

# Recent Studies in Nineteenth-Century English Literature

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THE FOLLOWING pages offer a guide to the books in the field published in 1961, along with a handful that appeared in 1960 too late to be noticed in last year's review. As in the year before, the books deal mainly with single authors; an uncommonly high proportion treat subjects not recently written on. Though some of the books are obviously less valuable than the significant articles published during the year, for lack of space and time I have ignored the periodicals entirely. I would, however, at the outset welcome the new quarterly *Studies in Romanticism*, edited by David B. Green and published by the Graduate School of Boston University. Its maiden issue (Autumn 1961) opens with Morse Peckham's "Toward a Theory of Romanticism: II. Reconsiderations," a brilliant (if somewhat knottily compressed) MLA paper read at Philadelphia two years ago stressing above all the toughmindedness of Romanticism. To the Romantic, we are reminded toward the end, "nothing is so beautiful as fact, nor does anything offer such sweet bones to gnaw on as the empirical world itself, the only world we can know." More such emphasis is needed. For too long we have based our defining platitudes on second-rate poets and poems. Indeed, the most interesting current trend in criticism suggests that the two greatest poets of English Romanticism were, by the old standards, anti-Romantics.

## I

Karl Kroeber's *Romantic Narrative Art* (University of Wisconsin Press, dated 1960 but published in 1961 [hereafter, where no date is given, the year of publication is 1961]) is a well-meaning "pioneer" exploration of the relationship of narrative mode to Romantic style. By the end of his three sections on "Balladry," "Stories of Imagination," and "Realistic Adventures" (this last valuable for its discussion of the influence of the poets, Byron and Scott especially, on later nineteenth-century fiction), Mr. Kroeber has blurred nearly every distinction be-

tween the lyric, narrative, and dramatic modes, and, by including all poems within the narrative, has proved conclusively (though he does not claim so much in his "Summary of Conclusions") that a relationship does exist between Romantic poetry and Romantic style. If the over-all result is unenlightening, and the argument circular, with a heavy draft upon wisdom of the ancients ("History is an art," "Love is probably too complex an emotion to be experienced fully by the immature," "Art does not exist in a vacuum"), the book at least contains some detailed analysis of a handful of important poems.

Mr. Kroeber is best at discussing the Romantics' assimilation and modification of the old ballads. A briefer but sharper account of the same process occurs in the later chapters of Albert B. Friedman's *The Ballad Revival: Studies in the Influence of Popular on Sophisticated Poetry* (University of Chicago Press), an admirably documented work of tremendous breadth in both poetry and scholarship. Admittedly the attempt to include everyone from Tacitus to Brooks and Warren at times results in a mere listing of names and titles, but Mr. Friedman's subject requires such sweep. Many more nineteenth-century writers are touched upon, but the dozen pages on Wordsworth and Coleridge (differentiating the kinds of ballads they imitated and defining the lyrical ballad along the lines of S. M. Parrish's recent articles) and a page on Keats (treating the fusion of romance elements with the ballad in "La Belle Dame") seem notably worthwhile additions to Mr. Kroeber's undertaking. The upshot is that someone, with Kroeber and Friedman before him, should attempt deeper coverage of the subject.

The one general book on the Romantics, Harold Bloom's *The Visionary Company: A Reading of English Romantic Poetry* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday), intended like Bernbaum's *Guide* of thirty years ago as a companion volume to an anthology of the poetry, offers the spectacle of high critical intelligence and native good sense confounded to an extent by bad methodology. Where Bernbaum extracted ideas—for example, Wordsworth's (actually Arthur Beatty's) "doctrine" of the three ages—Mr. Bloom pursues myths, as if Wordsworth had defined the poet as a man speaking to anthropologists; while neither provides complete truth, the more recent approach seems less useful and possibly duller. My eighteenth-century colleague in this department will have commented on the opening 119-page

chapter on Blake. Much of the remaining chapters (a major discussion of Wordsworth, rather more perfunctory performances on Coleridge, Byron, and Keats, an examination of Shelley pleasingly less polemic than the author's earlier *Shelley's Myth-making*, and a final chapter on Beddoes, Clare, George Darley, "and others"—the "others," in one paragraph, is Thomas Wade) appears as variations on myths established in the first chapter; one comes finally to despise Blake as a constant intruder, and Blakean "Beulah land" recurs with the monotony of a foghorn.

