, and the opinion of our Fathers. We look with a superstitious reverence upon the accounts of praeterlapsed ages: and with a supercilious severity, on the more deserving products of our own.⁸³

Cowley, the Society's poet, reminded them that Bacon had opened the road to progress by transferring attention from rhetoric to things:-

From Words, which are but Pictures of the Thought,
(Though we out Thoughts from them perversly drew)
To things, the Minds right Object, he it brought,
Like foolish Birds to painted Grapes we flew;
He sought and gather'd for our use the True.⁸⁴

And Thomas Sprat, the Society's historian, recorded their determination to rid science of the Latinate idiom of the past:-

They have extracted from all their members, a close, naked, natural way of speaking; positive expressions; clear senses; a native easiness: bringing all things as near the Mathematical plainness, as they can: and preferring the language of Artizans, Countrymen, and Merchants, before that, of Wits, or Scholars.⁸⁵

John Locke, speaking as a philosopher concerned with truth, demanded similar measures:-

Though the Schools and men of argument would perhaps take it amiss to have anything offered to abate the length or lessen the number of their disputes, yet methinks those who pretend seriously to search after or maintain truth, should think themselves obliged to study how they might deliver themselves without obscurity, doubtfulness, or equivocation; to which men's words are naturally liable, if care be not taken.⁸⁶

And in 1691, John Ray put the weight of his reputation as a natural historian behind the injunctions of Glanvill:-

Let it ^{not} suffice us to be Book-learned, to read what others have written, and to take upon Trust more Falshood than Truth: But let us our selves examine things as we have opportunity, and converse with Nature as well as Books. Let us endeavour to promote and encrease this Knowledge, and make new Discoveries, not so much distrusting our own Parts, or despairing of our own Abilities, as to think that our Industry can add nothing to the Invention of our Ancestors, or correct any of their Mistakes. Let us not think that the Bounds of Science are fix'd like Hercules's Pillars, and inscrib'd with a Ne plus ultra.⁸⁷

Ray's remarks introduce the fundamental tenet of the Baconian creed: "let us our selves examine things". This cry was repeated time and again throughout the second half of the century, as men like Thomas Sprat became convinced that observation "is the great Foundation of Knowledge".⁸⁸

Robert Hooke, one of the great "observers" of the Royal Society, speaks for all enlightened opinion in his day, in the preface to Micrographia (1665):-

The truth is, the Science of Nature has been already too long made only a work of the Brain and the Fancy: It is now high time that it should return to the plainness and soundness of Observations on material and obvious things.⁸⁹

In the same preface, Hooke gives voice to another of Bacon's teachings - that the ultimate purpose of research is practical - and suggests an interpretation of nature on analogy with the machine, which possibly owes something to Hobbes. He has been discussing the world of minute creatures revealed by the microscope:-

From whence there may arise many admirable advantages, towards the increase of the Operative, and the Mechanick Knowledge, to which this Age seems so much inclined, because we may perhaps be inabled to discern all the secret workings of Nature, almost in the same manner as we do those that are the productions of Art, and are manag'd by Wheels, and Engines, and Springs, that were devised by humane Wit.⁹⁰

With the Baconian methods and the Baconian attitudes to the physical sciences, was transmitted something of the Baconian vision of a brave new world. This was an age of ardent optimism, in which anything seemed possible to those who could look back on the amazing achievements of the recent past. Even Joseph Glanvill, who expressed doubts about the certainties of human knowledge - the Latin title of his 1661 volume was Scepsis Scientifica - was moved to enthusiasm as he contemplated the intellectual scene. Whereas Aristotle's philosophy had led to no new discoveries:-

We expect greater things from Neoterick endeavours. The Cartesian Philosophy in this regard hath shewn the World the way to be happy. And me thinks this Age seems resolved to bequeath posterity somewhat to remember it: The glorious Undertakers, wherewith Heaven hath blest our dayes, will leave the world better provided then they found it. And whereas in former times such generous free-spirited Worthies were as the Rare newly observed Stars, a single one the wonder of an Age: In ours they are like the lights of the greater size that twinkle in the Starry Firmament: And this last Century can glory in numerous constellations.⁹¹

The extent of this optimistic community of interests was extraordinary. Men with varied talents, remembered for their contributions to such different branches of art and science as architecture, physics, natural history, literature, optics, medicine, and even gardening, came together in the great surge forward of learning that prepared the way for the modern age.

But what of the place of religion in the scheme of things being evolved by the scientists and the "virtuosi", as they were called? In order to reconcile the beliefs "which men could not but reverence" with the science which was assuming an ever more dominant role in contemporary thought, it was necessary to demonstrate both that science did not undermine religion, and also that, on the contrary, it secured a firmer basis for it. These became the principal tasks of churchmen like Glanvill and Sprat, and of devout natural philosophers like Boyle and Ray.

Boyle was fully aware of the dangers instinct in the scientific movement, already evident in the atheistic tendency of Hobbes's ideas, and in the growth of Deism. He instituted courses of lectures, to be given under his name in St. Paul's, with the express intention of proving the

compatibility of faith and science. But in spite of these attempts to check the increasing inroads of science into religion, the inevitable result of the mathematical/mechanical conception of "fact" was a decline in the authority of the Bible. Too often the literal statements contained in its pages had been refuted according to scientific principles. Whether they would or no, Christian philosophers found themselves forced into adopting Hobbes's approach to the Scriptures. Thomas Burnet, in 1684, warned against accepting everything in them at its face value. Reason - the Cartesian natural light of the mind - must be a constant guide:-

'Tis a dangerous thing to engage the authority of Scripture in disputes about the Natural World, in opposition to Reason; lest Time, which brings all things to light, should discover that to be evidently false which we had made Scripture to assert.⁹²

Science, whatever its theological implications, was getting a grip on the popular imagination. The age had not yet come in which only the initiated could participate in the excitement of the new discoveries.

As Douglas Bush says:-

From being a cultural outcast science became a respectable and finally a dominant interest which attracted hosts of amateurs, including aristocrats and obscure business men. Raleigh, Bacon, and, when he first turned to science, Sir Kenelm Digby, were relatively isolated figures; by the time of Evelyn science was a major preoccupation of the virtuoso.⁹³

Among the "hosts of amateurs" produced by the second half of the seventeenth century can be numbered Samuel Pepys, Abraham Cowley, Charles Cotton (who wrote a Planter's Manual, and revealed an expert knowledge of river-insects in his portion of the Complete Angler), and Andrew

Marvell (who was remembered after his death as a "poet and botanist")⁹⁴

The Boyle lectures, besides sanctifying the research of the Royal Society, served the secondary purpose of disseminating the new ideas among a fashionable public. The growth of periodical literature towards the end of the century also assisted in the cultivation - or satisfaction - of popular interest. For the well-to-do and the informed, the lectures supplemented the regular publication of the Society's Philosophical Transactions. For the less educated reader, there were the question-and-answer magazines, like John Dunton's famous Athenian Mercury, which ran from 1690 till 1697, and the British Apollo (1708-1711). A predominantly literary enterprise like The Gentleman's Journal (1692-1694) carried articles with such titles as 'Of Rainbows in the Night by P.M.' and 'Observations on the Difference of the Weight of certain Bodies in open Air, and in a Vacuum, or exhausted Recipient, by Mr. Homberg'.⁹⁵ The Monthly Miscellany: or, Memoirs for the Curious (1707-1708) specialized in out-of-the-way items of scientific interest, and in particular in accounts of exotic plants from the Americas and the Far East.⁹⁶ Such was the background of the situation at the turn of the century as described by A.R. Humphreys:-

Philosophy and literature have never been closer than they were for the Augustans. Banishing the idea that learning was a matter for scholars alone the age admitted all reverent and not over-sceptical men to the fields of science, philosophy and theology. Religious congregations, theatre audiences, readers of poetry and periodicals - all formed the public for moral and scientific enquiries, and shared Addison's desire to naturalise philosophy 'in clubs and assemblies, at tea-tables and in coffee-houses'.
(The Spectator, No. 10)⁹⁷

Of all the developments in the new science, perhaps none captured the imagination more strongly than the microscope.

7. Nature's Watches.

Back in the 1630s Sir Thomas Browne had declared a greater delight in the "more curious Mathematicks" of insects than in "the Colossus and majestick pieces" of Nature's handiwork. Robert Boyle, writing in the 1650s, shared this fascination with the more delicate parts of Creation:-

And, as despicable as their Littleness makes the Vulgar apt to think some Creatures, I must confess my wonder dwells not so much on Natures Clocks (if I may so speak) as on her Watches, and is more exercis'd in the coyness of the sensitive Plant, and the Magnetical Properties of a small and abject Load-stone, then the bulk of the tallest Oakes, or those vast Rocks, made famous by Shipwracks. I have pass'd the Alpes, and have seen as much to admire at in an Ant-hill, and have so much wondred at the Industry of those little Creatures themselves that inhabited it, that I have ceas'd to wonder at their having given a Theme to Solomon's Contemplation.⁹⁸

And John Ray, in 1691, admonished those who dismissed the smaller of God's works as insignificant:-

Think not that any thing he hath vouchsafed to create, is unworthy thy Cognisance, to be slighted by thee. It is Pride and Arrogance, or Ignorance and Folly in thee so to think. There is a greater depth of Art and Skill in the Structure of the meanest Insect, than thou art able fer to fathom or comprehend.⁹⁹

Bacon had foreseen that advances in certain fields of inquiry would only come about "by help of instrument". This prediction had been fulfilled in his own life-time as astronomy expanded with the development of the telescope. In the middle of the century, the perfection of the microscope opened up a completely new area for observation and experiment.

The new instrument enabled Henry Power and Robert Hooke and others to discover in the minute world of insects and moulds an even more "curious Mathematicks" than Browne had suspected. Looking back over the achievements of his own and the preceding generations, Hooke remarked in 1692:-

How much the great Improvements of natural Knowledge have been owing to the Discoveries and Improvements that have been made in Opticks, I think few can be ignorant of, that have inquired into the Reasons and Grounds of the Progresses made in this last Century, since it hath been actually effected. 100

Hooke himself had done more than anyone to perfect the microscope for biological research, and a brief account of his methods and results will serve as an example of the painstaking dedication of the new scientists. His principal contribution to microscopic study was the superbly illustrated Micrographia of 1665. There could be no better introduction to his work than an extract from his own preface:-

What each of the delineated Subjects are, the following descriptions annexed to each will inform, of which I shall here, only once for all, add, That in divers of them the Gravers have pretty well follow'd my directions and draughts; and that in making of them, I indeavoured (as far as I was able) first to discover the true appearance, and next to make a plain representation of it. This I mention the rather, because of these kind of Objects there is much more difficulty to discover the true shape, then of those visible to the naked eye, the same Object seeming quite differing, in one position of the Light, from what it really is, and may be discover'd in another. And therefore I never began to make any draught before by many examinations in several lights, and in several positions to those lights, I had discover'd the true form. For it is exceeding difficult in some Objects, to distinguish between a prominency and a depression, between a shadow and a black stain, or a reflection and a whiteness in the colour. Besides, the transparency of most Objects renders them yet more difficult then if they were opacous. The Eyes of a Fly in one kind of light appear almost like a Lattice, drill'd through with abundance of small holes; which probably may be the Reason, why the Ingenious Dr. Power seems to suppose them such. In the Sunshine they look like

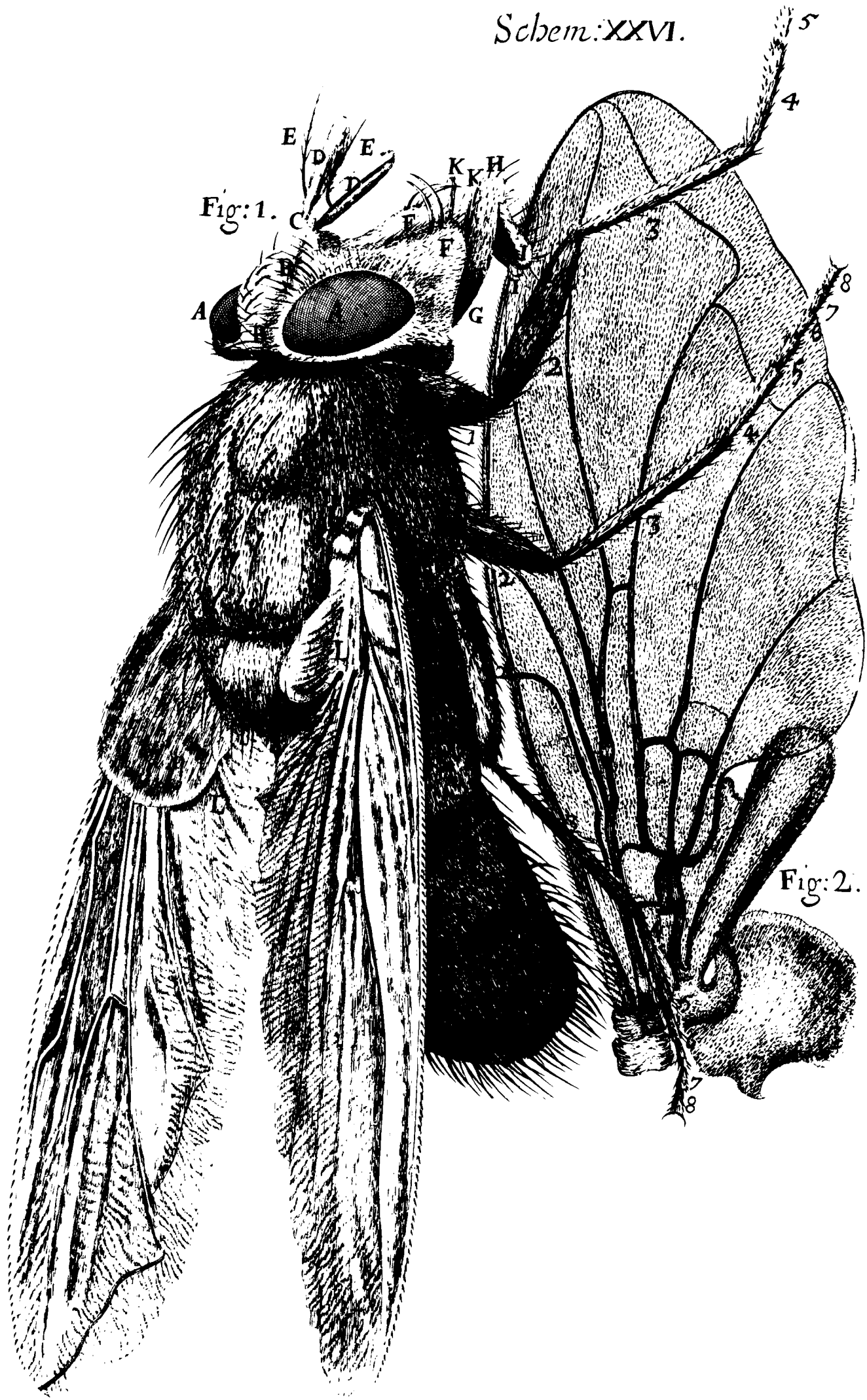


FIGURE ONE. Plate from Robert Hooke's Micrographia.

a Surface cover'd with golden Nails; in another posture, like a Surface cover'd with Pyramids; in another with Cones; and in other postures of quite other shapes, but that which exhibits the best, is the Light collected on the Object, by those means I have already describ'd.¹⁰¹

The book contains drawings and descriptions of such things as a louse, an ant, a "Book-worm", feathers, the "Teeth of a Snail", the point of a needle, and "Blew Mould and Mushromes". Hooke is somewhat diffident about his achievement, considering:-

that there is not so much requir'd towards it, any strength of Imagination, or exactness of Method, or depth of Contemplation (though the addition of these, where they can be had, must needs produce a much more perfect composure) as a sincere Hand, and a faithful Eye, to examine, and to record, the things themselves as they appear.¹⁰²

But the example shown in Figure One is proof not only of his accurate observation, but also of his genius for draughtsmanship. The loving care he put into drawings like this is the fruit of more than a "faithful Eye" and a "sincere Hand" - it comes from something approaching the artist's passion for beauty of form and intricacy of detail. Indeed, Hooke describes the Blue Fly of his illustration as "a very beautifull creature",¹⁰³ and begins his commentary on a later picture of a Flea: "The strength and beauty of this small creature, had it no other relation at all to man, would deserve a description".¹⁰⁴ Nor does his interest stop at a perfect delineation of the outward appearance of these specimens. His curiosity leads him on to examine their physical structure, and he finds beauty too in the workings of tiny living mechanisms:-

Nor was the inside of this creature [the fly of Figure One] less beautiful than its outside, for cutting off a part of the belly, and then viewing it, to see if I could discover any Vessels, such as are to be found in a greater Animals [sic], and even in Snails exceeding manifestly, I found, much beyond my expectation, that there were abundance of branchings of Milk-white vessels, no less curious than the branchings of veins and arteries in bigger terrestrial Animals. 105

The combination of curiosity and sense of humour evident in the remark quoted above about the flea, can be seen even more delightfully in the final paragraph of his observations on the Blue Fly:-

One of these put in spirit of Wine, was very quickly seemingly kill'd, and both its eye and mouth began to look very red, but upon the taking of it out, and suffering it to lie three or four hours, and heating it with the Sun beams cast through a Burning-glass, it again reviv'd, seeming, as it were, to have been all the intermediate time, but dead drunk, and after certain hours to grow fresh again and sober. 106

Like the good Baconian that he is, Robert Hooke is a thorough-going empiricist. He makes no absolute deductions, and raises no hypotheses. If he offers a conjecture about the causes of the things he has observed, he warns the reader to regard them only as "doubtful Problems, and uncertain gheses". 107 He is quite ready to be contradicted even in his observations, if others can demonstrate by empirical proof that he is mistaken. Hooke is satisfied if he can find out what a blue fly is like, and how it works. At least in his role as a scientist, he, like Bacon, has no interest in final causes. The Micrographia does not even proceed systematically to the second stage of Bacon's method, and seek to discover underlying natural laws. It merely presents, as clearly and exactly as possible, a number of particular observations, to be added to by future research,

until some general pattern emerges. This purely scientific approach precludes any enquiry into the wider significance of his work, other than the suggestion that it might have practical results in "the increase of the Operative, and the Mechanick Knowledge".¹⁰⁸ It was left for the philosophers and theologians to consider the implications of the microscope for epistemology, metaphysics, and religion.

For the epistemologist, the new instrument provided "proof" of one of the basic assumptions of seventeenth-century thought. Since (at least) the time of Galileo, it had been axiomatic that in talking about the things of the physical world, one must distinguish between primary and secondary qualities. The primary qualities are those "real" attributes of matter that can be measured mathematically: shape, extension, quantity, motion; and the secondary qualities are the ideas produced in the mind by the action of physical realities on the sense organs: colours, tastes, odours, sounds. The latter were felt to be in some way unreal, being no more than the subjective response of animal senses. If the perceiving organism were removed, the secondary qualities would disappear. This means that the knowledge we receive through our sense perceptions is deceptive: if our sense organs were differently constructed, our ideas about the world around us would be different too. This hypothesis was convincingly substantiated by the observations of Robert Hooke and his fellows. John Locke was among the first to recognize the fact:-

Had we senses acute enough to discern the minute particles of bodies and the real constitution on which their sensible qualities depend, I doubt not but they would produce quite different ideas in us; and that which is now the yellow colour of gold would then

disappear, and instead of it we should see an admirable texture of parts, of a certain size and figure. This microscopes plainly discover to us; for what to our naked eyes produces a certain colour is, by thus augmenting the acuteness of our senses, discovered to be quite a different thing; and the thus altering, as it were, the proportion of the bulk of the minute parts of a coloured object to our usual sight produces different ideas from what it did before. Thus sand, or pounded glass, which is opaque and white to the naked eye, is pellucid in a microscope; . . . Blood to the naked eye appears all red, but by a good microscope, wherein its lesser parts appear, shows only some few globules of red, swimming in a pellucid liquor; and how these red globules would appear, is glasses could be found that yet could magnify them a thousand or ten thousand times more, is uncertain. 109

Locke is here the dispassionate philosopher of the mind, analyzing the nature of human knowledge without reference to a wider scheme of existence and values. Others (and Locke himself elsewhere in his Essay) saw the microscòpic discoveries as a revelation of the God who made all things well. William Molyneux, in his Dioptrica Nova of 1692, writes of the microscope:-

And indeed with this, our Contemplations may be endless; all things affording such admirable Appearances, such curious Contexture of Parts, and such delicate vivid Colours; that the Contrivance of the Almighty Creator is as visible in the meanest Insect or Plant, as in the greatest Leviathan or strongest Oak. To touch upon all the Wonders this instrument shews us, would be infinite. 110

Indeed, in England the microscope had a short life as a primarily scientific instrument of research. By the time Molyneux's book was published, the Royal Society had got over the initial enthusiasm which had led them to commission Hooke's Micrographia, and had turned their attention to other matters. It was on the Continent, with Leeuwenhoek's discoveries in microbiology, that the most important advances were being

made. In this country, the chief impact of the microscope was to be in the realm of ideas. Just as it had offered Locke fresh evidence to support the orthodox theory of perception, so it confirmed other accepted beliefs. The ancient conceptions of the Chain of Being and the plenum formarum, or Principle of Plenitude, which had been rationally deduced on largely metaphysical grounds, now took on a new vitality as the microscope gave empirical proof of the existence of multitudes of creatures undreamed of before. In the early years of the next century, Shaftesbury wrote excitedly of the "Worlds within Worlds, of infinite Minuteness";¹¹¹ and Addison expressed the wonder and satisfaction of the generation that could see with its own eyes what had previously been only suppositions:-

Every part of Matter is peopled: Every green Leaf swarms with Inhabitants. There is scarce a single Humour in the Body of a Man, or of any other Animal, in which our Glasses do not discover Myriads of living Creatures.¹¹²

As the revelations of the microscope were exploited by the philosophers and theologians rather than by the scientists, so the instrument itself passed from the laboratory to the drawing-room. Amateurs like Samuel Pepys proudly acquired one of the early models, and by the eighteenth century the microscope had become a fashionable toy.¹¹³

Before pursuing further the revision of assumptions about God, Nature, Man, and their relationship to each other - questions already raised in part - it is necessary to consider some of the other scientific developments that had to be taken into account by the new synthesis.

8. Space and Light.

The greatest member of the Royal Society, and the greatest scientist of his age, was Sir Isaac Newton. Others among his contemporaries did much to achieve the advances that Bacon had foreseen, and in many respects he was building upon the work of such men as Gilbert, Boyle, and Hooke. But his major contribution to European thought was made in the field of theoretical rather than practical science.¹¹⁴ The procedures and results of Newton's most famous and far-reaching discoveries were set out in the Principia (1687), translated by Andrew Motte as The Mathematical Principles of Natural Philosophy, and published in an English version in 1729. He described his purpose in 'The Author's Preface', dated 8th May, 1686:-

Our design not respecting arts but philosophy, and our subject, not manual but natural powers, we consider chiefly those things which relate to gravity, levity, elastic force, the resistance of fluids, and the like forces whether attractive or impulsive. And therefore we offer this work as mathematical principles of philosophy. For all the difficulty of philosophy seems to consist in this, from the phaenomena of motions to investigate the forces of Nature, and then from these forces to demonstrate the other phaenomena.¹¹⁵

The conception of the physical universe as a complex of motions activated by other movements and impulses - nature, that is, as a vast machine - is similar to that of Hobbes; and the method of deriving natural laws mathematically from "the phaenomena of motions" is close to that of Descartes. Where Newton approaches even more nearly the Cartesian Rationalists is in demonstrating from these natural laws "the other phaenomena". This he does in the third book of the Principia, which elaborates a "System of the World".¹¹⁶

The bulk of the Principia is concerned with the mechanical functioning of the cosmic system and with the laws which regulate the movements of its various parts. But Newton was not only a scientist in the narrow sense. Towards the end of the third book, he turns from the efficient causes of motion, to the question of final causes, and concludes that the complexity and immenseness of the system he has explained must owe both its origin and its maintenance to a Divine Being:-

But it is not to be conceived that mere mechanical causes could give birth to so many regular motions: since the Comets range over all parts of the heavens, in very eccentric orbits. . . This most beautiful System of the Sun, Planets and Comets, could only proceed from the counsel and dominion of an intelligent and powerful being. And if the fixed Stars are the centres of other like systems, these being form'd by the like wise counsel, must be all subject to the dominion of One; especially, since the light of the fixed Stars is of the same nature with the light of the Sun, and from every system light passes into all the other systems. And lest the systems of the fixed Stars should, by their gravity, fall on each other mutually, he hath placed those Systems at immense distances from one another. 117

Such a finding had important implications for an age that was finally ridding itself of the old and persistent doctrine of the decay of nature, and the fallen state of the physical world. This doctrine had just been forcefully restated in Thomas Burnet's Theory of the Earth (1684), which purported to demonstrate that the original earth had been a perfect sphere, and that the irregularities of mountains and oceans depths were the results of Adam's sin and the Flood which destroyed the erring sons of Adam. There had been one great weakness in the argument of George Hakewill, who had written the first detailed refutation of the decay theory: he could only explain away the signs of irregularity in the heavens - the new star of

1572 and the comets that had recently appeared - in terms of "a miracle of God", like the Star of the Nativity. Here at last, in the work of Newton, was proof of the most cogent kind - mathematically reasoned - that there was order in the cosmos, just as the microscope had provided proof of the order and pattern of the tiniest of Nature's creatures.¹¹⁸

Newton's idea of a God who governs the universe of which He is the final cause was easily absorbed into metaphysical speculations that had been crystallizing for some time: these concerned the relationship between God and Space. Ernest Tuveson, in an article entitled "Space, Deity, and the "Natural Sublime"", has outlined the development of the concept of Absolute Space. Nicholas of Cusa, in the fifteenth century, had seen the material world as an unfolding of God.¹¹⁹ In the context of the mediaeval cosmology, these ideas could have little effect. But with the revelations of later astronomers, these formerly abstract speculations could be grasped as the basis for a new understanding of God's relation to the physical universe. Tuveson suggests that Bruno may have been the first to recognize the significance of the new science for Nicholas's metaphysical conclusions. Certainly, during the 1640s Nicholas of Cusa was well known, and it was in this decade that the breakthrough was made. Henry More, the Cambridge Platonist thinker and poet, constructed "a synthesis of new astronomical theories and the philosophical theology of the infinite".¹²⁰ His interpretation of space, or infinite extension, as the "nexus between the infinite Spirit and His finite manifestations"¹²¹ was embodied in his poem Democritus Platonissans (1646). Not long afterwards,

an obscure country preacher called Ellis Bradshaw published A Week-daies Lecture, or, Continued Sermon to wit, The Preaching of the Heavens (1649), which took as its theme "the infinity of space as an attribute of God".¹²²

To Newton, who as a young man had been at Cambridge when More's reputation was at its height, the connection between his discoveries and the doctrine of Absolute Space must have seemed obvious. He writes in the

Principia:-

The supreme God is a Being eternal, infinite, absolutely perfect. . . . He is Eternal and Infinite, Omnipotent and Omniscient; that is, his duration reaches from Eternity to Eternity; his presence from Infinity to Infinity; he governs all things, and knows all things that are or can be done. He is not Eternity or Infinity, but Eternal and Infinite; he is not Duration or Space, but he endures and is present. He endures for ever, and is every where present; and by existing always and every where, he constitutes Duration and Space. Since every particle of Space is always, and every indivisible moment of Duration is every where, certainly the Maker and Lord of all things cannot be never and no where. . . . 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.¹²³

Newton's God was thus transcendent - the great Mechanic - who yet, through his very power, was omnipresent. He himself was careful to avoid falling into the pantheistic heresy of regarding the Deity as a divine essence who "rolls through all things". He stated categorically: "This Being governs all things, not as the soule of the world, but as Lord over all".¹²⁴ Nevertheless, the tendency of the age was towards the identification of God with Nature, and Newton's own famous definition of Space as the "sensorium of God" contributed to this movement.¹²⁵ By the time Alexander

Pope was writing the Essay on Man in 1733, many had come to accept the simplified version:-

All are but parts of one stupendous whole,
Whose body Nature is, and God the soul.¹²⁶

The year after Newton's death, there were published for the first time the course of Optical Lectures which he had delivered in 1669, when he succeeded Dr. Barrow at Cambridge. On page iii of the preface a brief history of the progress of the Theory of Light and Colours is given. Newton had hit upon the fundamental conceptions as early as 1666, and had first made them public in these lectures. In 1671/2, his findings began to appear in the Transactions of the Royal Society, but discouraged by disputes (chiefly with Robert Hooke, over the validity of the theory), he discontinued publication. Only after the success of the Principia, and incidentally the death of Hooke in 1703, did Newton work up his ideas into book form as the Opticks (1704). On this side of his achievement, his methods were a combination of the Baconian and the Cartesian. His results were demonstrated mathematically, and partly based on a priori laws of geometry, but they depended also on a series of controlled experiments and careful observations.¹²⁷

Professor Nicolson, who had furnished a detailed account of the influence of the Opticks on eighteenth-century poetry in Newton Demands the Muse, finds no evidence that the lay imagination was affected by the early lectures at Cambridge. But before the end of the century, the prismatic discoveries were known and accepted by such men as Locke, Addison, and

Arbuthnot. Even after the Opticks were printed in 1704, there was no immediate widespread reaction. Addison, however, popularized certain aspects of the new theory in his Spectator essays, and gradually the poets began to realize its value for the imagination.¹²⁸ Newton's death was the signal for an outpouring of verse tributes, one of the best known of which - James Thomson's 'To the Memory of Sir Isaac Newton' (1727) - contains the notorious line: "How just, how beautiful the refractive law". The Opticks did raise certain problems of epistemology, but on the whole it was in the realm of imagination - for the poets and painters, rather than for the philosophers and theologians - that the Theory of Light and Colour was to be influential.

9. Against Materialism.

The advent of materialism and the direction in which the new science was developing inevitably provoked a reaction among those who were concerned to preserve a belief in the spiritual foundation of the universe. Descartes had made a distinction between Mind or Spirit and Matter; Hobbes had sought to explain everything in terms of matter alone; the Cambridge Platonists - such men as Benjamin Whichcote (Select Sermons, not collected until 1698), Henry More (An Antidote against Atheisme, 1653, and The Immortality of the Soul, 1659), John Smith (Select Discourses, 1660), and Ralph Cudworth (The True Intellectual System of the Universe, 1678) - built their conception of existence on the reality of a spiritual world which permeated and gave value to the world of matter. In other words, they attempted to unify the two aspects of the Cartesian dualism.¹²⁹ Flora

I. MacKinnon, in the introduction to her selections from More's works, states:-

More's way out of the dualistic dilemma was not that of denying the reality either of matter or of spirit, but consisted in bringing them closer together, denying the fissure between them by asserting that their likeness and their connection are far more fundamental than their differences. The exact line between soul and body in man, between spirit and matter in the universe, becomes in More's hands a wavy, misty, boundary, so that it is impossible to trace just where, for him, the one passes over into the other.¹³⁰

The chief object of the Cambridge Platonists was to defend traditional religion against what was widely held to be the atheism of Hobbes. But the weapons they used were the weapons of their age: instead of appealing to revealed truth and Church dogma, they turned to the inner principle of Reason - Whichcote's famous "Candle of the Lord" - as the ultimate sanction for their beliefs. More significant for future developments was the demonstration in the Antidote against Atheisme that a proof of God's being and activity could be found in the world of nature. Like Hakewill, Henry More saw clear evidence of the Creator's handiwork in the universe around him. The Antidote, even more than Hakewill's Apologie, became a source of ideas and arguments for later writers who wished to show that divine providence was still at work in the world.

Although the analogy of the Machine was the new explanation of the universe that the age was seeking - for Newton's theories translated the speculations of the philosophers into the realm of simple, scientific facts that the Reason of Everyman could comprehend¹³¹ - the dualism inherent in the Western intellectual tradition raised a problem. The ultimate implication of the Newtonian system was that the universe is

cold, dead, unsympathetic to human aspirations. It has no place, in spite of Newton's expostulations to the contrary, for the world of spirit. The universe had been defined, but was in danger of being bereft of meaning, Matter itself, which constituted the objects controlled by natural laws, was unknowable, since the brilliant colours analysed by Newton, and the other qualities apprehended by the senses, were only secondary - the surface glitter of a universe of unfeeling atoms. Newton's means of escape from this unpalatable conclusion was the means of the majority of thinking men: that there was a God who set the Machine in motion would have been denied by few (even Hobbes needed a First Mover); Newton and the whole array of physico-theologists and "Sentimentalists"¹³² went a step further, and insisted that the Great Artificer continued to interest Himself in His Creation. In this way, the men of the later seventeenth century contrived to have the best of both worlds - the scientific and the religious.

But although religion was salvaged from the intellectual storms of the century, it was a religion that had been driven a long way from its traditional Christian course. Natural religion, or "Deism" as it was called by those who felt uneasy about the direction in which things were moving, became the dominating element in religious thought, even among those who still regarded themselves as orthodox Churchmen. Overriding all Christian scruples was the need for explanation and demonstration. Revealed truth, as found in the Bible, was subconsciously rejected as inadequate. By itself it could not satisfy the demands of Reason. Basil Willey writes:-

The characteristic task of a century which was gravitating steadily towards 'enlightenment' was to give the true, the 'philosophical' account of matters which had hitherto been misconceived by both the learned and the vulgar. In the field of theology, then, we must expect to find the rationalizers largely concerned with putting an idea, and abstraction, where formerly there had been a picture. For only the abstract, only what could be conceptually stated, could claim to be real: all else was shadow, image, or at least 'type' or symbol. 133

The deist, John Toland, makes the usually unacknowledged assumption explicit in his Christianity not Mysterious (1702):-

for, as long as the Reasons of it ^{his discourse} hold good, whatever Instance can be alledg'd must either be found not mysterious, or, if it prove a MYSTERY, not divinely reveal'd. There is no middle way, that I can see. 134

Sir Thomas Browne's delighted cry of "O altitudo!" would have sounded naive to Toland's rational mind. Even the Cambridge Platonists of the mid-century, for all their sense of spiritual verities, belong to this long retreat from revelation. Their criterion of "reality" was that of the rational temper of their times. 135

The central problem facing the Cambridge Platonists and the later physico-theologists was the old Platonic problem of the relationship between God and Nature - otherworldliness and this-worldliness. The solution of the Enlightenment was to seek for God in Nature. This was a reversal of the mediaeval approach, which studied the physical world as an adjunct to the study of God, because Nature was grounded in God. The neo-Platonic/Christian-mystical conception of the Scale of Being by means of which one ascended to a spiritual communion with the Creator, was replaced by a virtual pantheism whereby God was to be found - and for

some only to be found - in nature itself. The result was that nature was raised to the status of revelation, compensating for the no longer adequate revelation of Scripture. Later in the eighteenth century, this shift of emphasis bore fruit in the "nature poetry" of the Romantics.

10. Theologia Ruris.

Bacon and Browne, as we have seen, inherited the ancient view that Nature was the Book of God, but in urging men to read it, they added the reservation that it should not be allowed to usurp the place of the Word of God in the Bible. Bacon retained the mediaeval priorities when he invoked the image in his Preparative towards a Natural and Experimental History (1620). He is speaking of the need for a history of natural knowledge, as a foundation for later research:-

For I want this primary history to be compiled with a most religious care, as if every particular were stated upon oath; seeing that it is the book of God's works, and (so far as the majesty of heavenly may be compared with the humbleness of earthly things) a kind of second Scripture. ¹³⁶

The image was developed further by Ralph Austen, in the preface to A Treatise of Fruit-trees (1653). He learns from his trees both facts about his Maker, and lessons for man:-

The World is a great Library, and Fruit-trees are some of the Bookes wherein we may read & see plainly the Attributes of God his Power, Wisdom, Goodnesse &c. and be Instructed and taught our duty towards him in many things. ¹³⁷

Boyle makes the same point in The Usefulness of Experimental Naturall Philosophy (1663):-

Nor can the Creatures onely inform Man of God's Being and Attributes . . . but also instruct him in his own Duties: For we may say of the World, as S^t Austin did of the Sacraments, that it is Verbum visibile.¹³⁸

And the Occasional Reflections of two years later enjoins the readers to make an effort to discover the lessons that lie unheeded around them:-

And indeed, the World is the great Book, not so much of Nature, as of the God of Nature, which we should find ev'n crowded with instructive Lessons, if we had but the Skill, and would take the Pains, to extract and pick them out: The Creatures are the true Ægyptian Hieroglyphicks, that under the rude forms of Birds, and Beasts, &c. conceal the mysterious secrets of Knowledge, and of Piety.¹³⁹

One interesting facet of this last quotation is that Boyle is wary about using the phrase "Book of Nature", since this might give the impression that the physical world is being exalted to some quasi-divine eminence: the "Book" is firmly placed as the work of the "God of Nature", thus ensuring the independence and transcendence of the Creator. Something of the changing emphases of the period can be felt by comparing the image as used two decades later by the anonymous author of Theologia Ruris, sive Schola & Scala Naturae (1686). The passage quoted follows a long, rapturous account of the beauties of the countryside:-

Know therefore, O Man, that Nature, in this gay and most delightful spectacle, opens a large Book unto thee; a Book as profitable, as it is pleasant; a Book, which if thou attentively lookest upon, and constantly studiest, thou wilt find therein as many Letters, as there be Flowers of the Spring, Piles of Grass, or drops of Dew. These Letters of Creatures, when they are fitly joyned together, (as by Divine Providence, so by humane Meditation) meet as it were in words; and those words, through the vicissitudes of certain Seasons, close in set Periods. Yea more: There is an entire Sense in every Letter.¹⁴⁰

Boyle's interest is centred on the lessons and the process of extracting and picking them out. Like a metaphysical poet or an emblematiser, his pleasure is largely the intellectual one of discovering the (often fantastic) correspondences between natural phenomena and human life. (Incidentally, the reference to the Egyptian hieroglyphics was a commonplace in contemporary discussions about the origin of the Emblem.) In Theologia Ruris, there is much more concentration on the physical world itself. Profit is only one motive for reading in Nature's Book: pleasure in "this gay and most delightful spectacle" is at least as strong. Elsewhere in the Occasional Reflections, Boyle shows a genuine delight in, for example, the song of the skylark. But there is none of that sense of enthusiastic abandon to natural beauty which is so striking a feature of the anonymous treatise - and which looks forward to the spirit of the famous "nature" passages of Shaftesbury's The Moralists.

The doctrine that Nature is the Book of God required an interpretation of man's place in the divine scheme: The Book must have been written in order to be read, and only man of all created beings on earth was equipped for this task. One response was to exalt the human position. Boyle speaks from this point of view:-

For it is no great presumption to conceive that the rest of the Creatures were made for Man, since He alone of the Visible World is able to enjoy, use, and relish many of the other Creatures, and to discern the Omniscience, Almightyesse and Goodnesse of their Author in them, and returne Him praises for them. 'Tis not for themselves that the Rubies flame, other Jewels sparkle, the Bezar-stone is Antidotall; nor is it for their own advantage that fruitfull trees spend and exhaust themselves in Annual profusions. 141

But man's special privilege entails a special duty - what Browne had termed "the Debt of our Reason we owe unto God". For, although in one respect all things were made for man, in another man was made for all things. The stars are said to "praise" God, which for them is a source of pleasure. But they can only achieve this end through man, who is the point of consciousness of the created universe. John Ray develops this idea:-

The like may be said of Fire, Hail, Snow, and other Elements and Meteors, of Trees, and other Vegetables, of Beasts, Birds, Insects and all Animals, when they are commanded to praise God, which they cannot do by themselves; Man is commanded to consider them particularly, to observe and take Notice of their curious Structure, Ends, and Uses, and give God the Praise of his Wisdom, and other Attributes therein manifested. 142

The primary intention of those who turned to nature looking for other than purely scientific data, was to find proof of the existence of God. Henry More's Antidote against Atheisme was designed for this specific end. He avoids the trap that snared many of his more materialistic and literal-minded successors by disclaiming at the outset that any absolute proof can be given:-

For it is possible that Mathematical evidence it self may be but a constant undiscoverable Delusion, which our nature is necessarily and perpetually obnoxious unto, and that neither fatally or fortuitously there has been in the world time out of minde such a Being as we call Man, whose essentiall Property it is to be then most of all mistaken, when he conceives a thing most evidently true. 143

But he is convinced that, although his arguments may not be utterly unanswerable, yet "they shall be such as shall deserve full assent, and

win full assent from any unprejudic'd mind".¹⁴⁴ Book I is concerned mainly with metaphysical arguments about the definition of "God" and the possibility of a human mind framing the idea of such a Being. Book II turns to natural evidence, with chapters headed by captions like: "That the more general Phaenomena of External Nature argue the Being of a God" (I); "The great Usefulness of Hills and Mountains" (III); "That the whole Creation and the several parts thereof are an undeniable Demonstration that there is a God" (XII).

For some the plenitude of Creation was a central issue, for others the beauty and harmony, for others the appropriateness or "convenience" of each kind to its conditions of life and of everything to the welfare of man. The different emphases produced different overall philosophies, but all concurred in insisting that the characteristics of the universe precluded the Epicurean hypothesis of a chance concourse of atoms.

In his search for a definition of "God" as a basis for further argument, Henry More settled on a formula: "a Being absolutely and fully Perfect". He later added to this: "Whatever is absolutely Perfect, is Ininitely both Good, Wise ~~and~~ Powerful".¹⁴⁵ The trinity of Goodness, Wisdom, and Power has echoed like a refrain through remarks that have already been quoted, and these qualities became established as the three attributes of God that could be discerned in the created universe. Among hosts of others Ray, Boyle, Locke, Derham, Berkeley, and the author of the Theologia Juris¹⁴⁶ evince the same character of God from their varied approaches to the investigation of nature. Samuel Clarke, giving his Boyle lectures

of 1704 - 'A Demonstration of the Being and Attributes of God' - found it superfluous to repeat the well-known catalogue of instances from the Works:-

I shall here observe only this One Thing; That the older the World grows, and the deeper Men inquire into Things, and the more Accurate Observations they make, and the more and greater Discoveries they find out; the stronger this Argument continually grows: Which is a certain Evidence of its being founded in Truth. 147

A passage like this clearly indicates how much the work of the scientists was contributing to the speculation of philosophers and theologians. The "truth" revealed by the Enlightenment may not have had the rich complexity of the "truth" of the Elizabethans, but it had not yet been divided irrevocably between the different disciplines.

God exists, and His character can be deduced from nature. But there was another fact that many religious thinkers felt called upon to demonstrate: God's relationship to the universe did not stop at that suggested by the Artist analogy - the Maker, if he was to be a Deity acceptable to Reason, must still be active in the upkeep of his Creation. George Hake-will, back in 1635, had argued that one thing which proved the fallacy of the theory of a decaying world, was divine supervision:-

And how other men may stand affected in reading, I know not, sure I am that in writing, it often lifted up my soule in admiring and praying the infinite wisedome and bounty of the Creator, in maintaining and managing his owne worke, in the government and preservation of the Vniverse, which in truth is nothing else but (as the Schooles speake) continuata productio, a continued production. 148

The Cambridge Platonist, John Smith, took up this notion of a "continued production" in his contribution to the attack on Hobbesian atheism - the

essay 'Of the Existence and Nature of God', in Select Discourses (1660).

He has just demonstrated that there is a God, by the usual appeal to Reason and Nature:-

In the next place we may by way of further Deduction gather, That that Almighty Wisdome and Goodness which first made all things, doth also perpetually conserve and govern them; deriving themselves through the whole Fabrick, and seating themselves in every Finite Essence . . . lest stragling & falling off from the Deity, they should become altogether disorderly, relapsing and sliding back into their first Chaos. 149

The Book of Nature revealed the existence, attributes, and continuing activity of God, and it could also teach particular moral lessons and duties to the man who took the trouble to read carefully in it. The attitude of many men towards nature seems to have been limited to this theological approach, or to a more purely scientific interest. Others - or the same men when they could allow theological and scientific preoccupations to remain in the background for a while - experienced an aesthetic pleasure in the presence of natural beauty. We turn now from God-in-Nature to Nature itself, as it appeared to the men of the mid-seventeenth century.

11. The Magnificent Fabrick.

Robert Boyle, in the first essay of The Usefulness of Experimental Naturall Philosophie, cites the contemporary case of an eighteen-year-old girl who had been blind from birth, and who "was so ravisht at the surprizing spectacle of so many and various Objects, as presented themselves to her unacquainted Sight" when the offending ~~objects~~ were removed, "that she was in danger to loose the eyes of her Mind, by those

of her Body". He uses this incident to support his conviction that only familiarity prevents us from being constantly overwhelmed with awe at the beauty and intricacy of nature:-

The bare prospect of this magnificent Fabrick of the Universe, furnished and adorned with such strange variety of curious and usefull Creatures, would, suffice to transport us both with Wonder and Joy, if their Commonnesse did not hinder their Operations. 150

He was by no means alone in stressing the delight to be derived from the sheer "spectacle" of the natural world. Milton spoke to his Cambridge contemporaries of the personal pleasure and fulfilment that he had achieved during a vacation spent in the country:-

For my own part I appeal to the groves and streams and the dear village elms under which in the summer now just over I remember that I enjoyed supreme happiness with the Muses (if it is lawful to speak of the secrets of the goddesses). There among the fields and in the depths of the woods I seemed to myself to have achieved some real growth in the season of seclusion. 151

John Evelyn's Diary records numerous "beautiful" and "incomparable" prospects that he enjoyed on his continental travels, and later on his visits to country houses in England. 152 A large part of Izaak Walton's pleasure in angling was derived from the sights and sounds of the natural settings:-

Look! under that broad beach-tree I sat down, when I was last this way a-fishing; and the birds in the adjoining grove seemed to have a friendly contention with an echo, whose dead voice seemed to live in a hollow tree near to the brow of that primrose-hill. There I sat viewing the silver streams glide silently towards their centre, the tempestuous sea; yet sometimes opposed by rugged roots and pebble-stones, which broke their waves, and turned them into foam; and sometimes I beguiled time by viewing the harmless lambs; some leaping securely in the cool shade,

whilst others sported themselves in the cheerful sun; and saw others craving comfort from the swollen udders of their bleating dams. 153

Walton here gives the impression that he is recalling actual experiences, rather than recommending the country life in a generalized way. He selects items from the scene which he has observed and enjoyed in detail - the echo of the birdsong, the play of water over root and pebble, the sporting of the lambs. Other writers offer a vaguer, but no less enthusiastic, encomium on the pleasures of nature. Margaret Cavendish, the Duchess of Newcastle, sets out to prove "the Happiness of a Rural Life" with a long list of country benefits:-

Can there be more Odoriferous Perfumes, than the Sweet Vegetables on the Earth? or Finer Prospects than Stately Hills, Humble Vallies, Shady Groves, Clear Brooks, Green Hedges, Corn Fields, Feeding Cattel, and Flying Birds? . . . can there be more Delightfull Sounds than Furling Brooks, Whispering Winds, Humming Bees, and Small-Voiced Grashoppers? can there be a more Delicious Sweet than Honey? 154

But aesthetic pleasure is not confined to the wider prospects of the countryside, and the traditionally honoured items of the landscape.