In *The Recluse* Wordsworth set a major theme, the wedding of "the discerning intellect of Man . . . to this goodly universe," and spoke of his "spousal verse / Of this great consummation." Though a few years ago F. W. Bateson seemed to dally with the metaphor ("With nobody left to love him, or to be loved by him, Wordsworth fell in love with nature"), it remained for Mr. Bloom to render it literally: "in a clear sense all the poetry of the Great Decade is erotic . . . with Wordsworth as the Bridegroom, Nature as the Bride." Alertly, Mr. Bloom finds many sexual passages in the poems, even "a muffled sexual element" in the boat-stealing episode; and it is this above all that mars his chapter, which, one may learn by sidestepping the apocalypses and epiphanies lurking at the top and bottom of nearly every page, expounds quite sanely the central Wordsworthian notion of salvation through common perception and memory. The over-all view is, to my mind, unquestionably the right one: "The human glory of Wordsworth, which he bequeathed to Keats, is in this naturalistic celebration of the possibilities inherent in our condition, here and now."

Bloom will have to do for Wordsworth. The year's only book devoted to the poet, John F. Danby's *The Simple Wordsworth: Studies in the Poems, 1797-1807* (New York: Barnes and Noble), is actually a 1960 book, published in London by Routledge and Kegan Paul. The title is of course ironic, for Mr. Danby's "simplicity" is a more-than-Brooksian complexity, though what it *really* is (beyond the placing of heavier reliance on the extrinsic relations of a poem, especially its relation to the reader's imagination) we are never very clearly told. The book has the merit of concentrating primarily on poems too frequently slighted—"The Idiot Boy," "Simon Lee," "The Thorn" (unhappily Mr. Danby ignores Parrish's explication), *The White Doe*—and the weakness of a certain rambling

quality along with breeziness of style. A main aim is to defend Wordsworth against "Wordsworthianism" (the study begins with Arnold and Mill). It is worth mentioning, since others beside Mr. Danby have recently written seemingly *in vacuo*, that James V. Logan's *Wordsworthian Criticism: A Guide and Bibliography* (Ohio State University Press) was reissued during the year.

The publication of Coleridge's *Collected Letters* (four volumes so far) and Kathleen Coburn's edition of *The Notebooks*, of which Volume II (1804-08, Text and Notes in two sets of covers, as before) appeared during the year (New York: Pantheon Books, for the Bollingen Foundation), has stimulated considerable critical activity. I have the impression that the journals are currently receiving three or four times as many contributions on Coleridge as on any other Romantic. One valuable product of this activity is Carl R. Woodring's *Politics in the Poetry of Coleridge* (University of Wisconsin Press), which, easily demonstrating that Coleridge was the most political-minded of the Romantics, focuses from beginning to end intently on the poems with the reasonable assumption that the "greatest poems can be better understood and more fittingly enjoyed . . . through awareness of the principal impulses and themes in the bulk of his verse." "The bulk of his verse" is the subject; if "The Ancient Mariner," "Christabel," and "Kubla Khan" as poems of escape do not figure prominently, the political concerns of the other poems form a substantial background against which to measure their escape. There are chapters on political events, Coleridge's political vocabulary, major ideas, Pantisocracy, principal genres (sonnet, "pop-up," ode, and play), and they are packed with information of all sorts (e.g., Coleridge's use of the *errata* table as a protection against prosecution for libel). Because it is well indexed, the study will be useful as a handbook beside the poems; but it is also one of the most readable works to appear on a Romantic in recent years. A similar volume on Wordsworth is in progress.