Walton has a keen eye for some of the smaller creatures of nature:-

Nay, the very colours of caterpillars are, as one has observed, very elegant and beautiful. I shall, for a taste of the rest, describe one of them; which I will, some time the next month, shew you feeding on a willow-tree; and you shall find him punctually to answer this very description: his lips and mouth somewhat yellow; his eyes black as jet; his forehead purple; his feet and hinder parts green; his tail two-forked and black; the whole body stained with a kind of red spots, which run along the neck and shoulder-blade, not unlike the form of St. Andrew's cross, or the letter X, made thus cross-wise, and a white line drawn down his back to his tail; all which add much beauty to his whole body. 155

This caterpillar may be useful bait for the fisherman, but it is quite obviously much more than this to Walton. Its very form and colour appeal to his sense of beauty. His delighted response to such details of natural beauty was shared by his friend Charles Cotton, who included, among many others, this even more loving and minutely observed description in his continuation of The Compleat Angler:-

This same Stone-Flie has not the patience to continue in his Crust, or Husk, till his wings be full grown; but as soon as ever they begin to put out, that he feels himself strong (at which time we call him a Jack) squeezes himself out of Prison, and crawls to the top of some stone, where if he can find a chink that will receive him, or can creep betwixt two stones, the one lying hollow upon the other . . . he there lurks till his wings be full grown, and there is your only place to find him (and from thence doubtless he derives his name) though, for want of such convenience, he will make shift with the hollow of a Bank, or any other place where the wind cannot come to fetch him off. His body is long, and pretty thick, and as broad at the tail almost, as in the middle; his colour a very fine brown, ribbed with yellow, and much yellower on the belly than the back, he has two or three whisks also at the tag of his tail, and two little horns upon his head, his wings, when full grown, are double, and flat down his back of the same colour, but rather darker than his body, and longer than it; though he makes but little use of them, for you shall rarely see him flying, though often swimming, and paddling with several feet he has under his belly upon the water, without stirring a wing: but the Drake will mount Steeple height into the Air, though he is to be found upon flags and grass too, and indeed every where high and low, near the river. 156

12. Painting and the Taste for Nature.

The aesthetic pleasure which men like Walton and Cotton derived from the contemplation of the natural world was part of a general movement of taste and interest which grew out of the Renaissance. This movement first manifested itself in the art of painting. The central role played by

painting in the history of modern responses to nature has been explored by Kenneth Clark in the series of lectures printed under the title Landscape into Art. He indicates the significance of the painter's vision of landscape in his opening remarks:-

We are surrounded with things which we have not made and which have a life and a structure different from our own: trees, flowers, grasses, rivers, hills, clouds. For centuries they have inspired us with curiosity and awe. They have been objects of delight. We have recreated them in our imaginations to reflect our moods. And we have come to think of them as contributing to an idea which we have called nature. Landscape painting marks the stages in our conception of nature. Its rise and development since the middle ages is part of a cycle in which the human spirit attempted once more to create a harmony with its environment. The preceding cycle, that of Mediterranean antiquity, had been so deeply rooted in the Greek sense of human values that this concept of nature had played a subordinate part. 157

The representation of natural objects in early mediaeval art is highly symbolic, rather than imitative of reality. This is partly the result of the Christian-Platonic belief that the world of appearances is at best a dim reflection of the perfect world of ideas, and at worst a sinful impediment to man's perception of spiritual truths. To a mind formed by such a philosophy, art had no obligation to reproduce faithfully the details of the material world. Trees, flowers, and mountains could be extremely stylized, since the artist's purpose in presenting pictures of them was to direct the mind to the spiritual idea which lay behind them, rather than to record their actual appearance. Similarly their arrangement on the canvas or page was governed by principles of symbolic pattern or decoration. There was no attempt to capture the effects of light or spatial relationship. By the seventeenth century this was no longer the

case. Painters - like philosophers and scientists - had become much more concerned with the actual physical structure and appearance of the things around them, as witness the realistic sketches of flowing water and the anatomical studies of Leonardo, the topographical water-colours of Dürer, the naturalistic landscapes of Breughel, the landscape art of Holland, and the still lifes of Van Dyck. Not only did the representation of objects and their spatial relationships become more realistic, but gradually their traditional symbolic function was discarded. Erwin Panofsky, who has examined the iconographic significance of various motifs in Renaissance art,¹⁵⁸ argues that such an elimination of "the whole sphere of secondary or conventional subject matter", in European landscape painting, still life, and genre, is an exceptional phenomenon which marks "the later, over-sophisticated phases of a long development".¹⁵⁹ The process is similar to that which was to take place later in poetry, as the old emblematic values of many natural images were rejected or forgotten in favour of self-sufficient descriptions of scenery and details from nature. In this kind of poetry, as in pure landscape and still-life pictures, there is an attempt to achieve what Panofsky calls "a direct transition from motifs to content".¹⁶⁰

The line of landscape art which was to have the most widespread influence on English taste and English poetry was that of the "Ideal Landscape". It is not difficult to see why this should be so, since the inspiration behind it was to a large extent literary. The ideal landscapes were an attempt to render in paint the vision of Virgil, a vision which includes not only the hints of scenery to be found in the Aeneid, but

also the enchanting fiction of an idyllic rural life. The Virgillian myth of the Golden Age, of the simple pastoral life of tranquillity and innocence, had a great attraction for the men of the seventeenth century. Walton makes an explicit comparison between the peaceful angler and the shepherds of antiquity, describing how he and his companion have sat:-

as quietly and as free from cares under this sycamore, as Virgil's Tityrus and his Meliboeus did under their broad beech-tree.¹⁶¹

The direct influence of Virgil was reinforced by the vogue of Italian ideal landscapes, and profoundly affected seventeenth-century ways of responding to the natural scene. As will be demonstrated in a later chapter, descriptions of the English countryside in the middle years of the century were designed to satisfy aesthetic assumptions about landscape which were derived from the work of Giorgione, Titian, Poussin, and above all Claude Lorrain. Another painter who is often associated with the ideal landscapists was Salvator Rosa. His pictures portray natural scenes of greater savagery and mystery than Claude's, and were destined to have a considerable influence on the poets of the eighteenth century. The precepts governing this school of painting, and consequently the precepts which were adopted by the English poets who were influenced by it, are summed up by Christopher Hussey in his book The Picturesque:-

In the back of their minds they had Aristotle's conception of nature as an immanent force working in the refractory medium of matter, towards a central, generalized form, but invariably deflected from this ideal form by "accident". Accordingly it was the artist's function to do what nature could not do, and to produce such a tree, valley, mountain, leaf, as most perfectly expressed that aspect of nature which he had chosen to portray.

A Claude selected and compounded aspects that were calm and idyllic, a Salvator those that accentuated the wildness and fierceness of nature. In neither case was it intended to represent nature as she was, but as she might have been if at liberty to express her moods freely and fully.¹⁶²

The taste for landscape painting was a late arrival in Britain. The valuable study, English Taste in Landscape in the Seventeenth Century, by H.V.S. and M.S. Ogden has assembled evidence from seventeenth-century English pictures and books about painting, from poetry, from book illustrations, from prints of European paintings, and from auction catalogues to build up an impression of the growing and changing taste for landscape works between 1600 and 1700. This study finds little indication that there was much interest in landscape of any kind until the last decades of the sixteenth century. At the turn of the century, some interest was being shown, and the "early years of the seventeenth century were to bring the recognition of landscape as a genre in its own right, with a small but enthusiastic following at first".¹⁶³ Discussing the kind of prospect that was popular in this country during the period 1600-1649, the Ogdens conclude that "the liking for an extensive and variegated view was the dominant characteristic of English taste in landscape at this period".¹⁶⁴ The landscape that Milton describes in 'L'Allegro' might well be summed up as "an extensive and variegated view". Hussey, in fact, sees this poem, together with Denham's Cooper's Hill and a sketch by Inigo Jones, as forming "a small but unmistakable body of evidence that the painted landscape of Rubens and Titian and Claude was beginning to influence the vision of Englishmen".¹⁶⁵

The combination of aesthetic and religious attitudes to the material world which found expression in the meditative verse of men like Vaughan and Mildmay Fane led to a parallel development in painting. During the Commonwealth years, the "association of landscape appreciation with religious contemplation" resulted in pictures suggesting "a reflective mood in which the beauty of the scenery was regarded as the manifestation of God's goodness".¹⁶⁶ This mood did not survive much beyond the Restoration, after which responses to landscape became more and more aesthetic and emotional, rather than religious.

The second half of the century saw an increasing vogue for the ideal Italianate landscape, but it had not yet reached the pitch of exclusiveness that characterized eighteenth-century taste. Alongside it there developed a liking for the native Dutch tradition of Ruysdael, van der Velde, and Ostade. Prospects in general remained the most popular kind of landscape painting, but important new sentiments came into fashion: the sentiment of antique mystery associated with "ruin pieces"; and the sentiment of horror associated especially with mountain scenes.

It is always hazardous to try to distinguish the parts played by the various elements that go to make up the history of taste, but the evidence does seem to suggest that landscape painting was a primary influence in the evolution of modern attitudes to nature. Rather than reflecting aesthetic responses to scenery, the painters of the seventeenth century seem to have done much to create a taste which was later transferred to actual experiences of nature. John Evelyn, writing in July 1675, was

clearly carrying over into his enjoyment of an actual view a conception of the picturesque which he had absorbed from the paintings of Claude and his imitators:-

The Parke full of Fowle & especially Hernes, & from it a prospect to Holmby house, which being demolished in the late Civil Warre, shews like a Roman ruine shaded by the trees about it, one of the most pleasing sights that ever I saw, of state & solemne. 167

The Ogdens' study leads them to this conclusion:-

The significance of the breaking down of the distinction between topographical and ideal landscape is great. The whole history of landscape painting from Patinir to Turner might be written in terms of the process by which this distinction disappeared. Moreover, its disappearance had great significance for the development of the appreciation of natural scenery. The esthetic values created by artists in their ideal landscapes were transferred to their topographical pictures. From there it was an easy step to transfer the same values to natural scenery itself, to find the same kinds of enjoyment in actual views as in ideal prospects, and to associate with external nature the moods imparted by landscapists to their canvasses. 168

The full effects of the painters' vision of nature were not felt in English poetry until the 1720s, with the work of Dyer and Thomson, but later chapters of this thesis will show that as early as the middle of the seventeenth century there were poets who, like John Evelyn, were already beginning to look at the English countryside through the spectacles of the Italian landscapists.

13. Of Gardens.

Painting and poetry are by no means the only arts which reflect clearly the relationship between the general aesthetics of an age and its attitude towards the external world of nature. As seventeenth-century writers from

Bacon to Sir William Temple are never tired of reminding us, "God Almighty first planted a garden; and, indeed, it is the purest of human pleasures".¹⁶⁹

Since the garden is that area of nature which man encloses and arranges to his own satisfaction, his concept of the perfect garden will tell us a good deal about his views on nature in general. The mediaeval garden was a little world in itself, an enclosed haven furnished with knots, mounts, flowerbeds, arbours, fountains, and clipped trees. It seems essentially to represent man's attempt to remake for himself that lost garden of innocence and timelessness first planted by God Almighty. For the men of the Italian Renaissance, the garden became part of a wider concept of symmetry and design. They introduced statues, balustrades, terraces, long avenues of stately trees, the whole being governed by a principle of axial arrangement. The garden was no longer a private retreat, but part of an expansive intellectual purpose which brought together house and grounds in a single artistic design.¹⁷⁰ The ideal of the English garden in the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries was not much affected by Italian methods, beyond the introduction of a few features, such as terraces and statues. Francis Bacon's plan for the lay-out of a prince's garden combines mediaeval and Italian elements:-

For gardens, . . . the contents ought not well to be under thirty acres of ground, and to be divided into three parts; a green in the entrance, a heath, or desert, in the going forth, and the main garden in the midst, besides alleys on both sides; . . . The green hath two pleasures: the one, because nothing is more pleasant to the eye than green grass kept finely shorn; the other, because it will give you a fair alley in the midst, by which you may go in front upon a stately hedge, which is to enclose the garden: . . . The garden is best to be square, encompassed on all the four sides with a stately arched hedge; the arches to be on pillars of

carpenter's work, of some ten foot high, and six foot broad, and the spaces between of the same dimension with the breadth of the arch. 171

Within this enclosed area he does not like to see "images cut out in juniper or other garden stuff", but is in favour of fountains, and "in the very middle, a fair mount".¹⁷² The "heath, or desert" is an especially interesting feature:-

I wish it to be framed as much as may be to a natural wildness, Trees I would have none in it, but some thickets made only of sweet-briar and honeysuckle, and some wild vine amongst; and the ground set with violets, strawberries, and primroses; for these are sweet, and prosper in the shade; and these to be in the heath here and there, not in any order. I like also little heaps, in the nature of mole-hills (such as are in wild heaths), to be set, some with wild thyme, some with pinks, some with germander, that gives a good flower to the eye. 173

The desire to bring "a natural wildness" and mole-hills like those "in wild heaths" within the confines of the garden is indicative of an attitude to nature. English taste could not subscribe completely to the formalization of the Italian fashion, but neither could it throw over traditional ideas of order. The wildness and naturalness that it desires must be kept within the control of art and reason: nature produced her own beauties, but they must not be permitted to get out of hand - they must be incorporated within the total unit of the garden, so that they could be grasped by the ordering mind of man. We shall see later what happens when that mind comes up against aspects of nature with which it has not yet learnt to cope aesthetically.

English books about gardening in the seventeenth century - such as

William Lawson's New Orchard and Garden (1618), John Parkinson's Paradisi In Sole Paradisus (1629), and John Rea's Flora (1665) - show, as Elizabeth Wheeler Manwaring has said, "that the interest was largely practical, and never picturesque".¹⁷⁴ Nevertheless, the taste for the continental formal garden spread during the course of the century, and was to become a dominant fashion among the owners of great estates after the Restoration. The influence came not directly from Italy, but from France which was then the leader of European taste, and the country of refuge for many of the exiled Royalists during the Commonwealth. John Evelyn, that great connoisseur of garden-art, had become acquainted with Italian designs during his foreign travels in the 1640s, and several times comments on the imitations he has seen in England. Of one English gentleman with whom he dined in 1663 he remarks:-"He has a pretty Garden & banqueting house, potts, status, Cypr[e]sses, resembling some villa about Rome".¹⁷⁵ He describes the house and gardens of the "Duke of Laderdaile", which he saw in 1678, as "indeede inferiour to few of the best Villas in Italy itselfe".¹⁷⁶ He often took a professional interest in the gardens he visited, mentioning the house of one Mr. Howard at Alburie, "where I designed for him the plat for his Canale & Garden, with a Crypta thro the hill &c."; persuading another landowner to "bring his Park so neere, as to comprehend his house with in it"; and complaining of Hampton Court that "all these Gardens might be exceedingly improved, as being too narrow for such a Palace".¹⁷⁷

Celia Fiennes, another tireless visitor of country houses in the last decades of the century, bears witness to the spread of continental

fashions during the neo-classic period. At Wilton she saw the grounds of the Earl of Pembroke:-

The Gardens are very fine, with many gravel walkes with grass squaires set with fine brass and stone statues, with fish ponds and basons with figures in the middle spouting out water, dwarfe trees of all sorts and a fine flower garden, much wall fruite. 178

At Coleshill, near Faringdon, she enjoyed the gardens of Sir George Pratt:-

All the avenues to the house are fine walkes of rows of trees, the garden lyes in a great descent below the house, of many steps and tarresses and gravel walkes one below another, and green walke with all sorts of dwarfe trees, fruit trees with standing apricock and flower trees, abundance of garden roome and filled with all sorts of things improved for pleasure and use. 179

Sir Griffith Boynton's house at Barmston is less to her modern taste, since, though "the Gardens are large and are capable of being made very fine", at the time of her visit they "remaine in the old fashion". 180

Not all Englishmen admired the Italian garden, however, even when its fashion was at its height. John Rea, in Flora (1665), speaks up for a more natural beauty:-

I have seen many Gardens of the new model, in the hands of unskilful persons, with good Walls, Walks and Grass-plots; but in the most essential adornments so deficient, that a green Medow is a more delightful object: there Nature alone, without the aid of Art, spreads her verdant Carpets, spontaneously imbroydered with many pretty Plants and pleasing Flowers, far more inviting than such an immured Nothing. And as noble Fountains, Grottoes, Statues, &c. are excellent ornaments and marks of Magnificence; so all such dead works in Gardens, ill done, are little better than blocks in the way to interrupt the sight, but not at all to satisfie the understanding. A choice Collection of living Beauties, rare Plants, Flowers and Fruits, are indeed the wealth, glory and delight of a Garden, and the most absolute indications of the Owners ingenuity, whose skill and care is chiefly required in their Choice, Culture, and Position. 181

Abraham Cowley also raised a dissenting voice in his essay Of Greatness (1668):-

Lastly, . . . not whole Woods cut in walks, nor vast Parks, nor Fountain, or Cascade-Gardens; but herb, and flower, and fruit-Gardens which are more useful, and the water every whit as clear and wholesome, as if it darted from the breasts of a marble Nymph, or the Urn of a River-God.¹⁸²

Just as Bacon had wanted to keep in touch with the natural beauties of the countryside, rather than substituting for them a formal beauty of human design, so men like Rea, Cowley, and John Worlidge preferred nature's own flowers and streams to the statues and gravel-walks of French taste. B. Sprague Allen finds in these men of the Restoration the beginnings of an attitude to garden-art which came to fruition with the English landscape gardening of the eighteenth century.¹⁸³

14. Travel and Tourism.

Another aspect of the life of a period which will contribute to men's attitude to nature is the ease or difficulty of getting from one place to another. A journey by aeroplane which takes the traveller over the Alps will induce different sensations in response to the landscape than those produced by a laborious and dangerous trek through the mountains on foot or horseback. Travel in the seventeenth century was a hazardous and uncomfortable business. In this country, journeys can rarely have been undertaken for pleasure. The terrain itself was difficult, as Joan Parkes describes in her book Travel in England in the Seventeenth Century:-

Half, or more than half, of the country was wilderness, heath, moor, hill, common, supporting besides indigenous fauna no more

than a sparse and scattered population of 'heathers', or squatters, and here and there the lean, starveling wattle of labouring folk. 184

Roads were almost inconceivably bad, and were made worse by wheeled traffic - farm waggons and carts, and the stage-coach which was probably introduced during the Civil Wars - means of transport which supplemented the traditional riding-horse, pillion-saddle, litter, and pack-horse. Only the fourteen-hundred-year-old roads left by the Romans had any substantial foundations. The rest were just worn through the surface of the land:-

Sometimes the highway consisted of a narrow raised track, flanked on each side by a quagmire of mud into which unfortunate riders had to venture when meeting waggons or strings of pack-horses. . . . Each season of the year gave to the roads a different and unenviable character. In summer there was a smothering, suffocating dust; in spring and autumn the ruts filled with water, leaving hard dry ridges, enough to overturn a coach; in winter the mud levelled road and ditch to a quagmire, except during periods of hard frost, when it turned into slippery ice until a thaw brought its own peculiar dangers. . . . In winter it might be days before coach or waggon could complete its journey. 185

The first Turnpike Act of 1663 saw the beginning of improvements, but it was not until the eighteenth century that travelling conditions, especially in the home counties, were gradually ameliorated by the institution of Turnpike Trusts.

It is hardly surprising that few travellers had much time for admiring the passing countryside. Journeys were undertaken reluctantly, and for pressing reasons that were practical rather than aesthetic. The age of the tourist had not yet come. There were a few intrepid travellers, however, who braved the hardships of the way in order to see what was to be

seen. Ben Jonson trudged to Scotland, and John Taylor the Water-poet tramped all over England, recording his experiences. Charles Cotton, in 'A Voyage to Ireland in Burlesque', explains that he has always been fascinated by strange sights:-

Truth is, in my youth I was one of those people
 Would have gone a great way to have seen an high steeple,
 And though I was bred 'mongst the wonders o'th'Peak,
 Would have thrown away money, and ventur'd my neck,
 To have seen a great hill, a rock, or a cave,
 And thought there was nothing so pleasant and brave. 186

A number of "journey poems", and poetic accounts of the Wonders of the Peak District by Cotton and Thomas Hobbes, witness to a growing interest in visiting at least the more extraordinary features of the countryside as the century progressed. But the most remarkable traveller in seventeenth-century England was surely Celia Fiennes. From about 1685 onwards she visited many parts of the country on horseback, often with only a groom as a companion. Some idea of the difficulties and slowness of travelling is given in her account of a journey into Derbyshire:-

Its very difficult to find the wayes here for you see only tops of hills and so many roads by reason of the best wayes up and down that its impossible for Coach or Waggon to pass some of them, and you scarce see a tree and no hedges all over the Country, only dry stone walls that incloses ground no other fence; Buxton we saw 2 or 3 tymes and then lost the sight of it as often, and at last did not see it till just you came upon it - that 9 mile we were above 6 hours going it. 187

If conditions were bad in England, travelling was an even more arduous enterprise for those who ventured abroad. Two accounts of the practical problems of crossing the Alps into Italy, one from 1611 and one from 1685,

must serve to show the dangers and hardships involved. Thomas Coryat wrote, in his essay 'My Observations of Savoy':-

The wayes were exceeding difficult in regard of the steepnesse and hardnesse thereof, for they were al rocky, petricosae & salebrosae, and so uneven that a man could hardly find any sure footing on them. . . The worst wayes that ever I travelled in all my life in the Sommer were those betwixt Chamberie and Aiguebelle, which were as bad as the worst I ever rode in England in the midst of Winter. 188

Gilbert Burnet has an even more terrifying detail to impart:-

is
The way[^] cut out in the middle of the Rock in some places, and in several places the steepness of the Rock being such, that a way could not be cut out, there are Beams driven into it, over which Boards and Earth are laid; this way holds an hour. 189

15. Delightful Horror and Terrible Joy.

Recent historians of aesthetics have stressed the importance of journeys across the Alps in catalyzing new attitudes to external nature. 190
The disapproval felt by men of the seventeenth century when they thought about mountains can be analyzed into three types: firstly, there was the fear of personal danger; secondly, there were moral doubts bred of the Biblical tradition which saw mountains as symbols of pride; and thirdly, there were aesthetic doubts occasioned by the apparent lack of classical symmetry and order. The first attitude is simply expressed in Thomas Coryat's comment:-

It seemeth very dangerous in divers places to travel under the rocky mountains, because many of them are cloven and do seeme at the very instant that a man is under them minari ruinam. 191

John Evelyn's record of his crossing into Italy in 1644 combines this

sense of danger with an aesthetic abhorrence:-

By the Way we passe through a Forest so prodigiously encompassd with hidious rocks of a Certain whiteish hard stone, congested one upon another in Mountainous heights, that the like I believe is no where to be found more horrid & solitary. . . . Upon the Summite of one of these gloomy Precipices, intermingled with Trees & Shrubbs & monstrous protuberances of the huge stones which hang over & menace ruine, is built an Hermitage. 192

A passing reference by Dryden, in the dedication of The Indian Emperour (1667), implies a similar sense of personal discomfort in the contemplation of mountainous scenery:-

High Objects may attract the sight; but it looks up with pain on Craggy Rocks and Barren Mountains, and continues not intent on any object, which is wanting in shades and greens to entertain it. 193

Aesthetic, scientific, and religious considerations merge in Gilbert Burnet's letter from Zurich, written in 1685:-

And when one considers the height of those Hills, the chain of so many of them together, and their extent both in length and breadth; if at first he thinks of the old Fables of laying one Hill upon the top of another, he will be afterwards apt to imagin, according to the ingenious conjecture of one that travelled over them oftner than once, that these cannot be the primary productions of the Author of Nature; but are the vast ruins of the first World, which at the Deluge broke here into so many inequalities. 194

The "one who travelled over them oftner than once" was his namesake, Thomas Burnet, who went abroad in 1671 and whose experiences in the Alps were to have momentous results. Thomas Burnet's aesthetics were formed by the views of the Cambridge Platonists - notably Ralph Cudworth and Henry More - who held that beauty and proportion were the fundamental principles of nature. These aesthetics were closely bound up with a religious and

philosophical conception of the universe, modified by the recent discoveries of the new philosophy and astronomy which had led More and others to develop the theory of infinite space to replace the traditional Ptolemaic finite universe. When he came face to face with the Alps, Burnet experienced sensations which could not be accounted for by his aesthetic theories, and which threw into confusion many of his established ideas. Marjorie Hope Nicolson, who regards The Theory of the Earth (1684) - the book in which Burnet formulated the consequences of his experience - as one of the most significant works of the seventeenth century, describes the complex and paradoxical nature of his response to the mountain passage:-

On his Alpine journey Burnet faced what he believed was a religious crisis. It was less his theology than his aesthetics that was threatened. When he began to write the Telluris Theoria Sacra, Burnet was not so much trying to justify Genesis as attempting to save for himself Plato and Augustine, Ficino and Kepler. . . . Theologically Burnet condemned mountains; actually he was obsessed by them. He believed himself an apostle of decorum and proportion, but he was so strongly attracted by the grandeur of external Nature that he persistently fought the attraction. 195

Here is the passage in which he expresses the feelings inspired in him by the sight of the Alps - feelings which he recognizes as similar to those aroused by the new universe of the scientists:-

The greatest objects of Nature are, methinks, the most pleasing to behold; and next to the great Concave of the Heavens, and those boundless Regions where the Stars inhabit, there is nothing that I look upon with more pleasure than the wide Sea and the Mountains of the Earth. There is something august and stately in the Air of these things that inspires the mind with great thoughts and passions; We do naturally upon such occasions think of God and his greatness, and whatsoever hath but the shadow and appearance of INFINITE, as all things have that are too big for our comprehension, they fill and over-bear the mind with their Excess, and cast it

into a pleasing kind of stupor and admiration.

And yet these Mountains we are speaking of, to confess the truth, are nothing but great ruines; but such as show a certain magnificence in Nature; as from old Temples and broken Amphitheaters of the Romans we collect the greatness of that people. 196

The last paragraph reveals Burnet's uneasiness. What he was responding to was not the perfectly proportioned nature of classical aesthetics, but the deformed ruins of that beauty, which can only have come into being as the result of some gigantic disruption in the created order of things. The reference to the shattered remains of Roman greatness forms an interesting link with the growing taste for "ruin pieces" in the landscape painting of this period. A few pages later, he pays lip-service to the classical ideal of beauty:-

There is nothing in Nature more shapeless and ill-figur'd than an old Rock or a Mountain, and all that variety that is among them is but the various modes of irregularity. 197

But his instincts were stronger than his precepts, and other travellers during the next fifty years were to corroborate his discovery of the "magnificence" of nature's excesses, and to evolve a new theory of aesthetics which could accommodate the sublime as well as the beautiful.

Some extracts from a letter by the influential critic John Dennis, written from Turin in 1688, must suffice to indicate the lines along which the aesthetic theory of the sublime was to develop:-

The sense of all this produc'd different motions in me, viz. a delightful Horrour, a terrible Joy, and at the same time, that I was infinitely, pleas'd I trembled. . . her, [i.e. Nature's] careless irregular and boldest Strokes are most admirable. For the Alpes are works which she seems to have design'd, and executed too

in Fury. Yet she moves us less, where she studies to please us more. I am delighted, 'tis true at the prospect of Hills and Valleys, of flowry Meads, and murmuring Streams, yet it is a delight that is consistent with Reason, a delight that creates or improves Meditation. But transporting Pleasures follow'd the sight of the Alpes, and what unusual transports think you were those, that were mingled with horrors, and sometimes almost with despair? . . . I am afraid you will think that I have said too much . . . The Alpes appear to be Nature's extravagancies, and who should blush to be guilty of Extravagancies, in words that make mention of her's. 198

The men of the earlier seventeenth century - men like Bacon and Herbert, Walton and Marvell - had enjoyed nature, even the "wild" nature outside the garden, only insofar as it was "consistent with Reason". They valued the countryside because its tranquillity fostered spiritual peace and "Meditation". Dennis values the more savage, dangerous aspects of nature - the aspects that Salvator Rosa was exploiting in his pictures - because they move him emotionally, they "transport" him. He recognizes, in the latter part of the quotation above, that he is stepping beyond the bounds of contemporary propriety. He is giving way to enthusiasm, that arch-enemy of Reason. But he argues, in self-defence, that if nature herself displays enthusiasm in some parts of her Creation, then the human mind must extend the range of its sympathies, and recognize new possibilities of aesthetic response.

16. Social and Political Change.

The England of the seventeenth century was still predominantly a rural society. Out of an estimated population in England and Wales of four millions at the end of Elizabeth I's reign, more than four fifths lived in country villages, farms, and estates. Some of these were engaged in

local industries supplying the needs of the village communities and wider national markets, but the majority worked on the land. Even those who lived in the towns were closely identified with agricultural life, and at least for part of the year many of them were directly engaged in agriculture. G.M. Trevelyan has described the fundamentally rural character of these communities:-

A provincial town of average size contained 5,000 inhabitants. The towns were not overcrowded, and had many pleasant gardens, orchards, and farmsteads mingled with the rows of shops.¹⁹⁹

The social organization in the countryside was still largely feudal, though in the course of the century economic and political developments were more and more undermining ancient structures and loyalties. The large country house, where the landlord and his wife were served and respected by the local community, and in return fulfilled their obligations of charity, hospitality, and educational and literary patronage, was the centre of this traditional way of life. George Hibbard has examined the significance of this feudal arrangement for the poetry of the period, and has traced the gradual decline in the social, and to some extent the cultural, importance of the country house as the century wore on.²⁰⁰ Jonson, Carew, Herrick, and Marvell all wrote poems extolling the values of such houses as Penshurst, Saxham, and Nun Appleton.

The threats to this established order in the country were manifold. One important factor was the shifting balance of economic and political power. Many of the landed gentry had to sell off their estates for financial reasons. Charles Cotton, for example, was forced to sell Beres-

ford Hall in 1681 to meet mounting debts. (Fortunately, however, his cousin bought it back again and allowed Cotton to live there until his death.) Others were less lucky. Edward Benlowes, whose Catholic family had already suffered under the system of fines that were imposed from time to time on Recusants, was also heavily taxed during the Civil War for his Royalist sympathies. By 1649 his financial situation was becoming desperate, and he mortgaged much of his property in Essex. In 1654 he was forced to mortgage the rest of his estates to provide his niece and heir with a dowry, and soon after had to sell them outright to one Nathan Wright. For the remainder of his life he lived in poverty in London and Oxford.²⁰¹

The displacement of the hereditary landed gentry by men of the newly rich and rapidly expanding merchant class, like Nathan Wright, broke the continuity of the traditional country society. In addition to this, many of the nobility and gentry were enticed away from their estates and their feudal duties by the lure of London. Both James I and Charles I passed laws requiring those with no particular business at court to return to their country homes, but to little avail. The French ways picked up by the Royalist exiles during the Interregnum may also have contributed to the shift not only of political and economic power, but also of the centre of taste, from the provinces to the capital. James Sutherland notes that not long after the Restoration Thomas Sprat had observed that, whereas the French nobility tended to congregate in the cities, their English counterparts were more scattered in their country houses. Sutherland goes on:-

By the end of the century this was no longer so true. The great country-houses, both old and new - Audley End, Badminton, Cassiobury Park (where Gibbons and Verrio were again employed), Clivedon, Knole, Euston, and the rest - continued to exist as self-supporting communities employing large numbers of people; but their owners were normally spending more of their time in London, where there was now a recognized season, followed in the summer months by a shorter season at a fashionable resort such as Bath or Tunbridge Wells.²⁰²

The growth in size and importance of London, and the concentration there of the fashionable and cultural élites, was one of the factors which brought about the vogue of pastoral poetry in the later years of the seventeenth and early years of the eighteenth centuries, and led eventually to the development of nature poetry later in the eighteenth. Nostalgia for the quiet and beauty of the countryside is in part a phenomenon born of an urban environment.

Of all the political and social disturbances of the seventeenth century, by far the most significant for the poetry of the period covered by this study is the Civil War and its aftermath. Most of the poets were supporters of the king, and many of them, including Lovelace, Vaughan, and Benlowes, took some part in armed hostilities. Many went into exile as a result of the failure of the Royalist cause - among them the Duke and Duchess of Newcastle, Davenant, Waller, Cowley; many more stayed in England, living quiet lives in the country, and drawing little attention to themselves. As John Buxton has said, speaking of the situation of Charles Cotton, which was typical of many who shared his allegiance to the king:-

To be a man about town during the rule of the Saints can have had

fewer attractions than dangers. It was more sensible to wait in patience for the Restoration, reading, learning, fishing, writing poetry, than to challenge the Puritans with irreverent and scurrilous poems, like Tom Weaver, some time Canon of Christ Church, and then find yourself on trial for your life.²⁰³

A list of poets who are significant for this study, and who spent a good many of the years of Civil War and Commonwealth in country retreats, would include, along with Cotton, Henry Vaughan, Edward Benlowes, Mildmay Fane, Joseph Beaumont, Sir Richard Fanshawe, Ralph Knevet, John Collop, and George Daniel. This list contains members of the aristocracy, minor landed gentry, country parsons, and physicians. Many of them found in country life not only a refuge from strife and persecution, but also a solace for the cares of the world of politics and ambition, and an environment conducive to contemplation and spiritual contentment. The ideal of country retirement, which for many may have begun as a literary convention deriving in varying degrees from Horace, from Virgil, and from George Herbert, became a practical alternative to exile for those who retained their Royalist sympathies through the 1640s and 1650s. The vogue of Horace and Horatian imitations during this period was no accident of literary history. The Horace who lived through the civil turmoil of Rome, and advocated the Sabine farm ideal, spoke directly to the Royalist and Anglican poets of the mid-seventeenth century.

NOTES

- 1 Marjorie Hope Nicolson, Mountain Gloom and Mountain Glory (New York, 1959), p. 3.
- 2 Arthur O. Lovejoy, The Great Chain of Being (1936) (ed. used, Harper Torchbooks, New York, 1960), p. 7.
- 3 Bonamy Dobrée has defined the reasonable limits of such an undertaking:- "The business of the literary historian when discussing the philosophers is not to consider the validity of their systems. It is, rather, to note them as men of letters, and to describe their ideas in so far as they nourished works of imagination". (English Literature in the Early Eighteenth Century 1700-1740, "The Oxford History of English Literature", Vol. VII (Oxford, 1964), p. 257).
- 4 Professor Lovejoy has demonstrated how the ideas of the Chain of Being and the Principle of Plenitude were adjusted to meet the needs of various philosophical systems from their origins in Plato and Aristotle, through Thomas Aquinas, to the eighteenth century.
- 5 R.G. Collingwood, discussing the relationship between the two, suggests: "That natural science must come first in order that philosophy may have something to reflect on; but that the two things are so closely related that natural science cannot go on for long without philosophy beginning; and that philosophy reacts on the science out of which it has grown by giving it in future a new firmness and consistency arising out of the scientist's new consciousness of the principles on which he has been working". (The Idea of Nature (Oxford, 1945), p. 2.)
- 6 Lovejoy, pp. 24 ff.
- 7 *ibid.*, pp. 43-49.
- 8 *ibid.*, pp. 49-50.
- 9 *ibid.*, p. 50.
- 10 *ibid.*, p. 56.
- 11 *ibid.*, p. 59.
- 12 Basil Willey writes: "St Thomas sees the universe as a hierarchy of creatures ordered to the attainment of perfection in their several kinds. All things proceed from God; and God is not only the ground of their being but also the Supreme Good with which all seek to be reunited. God created the world that he might communicate himself more fully; as First Mover (the 'unmoved mover' of Aristotle) he impels all creatures to desire him. Love is thus 'the deepest spring of all causality'. God not only created, but continuously sustains the world, and governs it both directly by the eternal laws, and indirectly through (for instance) the angels, and through the celestial bodies upon whose motions all terrestrial motion depends". (The Seventeenth-Century Background (1934) (ed. used, Penguin Books, London, 1962), pp. 19-20.)
- 13 See Basil Willey, p. 20.
- 14 Douglas Bush, Science and English Poetry: A Historical Sketch, 1590-1950 (New York, 1950), p. 11.

- 15 H.M.W. Tillyard, The Elizabethan World Picture (1943) (ed. used, Penguin Books, London, 1963), p. 103.
- 16 Professor Nicolson writes: "Indeed, the figures were often not conceits but metaphors, drawn from a pattern of the universe which seemed to the poets inevitable, in which the little body of man corresponded exactly to the larger body of the world, and that in turn to the still larger body of the universe . . . The pattern of the three interlocking worlds was not invented or discovered by poets, avid for novelty. It was inscribed upon man, world, and universe in which design, plan, and repetition of motif were everywhere apparent". (The Breaking of the Circle (Revised ed., New York, 1962), p. 5.)
- 17 S.L. Bethell, The Cultural Revolution of the Seventeenth Century (London, 1951), p. 57.
- 18 *ibid.*, p. 55.
- 19 R.G. Collingwood analyses what happened: "Formal and efficient causes were regarded as being in the world of nature instead of being (as they were for Aristotle) outside nature. This immanence lent a new dignity to the natural world itself. From an early date in the history of the movement it led people to think of nature as self-creative and in that sense divine, and therefore induced them to look at natural phenomena with a respectful, attentive, and observant eye; that is to say, it led to a habit of detailed and accurate observation, based on the postulate that everything in nature, however minute and apparently accidental, is permeated by rationality and therefore significant and valuable. . . . This new attitude was firmly established by the time of Leonardo da Vinci at the end of the fifteenth century". (*op. cit.*, n. 5 above, pp. 95-6).
- 20 The emergence of these Italian philosophers of nature is discussed by Frederick Copleston, A History of Philosophy (London, 1953), Vol. III, pp. 248-250.
- 21 See Collingwood, p. 95.
- 22 Marjorie Nicolson, The Breaking of the Circle, p. 7.
- 23 Marjorie Nicolson, Mountain Gloom and Mountain Glory, p. 101.
- 24 *ibid.*, p. 99.
- 25 Victor Harris, All Coherence Gone (Chicago, 1949), pp. 93-4.
- 26 *ibid.*, p. 121.
- 27 Sir John Davies, Orchestra, in Silver Poets of the Sixteenth Century, ed. Gerald Bullett, "Everyman's Library" (London, 1947), p. 326.
- 28 *ibid.*, p. 328.
- 29 John Donne, An Anatomy of the World: The First Anniversary (1611), in John Donne: Complete Poetry and Selected Prose, ed. John Hayward, "The Nonesuch Library" (London, 1955), p. 202.
- 30 Godfrey Goodman, The Fall of Man, or the Corruption of Nature (1616), p. 6.
- 31 *ibid.*, p. 26.
- 32 Basil Willey discusses the Mephistophelean and Promethean views of natural philosophy in The Seventeenth-Century Background, p. 37.

- 33 Francis Bacon, The Advancement of Learning (1605), ed. G.W. Kitchin, "Everyman's Library" (London, 1915), p. 8.
- 34 *ibid.*, p. 37.
- 35 *ibid.*, p. 39.
- 36 *ibid.*, pp. 41-2.
- 37 *ibid.*, p. 85.
- 38 *ibid.*, p. 88.
- 39 *ibid.*, p. 88.
- 40 *ibid.*, p. 89.
- 41 *ibid.*, p. 93.
- 42 *ibid.*, p. 95.
- 43 *ibid.*, pp. 97-8.
- 44 *ibid.*, p. 24.
- 45 *ibid.*, p. 26.
- 46 *ibid.*, p. 126.
- 47 *ibid.*, pp. 126-7.
- 48 *ibid.*, p. 209.
- 49 *ibid.*, p. 208.
- 50 Sir Thomas Browne, Religio Medici (1643), in Religio Medici and Other Writings, ed. M.R. Ridley, "Everyman's Library" (London, 1906), p. 50.
- 51 *ibid.*, p. 18.
- 52 *ibid.*, p. 15.
- 53 *ibid.*, p. 37.
- 54 *ibid.* (The Garden of Cyrus (1658)), p. 205.
- 55 *ibid.*, p. 218.
- 56 *ibid.* (Religio Medici), p. 19.
- 57 *ibid.*, p. 17.
- 58 See Pseudodoxia Epidemica (1646), in The Works of Sir Thomas Browne, ed. Charles Sayle, 3 vols. (Edinburgh, 1927), I, 152.
- 59 Religio Medici, pp. 10-11.
- 60 *ibid.*, p. 83.
- 61 *ibid.*, p. 39.
- 62 Bacon, The Advancement of Learning, p. 99.
- 63 Galileo, quoted by Stuart Hampshire, The Age of Reason (Mentor Books, New York, 1956), p. 33.
- 64 See Hampshire, *op. cit.*, p. 13.
- 65 See Copleston, *op. cit.*, IV, 17. Basil Willey notes the growing feeling that "whatever cannot be clearly and distinctly (i.e. mathematically) conceived is 'not true'. In this way Cartesian thought reinforced the growing disposition to accept the scientific world-picture as the only 'true' one. The criterion of truth which it set up, according to which the only real properties of objects were the mathematical properties, implied a depreciation of all kinds of knowing other than that of the 'philosopher'". (The Seventeenth-Century Background, p. 83).
- 66 Collingwood, *op. cit.*, p. 6.
- 67 Willey, *op. cit.*, p. 95.

- 68 Thomas Hobbes, Leviathan (1651), ed. A.D. Lindsay, "Everyman's Library" (London, 1914), pp. 367-368.
- 69 *ibid.*, p. 19.
- 70 *ibid.*, p. 1.
- 71 *ibid.*, p. 3.
- 72 *ibid.*, p. 21.
- 73 *ibid.*, pp. 30-31.
- 74 *ibid.*, p. 55.
- 75 *ibid.*, p. 39.
- 76 Willey, *op. cit.*, p. 105.
- 77 Michael Mackdèm, The Anatomy of the World: Relations between Natural and Moral Law from Donne to Pope (Minneapolis, 1958), p. 19.
- 78 A.R. Humphreys, The Augustan World (London, 1964), p. 203.
- 79 See J. Bronowski and Bruce Mazlish, The Western Intellectual Tradition (1960) (ed. used, Penguin Books, London, 1963), p. 215.
- 80 Abraham Cowley, Poems, ed. A.R. Waller (Cambridge, 1905), p. 450.
- 81 Robert Boyle, Some Considerations touching the Usefulness of Experimental Naturall Philosophy (Oxford, 1663), Part I, p. 30.
- 82 John Ray, The Wisdom of God Manifested in the Works of the Creation (1691) (ed. used, 6th. ed., London, 1714), pp. 170-71. Ray's disciple, William Derham, who gave the Boyle lectures in 1711 and 1712, seems to be closer to Browne than to Bacon in his enunciation of the theme: "The Creator doubtless did not bestow so much Curiosity, and exquisite Workmanship and Skill upon his Creatures, to be looked upon with a careless, incurious Eye especially to have them slighted or contemned; but to be admired by the Rational Part of the World, to magnify his own Power, Wisdom and Goodness to all the World, and the Ages thereof". (Physico-Theology (1711-12) (ed. used, 3rd. ed., London, 1714), p. 430.)
- 83 Joseph Glanvill, Scopsis Scientifica; or, Vanity of Dogmatizing (1661), ed. John Owen (London, 1885), p. 115.
- 84 Cowley, Poems, ed. *cit.*, pp. 449-50.
- 85 Thomas Sprat, The History of the Royal Society of London (1667), p. 113.
- 86 John Locke, An Essay Concerning Human Understanding (1690), ed. John W. Yolton, "Everyman's Library", 2 vols. (Revised ed., London, 1965), II, 107.
- 87 John Ray, The Wisdom of God, p. 172.
- 88 Thomas Sprat, *op. cit.*, p. 20.
- 89 Robert Hooke, Micrographia: Or Some Physiological Descriptions of Minute Bodies made by Magnifying Glasses, with Observations and Inquiries thereupon (1665), p. b^r.
- 90 *ibid.*, p. a2^v.
- 91 Joseph Glanvill, *op. cit.*, p. 156.
- 92 Thomas Burnet, The Theory of the Earth (1684), p. a^v.
- 93 Douglas Bush, English Literature in the Earlier Seventeenth Century: 1600-1660, "The Oxford History of English Literature", Vol. V, 2nd. ed. (Oxford, 1962), p. 273.

- 94 See John E. Bailey, "Andrew Marvell a Botanist", Notes and Queries, 5th. Series, VII (1877), p. 467. (Quotation from a letter of Rev. Robert Banks, Vicar of Hull, dated April 14, 1707, to Ralph Thoresby: "Mr. Andrew Marvell, the poet and botanist, and sometime burghess in Parliament for this town".)
- 95 The Gentleman's Journal; Or, The Monthly Miscellany, Vol. III (March, 1694), pp. 43-46; and Vol. III (May, 1694), pp. 111-13.
- 96 See, for example, 'An Abstract of the First Volume of Hortus Malabaricus, with a brief Description of each Tree, its Names, Vertues, Time of Flourishing, &c.' (January, 1707), Vol. I, 15-23; 'De Filicibus Americanis Floriferis. Being an Account of divers West-India Flowering Ferns, and particularly such as have been observ'd to grow in the Charibby Islands of America, and especially in St Domingo, Martinico, Jamaica, Barbadoes, Nevis, &c.' (February, 1707), Vol. I, 41-46; and 'The Names and Vertues of several Roots, Barks, Wood, Fruit, Seed, Minerals, &c. lately brought from China, with an Explication of some of their Words', Vol. I, 165-168.
- 97 A.R. Humphreys, The Augustan World, p. 210.
- 98 Robert Boyle, The Usefulness of Experimental Naturall Philosophy, Part I, pp. 36-37.
- 99 John Ray, The Wisdom of God, p. 180.
- 100 Robert Hooke, Philosophical Experiments and Observations, ed. W. Derham (London, 1726), p. 257.
- 101 Robert Hooke, Micrographia, p. f2^v.
- 102 *ibid.*, p. a2^v.
- 103 *ibid.*, p. 182.
- 104 *ibid.*, p. 210.
- 105 *ibid.*, p. 184.
- 106 *ibid.*, p. 185.
- 107 *ibid.*, p. b^r.
- 108 See no 90 above.
- 109 Locke, An Essay Concerning Human Understanding, I, 250.
- 110 William Molyneux, Dioptrica Nova. A Treatise of Dioptricks (1692), p. 280.
- 111 Earl of Shaftesbury, 'The Moralists, A Philosophical Rhapsody', in Characteristicks (London, 1711), 3 vols., II, 367-68.
- 112 The Spectator, ed. G. Gregory Smith, 8 vols. (London, 1898), No. 519, Vol. VII, p. 167.
- 113 See The Tatler, No. 119: "I have lately applied my self with much Satisfaction to the curious Discoveries that have been made by the Help of Microscopes, as they are related by Authors of our own and other Nations. There is a great deal of Pleasure in prying into this World of Wonders, which Nature has laid out of Sight, and seems industrious to conceal from us". (4 vols. (London, 1743), III, 19) See also The Spectator, No. 420 (ed. cit., VI, 88).
- 114 See Bronowski and Mazlish, *op. cit.*, p. 224.
- 115 Sir Isaac Newton, The Mathematical Principles of Natural Philosophy (1687), trans. A. Motte, 2 vols. (London, 1729), I, A2^r.
- 116 *ibid.*, p. A2^v.