James D. Boulger's *Coleridge as Religious Thinker* (Yale University Press) is, as the author says of *Aids to Reflection*, "not an easy book to read or to understand." (There are, I should confess, times when Ipseity, Alterity, Personcity, Community, Distinctity, and the rest of Coleridge's terms after a while begin to sound to me like materials for Gilbert and Sullivan, and I

would gladly refer the reader to Newton P. Stallknecht's sympathetic review in the April 1962 *JEGP*.) Somewhat in the manner of Frances Blanshard's *Portraits of Wordsworth*, in which most of the portraits show Wordsworth older than sixty, this book may give a wrong over-all impression: "As early as the *Biographia Literaria*," Mr. Boulger writes at one point, citing a work published when Coleridge was in his mid-forties and long dead as a poet (thanks, according to the author, partly to his religious thinking). A central chapter on the influences of Kant and the Neoplatonists is informative. But the early poems—which seem the primary reason (apart from the criticism) for still studying Coleridge—are virtually untouched in the shortest of the chapters, "Religion and Poetry." To the aging subject of this study, these poems, in Mr. Boulger's words, "must have appeared as curious relics from the early years of optimism, the One Life and the universe of immanence." Merely that.

Andrew Rutherford's *Byron: A Critical Study* (Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd; Stanford University Press) views Byron's career as a quest for his own best poetic personality—a quest ultimately issuing in the synthesis of three separate characters: Romantic poet, humanitarian man of action, and aristocratic dandy of fashion. Thirteen chapters survey the poet's early failures in the tales, *Childe Harold*, and *Manfred*, his qualified success in the *ottava rima* satires beginning with *Beppo*, and a single instance of perfection in *The Vision of Judgment*, which is displayed as having the strengths but none of the weaknesses of the all-inclusive and therefore less stable and less sharply focused *Don Juan*. It is an excellent study, comprehensive and unified, with an admirable soundness of judgment—for example, on *Manfred*: "There is . . . an almost wilful confusion on the question of Free Will *versus* Predestination, and this enables him [Byron] to have it both ways: Manfred has all the glamour which in Byron's eyes attached itself to a doomed hero . . . but he is also shown as a kind of superman, choosing his own course in defiance of all supernatural powers, and the contradiction is never examined or resolved." There seems a limit to what can intelligently be said about Byron as poet; Mr. Rutherford goes the limit, and not a step beyond, with the utmost grace and economy.

The limit does not apply to Byron biography. Doris Langley Moore's *The Late Lord Byron* (London: John Murray, 1960;

Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott) is nearly three times as long as Mr. Rutherford's modest essay. From her travels over much of the world (while Rutherford stayed home in Edinburgh reading Byron) and, more important, from a wealth of unpublished manuscripts (the Lovelace papers, Hobhouse's diaries, the Murray archives), Mrs. Moore has chronicled the "aftermath" of Byron's life in an attempt to create "a kind of shadowgraph, the portrait of a man as projected by the conduct of his friends, acquaintances, and enemies after his death." In the biographical department, it was an important undertaking, for we have an unparalleled amount of conflicting contemporary testimony that must be sifted and judged on the basis of just the kind of evidence Mrs. Moore has collected. If there is some innocuous fictionalizing ("Hobhouse was awakened by a loud and unaccustomed rapping at his bedroom door. As he hurriedly rose, already apprehensive . . .") and, for this kind of work, but scant documentation, there is also much new material to aid assessment. The general tone may be conveyed by some of the changing topical headlines: "Battles new and old," "The Dallasses return to the fray," "Medwin goes on waging war," "Hobhouse lashes out." The book occasioned a prolonged and increasingly venomous exchange of letters in *TLS*—which one hopes will not be resumed with the publication of Malcolm Elwin's forthcoming *Lord Byron's Wife*.