- 117 *ibid.*, II, 388-89.
- 118 Michael Macklin, discussing the controversy aroused by Burnet's Theory of the Earth, makes this point: "By showing that heavenly law is an effect of the continuous agency of God, Newton's theory of planetary mechanics supported the belief that the Fall and the curse did not alter the principles of nature in the heavens, and that the present and original states of the world are the same, each representing not the consequences of sin but the will and action of God. This belief was further supported by the evidence provided in the Principia to show that the heavens, as such, represent the order of universal law". (The Anatomy of the World, p. 50).
- 119 Ernest Tuveson, "Space, Deity, and the "Natural Sublime"", Modern Language Quarterly, XII, No. 1 (March, 1951), p. 22.
- 120 *ibid.*, p. 23.
- 121 *ibid.*, p. 24.
- 122 *ib id.*, p. 25.
- 123 Newton, Principles, II, 389-90.
- 124 *ibid.*, II, 389.
- 125 Addison popularized the notion in The Spectator of July 9th 1714 (ed. cit., No. 565, VIII, 37).
- 126 Alexander Pope, 'An Essay on Man', Epistle I, ll. 267-8, in Pope: Poetical Works, ed. Herbert Davies (London, 1966), p. 249.
- 127 At the head of a section of definitions, Newton explained: "My Design in this Book is not to explain the Properties of Light by Hypotheses, but to propose and prove them by Reason and Experiments". (Opticks: or a Treatise of the Reflexions . . . of Light (1704), p. 1.
- 128 See Marjorie Hope Nicolson, Newton Demands the Muse (1946) (ed. used, Princeton, 1966), pp. 6-9.
- 129 The work of George Berkeley (An Essay towards a New Theory of Vision (1709), A Treatise concerning the Principles of Human Knowledge (1710), and Three Dialogues between Hylas and Philonous (1713)) represents an alternative reaction to the dualism of Descartes. Whereas Hobbes took the materialist path, and the Cambridge Platonists attempted to reconcile the two sides of the matter-spirit dichotomy, Berkeley argued that matter was merely an invention of the philosophers, and that all things were in fact phenomena of the mind.
- 130 Flora Isabel MacKinnon, Philosophical Writings of Henry More (New York, 1925), p. xx.
- 131 Professor Lovejoy writes: "The representatives of the Enlightenment of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries . . . were manifestly characterized to a peculiar degree by the presumption of simplicity. Though there were numerous exceptions, though there were powerful ideas in vogue which worked in the contrary direction, it was nevertheless largely an age of esprits simplistes". (The Great Chain of Being, p. 7).
- 132 The physico-theologies stretched from Ray's Wisdom of God (1691) and Three Physico-Theological Discourses (originally printed in 1692 as Miscellaneous Discourses concerning the Dissolution and Change of

- the World), through Bentley's The Folly and Unreasonableness of Atheism (1695), Nehemiah Grew's Cosmologia Sacra (1701), Samuel Clarke's A Discourse Concerning the Being and Attributes of God (1704), William Derham's Physico-Theology (1711-12) and Astro-Theology (1715), Sir Richard Blackmore's The Creation (1712), to William Wollaston's Religion of Nature Delineated (1724), and thence into later discourses and into such poetical works as Thomson's Seasons (1726-1730) and David Mallet's Excursion (1728). Ray, whose Wisdom of God set the pattern for many of the later contributions, himself took more than a hint from Hakewill and Henry More.
- 133 Willey, op. cit., p. 123.
- 134 John Toland, Christianity Not Mysterious, Or, a Treatise Shewing, That there is Nothing in the Gospel Contrary to Reason, Nor Above it (London, 1702), pp. 170-71.
- 135 See Willey, op. cit., p. 127.
- 136 Francis Bacon, Preparative Towards a Natural and Experimental History (1620), in The Philosophical Works of Francis Bacon, ed. John M. Robertson (London, 1905), p. 407.
- 137 Ralph Austen, A Treatise of Fruit-Trees (Oxford, 1653), p. *3^v.
- 138 Robert Boyle, The Usefulness of Experimental Naturall Philosophy, Part I, p. 50.
- 139 Robert Boyle, Occasional Reflections upon Several Subjects (1665), p. 47.
- 140 Theologia Ruris, Sive Schola & Scala Naturae: Or, The Book of Nature (1686), "Augustan Reprint Society", No. 56 (Los Angeles, 1956), p. 197.
- 141 Boyle, The Usefulness of Experimental Naturall Philosophy, Part I, pp. 26-27.
- 142 Ray, The Wisdom of God, p. 179. One of the fullest accounts of the various ramifications of the Book of Nature analogy is given in the Theologia Ruris, pp. 198-201.
- 143 Philosophical Writings of Henry More, ed. cit., pp. 4-5.
- 144 *ibid.*, p. 5.
- 145 *ibid.*, p. 13.
- 146 See Boyle's Usefulness of Experimental Naturall Philosophy, Part I, p. 32; Locke's Essay, I, 250; Derham's Astro-Theology, p. 209; Berkeley's Three Dialogues, ed. cit., p. 249; and Theologia Ruris, p. 203.
- 147 Samuel Clarke, A Discourse Concerning the Being and Attributes of God (1711), p. 120.
- 148 George Hakewill, Apologie or Declaration of the Power and Providence of God in the Government of the World, 3rd. ed. (1635), p. b^r.
- 149 John Smith, Select Discourses (1660), p. 144.
- 150 Boyle, Usefulness of Experimental Naturall Philosophy, Part I, p. 3. A similar view is expressed by Lorenzo Gracian in The Critick (trans. 1681), p. 16, and by the author of an article in The Censor, No. 51 (1717), 2nd. ed., 3 vols. (London, 1717), II, 137-38.
- 151 John Milton: Complete Poems and Major Prose, ed. Merritt Y. Hughes (New York, 1957), 'Prolusion VII', p. 622.

- 152 See The Diary of John Evelyn, ed. E.S. de Beer (London, 1959), pp. 68, 78, 670, etc.
- 153 Izaak Walton, The Compleat Angler, introd. Margaret Bottrall, "Everyman's Library" (London, 1962), p. 67.
- 154 Margaret Cavendish, Duchess of Newcastle, Orations of Divers Sorts (1662), p. 248.
- 155 Walton, op. cit., p. 87.
- 156 Charles Cotton, The Compleat Angler, "World's Classics" (London, 1960), pp. 294-95.
- 157 Kenneth Clark, Landscape into Art (Penguin Books, 1966), p. 17.
- 158 See Erwin Panofsky, Studies in Iconology (Harper Torchbooks, New York, 1967). Panofsky is chiefly concerned with certain motifs which do not involve natural images - such motifs as "Father Time" and "Blind Cupid". But what he has to say in general about Renaissance iconographic methods is applicable to the poets' and painters' use of symbolic details from nature. For example, he mentions "a female figure with a peach in her hand" as a type of Veracity (p. 6).
- 159 *ibid.*, p. 8.
- 160 *ibid.*, p. 8.
- 161 Walton, op. cit., p. 99.
- 162 Christopher Hussey, The Picturesque (London and New York, 1927), p. 8.
- 163 H.V.S. and M.S. Ogden, English Taste in Landscape in the Seventeenth Century (Ann Arbor, 1955), p. 3.
- 164 *ibid.*, p. 48.
- 165 Hussey, p. 24.
- 166 Ogden, p. 66.
- 167 John Evelyn, Diary, p. 616.
- 168 Ogden, p. 163.
- 169 Francis Bacon, 'Of Gardens', The Moral and Historical Works of Lord Bacon, ed. Joseph Devey (London, 1857), p. 125. See also Abraham Cowley, 'The Garden', Essays, Plays and Sundry Verses, ed. A.R. Waller (Cambridge, 1906), p. 433; and Sir William Temple, 'Upon the Gardens of Epicurus' (1685), Works (1757), Vol. III, p. 207.
- 170 See B. Sprague Allen, Tides in English Taste (1619-1800), 2 vols. (New York, 1958), I, 115-117.
- 171 Bacon, 'Of Gardens', ed. cit., p. 127.
- 172 *ibid.*, p. 128.
- 173 *ibid.*, p. 129.
- 174 Elizabeth Wheeler Manwaring, Italian Landscape in Eighteenth Century England (New York, 1925), p. 122.
- 175 Evelyn, Diary, p. 454.
- 176 *ibid.*, p. 653.
- 177 *ibid.*, pp. 515, 561, and 439.
- 178 The Journeys of Celia Fiennes, ed. Christopher Morris (London, 1947), p. 9.
- 179 *ibid.*, p. 24.
- 180 *ibid.*, p. 90.

- 181 John Rea, Flora: Seu, De Florum Cultura OR, A Complete Florilege (1665), Book I, pp. 1-2.
- 182 Cowley, 'Of Greatness', op. cit., n. 169, p. 432.
- 183 See B. Sprague Allen, op. cit., I, p. 146.
- 184 Joan Parkes, Travel in England in the Seventeenth Century (London, 1925), p. 1.
- 185 *ibid.*, pp. 12-13.
- 186 The Poems of Charles Cotton, ed. John Beresford (London, 1923), p. 293.
- 187 Celia Fiennes, Journeys, p. 103.
- 188 Thomas Coryat, Coryat's Crudities (1611) (Glasgow, 1905), 2 vols. I, pp. 217 and 220.
- 189 Gilbert Burnet, Some Letters, Containing An Account of what seemed most Remarkable in Travelling through Switzerland, Italy, Some Parts of Germany, &c. In the Years 1685 and 1686 (1689), p. 91.
- 190 See Marjorie Hope Nicolson, Mountain Gloom and Mountain Glory; Samuel Monk, The Sublime: A Study of Critical Theories in XVIII-Century England (New York, 1935); Ernest Tuveson, "Space, Deity, and the "Natural Sublime"", Modern Language Quarterly, XII, No. 1 (1951), 20-38.
- 191 Coryat, op. cit., I, p. 222.
- 192 Evelyn, Diary, p. 67.
- 193 The Works of John Dryden, General ed., H.T. Swedenborg, Vol. IX, ed. John Loftis and Vinton A. Dearing (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1966), p. 23.
- 194 Gilbert Burnet, op. cit., pp. 13-14.
- 195 Nicolson, Mountain Gloom and Mountain Glory, pp. 212-213.
- 196 Thomas Burnet, The Theory of the Earth (1684), 2 vols., I, 139-40.
- 197 *ibid.*, I, pp. 144-45.
- 198 John Dennis, Miscellanies in Verse and Prose (1693), pp. 133-140 *passim*.
- 199 G.M. Trevelyan, Illustrated English Social History (Penguin Books, London, 1964): 4 vols., II, 19.
- 200 See G.R. Hibbard, "The Country House Poem of the Seventeenth Century", Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes, XIX (1956), 159-174.
- 201 See Harold Jenkins, Edward Benlowes (1602-1676). Biography of a Minor Poet (London, 1952), pp. 236-243.
- 202 James Sutherland, English Literature of the Late Seventeenth Century, "The Oxford History of English Literature", Vol. VI (Oxford, 1969), p. 21.
- 203 John Buxton, A Tradition of Poetry (London and New York, 1967), p. 141.

PART TWO

ENGLISH POETRY: 1645-1668

Chapter III

Introduction

Any imposition of dates on a literary survey must be more or less arbitrary, and the servant of convenience rather than truth. Sufficient to justify the choice of 1645 as a starting-point for this study must be the fact that it was the year in which Milton's early poems were published. It also conveniently admits most of the poetry of the mid-century which has an important bearing on the subject of this dissertation: George Daniel's Scattered Fancies (which bear the date 1645 on a separate title page in the manuscript collection of his verse); Vaughan's Poems (1646) and Silex Scintillans (1650 and 1655); Crashaw's Steps to the Temple (1646 and 1648); Cowley's The Mistress (1647); Herrick's Hesperides and Noble Numbers (1648); Fane's Otia Sacra (1648); Lovelace's Lucasta (1649); Benlowes's Theophila (1652). It will be necessary on occasion to hark back to Denham's Cooper's Hill of 1642 (though the revised and authorized edition of this falls well within the prescribed period, in 1655), to George Herbert's The Temple of 1633, and to other writers whose contribution seems important, or whose influence can be detected in poems published after 1645. 1668 seems an appropriate point at which to terminate the detailed portion of the study. The Restoration of the monarchy in 1660 marked a watershed between the old world which nourished the literary talents of men like Sir Thomas Browne, Henry Vaughan, and Edward Benlowes, and the new world of Court, coffee-house, and Royal Society, permeated by the rationalism and classicism absorbed by the exiles in France, and

ornamented by the rising stars of Newton, Dryden, and Locke. And by going a little beyond this, to 1668, it is possible to take in Paradise Lost and the Works of Cowley. The period under review is thus given a certain unity by spanning the major part of the careers of Milton, the greatest poet of the age, and Cowley, in some ways the most representative poet, whose work mirrors the changing techniques and tastes of the age.

A problem arises over the question of what poetry can properly be ascribed to the period 1645-1668. A good deal that was written long before 1645 was not published until after that date, and much that was written under the Commonwealth was not available in print until many years later. Milton's 1645 volume itself contained poems that belonged to the late 1620s and the 1630s; many of Herrick's verses were written in the earlier part of the period 1620-1648; William Cartwright had been dead for eight years when his Poems were collected in 1651; Marvell's Poems did not appear till 1681; Charles Cotton's not till 1689. With regard to the earlier date, the usual principle has been to consider any poetry that was published for the first time after it. The fact that this lets in work of much earlier composition (especially in the case of Milton and Herrick) is an advantage, because it helps to lessen the artificiality of imposing precise chronological boundaries, and to establish links between the mid-century and the decades that went before. Anything first published after 1668 has been held over for Part Four, unless there is evidence or general agreement among scholars that it belongs to the prescribed period. So Marvell's 'Mower' poems, 'The Garden', and Upon Appleton House are taken as the fruit of his stay at Nun Appleton in the

early 1650s. It is more difficult to decide about Cotton. Much of his work has such obvious affinities with the Royalist lyrics of the Cromwell era that it would be inappropriate to include it in a discussion of later Augustan literature. But it^{is} also evident that Cotton continued writing verse into the 1680s. In the absence of other information, the following distinction has been made: work which appears in the manuscript of his poems - which John Buxton suggests was mostly copied in the 1650s¹ - will be discussed in this part; work which appears in the 1689 edition, but not in the manuscript, will be assumed to have been composed at the latter end of Cotton's career, and will be reserved for Part Four. With all the uncertainty about dates that is inevitable in a period of largely amateur poetry, however, the ultimate consideration must often be the relevance of a particular poem to the general drift of discussion.

The ways in which natural imagery is used in any given period will be inextricably bound up with the culture of the time. A survey of the intellectual, aesthetic, and social background has been provided in Part One. It only remains here to indicate some of the more purely literary influences that were significant for the use of details from nature. The years 1645-1668 witnessed the decline of some strains in poetry (the Elizabethan pastoral, and the Metaphysical style), the finest fruits of others (the devotional lyric derived from George Herbert, and the mystical retirement poem), and the rise of others which were to flourish later (the secular retirement poem, and the topographical poem). Sometimes, when a particular mode has become outworn or debased, but the impulse that

produced it is still strong, one can see another mode emerging to compensate for it. Dorothy Schuchman McCoy has spotlighted one such line of descent, which is of special importance for the history of natural imagery:-

When the pastoral becomes only the tool of wit, the themes which lie so close to its construction in the Elizabethan period find expression in the piscatory poems, the *sylvae*, the garden poems, and the retirement poems of this century.²

The garden poems and retirement poems were of very complex origins. The escape theme which they had in common with the declining pastoral was reinforced from another classical source - the Horace of the Sabine farm odes. This merged with the hortus conclusus topos of the Middle Ages, which in turn derived much of its imagery from the Song of Songs. In the seventeenth century the Horatian and Biblical material came into contact with neo-Platonic mysticism, and with Hermeticism, and produced the peculiar brand of retirement poetry which found expression in the Latin odes of Casimire, Henry More's philosophical poems, and Benlowes's Theophilus, and culminated in Marvell's 'The Garden' and Upon Appleton House.³

Besides that of Horace, other classical influences were at work in the period. The fanciful and sensual Ovid was still a vital presence, though not as strong as in the Elizabethan heyday; Virgil must not be discounted, though his supremacy as a model for imitation was not fully established until the new Augustan Age had proclaimed itself; Catullus, Anacreon, and the lyrics and epigrams of the Greek Anthology had a special appeal for the Cavaliers and the Sons of Ben.

Apart from the hortus conclusus and Paradise symbolism of the garden

poets, the Bible was also a pervasive influence for the poets who followed the devotional and emblematic manner of Herbert. The religious verse of Vaughan, George Daniel, Mildmay Fane, and Joseph Beaumont echoes with phrases and images from the great nature poems of Job, Isaiah, and the Psalms.

Some of the favourite topoi of the Elizabethan age were preserved intact, or transformed by the wit of the mid-century poets. The season description, peopled by the figures of antique mythology; the "Come live with me" formula; the elegy convention of mourning Nature; the lady wooed by plants, elements, and creatures as she walks in the snow, the rain, or the garden; the catalogue of trees, flowers, or birds; all these survived in the popular collections and miscellanies of the Interregnum.

The Metaphysical conceit and the emblem were the literary progeny of the world-picture of hierarchy, correspondence, and harmony and the old intuitive reason, which were about to give way to the Newtonian universe and the mathematical Reason of the modern age. During the years of Civil War and Commonwealth they were beginning to degenerate into the merely fantastic or the frigidly rational, in the hands of such men as Cleveland, Fane, Benlowes, and Cowley. But these years also saw some of the greatest achievements with these devices, in the major poems of Henry Vaughan and Andrew Marvell.

A study of this kind presents certain problems of organization and documentation. An attempt might be made to categorize every type and use of natural image, with illustrations drawn from all the poetry of the

period. But the task of illustrating adequately would either impede the argument with blocks of quotations, or demand extensive appendices. Such a scheme would also fragment the work of poets whose contributions can be seen to better advantage as a whole. The disposition of material is, therefore, the result of a compromise. The remaining three chapters of this part examine the main ways in which natural details were used in the poetry of 1645-1668, with examples taken from poets who do not seem to warrant individual attention. Sufficient examples are given in the text to illuminate the discussion, but fuller documentation has been relegated to notes, and to references rather than quotations. One appendix has been deemed necessary, however, to provide space for a group of poems that have a special interest. Part Three can then be devoted to those poets who made most extensive and significant use of natural details. This arrangement of material will help to preserve a sense of the period as a whole, and to emphasise the importance and achievement of individual poets.

NOTES

- 1 See Poems of Charles Cotton, ed. John Buxton, "The Muses' Library" (London, 1958), p. 261: "The latest date in this manuscript is January 14, 1666, but most of the poems were probably copied into it in the 1650s".
- 2 Dorothy Schuchman McCoy, Tradition and Convention: A Study of Periphrasis in English Pastoral Poetry from 1557-1715, "Studies in English Literature", Vol. V (The Hague, 1965), p. 201.
- 3 See Maren-Sofie Røstvig, The Happy Man, Vol. I, 2nd. ed. (New York, 1962); and Stanley Stewart, The Enclosed Garden (Madison, Milwaukee, and London, 1966).

Chapter IV

Types and Methods of Description

Description is a term that must be carefully qualified when talking about the poetry of the period 1645-1668. These years afford very few instances of fresh and accurate observation or of the attempt to represent nature realistically. Poetic interest is centred not in natural details, so much as in the skill or ingenuity displayed in handling them. Or perhaps it would be more correct to say that the poet's material is literary rather than natural, comprising stock images, phrases, and devices rather than observed physical phenomena. This means that, although one might expect description to be an example of the first kind of poetic function suggested for natural details in Chapter I, most of the types of description found here are related to the third kind of function.¹ They are manifestations of what Henry W. Wells has called "Decorative Imagery". He characterizes the art of this imagery as "the exotic and illogical art of gingerbread ornamentation", and demonstrates:-

how imaginative value is reduced in the Decorative figure by the essential incongruity of the form, by improbability, conventionality, particularization, confusion, or by the use of the diminutive.²

He suggests that pastoral poets are especially prone to this method, which enables them to "remake nature to their hearts' desire".³ A poet of this kind "is often less interested in his nominal subject than in his metaphorical digression. Ingenuity is the life and breath of his poetry".⁴

1. Periphrasis.

One of the commonest descriptive techniques of the period is the periphrasis, by means of which a mythological figure or a personification is substituted for the natural phenomenon. The habit of personifying nature derives from the animistic religions of antiquity.⁵ The Graeco-Roman pantheon was a vital part of the classical heritage of mediaeval and Renaissance Italian poetry, but by the seventeenth century Flora, Ceres, Neptune, Auster, Phoebus, Aurora and the rest had been reduced to little more than literary synonyms for their natural counterparts. Samuel Porlage's 'To Sylvia Weeping' furnishes a typical example:-

After Aurora with her silver showers
Has wash'd her Grandame Tellus chapped face,
A pleasant Zephyrus the dark Heaven scoures,
And Sol steps out with a far greater Grace:
After a Storm fair weather doth succeed;
Let sable Grief your whiter Joys then breed.⁶

Only the scansion of these lines would be violated if the mythological labels were replaced with their appropriate referents: dawn, earth, breeze, and sun. The entire description is rendered superfluous by the fifth line, which presents the same set of facts more succinctly. Since the mythological beings contribute nothing to the theme of the poem, their only justification must lie in their supposed value as style - in the feeling that it is more "poetic" to say "Zephyrus" than "breeze". Dorothy Schuchman McCoy, who has carried out a thorough investigation of the function of periphrasis in pastoral verse of the seventeenth century, has indeed concluded that:-

Abused or not, the connection of periphrasis with the high style was established in the minds of most writers from Barclay to Pope.⁷

Examples of the device used for just this stylistic purpose abound: William Davenant enhances the sun with the title of "th'illustrious Officer of Day"; Thomas Stanley sees him as "the bright Regent of the Day", and at nightfall fits him out "in his saffron night-array"; in another poem he refers to "the bright Steeds which draw the Wain/Of weary Day's ~~de-~~declining Star"; Robert Heath speaks of the "rosie-fingred Morn" with "his steeds/Deckt in their Royal weeds".⁸

Dorothy S. McCoy points to the weakness of this method:-

When periphrase is frequently used to describe nature or its operations, the real relationships may be lost just as if nature herself had been lost from the poems, as she is when pastoral comes to the Restoration court. . . . Frequent and elaborate mythological substitutions may detract from an imaginative response by giving nature a pointlessly animistic and independent set of actions.⁹

In the poems cited so far, nothing of worth has been brought in by the periphrasis to compensate for the loss of nature. But this does not mean that the device itself was worthless. In competent hands, it could still be used to excellent imaginative effect, as Miss McCoy asserts:-

The meaning of a periphrase may, as much as that of a single word, increase or decrease according to the appropriateness of its surroundings; and the amount of meaning which a periphrase succeeds in conveying usually determines a degree of goodness or badness in the verses which contain it. It has been my assumption . . . that periphrase written in the consciousness of the traditional rhetoric is more likely to have meaning than periphrase adopted as a part of patterns established by poetic idols such as Spenser or Milton.¹⁰

Poets as bad as Fordage and Baron merely repeated the formulae - or

borrowed and distorted actual passages from greater men.¹¹ Others seized upon the opportunities that the traditional material offered for metaphoric or pictorial exploitation. Henry More, for example, brings a new vitality to the much-used periphrasis of the eyelids of dawn¹² by emphasising its aptness as a visual image:-

There you may see the eyelids of the Morn
With lofty silver arch displaid ith' East.¹³

Elsewhere, he develops the pictorial possibilities of the metaphor of the chariot of Night in such a way that the periphrasis serves a genuinely descriptive purpose:-

It was the time when all things quiet lay
In silent rest; and Night her rusty Carre
Drawn with black teem had drove above half way.
Her curbed steeds foaming out laving tarre
And finely trampling the soft misty air
With proner course toward the West did fare.¹⁴

The impression of the hard-driven horses of Night, foaming blackness, being held back - "curbed" - as they race downhill through the misty air of approaching morning, is imaginatively correct. Although this passage offers a mythological picture in place of any attempt at realistic description, it captures the very atmosphere of the hours before dawn.

Thomas Stanley, given a worthwhile source to translate, could maintain contact with both the physical world and the traditional symbolic value of his personifications, and at the same time contrive to give his description contextual relevance. His version of Girolamo Preti's Oronta, the Cyprian Virgin, contains the following stanza:-

Forth her nocturnal dwelling in the East
Aurora with a crown of light comes drest,
 In a Pyropus Chariot she doth rise,
 And silvers ower first, then gilds the skies,
 Loves brighter star, the Harbinger of day,
 Her splendour stain'd with pale grief doth display,
 To see th'oppression that her kingdom bears,
 She drops from Heaven her dew distill'd in tears.¹⁵

This not only preserves the integrity of the personifications, which Poridge forfeited by the bare substitution of proper name for natural detail, but also captures the essence of the scene described. A "crown of light" is a fine image for the sun seen in terms of a personified Aurora, and the progression from a silver to a golden radiance pictures the gradual brightening of a real dawn. More complex is the treatment of the morning star: the physical phenomenon is described, in the fading from splendour to paleness; the conventional image of the dew as tears¹⁶ is reinforced by interpreting the paleness as the pallor of grief, caused when the star sees the chariot of light overcoming her kingdom of darkness; and an extra dimension is provided by the context of the whole poem, which is about the bloody conquest of Cyprus by the Turks - so that Venus, born on that island, grieves for more than the oppression of her kingdom of night and love. By making himself master rather than slave of the convention, and by remaining alive to the traditional associations of his periphrasis, the poet has been able to express meaning on several levels at once.

Charles Cotton was another artist who knew how to make the most of his material. His delightful poem, 'The Entertainment of Phillis', opens with a tour de force of description in the periphrastic manner:-

Now Phebus is gone downe to sleepe
 In could embraces of the Deepe,
 And Night's Pavillion in the sky,
 (Crownd with a starry Canopy)
 Erected stands, whence the pale Moone
 Steales out to her Endimion;
 Over the Meads, and o're the Floods,
 Through the Ridings of the woods,
 Th'enamour'd Huntresse scowrs the ways,
 And through night's veil her hornes desplays.

I have a Bower for my love,
 Hid in the Center of a Grove
 Of aged oakes, close from the sight
 Of all the prying eyes of Night.¹⁷

Compared with the delicacy and sureness of touch in these lines, the stanza from Oronta appears studied and ponderous. Stanley, one feels, has exploited his personification with a keen eye for the relevant emphasis; but Cotton enters into the spirit of the traditional mythology. His Diana lives in the imagination, whereas the grief of Venus remains on the plane of understanding. There is an intimate sense both of the mythological figure as a real being, and of the natural object that she stands for, as she "steales out", and "scowrs" the landscape for her lover. Cotton manages to catch some of that sensitivity to the mystery of the world which lies at the core of the old anthropomorphic vision of nature. This is not to deny that the passage is literary in inspiration, but it is clearly the work of a mind which had grasped the connection between the symbol and the natural phenomenon. Splendid as it is in itself, the description is more than a set piece with which to open the poem. It creates an atmosphere appropriate to the ensuing theme of the amorous catalogue of delights, and its details are taken up in the last four lines quoted. The lover's Bower corresponds to the "Night's Pavillion", from

which "th'enamour'd Huntresse" steals. (The full force of the description is lost if the reader does not stress the pronouns in "I have a Bower for my Love".) And the air of secrecy that pervades the passage is repeated in the final phrases: "close from the sight/Of all the prying eyes of Night". The suggestion of prying eyes looks back to the earlier imagery of stars and veil. The periphrases are thus justified both by their own beauty, and by their contribution to a wider context of meaning.

The sympathy with the mythological approach to nature, which is evident in some of the work of More and Cotton, is unusual at this date. 'The Entertainment to Phillis' belongs to the Elizabethan "Come live with me" genre, and it brings a breath of Elizabethan freshness, and a sensuous delicacy, to the stale or conceited periphrases of the 1650s. The staleness has been seen in Fordage's verse; the wit can be seen in Crashaw's 'The Weeper':-

Not in the Evenings Eyes
When they red with weeping are,
For the Sun that dyes,
Sits sorrow with a face so faire;

and in Eldred Revett's 'Ode. The Rosary':-

The early Morn (as yet undrest)
Drew the red Curtains of the East;
And did betray the blushing state,
In which she lay, she thought too late.¹⁸

The tears and eyes of dawn or dusk were stock features of the descriptive periphrasis. Crashaw makes an original and striking conceit out of them.

Similarly, Revett adds a touch of new life to the conventional blushes

of Aurora by suggesting a reason for her shame. The witty effect is due partly to the idea that she thinks she has overslept, and partly to the consequent lowering of dignity of a high style device. Richard Lovelace's 'Night' begins with a witty apostrophe to its subject:-

Night! loathed Jaylor of the lock'd up Sun,
And Tyrant-turnkey on committed day.¹⁹

This periphrasis gains its effect not simply from its own ingenuity, but also from its role in the development of the whole poem, which works through a conceited argument about Lucasta's eyes fettered in sleep and the poet who is bondsman to her love. In none of these three cases is the poet concerned with the natural detail: he is working with literary material, which happens to be derived from nature. He is, in Wells's words, "less interested in his nominal subject than in his metaphorical digression".

2. The Locus Amoenus and the Bravura Season-piece.

The passages discussed so far have been accounts of dawn or night which functioned as comparison or embellishment in longer poems. Nature-description, however, flourished as a genre in its own right, either as a complete poem by itself, or as a more or less independent set piece within a narrative structure. Ernst Robert Curtius has demonstrated that this type of verse had its origins in the classical period. Homer, Theocritus, and Virgil passed on to the Middle Ages:-

the mixed forest and the locus amoenus (with flowery meadows ad libitum). This heritage was twice subjected to conceptual schematization: in late antique rhetoric and in twelfth-century dialectics. Both processes worked in the same direction: toward technicalization and intellectualization. A series of clearly distinguished nature topoi was developed.²⁰

He warns that mediaeval descriptions of nature "are not meant to represent reality", and explains that "The descriptions of landscape in mediaeval Latin poetry are to be understood in the light of a continuous literary tradition".²¹ In Virgil, nature, though idealized, was "still poetically felt and was harmonized with the composition of the epic succession of scènes"; but with Ovid and his followers, landscapes, and especially pictures of the locus amoenus, "were soon detached from any larger context and became subjects of bravura rhetorical description".²² It is as a continuation of the Ovidian and mediaeval tradition that the seventeenth-century season poems - usually on the Spring - should be read. The poets of the mid-century added to the inherited material their own peculiar brand of wit.

This wit largely took the form of applying to nature the terms of art, of seeing vegetation as the "robes" of earth, smooth water as a "mirror", flowers as "embroidery", and so on - a device related to the periphrastic method which regards dawn as the drawing of "the red Curtains of the East". This technique became widespread in English poetry through the influence of Sylvester's translation of Du Bartas' La Semaine.²³ Several of the commonest terms of artificial description have been traced to this work by J.B. Leishman.²⁴ He cites numerous examples from the first half of the seventeenth century of variations on Sylvester's use of "curl" to describe the tops of trees. The frequent "enamel'd greens" and "enamel'd meads" derive from the same source, as does the habit of "candyng" water into ice, or "candyng" natural objects with ice. Another of Sylvester's images was disseminated more widely than Leishman was aware. It occurs

twice in Bartas his Divine Weekes & Workes: once as a direct translation of the French:-

But, when the Winters keener breath began
To crystallize the Baltike Ocean,
To glaze the Lakes, and bridle-up the Floods,
And perriwig with wooll the bald-pate Woods:²⁵

and once, earlier in the poem, as an unauthorized elaboration of the original:-

In stead of Flowrs, chill shivering Winter dresses
With Isicles her (self-bald) borrow'd tresses:
About her brows a Periwig of Snow.²⁶

Leishman notes that Edward Benlowes, in his long work Theophila (1652), conflated these two references to the "periwig" to produce the lines:-

When periwig'd with Snow's each bald-pate Wood,
Bound in Ice-Chains each struggling Flood;²⁷

and mentions that one of Sylvester's passages was misquoted by Dryden in the dedication of The Spanish Friar (1681).

Benlowes, in fact, as his biographer Harold Jenkins has pointed out,²⁸ had already made use of the image in an earlier canto of Theophila:-

Betimes, when keen-breath'd winds, with frosty cream,
Periwig bald trees, glaze tattling stream.²⁹

This clearly derives directly from Sylvester, since not only the periwig image, but also the phrase "keen-breath'd winds" and the metaphor of ice "glazing" water are taken over from the first of the Sylvester passages quoted above.

Benlowes was by no means the first poet to profit from the ingenuity of Du Bartas and Sylvester. Some years before the composition of Theophila, Robert Chamberlain had lifted the "periwig" image from his poem 'On the Spring', where he extended its application from trees to mountains:-

The lofty Mountains standing on a row,
Which but of late were periwig'd with Snow,
Doff their old coats, and now are daily seene
To stand on tiptoes, all in swaggering greens. 30

The anonymous author of 'Lavinia walking in a frosty Morning', which was first printed among the 'Excellent poems . . . by other Gentlemen' in Benson's edition of Shakespeare's Poems (1640), had also seized upon it for the couplet:-

Every hoary headed twigge
Drop'd his Snowy Periwigge. 31

Robert Baron may well have had Sylvester's personification of Winter in mind, or he may simply have been re-working what had become a descriptive commonplace, in some lines from The Cyprian Academy:-

My head of late was thatcht with yellow straw
Now it is perriwig'd with Winters gray. 32

Thomas Shipman, writing 'The Peek of Tenariff' in 1660, wrought another variation on the original image:-

Some Hills are perruk'd o're with Trees and Snows,
Others wear wreaths of Clouds about their brows. 33

The Poems, Songs, and Love-Verses of Matthew Coppinger, published in 1682, took up another detail from the image as it had appeared in Sylves-

ter's translation and in Theophila, canto XIII. His poem 'The Lovers Greeting' begins:-

When bald-pate Winter, with his hoary head,
By the Springs kind aspect was vanquished.³⁴

He used the "bald-pate" metaphor a second time, introducing it into the opening lines of his version of Horace's Ode 7, Book IV:-

The Snow's dissolv'd, the grassie Fields grow green,
And bald-pate Trees with dangling Locks are seen.³⁵

Coppinger may have chanced upon the image himself in reading Sylvester or Benlowes, but the date of his volume of verses suggests that his attention may have been drawn to it by Dryden in the dedication of The Spanish Friar, which had been printed the previous year.

The metaphor of the "periwig" turns up yet again - in a translation of another of Horace's odes - demonstrating how heavily the descriptive poets of this period relied on a body of conventional diction. Sir Edward Sherburne's rendering of Ode 9, from Book I begins:-

Seest thou not, how Soractes Head,
(For all it's Height) stands covered
With a white Perriwig of Snow?
Whilst the labouring Woods below
Are hardly able to sustain
The Weight of Winters feather'd Rain;
And the arrested Rivers stand
Imprison'd in an Icy Band?³⁶

The periphrasis "feather'd Rain" for snow became even more popular than Sylvester's periwig. Whatever its origin, it seems to have been disseminated through its use in William Strode's lyric 'On a Gentlewoman

Walking in the Snowe', which opens with the couplet:-

I saw faire Cloris walke alone
Where feather'd rayne came softly downe.³⁷

This poem was first printed in 1632 in W. Porter's Madrigals and Airs, and must have been widely read, for it was included, under the title 'On Cloris walking in the Snow', in the popular miscellany Wit's Recreations, which appeared in 1640 and was reprinted in 1641 and 1645. (Several more editions, under the title Recreation for Ingenious Head-Pieces, were issued between 1650 and 1683.) It also found applace, this time as 'Upon his Mistresse walking in the Snow', in John Cotgrave's Wits Interpreter, which went through three editions in 1655, 1662, and 1671.

In the course of the two decades following its appearance in 1632, the image seems to have caught the fancy of a number of poets. It was picked up almost at once by Richard Crashaw in an elegy on the death of James Stanenough, who died in 1634/5:-

Hath aged Winter, fledg'd with feathered raine,
To frozen Caucasus his flight now tane?³⁸

It occurs, along with the "Perriwigg of Snow" in Sherburne's translation of Horace; and Mildmay Fane, Earl of Westmoreland, made use of it in a poem headed 'Annus annulus, &c. Diminutione largimur':-

Then whilst the Sharp'd-breath'd Winter seems to lay
Stripes on the bearing earth, and Blasts th'array
She late was deckt in; Spitting on her face
Its Feather'd-rain.³⁹

Fane's "Sharp'd-breath'd Winter" is possibly an intermediate stage between

Sylvester's "Winters keener breath" and Benlowes's "keen-breath'd winds".⁴⁰

There may be an allusion to Strode's "feather'd rain" in William Cartwright's ingenious account of the great frost of 1634:-

Whiles you that call'd Snow Fleece, and Feathers, do
Wish for true Fleeces, and true Feathers too.⁴¹

Cartwright, if he was the author of the "Splendora" poems which have been attributed to him, certainly knew Strode's 'On a Gentlewoman Walking in the Snowe', because one of them is an expanded version of that popular lyric. It begins:-

See faire Splendora what a lovely bed
Of candid snow the courteous heavens have spread
O're Earth's congealed face, to entertaine
Th'Impression of thy feet, y^e downy Raine
O'ercome with' whiteness of thy purer foote
Melts into teares.⁴²

Yet a further development of the image is found in a piece on 'The Frost' of 1654 by Thomas Shipman, which seems to owe something to both Strode and the "Splendora" poet:-

Those downy show'rs appear, (which Boreas brings),
As though the moulting Clouds had new'd their wings;
What else is Snow but feather'd drizzel, blown
Fro^th[']Sky, where their swift Pinnions late had flown.⁴³

The "Downy Raine" of the "Splendora" poem, which may itself be a refinement on the image from Strode's lyric, re-appears as "Those downy show'rs", and leads into the elaborate conceit of the "feather'd drizzel", an obvious adaptation of the "feather'd rain" of the earlier poets.

Examen Poeticum, the third volume of Dryden's Miscellany Poems (1693),

contains a version of Horace's Ode 9, Book I, which works yet another variation on this strangely persistent image. William Congreve, acknowledging that his verses are an imitation rather than a translation, begins:-

Bless me, 'tis cold! how chill the Air!
 How naked does the World appear!
 But see (big with the Off-spring of the North)
 The teeming Clouds bring forth.
 A Show'r of soft and fleecy Rain,
 Falls, to new-cloath the Earth again.⁴⁴

Whether he was familiar with the "feather'd Rain" of Sherburne's rendering of this same ode, or whether he was merely drawing on the tradition at large, Congreve's "soft and fleecy Rain" bears witness to the continuing currency of this line of descriptive imagery towards the end of the seventeenth century.

The same kind of borrowing and refurbishing could be demonstrated over a wide range of artificial descriptive phrases and images - for example, Sherburne's rivers "imprison'd in an Icy Band", or Thomas Carew's frost, which "castes an ycie creame/Vpon the silver Lake or Chrystall stream"⁴⁵ but enough has been given to show the literary, and essentially unrealistic character of the season-piece. The continuity of the bravura tradition, and its exploitation by seventeenth-century wit, can be gauged by consulting the Earl of Surrey's sonnet "The soote season, that bud and bloom forth brings"; Carew's 'The Spring'; Crashaw's 'In the Praise of the Spring', translated from Virgil's Georgics; Stanley's version of Anacreon's 'The Spring'; the opening lines of Robert Baron's 'To ELIZA, with my Cyprian Academy'; and Ralph Cudmore's 'The Spring'.⁴⁶

The work of one poet, however, warrants more detailed attention. Eldred Revett seems to have been the only man to produce a full cycle of season-poems during these years. But this is by no means the only reason for looking more closely at his Spring-Summer-Autumn-Winter sequence.⁴⁷ Revett set about his task with a gusto which often compels admiration for the sheer audacity and vigour of his wit. And more importantly, behind the dense and tortuous syntax and the complexity and outrageousness of his conceits - a combination which makes him nearly incomprehensible at times - there is often a sense of the physical reality of what he is describing. The ingenuity of his metaphorical digression may be "the life and breath of his poetry", and he may revel in the opportunities offered by the conventional "nature-as-art" tradition, but the wit sometimes gives the impression of struggling to express observed details, rather than merely playing with literary material.

'Spring', for example, describes the beginning of the thaw:-

The Sun puts on his beames by Ice,
 And melts the mirror at his Rise;
 Which doth unabaz under lye,
 And waters weak'ned by his eye:
 'Till with beblubber'd cheek it flowes,
 And (with the forehead knit up) goes.
 (ll. 7-12)

Conceited this certainly is, but the function of the wit is visually descriptive. The ice reflects the sun's rays like a looking-glass, and is then slowly melted by their warmth, until the unfrozen water flows free, and ripples like a wrinkled brow.

The opening of 'Summer' is also remarkable for its descriptive realism:-

Now all the Damasque pride is shed,
 To yellow chang'd, or swarthy red,
 Such as doth settled swell to sleek,
 The nigh sleep-strangled Poppies cheek,
 A sportive wind with whistling note,
 Doth early tune the standing Oate,
 And all the fields are gilt about;
 As the rich-bowel'd earth burst out,
 Each gale doth o're them gliding sweep,
 (Bearing along) spreads the bright heap,
 And shews it burnish'd to the Sun,
 Dazled In Repercussion.

Where Ceres thus triumphant rides,
 New graine along the furrows slides,
 As her rich Carre did scatter streames,
 And the dark earth dawn'd in the beames.
 Untill a more illustrious day's,
 Shot in innumerable Rayes;
 That from obscurer Cavernes borne,
 Irradiate a Noon of Corn:
 Lustre alone doth not decline,
 But starts in vegetable shine.

(ll. 1-22)

The meaning of this is difficult to decipher, partly because of uncertain punctuation and syntax, and partly because of the conceited mode of presentation. The interesting thing is that the mental agility required is not that of following the contrived connections of a witty dialectic, but that of recognizing the sensuous (shiefly visual) effects that are being exploited. Once the first freshness of spring is over, and the vegetation has "settled" (glossed by the editor as "become dense"), the plants "swell" and grow "sleek" - a good word for the silky gloss of the poppy. The wind whistles through the field of oats. (There is probably a pun on the "oaten pipe" of the pastoral shepherds. This is why the wind is said to tune the "standing" oat "early": i.e. before it is cut down, and fashioned into a pipe for a shepherd to "tune".) The rest of the

passage is about the fields "gilt" with ripening corn. The breeze sweeps across the corn-fields and makes them wave ("spreads the bright heap"?), and as the sun catches them at different angles as they sway, they seem to flash back its beams, like a shaken sheet of burnished metal. The "new graine" growing at the top of the corn-stalks waves in the wind ("along the furrows slides"), so that the golden expanse on the surface of "the dark earth" seems like the dawning light of another sun. As the corn grows riper and more golden, a "more illustrious day" is produced, until the "Noon of Corn" surpasses the earlier "dawn" of the less mature grain. The last couplet quoted seems to imply that as the corn advances to its most golden lustre, ready for cutting, it is no longer growing vigorously as it was before ripening.

Revett clearly enjoys working through his conceits, like other decadent metaphysical poets, but unlike most others, he also enjoys the appearances of nature. His verbal puzzles are to be solved only by the projection of the visual images from which they have been contrived. Among his contemporaries, only Marvell (notably in Upon Appleton House, and with infinitely greater poetic skill and finer sensibility) can so combine extravagant wit with a firm grasp of the actual phenomena of nature.

A few more examples must suffice to illustrate his peculiar descriptive manner. The coloured fruit and leaves of autumn provoke the following ingenuities:-

From fruits a Ruddiness doth flow,
 And all the trees with scarlet glow;
 So the bold Sun with frequent glance
 Hath look'd them out of Countenance.

And now the mellow fruits not want,
 The price of an Hesperian plant:
 That valu'd cannot these out-do,
 Whose very leaves are golden too.
 (ll. 17-20, 25-28)

As the earth is baked by the heat of summer:-

Afflicted Valleys cranny'd lye
 And let into deep hell the skye.
 (ll. 35-36)

There are traces of the allegorical treatment of the seasons (found, for example, in Spenser's Faerie Queene⁴⁸) in Revett's sequence of poems.

'Spring' ends with:-

Thus passing on doth disappeare
 The first gay Pageant of the year.

'Autumn' begins:-

And fruit-oppressed ^uAutumne now,
 Beneath his wealthy load doth bow,
 While from his labour-fainting sides
 A precious sweat of Amber slides.

And 'Winter' opens with:-

Old Winter now himself bestirres,
 And gathers up within his fures.

But allegory, like the mythological Ceres, the conventional "fettters" of ice ('Winter', l. 50), "cream" of frost ('Winter', l. 51), and "dresse" of vegetation ('Spring', l. 5), and the Cleveland-like hyperbolical wit, is only a minor ingredient in Revett's strangely original descriptive poetry.

3. The Earthly Paradise.

Closely related to the locus amoenus tradition, which gave rise to the

bravura descriptions of spring, was the topos of the earthly paradise. In Crashaw's Virgilian 'In the praise of the Spring', there is a transition from the felicities of spring as man now knows it, to the more perfect delights of the world's infancy:-

Nor doe I doubt
 But when the world first out of Chaos sprang
 So smil'd the Bayes, and so the tenor ran
 Of their felicity. A spring was there,
 An everlasting spring, the jolly yeare
 Led round in his great circle; No winds Breath
 As then did smell of Winter, or of Death.⁴⁹

Richard Lovelace's 'Love made in the first Age' presents an ecstatic vision of sexual laissez-faire, in a setting of natural abundance where:-

A fragrant Bank of Straw-berries,
 Diaper'd with Violets Eyes,
 Was Table, Table-cloth, and Fare.⁵⁰

One of the speakers in a pastoral dialogue by Thomas Washbourne pictures heaven as a "place where all the year is May", and Thomas Stanley has a locus amoenus in 'Loves Embassy', where trees "bloom with fragrant blossoms all the year".⁵¹ The "everlasting spring" of the Golden Age, when fruit and blossom grew at the same time in a perpetual abundance, became a stock feature of the ideal description, and fused with other favourite topos. The "catalogue of delights", which produced the "Come live with me" poems of Marlowe, Donne, and Cotton,⁵² often included among its temptations an impossible profusion of fruits and flowers, as in Stanley's translation of the pseudo-Virgilian 'The Hostesse':-

Wreaths twisted with the purple Violet;
 White Garlands with the blushing Rose beset;

And Osier Baskets with fair Lillies fraught
 From the Bank-side by Achelois brought:
 Fresh Cheese in Rushy Cradles layd to dry:
 Soft Plums, by Autumn ripenèd leisurely:
 Chessnuts, and Apples sweetly streakt with red;
 Neat Ceres by young Love and Bacchus led:
 Black Mulberries, an overcharged Vine;
 Green Cowcubers, that on their stalks decline.⁵³

This in turn fused with the sensuous imagery of the Biblical Song of Songs. G. Hills's English version of Casimire's Latin ode 'Out of Solomon's Sacred Marriage Song' contains the lines:-

No want appeares; th'officious Vine doth stand
 With bending clusters to our hand.
 Here, thou shalt pick sweet Violets, and there
 Fresh Lillyes all the yeare:
 The Apple ripe drops from its stalke to thee,
 From tast of death made free.
 The luscious fruit from the full Figtree shall
 Into thy bosome fall.
 Mean while, the Vine no pruning knife doth know,
 The wounded earth no plow.⁵⁴

Here, the connection with the paradise of Eden is made explicit in the reference to the apple "whose mortal taste/Brought death into the world".⁵⁵

In the seventeenth century, the convention was confronted with a reality that was hardly less fantastic. Cowley, in his version of Pindar's 'Second Olympique Ode', stresses the literary origins of the theme. He describes the "Muse-discovered World of Islands Fortunate", where:-

Soft-footed Winds with tuneful voyces there
Dance through the perfum'd Air.
 There Silver Rivers through enamell'd Meadows glide,
 And golden Trees enrich their side.
 Th'illustrious Leaves no dropping Autumn fear,
 And Jewels for their fruit they bear.⁵⁶

But Edmund Waller, in 'The Battle of the Summer Islands', is concerned with astonishing fact, not with "Muse-discovered" fancy:-

Bermudas, walled with rocks, who does not know?
That happy island where huge lemons grow,
And orange trees, which golden fruit do bear,
The Hesperian garden boasts of none so fair;
Where shining pearl, coral, and many a pound,
On the rich shore, of ambergris is found.

.
Nature these cates with such a lavish hand
Pours out among them, that our coarser land
Tastes of that bounty, and does cloth return,
Which not for warmth, but ornament, is worn;
For the kind spring, which but salutes us here,
Inhabits there, and courts them all the year.
Ripe fruits and blossoms on the same trees live;
At once they promise what at once they give.
So sweet the air, so moderate the clime,
None sickly lives, or dies before his time.
Heaven sure has kept this spot of earth uncursed,
To show how all things were created first.⁵⁷

Once again, in the last couplet quoted, the description of an earthly paradise turns the poet's thoughts inevitably to the first paradise of Genesis.⁵⁸ The seventeenth-century mind seems to have been haunted by this image of the untainted innocence and plenty of a forfeited past. J.B. Leishman has commented on the "fascinating interaction between ancient fable and the reports of contemporary travellers",⁵⁹ both in this poem and in others like it (from Spenser's Garden of Adonis to Marvell's 'Bermudas'), which resulted from the peculiar meeting of forces in the age which was exploring and colonizing the New World.

One more example may be given here, since it relates the poetic preoccupation with the earthly paradise to the contemporary interest in the art of gardening discussed in Chapter II.⁶⁰ Margaret Cavendish, the

Duchess of Newcastle, describes a garden laid out in "intermixing walkes of pleasure" with "Grasse, Sand, short, broad", where "Fruits delicious to the taste doe grow", birds sing in "Arched Arbours", and prospects of trees and clouds combine to produce "one perfect peece". But this is no simple English garden:-

No weeds are here, nor wither'd leaves, and dry,
 But ever green, and pleasant to the eye.
 No Frost, to nip the tender buds in birth,
 Nor winter snow to fall on this sweet earth.
 For here the Spring is alwayes in her prime,
 Because this place is underneath the Line:
 The Day, and Night, equall, by turnes keep watch,
 That theevish time should nothing from them catch.⁶¹

The haunting myth of a paradise on earth, which men strive to counterfeit in the secluded confines of "a few paternal acres", seems to be realised in those mysterious tropical lands "underneath the Line".

4. The Pathetic Fallacy.

Conventionality and improbability, essential features of what Henry W. Wells called "Decorative" imagery, have been seen operating in the mythological periphrasis, the conventional and witty season-piece, and the genre of the earthly paradise. Another aspect of the seventeenth-century treatment of nature belongs in the same category. Wells explains:-

Associated with figures of simple improbability is the type of the "pathetic fallacy". This is an animistic image in skeptical and sophisticated thought. When animism is powerful enough to force a suspension of disbelief . . . there is, in my use of the word, no trace of the pathetic fallacy. . . . The pathetic fallacy occurs when animistic imagery is the frank assumption of Decorative poetry, a conscious and highly artificial device, subverting the stronger imagination. If the idea of an animistic image is not only artificial, but if the animated object is made to act in an

unnatural manner, a still further descent is taken on the scale of imaginative values.⁶²

N.H. Clement indicates the long history of this device:-

Sympathy between nature and man was not unknown to the ancient or the mediaeval poets. The ancient poets often represent nature as weeping over the death of some hero, or rejoicing over his elevation to the rank of the gods; the mediaeval poets attempt on occasion to establish a consonance between the aspect of nature and the situation of their personages. The sixteenth-century poets show an extension of this idea: they represent nature as taking a sympathetic interest in the sorrows of man.⁶³

The consoling grief of nature was an ingredient, especially, of the pastoral elegy. One of the most famous and influential early examples was the epitaph on Bion by his fellow-poet Moschus. Stanley's translation of this begins:-

Mourn, and your grief ye Groves in soft sighs breath,
Ye Rivers drop in tears, for Bions death:
His losse ye Plants lament, ye Woods bewaile,
Ye Flowers your odours with your griefs exhale;
In purple mourn, Anemony and Rose.⁶⁴

The poet, here, is merely appealing to the rivers and plants to mourn. Christopher Wyvill does the same in a poem on the death of his mother. He hears the birds singing, and reprimands them:-

my-thinks you
Should leave henceforth your warbling sonnets too,
Yet sing, but change your note and joyne with me,
Tune your loud whistles to an Elegie.⁶⁵

In Ronsard's 'Adonis' (also in Stanley's version), the inanimate creatures of nature are represented as actually responding:-

The Woods in sighs, Rivers in tears lament,
 Echo in groanes her griefs and mine doth vent.
 In purple every drooping flower is drest,
 And mourning garments every field invest.⁶⁶

But this is not an example of the fully artificial animism which Wells associates with Decorative poetry, because the mourning of nature is largely a figment of the grief-stricken mind. The sound of the breeze among the leaves is interpreted as the sighing of the woods; the flowing of the river is interpreted as the streaming of tears; the "groanes" of "Echo" are no more than the reverberation of the poet's own lamentations. Although not every flower is drooping and appropriate in colour, it is understandable that the mood of the poet should lead him to stress those elements in his surroundings which harmonize with his grief.

The ingenious wit of the seventeenth century, however, readily exploited the Decorative possibilities of the device. William Davenant's verses, 'In remembrance of Master William Shakespeare', warn poets not to welcome the spring on the banks of the Avon, for "each Flowre . . . Hangs there, the pensive head", and the river itself is, quite literally, exhausted with weeping:-

The pitious River wept it selfe away
 Long since (Alas!) to such a swift decay;
 That reach the Map, and looke
 If you a River there can spie:
 And for a River your mock'd Eye,
 Will finde a shallow Brooke.⁶⁷

Sympathetic natural response was also much resorted to in love lyrics, where the poet wished to express the lover's torments. In William Caven-

dish, the Duke of Newcastle's 'Love's Murmuring Brooke', the human predicament disrupts the cycle of the seasons:-

Siths tellinge make harts Ake
Of Stouter Oakes; leaves quake,
And trembling thus for feare,
When my sad story heare,
Though Springe, they almost deafe;
Greefe makes it faule o'th'leafe.⁶⁸

Other instances of mourning nature can be seen in the work of Cartwright, Waller, and Cowley.⁶⁹

This kind of pathetic fallacy was not of exclusively classical origin. The Creation of the Old Testament often emphasizes the solemnity of some great event with thunder, earthquake, or unseasonable darkness, or is called upon to witness to the glory of its Maker. C.A. Patrides has shown that, from the basic belief in God's "absolute jurisdiction over every aspect of creation" (expressed, for example, in God's words to Job out of the whirlwind):-

the Hebrews advanced to the conclusion that in some way all of nature's 'singularities and discontinuities' are vitally important in the gradual revelation of the Divine Purpose in history.⁷⁰

The act of meditating on the righteousness of God brings to the psalmist's mind the joys of nature:-

Let the heavens rejoice, and let the earth be glad; let the sea
roar, and the fulness thereof.
Let the field be joyful, and all that is therein: then shall all
the trees of the wood rejoice.

The anger of God is witnessed by frightening disturbances in nature:-

The mountains saw thee, and they trembled: the overflowing of the

water passed by: the deep uttered his voice, and lifted up his hands on high.

The sun and moon stood still in their habitation: at the light of thine arrows they went, and at the shining of thy glittering spear.⁷¹

This attitude to the physical universe, though in the process of being superceded by the Newtonian mechanistic universe, was still strong in many quarters during the middle years of the seventeenth century. After quoting the passages from scripture cited above, Patrides goes on:-

The continuity of tradition throughout the age of Milton is testified by countless treatises of the Renaissance. Most frequently - almost habitually - nature's reaction to contemporary events was said to have been parallel to incidents recounted in the Scriptures. But even when the reference was not directly to a specific Biblical event, the language used was often largely, and at times exclusively, derived from the Old Testament.⁷²

The competent use of responsive nature in religious poetry, whether presented as literal or symbolic truth, obviously cannot be included under Wells's definition of the "pathetic fallacy", for it entails no descent "on the scale of imaginative values". When the device becomes a convention to be exploited, however, or when wit becomes too prominent in its development, the "stronger imagination" is in danger of subversion. The fourth stanza of Cotton's 'On Christmas-Day, 1659' does not completely avoid the danger:-

Att th'teeming of this blessed wombe
 All Nature is one joy become;
 The Fire, the Earth, the Sea, and Ayre,
 The great Salvation doe declare;
 The Mountaines skipp with joyes excesse,
 The ocean's briny billowes swell
 O're the surface of their lands,
 And at this blessed Miracle

Floods doe clap their liquid hands,
Joyes inundation to expresse.⁷³

This is based on Psalm cxviii, verses 7-8, but by adding "liquid" to "the floods clap their hands", Cotton forces a greater awareness of the image's innate incongruity. He also takes the image of the rising sea a stage further, developing it into the conceit of "Joyes inundation". The result is that attention is directed away from the ostensible subject to the verbal and metaphorical ingenuity.

The wit of the nature imagery in Crashaw's 'Hymne of the Nativity' is less dependent on Biblical example, and closer to the contemporary love lyric:-

Winter chid the world, and sent
The angry North to wage his warres:
The North forgot his fierce intent,
And left perfumes, in stead of scarres:
By those sweet Eyes persuasive Powers,
Where he meant frosts, he scattered Flowers.

A few lines later, one of the shepherds warns the snow that its sheets are not suitable for the infant Christ's bed:-

Forbeare (said I) be not too bold,
Your fleece is white, but 'tis too cold.⁷⁴

These conceits are more ingenious than Cotton's, and perhaps closer to a successful fusion of image and experience in the metaphysical manner. The conceit, after all, was not inimical to imaginative religious verse, as Donne's sonnets demonstrate. The uneasiness that the conceits in Crashaw's poem cause may be due to the feeling that they have been contrived for the occasion, and not generated by the occasion. Whether they

are regarded as "Decorative", or as more powerfully functional, must rest with the taste of the individual reader.

5. The Myth of Orpheus and the Pastoral Hyperbole.

One of the commonest manifestations of the pathetic fallacy at this time was related to the myth of Orpheus, whose music could tame wild beasts, make the earth and trees move, and check the rivers in their courses. These unnatural powers were attributed to any singer whom the poet wished to commend. Virgil had used the device in his eighth Eclogue, where he presents the singing contest between Damon and Alphesiboeus, "at whose rivalry the heifer marvelled and forgot to graze, at whose song lynxes stood spell-bound, and rivers were changed and stayed their course".⁷⁵

Lovelace alludes to the idea in passing, in his dialogue for *Lute and Voice*:-

Touch thy dead Wood, and make each living tree,
Unchain its feet, take arms, and follow thee.⁷⁶

And Thomas Philipott gives it full conceited treatment in 'To a Gentlewoman singing'. At the sound of her voice, the angels who guard the spheres cease from "whirling round" the orbs; the rough North wind is "rock'd asleep"; the conflicting elements "take truce"; and:-

Copernicus's Pupils may go on
Now to protect his wild assertion,
And say the earth doth circularlie move,
Whilst the dull Planets in their Sphere above
Stand still like idle gazers on, since she
Has by the miracle of her harmonie,
Accomplish'd this, for at her charming call
Thrill'd forth in an inchanting madrigall,
The earth appears to move, the knottie rock

And aged oak, as if they meant to mock
 Natures decrees, assemble in loose trings
 And shake their active feet when shee but sings.⁷⁷

In an anonymous piece in The Marrow of Complements, "Endimion" appeals to "Julietta":-

Lets mix our notes that we may prove,
 To make the mountaine Quarries move;
 To stay the running floods,
 And call the walking woods.⁷⁸

Sometimes the Orphean element of the song was discarded, and nature was stunned into reverence simply by the beauty or authority of the favoured lady.⁷⁹ Stanley's condensed version of Théophile de Viau's La Maison de Silvie contains one such passage, which may well have been in Marvell's mind as he composed the Maria sequence at the end of Upon Appleton House:-

Whilst with one hand the Line she cast,
 Commanding Silence with the other,
 Her signe the Day obeying, past
 More silly to her dusky Brother.
 The doubtful Sun with equal awe,
 Fear'd to approach or to withdraw:
 The intente Stars suspend their glowing.
 No Rage the quiet Billows swell'd,
Favonius his soft breath withheld,
 The listning Grass refrain'd from growing.⁸⁰

Another example can be found in Charles Cotton's 'The Surprize', where a river tries to delay its course in order to gaze at the nymph sitting on its brink.⁸¹

One particular variation of the pathetic fallacy - and one which has close affinities with the "Orphean" topos - must receive special attention,

since it has claims to be regarded as the most popular of all the uses of natural details in the 1640s and 1650s. This is the device which J.B. Leishman has investigated, and to which he has given the name of the "pastoral hyperbole", "since it occurs in pastorals by Theocritus and Virgil". The device, he goes on:-

in those two poets amounted to little more than saying that all things flourished in the presence of the beloved and withered at her (or his) departure.⁸²

He traces this conceit from his earliest record of it, in Hesiod's Theogony, through Theocritus, Lucretius, Virgil, Petrarch, and Tasso, to the seventeenth century, where he cites examples of Strode, two anonymous pieces in Benson's edition of Shakespeare's Poems (1640), Suckling, Waller, Cleveland, and finally Pope.⁸³ And this list of Leishman's is far from exhaustive. Indeed, so widespread was the currency of this device, and so important is it for the subject of this thesis, that a fuller catalogue has been provided in Appendix C. Here, there can be room for only a general outline and a few samples.

The poem which served to popularize this development of the pathetic fallacy among English poets of the mid-century was Strode's famous lyric, which was mentioned earlier in connection with one of its descriptive phrases:-

I saw faire Cloris walke alone
Where feather'd rayne came softly downe,
And Jove descended from his tower
To court her in a silver shower;
The wanton snowe flewe to her breast
Like little birds into their nest,
And overcome with whiteness there

For greife it thaw'd into a teare,
 Thence falling on her garment's hemme
 For greife it freez'd into a gemme.⁸⁴

Leishman considers that this was inspired by a variation on the classical topic, written by Tasso, in which the snow rather than the traditional flowers and grass responds to the lady's presence. He quotes 'Lavinia walking in a frosty Morning' and 'I saw faire Flora take the aire', as poems which were most likely derived from it. While this may well be so, there are other much closer imitations. William Cartwright's 'To his M^{rs} Walking in y^e snow' is an obvious reworking of Strode's lyric, which seizes upon the hints it affords for more elaborate conceited play. Cartwright's "faire Splendora" is courted by "y^e downy Raine", which "O'ercome with'whiteness of thy purer foote/Melts into teares". The subsequent piling on of circumstantial detail does little to enhance the pithier wit of Strode:-

Observe Splendora how each amorous flaque
 Hovers about they bosome: how they'le make
 By their mild confluence a pure milky way
 To run through y^t sleske valley w^{ch} doth lay
 Betweene y^e two round hillockes, thy soft breasts
 Whose native colours purity contests
 With snow in whitenes, & excells, for marke
 How being compar'd with thine it waxes darke
 And changes colour: being asham'd to lye
 On earth so low & yet so neare y^e sky
 But banisht thence with whitenes, melts wth greife
 Into a falling teare & seekes releife
 Within y^e closure of thy garments hemme
 Where it to decke thee freezes to a Gemme.⁸⁵

The ingenious Eldred Revett takes up the gauntlet thrown down by Strode and Cartwright, and contrives an even more conceited version. 'Upon a

Gentlewoman caught in a shower of Haile' concludes with the following virtuoso display:-

Or else 'twas Jove himself did hurle,
 Thus scatter'd, in a show'r of Pearle.
 To court my Nymph, and call'd in Day,
 As when he with Alcmena lay:
 Her burnisht Haire, her Diadems
 Powderd with these Orient Gemmes;
 When sheding through the Curles for Dress,
 They sometimes fall her Neck-laces;
 Her Vesture they Imbroyder do,
 And trickle down for Arm'lets too:
 And some that would be over-blest
 Rowle between her either Brest;
 But she heaves up her Bosome there
 And stops th'Audacious Ravisher,
 To let the God know, though in's Trim,
 That milky way's not free for Him:
 The anger of her eye then feares,
 Him into penitentiall teares
 Now drops thrill'd through her ring'd-hayr laves,
 Like springs that issue out of caves.
 And from her Neck (my wonder though)
 How Hayle should be dissolv'd in snow.⁸⁶

More directly descendent from the Greek and Roman originals are the poems in which flowers and plants woo the lady with their attentions. Waller's 'At Penshurst' (probably written before 1639) set the pattern for many imitations, and interestingly connects the device with the Orpheus myth:-

Her presence has such more than human grace,
 That it can civilize the rudest place;
 And beauty too, and order, can impart,
 Where nature ne'er intended it, not art.
 The plants acknowledge this, and her admire,
 No less than those of old did Orpheus' lyre;
 If she sit down, with tops all towards her bowed,
 They round about her into arbours crowd;
 Or if she walk, in even ranks they stand,
 Like some well-marshalled and obsequious band.⁸⁷

Cleveland, as Leishman notes, was almost certainly responsible for the excessive hyperbole, verging on burlesque, which characterized its treatment by later poets:-

The flowers, called out of their beds,
Start and raise up their drowsy heads;
And he that for their colours seeks
May find it vaulting in her cheeks,
Where roses mix - no civil war
Between her York and Lancaster.⁸⁸

These lines from 'Upon Phillis walking in a morning before sun-rising' furnished a number of hints that were developed by later poets. The notion that the flowers which respond to the lady's presence owe their own lovely hues to her beauty seems to be reflected in William Hammond's 'The Walk':-

The violet,
Bowing its humble head down at her feet,
Pays homage for the livery of her veins:
Roses and lilies, and what beauteous stains
Nature adorns the Spring with, are but all
Faint copies of this fair Original.
She is a moving Paradise, doth view
Your greens, not to refresh herself, but you.⁸⁹

In Nicholas Hookes's 'To Amanda walking in the Garden', Cleveland's brief image of the flowers starting from their slumbers and lifting up their heads as the lady passes by is expanded into an elaborately artificial description:-

How her feet tempt! how soft and light she treads,
Fearing to wake the flowers from their beds!
Yet from their sweet green pillowes ev'ry where,
They start and gaze about to see my Faire;
Look at yon flower yonder, how it growes
Sensibly! how it opes its leaves and blowes,
Puts its best Easter clothes on, neat and gay!

Amanda's presence makes it holy-day:
 Look how on tip-toe that faire lilie stands
 To look on thee, and court thy whiter hands
 To gather it!⁹⁰

One more example may be given here, to emphasise a particular point.

This passage comes from Robert Heath's 'On Clarastella walking in her Garden':-

Here the Violet bows to greet
 Her with homage to her feet;
 There the Lilly pales with white
 Got by her reflexed light;
 Here a Rose in Crimson die
 Blushes through her modestie;
 There a Pansie hangs his head
 'Bout to shrink into his bed,
 'Cause so quickly she past by,
 Not returning suddenly;
 Here the Currans red and white
 In yon green bush at her sight
 Peep through their shady leaves, and cry
 Come eat me, as she passes by.⁹¹

The action of nature in offering herself to the mistress has affinities with the topos of the earthly paradise. Heath's currants cry "come eat me", and Hookes's lilies sue to be gathered, just as the spring in Waller's Bermudas "courts them all the year", and the ripe apple "drops from its stalke to thee" in Casimire's ode. The collection of flowers in Heath's poem is also related to the traditional listing of trees, birds, or flowers, found, for example, in Chaucer's Parlement of Foules and Milton's Lycidas.⁹² No easy division into genres can be made in a period when classical, Biblical, mediaeval, and Renaissance continental traditions could all interact and vitally modify each other, and when even the

amateur poet was intensely alive to the complex of literary examples that lay before him.

Writing of the pathetic fallacy in general, Dorothy Schuchman McCoy makes the interesting suggestion that:-

Perhaps the falsely responsive nature becomes prominent in the poetry as a reaction to the brutalities of Hobbesian nature.⁹³

It is certainly true that in the years when the old animistic world-view was beginning to be seriously challenged by the new philosophy, the attribution of feelings to the natural world became a major motif in poetry. The "pastoral hyperbole" was hardly believed in, in any rational sense, and many of its exponents were doing no more than follow a literary fashion, but ultimately it may have been the unconscious defence of minds disturbed by the rising scepticism and materialism of the mechanistic age - a disturbance which became articulate in the alienation theme of Marvell's Mower poems.

6. "Metaphysical" Descriptions.

Description of nature, in the decades under review, was, as has been seen, largely a matter of refashioning traditional phrases, images, and devices. The material, as well as the treatment, was unashamedly literary and artificial. There were a few poems, however, which derived their inspiration from the actual phenomena of nature. Nevertheless, even in these works, the poetic method was based on the conceit, and the purpose was to display wit rather than to describe in any realistic or pictorial sense. John Donne seems to have been the father of this peculiarly

seventeenth-century genre. Robert Ellrodt places this aspect of his work in relation to his contemporaries:-

Avant Donne, les poètes avaient décrit la nature, avec artifice certes et souvent avec des intentions allégoriques, mais ils ont donné du moins des «tableaux» qui s'adressaient d'abord aux sens. L'auteur des Songs and Sonets a jeté la palette du peintre. Point d'évocation directe: il procède par comparaisons. . . . Il est significatif que Donne ne nous ait laissé que deux poèmes descriptifs, The Storme et The Calme. . . . L'intellectualité de sa technique ingénieuse s'y affirme déjà pleinement.⁹⁴

In the poems cited by Ellrodt the concrete images are very scanty. 'The Storme' describes how:-

The South and West winds joyn'd, and, as they blow,
Waves like a rowling trench before them threw;

and how:-

Lightning was all our light, and it rain'd more
Than if the Sunne had drunke the sea before.

'The Calme' contains one or two descriptive touches:-

As steady'as I can wish, that my thoughts were,
Smooth as thy mistress's eglasse, or what shines there,
The sea is now. And, as the Iles which wee
Seeke, when wee can move, our ships rooted bee.
As water did in stormes, now pitch runs out:
As lead, when a fir'd Church becomes one spout.

.
No use of lanthornes; and in one place lay
Feathers and dust, to day and yesterday.⁹⁵

The conceits are in evidence even in these lines, and the rest of the verses are made up of a series of fantastic allusions drawn from the basic situations. What Ellrodt calls "l'intellectualité de sa technique ingénieuse" was exploited by the later poets who attempted to make poems

out of real natural occurrences.

The subjects chosen were usually extraordinary in some way - subjects which provided an excuse for elaborate hyperbole. Exceptionally hard or untimely frost was a favourite theme. William Cartwright's 'On the great Frost. 1634' describes how:-

Waters have bound themselves, and cannot run,
Suff'ring what Xerxes fetters would have done;
Our Rivers are one Christall; Shoares are fit
Mirrours, being now, not like to Glass, but it:
Our Ships stand all as planted, we may swear
They are not born up only, but grow there.
Whiles Waters thus are Pavements, firm as Stone,
And without faith are each day walk'd upon. . .

and after much delighted ingenuity concludes:-

But Frost's not all our Grief: we that so sore
Suffer its stay, fear its departure more:
For when that Leaves us, which so long hath stood,
'Twill make a New Accompt From th'second Flood.⁹⁶

It seems probable that Cartwright picked up from Donne not only the technique of "metaphysical" description, but also the specific image of the ships which "stand all as planted". The vessels immobilized by the frozen river are reminiscent of the becalmed ships of Donne's poem, which are said to be "rooted".⁹⁷

The modern editor of Cartwright's work prints for the first time a sequel to this piece, which immediately follows it in a manuscript, and which bears the initials "H.C." It is entitled 'On the Hott Summer following the Great Frost, in imitation of the Verses made upon it by W:C:', and is written in the same vein of outrageous hyperbole. It is mainly con-

cerned with the unpleasant and frankly fantastic effects of extreme heat:-

We all live Portia's death, our very meate
Is roasted soone as 'tis layd downe, we eate
Nothing but heat, that which is coldest fish
Comes boyld unto the Shore as to the Dish.

On the few occasions when there is any specific reference to the effects of the heat on the natural scene ingenuity still predominates over description:-

The Floud Sunk not, but vanish't, the Sun's lust
Thaw'd the cold snow, net into drops, but dust

Our gliding Chanells are become Firme Land
Resembling Rivers only by their Sand;
Without a prophette mantle to devide,
We through our Jordah safely walke & ride.⁹⁸

Thomas Shipman's 'The Frost. 1654'⁹⁹ is slightly more pictorial, but hardly less witty than these two pieces. Joseph Beaumont and George Daniel both have poems about a frost in May, which damaged the early spring growth. The former's 'The Winter-Spring', dated May 18. 1652, begins with the following descriptive stanzas, then goes on to derive emblematic lessons from them:-

O how the Worlds Amazement now doth stare
Upon this contradiction of the Year;
 Whilst frowning Januaries frost
 Doth smileing Maja's beauties blast;
 Whilst Winter his chaste bounds forgets
And on the virgin Spring a rape commits.
Poor ravishd Spring! how every Leaf confesses
The violence done to her goodly tresses!
 Her woefull head how sadly She
 Hangs down in every floure! No tree,
 No feild, no gardin, where she went
But doth her piteous injury lament.¹⁰⁰

Daniel's 'A Strange Maye',¹⁰¹ which will be dealt with in Chapter IX, is more purely descriptive, and suffers less from generalization and weak personification than Beaumont's conventionally phrased lines. Thomas Washbourne begins his meditation 'Upon a great showre of snow that fel on May day, 1654' with expressions of astonishment at the unexpected occurrence, and continues with a conceit which leads him into an attack on the "superstitious Cavalier,/That lov'd to keep his Christmas":-

Prodigious 'tis, and I begin to fear
 We have mistook the season of the yeer;
 'Tis Winter yet, and this is Christmas day,
 Which we indeed miscal the first of May.
 Summer and winter now confounded be,
 And we no difference betwixt them see,
 Only the Trees are blossomed, and so
 The Glassonbury Hawthorn us'd to doe,
 Upon the day of Christs nativity,
 As Cambden tels in his Chorography.¹⁰²

Richard Crashaw contributed one example to the genre, with his 'On a foule Morning, being then to take a journey',¹⁰³ though his theme is mist and rain rather than unseasonable or severe frost or snow,

The genre was not confined to meteorological subjects. William Strode used the Donne manner for a long meditation 'On a Great Hollow Tree'. Woven into a tissue of conceited allusions to the centaur, Silenus, Delphos, Dodona, Tristram, Lancelot, etc., there are a number of detailed physical observations. The "hardy stocks/Is knotted like a clubb";

Age came on,
 And loe a lingering consumption
 Devour'd the entrails, where an hollow cave
 Without the workman's helpe beganne to have
 The figure of a Tent;

inside the hollowed trunk, can be seen the "twisted curles, the wreathing
to and fro/Contrived by nature"; it has "no other proppe,/But only barke
remayns to keep it uppe";

Three columes rest
Upon the rotten trunke, wherof the least
Were mast for Argos. Th'open backe below
And three long leggs alone doe make it shew
Like a huge trivett, or a monstrous chayre
With the heeles turn'd upward;

the "neighbor spring" nourishes its root with "Conduits of water";

It might as well have grown,
If Pan had pleas'd, on toppe of Westwell downe,
Instead of that proud Ash; and easily
Have given ayme to travellers passing by
With wider armes. But see, it more desirede
Here to bee lov'd at home than there admirede. 104

Strode, more obviously than Cartwright or Beaumont, has had his eye firmly fixed on the object, and his graphic images of the tent, the "twisted curles", and the upturned chair, together with the geographical contrast with "that proud Ash" on the top of the hills, combine to give a vivid impression of the thing itself. Wit was a part of his heritage which he could not eschew, but it does not become the sole justification of the poem. His affection for the familiar natural detail, which is "lov'd at home", provides the real impetus. As he says in his final line: "I'me sure by this time it deserves my song".

This seems the most appropriate point at which to mention the Duchess of Newcastle's poem, 'Of an Oake in a Grove', though strictly speaking it does not treat its subject with the ingenuity that characterizes the

other pieces discussed in this section. The Duchess uses the ancient oak as an emblem to show how "Time doth ruine", and how the gods have ordained that "all should returne to dust". But in her actual description of the tree and its setting, she is at great pains to present a realistic visual impression. The poem begins:-

A Shady Grove, trees grew in equall space,
Which seem'd to be a consecrated place.
Through spreading boughs, their quivering light broke in,
Much like to Glasse, or Christall shiver'd thin:
Those peices small on a green Carpet strew'd,
So in this wood, the light all broken shew'd.

The visual effects here are more precisely observed and expressed than the famous "chequered shade" of 'L'Allegro', or the couplet from Pope's Windsor-Forest which they seem to look forward to:-

Here waving groves a chequer'd scene display,
And part admit, and part exclude the day. 105

The image of the shivered glass is pictorially apt, but even more remarkable for its verisimilitude is the phrase "quivering light", which exactly catches the impression of light filtering through foliage.

The contrast between the oak-tree as it was in its prime and as it is now elicits the inevitable gnomic comment, but the real interest for the reader - and one suspects for the Duchess herself - lies in the minute particulars of the tree's present physical condition:-

But youth, and beauty, which are shadowes thin,
Doe fade away, as if they ne're had been.
For all his fresh green leaves, and smooth moyst rine,
Are quite worne off, and now grown bald with time.

.

His branches all are sear'd, his bark grown gray,
 Most of his rine with time is peel'd away.
 The liquid sap, which from the root did rise,
 (Where every thirsty bough it did suffice)
 Is all drunke up, there is no moysture left,
 The root is rotten, and his body's cleft. 106

Even more striking than the observation of details is the feeling of sympathy for the tree as a living thing. This is partly achieved by the simple use of the personal pronoun and such words as "bald" and "body", but more especially by the reference to the process of vegetable growth whereby each "thirsty bough" was satisfied by the drink ministered to it through the root. This empathic sense of the life and feelings of nature's creatures is evident elsewhere in the Duchess of Newcastle's work, and is one of her most charming qualities.

The irrepressible Eldred Revett has a witty piece called 'The Daisie'. The first two stanzas contrive to express visual details through knotty conceits, in the way we have seen him performing in other poems:-

As it blowes
 The Hood it self unclasped throwes
 In sharpe a starre;
 But its Pride
 Is to the flower, 't^h/_i's not deni'd
 To be a sphere.

Beauty playes
 From of it, eye-disabling Rayes;
 In red and white
 That are Parts
 Constituent to captive Hearts;
 Make Faces bright. 107

Colour, shape, and relation of petals to central ball of disc florets are all c~~h~~everly indicated - and minutely observed. Once again, Revett

demonstrates that the conceit can function as a means of description, and not merely as a witty digression upon some nominal subject.

One other poem can perhaps be included in this genre. In September, 1652, Katherine Philips sent to her friend "Lucasia" an account of 'A Sea-Voyage from Tenby to Bristol'. Once the ship was under way, the poetess noticed how: "the moon-beams did on the water play,/As if at midnight 'twould create a day". The visual detail provokes the inevitable witty simile. The same thing happens later in the poem, but this time both the observation and the conceit are less hackneyed:-

But what most pleased my mind upon the way,
Was the ships' posture that in harbour lay:
Which to a rocky grove so close were fix'd,
That the trees' branches with the tackling mix'd.
One would have thought it was, as then it stood,
A growing navy, or a floating wood.¹⁰⁸

The last line may have been suggested by Donne's "rooted" ships or by Cartwright's "Our Ships stand all as planted". (Mrs Philips was an avowed disciple of Cartwright.) But whatever its source, the passage reveals an eye for the unusual detail, and a capacity for enjoying visual observations and expressing them in terms of the witty conceit.

7. The Topographical Poem.

'A Sea-Voyage from Tenby to Bristol' should, perhaps, more properly be regarded as an offshoot of the topographical verse of the period. R.A. Aubin, who has written an important study of the genre, defines it as follows:-

A subspecies of "descriptive" which is here taken to mean "depicting nature in general", "topographical" poetry aims chiefly at describing specifically named actual localities.¹⁰⁹

The topographical poem took numerous forms. Jonson, Carew, Casimire, Herrick, Marvell, and Rowland Watkyns all composed pieces celebrating the estates of a noble patron.¹¹⁰ Watkyns's 'Upon the golden Grove in the County of Carmarthin, the habitation of the Right Honorable the Lord Vauhan, Earle of Carbery, now Lord President of the Marches of Wales' is worth quoting in full, since it has not been noticed by those scholars who have examined the genre of the "estate poem":-

If I might, where I pleas'd, compose my nest,
 The golden Grove should be my constant rest.
 This curious fabrick might make us believe
 That Angels there, or men like Angels live,
 I must commend the out-side; but within 5
 Not to admire, it were almost a sin.
 Of fertile ground the large circumference
 With admiration may confound the sense;
 Which ground, if things were rightly understood,
 From Paradise came tumbling in the Flood, 10
 And there the water left it, therefore we
 Find here of pleasures such varietie.
 Wise Nature here did strive, and witty Art
 To please the curious eye, and longing heart.
 The neighbouring river Towy doth ore flow, 15
 Like pleasant Nilus the rich Meades below.
 Hence come great store, and various kind of fish
 So good, as may enrich the empty dish.
 Fowles thither flock, as if they thought it fit,
 They should present themselves unto the spit. 20
 Here gardens are compos'd, so sweet, so fair
 With fragrant flowers as do perfume the air.
 Hard by a grove doth stand, which doth defeat
 Cold winter storms, and the dry Summers heat.
 Their merry birds their pleasant Carols sing, 25
 Like sweet Musicians to the wanton spring.
 There are parks, orchards, warrens, fish-ponds, springs,
 Each foot of ground some curious object brings:
 There lives a noble Earl, free, just and wise,

In whom the Elixer of perfection lyes.
 His heart is good as balsome, pure as gold,
 Wise, as a Serpent, as a Lion bold.

30

Most of the standard items of the estate poem are included: the building, the grounds, the river, the abundance of fish and fowl, the gardens, the parks and orchards, and the tribute to the noble proprietor. The conceit of the fowls offering themselves readily "unto the spit" is a variation of the pastoral hyperbole found also in Jonson's "Fat, aged carps, that runne into thy net" and in Carew's "willing ox" that comes "Home to the slaughter" of its own accord. The poem contains a number of details, and turns of phrase which are reminiscent of Marvell's Upon Appleton House, and which are not common to other examples of the genre. Lines 3-4 could be derived from Marvell's comment on the modest size of Appleton House:-

As practising, in doors so strait,
 To strain themselves through Heavens Gate.
 (ll. 31-32)

Although Nature and Art are brought together as allies in lines 13-14, whereas Marvell regards them as opposing forces, Watkyns's adjectives - "Wise Nature" and "witty Art" - succinctly sum up the distinctions that are made in Upon Appleton House:-

But Nature here hath been so free
 As if she said leave this to me.
 Art would more neatly have defac'd
 What she had laid so sweetly wast.
 (ll. 75-78)

The local river floods the surrounding meadows, and is likened to the Nile (ll. 15-16), just as the Denton "sets ope its Cataracts" (l. 466)

and later becomes "our little Nile" (l. 630) in Marvell's poem. Lines 21-22 possibly contain verbal echoes of Marvell's "But all things are composed here" (l. 25) and "With Breath so sweet, or Cheek so faire" (l. 304), especially as the latter occurs in the stanza describing the "fragrant Vollyes" of the flowers in the Nun Appleton gardens. None of these similarities are close enough to establish that Watkyns, whose poems were printed in 1662, had seen a copy of Upon Appleton House. But they are suggestive, and the poem itself provides interesting evidence that the line of estate poems did not end, as George Hibbard claims, with Marvell's contribution.¹¹¹

Other exponents of topographical verse wrote about out-of-the-way places - William Prynne from his confinement in Mount Orgeuil Castle on the Isle of Jersey, Cleveland from Newcastle, and J. Emerson from Orkney.¹¹² Prynne's descriptive passages are perfunctory - merely an excuse for moral lucubrations; Cleveland's poem contains only one descriptive line - "The bald parched hills that circumscribe our Tyne" - the other one hundred and forty-five being devoted to fantastic variations on the theme of coal-mining.

More homely, and certainly more genuinely descriptive, is William Strode's 'On Westwell Downes'. Apart from a few conceits, which are ornamental rather than functional in the Revett manner, the poem presents an unusually objective and detailed account of an actual stretch of countryside. Here is the poem, with only the irrelevant conceits omitted:-

When Westwell Downes I gan to tread,
Where cleanly wynds the greene did sweepe,

Methought a landskip there was spread,
 Here a bush and there a sheepe:
 The pleated wrinkles of the face
 Of wave-swolne earth did lend such grace,
 As shadowings in Imag'ry
 Which both deceive and please the eye.

The sheepe sometymes did tread the maze
 By often wynding in and in,
 And sometymes round about they trace
 Which milkmayds call a Fairie ring:

.

The slender food upon the downe
 Is allwayes even, allwayes bare,
 Which neither spring nor winter's frowne
 Can ought improve or ought impayre:

.

Here and there twoe hilly crests
 Amiddst them hugg a pleasant greene,
 And these are like twoe swelling breasts
 That close a tender fall betweene.
 Here would I sleepe, or read, or pray
 From early morne till flight of day:
 But harke! a sheepe-bell calls mee upp,
 Like Oxford colledge bells, to supp.¹¹³

Particularly fresh and striking are the details of the "wave-swolne earth"
 - pastureland that still shows the contours left by the plough; the "Fairie
 ring" worn by the sheep; and the short, but perennial, downland grass.

This poem reveals the same affection for a familiar scene that was
 noticed in Strode's 'On a Great Hollow Tree'.

The topographical poem frequently took the form of a traveller's
 journal. R.A. Aubin writes:-

Journey-poems are of two sorts: the informally narrative, concerned
 chiefly with the events of a journey, and the seriously descriptive,
 opulent in details, seeking to impart information. The former,
 their prototype Horace's lively relation of his trip to Brundisium,
 were decidedly more popular after 1660; the latter, partly of
 Ausonian origin, had already won striking recognition.¹¹⁴

The seriously descriptive and informative type flourished in the years preceding 1645. The most notable examples are Drayton's Poly-Olbion,¹¹⁵ Hobbes's De Mirabilibus Peccis, and the Rev. Richard James's 'Iter Lancastrense'.¹¹⁶ To the Horatian type belong Katherine Philips's 'A Sea-Voyage from Tenby to Bristol', Richard Corbet's 'Iter Boreale', Henry Bold's 'A Journey from Oxon' (which contains many incidents, but no description), and Jeremiah Wells's 'Iter Orientale'.¹¹⁷ Corbet's poem is found in numerous manuscripts, and may have been written as early as 1621, but it did not appear in print till 1647. Despite its probable date, it has more than one claim to attention in this study. Firstly, it set the pattern for a whole spate of journey poems (often, like Bold's, also setting out from Oxford) later in the century. Secondly, it may have been a source for Denham's Cooper's Hill, which was to have such an enormous influence on the future development of the genre of topographical verse. And thirdly, it shows an awareness of the new school of Italian "picturesque" landscape painting, which played a great part in the subsequent approach to description in England. The important passage comes as Corbet conducts his reader from Nottingham to Newark:-

Nature is wanton there, and the High-way
 Seem'd to be private, though it open lay;
 As if some Swelling Lawyer for his health,
 Or frantick Userer to tame his wealth,
 Had chosen out ten miles by Trent, to trye
 Two great effects of Art and Industry.
 The ground wee trodd was Meddow, fertile Land,
 New trimm'd and levell'd by the Mowers hand;
 Above it grew a Roo/g/ke, rude, steepe, and high,
 Which claimes a kind of reverence from the Eye:
 Betwixt them both there glides a lively Streame,
 Not loude, but swift: Maander was a theame

Crooked and rough; but had the Poetts seene
 Straight, euen Trent, it had immortall bin.
 This side the open Plaine admitts the Sunne
 To halfe the River, there did Silver runne:
 The other halfe ran Clowdes; where the Curl'd wood
 With his exalted head threaten'd the Floude.
 Here could I wish us ever passing by
 And never past; now Newarke is too nigh;
 And as a Christmas seemes a Day but short,
 Deluding time with revells and good sport:
 So did these beauteous mixtures us beguile,
 And the whole twelue, being trawail'd, seem'd a mile.¹¹⁸

Corbet interprets his English scene in terms of Italian art: the pleasant, sunlit meadows and plain of Claude's landscape vision are set against the "rude, steepe, and high" eminence, from which a crown of trees "threaten'd the Floude", as in many a later painting by Salvator Rosa.¹¹⁹ Aubin comments on the historical significance of these lines:-

Mr. Hussey claims for Denham the distinction of being the first descriptive poet in England to attempt a scene after the manner of Italian landscape art. The slightly-sketched contrast in the "Iter Boreale" between the serene Claudian prospect and its savage, menacing Salvatorial foil may proclaim Corbett a forgotten pioneer in England of the "picturesque".¹²⁰

The passage in Cooper's Hill which shows most clearly the Italian influence is that describing the Thames:-

While the steep horrid roughness of the Wood
 Strives with the gentle calmness of the flood.
 Such huge extreame when Nature doth unite,
 Wonder from thence results, from thence delight.
 The stream is so transparent, pure, and clear,
 That had the self-enamour'd youth gaz'd here,
 So fatally deceiv'd he had not been,
 While he the bottom, not his face had seen.
 But his proud head the aery Mountain hides
 Among the Clouds; his shoulders, and his sides
 A shady mantle cloaths; his curled brows
 Frown on the gentle stream, which calmly flows,

While winds and storms his lofty forehead beat:
 The common fate of all that's high or great.
 Low at his foot a spacious plain is plac't,
 Between the mountain and the stream embrac't:
 Which shade and shelter from the Hill derives,
 While the kind river wealth and beauty gives;
 And in the mixture of all these appears
 Variety, which all the rest in dears. 121

There are indications that this passage, with its contrast between peaceful and savage aspects of nature, was directly modelled on Corbet's poem. River, plain, and hill topped with trees are the basic elements in each; "the Curl'd wood/With his exalted head threaten'd the Floude" is echoed in "his curled brows/Frown on the gentle stream"; and the final couplet of Denham's description looks back to the "beauteous mixtures" of the 'Iter Boreale'. In both poems, the poet's eye transforms the reality to make it accord with an aesthetic ideal. The purpose is not to describe faithfully, but to compose a scene.

The landscapes of Corbet and Denham are interludes in poems which have wider themes. Eldred Revett seems to have been the first poet to devote an entire piece to the description of Italianate scenery. 'The Land-schap between two Hills' is an ambitious attempt at detailed pictorial composition, which is quite extraordinary at this time:-

Plac'd on yon' fair, though beetle brow
 That on the pleasures frowns below,
 Let us with sprightly phancie thence
 Teach the dumb Rhetorick Eloquence;
 And leave the Painters Art out-gone
 In liv'ning by transcription.

First then observe with levell'd sight
 A rising to this opposite;
 As if the wind in billow drave
 Here, and had rowld the earth in wave:

The Aspen and the Bramble heaves
 And a white foam froth's in the leaves:
 That spot beneath, that lies so plain
 Schorch'd here and there, hath lost the grain:
 As Sol there dried the Beams he swet
 And stain'd the gras-green coverlet;
 That Goat the bushes nigh doth browse
 Seems the un-ravell'd plush to frowse;
 And now let fall the eye it sees
 A pretty storm of cloudy trees,
 To us seem black and full of rain,
 As they would scatter on the plain:
 From hence the hill declineth spent,
 With imperceptible descent,
 'Till un-awares abroad it flow
 Lost in the deluge spreads below.

An Age-bow'd oak doth under-root
 As it would prostrate at it's foot;
 Whose thrown-out armes in length display
 And a fair shady carpet lay,
 On it a lad in russet coat,
 His soul melts through the vocal oate;
 And near that black eyed Nymph doth draw
 As if her eyes hung on the straw:
 The scrip and leathern Bottle nigh,
 (With guardian too Melampo) lie:
 The flocks are round about them spread
 In num'rous fleece have clad the Meade;
 And now our eyes but weakly see
 Quite tippled with varietie:
 Here the grass rowls, and hills between
 Stud it with little tufts of green:
 There in the midst a tree doth stray
 Escap'd, as it had lost the way,
 And a winding river steals
 That with it self drunk curling reels,
 A cheaper flood than Tagus goes
 And with dissolved silver flowes.
 Some way the field thence swells at ease
 And lifts our sight up by degrees
 To where the steep side dissie lies
 Supinely fast in precipice
 Till with the bank oppos'd it lie,
 In a proportion'd Harmonie,
 As Nature here did sit and sing
 About the cradle of the spring. 122

Revett is quite deliberate about what he is doing - his stated aim is to

"leave the Painters Art out-gone". The painting he is going to enliven "by transcription" is unmistakably an Italianate landscape. Placing himself on the vantage-point of the "beetle brow" (which "frowns" on the pleasant scene below, like the "aery Mountain" of Cooper's Hill), he carefully directs attention from one part of the picture to another. First we look across to the hill opposite, then down past the reaped field and the "storm of cloudy trees", to the expanse of water that spreads below. There, in the foreground, is the oak, with the pastoral scene being enacted in its shade. Moving on, past the solitary tree and the silver river, the eye is led across the fields that gradually rise away on the other side of the canvas to the precipitous height from which we are pretending to view the scene. The two eminences form a frame for the central figures, and neatly restrain the "varietie" of the landscape "In a proportion'd Harmonie". The principle of "Order in Variety", which is hinted at by Corbet and Denham, and which dominated the aesthetic attitude to nature in the neo-classical period, is satisfied here by making all the details conform to the new "picturesque" vision. The sense of variety is achieved by carefully noting isolated details: "a white foam froth's in the leaves" of the aspen; the cornfield is "schorrh'd here and there"; a goat browses the bushes; the scrip and bottle and the watch-dog lie near the human figures; a single tree stands amid the "little tufts of green" in the middle-ground.

What is so remarkable about this poem is that its details, though contributing to an artificially "composed" scene, remain purely visual items. The bramble does not signify humility, nor the oak kingship or

longevity, nor the river time, nor the hills pride or ambition. There is nothing symbolic in the oak's being "Age-bow'd" - the epithet is exclusively descriptive. Only Strode's 'On Westwell Downes' and a handful of other poems in this period consistently present natural details divorced from their traditional associations.

Jeremiah Wells's 'Iter Orientale', published in 1667, consists chiefly of the incidents that befell the travellers on their journey. But there is one extended description - of the view from the top of Shot-over Hill, not far from Oxford:-

Then might we wond'ring view from off the Hill
 A stately Landskip drawn by natures skill.
 Here Cattel Plunder and Adorn the place,
 And are Earth's equall Detriment and Grace:
 Cattel, which do Augment while they Devour,
 Eat what they find, & Dung the ground for more.
 There the rank Meadows clad in pleasant Green,
 Unripe for the'Sithe, stand only to be Seen.
 Here the young Eares with their rich verdant dye
 Do satisfie our Hunger at our Eye:
 Stretching their heads tow'ards Phoebus smiling face,
 As if they thank'd him for his quicke'ning rayes:
 At last their aged Heads decline, and they
 Seem then most Lovely when they most Decay.
 There a large Wast adds to the rest more grace,
 As Foiles to the'Diamond, or Spots to the'Face.
 Here a high Hill the neighbouring Vale defies,
 Commanding Earth, and threatening the Skies:
 At whose proud feet some trembling streams do lye,
 And with a silent noise run swiftly by.
 Thus Meadow, Pasture, Arable, and Wast,
 Hills, Dales, and Rivers sweetly interlac'ed
 Made up one Prospect so divinely fair,
 We wish'd the way our Fellow-Traveller. 123

It is interesting that, although Wells makes a genuine attempt to describe what he sees, he still feels it appropriate to amplify his account with

wit. The cattle "Plunder and Adorn" the meadows; the unripe ears of corn "satisfie our Hunger at our Eye". This ingenuity is related to the "great frost" type of poem, where wit is its own justification; but perhaps it is more than that. Both these conceits bring together the practical and the aesthetic. The cattle are not in the fields, feeding on the grass and manuring the ground, because of their "picturesque" value as part of a scene. The corn is not there primarily to be looked at. And yet to the passer-by with an eye for beauty the cattle are part of the "Grace" of the countryside, and the "rich verdant dye" of the young ears is there "only to be Seen". Through his conceits Wells is - perhaps unconsciously - revealing the process that lies behind the picturesque habit of mind. The same process is at work in the reference to the "large Wast", which is valued in terms of its contribution to an overall aesthetic effect. The aesthetic ideal is summed up in the last four lines, where all the details that can be seen from the hill-top are felt to be "sweetly interlaced" in "one Prospect".

Turning back to Cooper's Hill, one can see how landscape could be made to express moral meaning. The mountain, with its "proud head", is exposed to the assaults of the elements: "The common fate of all that's high and great". The humble plain, "low at his foot", is shaded and protected by the greatness of the hill - symbolic of the relationship of people and king. The most famous couplet in the poem contains an implicit moral statement:-

O 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 full,
 Strong without rage, without ore-flowing full.
 (ll. 189-192)

The river's physical qualities are felt and expressed as moral qualities.