There was no book on Keats (there has been none since the 1959 studies by Bernard Blackstone and David Perkins), and no critical volume on Shelley. The publication of the first two volumes of Kenneth Neill Cameron's *Shelley and His Circle, 1773-1822* (Harvard University Press), the long-awaited catalogue and edition of manuscripts in the Carl H. Pforzheimer Library, New York, was an event (like the volumes themselves) of considerable proportions. Nearly two hundred documents—mainly by Godwin, Mary Wollstonecraft, Peacock, and Shelley (most notably the correspondence with T. J. Hogg in 1810-11)—are here exactly transcribed, and surrounded (one might say engulfed) with bibliographical descriptions, textual notes, full commentaries, separate introductory essays here and there on the principal writers and on special topics (e.g., Hogg's "censorship" of Shelley's letters), as well as valuable accounts of editorial procedures, provenance, and "Postmarks and the Dating of Manuscripts" that will be of use to future editors in the

period. The documents should affect many details (though often minor and mainly biographical) in scholarship on Godwin and Shelley. Six further volumes, promising even greater significance, are in progress.

In *A Life of Matthew G. Lewis* (Harvard University Press), the first biography of the author of *The Monk* since 1839, Louis F. Peck "eschews broad literary considerations in favor of an account of the output of one man, who remains the focal point throughout." As a strictly factual, fully documented account of the life and writings (there is also a ninety-page section of "Selected Letters," with a list of sources for other letters available), the work is definitive. If the life was but humdrum, fantastically at variance with the sensation created by the works, one is nevertheless grateful to Mr. Peck for having set it down plainly and authoritatively—if for no other reason than to correct some prevalent false notions based on the extravagances of Eino Railo and Montague Summers.

Also in the Gothic line, *Melmoth the Wanderer* (1820), by Charles Robert Maturin, another biographically tame sensationalist, was reprinted with an inoffensive introduction by William F. Axton (University of Nebraska Press). It is worth mentioning, as a possible novelty in book production, that the text was established (in accord with fairly rigorous stated principles), and in a dozen or so places annotated, by the publisher rather than by any identified scholar. The new edition may serve to scotch the widespread idea (perpetuated in the *Baugh Literary History* and most recently echoed by Leslie Fiedler) that *Melmoth* is the greatest of the Gothic romances; it is merely the longest.

Finally, for the first part of the century, there is Donald Davie's *The Heyday of Sir Walter Scott* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul; New York: Barnes and Noble), a "report on desultory reading over several years" primarily concerned with Scott's influence on Pushkin (*The Captain's Daughter*), Mickiewicz (*Pan Tadeusz*), a handful of Irish novelists, and Cooper (especially in *The Pioneers*). Mr. Davie claims to raise larger issues ("what romanticism is . . . what 'plot' means . . . what 'realism' means"), but the main point is apparently to bolster personal with historic estimate: to justify a feeling—"I am moved continually and powerfully, and it is because I am so moved that I consider *Waverley* one of the greatest novels in the language"

—by giving the works a fresh literary-historical importance. It is largely special-pleading, though brief and readable.

## II

Park Honan's massive *Browning's Characters: A Study in Poetic Technique* (Yale University Press) proceeds by under-rating Browning's current standing, citing outdated bad and misguided criticism as standard, in order to establish rare "minority" views—usually what we had always thought in the first place—as the right ones. After chapters on Browning's early experiments, the dramas, and *Pippa Passes*, and an anguished attempt to define the dramatic monologue (the wooden result, after the rejection of all previous notions, is "A single discourse by one whose presence is indicated by the poet but who is not the poet himself"), it also proceeds very scientifically, isolating twenty specimens of blank-verse monologue on which to base generalizations about situations, imagery, diction, and so forth. Unhappily, even for twenty poems, the generalizations must be so hedged and qualified as seriously to damage their usefulness. Obviously a great deal of work went into the book (many statistics are cited—"Words of more than two syllables average about one in 5.25 lines"—and punctuation is examined at length); there is good rhetorical analysis of passages here and there (especially some from *Pippa*). Concerning the main thesis, however, it is difficult to believe that Browning is not already studied for his characters or admired for his technique; Mr. Honan's "Conclusion," nearly a full page, is that, "First, it would seem to be clear that Browning himself . . . paid the utmost attention even to the minutiae of his artistry. . . . Second, it would seem to be equally clear that character itself is of key importance in Browning's art."