As M.A. Goldberg has remarked, in Cooper's Hill:-

the abstract and intellectual control the sensual and ocular. . .
 A particular view of hill is lacking, Specific scenes are mentioned,
 but their correspondence to an abstract, universal, and moral plane
 in the poet is what provides them with meaning.¹²⁴

Professor Maren-Sofie Røstvig maintains that "this technique of using
 descriptive passages for didactic purposes" was not invented by Denham,
 as many critics have assumed. Horace himself could achieve similar effects,
 and "Casimire Sarbiewski had exploited the technique to the full in his
 Horatian imitations".¹²⁵ She cites particularly the Polish poet's loco-
 descriptive epode on the estate of the Duke of Bracciano, which, she
 demonstrates, had a direct influence on Cooper's Hill. Other poets (includ-
 ing Marvell in 'Upon the Hill and Grove at Bill-borow', and Wells with
 his "high Hill", which defies the valley, commands the earth, threatens
 the skies, while "trembling streams" lie at its "proud feet") soon imitated
 the method established by Casimire and Denham. Professor Røstvig suggests
 why the new genre became so popular:-

The loco-descriptive poem suited the temper of the new age because
 of its novel presentation of well-known classical motifs; instead
 of being confined to the praise of a Sabine farm or its English
 equivalent, poets now were free to apply their descriptive powers
 to an entire landscape.¹²⁶

The importance of Cooper's Hill for nature-description in the later

seventeenth and the eighteenth centuries can hardly be overestimated.

R.A. Aubin has discovered nineteen collected editions of Denham between 1668 and 1857; fourteen separate reprintings of the poem between 1642 and 1794; fifteen topographical poems which are indebted to it, or directly imitate it between 1666 and 1808; over two hundred references to it or borrowings from it in verse or prose works between 1650 and 1841; and twenty-six remarks in verse or prose which denote an interest in it between 1648 and 1844.¹²⁷ He concludes that: "Only Milton, Pope, and Thomson were more powerful influences on eighteenth-century topographical verse".¹²⁸

8. The Creature Poem.

One other group of poems may be included under the heading of descriptive verse. These were the pieces modelled on Virgil's accounts of ants and bees, and on various Latin and Greek vignettes of the creatures. The Renaissance development of this genre is sketched by Kitty Scoular:-

For the growth of interest in the writing of short poems on insect, animal, or plant, 1494, the year of the first printing of the Greek Anthology, and 1554, the year of the printing of Henri Estienne's edition of Anacreon, are important dates. Of course, only a relatively small number of these classical epigrams and lyrics dealt particularly with the creatures, but these shared their popularity with poems more distinctly amatory or didactic. So the taste was accentuated for pleasing trivialities, folastries, in which craftsmanship in small space and refinement on a tradition of associations are all-important.¹²⁹

Thomas Stanley's close renderings of Anacreon included 'The Swallow' and 'The Grassehopper'. The latter is a good example of the traditional material:-

Grasshopper thrice-happy! who
 Sipping the cool morning dew,
 Queen-like chirpest all the day
 Seated on some verdant spray;
 Thine is all what ere earth brings,
 Or the howrs with laden wings;
 Thee, the Ploughman calls his Joy,
 'Cause thou nothing dost destroy:
 Thou by all art honour'd; All
 Thee the Springs sweet Prophet call;
 By the Muses thou admir'd,
 By Apollo art inspir'd,
 Agelesse, ever singing, good,
 Without passion, flesh or blood;
 Oh how near thy happy state
 Comes the Gods to imitate!¹³⁰

The poem contains very little physical description. The chirping, the sipping of dew, and the "verdant spray" are all stock features of other grasshopper poems of the period.¹³¹ But more important are the symbolic overtones of carefree Epicurean improvidence, and the emblematic significance of the insect as the singer, or poet, inspired by Apollo. Cowley's embroidery upon Anacreon develops this symbolic vein, addressing the grasshopper explicitly as "Epicurean Animal!"¹³² Don Cameron Allen has argued that in Lovelace's treatment of the insect a long and complex symbolic tradition is exploited, to produce an intensely Royalist poem which "has nothing to do with grasshoppers".¹³³

In the seventeenth century the creature-poem became a vehicle for wit. Donne's 'The Flea', Stanley's translation of Marino's 'The Silkworm', Lovelace's poems on 'The Ant', 'The Snayl', and 'A Fly caught in a Cobweb', Marvell's 'The Mower to Glo-worms',¹³⁴ are all less concerned with describing their nominal subjects than with the conceits that can be derived from them. For instance, Stanley's famous lyric on 'The Gloworme' begins:-

Stay fairest Chariessa, stay and mark
 This animated Gem, whose fainter spark
 Of fading light, its birth had from the dark.

A Star thought by the erring Passenger,
 Which falling from its native Orb dropt here,
 And makes the Earth (its Centre,) now its Sphere.

Should many of these sparks together be,
 He that the unknown light far off should see
 Would think it a terrestrial Galaxie. 135

One poet of the period, however, did look closely at the insect she was basing her poem on, and tried to record exactly what she saw. 'Of the Ant', by the Duchess of Newcastle, is an emblem poem which contrasts the community life of the anthill with human society. But before she gets on to this theme, the Duchess describes the physical activities of the tiny creatures:-

Mark but the little Ant, how she doth run,
 In what a busie motion shee goeth on;
 As if she ordered all the Worlds Affaires:
 When tis but onely one small Straw shee beares.
 But when they find a Flye, which on the ground lyes dead,
Lord, how they stir; so full is every Head.
 Some with their Feet, and Mouths, draw it along,
 Others their Tailes, and Shoulders thrust it on.
 And if a Stranger Ant comes on that way,
Shee helps them strait, nere asketh if shee may.
 Nor staies to ask Rewardes, but is well pleas'd:
 Thus paies her selfe with her owne Paines, their Ease. 136

One feels that this is the fruit of delighted observation, and of that affectionate regard for the inhabitants of the natural world which has been noted elsewhere in her work. She commented on her sympathetic response to other creatures in her autobiography:-

I am apt to weep rather than laugh, not that I do often either of them; also I am tender natured, for it troubles my Conscience

to kill a fly, and the groans of a dying Beast strike my Soul.¹³⁷

Two of her poems give ample expression to this side of her character: 'The Hunting of the Hare' and 'The Hunting of the Stag'.¹³⁸ The first of these displays her remarkable powers of perception and empathy. It begins with a detailed description of the hare's physical characteristics and daily activities:-

Betwixt two Ridges of Flowd-land, lay Wat,
Pressing his Body close to Earth lay squat.
 His Nose upon his two Fore-feet close lies,
 Glaring obliquely with his great gray Eyes.
 His Head he alwaies sets against the Wind;
 If turne his Taile, his Haires blow up behind:
 Which he too cold will grow, but he is wise,
 And keepes his Coat still downe, so warm he lies.
 Thus resting all the day, till Sun doth set,
 Then riseth up, his Reliefe for to get.
 Walking about untill the Sun doth rāse,
 Then back returnes, downe in his Forme he lyes.
 At last, Poore Wat was found, as he there lay,
 By Hunts-men, with their Dogs which came that way. . .

The minute particularity with which the Duchess describes the hare's posture - especially the observation that he crouches facing the wind, to prevent his fur being uncomfortably ruffled - is unparalleled in the period under review. The rest of the poem concerns the chase and killing of the hare, but there is one more interlude of exact description when he has momentarily thrown off his pursuers:-

On his two hinder legs for ease did sit,
 His Fore-feet rub'd his Face from Dust, and Sweat.
 Licking his Feet, he wip'd his Eares so cleane,
 That none could tell that Wat had hunted been.
 But casting round about his faire great Eyes,
 The Hounds in full Careere, he neere him 'spies:
 To Wat it was so terrible a Sight,
Feare gave him Wings, and made his Body light. . .

Needless to say, the "tender natured" Duchess is outraged by the cruelty of the creature's destruction.

'The hunting of the Stag' - which, incidentally, contains an elaborate example of the traditional "list of trees" - follows the same course as the previous poem. Sympathy for the doomed quarry is established in the earlier part of the poem by a detailed account of its innocent existence:-

While on the tender Leaves, and Buds did brouse,
 His Eyes were troubl'd with the broken Boughs.
 Then strait He seeks this Labyrinth to unwind,
 But hard it was his first way out to find.
 Unto this Wood a rising Hill did joyne,
 Where grew wild Margerom, and sweet wild Time:
 And Winter-savory which was never set,
 On which the Stag delighted much to eat.
 But looking downe upon the Vallies low,
 He sees the Grasse, and Cowslips thick to grow;
 And Springs, which dig themselves a Passage out,
 Much like as Serpents wind each Feild about.
 Rising in Winter high, do over-flow,
 The Flowry Banks, but rich the Soile doth grow.
 So as he went, thinking therein to feed,
 He saw a Feild, which sow'd was with Wheat Seed.
 The Blades were growne a hand-full high, and more,
 Which Sight his Tast did soon invite him o're.
 In hast goes on, feeds full, then downe he lies,
 The Owner coming there, he soon espies:
 Strait call'd his Dogs to hunt him from that place,
 At last it came to be a Forrest Chase. . .

There is an extraordinary feeling here of the stag's reactions to his environment, as he is "troubled with the broken Boughs" in the wood, and is tempted further and further from his natural haunts by the delicious vegetation. Only Vaughan and George Daniel, among the Duchess's contemporaries, exhibit anything like her ability to respond to the life that is in other living things.¹³⁹

Two other poems are devoted to the activities of creatures, this time

to the mortal conflict between different species. Lovelace's 'The Falcon' relates the killing by a heron of a bird of prey; and the same poet's 'The Toad and the Spyder' is subtitled 'A Duel', and tells of the horrific struggle between these two poisonous combatants.¹⁴⁰ Although there is a good deal of spirited narrative, the poems are little more than ingenious versifications of well-known material from bestiary lore.¹⁴¹ Lovelace's chief interest seems to be in the development of outrageous military conceits. Here, as a sample of his virtuoso treatment, is the passage describing the death of the falcon:-

When now he turns his last to wreak
The palizadoes of his Beak;
The raging foe impatient
Wrack'd with revenge, and fury rent,
Swift as the Thunderbolt he strikes,
Too sure upon the stand of Pikes,
There she his naked breast doth hit
And on the case of Rapiers's split.

Related to the creature-poem genre are the poetic accounts of bird-song - usually the song of the nightingale. A Latin poem by Famianus Strada (1572-1649), which was translated by several English poets, notably John Ford, Strode, and Crashaw,¹⁴² dealt with the popular theme of a singing contest between a nightingale and a human musician. Sir Richard Fanshawe's 'A Nightingale' plays with the myth of Philomel, and the "mournefull song" of the wronged maiden.¹⁴³ The Duchess of Newcastle brings together lark, nightingale, robin, owl, sparrow, magpie, linnet and many more in 'A Dialogue of Birds', which concludes with another charming example of her sympathetic delight in her fellow-creatures:-

The Thrushes, Linnets, Finches, all took parts,
 A Harmony by Nature, not by Arts.
 But all their Songs were Hymnes to God on high,
 Praising his Name, blessing his Majesty.
 And when they askt for Gifts, to God did pray,
 He would be pleas'd to give them a faire day.
 At last they drousie grew, and heavie were to sleep,
 And then instead of singing, cried Peep, peep.
 Just as the Eye, when Sense is locking up,
 Is neither open wide, nor yet quite shut:
 So doth a Voice still by degrees fall downe,
 And as a Shadow, wast so doth a Sound.
 Thus went to rest each Head, under each wing,
 For Sleep brings Peace to every living thing. 144

The last eight lines, through description and apt simile, very tenderly evoke the gradual stilling of the daylight music, as the birds drop off to sleep one by one.

The Duchess's husband has his own poetic tribute to the song of birds in his piece entitled 'The Lyrick Poet':-

The Lyrick Poett Nightingale,
 With love's songs shee doth never faile
 To warble forth love's sevrall Passions,
 With fine Expressions, sundry fashions,
 To make her love sick Male hopp to her,
 With love's sighs bowing so to woee her.

The Gentle Natur'd spotted Thrushe
 Such languadge Utters in her bushe
 As doth astonish those that heare her;
 Her lover then drawes somewhat neer her,
 With homage to her that sitts higher,
 Not Venter till shee calls him nigher.

The Litle Bulfinche doth Expresse
 That love in her is no whitt lesse;
 Love's languadge both can speake and singe.
 Her lover moves with fluttering winge;
 Dansinge on tender bowes so light,
 Enamour'd kills him with the sight.

The lovely Blackbird in her throate
 With trilloes sweetens Evry note;

Arcadian love discourses then
 Beyond our high borne Sydne's penne.
 And I dare sweare, were their loves knowne,
 Language and witt putts downe our owne. 145

The Duke maintains a refreshing delight in the creatures themselves - something which tends to get lost beneath literary preoccupations and conceits in the general run of animal-poems at this time - and in the last couplet of his poem evinces the same sense of humble reverence before nature's lesser creatures which characterizes so much of his wife's verse.

9. Conclusion.

This preliminary survey has revealed that the types and methods of description in the poetry of the mid-seventeenth century mostly came into Wells's category of the "Decorative". The natural details involved are usually literary, rather than freshly observed, and the poet rarely has physical verisimilitude or even sensuous vividness as his aim. Ingenuity, felicitous phrasing, virtuosity in handling established conventions are the predominant qualities. William Strode, Eldred Revett, and the Duchess of Newcastle are striking exceptions, both in their attitude to natural material and in their attempts to describe with visual accuracy. Neither of the men has the resources, nor perhaps the inclination (especially in the case of Revett), to escape from the prevailing influence of wit, but each in his own way tries to express his interest in the real features of the natural world: Strode by separating description from conceit, so that ingenuity serves merely as amplification; and Revett by making the conceit itself a vehicle for visual description. The Duchess is in a class

on her own. As poetry her work has obvious deficiencies, but these are more than compensated by the charm of her character and the ingenuous freshness of her response to the details of the world around her.

The most frequent descriptive types - the conventional season-piece, the earthly paradise, the "metaphysical" description, and above all the pastoral hyperbole - mark the zenith of a literary fashion that was about to give way before the rationalism and more limited classicism of the Augustans. While the topographical poem, the Italianate landscape of Corbet, Denham, and Revett, and the moralistic hill-poem modelled on Cooper's Hill, were destined to be among the most prolific genres of the coming era. The perfecting of the microscope was to lend a new emphasis to the insect-poem, and to divert interest from the traditional significance to the physical characteristics and the philosophical implications of the tinier creatures. And in the field of expression, the periphrasis, the artificial imagery of Sylvester's version of Du Bartas, and the morally pregnant epithets of Denham were to form the basis of the descriptive "poetic diction" of the eighteenth century.

NOTES

- 1 See pages 5-6 above.
- 2 Henry W. Wells, Poetic Imagery: Illustrated from Elizabethan Literature (New York, 1924), pp. 38-39.
- 3 *ibid.*, p. 45.
- 4 *ibid.*, p. 64.
- 5 N.H. Clement has written that, "In this anthropomorphization the ancient mind was undoubtedly more aware of the symbol than of the aspect of nature it humanized". ("Nature and the Country in Sixteenth and Seventeenth Century French Poetry", PMLA, XLIV, No. 4 (1929), p. 1014.
- 6 Samuel Pordage, Poems upon Several Occasions (1660), p. C6v.
- 7 Dorothy Schuchman McCoy, Tradition and Convention (The Hague, 1965), p. 37.
- 8 See William Davenant, 'The Queene, returning to London after a long absence', Madagascar; with other Poems (1648), p. 70; Thomas Stanley, 'Acanthus Complaint' and 'Sylvia's Park', The Poems and Translations of Thomas Stanley, ed. Galbraith Miller Crump (Oxford, 1962), pp. 166 and 158; Robert Heath, 'On the loss of Clarastella's black fan', Poems and Songs, ed. William G. Hutchison, "The Orinda Booklets" (Extra Series), II (Hull, 1905), p. 25.
- 9 Dorothy S. McCoy, *op. cit.*, p. 202.
- 10 *ibid.*, p. 14.
- 11 For some of Baron's thefts from Milton see The Cyprian Academy (1647), I, pp. 30, 55, 59; II, pp. 28-29; III, pp. 43, 45.
- 12 See, for example, Milton's 'Lycidas', l. 26.
- 13 Henry More, Psychozoia (2nd. ed., 1647), Canto I, st. 24, in Philosophical Poems of Henry More, ed. Geoffrey Bullough (Manchester, 1931), p. 19.
- 14 Henry More, 'Insomnium Philosophicum', ll. 1-6, *ed. cit.*, p. 144.
- 15 Stanley, Poems, *ed. cit.*, p. 171.
- 16 For the likening of dew to tears see Thomas Philipott, 'On the approach of night', Poems (1646), ed. L.C. Martin, "Liverpool Reprints", No. 4 (Liverpool, 1950), p. 10; Ralph Knevet, 'Solitude', The Shorter Poems of Ralph Knevet, ed. Amy M. Charles (Ohio, 1966), p. 296.
- 17 Charles Cotton, Poems, ed. John Burton, "The Muses' Library" (London, 1958), p. 43.
- 18 The Poems of Richard Crashaw, ed. L.C. Martin, 2nd. ed. (Oxford, 1957), p. 81; Eldred Revett, Selected Poems, Humane and Divine, ed. Donald M. Friedman, "English Reprint Series", No. 20 (Liverpool, 1966), p. 40.
- 19 The Poems of Richard Lovelace, ed. C.H. Wilkinson (Oxford, 1930) (reprinted 1968), p. 126.
- 20 Ernst Robert Curtius, European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages, trans. Willard R. Trask (London, 1953), p. 193.

- 21 *ibid.*, pp. 183 and 184.
- 22 *ibid.*, pp. 194 and 195.
- 23 See George Coffin Taylor, Milton's Use of Du Bartas (Cambridge, Mass., 1934) for a comprehensive examination of Milton's debt to Du Bartas and Sylvester; and Joan Grundy, The Spenserian Poets (London, 1969), for an account of the influence of La Semaine on the conception and practice of poetry by the seventeenth-century followers of Spenser.
- 24 See J.B. Leishman, The Art of Marvell's Poetry (London, 1966), pp. 273-77.
- 25 Quoted by Leishman, p. 274, from Bartas his Divine Weekes & Workes, trans. Sylvester, ed. 1621, p. 223.
- 26 Bartas, ed. 1621, p. 87.
- 27 Edward Benlowes, Theophila (1652), Canto XIII, st. lix, in Minor Poets of the Caroline Period, Vol. I, ed. George Saintsbury (Oxford, 1905), p. 458.
- 28 See Harold Jenkins, Edward Benlowes (London, 1952), pp. 113-14.
- 29 Theophila, Canto IV, st. lxxviii, ed. cit., p. 365.
- 30 Robert Chamberlain, Nocturnall Lucubrations (1638); 'On the Spring' is included in Rare Poems of the Seventeenth Century, ed. L. Birkett Marshall (Cambridge, 1936), p. 20.
- 31 Quoted by Leishman, p. 230. Leishman does not mention the connection between this poem and the borrowings from Sylvester which he discusses later.
- 32 Robert Baron, The Cyprian Academy (1647), I, p. 46.
- 33 Thomas Shipman, Carolina: Or, Loyal Poems (1683), p. 43.
- 34 Matthew Coppinger, Poems, Songs, and Love-Verses (1682), p. 39.
- 35 *ibid.*, p. 64.
- 36 The Poems and Translations of Sir Edward Sherburne (1616-1702), ed. F.J. Van Beeck, S.J. (Assen, 1961), p. 80.
- 37 The Poetical Works of William Strode (1600-1645), ed. Bertram Dobell (London, 1907), p. 41.
- 38 Crashaw, ed. cit., p. 394.
- 39 Mildmay Fane, Otia Sacra (1648), p. 16.
- 40 Benlowes seems to have been acquainted with Fane, to whom he sent a presentation copy of Theophila. See Harold Jenkins, *op. cit.*, pp. 167-68.
- 41 The Plays and Poems of William Cartwright, ed. G. Blakemore Evans (Madison, 1951), p. 457.
- 42 *ibid.*, p. 569. For a discussion of the possible attribution of these poems to Cartwright see the General Introduction to this edition, pp. 75-77.
- 43 Shipman, Carolina, p. 17.
- 44 Examen Poeticum (1693), p. 234.
- 45 See Thomas Carew, 'The Spring', Poems, ed. Rhodes Dunlap (Oxford, 1949), p. 3. See also the Duchess of Newcastle, 'A Dialogue between Earth, and Cold', Poems and Fancies (1653), p. 63: "Tyrant thou art, to bind the Waters clear/In Chains of Ice, lye fetter'd halfe the years".
- 46 See Surrey, Silver Poets of the Sixteenth Century, ed. G. Bullett,

- "Everyman's Library" (London, 1947), p. 114; Carew, ed. cit., p. 3; Crashaw, ed. cit., p. 155; Stanley, ed. cit., p. 91; Robert Baron, Pocula Castalia (1650), p. 86; Ralph Cudmore, Rare Poems of the Seventeenth Century, pp. 39-41 (from Euchodia: a Prayer-Song, 1655).
- 47 Revett, ed. cit., pp. 43-49. A few years earlier Matthew Stevenson had printed two pieces called 'Summer' and 'In prayse of winter' (Occasions Off-spring (1654), pp. 65-68), which are emblematic and conventional in phrasing and imagery.
- 48 See Spenser's Faerie Queene, "Mutabilitie" Canto VII, sts. 28-43, for a pageant of the Seasons and Months, in The Poetical Works of Edmund Spenser, ed. J. Payne Collier, 5 vols. (London, 1891), IV, 274-77.
- 49 Crashaw, ed. cit., pp. 155-56.
- 50 Lovelace, ed. cit., p. 147.
- 51 Thomas Washbourne, 'A Pastoral Dialogue Concerning the Joyes of Heaven, And the Paines of Hell', Divine Poems (1654), pp. 84-85; Stanley, ed. cit., p. 188.
- 52 See Marlowe, 'The Passionate Shepherd to his Love', Marlowe's Plays and Poems, ed. M.R. Ridley, "Everyman's Library" (London, 1955), p. 435; Donne, 'The Baite', Complete Poetry and Selected Prose, ed. John Hayward, "The Nonesuch Library" (London, 1955), p. 34; Cotton, 'An Invitation to Phillis', Poems, ed. cit., pp. 41-43.
- 53 Stanley, ed. cit., p. 141.
- 54 The Odes of Casimire, trans. G.H. (London, 1646), "Augustan Reprint Society", No. 44 (Los Angeles, 1953), p. 87.
- 55 The earthly paradise and eternal spring topoi provided the literary material for Milton's account of Eden in Paradise Lost. The locus amoenus or the garden, which became the major manifestation of it in seventeenth-century poetry, is frequently related specifically to the Garden of Genesis, as in Marvell's 'The Garden', where hints from this same ode of Casimire's are taken up.
- 56 Abraham Cowley: Poems, ed. A.R. Waller (Cambridge, 1905), pp. 160-1.
- 57 The Poems of Edmund Waller, ed. G. Thorn Drury, "The Muses' Library", 2 vols. (London, 1893), I, 66-67.
- 58 The last couplet reminds one of the theory that Nature was affected by the Fall of Man. Waller is using it for a witty effect here, but it is likely that the discovery of unspoiled natural paradises in the New World had something to do with the gradual decline in popularity of the Goodman view of the earth's history.
- 59 J.B. Leishman, The Art of Marvell's Poetry, p. 282.
- 60 See above, Chapter II, Section 13.
- 61 Margaret Cavendish, Duchess of Newcastle, Poems and Fancies (1653), pp. 158-59.
- 62 Henry W. Wells, op. cit., p. 47.
- 63 N.H. Clement, op. cit. (see n. 5 above), pp. 1021-23.
- 64 Stanley, ed. cit., p. 112.
- 65 Christopher Wyvill, Certaine Serious Thoughts (1647), pp. 34-35.
- 66 Stanley, ed. cit., p. 148.
- 67 Davenant, Madagascar (1648), pp. 34-35.

- 68 The Phanseys of William Cavendish (written about 1645), ed. Douglas Grant (London, 1956), pp. 87-88.
- 69 See William Cartwright, 'Sadness', Poems (1651), ed. cit., pp. 473-74; Waller, 'Thyrsis, Galatea', Poems, ed. cit., I, 42; Cowley, 'On the Death of Mr. William Hervey', st. 6, Poems, ed. cit., p. 34.
- 70 C.A. Patrides, Milton and the Christian Tradition (Oxford, 1966), p. 72.
- 71 Psalm XCVI, vv. 11-12; Habakkuk, III, vv. 10-11.
- 72 Patrides, p. 73.
- 73 Cotton, ed. cit., p. 26.
- 74 Crashaw, ed. cit., pp. 106 and 107.
- 75 Virgil, "The Loeb Classical Library", 2 vols. (London, 1965), I, 55.
- 76 Lovelace, ed. cit., p. 160.
- 77 Philipott, ed. cit., pp. 7-8. This poem is also interesting for its reference to the "wild assertion" of Copernicus. Milton, of course, as late as the 1660s, could still base the cosmology of his epic on the Ptolemaic system, and decline to arbitrate between the old and the new conceptions of the universe in Adam's discussion with Raphael in Book VIII.
- 78 'A Song in Parts', The Marrow of Complements (1655), p. 27. This song, with the lines rearranged and a few small changes in phrasing, is Ben Jonson's 'The Musically Strife', in Poems, ed. George Burke Johnsten, ("The Muses' Library" (London, 1954), pp. 122-23.
- 79 There is an evident similarity between this device and the passage from Habakkuk quoted above, in which the mountains and the heavenly bodies respond to the wrath of God (see n. 71).
- 80 Stanley, ed. cit., p. 159.
- 81 Cotton, ed. cit., p. 181.
- 82 J.B. Leishman, op. cit., p. 80.
- 83 *ibid.*, pp. 224-37.
- 84 Strode, ed. cit., p. 41.
- 85 Cartwright, ed. cit., pp. 569-70. It is not certain that the group of "Splendora" poems were written by Cartwright. For a discussion of the possible attribution of them to this poet see the General Introduction to the edition cited, pp. 75-77.
- 86 Revett, ed. cit., pp. 12-13.
- 87 Waller, ed. cit., I, 46. For the early date of this poem see the discussion of Waller's devotion to Lady Dorothy Sidney in G. Thorn Drury's Introduction to the Muses' Library edition, pp. xxiii-xxx.
- 88 John Cleveland, Poems (1647), in The Minor Poets of the Caroline Period, ed. George Saintsbury, Vol. III (Oxford, 1921), p. 35.
- 89 William Hammond, Poems (1655), The Minor Poets of the Caroline Period (Oxford, 1906), Vol. II, p. 489.
- 90 Nicholas Hookes, Amanda, a Sacrifice to an Unknown Goddess (1653, reprinted London, 1923), pp. 42-43.
- 91 Heath, ed. cit., p. 20.
- 92 See The Parlement of Foules, ll. 176-82 and 330-64, and 'Lyoidas', ll. 142-51. There is a list of trees in Pathericke Jenkyns's 'A Pastorall Poem', to be found in Amorea (1661), p. 36. See also J.B.

- Leishman's discussion of flower passages in Spenser, Shakespeare, (Hamlet, The Winter's Tale, Pericles, and Cymbeline), and Milton, in Milton's Minor Poems (London, 1969), pp. 300-304.
- 93 Dorothy S. McCoy, *op. cit.*, p. 218.
- 94 Robert Ellrodt, Les Poetes Metaphysiques Anglais (Paris, 1960), 2 vols., I, 249.
- 95 Donne, *ed. cit.*, pp. 145-48.
- 96 Cartwright, *ed. cit.*, pp. 457-59.
- 97 The editor of the edition cited notes the resemblance to Donne, p. 688.
- 98 *ibid.*, pp. 687-88.
- 99 See n. 43 above.
- 100 The Minor Poems of Joseph Beaumont, D.D., 1616-1699, ed. Eloise Robinson (London, 1914), p. 399.
- 101 The Selected Poems of George Daniel of Beswick: 1616-1657, ed. Thomas B. Stroup (Kentucky, 1959), p. 43.
- 102 Thomas Washbourne, Divine Poems (1654), p. 138.
- 103 Crashaw, *ed. cit.*, pp. 181-82.
- 104 Strode, *ed. cit.*, pp. 21-24.
- 105 Pope, Poetical Works, ed. Herbert Davis (London, 1966), p. 38.
- 106 Duchess of Newcastle, Poems and Fancies (1653), pp. 160-61.
- 107 Revett, *ed. cit.*, p. 11.
- 108 Katherine Philips, Minor Poets of the Caroline Period, ed. George Saintsbury, Vol. I (Oxford, 1905), pp. 519-20.
- 109 R.A. Aubin, Topographical Poetry in XVIII-Century England (New York, 1936), p. vii.
- 110 See Ben Jonson, 'To Penshurst', *ed. cit.*, pp. 76-79; Carew, 'To Saxham', *ed. cit.*, pp. 27-29; Mathias Casimire Sarbiewski, 'To Paulus Iordanus Vrsinus, Duke of Bracciano', Odes, trans. G.H., pp. 105-121; Marvell, Upon Appleton House, The Poems and Letters of Andrew Marvell, 2 vols., ed. H.M. Margoliouth, 2nd. ed. (Oxford, 1952), I, 59-83; Rowland Watkyns, Flamma Sine Fumo (1662), pp. 17-18.
- 111 See George Hibbard, "The Country House Poem of the Seventeenth Century", Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes, XIX (1956), p. 171.
- 112 See William Prynne, Mount-Orgeuil; or Divine and Profitable Meditations (1641); Cleveland, *ed. cit.*, pp. 88-92; J. Emerson, 'Poetical Descriptions of Orkney', ed. J. Maidment (Edinburgh, 1835).
- 113 Strode, *ed. cit.*, pp. 20-21.
- 114 R.A. Aubin, *op. cit.*, p. 242.
- 115 For a recent critical treatment of Poly-Olbion see Joan Grundy, The Spenserian Poets (London, 1969), pp. 128-142.
- 116 Drayton, Poly-Olbion (1612 and 1622); Thomas Hobbes, De Mirabilibus Pecci (1636); Richard James, 'Iter Lancastrense' (1636).
- 117 For Katherine Philips's poem see n. 108 above; Richard Corbet, Poems, ed. J.A.W. Bennett and H.R. Trevor-Roper (Oxford, 1955), pp. 31-49; Henry Bold, Poems: Lyrique, Macaronique, Heroique, &c. (London, 1664), pp. 151-58; and Jeremiah Wells, Poems upon Divers Occasions (1667), pp. 77-111.

- 118 Corbet, ed. cit., p. 38.
- 119 If the poem were written as early as 1621, it could hardly be a reflection of the landscape vision of Claude (1600-1682) and Salvator Rosa (1615-1673), as seems to be implied by the remarks of Aubin which follow in the text. Corbet, however, could have been influenced by such earlier exponents of landscape art as Domenichino (1581-1641), and Elsheimer (1578-1610).
- 120 R.A. Aubin, p. 32.
- 121 Cooper's Hill, ll. 209-228, in The Poetical Works of Sir John Denham, ed. Theodore Howard Banks (New Haven, 1928), p. 79.
- 122 Revett, ed. cit., pp. 15-16.
- 123 Wells, ed. cit., n. 117 above, pp. 82-83.
- 124 M.A. Goldberg, "The Language of Art and Reality: A Study of Eighteenth-Century Hill Poems", Boston University Studies in English, III, No. 2 (1957), pp. 67-68.
- 125 Maren-Sofie Røstvig, The Happy Man, 2nd. ed. (New York, 1962), I, 110.
- 126 *ibid.*, p. 113.
- 127 R.A. Aubin, pp. 35-36.
- 128 *ibid.*, p. 36.
- 129 Kitty Scoular, Natural Magic (Oxford, 1965), pp. 90-91.
- 130 Stanley, ed. cit., p. 94. For 'The Swallow' see pp. 89-90.
- 131 See Lovelace, 'The Grasse-hopper, ed. cit., pp. 38-40; Casimire, Ode I, Lib. I, Odes, ed. cit., p. 5; Marvell, Upon Appleton House, st. xlvii, ed. cit., I, 70.
- 132 Cowley, ed. cit., p. 57. Cowley also wrote a free paraphrase of Anacreon's 'The Swallow', *ibid.*, p. 58.
- 133 D.C. Allen, "Richard Lovelace: 'The Grasse-Hopper'", reprinted in Seventeenth-Century English Poetry, ed. William R. Keast (Galaxy Books, New York, 1962), pp. 280-89.
- 134 See Donne, ed. cit., pp. 29-30; Stanley, ed. cit., p. 46; Lovelace, ed. cit., pp. 134-35, 136-37, 155-56; Marvell, ed. cit., I, 44-45.
- 135 Stanley, *ibid.*, p. 2.
- 136 Duchess of Newcastle, *op. cit.*, p. 103.
- 137 'A True Relation of the Birth, Breeding, and Life, of Margaret Cavendish, Duchess of Newcastle, Written by Herself' (reprinted with a Critical Preface by Sir Egerton Brydges, Kent, 1814) in The Lives of William Cavendish, Duke of Newcastle, and of his Wife, Margaret Duchess of Newcastle, ed. Mark Antony Lower (London, 1872), p. 304. The autobiography originally appeared in Natures Pictures drawn by Fancies Pencil to the Life by the Lady Marchioness of Newcastle (1656).
- 138 Duchess of Newcastle, Poems and Fancies, pp. 110-13, 113-16.
- 139 Similar effects of empathy occur in Shakespeare's work. For example, in these lines from Venus and Adonis:-
 Or, as the snail, whose tender horns being hit,
 Shrinks backward in his shelly cave with pain,
 And there all smother'd up in shade doth sit,
 Long after fearing to creep forth again. (st. 173)

- 140 Lovelace, ed. cit., pp. 141-45, 162-68.
- 141 The notes to the edition cited provide a long quotation from
Topsell's History of Serpents, and several references to Nash.
- 142 See Crashaw, 'Musick's Duell', ed. cit., pp. 149-53; also the ed-
itor's note about the poem and its other translators, on pp. 438-40.
- 143 Sir Richard Fanshawe, Shorter Poems and Translations, ed. N.W. Baw-
cutt, "English Reprints Series", No. 19 (Liverpool, 1964), p. 35.
- 144 Duchess of Newcastle, Poems and Fancies, p. 75.
- 145 William Cavendish, Duke of Newcastle, Phanseys, ed. cit., p. 94.

Chapter V

Figurative Uses of Natural Details

It was suggested in Chapter I that when the poet of the seventeenth century invoked natural imagery to express his ideas or experiences, he could rely upon his reader's familiarity with a tradition of fixed significances. Classical and Biblical literature, the mediaeval bestiaries, anagogical commonplaces, folklore, the Petrarchan love-lyric: all these provided a vast array of images which were received by the Renaissance mind less as items from nature, each with its own unique physical characteristics, than as types and symbols of moral, spiritual, or emotional areas of experience. As Josephine Miles demonstrates,¹ sensuous details were admitted into poetry by Donne and most of his contemporaries only insofar as they could be recognised as standing for abstract qualities: the visual phenomenon of "brightness" indicated the moral virtue of "goodness". Rosemond Tuve further declares:-

It is clear that images designed to assist in the poetic statement of values would not succeed in this by virtue of their sensuous precision. Poets well understood the role of a credible vividness in accomplishing such intentions, especially in certain genres; but profound suggestiveness or logical subtlety is likely to displace sensuous accuracy in the images.²

Moreover, although the poet's sensibility, or his purpose in a particular context, might lead him to emphasize the sensuous qualities of his image - to give an impression of what the natural detail itself is like - more often than not he needed only to name the detail for its symbolic meaning to be released. Richard Crashaw's early work, for example, reveals a

sensibility that was responsive to certain aspects of the natural world, most frequently the dawn and flowers. The second of the elegies on Herrys contains a fully developed sensuous image:-

I've seen indeed the hopefull bud,
 Of a ruddy Rose that stood
 Blushing, to behold the Ray
 Of the new-saluted Day;
 (His tender toppe not fully spread)
 The sweet dash of a shower now shedd,
 Invited him no more to hide
 Within himselfe the purple pride
 Of his forward flower, when lo
 While he sweetly 'gan to show
 His swelling Gloryes, Auster spide him,
 Cruell Auster thither hy'd him,
 And with the rush of one rude blast,
 Sham'd not spitefully to wast
 All his leaves, so fresh, so sweet,
 And lay them trembling at his feet.³

There is a "credible vividness" in this drama of the rose-bud,, opening in response to "the sweet dash of a shower", and then destroyed by the South Wind. Nevertheless, the important words for the image's effect in the poem are not the physically descriptive ones, but the evaluative ones: "hopefull", "pride", "forward", "swelling Gloryes" (descriptive and evaluative coincide in these last two), "cruell", "spitefully". And the sensuousness, though vivid, is not accurate: it is unlikely that a rose just opened from the bud would be deprived of "all his leaves" by "the rush of one rude blast". Accuracy is disregarded in the need to interpret Auster as Death, who, in his cruelty, cuts off youth at one blow.

In Crashaw's later work, the natural details lose even the degree of realization accorded them in the Herrys elegy. The third stanza of 'An

Himne for the Circumcision day of our Lord' reads:-

Of all the faire cheekt flowers that fill thee,
 None so faire thy bosome strowes;
 As this modest Maiden Lilly,
 Our sinnes have sham'd into a Rose.⁴

The success of this depends on the reader's awareness not simply of the physical facts that lilies are white and roses red, but of all the connotations of the two flowers in a long tradition of literary and religious symbolism. No effort is made to project an image of the rose or the lily - they have ceased to be felt as items from the natural world.

Austin Warren comments on their place in Crashaw's verse:-

These flowers, which appear briefly, in his earliest poems, as outward and visible creatures, do not disappear from his later verse; but they soon turn into a ceremonial and symbolical pair, a liturgical formula, expressive of white and red, tears and blood, purity and love.⁵

A few lines later, he goes on:-

If Crashaw's flora soon turn symbols, his fauna have never owed genuine allegiance to the world of Nature. The worm; the wolf, the lamb; the fly, the bee; the dove, the eagle, the "self-wounding pelican", and the phoenix: all derive their traits and their significance from bestiary or Christian tradition, not from observation; and their symbolism is palpable.⁶

The same is true of most of the figurative uses of natural details of Crashaw's age. Whether the rose is presented as a plant growing in the real earth, or whether it is invoked as part of a liturgical or an erotic formula, its meaning is already established by centuries of usage. Miss Tuve argues that, since metaphors and other figures become symbols "when

writers can be entirely sure that readers will take one thing as truly presenting another", all early seventeenth-century metaphor had "more of the character we should now call symbolic".⁷

1. Infant Buds.

Crashaw's elegy on Herrys draws on one of the most frequently exploited of all nature symbols: the brief life of flowers as a figure of transience. The image could be given different emphases, depending on the context, and several distinct genres grew up around it. Crashaw's poem belongs to that of the elegy or epitaph on a youth or child. The opening lines of Milton's lament 'On the Death of a Fair Infant Dying of a Cough' contain the main motifs of such pieces:-

O Fairest flower, no sooner blown but blasted,
Soft silken Primrose fading timelessly,
Summer's chief honor, if thou hadst outlasted
Bleak winter's force that made thy blossom dry.

As in Crashaw's elegy, the fragility of young life, and the promise of future achievement are both stressed, together with the harshness of the fate that denies maturity and fulfilment - usually also expressed in terms of natural phenomena: "Cruell Auster" or "Bleak winters' force". Each of these ideas is delicately touched on in the first couplet of Clement Barksdale's brief epitaph 'Upon the Decease of my Infant Lady':-

E'en so, the nipping wind in May doth come,
And blast the choicest fruit in the first bloom.⁸

Rowland Watkyns gives the image a Christian application in 'An Epitaph upon my beloved Daughter Susanna Watkyns, who was born upon Ashwednesday,

1655, and dyed the 5. of August, 1658':-

Here lies a pleasant Rose, rash Death thought good
To take, and crop it in the tender bud:
God is a Husbandman, who doth remove
His younger plants, to make them better prove.⁹

And Martin Lluelyn's 'Epitaph on --- borne tenne Weekes before his Time,
died at three Quarters' dwells on the pity of innocent death:-

Greiv'd at the World and Crimes, this early Bloome
Look'd round, and sigh'd, and stole into his Tombe.
His fall was like his Birth, too quicke, this Rose
Made hast to spread, and the same Hast to close:
Here lyes his Dust, but his best Tombe's fled hence,
For Marble cannot last like Innocence.¹⁰

Edmund Waller works an interesting variation on the traditional material in 'On the Picture of a Fair Youth, Taken After he was Dead':-

As gathered flowers, while their wounds are new,
Look gay and fresh, as on the stalk they grew;
Torn from the root that nourished them, awhile
(Not taking notice of their fate) they smile,
And, in the hand which rudely plucked them, show
Fairer than those that to their autumn grow;
So love and beauty still that visage grace;
Death cannot fright them from their wonted place.¹¹

Related to this genre is Sir Richard Fanshawe's beautiful meditation on 'A Rose':-

Blowne in the Morning, thou shalt fade ere Noone:
What bootes a Life which in such hast forsakes thee?
Th'art wondrous frolick being to dye so soone:
And passing proud a little colour makes thee.

If thee thy brittle beauty so deceives,
Know then the thing that swells thee is thy bane;
For the same beauty doth in bloody leaves
The sentence of thy early death containe.

Some Clowes course Lungs will poyson thy sweet flow'r
 If by the carelesse Plough thou shalt be torne:
 And many Herods lye in waite each how'r
 To murther thee as soone as thou art borne;
 Nay, force thy Bud to blow; Their Tyrant breath
 Anticipating Life, to hasten death.¹²

This sonnet, based on Gongora's 'Vana Rosa', distills the quintessence of the transient rose image: the bitterness and frustration that is felt at the loss of young life; the dangers that beset growing beauty; the malice and injustice of a world where "Herods lye in waite" for innocence. The peculiar intensity and grace of the poem must derive largely from the skilfull handling of phrase and rhythm, and from the fine unexpectedness of the reference to Herod, but much is also owed to the tradition of elegies and epitaphs which informs the basic metaphor with the vibrancy of immemorial associations. The opening line suggests at once to the reader the area of experience that is to be explored, so that the poet can concentrate on laying bare new facets of his subject. The rose of the title has deep roots in previous literature.

Another of the transient-flower genres is hinted at in Fanshawe's 'The Rose'. One aspect of his image is that of beauty just swelling into maturity, which will be "passing proud" of its own fleeting perfection. There was a line of flower-images applied to children, or girls on the threshold of womanhood, expressing either their future threat to mankind or their own danger from man and death. J.B. Leishman has traced the development of poems addressed to "very young ladies" from two epigrams in the Greek Anthology and Horace's Ode V, Book II, into the seventeenth

century.¹³ The earlier examples do not invoke the flower image, but the middle stanza of Waller's 'To a very young lady' exhorts:-

Yet, fairest blossom! do not slight
That age which you may know so soon;
The rosy morn resigns her light,
And milder glory, to the noon;
And then what wonders shall you do,
Whose dawning beauty warms us so?¹⁴

Leishman suggests that the image of the "fairest blossom" in this poem may have been taken up by Thomas Stanley and expanded into his 'The Bud', which bears the subtitle 'To a young Gentlewoman' and begins:-

See how this infant bud, so lately borne,
Swell'd with the Springs warme breath and dew o'th'morne,
Contracted in its folded leaves doth beare
The richest treasure of the teeming yeare,
By whose young growing beauties conquerd yield
The full-blowne glories of the painted field,
And, thus surpast, do jointly all confesse
Nature hath here done more in doing lesse.¹⁵

An anonymous and undated poem (first printed in 1671), also called 'To a very young lady', which Leishman suspects of being pre-Restoration, adds the cautionary note of transience to the theme of ripening beauty:-

Sweetest bud of beauty, may
No untimely frost decay
The early glories, which we trace
Blooming in thy matchless face.¹⁶

The most celebrated products of the tradition are Marvell's 'Young Love' and 'The Picture of Little T.C. in a Prospect of Flowers'.

One other poem must be mentioned here, for although it does not deal with young beauty as such, it has affinities with both Stanley's and

Fanshawe's treatment of the opening flower image. These first two stanzas of Waller's 'The Bud' present the image, a third applies it ingeniously to "Flavia":-

Lately on yonder swelling bush,
 Big with many a coming rose,
 This early bud began to blush,
 And did but half itself disclose;
 I plucked it, though no better grown,
 And now you see how full 'tis blown.
 Still as I did the leaves inspire,
 With such a purple light they shone,
 As if they had been made of fire,
 And spreading so, would flame anon.
 All that was meant by air or sun,
 To the young flower, my breath has done.¹⁷

The idea of the bud unfolding in response to warm air is found in Stanley's "Swelld with the Springs warme breath", and is given a more sinister turn in Fanshawe's "Some Clownes course Lungs" and "Tyrant breath".

2. Carpe florem and Memento mori.

Perhaps the most popular of all the themes associated with the transient-flower symbol is that of Carpe florem - the theme of Herrick's "Gather ye Rose-buds while ye may" and Comus's temptation speeches in Milton's masque:-

If you let slip time, like a neglected rose
 It withers on the stalk with languisht head.¹⁸

Henry More uses the image in a very similar exhortation in Cupids Conflict:-

Unthankfull wretch! Gods gifts thus to reject
 And maken nought of Natures goodly dower.
 That milders still away through thy neglect
 And dying fades like unregarded flower.¹⁹

Edmund Waller's 'Go, Lovely Rose!' elaborates a charming conceit on the image, and the first stanza of his 'To a Lady in a Garden' neatly sums up the typical argument:-

Sees not my love how time resumes
The glory which he lent these flowers?
Though none should taste of their perfumes,
Yet must they live but some few hours;
Time what we forbear devours!²⁰

The author of 'A Song' in The Marrow of Compliments puts it more saucily:-

Now the lusty Spring is seen,
Golden yellow, gaudy blew,
Daintily invite the view
Every where on every green;
Roses blushing as they blow,
 And inticing men to pull;
Lilies whiter then the Snow,
Wood-bines of sweet Honey full.
 All Loves emblems, and all cry,
 Ladies if not pluck'd we die.²¹

Robert Baron changes the import of the image slightly by adding two other traditional symbols which signify victory over transience, and suggesting that even the fading rose has a remedy denied to time-haunted man:-

Use time, the squabbling Snake with age ore-worne
Casts off her hide, and re-assumes a new.
The tousing Eagle change her aged plumes,
The fading Rose (the glory of the Spring)
Receive an annual birth from the sharp briar,
Be wise, and crop in time your beauties flowers,
They ne're spring more, being faded once, like ours.²²

Lastly, there is the more general application of the image as a memento mori: the rose of George Herbert's 'Vertue', whose "root is ever in its grave"; the flowers which cry to Henry King in his 'Midnight

Meditation', "Fool! as I fade and wither, thou must die"; the roses which Eldred Revett's *Lycoris* watches bloom and die, "And fall her dear similitude".²³ The Duchess of Newcastle begins her reverie, 'Of the Shortnesse of Mans Life, and his foolish Ambition', with typical bluntness:-

In Gardens sweet, each Flower mark did I,
How they did spring, bud, blow, wither, and dye.
With that, contemplating of Mans short stay,
Saw Man like to those Flowers passe away.²⁴

The three favourite flowers of seventeenth-century literature are called upon to witness to the frailty of the human condition in the introduction to Thomas Philipott's 'An Elegie offered up to the memorie of Anne Countesse of Caernarvon':-

Those Flowers of Beautie, Lilly, Violet,
And blushing Rose, which were by Nature set
In faire Caernarvons cheek, and seem'd to grow,
(Strange wonder!) there amidst a bed of Snow,
By deaths rude hand now from their stalk are rent,
And throwne (alas) into a Monument,
Where they will wither into dust, and be
The types of humane mutabilitie.²⁵

And Henry King finds that he can learn a gracious acceptance of his lot from the example of the "Brave flowers", which are content to return to the earth from which they sprang, concluding with the prayer:-

You fragrant flowers then teach me that my breath
Like yours may sweeten and perfume my death.²⁶

In most of the poems cited, the sensuous element ~~wither~~ does not intrude at all, or else is generalized, like Stanley's "richest treasure of the teeming yeare" or Waller's "to their autumn grow". Milton's "soft

silken Primrose" and rose which "withers on the stalk with languish't head", and Waller's bud which "did but half itself disclose", are in this respect exceptional. What they all have in common - even the poorest poetic utterances - is *avvitality*, a power to move the reader, which resides to a large extent in the image itself. This is not because fading flowers are essentially "poetic", but because they have become so in a tradition of usage that has imprinted itself deeply on the sensibility of our culture. So indelible is the mark of poems like 'Go, Lovely Rose!', "Gather ye Rose-buds while ye may", 'Vertue', 'A Contemplation upon Flowers', 'My Love is like a Red, Red Rose'; and famous lines like:-

Full many a flower is born to blush unseen,
And waste its sweetness on the desert air;

and "Then glut your sorrow on a morning rose"; that the image has retained its vigour over the centuries. It is in the immediacy of our response to the implications of the transience of flowers that we can understand something of the symbolic impact of many natural details, which had wide currency in the seventeenth century, but which are now dead to us except in the hands of such gifted artists as Milton, Marvell, or Vaughan.