Two of the year's three tiny books on Arnold take a condescending view of their subject. W. Stacy Johnson's *The Voices of Matthew Arnold: An Essay in Criticism* (published for Smith College by Yale University Press) not very clearly classifies the poems according to four voices employed in them (roughly Eliot's three plus the narrative voice), and measures Arnold's success in each category. Commenting on the entire corpus of poems in 140 pages, Mr. Johnson's own voice is more often soliloquy than oracle. If at times it takes on the indeci-



siveness that is said to exist in many of the poems, its summary statement is none the less eloquently firm: "when Arnold's poetry embodies the inner dialogue of his mind it recognizes the tyranny of time and yet asserts an order that transcends all temporal change; it celebrates both the society of human beings, with its bond of love, and the longing for a buried life, for isolation from the noisy crowd of others; it praises natural force and the idea of Nature, and it sees steadily the danger to humanity of natural coldness, natural strength." But if this is really, as the dustjacket says, the "first critical commentary to deal fully with his work," the essay leaves wide room for a second.

D. G. James's *Matthew Arnold and the Decline of English Romanticism* (Oxford: Clarendon Press), four Gregynog Lectures delivered at the University College of Wales in 1959, amounts to a personal attack on the poet-critic in the clamorous manner, one imagines, of the lone man who doesn't read the *Philadelphia Bulletin*. The poems are dismissed in a sentence: "Poetry cannot rest in a fluctuating, picturesque dismay: it must move on, sharpen its vision, commit itself to the Extreme." The fact is that Arnold could not draw on "the Lordship of Christ," therefore somehow could not comprehend Wordsworth and Coleridge, and as a result fell into "deep obscurity," "confused and obscure statement," "a tangle of evasion and subterfuge," a "tangle and disorder of the mind . . . half-thought and half-contradiction . . . in the end, nothing is clear." What is clear is that Arnold did not understand Mr. James's notion of Romanticism. Surprisingly, if one perseveres through this tasteless display of pedantry, he will find an excellent brief exposition of the Romantic imagination. The rest is indignation.

By contrast, G. Thomas Fairclough's *A Fugitive and Gracious Light: The Relation of Joseph Joubert to Matthew Arnold's Thought* (University of Nebraska Studies, new series, No. 23) is a modest and orderly presentation of the likenesses between Arnold's writings and Joubert's *Pensées* on religion, society, and literature. Perhaps because it is an M.A. thesis (*sic!*), and the author has not been invited to lecture in Wales, this fugitive and gracious essay gives the impression that the "thought" is worth considering. It is a large merit that Mr. Fairclough makes no great claims for "influence," but rather expounds "shared sympathies" between the two writers.

Feeling that his poet has been too long neglected, William

Turner Levy, in *William Barnes: The Man and the Poems* (Dorchester: Longmans, 1960), provides an agreeably informal account of the life and better poems, persuading with enthusiasm and practical aids to the uninitiated that Barnes is worth reading in spite of the difficulties presented by his use of dialect. Barnes's is admittedly a minor talent; his pictures of Dorset folk are said (approvingly) to have succeeded for the same reasons as Norman Rockwell's *Saturday Evening Post* covers. But this book is a pleasant introduction, quoting (as the author suggests in a preface dated from the Bernard M. Baruch School of City College, New York) enough of the poems to constitute "a miniature but highly selective anthology." In addition to appreciative commentary we are given an appendix on Dorset grammar and orthography. Mr. Levy's call for a definitive collection will be answered during the present year by Bernard Jones's two-volume edition.

According to Robert Boyle, in *Metaphor in Hopkins* (University of North Carolina Press), "The most unfortunate tendency among Hopkins' critics in regard to his world-view is that many of them tend to furnish him with one drawn not from the text of his poems or other writings, but from what they think a Catholic world-view is." Father Boyle illuminates that world view and applies it, in as many chapters, to eight images selected as a basis for redefining metaphor. With considerable wit he separates "Christian" from "pagan" critics, seeking to disqualify the latter (a distinguished group—sometimes failing, it seems to me, not through paganism but through slipshod reading and writing). In the case of "The Windhover," one might disqualify the non-birdwatcher as well, and observe that if it takes a Jesuit to read the sestet, it also requires a birdwatcher to read the octave, and therefore a Jesuit birdwatcher (preferably from Yale) to read the whole poem. At various places in the book one would recall Father Boyle's own words on another critic: "What he says about the spiritual life and its laws is certainly true, and Hopkins also knew that it was true. But that it is true does not warrant the conclusion that Hopkins is here saying it." Along with some interesting charts of the structures of poems, there is also some hairsplitting, and the philosophical discussion of metaphor at the end seems open to philosophical objections. But it is a lively and original contribution, which should be required reading for the pagans.

Another book bearing an *imprimatur*, Paul van Kuykendall Thomson's *Francis Thompson: A Critical Biography* (New York: Thomas Nelson), might fairly be described as well-intentioned but pedestrian. "The appeal of ["The Hound of Heaven" and "The Kingdom of God"] . . . has been universal. Just a few years ago the phrase 'many-splendoured thing,' which is taken from 'The Kingdom of God,' appeared as part of the title of a popular novel that was made into a film, and millions who had never heard of Francis Thompson were either singing or listening to a melodious, if somewhat insipid, tin-pan alley production called 'Love Is a Many-Splendored Thing.'" If this, from the preface, does not put off the reader, he will find some interesting discussion of Thompson's criticism and his vein of "inward merriment" (soberly held back until the penultimate chapter), but not much of an attempt to explain his many-sided personality and generally wretched life. Only the singing and listening millions could require another biography so soon after Pierre Danchin's hefty *La Vie et L'Oeuvre*—but then, while they cannot read French, they also "had never heard of Francis Thompson."

The "pattern" of Samuel Hynes's *The Pattern of Hardy's Poetry* (University of North Carolina Press) is, as the preface tells us, "simply the eternal conflict between irreconcilables"—appearance and reality, we learn a third of the way through the book and frequently thereafter. "Simply" is indicative; in two pages that include the full text of "The Convergence of the Twain" we read: "most apparent . . . most obviously . . . most obvious . . . more obvious . . . commonest . . . obviously . . . most obvious." Mr. Hynes's apologetic tone is justified, for, apart from a chapter on *The Dynasts*, he provides no single explication as good as the run-of-the-mill sort found in handbooks for freshman poetry courses; concerning the pattern itself, Mr. Hynes is, as he says of Hardy, "prone to discover and assert with great enthusiasm what other people had known all their lives, and to theorize truisms at length." Hardy, of course, is at least partly to blame. What is surprising is to read, after 176 pages devoted mainly to Hardy's failings and limitations, that "Hardy contrived . . . to make himself a major poet." It is not clear just how.

*Some Recollections by Emma Hardy*, edited by Evelyn Hardy and Robert Gittings (London: Oxford University Press), pre-

sents from a hitherto largely unpublished manuscript in the Dorset County Museum a pleasant little self-portrait of Hardy's first wife up to the time of their marriage. It is interesting for its picture of life in the West Country and its account of her meeting with Hardy and their courtship. An appended section called "Some Relevant Poems by Thomas Hardy Printed with Parallel Passages from the MS." won't do, however; Emma was no Dorothy Wordsworth, and there is no "parallel" that cannot more easily be explained by the general circumstance that Hardy was married to her for thirty-eight years.