3. Traditional Natural Symbolism.

The natural images which the Renaissance poet automatically associated with particular human situations or qualities are far too numerous to catalogue here.²⁷ The following examples will give some idea of the way in which inherited material was used to amplify or embody conventional themes.

a) Flowers.

The commonest symbolic flowers of literature were the rose, the lily, and the violet; the rose signifying usually either love/passion/beauty or shame/modesty; the lily modesty or purity; and the violet humility.

Crashaw concluded 'The Weeper' with:-

We goe not to seeke
The darlings of Aurora's bed,
The Roses modest cheekes
Nor the Violets humble head.
No such thing; we goe to meet
A worthier object, Our Lords feet.²⁸

Modesty and humility are so habitually associated with the rose and the violet that the mere mention of the flowers calls up the appropriate qualitative epithets. An emblem from Christopher Harvey's The School of the Heart effects a complete identification of flower and human quality. Previous plates had shown the heart being tilled, sown, and watered. In number thirty, the "Flowers of the Heart" are seen blossoming from it. Stanzas 3-4-5 of the accompanying ode explain their significance:-

What say'st thou to that Rose,
That queen of flowers, whose
Maiden blushes, fresh and fair,
Outbrave the dainty morning air?
Dost thou not in those lovely leaves espy
The perfect picture of that modesty,
That self-condemning shamefacedness,
That is more ready to confess
A fault, and to amend,
Than it is to offend?
Is not this lily pure?
What fuller can procure
A white so perfect, spotless, clear,
As in this flower doth appear?
Dost thou not in this milky colour see

The lively lustre of sincerity,
 Which no hypocrisy hath painted,
 Nor self-respecting ends have tainted?
 Can there be to thy sight
 A more intire delight?

 Or wilt thou have, beside,
 Violets purple-dy'd?
 The sun-observing marigold,
 Or orpin never waxing old,
 The primrose, cowslip, gilliflow'r, or pink,
 Or any flow'r, or herb, that I can think
 Thou hast a mind unto? I shall,
 Quickly be furnish'd with them all,
 If once I do but know
 That thou wilt have it so.²⁹

The symbolic values of the rose and the lily are worked out in detail,
 but the humility of the violet, the faithfulness of the marigold, and so
 on³⁰ are left to the reader to interpret for himself, from his acquaintance
 with traditional symbolism. Similar lists of flowers, some of which
 intimate moral values, occur in The Shepherds' Calendar, Hamlet, and The
 Winter's Tale.³¹ Harvey's emblem presents with graphic vividness the
 correspondences that were felt to obtain between the human and the
 natural planes of existence.

b) Trees.

The list of trees, each with its proper use and meaning attached, was
 a topos deriving from antiquity. Chaucer and Spenser both furnish examples.³²
 In the seventeenth century trees were often used as images to reinforce
 an emotional situation or to point a moral. Willows, for instance, were
 traditionally the sign of unrequited love, as in Viola's "Make me a
 willow cabin at your gate" or Desdemona's 'Willow Song'. Laurel was the
 crown of the poet, oak leaves of the victorious general. The cypress and

the yew of Feste's song in Twelfth Night stood for death or melancholy.³³

William Cartwright's 'Sadness' begins:-

Whiles I this standing Lake,
Swath'd up with Ewe and Cypress Boughs,
Do move by Sighs and Vows,
Let Sadness only wake;

and Cowley's 'The Complaint':-

In a deep Vision's intellectual scene,
Beneath a Bow'r for sorrow made,
Th'uncomfortable shade,
Of the black Yew's unlucky green,
Mixt with the mourning Willow's careful gray,
Where Reverend Cham cuts out his Famous way,
The Melancholy Cowley lay.³⁴

A modern poet might use tree-imagery to express his mood or ideas - see Edward Thomas's 'Old Man' - but he would have to create a significance for it in the context of the poem. The seventeenth-century poet can suggest his meaning by simply naming the appropriate tree. Cowley's yew and willow are as divorced from the material world as the "intellectual scene" of misery which they adorn. They function exclusively at a symbolic level. The pathside shrub in Thomas's poem, on the other hand, is a real plant growing in a particular place, and it gathers significance around itself as the poem progresses.

The oak, as king of the forest,³⁵ is often coupled with some more lowly plant to establish a qualitative comparison. The poet tells the story of the Oak and the Briar, in Spenser's February eclogue, to illustrate that the humbler creatures depend on the more noble in times of adversity. Matthew Stevenson uses a similar comparison to scorn his "Coy and Captious

Mistress":-

Ile court my shade no more, but flee
 From it, and make it follow me:
 Nor shall the lofty Cedar bough
 To the base Bramble, tis too low.
 Ile kneel no more t'ungrateful Thistles.³⁶

Mildmay Fane uses this kind of image to suggest that lowliness often has the advantage over greatness, in his 'A Quid Retribuam':-

So have I tender Saplings seen unbroak,
 When Tempests have o'r-turn'd the sturdier Oak.³⁷

And Waller depends on the reader's familiarity with the traditional contrast for the impact of his lines:-

Where oaks and brambles (if the copse be burned)
 Confounded lie, to the same ashes turned.³⁸

Other pairs of plants functioned as emblems of love and dependence. The second of Stanley's translations of Johannes Secundus's 'Kisses' opens with two of the most common:-

As in a thousand wanton Curles the Vine
 Doth the lov'd Elme embrace;
 As clasping Ivy round the Oak doth twine
 To kiss his leavy Face;
 So thou about my Neck thy Arms shalt fling,
 Joyning to mine thy Breast.³⁹

Another of Stanley's poems links the ivy to the vine, and introduces another tree often used to symbolize affection:-

See how this Ivy strives to twine
 Her wanton arms about the Vine,

And her coy lover thus restrains,
 Entangled in her amorous chains;
 See how these neighb'ring Palms do bend
 Their heads, and mutual murmurs send,
 As whisp'ring with a jealous fear
 Their loves, into each others ear.⁴⁰

Waller concludes his 'Of Her Passing through a Crowd of People' with a simile about the palm tree which indicates the origin, in the physical characteristics of the tree, of its symbol~~ic~~ value:-

So the amorous tree, while yet the air is calm,
 Just distance keeps from his desired palm;
 But when the wind her ravished branches throws
 Into his arms, and mingles all their boughs,
 Though loath he seems her tender leaves to press,
 More loath he is that friendly storm should cease,
 From whose rude bounty he the doubl~~e~~ use
 At once receives, of pleasure and excuse.⁴¹

Besides signifying mutual affection, the palm often appeared in the emblem books as a type of perseverance and patience in life, love, or religion. It is in this sense that Vaughan elaborated it in 'The Palm-tree'.⁴²

c) Birds.

The nightingale, the lark, and the dove occur frequently, as symbols of love, joy (usually of the poet), and wedded happiness and constancy respectively.⁴³ The eagle's fabled ability to renew its youth and plumage in old age, and to gaze upon the sun, provided an image for Eldred Revett's account of the Cherubs who witnessed the Assension:-

Though more then Eagle plum'd, they dare not eye,
 Such killing Majesty;

and for Matthew Stevenson's piece, 'A Gentleman to his Mistress that told

him he lookt asquint upon her':-

Asquint, why not? am I of Eagles race,
To try mine eyes upon Apollo's face:
Admit I were, yet while I look on thee,
Thy brighter beams force an obliquity.⁴⁴

In the second stanza of 'Sadness', Cartwright proceeds from the trees of sorrow and foreboding to the birds:-

Heark! from yond' hollow Tree
Sadly sing two Anchoret Owles,
Whiles the Mermit Wolf howls,
And all bewailing me,
The Raven hovers o'r my Bier,
The Bittern on a Reed I hear
Pipes my Elegy,
And warns me to dye.⁴⁵

The peacock was then, as now, a type of vanity, as in Rowland Watkyns's 'The Martyr':-

Some in gay feathers do the Peacocks play,
While 'tis fair weather, and a sunny day.⁴⁶

d) Animals.

Othello's cry of "Goats and monkeys!" uses the traditional association of certain creatures with lechery, as does Marvell's reference to the "lusty Bull or Ram" in 'Young Love'.⁴⁷ In contrast, the lamb and the ermine are the types of innocence and purity. John Hall's poem on the latter begins:-

The Ermine rather chose to die
A martyr of its purity,
Than that one uncouth soil should stain
Its hitherto preserved skin;

And thus resolv'd she thinks it good
To write her whiteness in her blood.⁴⁸

And Patrick Carey brings together several images to illustrate the
chastity of his mistress:-

The Ermine is without all spot,
And harmless is the dove;
The lamb is innocent, but not
Like to my chastest love.⁴⁹

e) Insects.

The spider of seventeenth-century poetry can both corrupt with poison
and ensnare in its webs. In Donne's 'Twickenham Garden' it appears as "The
spider love, which transubstantiates all/And can convert Manna to gall".
John Collop saw the insect as a type of the 'Jesuite'. The same poet
likens 'Sectaries' to "Snails of all Heresies which contract the slime".⁵⁰
Grasshoppers, as we have seen, were symbols of Epicurean improvidence and
of the carefree poet, and ants emblems of industry and civil order.⁵¹

f) Other Natural Phenomena.

The life of man, or time itself, is often presented under the figure
of a river flowing relentlessly onwards. Hills and valleys correspond to
human pride and humility, as in Marvell's 'Upon the Hill and Grove at
Bill-borow' or these lines from Rowland Watkyns's 'Upon the Right Honorable
James Duke of Ormond, and Earl of Brecknock':-

Though like a mountain in his great Fortunes swell,
His lowly Mind doth in a valley dwell.⁵²

Wind could be used as an image of inconstancy, as in Lovelace's "Oh she

is Constant as the Winde/That Revels in an Ev'nings Aire!" or more seriously as the divine breath of God.⁵³ Darkness and light, night and day, are among the most frequently employed of all images in the seventeenth century. Some lines by Crashaw contain the essence of their symbolic significances:-

And, through the Night of error and dark doubt,
Discerne the Dawne of Truth's eternall ray,
As when the rosie Morne buds into Day.⁵⁴

Milton and Vaughan both drew heavily on this area of symbolism, and among the minor poets of the period Mildmay Fane was especially indebted to it for some of his most striking effects. The following passage from 'My Looking-Glass' is a good example:-

So horrid black my Conscience doth present
My Guilt-complexions Night Firmament,
Not Tincel'd with one Star of Grace, or Spark
Of Goodness, but Sin-clouded o'r and Dark.
How shall I then presume to Claim a right
In any Dawn of Mercy and of Light?⁵⁵

The feature which all the foregoing examples have in common is that they are second-hand: though ultimately the words "lily", "nightingale", "cypress", "lamb", "eagle", "darkness" refer to natural phenomena which can be experienced by the senses, in the context of the poems they refer to meanings established by centuries of tradition. In the words of Rosemond Tuve quoted in Chapter I, "the 'particulars' in Elizabethan poems turn into metaphors at a touch". One can go even further than this, and say that many images are felt much more strongly as metaphors than as particulars: the yew and cypress, owls, wolf, and raven of Cartwright's

'Sadness', and the ermine, dove, and lamb of Carey's song have as their referents not the creatures named, but the abstract associations which they call up.

While this kind of inherited symbolism abounds in the verse of the period, it is relatively rare to find a figure derived from nature which needs to establish its own significance, and which consequently demands a greater realization of the image itself. Two bird images, from poems by Robert Baron and an anonymous contributor to Wits Interpreter, demonstrate the use of less traditional natural details. Baron's describes a reaction 'Upon the first sight of ELIZA, Masked':-

I felt this sympathy, and in my breast
 (Like a stray Bird now fluttering near his Neast,
 Or like the Needle) my warm'd Heart did hover,
 As who would say, the North I do discover.⁵⁶

The image of the bird which had gone astray, but which has now found its home again, has no fixed meaning, like the lily or the ermine. It only assumes significance through its connection with a particular human situation. In the ninth stanza of 'To his Mistressse', the smitten lover wanders away, but leaves his heart behind:-

Like as the little Bird (in time of night)
 When Birders beat the bush, and shake the nest,
 He fluttering forth straight flies into the light,
 As if 'twere day, new springing from his rest:
 Where so his wilfull wings consume away,
 That needs he must become the Birders prey.⁵⁷

The various circumstances of the natural image are all relevant to the fact in the human world that they are to illustrate: the heart, like the

bird, is shaken from the comfort of its rest by the influence of the lady; it flies straight to her, like the bird to the light; it is agitated and wearied by the experience; and finally it is made captive. The bird is not an instantly recognizable symbol, but a simile the appropriateness of which to this particular context has to be established by the poet point by point.

In the same way, Waller has to create significance for his image of the storm-torn tree by setting it against a human situation, in his short piece 'To Chloris':-

Chloris! since first our calm of peace
 Was frightened hence, this good we find,
 Your favours with your fears increase,
 And growing mischiefs make you kind.
 So the fair tree, which still preserves
 Her fruit and state while no wind blows,
 In storms from that uprightness swerves,
 And the glad earth about her strows
 With treasure, from her yielding boughs.⁵⁸

The aptness of this comparison is obvious enough, once the two terms of the simile have been brought together and welded by the verbal play on the moral and physical connotations of "uprightness" and "yielding"; but they were not terms which were habitually associated by the seventeenth-century mind.

One apparently new image from nature was seized upon by two later poets. Mrs. E.E. Duncan-Jones has noted that the reference to roses in Marvell's 'Daphnis and Chloe' was almost certainly suggested by a passage in Suckling's Aglaura.⁵⁹ Suckling's image reads:-

Gather not roses in a wet and frowning hour,
 They'll lose their sweets then, trust me they will, Sir.
 What pleasure can Love take to play his game out,
 When death must keep the stakes?

Marvell's reworking of the image is more pithy:-

Gentler times for Love are ment;
 Who for parting pleasure strain
 Gather Roses in the rain,
 Wet themselves and spoil their Scent.

The image was taken up again, and used for a slightly different purpose,
 by Thomas Shipman, in 'The Old-English Gentleman', dated 1665:-

Grief shows them best when freshly wept:
Roses lose scent, if too much steep.⁶⁰

It may be surprizing to find that the age which is notorious for its inventiveness and audacity in image-making should have produced so few fresh nature-metaphors of the kind just described. One reason is suggested by Robert Ellrodt's account of the place of impressions of the external world in Donne's poetry. Donne's perceptions of the world of sense were precise and intense:-

Mais il faut reconnaître que ce monde l'intéresse, non pas en tant qu'il est perçu, mais en tant qu'il est conçu. Il l'évoque, non pour le décrire, mais à la faveur de comparaisons, ordinairement ingénieuses, où les images tirées du monde sensible ont la même fonction que les propositions scolastiques et scientifiques: illustrer, prouver, définir.⁶¹

In poetry which deals in conceptions rather than perceptions, and in which concrete images function as propositions in dialectic, natural details which already possess an established conceptual or evaluative significance will be preferable to neutral details. The need to create

meaning for images in the context of the poem will impede the ingenious windings of the argument.

4. The School of Herbert.

Another reason for the prevalence of a traditional nature-imagery in this period is indicated by Rosemond Tuve's analysis of the short religious or meditative poems which flourished in the thirty years before the Restoration. It is not often recognized how large a proportion of the poetic output of the 1640s and 1650s belonged to this genre. The eminence of Crashaw and Vaughan has thrown into obscurity the many minor figures, some of them by no means negligible as poetic artists, who were writing in the same tradition. They are lumped together with secular poets like Cleveland, John Hall, and Cowley under the comprehensive labels of "Metaphysicals" or the "School of Donne", when in fact they could more justly and more appropriately be distinguished as the School of Herbert. A. Alvarez acknowledges that of all the followers of Donne, only George Herbert used what he learnt for wholly original ends:-

It was Herbert, however, who from this initial impulse of Donne's produced a common language for religious verse. The line runs directly from him rather than from Donne. Vaughan owes Herbert an enormous debt; so, though less obviously, does Traherne; Crashaw called his volume Steps to the Temple, in deference to Herbert's The Temple; other minor seventeenth-century poets invoked him or his book in the same way.⁶²

Alvarez does not specify who these minor poets were, but a list would include Christopher Harvey (The Synagogue, or the Shadow of the Temple), Ralph Knevet (A Gallery to the Temple), George Daniel, Joseph Beaumont, Daniel Cudmore, Thomas Fettiplace, Edmund Elys, and to some extent Francis

Quarles and Mildmay Fane.

Certain kinds of nature-metaphor were part and parcel of the "common language" which these men derived from The Temple. Miss Tuve's analysis helps to explain the qualities of this imagery, and offers reasons for its wide dissemination in the religious lyrics of the period. The simplicity and familiarity of many of the images is dictated by the poets' thematic preoccupations:-

Because of the transcendental nature of subjects treated, images in mystical or related types of writing have from time immemorial been chosen on the ground of perceived relations which are easy to grasp and almost universally apprehensible.⁶³

Miss Tuve cites Crashaw's "Where he mean't frost, he scatter'd flows" and "Hath mett love's Noon in Nature's night"; Vaughan's "'Twas but Just now my bleak leaves hopeles hung"; and Herbert's "And now in age I bud again". The reader has no difficulty in immediately interpreting the symbolism of such metaphors:-

For with images of this kind we rather see immediately with the eye of the conceiving mind, to which these things are, for the moment, their meanings - through long usage and through the special simplicity of the logical process required of us.⁶⁴

After noting the closeness of the mystic's apprehension of the world to the methods of allegory, she goes on to discuss the almost symbolic force of certain "public and conventional figures" which these poets adopted in their quest for "perspicuity":-

Vaughan's 'dark contest of waves and winde' (786) and his 'surly winds/Blasted my infant buds' (794), or Herbert's 'That I am he/
On whom thy tempests fell all night' (748), need no gloss. A

connection that has been learned rather than experienced is frequently the important element in such figures; inland readers do not stumble over symbolic uses of sea.⁶⁵

Miss Tuve is not concerned particularly with natural details, but it is significant that most of her illustrations are metaphors derived from the world of nature. Her quotations from Herbert, Crashaw, and Vaughan indicate the chief types of nature-image employed by the school: weather imagery; plant imagery; day-night symbolism. All of these are developed from familiar sources in the Bible, and all were established as the common currency of the devotional lyric by the example of Herbert.

a) Weather imagery.

Metaphors of winter, frost, storm, and so on are used to express a number of different aspects of spiritual experience. They may occur as simple analogues for particular emotions or general psychological disturbances, on the model of Herbert's 'The Flower':-

Grief melts away
Like snow in May,
As if there were no such cold thing.

Christopher Harvey, for instance, speaks of "cold cares and frosty fears"; An. Collins of "The storm of Anguish being over-blown"; and John Collop flatly equates "Motions and perturbations of the minde" with "tempests, thunder, lightning, wind".⁶⁶ Edmund Elys, in 'A Foule Morning, or, The Young Converts Doubts &c.', develops the conceit of his title at some length:-

My Joyes are chang'd to Doubts and Feares, which roule
Like stormy Billowes in my Wav'ring Soule!

Shine forth, my SUN, amidst these showers of Teares,
Let thy Clare Beames pierce through these Clouds of Feares!⁶⁷

And the whole of Rowland Watkyns's short 'Winter. Charitas frigescit'
is built from this kind of imagery:-

Speak not to me of Frizland, or the cold
And gelid Clymats of the North: I hold
There can no greater frost, or Winter be,
Than a hard heart that's cold in charitie.
O shine thou Sun of glory, and impart
Thy gracious heat to thaw my frozen heart.⁶⁸

In other poems, these metaphors symbolize the testing of the faithful heart by God. There was Biblical authority for this kind of usage. In a piece based on the passage in St Mark's Gospel (Chapter 4, vv. 37-41) which describes the storm that arose as Christ slept in the disciples' boat, Crashaw makes Him rebuke them in terms which make it clear that their faith is being tried:-

There is no storme but this
Of your owne Cowardise
That braves you out;
You are the storme that mocks
Your selves; you are the Rocks
Of your owne doubt:
Besides this feare of danger, there's no danger here
And he that here feares Danger, does deserve his Feare.⁶⁹

Here, as in most of his work, Crashaw is not typical of the followers of Herbert, in that his theme is not presented in a context of personal experience. He prefers to celebrate the great Church festivals, or to meditate on events from the Scriptures or from Church history, rather than to record the inner relationship of his soul with God. When Joseph

Beaumont, on the other hand, turns to the imagery of storm, he does so to embody a personal tragedy and his own struggle to become reconciled to the will of God. Writing - as was his custom - a poem on his birthday, he looks back over the year, and describes his joy at the birth of a daughter:-

But ah! the flattering treacherous Year
 Which rose & shin'd till now so cleer;
 With sudden frowns plough'd up his brow,
 And violently study'd how
 To mock my Joy's precocitie
 By levelling his storm at me.
 For by an envious stroke
 He broke
 My dainty Bud, which in that gust
 Was quite blown down & buried in the dust.

 Yet why do I accuse the Year,
 Which taught me (though by a sever
 And nature-tearing lesson) not
 To build my hopes & joys on what
 The easy gaine & prize can be
 Of tottering Mortalitie.
 This Lesson & hard Art
 By heart
 O may I get, & run to thee
 Sweet JESU for true Rest's Stabilitie.⁷⁰

The poem is one of Beaumont's most sustained successes, and much of its quiet power and dignity is due to the absorption of painful feeling into the simple but profoundly moving quality of his traditional imagery. By combining the conventional reference to infancy destroyed in the bud with the metaphor of the testing storm, he is able to view his loss in a context of the wider purposes of God, and to find some measure of comfort.

Mildmay Fane finds consolation in a similar situation, in 'My Pent-house against the Storm of Grief, occasioned upon the Death of a dear

Friend'. Beginning with the imagery of storm:-

O How the Blasts
Temptation Casts
Against my Naked Ston,
Threaten Subversion;⁷¹

he concludes on a note of acceptance: "That Fear is good/When it withstands ill, not of ill withstood".

The third, and most characteristic, use of weather imagery by these poets, is to express their sense of temporary alienation from God. Herbert had declared that since he first felt the gracious influence of God, he had suffered "many a bitter storm", from which only the return of grace had saved him. And in 'The Flower', he had explored in depth the isolation and grief of periods of spiritual barrenness, in terms of frost, hard weather, and tempests.⁷² Ralph Knevet returns to this theme and imagery more than once. In 'Vivacitye' he likens the withdrawal of God's Spirit to the desolation of winter, and in 'Solitude' he contrasts the bee, which is wakened from its hibernation to the joys of summer, with his own sad state:-

But I am to my cell confin'd,
By longer winter and blasts more unkind,
Then those of Boreas, where I doe
Endeavour to improve my woe,
(And though uncloyster'd) yet dare vye
Sad howres, with the monastique Votarye.⁷³

For Thomas Fettiplace, in 'The Sinner's Complaint', spiritual alienation is presented as a more turbulent experience - more akin to Herbert's "bitter storm":-

O that I were at rest with thee,
 Or else that thou wert come to mee,
 Since in thine absence I am so distrest!
 Thy wrathfull frown
 Hath thrown me down,
 And rais'd a storm in my unquiet brest.⁷⁴

Thomas Washbourne moves from an image of God's displeasure, which is very close to Fettiplace's in phrasing (his collection of poems was printed in 1654, Fettiplace's in 1653), to a recognition of his own responsibility:-

What though sometimes he seems to frowne,
 And with rough winds to blow me down?
 The fault's not his, but mine,
 For he would alwaies shine
 On me; 'tis I that change,
 My sins make him look strange;
 Yet under his bent brow I may discover
 Some smiling glances which betray a lover.⁷⁵

Mildmay Fane makes a more detailed exploration of his state of mind, through the medium of the traditional imagery, in 'My Invocation'. Stanza I asks for a revival of his "Trembling Heart"; stanza II continues:-

Small hopes of This, unless I may
 In awe to That, finde a decay
 Of such Lewd Thoughts, Words, Acts, did bring
 My whole Man to a wintering
 In Lust, and Sin, and growth of Grace,
 T'assure a fruitfull Spring-tide in the place.
 How's that attain'd? By heat, not cold,
 'Tis that the Bounteous Marygold
 Dispayes its Treasures; and kinde Showers
 (Not Frosts) befriend both fruit and Flowers:
 Thaw then my Breast till't open Zeal,
 And let my Eyes those sighs reveal
 In rain, that my Affections may subdue,
 So from my Old Congeal'd Clot raise thoughts new.⁷⁶

The metaphor of weather and season enables Fane to make apprehensible a

complex spiritual condition, which would have been difficult to convey so simply or effectively without the resources of the "common language" derived from a familiar tradition. The fourth line of the quotation, in particular, strikes home with an imaginative rightness which, in Tuve's words, is seen "immediately with the eye of the conceiving mind".

The same can be said of Joseph Beaumont's 'Loves Monarchie'. In a concluding stanza reminiscent of Fane's 'My Invocation' and Herbert's 'The Glance', he looks forward to an end of the present state in which "I . . . all frozen lie":-

And yet this Ice
 May capable of thawing bee
 If Thy pure Eyes
 Will glance their potent beames on Me.
 Forbid it, mighty King of Hearts, that my
 Poore Soule should not obey LOVES MONARCHIE.⁷¹

As a final example of the widespread use of weather imagery in the devotional verse of the mid-century, here is a poem which mobilises all the metaphoric resources of the tradition. Martin Lluelyn's spiritual trials, set forth at length in his song 'God's Love and Power', are imagined in terms of frost and ice, thaw, flood, thunder, and lightnings:-

I Felt my heart and found a Chillnesse coole,
 It's Azure channells in my frozen side.
 The Spring was now became a standing Poole,
 Depriv'd of motion and its Active Tyde.
 O stay! O stay!
 Thus I shall ever freeze, if banisht from thy Ray.
 A lasting warmth thy secret Beames beget
 Thou art a Sun which can nor Rise nor Set.
 Then thaw this Ice, and make my frost retreat,
 But let with temperate Rays thy Lustre Shine;

Thy Judgements Lightning, but thy Love is heate,
 This will consume my heart, but this Refine.
 Inspire, Inspire,
 And melt my frozen soule with thy more equall fire,
 So shall a Pensive deluge drowne my feares,
 My Ice turne water, and that water Teares.

After thy Love if I continue hard,
 If Vices knit and more confirm'd are growne,
 If guilt rebell, and stand upon his Guard,
 And what was Ice before freeze into Stone,
 Reprove, Reprove,
 And let thy Pow'r assist thee to revenge thy Love,
 For those hast still thy threats and thunder left;
The Rocke that can't be melted, may be cleft.⁷⁸

b) Plant imagery.

Plant symbolism became a convenient mode of expression for various aspects of the religious poet's material. In his celebration of the birth of Christ, 'Christmasse Day', Beaumont describes Mary under the figure of a flower:-

For Winter now
 A Virgin Plant espies
 Which all his Snow
 Could never equalize:
 More white, more chaste is shee, yet fertile too:
 The King of Miracles would have it so.

In later stanzas, Christ Himself is portrayed in imagery which seems to be a development of the verse from Isaiah (Chapter 11, v. 1):-"And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots". Beaumont contrasts this heavenly plant with those of the sinful earth:-

Proud flesh corrupts & staine's y^e Seed we sow:
 He, planted by his Spirit will spotlesse grow.

He takes up the image again a few lines further on:-

All Paradise
 Collected in one Bud
 Doth sweetly rise
 From its fair Virgin bed.⁷⁹

There was plenty of Biblical precedent for discussing the phases of spiritual growth in terms of the cultivation of plants. The best known of such sources - the parable of the Sower - is the starting-point for Fane's elaboration of the text "They that sow in Tears, shall reap in Joy". After retelling the parable, he expounds it as follows:-

Wherefore as Earth 'thout Culture sithence mans fall
 Is of fruits barren, Thistles Prodigall;
 So doe the dispositions and desires
 Nature brings forth, abound with Thorns and Briers;
 Which to correct, the Masters strict Command
 Is to break up again the Fallow-land.
 And by Contritions Coulter and Plough-shares
 To dress our Minds, furrow our Cheeks with teares
 Of true Repentance. And those thus destroy
 The Weeds of Sin, shall surely reap in Joy.⁸⁰

Emblems XXVII-XXXI of Harvey's The School of the Heart treat the same imagery at more length. The ode to number XXIX, for example, contains the stanza:-

See how the seed, which thou didst sow,
 Lies parch'd, and wither'd; will not grow
 Without some moisture, and mine heart hath none
 That it can truly call its own,
 By nature of itself, more than a stone:
 Unlesse thou water's; it will lie
 Drowned in dust, and still be dry.⁸¹

Sir Christopher Wyvill rounds off his meditation 'Vpon Psalm 7' with an extended image based on the same Scriptural symbolism:-

From my wast-field if any good proceed,
 Thou must be Author both of Will and Deed:
 Stub-up the thornes, un-pave the soyle and make
 The well-injected seed deep rooting take,
 Afford me fruitfull seasons that I may
 Bring some sheafe with me on my judgment day.⁸²

In the birthday poem mentioned earlier, Joseph Beaumont speaks in less generalized terms than this of:-

A Year in which my Joyes grew up
 Into a blade of cheerly Hope:
 But blasted then, did onely yeild
 A Crop of Greif from Comforts Feild.⁸³

Uses of plant imagery in this way, to express personal experience, frequently seem to echo such passages of Herbert's as:-

Many a spring I shoot up fair,
 Offring at heav'n, growing and groning thither:
 Nor doth my flower
 Want a spring-showers,
 My sinnes and I joining together.⁸⁴

Daniel Cudmore's rhapsody 'On the Spring', for example, turns in its closing lines to the poet's sense of alienation from God, lamenting "Lord, all things bud, and shall I davour/Without the sunshine of thy favour?" and concluding with an image that has clear affinities with those of Beaumont and Herbert just quoted:-

Let Primrose-like Repentance rise,
 Dew'd by the April of mine eyes:
 Then will I not doubt but next thou
 Wilt make each grace in order blow.⁸⁵

The origin of this kind of imagery may, again, be the Bible. This

Perhaps the most remarkable, and in some ways the most moving, of the poems deriving their imagery and inspiration from this traditional complex of symbols is 'Another Song' by Anne Collins.⁸⁹ It is a very frank confession of personal disabilities and disappointments,⁹⁰ which expresses itself exclusively through images of seasons, weather, and plant-life. The poem begins with the striking and disconcerting line: "The Winter of my infancy being over-past", and goes on to describe the coming of Spring to the earth. What follows must be quoted at length:-

But in my Spring it was not so, but contrary,
 For no delightfull flowers grew to please the eye,
 No hopefull bud, nor fruitfull bough,
 No moderat showers which causeth flowers
 To spring and grow.

My Aprill was exceeding dry, therefore unkind;
 Whence tis that small utility I look to find,
 For when that Aprill is so dry,
 (As hath been spoken) it doth betoken
 Much scarcity.

Thus is my Spring now almost past in heavinesse
 The Sky of pleasure's over-cast with sad distresse
 For by a comfortlesse Eclips,
 Disconsolation and sore vexacion,
 My blossom nips.

Yet as a garden is my mind enclosed fast
 Being to safety so confined from storm and blast
 Apt to produce a fruit most rare,
 That is not common with every woman
 That fruitfull are.

A love of goodnesse is the chiefest plant therin
 The second is, (for to be briefe) Dislike to sin,
 These grow in spight of misery,
 Which Grace doth nourish and cause to flourish
 Continually.

But evill mocion, currupt seeds, fall here also
 whence springs prophanesse as do weeds where flowers grow
 Which must supplanted be with speed
 These weeds of Error, Distrust and Terror,
 Lest woe succeed.

And so on, for four more stanzas. In the last three stanzas quoted here, Anne Collins exploits the traditional significance of the imagery as we have seen it in Harvey's emblems, and the poems of Herbert, Cudmore, Fanshawe, and others: the garden of the mind produces virtuous fruits and sinful weeds, and is nourished by the grace of God. But in the earlier stanzas she seems to have taken the original - and daring - step of applying the images of spring rain, flowers, buds, and fruits to her physical condition. As she passed from the winter of infancy into the spring of young womanhood, she was denied the expected gifts of beauty and fruitfulness: "no delightfull flowers grew to please the eye", and there were "no moderat showers" - no beginning of the menstrual cycle? - to make flowers "spring and grow". Because her youth was infirm and barren, it was unnatural: "My Aprill was exceeding dry, therefore unkind". This gave her a feeling of uselessness - "small utility" - when she realised that she could hope for no bodily fruit: the dryness of her April "doth betoken/Much scarcity". The "comfortlesse Eclips" of the normal functions of the healthy body nips the blossom of promised fruit like a frost. So for consolation - but with a note of bitterness - she turns to the cultivation of the garden of the mind, which can produce "a fruit most rare" - possibly her poems, or intellectual attainments - something "not common with every woman/That fruitfull are". The extraordinary frankness of this poem would hardly have been possible for a woman of Anne Collins's time and piety if the conventional imagery of the School of Herbert had not been available as a means of indirect expression. Together with some of the more personal pieces by Joseph

Beaumont, it demonstrates clearly how the existence of a strong tradition can provide the opportunity for a very minor talent to achieve startlingly poignant poetic effects.

c) Light and darkness.

The third group of nature-symbols is the most widely used of all: the fundamental Christian symbolism of light and darkness. God is Light; Christ is the Light of the World; He is both the Son and the Sun. Beaumont, in 'The Winter-Spring', feels "The raies of Righteousnesses Sun"; Crashaw is awed, in 'Sospetto d'Herode', "That hee whom the Sun serves, should faintly peepe/Through clouds of Infant flesh"; and the same image serves Harvey, in 'The Epiphany, or Twelthday': "Though clouded in a vail of flesh,/The sun of righteousness appears".⁹¹

John Collop translates the idea that flesh is darkness into more general terms in his exposition of the analogy 'Man a Microcosm':-

Our minde the day is, and our flesh the night,
Death is but darknesse, and our life the light.⁹²

And Rowland Watkyns brings together the traditional symbol and the new astronomy in his short meditation on 'The Moon':-

It is beleev'd, the Moon so fair, so bright,
Doth from the Sun receive her candid light:
My soul no beauty, no perfection knows,
But what the Sun of glory still bestows.⁹³

More typical of the School of Herbert is the examination of the state of the individual soul. Alienation from God, through the withdrawal of grace or through sin, is like dwelling in darkness. Herbert began 'The

Glimpse' with:-

Whither away delight?
 a Thou can'st but now; wilt thou so soon depart,
 And give me up to night?⁹⁴

Revett similarly laments that, though daylight comes to the earth, "Still Night with me doth stay".⁹⁵ For Fane, night is more commonly the sin which darkens his thoughts, the "Guilt-complexions Night Firmament", which can only be brightened by the "Bright Merits" of the Saviour, through whose power "This Night will turn into eternall Day".⁹⁶ Anne Collins uses this line of imagery extensively in 'A Song shewing the Mercies of God to his people, by interlacing cordiall Comforts with fatherly Chastisement'. In the second stanza she combines it interestingly with other images derived from the devotional stock:-

So though that in the Winter
 Of sharp Afflictions, fruits seem to dy,
 And for that space, the life of Grace
 Remayneth in the Root only;
 Yet when the Son of Righteousnesse clear
 Shall make Summer with us, our spirits to ehear,
 Warming our hearts with the sense of his favour,
 Then must our flowers of piety savour,
 And then the fruits of righteousnesse
 We to the glory of God must expresse.⁹⁷

The idea of the life of Grace remaining "in the Root only" is reminiscent of the image of the heart in Herbert's 'The Flower' which went "Quite under ground; as flowers depart/To see their mother-root, when they have blown"; and of Vaughan's search for the "gallant flowre", in "I walkt the other day", which is discovered "fresh and green" beneath the winter soil and provokes the comment:-

And yet, how few believe such doctrine springs
 From a poor root
 Which all the Winter sleeps here under foot.

d) Allegory.

In her account of the imagery of Herbert, Crashaw, and Vaughan, Rosemond Tuve noted that poetry which attempts to convey mystical experience "invades, though it is not coincident with, the territory of allegory".⁹⁸ The uses of nature-symbolism illustrated above are not generally given a consistent allegorical frame. Harvey's emblems, and some of the pieces by Fane and Anne Collins come closest to the method of allegory, but for the other poets an isolated image-word, like "bud", "Blade", or "frost", is often sufficient to evoke the intended response. One group of poems, however, can be classed as fully developed allegories. These are the works modelled on the journey analogy of Herbert's 'Peace' and 'The Pilgrimage'. The most famous is, of course, Vaughan's 'Regeneration', but Harvey and Knevet also contributed to the genre. Harvey's 'The Journey' makes occasional reference to a symbolist landscape:-

Life is a journey. From our mothers wombs,
 As houses, we set out: and in our tombs,
 As Inns, we rest, till it be time to rise.
 'Twixt rocks and gulfs our narrow foot-path lies;

.....
 Sometimes we scramble to get up the banks
 Of icy honour;

.....
 If God be not our guide, our guard, our friend,
 Eternal death will be our journeys end.⁹⁹

Knevet's 'The Pilgrimage' leans much more heavily on nature symbolism to convey its ideas. It begins with a version of Spenser's Wood of Error:-

How did my sorowes mount above
 My hopes, and threate
 Me to defeate,
 While I did wander in a grove,
 Through crooked pathes of doubts, and feares,
 Where little light of joy appeares. . .

The pilgrim encounters a number of allegorical figures: first Fortune:-

Shee led, I followed close behind,
 But ere wee had
 Three furlongs made.
 I did perceive my guide was blind,
 Depp holes, steepe Hills, and pathwayes glaz'd
 With slipp'ry ice, made mee amaz'd. . .

Next Pleasure:-

Then shee mee to a mountaine led,
 Where flowers grew,
 Of every hue,
 And Trees of pleasure their armes spred,
 Where did melodious Birds rejoyce
 Admir'd for colour, and for voyce. . .

But this beauty is found to be deceptive:-

For the swaine Toade, and th'hisseing Snake,
 With speckled hides,
 Upon all sides
 Did crawle, and their vagaryes make,
 Who did their livide poyson spue,
 Upon all flowers which there grew. . .

At this point he hears a voice crying "Returne, returne", much as Herbert's traveller had heard a voice warning, "None goes that way/And lives", and Vaughan's reported how "Some cryed Away". The pilgrim next meets Knowledge, who takes him into a garden:-

All fruites, and flowers there did grow,
 Here birds did warble;
 And polish'd marble,

Did streames from his hard intrayles throwe,
 Which did perpetually gush,
 And made the very cristall blush. . . 100

At last, the quest ends with the wanderer encountering Grace. The natural details that make up each scene of the pilgrimage all belong to a recognized pattern of significances: crooked paths, steep hills and icy slopes, flowers and melodious birds, toads and snakes, the clear streams of Knowledge's garden, none of these images is obscure, because each belongs to the stock of "public symbols". Together with the recurrent imagery of weather, plants, and light, they corroborate Miss Tuve's conclusion that:-

The use of known and conceptually weighted symbols to form powerful images is habitual throughout the entire period. 101

5. The Emblem.

Any survey of the figurative uses of natural details in the mid-seventeenth century cannot ignore the phenomenon of the emblem. Mario Praz has suggested that the rise and popularity of this hybrid art-form can be explained by reference to the general delight in the ingenious and fantastic that pervaded baroque sensibility:-

Since every poetical image contains a potential emblem, one can understand why emblems were the characteristic of that century in which the tendency to images reached its climax, the seventeenth century. 102

The emblem books themselves are of minimal importance for the study of natural details. Single objects from nature - the pelican, the sunflower, the lily - are occasionally represented in the plate, and interpreted

in the accompanying poem; occasionally - as in Harvey's sequence on the cultivation of the Flowers of the Heart - the natural items form part of a composite illustration; but it is the emblem manner, rather than the emblem matter, that was of greatest consequence for poetry - encouraging what J.B. Leishman has called "that emblemization of metaphor which is one of the distinguishing characteristics of much seventeenth-century poetry, especially English".¹⁰³ Rosemary Freeman, who has written the authoritative work on the English emblem tradition, indicates the wide general debt of the poets to the emblematisers, but warns of the dangers of attaching too much, or too specific, an importance to the genre's influence:-

The form was so characteristic of its age that there are very few poets of the period in whose work the matter, if not the manner, of the emblem books cannot somewhere be traced. The material upon which they drew was never their peculiar prerogative; it was easily accessible and could equally well be drawn upon by others for other purposes. The manner was inherited from past traditions in allegory and found its way into poetry and prose quite independently of the specialised adaptations of it made by emblem writers. The form cannot, therefore, be regarded as one whose influence can be pinned down and precisely defined; nor should its importance be overstressed. Probably its greatest value for the Elizabethan poet or prose writer was a purely general one: emblems embodied and gave currency to certain conventions in allegory and imagery which were accepted without difficulty by readers and which could, therefore, be used as a natural part of their technique by poets concerned with much wider and more serious themes.¹⁰⁴

The simplest kind of emblem-poem can be found 'On the Title Page' of

Fane's Otia Sacra:-

There is a Fowle wont hide its head,
To passe so undiscovered:

Judging it self exempt from eyes
 Of others, whilst it none descryes.
 Not much unlike are such to these,
 Who commit Closet-trespases
 And Chamber-dalliance; and then
 Goe for unseen, 'cause so of Men.¹⁰⁵

Another typical example is Rowland Watkyns's 'The Hen and Chickens', which even in its phrasing could have come straight from an emblem-book:-

See how the careful Hen, with daily pain,
 Her young and tender Chickens doth maintain;
 From ravenous birds secure her young ones lie
 Under their mothers feather'd canopy:
 Thus his dear children God together brings,
 And still protects them with his gracious wings:
 The birds of prey Gods Doves would soon devour,
 Did he not guard them with his watchful pow'r.¹⁰⁶

Watkyns has other pieces of a similar kind on the marygold, the ant and the bee, a fountain, and the rainbow.¹⁰⁷ In all these simple emblems a single fact from the natural world is described or referred to, and then interpreted in terms of some aspect of human behaviour or religious truth. John Collop's 'The Fruit of Paradise' is modelled on the more complex composite emblem. Developing the analogy that "Man is a Garden", Collop describes "th'crooked waies of sin", the "Serpent", "the fruits of sense", "the figleaves of Hypocrisy", the trees which are "Our better thoughts", and the "fruits, thistles and thorns" of sin.¹⁰⁸ This poem could easily have been the gloss to an emblem plate which showed in graphic form each of the items which Collop provides with a moral connotation. The Duchess of Newcastle pursues a similar theme with even greater tenacity and more fantastic ingenuity in her poem 'Similizing the Braine to a Garden'.¹⁰⁹

The emblem helped to preserve into the seventeenth century the allegorical habits of mind which had come down from the Middle Ages, even though the comprehensive structure of correspondences and levels of meaning was beginning to give way before the advance of the new philosophy. These habits of mind, though no longer supporting a coherent world-picture, could lead a Vaughan to find the types and symbols of time and eternity in a waterfall, or a more prosaic Thomas Philipott to find lessons about an "unwarie heire", userers, and spendthrifts, in 'On the Sight of a Rivelet, that eight foot off from its Fountain did-embogues it selfe into the Medway'.¹¹⁰ One important consequence of this survival of the allegorical habit into the age which was destroying the allegorical world-view is illuminated by Miss Freeman's study. She states that, in general terms, "As the seventeenth century progressed allegory found a less public and more psychological sphere".¹¹¹ Later she elaborates this with reference to the early English emblem books of the sixteenth century, represented by Geoffrey Whitney's A Choice of Emblemes (1586), and the mid-century developments, represented by Francis Quarles's Emblemes (1635):-

The same emblematic characteristics - the persistently literary nature of the symbolisation and the arbitrary way in which the significance is imposed - lie behind both, but they find different forms of expression in each. There is, in the first place, a change of theme, a shift in the later emblems from what is impersonal, to more individual and subjective types of material. . . . As a consequence of this new interest, the later emblem writers preferred to invent their own images or to adapt familiar ones and apply them in their own way, whereas the earlier writers were content very often with the conventional symbols and personifications or with traditional episodes from history, legend, or fable.¹¹²

The emblem books of the 1630s and 1640s, that is, came to deal with personal and spiritual problems rather than with general moral principles. Their preoccupations thus coincided with those of Herbert and his followers. This was largely due to the wider movement of the times, away from authority and towards an individual reliance on the "inner light"; away from dogma and towards experience. But one must not rule out the possibility that Herbert himself was instrumental in effecting the transformation of the emblem in England. He was certainly influenced by the emblem tradition, and, as Miss Freeman demonstrates, adapted its methods to suit the needs of his devotional and subjective attitudes to religious verse. It seems likely that his innovations were in turn reflected by the genuine emblems of Quarles, and particularly Harvey, whose Synagogue had been written in avowed imitation of The Temple. Miss Freeman finds that Herbert's poetry rarely conforms to the standard emblem pattern of picture, interpretation, application; but in a more subtle way it is never far from the emblematic conception of the relation between the physical and the abstract:-

It reflects, in fact, an habitual cast of mind, a constant readiness to see a relation between simple, concrete, visible things and moral ideas, and to establish that relation in as complete a way as possible without identifying the two or blurring the outlines of either.¹¹³

The great difference between Herbert's technique and that of the emblem-proper lies in the quality of the symbolic relationship created:-

In Quarles's Emblemes the poetry simply deduces ideas from a given image; it consequently requires the presence of an actual

picture for the verse to analyse in detail and build its argument upon. Herbert's poetry brings its pictures with it. It remains primarily visual, but the images presented have already been explored and when they enter the poem they enter it with their implications already worked out.¹¹⁴

The major examples of this technique in later poetry are Vaughan's 'The Water-fall' and Marvell's 'On a Drop of Dew'. A less exalted instance is furnished by Thomas Philipott, in a piece entitled 'On himselfe being stung by a Wasp':-

When first this busie testie Wasp did fix
 His sting in me, and did his venome mix
 With my untainted bloud, my skin begun
 To swell to an Imposthumation.
 How did each part by sympathie complaine,
 Stretch'd and distorted on the rack of paine?
 What flames did this Incendiarie fling
 From out the narrow quiver of his sting,
 Into each part? which through my veins were thrown,
 And through each Nerve and Arterie were blown.
 If then a Wasp can so afflict each sense,
 How great must be the sting of conscience?¹¹⁵

The sting of the wasp and the sting of conscience are never fully identified with each other - in the way that the growth of the plant is identified with the growth of the spirit in 'The Flower' - but all that is said of the physical results of the wasp's poison can be seen to correspond to similar results in the psychological sphere. In his smaller way, Philipott has worked out the implications of his image before he writes his poem.

6. Nature and Female Charms.

In all the poetry discussed so far in this chapter, natural details have been used to express some abstract feature of the human world -

whether facts, like death and youth; or qualities, like purity and humility; or states of mind, like alienation or grief. It is obvious that the bulk of poetic imagery in any period will be of this kind, since poetry is usually concerned with man and his response to life. But images can also serve to express physical appearances. And just as there were established images for the emotional and moral aspects of experience, the Cavalier lyricists had a conventional set of nature metaphors to describe the bodily perfections of their ladies. Several of these standard images are brought together by Robert Baron, who finds attributes of all four seasons about the person of his mistress, in 'The Lovers Sun':-

The Spring perfum'd with fragrancy
 I'th'Violets of her veines I spie;
 To evidence tis Summer Time
 Her Lips bear Cherries in their prime;
 Wish I Autumn? Lo, all the Year
 On her Cheek hangs a Katherine Pear;
 And Apples on her Breast be set
 By Nature fairer far than that
 Which tempted Eve
 T'eat without leave.
 If I desire a Winter's Day
 Warm Snow upon her hands doth lay. 116

Robert Heath's verses 'Deploring Clarastella's Inconstancie' use a similar conceit, but transfer the apples from breasts to cheeks; the lady of Charles Cotton's 'Forbidden Fruit' has a face that is "apple-round"; the cheeks and lips of Nicholas Hookes's Amanda are likened to "ripest mulberries", in 'To Amanda waking', while in 'His love to Amanda':-

No flowers pleasant are to me,
 But roses which do smell of thee:
 The primrose and the violet,

Which from thy brest their odours get;
 No rich delights can please my eyes,
 With all their colour'd rarities;
 But those that represent my Faire,
 Such as the matchlesse tulips are,
 Where Beautie's flourish flags invite,
 I'th'purest streames of red and white.¹¹⁷

Hugh Crompton's 'In the Garden' is fashioned from the more fantastic conceit that all flowers - the milk-white roses, the "blew-lipt Lavanders", the "virid Marjoram" - blush red at the sight of Rosella's complexion.¹¹⁸

The usual relationship between the lady and the flowers is reversed in Alexander Brome's cynical preference for canary to women in 'The Resolve':-

The glories of your ladies be
 But metaphors of things,
 And but resemble what we see
 Each common object brings.
 Roses out-red their lips and cheeks,
 Lilies their whiteness stain:
 What fool is he that shadows seeks,
 And may the substance gain!¹¹⁹

John Collop calls up roses, lilies, pearls, and snow to express his 'Praise of his Mistris'; John Hall's Antinetta is "More white than foam"; William Hammond's 'Cruel Mistress' is "smooth/As seas", "than down/More swift", and "Whiter than is the milky road"; Revett's lady, seen walking in the evening, robed in white, is like the moon; Hookes's 'To Amanda lying in bed' begins with more flower images:-

In bed, my Dearest? thus my eye perceives
 A primrose lodg'd betwixt its rugged leaves;
 Lain down, Amanda? thus have I often seen
 A lily cast upon a bed of green.¹²⁰

More generalized is the month-imagery of Crashaw's 'The Weeper':-

Well does the May that lyes
Smiling in thy cheekes, confesse,
The April in thine eyes,
Mutuall sweetnesse they expresse.
No April e're lent softer showres,
Nor May returned fairer flowers. 121

Hookes uses the same conceit, though in a more literal context, in 'To
Amanda fearing a second showre':-

'Twill raine no more, I'le kisse thy cheeks, my Fair,
'Tis May without an April showre there. 122

A popular variation of this imagery of appearances is found in laments
modelled on Lord Herbert's 'Elegy over a Tomb':-

Doth the sun now his light with yours renew?
Have waves the curling of your hair?
Did you restore unto the sky and air
The red and white and blue?
Have you vouchsaf'd to flowers since your death
That sweetest breath? 123

Similarly, the dead maiden in Matthew Stevenson's 'Phyllis Funerall'
resigns the elements of her beauty to the natural objects that resemble
them:-

Item, I leave my Virgin Zone
Unto the Bud as yet unblown.
My Purple Veynes resign to you
Sweet Violets their azure hue.
My blushes to the Rose I give
My white shall in the Lilly live:
My golden Tresses shall repaire
The ruines of lost Maiden hair.
My Glòbes of light after this life
Shall wait on Phoebus and his wife. 124

And William Cavendish looks for a continuation of love after death, when

he and his mistress are both absorbed into nature:-

In Roses you, for finer Poseys fitt,
 I, winding Silke, your tender stalkes to knitt,
 And so Imbrase you; or you, heaven's due,
 Fallinge on me, a dead leafe, may renue
 With honey'd kisses; you, lillies newly gott,
 And putt in me, turn'd now a Purslaine pott;
 Or Sweeter Grapes, whose squee's'd Juice is divine,
 Minglinge our selves, makinge but one pewr Wine. 125

7. Conclusion.

This survey reveals that the poet of the Civil War, Commonwealth, and early Restoration years did not value those elements in figurative natural material which a modern reader has come to regard as paramount. He was not concerned with the kind of originality which prides itself on discovering fresh details from the natural world, or on presenting details with complete fidelity to their physical make-up. The images he used were mostly hallowed by long literary usage, and his originality consisted in the ingenious ways in which they could be incorporated into new contexts: an originality of manner rather than of matter. Similarly, the accuracy or fidelity he aimed at was an accuracy of comparison: the emphasis was on the relationship revealed or imposed, not on the two items involved. Even when the comparison is a physical one, the imagery is stylized. The poets who likened their ladies' lips to cherries, breasts or cheeks to apples, skin to snow, veins to violets, were not trying to call up accurate pictures of their beauty, but to relate it to an ideal enshrined in a traditional set of images. The brilliance of many Cavalier songs, and the unique quality of the devotional poems derived from The Temple,

may be partly indebted to the strong tradition of conventional conceits and accepted symbolism on which they were based. The Cavaliers were able to give free rein to their fancy and their lyrical gifts, because their basic material had already been assembled for them by their literary predecessors. The religious poets depended more on personal experience for their subjects, but had the advantage of a powerful tradition of symbolism with which to express their sometimes uncommon states of mind.

The figurative aspects of nature-imagery in general were still reflecting the old world-order of fixed values and meanings. It was not until the scientific movement had broken down many of the ancient ways of thought, and enthroned the new principle of observation, that, in Rosemary Freeman's words:-

It became possible, and then customary, to observe the river independently of its significance, and individual experience broke free of the haunting presence of a perpetual memento mori. 126

NOTES

- 1 See pages 10-11 above.
- 2 Rosemond Tuve, Elizabethan and Metaphysical Imagery (1947) (ed. used, Phoenix Books, Chicago, 1961), p. 25.
- 3 Richard Crashaw, 'Vpon the Death of the most desired Mr. Herrys', Poems, ed. L.C. Martin, 2nd ed. (Oxford, 1957), pp. 169-70.
4. ibid., p. 141.
- 5 Austin Warren, "Symbolism in Crashaw", from Richard Crashaw: a Study in Baroque Sensibility, reprinted in Seventeenth-Century English Poetry, ed. William Keast (New York, 1962), p. 255.
- 6 ibid., p. 256.
- 7 Rosemond Tuve, pp. 222 and 224.
- 8 Clement Barksdale, Nympha Libethris: or the Cotswold Muse (1651), p. 12.
- 9 Rowland Watkyns, Flamma sine Fumo (1662), p. 115. Katherine Philips uses the "beauteous blossom" image in an elegy 'In Memory of F.P. who died at Acton on the 24 of May, 1660, at Twelve and a Half of Age', printed in Minor Poets of the Caroline Period, ed. George Saintsbury, Vol. I (Oxford, 1905), pp. 530-31.
- 10 Martin Lluslyn, Men-Miracles. With Other Poems (1646), p. 126.
- 11 Edmund Waller, Poems, ed. G. Thorn Drury, 2 vols. (London, 1893), II, 67.
- 12 Sir Richard Fanshawe, Shorter Poems and Translations, ed. N.W. Bawcutt, "English Reprint Series", No. 19 (Liverpool, 1964), p. 33.
- 13 See J.B. Leishman, The Art of Marvell's Poetry (London, 1966), pp. 165-89.
- 14 Waller, ed. cit., I, 57.
- 15 Thomas Stanley, Poems and Translations, ed. Galbraith Miller Crump (Oxford, 1962), p. 327.
- 16 Quoted by Leishman, p. 177.
- 17 Waller, ed. cit., I, 98.
- 18 John Milton, Complete Poems and Major Prose, ed. Merritt Y. Hughes (New York, 1957), p. 107.
- 19 Cupids Conflict, ll. 85-90, in Philosophical Poems of Henry More, ed. Geoffrey Bullough (Manchester, 1931), p. 112.
- 20 Waller, ed. cit., I, 113.
- 21 The Marrow of Complements (1655), p. 161.
- 22 Robert Baron, The Cyprian Academy (1647), Bk. I, p. 43.
- 23 George Herbert, Works, ed. F.E. Hutchinson (Oxford, 1941), p. 87; Henry King, Minor Poets of the Caroline Period, ed. George Saintsbury, Vol. III (Oxford, 1921), p. 238; Eldred Revett, Selected Poems, ed. Donald M. Friedman, "English Reprint Series", No. 20 (Liverpool, 1966), p. 42.
- 24 Margaret Cavendish, Duchess of Newcastle, Poems and Fancies (1653), p. 97.
- 25 Thomas Philipott, Poems (1646), ed. L.C. Martin, "Liverpool Reprints", No. 4 (Liverpool, 1950), pp. 25-26.

- 26 Henry King, 'A Contemplation upon Flowers', ed. cit., p. 273. (The poem is of disputed authorship, but has traditionally been attributed to King.)
- 27 For a study of Renaissance symbolism in painting see Erwin Panofsky's Studies in Iconology (1939), (Harper Torchbooks ed., New York, 1962). He notes, for example, that "a female figure with a peach in her hand is a personification of Veracity" (p. 6); and that a quince is "the wedding fruit par excellence" (p. 163). See also George Ferguson's extremely useful dictionary of Signs & Symbols in Christian Art (New York, 1961).
- 28 Crashaw, ed. cit., p. 83.
- 29 Christopher Harvey, The School of the Heart (1647) (ed. used, London, 1778), pp. 96-97.
- 30 'A Nosegaie alwaies sweet', printed in A Handful of Pleasant Delights (1584), assigns values to lavender, rosemary, sage, fennel, violet, thyme, rose, gillyflowers, carnations, marigolds, penirial, cowslips.
- 31 See The Shepherds Calendar, April, ll. 136-144; Hamlet, Act IV, sc. v; The Winter's Tale, Act IV, sc. iv, ll. 73-129.
- 32 See The Parlement of Foules, ll. 176-82; and The Faerie Queene, Bk. I, Canto I, stanzas 8-9, in The Poetical Works of Edmund Spenser, ed. J. Payne Collier, 5 vols. (London, 1891), I, 115.
- 33 See Twelfth Night, Act I, sc. v and Act II, sc. iv; Othello, Act IV, sc. iii; for the symbolic use of oak, palm, and laurel see Marvell's 'The Garden', stanza I.
- 34 William Cartwright, Poems (1651), in The Plays and Poems, ed. G. Blakemore Evans (Madison, Wisconsin, 1951), p. 473; and Abraham Cowley, Poems, ed. A.R. Waller (Cambridge, 1905), pp. 435-36.
- 35 For the connection between the oak and kingship see 'A Dialogue between an Oake, and a Man cutting him downe' by the Duchess of Newcastle, Poems and Fancies, pp. 66-70.
- 36 Matthew Stevenson, Occasions Off-spring, Or Poems upon severall Occasions (1654), p. 16.
- 37 Mildmay Fane, Earl of Westmorland, Otia Sacra (1648), p. 30.
- 38 Waller, ed. cit., I, 76.
- 39 Stanley, ed. cit., p. 122.
- 40 ibid., 'Love's Innocence', pp. 26-27.
- 41 Waller, ed. cit., I, 51.
- 42 Rosemary Freeman discusses Vaughan's use of the palm-tree emblem in English Emblem Books (London, 1967), pp. 150-51. See also Henry Hawkins's prose emblem book, Partheneia Sacra (Rouen, 1633), p. 158 for a palm-tree emblem. This book contains interpretations and applications of a great many natural details, including birds, trees, flowers, and insects.
- 43 For nightingale images see 'Cupids Call', The Poems of James Shirley, ed. Ray Livingstone Armstrong (New York, 1941), p. 1; Mildmay Fane, 'My Happy Life', Otia Sacra, pp. 135-36. For lark images see Waller, 'Of the Queen', ed. cit., I, 77; Milton, 'L'Allegro', ll. 41-46. For

- dove images see Stanley, 'To Mrs Sandys', ed. cit., p. 331; Marvell, Upon Appleton House, ll. 521-28.
- 44 Revett, ed. cit., p. 58; Stevenson, Occasions Off-spring, p. 24.
- 45 Cartwright, ed. cit., p. 473.
- 46 Watkyns, Flamma sine Fumo, p. 76.
- 47 The ram and the bull are also signs of the zodiac for March and April. See Panofsky, op. cit., pp. 85-86 for an account of these symbols as they appear in a tapestry of Spring in the Galleria degli Arazzi.
- 48 John Hall, Minor Poets of the Caroline Period, ed. George Saintsbury, Vol. II (Oxford, 1906), p. 215. For the spotlessness of the ermine see also Marvell's 'The Nymph complaining for the death of her Faun', l. 108; and Pathericke Jenkyns's 'On the perfection of Beauty', in Amorea (1661), p. 51.
- 49 Patrick Carey, Minor Poets of the Caroline Period, ed. George Saintsbury, Vol. II (Oxford, 1906), p. 455.
- 50 John Collop, Poesis Rediviva: or Poesie Reviv'd (1656), pp. 9 and 15.
- 51 See Stanley, 'The Hymnes of Sinesius: Hymn I', ll. 27-30, ed. cit., p. 352.
- 52 Watkyns, op. cit., p. 11.
- 53 Richard Lovelace, 'The Apostacy of one, and but one Lady', Poems, ed. C.H. Wilkinson (Oxford, 1930), p. 95. For wind used to signify the spirit of God see Vaughan's 'Regeneration'.
- 54 Crashaw, 'On the Frontispiece of Isaacsons Chronologie explained', ed. cit., p. 191.
- 55 Fans, op. cit., p. 46.
- 56 Robert Baron, Pocula Castalia (1650), p. 82.
- 57 Wits Interpreter, The English Parnassus, ed. John Cotgrave (1655), p. 39.
- 58 Waller, ed. cit., I, 112.
- 59 See J.B. Leishman, op. cit., p. 121.
- 60 Thomas Shipman, Carolina; Or, Loyal Poems (1683), p. 94.
- 61 Robert Ellrodt, Les Poètes Métaphysiques Anglais, 2 vols. (Paris, 1960), I, 247.
- 62 A. Alvarez, The School of Donne (London, 1961), p. 69. Louis L. Martz argues that Herbert also learnt from Robert Southwell, the Jesuit poet. See The Poetry of Meditation, revised ed. (New Haven and London, 1962), pp. 179-210.
- 63 Rosemond Tuve, op. cit., p. 218.
- 64 *ibid.*, pp. 218-19.
- 65 *ibid.*, pp. 219-20.
- 66 Christopher Harvey, 'The Epiphany, or Twelthday', The Synagogue, or the Shadow of the Temple, 5th. ed. (1667), p. 40; Anne Collins, 'The Second Meditation', Divine Songs and Meditations (1653), selected by Stanley N. Stewart, "Augustan Reprint Society", No. 94 (Los Angeles, 1961), p. 75; John Collop, 'Man a Microcosm', op. cit., p. 47.
- 67 Edmund Elys, Divine Poems (1658), p. 29.
- 68 Rowland Watkyns, op. cit., pp. 6-7.

- 69 Crashaw, ed. cit., pp. 88-89.
- 70 Joseph Beaumont, Minor Poems, ed. Eloise Robinson (London, 1914), pp. 394-95.
- 71 Fane, Otia Sacra, p. 22.
- 72 See Herbert, 'The Glance' and 'The Flower', Poems, ed. F.E. Hutchinson (Oxford, 1941), pp. 171-72 and 165-67.
- 73 The Shorter Poems of Ralph Knevet, ed. Amy M. Charles (Ohio State University Press, 1966), pp. 368 and 296.
- 74 Thomas Fettiplace, from The Sinner's Tears, in Meditations and Prayers (1653), in Rare Poems of the Seventeenth Century, ed. L. Birkett Marshall (Cambridge, 1936), p. 89.
- 75 Thomas Washbourne, Divine Poems (1654), p. 103.
- 76 Fane, op. cit., pp. 25-26.
- 77 Joseph Beaumont, ed. cit., p. 97.
- 78 Martin Lluelyn, Men-Miracles (1646), pp. 151-52.
- 79 Beaumont, ed. cit., pp. 142-43.
- 80 Fane, op. cit., p. 12.
- 81 Christopher Harvey, The School of the Heart, ed. cit., p. 93.
- 82 Sir Christopher Wyvill, Certaine Serious Thoughts (1647), p. 7.
- 83 Beaumont, ed. cit., p. 393.
- 84 Herbert, 'The Flower', ed. cit., p. 166.
- 85 From Cudmore's Euchodia; a Prayer-Song (1655), printed in Rare Poems of the Seventeenth Century, ed. cit., p. 41.
- 86 Fane, op. cit., pp. 46-47.
- 87 Joseph Beaumont, for example, has a poem on the Burning Bush of the Old Testament, which treats the bush as a real plant which birds disdain to perch upon, and which is tossed by "every Blast/That past". Schooled in the Herbert tradition, he then goes on to liken it to "these poor Shrubs of Ours". (See Minor Poems, 'Love', Exod. 3, p. 26). See also, for another Biblical source, Thomas Washbourne's meditation on the image of the vine, based on Psalm 80, vv. 12-14. (Divine Poems, pp. 160-18).
- 88 Harvey, The Synagogue, ed. cit., p. 5.
- 89 Anne Collins, Divine Songs and Meditations (1653), ed. cit., pp. 56-58.
- 90 Nothing is known of Anne Collins apart from what can be deduced from her volume of poems, and from her reference to her physical infirmity in her introductory remarks "To the Reader": "I inform you, that by divine Providence, I have been restrained from bodily employments, suting with my disposicion, which enforced me to a retired Course of life". (p. A1^r).
- 91 Beaumont, ed. cit., p. 399; Crashaw, ed. cit., p. 115; Harvey, The Synagogue, ed. cit., p. 40.
- 92 John Collop, Poesis Rediviva, p. 47.
- 93 Rowland Watkyns, op. cit., p. 53.
- 94 Herbert, ed. cit., p. 154.
- 95 Revett, 'Affliction', ed. cit., p. 60.
- 96 Fane, Otia Sacra, pp. 46 and 40.

- 97 Anne Collins, ed. cit., p. 33. The day/night, sun/Son imagery is especially strong in stanzas III-IV of the poem cited.
- 98 Rosemond Tuve, op. cit., p. 219.
- 99 Harvey, The Synagogue, ed. cit., pp. 64-65.
- 100 Ralph Knevet, ed. cit., pp. 356-63.
- 101 Rosemond Tuve, p. 221. The most complex allegorical landscape in the meditative tradition is Robert Southwell's 'A Vale of Teares', which contains a great many natural details, organized into a vivid impression of a morally and spiritually meaningful countryside. (See The Poems of Robert Southwell, S.J., ed. James H. McDonald and Nancy Pollard Brown (Oxford, 1967), pp. 41-43).
- 102 Mario Fraz, Studies in Seventeenth Century Imagery, 2nd. ed. (Rome, 1964), p. 15.
- 103 J.B. Leishman, op. cit., p. 34.
- 104 Rosemary Freeman, op. cit., p. 99.
- 105 Fane, Otia Sacra, p. 1.
- 106 Rowland Watkyns, Flamma sine Fumo, p. 54.
- 107 *ibid.*, pp. 27, 39, 80-81, and 86.
- 108 John Collop, Poesis Rediviva, p. 6.
- 109 The Duchess of Newcastle, Poems and Fancies, pp. 136-37.
- 110 Thomas Philipott, Poems (1646), ed. cit., pp. 5-6.
- 111 Rosemary Freeman, p. 2.
- 112 *ibid.*, p. 33.
- 113 *ibid.*, p. 155.
- 114 *ibid.*, pp. 154-55.
- 115 Philipott, ed. cit., p. 45.
- 116 Robert Baron, Pocula Castalia (1650), p. 96.
- 117 See Robert Heath, Clarastella (1650), printed in "The Orinda Booklets" (Extra Series), II, ed. William G. Hutchison (Hull, 1905), p. 22; Cotton, Poems, ed. John Buxton, "The Muses' Library" (London, 1958), p. 211; Nicholas Hookes, Amanda (1653), reprinted 1923, pp. 40 and 14.
- 118 Hugh Crompton, Pierides, or the Muses Mount (1658), pp. 82-83.
- 119 Alexander Brome, from a volume dated 1661 and reprinted in The Works of the English Poets, ed. Chalmers (London, 1810), VI, 646.
- 120 Collop, op. cit., p. 71; John Hall, 'A Sea Dialogue', Minor Poets of the Caroline Period, ed. George Saintsbury, Vol. II (Oxford, 1906), p. 191; Hammond, *ibid.*, II, 496; Revett, ed. cit., p. 14; Hookes, Amanda, p. 36.
- 121 Crashaw, ed. cit., p. 82.
- 122 Hookes, Amanda, p. 50.
- 123 Lord Herbert of Cherbury, Minor Poets of the 17th Century, ed. R.G. Howarth, "Everyman's Library" (London, 1953), p. 24.
- 124 Matthew Stevenson, Occasions Off-spring (1654), p. 8.
- 125 William Cavendish, Duke of Newcastle, The Phanseys of William Cavendish, ed. Douglas Grant (London, 1956), p. 21.
- 126 Rosemary Freeman, op. cit., p.2.

Chapter VI

Nature as Experience

"Nature poetry" is a characteristic growth of the modern spirit - a fruit of that Renaissance awakening to the intrinsic interest of the physical universe and to the value of individual human experience, which gave rise to such diverse phenomena as experimental science, empirical philosophy, and landscape painting. (The true subject of the nature poet is his own experience of the countryside. He is distinguished from the merely descriptive poet or the merely religious poet by being concerned with the relationship between himself and the natural scene.) This relationship will be more or less complex, and its expression a more or less significant contribution to human understanding, in proportion to the scope of the poet's knowledge of nature and the intensity and integrity of his personal responses. (The need to capture in art the relationship between man and nature has persisted wherever human beings have organized themselves into societies, and so created an environment that is to some extent artificial or divorced from the natural world. The earliest religions were centred on the worship of the natural phenomena of earth, vegetation, weather, and seasons;) the earliest cave-paintings show the human hunter pursuing his prey; early poetry, whether Hebrew or Anglo-Saxon, is filled with a sense of the vastness or mystery or threat of the forces at work beyond the circle of human civilization. But these early artists approached nature as representatives of the tribe or race: their attitudes were universal, and eventually became stylized into

traditional formulae. The mediaeval spring-song, the lyrical outburst of joy at the return of warmth and life to the dormant earth, has a ritualistic element that is related to the pagan religions which were absorbed by Christianity. It is not so much an expression of a personal response to the season, as a celebration of the cycle of general human experience. The poet is the spokesman for his fellows, rather than the individual artist recording his own unique reaction.

As the social unit grows larger and more highly organized - as the family group or the nomadic tribe or the farming settlement gives place to the city or the court, with its complex and artificial conventions and structure - the less terrifying and savage aspects of nature take on a new significance. The innocence and tranquillity of the countryside are seen as an antithesis to the corruption and tumult of the man-made environment, and nature becomes a refuge for the care-worn poet. For many centuries, the Western world turned to the pastoral for the embodiment of the ideas and emotions surrounding this antithesis.¹

The pastoral poets rarely transmitted a realistic conception of the countryside, nor was their verse concerned with any personal response to the actual details of the natural world. (The "nature" of pastoral was an idealized Arcadia; and the "experience" of the poet was more or less confined to the contrast between the simple and sophisticated way of life. Towards the end of the Elizabethan age, and during the early part of the seventeenth century, pastorals began to take a closer interest in the details of their setting.) Maurice Evans, in English Poetry in the Sixteenth Century, mentions the "native local colour and detail", which provides "a

pleasant change after Arcadia", in the work of Drayton, Barnfield, and Breton, and adds:-

The many references to fields and hedges in the pastoral support C.S. Lewis' conjecture that the enclosing of land had both improved the English landscape and drawn attention to its beauty. Whatever the reason, the pastoral utters more than conventional praise for the countryside, and is the father of such works as the Compleat Angler.²

Later, speaking of the influence of Spenser, Sidney, and the University Wits on the English lyric, he comments on the "rich sensuous vitality" of the new song, and notes the fresh sense of the country "which is in part a development out of the medieval spring song but in part, also, an indication of a new interest in the English landscape".³ "Whatever the reason", as Evans says, both pastoral and lyric were becoming vehicles for the expression of the new interest and delight in the things of nature. But neither was really a suitable genre for the poets who were working towards that sense of personal involvement with nature which is the source of nature poetry. The song is too stylized in its manner, and too brief and slight in its form, to carry any but the simplest of experiences; and (the pastoral is essentially artificial and depends for its very qualities on an acknowledged remoteness of real experience from the golden world of the shepherds. Walter W. Greg explains how William Browne's Britannia's Pastorals - "the longest and most ambitious poem ever composed on a pastoral theme" - reveals the fundamental inappropriateness of the genre for what the poet had to say:-

In his genuine mood as a loving observer of country life he is a very different poet. His feeling is delicate in tone and his

observation keen; he was familiar with every tree that grew in the woods, every fish that swam in the waters of his beloved Devon; he entered tenderly into the homely life of the farm. . . . When, however, naturalism of this kind is introduced into pastoral it is already on the high road toward ceasing to be pastoral at all.⁴

It was not simply a question of new material superceding the old, and so demanding a different poetic mode. The preoccupations of the traditional pastoral became even more acute as the century wore on. Frank Kermode makes the point when he turns to discuss what he regards as the last of the line of significant pastorals - Marvell's Mower poems of the 1650s:-

Probably the contrast between town and country - the social aspect of the great Art and Nature antithesis which is philosophically the basis of pastoral literature - was more poignant at that time than it has been since. London was becoming a modern metropolis, with a distinctively metropolitan ethos, before the eyes of its citizens, who were by tradition and even by upbringing much more rural than any town-dweller can now be.⁵

1. The Happy Man.

Themes which had often been merely conventional in the past became intensely relevant to the generations which lived through the doubts and upheavals of the middle decades of the seventeenth century. The artificialities of the pastoral manner could no longer satisfy the serious-minded men who found in the country both a refuge from the troubles of the Civil War, and sustenance for their own moral and spiritual growth. There was a need for a new poetic form, which could preserve the vital elements in the pastoral tradition, and at the same time incorporate the changing preoccupations of society, religion, and aesthetics. The emergence of such a form is the subject of Professor Maren-Sofie Røstvig's compre-

hensive study of the "beat^{us} ille" motif in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century literature. Although her central theme is the development in England of the classical topos of the Happy Man - sometimes Stoic, sometimes Epicurean in his attitudes - in practice, she becomes involved with the beginnings of an important ingredient of what was later to be known as "nature poetry". She explains, in the preface to the first volume of The Happy Man, how the tradition of the descriptive poem and the beat^{us} ille tradition come together when a poet derives an important part of his happiness from his experience of the countryside. This merging of the two traditions scarcely took place in the poetry of Horace himself, because, although he showed himself sensitive to the beauties of nature in his lyrics, his philosophy of retired happiness was too firmly based on moral issues to take much account of the setting for retirement. The intellectual conditions under which the genre developed and flourished in England were different:-

The religious or philosophic bias of many seventeenth- and eighteenth-century poets, however, caused them to invest the rural scene with secret powers or qualities capable of inducing a certain state of mind in the beholder. In many cases the very perception of the significance of the landscape of retirement came to be viewed as the mechanism whereby happiness was achieved. In this manner the beat^{us} ille tradition led directly to the creation of descriptive poetry. . . . A study of the beat^{us} ille tradition in English poetry is therefore also a study of the poetic approach to the rural scene.⁶

The conception of the Happy Man, living a retired country life, free from the tensions of city and court, obviously has affinities with that aspect of pastoral which still appealed to the seventeenth-century mind. But it

also provided a vehicle for the wider range of experiences that were calling for expression - a vehicle, moreover, which was far more flexible than the stereotyped eclogue, and was capable of development and expansion to fit various situations.

Professor Røstvig finds that there was no easily defined tradition of beatus ille poetry in the literature of antiquity. It was created by Renaissance disciples of Horace and Virgil, who picked out passages dealing with the happy country life from classical works and translated or imitated them. The most influential among its neo-Latin exponents was the Pole, Casimire Sarbiewski, who published collections of Horatian odes in 1625 and 1628. The two crucial years in this country were 1621 and 1668, the dates respectively of the publication of John Ashmore's Certain Selected Odes of Horace and Abraham Cowley's Essays, in Verse and Prose. Five of Ashmore's nineteen translated odes contain beatus ille sentiments. More significant, however, is the large appendix, which "consists solely of beatus ille poetry divided into a pagan and a Christian section, the former being headed 'The Praise of a Country Life', the latter 'Of a Blessed Life'".⁷ By 1621, then, an Englishman had felt it worthwhile to extract from the works of Horace, Virgil, Martial, and the humanists those fragments dealing with the pleasures of rural life. During the second quarter of the century, there began a spate of translations from Horace, Virgil, Claudian, Martial, and others, which continued right through to the new Augustan Age.⁸ The popularity of the rural philosophy of Horace and the rest "becomes marked after 1630, while a veritable peak is

reached in the 'fifties and 'sixties".⁹

If we turn now to the minor poetry of the years 1645-1668, with a view to examining how this movement affected the use of natural details, we find that the poems which touch on the theme of rural retirement fall into two groups: those in which nature functions as an ideal to be contrasted with the evils of sophisticated life, and which therefore contain scant reference to any positive enjoyment of the objects of the countryside; and those in which the natural scene appears as a positive source of pleasure, which has its own value independent of its function as a haven from the troubles of the world.

a) Escape from the World.

Those poems of the first group which are closest to the pastoral merely make a general contrast between the quiet and innocence of the country and the cares of city and court. Typical are Robert Chamberlain's 'On the sweetness of Contentation', about the happiness of the farmer's peaceful lot, and 'In the praise of a Country Life', which demands:-

What are great offices but cumbring troubles?
 And what are honours but dissolving bubbles?
 What though the gates of greatness be frequented
 With chains of glittering gold? He that's contented
 Lives in a thousand times a happier way
 Than he that's tended thus from day to day.¹⁰

The only natural details in Patrick Carey's 'The Country Life' - a song beginning "Fondlings! keep to th'city" - occur in the antitheses of stanza six:-

Sweet, and fresh our air is;
 Each brook cool, and fair is;

On the grass we tread:
 Foul's your air, streets, water;
 And thereafter
 Are the lives which there you lead.¹¹

('A Country Life' by Katherine Philips makes the pastoral comparison of rural felicity to the Golden Age:-

How sacred and how innocent
 A country-life appears,
 How free from tumult, discontent,
 From flattery or fears!
 This was the first and happiest life,
 When man enjoy'd himself;
 Till Pride exchanged peace for strife,
 And happiness for pelf.¹²

The Civil War and the institution of the Commonwealth underlined the wisdom of holding aloof from public affairs, and inevitably allusions to the specific problems of England replace the generalized ills of the town in some works. Mrs. Philips, for instance, congratulates herself and "Ardelia" on their enjoyment of 'A retir'd Friendship':-

Here let us sit and bless our stars,
 Who did such happy quiet give,
 As that remov'd from noise of wars,
 In one another's hearts we live.

 In such a scorching age as this,
 Who would not ever seek a shade,
 Deserve their happiness to miss,
 As having their own peace betray'd.¹³

Mildmay Fane, after a brief spell of imprisonment during the war itself sought out:-

. a shade
 Of such Security may give

'Gainst heat and cold Prerogative
 Defence: where no times payes or Thunder
 Shall blast or scorch those so lie under.¹⁴

And Eldred Revett, in an ode 'Hastening his Friend into the Countrey', longs to escape from both "this smoakie Town" and "The Sow're breath'd Muskets Voyce".¹⁵

Even before the hostilities broke out in England, the ideal of the country retreat had become associated with the Royalist cause. Back in 1630, Sir Richard Fanshawe had written an ode welcoming and supporting the king's proclamation "Commanding the Gentry to reside upon their Estates in the Country". He uses the beatus ille argument to reinforce the political expediency:-

Nor let the Gentry grudge to goe
 Into those places whence they grew,
 But thinke them blest they may doe so:
 Who would pursue
 The smoaky glory of the Towne,
 That may goe till his native earth,
 And by the shining fire sit downe
 Of his owne hearth.¹⁶

In the years that followed, as Rostvig notes, the term "peace" came to be used for propaganda purposes by those who supported Charles in the gathering crisis:-

The writing of poetry in praise of a peaceful rural retirement must therefore have been practically tantamount to a confession of loyalty to the Crown. This is true to such an extent that one is tempted to view the classical figure of the Happy Man as a conscious counterpart to the Puritan concept of the Christian pilgrim or warrior. . . . Sibi vivere became his watchword, and the vestigia ruris of the husbandman were accepted as the only valid symbols of peace and contentment.¹⁷

A roll-call of the leading exponents, in practice as well as in literature, of the Horatian rural philosophy indicates an almost exclusively Royalist company: Randolph, Herrick, Fane, Joseph Beaumont, Sir Thomas Browne, Vaughan, Benlowes, George Daniel, Cowley, Evelyn, Cotton, Izaak Walton, Even Lord Fairfax, after his resignation as Commander-in-Chief of the opposing forces, retired to his country estate at Nunappleton, where he was joined by Andrew Marvell, whose early sympathies were with the royalist cause.

Many of the Royalists were also staunch supporters of the Anglican Church - some were themselves country clergymen - and were further attracted to the beatus ille philosophy by its compatibility with the prevailing religious and philosophic temper. As Professor Røstvig puts it:-

The Horatian appeal to the moral authority of the individual - sapiens sibi qui imperiosus - was bound to attract a period as individualistic as the seventeenth century. Both Anglicans and Puritans appealed to the inner authority: intra te quaere Deum (John Smith). For this reason private meditation or contemplation became extraordinarily important.¹⁸

One of the advantages of country life that Fanshawe held up to the ladies of the gentry in his famous ode was that they would find in it "more solid joyes,/More true contentment ~~of~~ the minde,/Than all Town-toyes".¹⁹ Mildmay Fane's address 'To my Book', on the title page of the second part of Otia Sacra, ends with an expression of the Stoic and Horatian ideal of self-knowledge which comes from quiet meditation:-

But who themselves in Peace can thus read ore,
Need but be thankfull, and ne're wish for more.

In 'My Countrey Audit', he translates the ideal into a Christian context:-

Blest Privacie, Happy Retreat, wherein
I may cast up my Reck'nings, Audit Sin,
Count o'r my Debts, and how Arrears increase
In Nature's book, towards the God of Peace.²⁰

John Collop's thoughts 'On Retirement' also concentrate on the opportunity it offers for self-sufficiency and understanding - an opportunity forfeited by those who give themselves up to the exigencies of public life:-

I leave the world, it me, yet not alone,
Nor left, have ages for my patrons known.
Or can I be alone, who treat with th'world,
Which is within, your's to th'first Chaos hurl'd.

.
Yet when these scorch, retire, within's a Cave;
In our own bodies we may cooling have.

.
Thus you may gain what others strive to seem;
Let me gain Knowledge, others gain Esteem.²¹

Even Katherine Philips endorses the Stoic maxim, in her 'Invitation to the Country':-

Kings may be slaves by their own passions hurl'd,
But who commands himself commands the World.
A country-life assists this study best,
Where no distractions do the soul arrest.²²

b) The Pleasures of the Countryside.

The second group of poems, which find positive enjoyment and value in the countryside itself, rather than merely praising the life of security and contemplation that it allows, vary in mood and complexity. Fanshawe's ode of 1630 ends with a list of the simple delights of birdsong, flowers, trees and fruit that will entertain the ladies of the gentry; Thomas

Randolph's famous 'Ode to Master Anthony Stafford, to Hasten him into the Country' dwells on similar pleasures of the senses: apples, damsons, grapes will satisfy the palate:-

Then, full, we'll seek a shade;
 And hear what music's made!
 How PHILOMEL
 Her tale doth tell;
 And how the other birds do fill the quire!
 The thrush and blackbird lend their throats,
 Warbling melodious notes!
 We will all sports enjoy; which others but desire!²³

Two of the eight stanzas of 'The Praise of the Country Life', in The Marrow of Complements (1655), add such simple enjoyment of the sights and sounds of nature to the basic appeal of the escape from Court sophistication:-

Happy are those Woods and Mountains,
 And as happy are those Fountains,
 Where contents are still excelling,
 More then in a Princes dwelling.
 These thy Flocks, thy clothing bring thee,
 Pretty Songs the Birds do sing thee,
 And what more the worth is seeing,
 Heaven and Earth thy prospect being.²⁴

Howland Watkyns finds in the actual surroundings of his contemplative retreat pleasant and profitable matter for meditation:-

It is my comfort to escape the rude
 And sluttish trouble of the multitude:
 Flowers, rivers, woods, the pleasant air and wind,
 With Sacred thoughts, do feed my serious mind.²⁵

2. The Ideal Day.

Perhaps the favourite poetic frame for the expression of this kind of

delight in the physical details of the countryside was that of the Ideal Day - a convention employed by Milton in 'L'Allegro', by Lovelace in 'Aramantha', by Fane for his account of 'My Happy Life', by Benlowes for the last two "retirement" cantos of Theophias, and by Marvell for the descriptive section of Upon Appleton House. Sara Ruth Watson's study of this topos²⁶ locates its origins in early pastoral, and demonstrates "that the description of the ideal day is a significant and deeply rooted theme which developed gradually during the whole course of the pastoral tradition".²⁷ The two dominant pastoral motifs of the "golden age" and the "come-live-with-me" appeal could both be amplified by means of concrete illustration, and it was an easy step from the random accumulation of details from country life to the ordering of these to suggest the pattern of a perfect day. The topos first emerges in complete form at the close of Book II of Virgil's Georgics.²⁸ The intrusion of the subjective note, which is so characteristic of Milton's 'L'Allegro' and Marvell's Upon Appleton House, was not foreign to the pastoral, but was "actually imbedded in the English tradition, beginning with Spenser . . . and repeated again and again . . . by his followers",²⁹ Miss Watson cites eclogues by Drayton, William Browne, Wither, Lodge, and others which contribute to the tradition, but omits to mention one Elizabethan piece which is of special interest: the Scottish dialect poem by Alexander Hume, entitled 'Of the Day Estivall'. This is free of any pastoral trappings, and sustains over 58 stanzas a purely descriptive account of the course of a single day. Two samples must suffice to illustrate the sensitive observation of detail which is found throughout:-

Oure Hemisphere is poleist clein,
 And lightened more and more,
 While everie thing be clearly sein,
 Quhilk seemed dim before.

.
 The subtile mottie rayons light,
 At rifts they are in wonne;
 The glansing phains, and vitre bright,
 Resplends against the sunne.

mottie: full of notes; in wonne: got in. 30

There is no attempt to apply what has been described, or to draw any moral from it beyond the simple statement of the final lines:-

Thankes to the gracious God of Heaven,
 Quhilk send this summer day.

This early piece is unique in the singlemindedness with which it sticks to its descriptive purpose, and in the profusion of detail with which it adorns its subject.

The flexibility of the topos of the Ideal Day during the middle decades of the seventeenth century can be seen not only in the great poems of Milton and Marvell, but also in the various treatments accorded it by writers as diverse as Casimire Sarbiewski (translated into English in 1646), Richard Lovelace, Patrick Carey, and Katherine Philips. Stanzas VIII-XII of Carey's song 'The Country Life' pursue the activities of the rural day from morning, through afternoon and evening, to night. The connections of this slight lyric with the 'L'Allegro' tradition are made more likely by the concluding lines of stanza VII, which introduce the Ideal Day passage:-

Yet we too are jolly;
 Melancholy
 Comes not near us, night nor day. 31

Mrs. Philips's contribution is found among her translations from the French: 'A Pastoral of Mons. de Scudery's in the first volume of 'Almahide'.³² The poem presents a shepherd's courtship of Aminta, and includes within the framework of a day in the countryside an account of her perfections, of the lover's offering of pastoral gifts, and of his own excellencies as a suitor. Many of the sights and sounds of nature are recorded - often in terms reminiscent of Virgil and other classical pastoralists - but they remain incidental to the main theme of the lover's wooing. They are coloured by his consuming passion: the sun rises, but the lady is ^a brighter sun; the winds do not blow, they "sigh" like the lover; the dew reminds him of her tears; the song of the birds yields to the sweeter song of the lady; and so on through the day, till the coming of evening suggests retirement with the beloved. The natural scene is only significant insofar as the shepherd can apply it to his love: it is the human emotion which holds the centre of attention. Too much weight cannot be given to what was not an original composition, but it must be of some significance that Mrs. Philips, with her frequently declared liking for country retirement, chose this particular piece to render into English. Her choice is indicative of a growing taste for poetry dealing, whether in the context of the traditional pastoral, or whether in less hackneyed forms, with the actual details of the country life which so many were advocating during her lifetime.

Lovelace's 'Aramantha'³³ is an altogether more accomplished and interesting work, and although, like Mrs. Philips's translation, it is a third person narrative, it merits attention here both because of its use of

the Ideal Day structure and because of some striking parallels to passages in the poems of Milton and Marvell. The poem begins with Aramantha waking, like Milton's Merry Man, to the song of the lark - "the jolly bird of light". Following the same course as the speaker in Upon Appleton House, she enters the garden, where she receives the homage of various flowers; when "the sun doth higher rise" she hurries off to the meadows, where she milks the cows; she then retires to "the neighb'ring wood", where the fish in the "clear stream" "Sues ever to be slave in vain". The passage which follows creates a mood and suggests an experience of nature which is very similar to the woodland sequence in Upon Appleton House and the magical account of "arched walks of twilight groves,/And shadows brown that Sylvan loves" in 'Il Penseroso':-

From hence her various windings roave
 To a well orderd stately grove;
 This is the Pallace of the Wood,
 And Court oth' Royall Oake, where stood
 The whole Nobility, the Pine,
 Strait Ash, tall Firre, and wanton Vine;
 The proper Cedar, and the rest;
 Here she her deeper senses bñest;
 Admires great Nature in this Pile
 Floor'd with greene-velvet Camomile,
 Garnisht with Gems of unset fruit,
 Supply'd still with a self recruit;
 Her bosom wrought with pretty Eyes
 Of never-planted Strawberries;
 Where th'winged Musick of the ayre
 Do richly feast and for their fare
 Each Evening in a silent shade,
 Bestow a gratefull Serenade.

Thus ev'n tyerd with delight,
 Sated in Soul and Appetite;
 Full of the purple plumme and Peare,
 The golden Apple with the faire
 Grape, that mirth fain would have taught her,
 And nuts which Squirrells cracking brought her;

She softly layes her weary limbs,
 Whilst gentle slumber now beginnes
 To draw the Curtaines of her Eye.

Overwhelmed by the pleasures of the senses, which satisfy deeper longings too - "Sated in Soul and Appetite" - she is like Marvell's speaker, "languishing with ease" and weaving "Strange Prophecies" in Upon Appleton House, or like Milton's Melancholy Man lost in "some strange mysterious dream". It is no surprise to learn later in the poem that she can become "conversant in lays/Of birds", just as Marvell's "I" begins "to call /In their most learned Original". She is awoken from her slumber by the lament of a lovestriken youth, and it is revealed that she is really his lost love Lucasta. The Ideal Day moves onward, as she leads him "to her bow'r to dine/Under a shade of Eglantine,/Upon a dish of Natures cheere/Which both grew drest, and serv'd up there". And the poem ends with the reunited lovers happy in each other's company.

Casimire's handling of the Ideal Day topos occurs in the very different context of his third Epode, 'The praise of a Religious Recreation'.³⁴ This poem - a palinode to Horace's second Epode, which was one of the chief classical models for the theme - contains within the unifying frame of the day in the countryside, two distinct movements: in the first, the poet is the solitary religious contemplator, who seeks in the objects of the landscape evidence of the Platonic or Hermetic oneness of all creation; in the second, he presents an orthodox Horatian portrait of simple country joys. The importance of the first movement becomes more obvious when one remembers that Henry Vaughan translated it, and that

it contains a distinctive development of star and plant imagery which was to become one of the most marked features of the Silurist's own mature work.

Song, pastoral love-poem, Horatian celebration of rural happiness, the mystic's apprehension of the unity of life - the ancient device of the Ideal Day provided a vehicle for all these, and for the satisfaction in a great variety of ways of the growing poetic interest in the details of the natural world.

3. The Cult of Solitude.

For Horace and many of his followers, companionship was an important element in the Sabine farm ideal. The Horatian strain in Casimire's third Epode is evident in the lines which round off the day's activities:-

Our worke once done, we doe not silent sit,
When knots of our good fellowes meet;
Nor is our talke prolong'd with rude delay;
In harmlesse jests we spend the day.

Katherine Philips's content depends very much on "all the peace a friendship ever lent". Milton's Happy Man enjoys the acquaintance of ploughmen, milkmaids, and mowers, and the sunshine holidays of upland hamlets, when "young and old come forth to play".³⁵ But the very concept of retirement from the world, and of seeking pleasure in the objects of nature, can easily lead to the converse attitude of 'Il Penseroso'. The Melancholy Man prefers to "walk unseen", to pass the night studying "in some high lonely tower", to wander among the shady groves, "Where no profaner eye may look". Like the speaker in Marvell's 'The Garden', he would agree that:-

Society is all but rude
To this delicious Solitude.

As the Duchess of Newcastle says of Melancholy, in 'A Dialogue between Melancholy, and Mirth' (which must surely owe something to Milton's twin poems):-

Shee loves to walk in the still Moon-shine Night,
Where in a thick dark Grove she takes delight.
In hollow Caves, Houses thatcht, or lowly Cell,
Shee loves to live, and there alone to dwell.

When Melancholy speaks for herself, the resemblance to Milton is even more remarkable:-

I dwell in Groves that gilt are with the Sun,
Sit on the Bankes, by which cleare waters run.
In Summers hot, downe in a Shade I lye;
My Musick is the buzzing of a Fly:
Which in the Sunny Beames do dance all day,
And harmlessly do passe their time away.
I walk in Meadowes, where growes fresh green Grasse.
Or Feilds, where Corne is high, in which I passe:
Walk up the Hills, where round I Prospects see;
Some Brushy Woods, and some all Champions bee.
Returning back, in the fresh Pasture go,
To heare the bleating Sheep, and Cowes to lowe.
They gently feed, no Evill think upon,
Have no designes to do another wrong.³⁶

These are the secular pleasures of the solitary, drinking in the=sights and sounds of nature, and feeling a bond of sympathy between her own gentle nature and the dancing flies and grazing cattle that share the quiet of the countryside.

But as we have seen, what Røstvig calls "the motif of solitary contemplation" was frequently introduced into seventeenth-century modifications of the beatus ille genre to express the individualistic and meditative

bent of contemporary religion. The first movement of Casimire's Epode is an early example of this, as the poet retires alone and "strives to collect and find/The dispers'd flock of's wandring mind".³⁷ But religious or Stoical introspection was not the only outlet for that sense of the value of individual experience which was awoken by the Renaissance. Solitude was also sought by those who wished to indulge the senses or the emotions: the exponents of a brand of Epicureanism known in France as the "libertins". M.C. Bradbrook, in her article "Marvell and the Poetry of Rural Solitude", recognises the various manifestations of the growing taste for solitude. With the coming of privacy during the sixteenth century - when, for example, the communal hall tended to give way to the private parlour - "a new attitude towards solitude appears in literature":-

It is advocated as a virtuous state, leading to self-examination and a healthy conscience; it is celebrated as improving to the intellectual faculties. Moreover it is enjoyed, not as a relief from society but as a positive pleasure in itself, as a taste to be cultivated.³⁸

She adds, significantly for the purposes of this study, "Solitude went with the new feeling for country landscape which could only have been born of temporary exile in the town". The phenomenon developed earlier in France than in this country, with the seriously reflective notes of Montaigne's essay 'De la Solitude', and the more abandoned enjoyment of the "libertin" poets, notably Racan (1589-1670), Théophile (1591-1626), and Saint-Amant (1594-1661). Thomas Stanley translated Saint-Amant's 'La Jouissance', 'La Débauche', and 'L'Arion', and part of Théophile de Viau's 'La Maison de Silvie', but far more important as an indication of the

movement of taste in the 1650s were the English renderings of Saint-Amant's 'La Solitude' by Katherine Philips and Marvell's employer, Lord Fairfax.³⁹

A fairly close analysis of these last two translations is necessary, to demonstrate how the French poet's use of natural details, and general attitude to landscape, are in some ways far in advance of most English poetry of the period, and how such representative figures as Mrs. Philips and Lord Fairfax tackled the aesthetic problems that the poem posed.

The poem begins with what would be the commonplace pastoral or beatus ille contrast with the troubles of public life, except that the idea of solitude replaces the usual retirement or country peace. Mrs. Philips's version is close to the original:-

O! Solitude, my sweetest choice,
Places devoted to the night,
Remote from tumult, and from noise,
How you my restless thoughts delight!

She is generally more faithful to Saint-Amant than is Lord Fairfax, whose divergences from his source are the most interesting parts of his piece. For instance, his account of the rest of stanza I and the start of stanza II reads:-

Oh how mine eyes are pleased to see
Oaks that such spreading branches bear,
Which, from old time's nativity
And th'envy of so many years,
Are still green, beautiful and fair
As at the world's first day they were.

Naught but the highest twigs of all,
Where Zephyrus doth wanton play,
Do yet presage their future fall,
Or shew a sign of their decay.

The reference to the oaks with spreading branches is expanded from the bare phrase "ces bois"; and the lines from the second stanza express a completely different idea from that of Saint-Amant's French:-

Rien que leur extrême hauteur
Ne fait remarquer leur vieillesse.

There is no suggestion here - or in Mrs. Philips's rendering - that there are signs of decay in the trees' "highest twigs", but only that their height indicates that they are old. It may be that Fairfax has in mind the grove of oaks on Bilbrough Hill - made famous by Marvell's poem - which was one of his favourite haunts. The poem as a whole may have appealed to him because it echoed his own feelings about the solitude of woodland, and the new details in his version may have been derived from his own observation on his solitary walks.

Fairfax misses the nuance of feeling in stanza III, possibly being led astray by the mention of Philomel, possibly unresponsive to the Romantic flavour of the experience. Katherine Philips comes closer to capturing Saint-Amant's mood, but also makes the references to the nightingale fit the conventional myth by adding "sad" and "case forlorn" to the simple "chant langoureux" of the French. She also mistranslates as "entertain" the first word of the line: "Entretient bien ma reverie":-

Sad Philomel upon this thorn,
So curiously by Flora dress'd,
In melting notes, her case forlorn,
To entertain me, hath confess'd.
O! how agreeable a sight
These hanging mountains do appear,
Which the unhappy would invite
To finish all their sorrows here,

When their hard fate makes them endure
Such woes, as only death can cure.

Fairfax finds it difficult to understand this strange state of mind which can enjoy the gloomy thoughts of suicide inspired by mountains and precipices (which might have adorned a landscape by Salvator Rosa), and can indulge in the fantasy of the death-wish, merely for the sensations they stimulate. He attempts to make sense of the experience by suggesting that the poet has some real cause for despair:-

Sad Philomela's mournful song
Doth sweetly entertain my grief.

He reverses the roles of human emotion and natural details, to bring them into line with normal seventeenth-century practice: human emotion - "my grief" - already exists, and finds expression or support from the traditional imagery of Philomel and deformed mountains. Saint-Amant, on the other hand, is allowing emotion to be prompted by the objects around him.

Fairfax again recoils from the Romantic suggestions of stanza IV. His difficulty is underlined by his failure to find a conclusion for the first quatrain:-

How pleasant are the murmuring streams
In shady valleys running down,
Whose raging torrent as it seems
* * * * *

Compare with this traditionally civilized and comfortable scene of "murmuring streams" and "shady valleys", the wildness of the original:-

Que je trouve doux le ravage
 De ces fiers torrents vagabonds
 Qui se precipitent par bonds
 Dans ce vallon vert et sauvage!

The "raging torrent" which Fairfax retains from the original is uneasy in the more gentle and cultivated context that he provides for it. Mrs. Philips sticks more closely to the French, but even she weakens the force of the last line by replacing "ce vallon vert et sauvage" with "This solitary Vale".

Stanzas V-VI-VII are almost pure description, in which the poet takes delight in the things of nature for their own sake: plants, frogs, birds nesting, mating, and preening. He does not go on to interpret these details, or to see them as emblems of human existence, as so many of the mid-century poets would have done. Fairfax makes one interesting alteration of detail: where Saint-Amant (and Mrs. Philips) tell how "l'on voit sauter les grenouilles", the retired Lord-General writes:-

'Mongst sedge and bulrush we may heare
 The lepinge frogge: see where they hide
 Themselves for fear when they espy
 A man or beast approaching nye.

Apart from changing "see" to "heare", Fairfax is faithful to his source. There was no necessity to make the change for rhyme or metre, and it is unlikely that he would mistranslate so common a verb as "voir", so it may be that he is inserting an item from his own observation. The image is certainly more vivid and unexpected than the original.

From this point on Fairfax omits certain parts, so that his finished poem is only thirteen stanzas long, compared to Mrs. Philips's complete

twenty stanzas.

Stanzas VIII-XIII of the full version describe some nearby ruins, and the poem reaches its most Romantic extremes, beginnings:-

What beauty is there in the sight
Of these old ruin'd castle-walls,
On which the utmost rage and spight
Of Time's worst insurrection falls?

The ruins put the poet in mind of witches, "nests of adders and of owls", "ghastly goblins", the "dismal cries" of ravens, the swinging carcass of a hanged lover, the ghost of the mistress who caused the suicide. Stanza XI describes the cellar of the ruin; stanzas XII and XIII the cave beneath the cellar, where sleep and echo reside.

More description follows (stanzas IX-XII in Fairfax, and XIV-XVIII in Mrs. Philips), which consists of a rather odd mixture of detailed observation, wit, and classical allusion. A sense of a landscape, with suggestions of the Italian picturesque, is built up in the first of these stanzas, as the poet moves from the ruin to the rock and thence down to see where the waters undermine it. Fairfax's version is the more vigorous:-

When from these ruins I do goe
Up an aspiring rock not farre,
Whose topp did seeme as 'twere to know
Where mist and storms engender'd are,
And then descending at my leisure
Down paths made by the storming waves,
I did behold with greater pleasure
How they did work the hollow caves -
A worke so curious and rare
As if that Neptune's court were there.

The poet enjoys the details of the scene, and presents it as a personal

experience, as he explores the rock and the "curious and rare" formation of the sea-weathered cliff. In the succeeding verses, he describes the "delightful sight" of the "calmer seas" that follow the storms, and the pleasures of the storms themselves when, in Mrs. Philips's words:-

Sometimes the sea dispels the sand,
Trembling and murmuring in the bay,
And rolls itself upon the shells
Which it both brings and takes away.

After this, he records his fascination at the way the sun is reflected in the smooth water as in a looking-glass - lines which may have suggested Marvell's imagery in stanza LXXX of Upon Appleton House. Fairfax's version seems to have been in Marvell's mind:-

The sun in it's so clearly seene
That, contemplating this bright sight,
As 'twas a doubt whether itt had beene
Himself or image gave the light,
All first appearing to our eyes
As if he had fal'n from the skyes,

Saint-Amant does not apply these observations. Whereas Marvell takes the image of the sun reflected in the river as a significant symbol, fitting into a context of ideas and meaningful allusions, the French poet simply records the phenomenon, and is pleased with his observations. They are part of an experience of nature which exists and is of value in its own right.

The last three stanzas of the poem contain the most interesting remarks about the character of poetry and the relation of natural details to the poet's method. Fairfax's version of the first of these stanzas (with which he chooses to conclude his poem) reads:-

Thus Alcidon, whose love injoines
 To think for thee no labor paine,
 Receive these rustick shepheard's lines,
 That's from their living object ta'en,
 Since I seek only desert places
 Where, all alone, my thoughts doe muse,
 No entertainment but what pleases
 The genius of my rural muse.
 But no thought more delighteth me
 Than sweet remembrances of thee.

The poet claims to have derived the details of his landscape "from their living object" - or in Mrs. Philips's translation, "from the life" - an unusual practice at this time. He has wandered alone, and the poem has grown from the relationship experienced between himself and what he saw and heard. Stanza XIX of Mrs. Philips's poem is even more remarkable:-

Thou mayst in this Poem find,
 So full of liberty and heat,
 What illustrious rays have shin'd
 To enlighten my conceit:
 Sometimes pensive, sometimes gay,
 Just as that fury does control,
 And as the object I survey,
 The notions grow up in my soul,
 And are as unconcern'd and free
 As the flame which transported me.

The course of his poem, Saint-Amant seems to be saying, has been directed by two things: "that fury", or "the flame", which is presumably his "inspiration"; and, much more important for this study, "the object I survey". The "notions grow up in my soul" as a result of seeing various natural objects. This process is quite unlike that of most poets of the period in England, who drew upon a store of available significant details. Marvell pursues a somewhat similar course in Upon Appleton House, where his fancy roves over the fields of Nun Appleton. But the details which

appear in his poem seem to have been carefully selected to accord with other preoccupations - the Civil War, the Universal History of Man, the stages of the mystic experience. Vaughan often develops his poems from some perception of an object in nature, but his objects are always seen in the light of an already formed set of religious beliefs. Saint-Amant claims that nature alone has been his inspiration. As he declares in the final stanza:-

O! how I Solitude adore,
 That element of noblest wit,
 Where I have learnt Apollo's lore,
 Without the pains to study it.

Neither Lord Fairfax nor Katherine Philips learnt from their French source how to apply his methods in their own original compositions; and Fairfax especially seems to have been baffled by the unorthodox pre-romantic sensibility in places - it is significant that he cuts short the concluding account of aesthetic procedure, which may have seemed too "enthusiastic" for his meditative turn of mind. But the poem and its attitudes must have had some appeal for these two amateur poets, and the very fact that they chose to expend considerable labour in translating it is evidence of the direction in which the mid-seventeenth-century mind was beginning to turn.

Among the minor English poets who expressed a love of solitary enjoyment of nature, the most important was Mildmay Fane. Two of his poems stand out from the rest of his work: 'To Retiredness' and 'My Happy Life'.⁴⁰ The former begins with an address to the condition of country retirement:-

Next unto God, to whom I owe
 What e're I here enjoy below,
 I must indebted stand to Thee,
 Great Patron of my Libertie;
 For in the Cluster of affaires,
 Whence there are dealing severall shares,
 As in a Trick Thou hast convey'd
 Into my hand what can be said;
 Whilst he who doth himself possess,
 Makes all things pass him seem farr less.

Part of his pleasure comes from the emblematic habit of reading lessons into the objects around him; part comes from the Horatian rejection of "the Cluster of affaires", and the contemplative's desire to "himself possess". But the escapist element in his attitude to nature and solitude is reinforced by the sheer delight that he takes in nature itself:-

There are no other Warrs or Strife's -
 Encouragers, shrill Trumpets, Fyfes,
 Or horrid Drumms, but what Excels
 All Musick, Nature's Minstrels
 Piping and Chirping, as they sit
 Embowr'd in branches, dance to it;
 And, if at all Those doe contest,
 It is in this, but which sings best;
 And when they have contended long,
 I, though unseen, must judge the Song.

'My Happy Life' contains a much more detailed record of the sights and sounds which appeal to him. Again it is the birds which especially attract him, and the solitude which enables him to watch and listen to them. The more social pastimes of hunting and hawking are pleasant, but he is "More taken with a well-grown Tree", which offers a shady seat:-

Whilst in the Branches peached higher,
 The wing'd Crew sit as in a quier:
 This seems to me a better noise
 Than Organs.

From this comfortable position:-

. . . one may, (if marking well),
Observe the Plaintive Philomel
Bemoan her sorrows, and the Thrush
Plead safety through Defendant Bush.

There follows a long list of birds, which begins with a continuation of the metaphor suggested by "plead" and "Defendant": the owl, for example, is "Rufft like a Judge". But Fane soon forgets his legal conceit, and lets his fancy range over the many birds that he has seen and heard, often revealing that he has followed his own advice of "marking well":-

The Augur Hern, and sozzing Kite,
Kalendar weather in their flight,
As doe the Cleanlier Ducks, when they
Dive voluntary, wash, prune, play,
With the fair Cygnet, whose delight
Is to out-vie the snow in white.
And therefore alwayes seeks to hide
Her feet, lest they allay her pride.

.
Whilst from some hedg, or close of furre,
The Partridge calls its Mate, and churrs.

.
Now not to want a Court, a King-
Fisher is here with Purple wing,
Who brings me to the spring-head, where
Crystall is Lymbeckt all the yeere,
And every Drop distill'd implies
An Ocean of Felicities;
Whilst calculating, it spins on,
And turns the Pebbles one by one,
Administering to eye and eare
New Stars, and musick like the Sphere;
When every Purle Calcin'd doth run,
And represent such from the Sun.

This description of the stream, with its delightful visual and aural impressions of the pebbles moved by the current, leads him to consider

the various fish that it contains: the "nobler Trowts, beset with stones/
Of Rubie and of Diamonds", the "sharp-finn'd Pearch", the "healing Tench".
After this - which again bears marks of keen personal observation - comes
a passage that brings his experience of nature's delights to a climax:-

These cool delights help'd with the air
Fann'd from the Branches of the fair
Old Beech, or Oak, enchantments tie
To every sense's facultie;
And master all those powers should give
The will any prerogative.

He has abandoned himself to the sensuous "enchantments" of the countryside, and the will and other faculties that are usually of prime importance to the Stoic and Christian contemplative, are completely subdued by the innocent pleasures of eye and ear. Fane is here close to the attitude to nature associated with the French "libertins". In 'To Retiredness', he voices more orthodox sentiments:-

I hugg my Quiet, and alone
Take thee for my Companion,
And deem in doing so, I've all
I can True Conversation call;
For so my Thoughts by this retreat
Grow stronger, like contracted heat.

M.C. Bradbrook suggests that these two elements came together to form
the characteristic nature-poetry of the mid-century:-

The English attitude towards solitude is a fusion of the stoic
one represented by Montaigne, and the delight in country pleasure
which is typical of the "Libertins".⁴¹

Both Bradbrook and Røstvig agree in seeing Fane as a central figure in
the development of this strain of verse. Bradbrook writes of 'My Happy

Life' and 'To Retiredness':-

It is in this paradoxical union of the ascetic and the epicure that Fane most decisively modifies the tradition and stands nearest to Marvell.⁴²

And Røstvig reminds us that Fane was the first English poet to write about retirement as distinct from country life, and that his ode in Otia Sacra (1648) was the first published example of one "dedicated 'To Retiredness' and devoted to an exposition of the joys that can be experienced only in a rural retirement marked by religious fervour".⁴³

4. The Poet in the Shade.

Even in the almost exclusively epicurean 'My Happy Life', Fane had pictured himself sitting at the foot of a tree:-

Under whose Shades I may rehearse
The holy Lays of Sacred Verse.

The idea of the solitary contemplator sitting in a grove, or reclining beneath a tree, became associated with the distinctive experience explored in such poems as Marvell's 'The Garden'. But the topos itself was an ancient one, going back to classical times. Curtius reminds us that shade is a vital requisite for the enjoyment of the countryside in the hot Mediterranean climate, and adds:-

To write poetry under trees, on the grass, by a spring - in the Hellenistic period, this came to rank as a poetical motif in itself.⁴⁴

When George Daniel wished to express his character as poet in a self-portrait, he painted himself in Horatian dress, sitting at the foot of

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Henrici Mori Cantabrigiensis S. S. T. D. Effigies. A. F. 61.
Salomon Pro. c. 4. v. 23.
Præ omni Custodia Serva cor tuum quia ex ipso sunt Vitarum Egressus.
M. Antoninus. Med. lib. iv.
O Chara Anima quando una eris et nuda et Simplex.
S. Paulus. 1. ad. Cor. c. 16.
 OMNIA VESTRA FIANI IN CHARITATE.

FIGURE TWO. William Faithorne's engraving of Henry More from More's Opera Theologica (1675).

a tree. William Faithorne's engraving of Henry More shows the poet-philosopher in a similar situation, with a river-scene fading away into the distance. (See Figure Two, facing this page.)

Katherine Philips contributes to the tradition in the opening setting for 'A Reverie':-

A chosen privacy, a cheap content,
 And all the peace a friendship ever lent,
 A rock which civil Nature made a seat,
 A willow that repulses all the heat,
 The beauteous quiet of a summer's day,
 A brook which sobb'd aloud and ran away,
 Invited my repose, and then conspir'd
 To entertain my Fancy thus retir'd.⁴⁵

It is interesting to note that the willow is felt here simply as a tree which provides shade, and has none of its connotations of luckless love. Even more significant is the fact that Mrs. Philips's nature is a "civil Nature" - a good-natured hostess, respectable and polite. This is a far cry from Chaucer's "Vicaire of th'almyghty Lord", Shakespeare's "Great Creating Nature", or Wordsworth's stern moral force. The concept of nature was in the process of being civilized during Katherine Philips's life-time, in order to make it fit company for the elegant Orindas, Lucasias, and Poliarchuses of the dawning era of decorum. Tooth and claw are well-concealed, or ignored. For many years yet, the nature which charmed and inspired the poet and the man of feeling usually had more in common with the "civil Nature" of 'A Reverie' than with the wilder landscapes of mountain and heath.

Eldred Revett's 'Ode. Hastening his Friend into the Country^e' is

largely concerned with nature's function as a haven from the town and the wars, but he also anticipates more positive comforts from the countryside, and adds another to the long list of seventeenth-century examples of the poet-under-the-tree topos:-

Let us Repaire
 To the soft winged Ayre,
 Which spread a space,
 Will gently fan the Face;
 And wipe with the down penons sweat away,
 Leaving them onely gilded by the Day.

Then in some Bower
 Belyes the Days bright Hour;
 Where Sun hath made
 Squeez'd in a Curd of shade.
 Under a Vocal Roof of Birds weel lye
 That sing's asleep, and are our Canopy,

Or underneath
 Wee'l Restie Fancie breathe;
 That else will lye
 Tiplid in Extasie:
 And tune some Rhapsodie to their wild notes,
 That in the leavie Belfry Chime their Throates.⁴⁶

Just as the epicurean element in Fane was happy to be tied by the "enchantments" of nature, so the more temperamentally epicurean Revett looks forward to being "Tiplid in Extasie".

5. The Rejection of the Senses and the Hortus Conclusus.

This kind of indulgence in the sensuous pleasures of nature was a great temptation to the men of this generation, whose attention was being directed to the physical world by the new scientific creed of observation, and whose aesthetic interest in landscape was being stimulated by the developments of painting on the continent, and to some extent by their

own embracement of beatus ille attitudes. But the more religiously inclined saw dangers in the sort of intoxication described by Fane and Revett. Henry More, for example, was highly attracted by the beauties of nature, but felt that to indulge this pleasure too far was a weakness. A passage from the beginning of 'Cupids Conflict' describes the general distrust of the senses:-

Upon a day as best did please my mind
 Walking abroad amidst the verdant field
 Scattering my careful thoughts i'th'wanton wind
 The pleasure of my path so farre had till'd
 My feeble that without timely rest
 Uneath it were to reach my wonted nest.

In secret shade farre moved from mortalls sight
 In lowly dale my wandering limbs I laid
 On the cool grasse where Natures pregnant wit
 A goodly Bower of thickest trees had made.
 Amongst the leaves the chearfull Birds did fare
 And sweetly carol'd to the echoing Air.

Hard at my feet ran down a crystall spring
 Which did the cumbrous pebbles hoarsly chide
 For standing in the way. Though murmuring
 The broken stream his course did rightly guide
 And strongly pressing forward with disdain
 The grassie flore divided into twain.

The place a while did feed my foolish eye
 As being new, and eke mine idle ear
 Did listen oft to that wild harmonie
 And oft my curious phansie would compare
 How well agreed the Brooks low muttering Base,
 With the birds trebbles perch'd on higher place.

But senses objects soon do glut the soul
 Or rather weary with their emptinesse;
 So I, all heedlesse how the waters roll
 And mindlesse of the mirth the birds expresse,
 Into my self 'gin softly to retire
 After his heavenly pleasures to enquire.⁴⁷

The religious contemplative turns away from the delights that tempt him

and looks within himself for a more profitable way to enjoy his solitude. More is never closer in spirit to his master Spenser than in a passage like this, which convinces the reader of the seductive beauty of the material world in the very act of rejecting it for a more inward beauty. The stanzas quoted above are reminiscent of Petrarch's experience when he climbed a mountain to see the view from the top. After looking in rapture at the prospect of the Alps, the Rhone, and the Mediterranean, he casually opened his copy of St. Augustine's Confessions, and came across some words which rebuked him:-

"And men go about to wonder at the heights of the mountains, and the mighty waves of the sea, and the wide sweep of rivers, and the circuit of the ocean, and the revolution of the stars, but themselves they consider not". I was abashed, and asking my brother (who was anxious to hear more) not to annoy me, I closed the book, angry with myself that I should still be admiring earthly things, who might long ago have learned from even the pagan philosophers that nothing is wonderful but the soul, which, when great itself, finds nothing great outside itself. Then, in truth, I was satisfied that I had seen enough of the mountain; I turned my inward eye upon myself, and from that time not a syllable fell from my lips until we reached the bottom again. 48

James Shirley's 'The Garden' - a poem which looks forward in several details to Marvell's more famous lyric - goes further than More, and rejects the snares of the senses completely. It begins:-

This Garden does not take my eyes,
Though here you shew how art of men
Can purchase Nature at a price
Would stock old Paradise agen.

These glories while you dote upon,
I envie not your Spring nor pride,
Nay boast the Summer all your own,
My thoughts with lesse are satisfied.

Give me a little plot of ground,
 Where might I with the Sun agree,
 Though every day he walk the Round,
 My Garden he should seldom see.

Those Tulips that such wealth display,
 To court my eye, shall lose their name,
 Though now they listen, as if they
 Expected I should praise their flame.⁴⁹

Like the fruit in Marvell's poem, the tulips court the poet's eyes, and expect a response from him. But he remains shut up in his own mind, and refuses the blandishments of the senses. He prefers the retiring humility of the "Violets drooping head" to the "flame" of the more flamboyant tulip. Like other poets, he desires the restful shade of trees, but they will provide a refuge from the sensuous delights of nature, not a comfortable seat from which to enjoy them:-

I'th'Center of my ground compose
 Of Bayes and Ewe my Summer room,
 Which may so oft as I repose,
 Present my Arbour, and my Tombe.

No woman here shall find me out,
 Or if a chance do bring one hither,
 Ile be secure, for round about
 Ile moat it with my eyes foul weather.

No Bird shall live within my pale,
 To charme me with their shames of Art,
 Unlesse some wandring Nightingale
 Come hbre to sing and break her heart.

Upon whose death I'le try to write
 An Epitaph in some funeral stone,
 So sad, and true, it may invite
 My self to die, and prove mine owne.

Like Marvell, and like More in 'Cupids Conflict', he seeks to avoid the temptations of women; but unlike Marvell, he has no place in his experience for the sensuous attractions of the natural world. No birds will

sing, except the melancholy nightingale; his arbour will be composed of laurel and yew, to keep his thoughts on the immortality of verse and the mortality of the flesh.

The exact connotations of Shirley's poem are not easy to determine. Is it the plaint of a lover, who rejects all stimulation of the senses because of disappointed or bereaved love? Or has it some more philosophical or religious motivation? It may be that the poet is making a covert reference to the hortus conclusus, in which case the "little plot of ground" and "My Garden", which will seldom be seen by the Sun, are symbols of the soul maintaining its integrity in a world of sense and physical hindrances, and waiting for the release of death into a fuller spiritual life.

Such an interpretation would be feasible in the period we are considering, for the symbolism of the Song of Songs was absorbed into the nature material of such poets as Casimire, More, and Marvell. Gardens, fountains, trees, shade, birds all become charged with spiritual significance in such poems as 'Cupids Conflict' and Marvell's 'The Garden'. In More's poem, for example, the "crystall spring", besides being a physically delightful object, also has the mysterious property of quelling the darts of Cupid; just as the trees of the woodland refuge protect the poet from the shafts of Beauty and the World in stanza lxxvi of Upon Appleton House:-

But ever as he shot his arrows still
In their mid course dropt down into the rill.⁵⁰

6. God in Nature.

If this is the meaning of Shirley's poem, he was advocating a course that did not generally appeal to contemporary poets. They resolved the Petrarchan conflict between the love of natural beauty and the demands of the spirit in one of two ways - both of which allowed a close interest in the natural world. Professor Rostvig describes the men who evolved these compromises as "Hortulan Saints", and explains:-

The landscape, then, became of extraordinary importance to the new type of beatus vir; trees, fields, and fountains seemed charged with a secret life which, if he could share it, would bring him into direct contact with God. If his piety were of a more orthodox type, he would look upon natural scenes and objects as vehicles of allegorical truth. The river would become an emblem of human life, the fountain of spiritual power and grace.⁵¹

A number of these "Hortulan Saints" - one thinks especially of Casimire, More, Vaughan, and Marvell - were influenced by the occult aspects of neo-Platonism and Hermeticism, and came to look upon the physical universe as "a secret pathway to God".⁵² Casimire's Happy Man, in the third Epode, gazes up at the night sky:-

How he admires th'immortal rayes breake forth,
 And their bright Orbes, more large then earth;
 How through his trickling teares, he helps his sight,
 Unto the open Courts of light,
 Which with thy selfe, O Christ, thy selfe in pray'r
 He'Adores, t'Eternall life an heire!⁵³

Henry More, in spite of his rejection of mere sense in 'Cupids Conflict', exclaims in Psychozoia:-

O gladsome life of sense that doth adore
 The outward shape of the worlds curious frame!⁵⁴

Marvell, in 'The Garden' and the woodland episode of Upon Appleton House, explores a state of almost mystic communion, in which the soul seems to rise above the restraints of the body, not by rejecting all sensuous experience, but through a sensuous relationship with the natural setting.

The other group - such men as Fane, Benlowes, and Rowland Watkyns - confined themselves (with the exception of one or two more ecstatic passages) to the more orthodox approach of discovering evidence of the Creator's hand in the things around them. In doing this, they obviously had much in common with certain features of the emblematic tradition, and with Boyle, and later Ray, who probed nature through the other medium of science, and who recorded their findings in prose rather than verse.

The pattern for poems praising God for the wonders of his Creation was set by the great psalms of David, which would have been ^afamiliar part of each poet's background at this period. Thomas Stanley wrote an elaborate variation on Psalm 148, expanding to a full stanza the praise of each named creature. Verse 3, for instance - "Praise ye him, sun and moon: praise him all ye stars of light" - furnishes the ideas for four ten-line stanzas, headed "Sol", "Luna", "Stellae", and "Lumen".⁵⁵ Fane's 'Coeli enarrant Gloriam Dei'⁵⁶ takes its inspiration from Psalm 19, which begins: "The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handywork". Anne Collins works her version of this into her 'Second Meditation':-

The Firmament his glory doth declare,
Yet over all his works, his mercies are.⁵⁷

Rowland Watkyns expresses the same idea, but provides for it a more topical context:-

I do not understand how Planets move,
 And differ in their several Orbs above.
 The Circle from the Stars reflexion may
 Escape my knowledge call'd the milky way:
 Such knowledge is too deep; but yet I will
 Admire the path of that mysterious skill. 58

Joseph Beaumont recognizes in all creatures, and in all the processes of nature, the sustaining power of God, in 'Loves Monarchie':-

No Southerne Wind
 Or Westerne Gale blows on y^e Springs;
 Onely thy kind
 And teeming Look new verdure brings:
 The Sun, because Thou send'st Him, neerer comes,
 And wakes cold Roots into their warmer Blooms.

Nature could not
 In every Creatures Tribe & kind
 Duely grow hot
 With fruitfull Flames, lesse Thine be joyn'd
 To teach them Life; All Births from Thee alone
 Doe grow, Who art Eternitie's great Sonne. 59

A favourite image in this type of poem was that of the Book of Nature, familiar from the prose works of such men as Bacon and Browne, and later very common in the physico-theologies. John Hall makes a passing reference to this in 'A Pastoral Hymn', which has verses devoted to the birds, snails, and fishes, and which ends:-

Great Lord, from whom each tree receives,
 The~~n~~ pays again, as rent, his leaves;
 Thou dost in purple set
 The rose and violet,
 And giv'st the sickly lily white;
 Yet in them all Thy name dost write. 60

Katherine Philips, in 'An Invitation to the Country', uses the metaphor to express one of the advantages of a country life:-

There Heav'n and Earth lie open to our view,
There we search Nature and its Author too.⁶¹

And in 'To Retiredness', Fane speaks of "Nature's Book" in the final stanza, and in the fourth remarks:-

Then turning over Nature's leaf,
I mark the Glory of the Sheaf,
For every Field's a severall page
Disciphering the Golden Age.⁶²

In Nature's Book, which, as Bacon warned, should more properly be thought of as the Book of God, the poets read the attributes of God - the Wisdom, Power, and Goodness which were mentioned so often in the later Christian and Deistic apologies for religion - and the chief features of the God-created universe - order, plenitude, and variety.

Henry More's 'Resolution' contains the couplet:-

Power, Wisdome, Goodnesse sure did frame
This Universe and still guide the same.

And in the same poet's 'The Philosopher's Devotion' we find:-

God is good, is Wise, is Strong,
Witnessse all the creature-throng,
Is confess'd by every Tongue.⁶³

A major theme of Psychosia is the plenitude and variety of the Creation: stanzas 41 and 42 of Canto I especially illustrate these characteristics with long lists of trees, birds, animals, insects, reptiles which provoke

the poet's apology:-

Their number's infinite, nought doth't avail
To reckon all, the time would surely fail.⁶⁴

Order, plenitude, and variety are all suggested in Ralph Knevet's praise of God's wisdom in 'Infinitenes':-

Nor doth thy wisdom lesse mee take,
When I behold the order rare,
Of things, which thine owne hand did make;
Even from the gloworme, to the starre,
From th'Angell bright, to the darke clod,
Thy wisdom doth extend (oh God).⁶⁵

'A Prayer', addressed significantly not to God, but to "Eternal Reason, Glorious Majesty", reveals Katherine Philips's acquaintance with the methods of reading Nature's Book, and with the concept of the great Chain of Being:-

These comely rows of creatures spell Thy Name,
Whereby we grope to find from whence they came,
By Thy own chain of causes brought to think
There must be one, then find that highest link.
Thus all created Excellence we see
Is a resemblance faint and dark of Thee.
Such shadows are produc'd by the moon-beams
Of trees or houses in the running streams.
Yet by impressions born with us we find
How good, great, just Thou art, how unconfin'd.⁶⁶

The last couplet shows that Mrs. Philips was not one of those advanced thinkers who were suggesting at this time that all ideas come from sense-impressions. She believes, like Henry More and the Cambridge Platonists, that we are born with certain inherent notions - of goodness, greatness, justice - which the senses confirm.

The pervasive influence of the Bible in the imagination of those who turned the pages of Nature's Book is clearly illustrated by a passage from Rowland Watkyns's 'Solitarinesse', which has as epigraph verses 6 and 7 of Psalm 102, and which is shot through with Scriptural allusions:-

When secret fields I tread, I do refuse
 The books of men, and Nature's books peruse.
 The glorious Sun, the Moon, the Stars so bright
 Are demonstrations of th'Eternal light.
 The Rainbow doth in the dark clouds declare,
 How great Gods Judgments, and his mercies are.
 Each herb, or flower, each living plant, or tree,
 Present Gods goodnesse, and his Majestie:
 I see the Lilleys grow, and then admire
 Gods wisdom in their pure, and rich attire;
 God feeds the Ravens, which nor reap, nor sow,
 By these Gods gracious providence I know;
 When to the lofty hills I lift mine eyes,
 I speak of heaven in soliloquies.⁶⁷

Mildmay Fane, with his emblematic turn of mind, looks not only for great general lessons about the existence and attributes of God, but also for more specific pieces of teaching. He ponders, in 'Contemplatio Diurna':-

When we behold the Morning Dew
 Dissolve ith'rising Sun: What would it shew?
 But that a Sun to us did rise,
 Our Fathers hoary sin to Atomise.
 And when the Flowers display'd appear,
 To entertain the mounting Charettier:
 What would they speak in that fair dress?
 But Man's redemption out of wretchedness.⁶⁸

The imaginative weakness of this kind of emblematic interpretation of the natural scene is self-evident: meaning is arbitrarily imposed on the morning dew and flowers; there is no felt connection between these details from nature and "Our Fathers hoary sin" or "redemption". More

accomplished poets could, in Røstvig's words, "invest the rural scene with a secret life of its own"⁶⁹ - as Marvell had transformed this same image of morning dew into a moving, vibrant symbol in 'Upon a Drop of Dew'. A comparison of two passages which use basically the same natural details will illuminate the differences in imaginative quality: the first is from Casimire's third Epode, the second from Fane's 'To Retiredness':-

See how (saies he) each herb with restlesse leaves
 To th^estarres doth strive and upward heaves:
 Remov'd from heaven they weep, the field appeares
 All o're dissolv'd in pious teares:
 The white-flowr'd Woodbine, and the blushing Rose
 Branch into th'aire with twining boughs;
 The pale-fac'd Lilly on the bending stalke,
 To th'starres I know not what doth talke;
 At night with fawning sighes they'expresse their fears
 And in the morning drop downe teares.
 Am I alone, wretch that I am, fast bound
 And held with heavy weight, to th'ground?
 Thus spake he to the neighbouring trees, thus he
 To th'Mountaines talk'd, and streames ran by,
 And after, seekes the great Creator out
 By these faire traces of his foot.

Here I can sit, and sitting under
 Some portions of His works of wonder,
 Whose all are such, observe by reason,
 Why every Plant obeys its season;
 How the Sap rises, and the Fall
 Wherein They shake off Leafes and all;
 Then how again They bud and spring,
 Are laden for an Offering:
 Which whilst my Contemplation sees,
 I am taught Thankfulness from trees.⁷⁰

The Polish poet suggests that the plants are sentient: that their leaves are "restlesse"; that they weep for heaven; that they can communicate with the stars in a secret language. He establishes them as creatures which have a significant relationship with the world of spirit, and with

which he can himself form a relationship - he speaks to them, and to the fountains, and bemoans his own earth-bound condition, which their upward striving has made him more acutely aware of.

Fane's trees remain mere trees, fulfilling their part in the pattern of nature. They are animated to a certain extent: they obey the change of the seasons; they "shake off" their leaves; they sprout again, and bear an "offering" of fruit. But there is no sense of their secret sympathy with the spiritual aspects of the universe, and no sense of relationship with the poet. He simply extracts from their natural cycle the arbitrary lesson of "Thankfulness".

In both these poems, the poet derives from nature not evidence of the Creator, but moral lessons for his own self-improvement: Casimire learns that he is alone and wretched without God, and Fane learns gratitude to his Maker. Examples of this more personal way of reading in Nature's Book can be found in Herbert's work. In 'Employment (I)', he laments that he does not live up to the example set by the creatures, and so forfeits his place in the scheme of Creation, which was made to serve and praise God:-

All things are busie; onely I
Neither bring hony with the bees,
Nor flowres to make that, nor the husbandrie
To water these.

I am no link of thy great chain,
But all my companie is a weed.
Lord place me in thy consort; give one strain
To my poore reed.⁷¹

And in 'The Storm' he learns from the weather how he should be constantly petitioning God:-

If as the windes and waters here below
 Doe flie and flow,
 My sighs and tears as busie were above;
 Sure they would move
 And much affect thee.⁷²

Of the followers of Herbert, Vaughan made most fruitful use of this kind of personal experience of nature. Among the lesser disciples, Rowland Watkyns is put to shame by the early singing of the lark:-

When I behold the Lark 't advance her wing,
 And to our God a thankful Anthem sing,
 I check my nature, and can do no lesse
 Than tax my self of dull unthankfulnesse.⁷³

In 'The Spring' the same poet learns from the rose that he must his "spice disclose,/But not presume"; from the evaporating dew that life is short; from the flourishing plants that he must not "be slow/In growth of Grace"; and from the fruitful trees and "painful Bees" that he must not be barren or slothful.⁷⁴

Perhaps closest to that sense of sympathy between the creatures who teach and the poet who learns, which is so characteristic of Vaughan's verse, are several pieces by George Daniel (see Chapter IX below) and by Joseph Beaumont. Very reminiscent of Vaughan is 'The Sluggard'. Stanzas I and IV contain the account of the natural detail, and the application of this to the poet's own situation:-

The World awoke, & op'd his flaming Eye,
 Which darted through y^e skie
 The broad daylight;
 And at y^e sight
 The virgin Morn, though Shee
 Were up & drest before,
 Yet blushed all o're

In Heavly Modestie,
 As if s'had slept too long & were
 Asham'd y^e Sun should look on her
 Being but newly risen, and array'd
 In a gray Mantel like some homely Maid.

.
 The sleepy Mists thus chased from my Brow,
 I woke, I knew not how:
 I cannot say
 Whither like y^e Day
 I blushed in my Rise
 Or no; though surely I
 Had more cause why;
 For as I rubbd mine Eyes
 A sudden Consort filld mine Eare;
 Plaine were y^e Notes, but sweet & clear,
 The honest Birds up long, long before Mee
 Were at their Mattens on a Neighbour Tree.⁷⁵

'The Gentle Check' suggests even more strongly the direct relationship
 between the nature which teaches and the man who learns:-

One half of me was up & drest,
 The other still in lazy rest;
 For yet my prayers I had not sayd;
 When I close at her Mattens heard
 A dainty-tongued Bird,
 Who little thought how she did me upbrayd.
 But Guilt caught hold of every Note,
 And through my breast the anthem shott:
 My breast heard more than did my ear,
 For now the tune grew sharp & chode
 Me into thoughts of God,
 To whome most due my earlyer Accents were.⁷⁶

Another encounter with nature causes Beaumont to meditate not on his own
 isolated state, but on the general human condition of sin and alienation
 from God which he shares. His poem 'The Gardin' begins:-

The Gardins quit with me: as yesterday
 I walked in that, to day that walks in me;
 Through all my memorie

It sweetly wanders, & has found a way
 To make me honestly possess
 What still Anothers is.

Yet this Gains dainty sence doth gall my Minde
 With the remembrance of a bitter Loss.

Alas, how odd & cross
 Are earths Delights, in which the Soule can finde
 No Honey, but withall some Sting
 To check the pleasing thing!

For now I'm hanted with the thought of that
 Heavn-planted Gardin, where felicitie
 Flourishd on every Tree.

Lost, lost it is; for at the guarded gate
 A flaming Sword forbiddeth Sin
 (That's I) to enter in. 77

Three more stanzas continue the reflections on the loss of Eden, the Tree of Life, and the Tree of Calvary which bought back paradise. Beaumont is drawing on the traditional symbolism of the Garden of Eden, but he presents his meditation as the result of a personal contact with an actual scene. The experience of the walk in the garden has affected him deeply, and now memories of it "walk in me" and "sweetly wander" through the mind, and fuse with Biblical stories. The more conventional method of presenting his material would have been by an emblematic description and interpretation. Beaumont manages to transform ideas into experience - an experience in which the natural setting of a real garden plays a great part.

7. Conclusion.

Apart from the translations of Saint-Amant's 'La Solitude', there is nothing among the minor verse of this period that can really be called "nature poetry". In the various strains of poetry that deal with the

countryside, or with natural details, there is always something that comes between the poet and his experience of nature, something that is more important in the scheme of the poem. It may be the pastoral country-city antithesis; the moral concerns of the beatus ille theme; the mystical or contemplative preoccupations which rise above or impose meaning upon the natural landscape; or merely the strength of a tradition, like that of the Ideal Day or the poet-in-the-shade, which overlays the possible fresh and personal response to nature with a conventional poetic formula. Nevertheless, the modifications to the Happy Man genre and the Ideal Day topos, and the emergence of the garden-poem and the Herbert-derived lyric which could take its impulse from a personal encounter with nature, were all manifestations of the new interest in the external world, and the response of the individual mind to sense-impressions from that world, and prepared the way for the rise of a true nature poetry in the century that followed.

NOTES

- 1 Walter W. Greg, in his study Pastoral Poetry and Pastoral Drama (London, 1906), wrote: "What does appear to be a constant element in the pastoral as known to literature is the recognition of a contrast, implicit or expressed, between pastoral life and some more complex type of civilization". (p. 4).
- 2 Maurice Evans, English Poetry in the Sixteenth Century, 2nd. ed. (London, 1967), p. 94.
- 3 *ibid.*, p. 115.
- 4 Greg, pp. 131 and 139-40.
- 5 From the introduction to Frank Kermode's anthology, English Pastoral Poetry (London, 1952).
- 6 Maren-Sofie Røstvig, The Happy Man: Studies in the Metamorphoses of a Classical Ideal, Vol. II, 2nd. ed. (New York, 1962), pp. 9-10.
- 7 *ibid.*, p. 14.
- 8 For more details see Røstvig, pp. 71-72. Ben Jonson translated Horace's second Epode and Martial's Epigram X, 47, two of the commonest classical models for the tradition, and was the first English poet of any importance to produce an original piece in this mode - his poetic compliment to Sir Robert Wroth (Poems, ed. George Burke Johnston, "Muses' Library" (London, 1954), p. 79. William Habington was among the first to present religious themes through the imagery and arguments of the Horatian rural ode. (See Røstvig, pp. 93 ff.)
- 9 *ibid.*, p. 23.
- 10 Robert Chamberlain, Nocturnall Lucubrations (1638), 2nd. ed. (London, 1652), see pp. H3^r-H4^r, and pp. G6^r-v.
- 11 Patrick Cary, Trivial Poems, and Triolets (1651, first printed 1819), quoted from Minor Poets of the Caroline Period, ed. George Saintsbury, Vol. II (Oxford, 1906), pp. 464-65.
- 12 Katherine Philips, Minor Poets of the Caroline Period, ed. George Saintsbury, Vol. I (Oxford, 1905), p. 558.
- 13 *ibid.*, stanzas IV and VIII of poem cited, p. 524.
- 14 Mildmay Fane, Earl of Westmorland, Otia Sacra (1648), p. 125.
- 15 Eldred Revett, Selected Poems, ed. Donald M. Friedman, "English Reprints Series", No. 20 (Liverpool, 1966), p. 8.
- 16 Sir Richard Fanshawe, Shorter Poems and Translations, ed. N.W. Bawcutt, "English Reprints Series", No. 19 (Liverpool, 1964), p. 7.
- 17 Røstvig, pp. 48-49.
- 18 *ibid.*, p. 49.
- 19 Fanshawe, ed. cit., p. 8.
- 20 Fane, ed. cit., pp. 125 and 8.
- 21 John Collop, Poesis Rediviva (1656), p. 45.
- 22 Katherine Philips, ed. cit., p. 565.
- 23 Thomas Randolph, printed in The Jonson Anthology, ed. Edward Arber (London, 1899), p. 232.
- 24 The Marrow of Complements (1655), p. 35.

- 25 Rowland Watkyns, Flamma sine Fumo (1662), 'The Poets Soliloquy,' p. 103.
- 26 Sara Ruth Watson, "Milton's Ideal Day: Its Development as a Pastoral Theme", PMLA, LVII, No. 2 (1942), 404-20.
- 27 *ibid.*, p. 404.
- 28 *ibid.*, p. 407.
- 29 *ibid.*, p. 411.
- 30 Alexander Hume, The Oxford Book of Scottish Verse, ed. John MacQueen and Tom Scott (Oxford, 1966), No. 78, pp. 245 and 246.
- 31 Cary, ed. cit., p. 465.
- 32 Katherine Philips, ed. cit., pp. 604-609.
- 33 Richard Lovelace, Poems, ed. C.H. Wilkinson (Oxford, 1930), pp. 107-118.
- 34 Casimire Sarbiewski, Odes, trans. G.H. (1646), in "Augustan Reprint Society", No. 44 (Los Angeles, 1953), pp. 125-35.
- 35 *ibid.*, pp. 133 and 135; Katherine Philips, ed. cit., 'A Reverie', p. 556; Milton, 'L'Allegro', ll. 63-98.
- 36 Margaret Cavendish, Duchess of Newcastle, Poems and Fancies (1653), pp. 78 and 79.
- 37 Casimire, ed. cit., p. 125.
- 38 M.C. Bradbrook, "Marvell and the Poetry of Rural Solitude", Review of English Studies, XVII (1941), p. 37.
- 39 See Thomas Stanley, Poems and Translations, ed. Galbraith Miller Crump (Oxford, 1962), pp. 22-25, 142-44, 335-42, and 156-63; Katherine Philips, ed. cit., pp. 601-04; and Lord Fairfax, in The Lord General, by M.A. Gibb (London, 1938), pp. 283 ff.
- 40 Fane, op. cit., pp. 172-74 and 134-40.
- 41 M.C. Bradbrook, op. cit., p. 40.
- 42 *ibid.*, p. 41.
- 43 Røstvig, p. 132.
- 44 Ernst Robert Curtius, European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages, trans. Willard R. Trask (London, 1953), p. 187.
- 45 Katherine Philips, ed. cit., p. 556.
- 46 Eldred Revett, ed. cit., p. 9.
- 47 Henry More, Philosophical Poems, ed. Geoffrey Bullough (Manchester, 1931), pp. 109-110.
- 48 Quoted in Kenneth Clark's Landscape into Art (1949) (Penguin Books, 1956), p. 23.
- 49 James Shirley, Poems, ed. Ray Livingstone Armstrong (New York, 1941), pp. 16-17.
- 50 More, ed. cit., ll. 59-60, p. 111.
- 51 Røstvig, p. 122.
- 52 *ibid.*, p. 123.
- 53 Casimire, ed. cit., p. 127.
- 54 More, ed. cit., Canto I, st. 32, p. 22.
- 55 Stanley, ed. cit., pp. 251-62.
- 56 Fane, op. cit., pp. 6-7.
- 57 Anne Collins, Divine Songs and Meditations (1653), "Augustan Reprint

- Society", No. 94 (Los Angeles, 1961), p. 75.
- 58 Rowland Watkyns, 'Astrology', op. cit., p. 46.
- 59 Joseph Beaumont, 'Loves Monarchie', Minor Poems, ed. Eloise Robinson (London, 1914), p. 95.
- 60 John Hall, Minor Poets of the Caroline Period, ed. George Saintsbury, Vol. II (Oxford, 1906), pp. 224-25.
- 61 Katherine Philips, ed. cit., p. 565.
- 62 Fane, op. cit., p. 173.
- 63 More, ed. cit., pp. 128 and 152.
- 64 *ibid.*, p. 25.
- 65 Ralph Knevet, Shorter Poems, ed. Amy M. Charles (Ohio, 1966), pp. 335-36.
- 66 Katherine Philips, ed. cit., p. 547.
- 67 Rowland Watkyns, op. cit., pp. 15-16.
- 68 Fane, op. cit., p. 13.
- 69 Røstvig, p. 134.
- 70 Casimire, ed. cit., p. 129; Fane, op. cit., p. 172.
- 71 George Herbert, Works, ed. F.E. Hutchinson (Oxford, 1941), p. 57.
- 72 *ibid.*, p. 132.
- 73 Watkyns, 'Solitarinesse', op. cit., p. 16.
- 74 *ibid.*, p. 102. Compare Herbert's 'Employment (I)', ed. cit., p. 57.
- 75 Joseph Beaumont, ed. cit., pp. 33-34.
- 76 *ibid.*, p. 401.
- 77 *ibid.*, p. 450.