J. Benjamin Townsend's *John Davidson, Poet of Armageddon* (Yale University Press) is the first work, and a sizable one, to break Davidson's injunction that "No one is to write my life now or at any time." Mr. Townsend believes that Davidson's output "to be fully appreciated must be read in its entirety. . . . [But] Since his most dedicated follower would not ask this service . . . it is all the more important to have a book about him, now that his place in modern literature can be properly assessed." Because virtually all the works are at least touched upon, reading Mr. Townsend's five hundred pages comes down in a sense to a rapid *skimming* of the whole, from which, because of its variety, one may gather that Davidson's "place" is his affinity with nearly every concern and literary figure of the turn of the century. Attempting to synthesize (rather than in Davidson's life and works, the synthesis is in this book about him), Mr. Townsend would finally not so much praise Davidson as use him as an index, and to an extent an occasion for re-appraisal, of the times. The book is strong on its subject's ideas, scant (like Davidson himself) on his artistry. Hundreds of unpublished letters and other documents produce a great deal of useful biographical and anecdotal detail. The opening, on Davidson's suicide, reads like a good detective novel.

### III

The year's work on Victorian fiction is again a varied lot, and Dickens especially continues to attract attention. A. O. J. Cockshut's *The Imagination of Charles Dickens* (London: Collins), with a stance vaguely resembling the Baconian's on Shakespeare, addresses itself to two questions: "How did a man with such a coarse mind become a master of his art? and, How

was it possible, in the nineteenth century, to be a best-seller and a true classic at the same time?" Mr. Cockshut bears down so hard on his subject's intellectual and spiritual shortcomings that for a while one wonders why he bothered to write on Dickens in the first place. These very failings, however, are held to be the cause of the novelist's success: "obvious lowbrow traits," for example, dull literalness and obsessive devotion to detail, when applied to the things Dickens personally felt most uneasy about—money, prisons, crowds, factories—produced almost by accident the wonderful symbols and techniques that hold "hypnotic power over the reader's imagination." By way of additional explanation, we are told that "Dickens was gifted . . . with great, natural, effortless talent for writing." The first half of Mr. Cockshut's essay is best described as a loosely organized conversation about Dickens, with examples (especially concerning prisons and crowds) drawn from the novels at random; in the latter half, seven books, from *Dombey and Son* to *Our Mutual Friend*, are discussed briefly in a chapter each.

*The Dickens Critics*, edited by George H. Ford and Lauriat Lane, Jr. (Cornell University Press), makes more readily available thirty-two essays by writers from Poe (1841) to Angus Wilson (1960). Edmund Wilson's "Dickens: The Two Scrooges" could not be reprinted, but an appropriately placed note reminds the reader of its significance ("undoubtedly the most important critical statement on Dickens of the last twenty-five years"); F. R. Leavis's piece on *Hard Times* also had to be omitted. Mr. Lane's brief and uncritical introduction, "Dickens and Criticism," begins by stating what the critics do not do: "They do not ask how Dickens directly reflects his own age. . . . They do not ask how Dickens' works reveal his life. . . . Nor do they search too closely into exactly how Dickens' novels were published. . . . They do not ask what were the real originals of character and place. . . . Nor, finally, do they trace the process of creation and revision too closely. . . ." They seem in fact a pretty lazy bunch, until one turns to the essays to see that, after all, a great deal of energy has been expended over the years. By a less distinguished publisher, this would appear but another in the endless stream of "casebook" publishing projects; even so, it would be liable, like the rest, to give some students the impression that they have everything before them,

had not the editors appended a 24-page selective "Bibliography," listing some 400 books and articles that appeared before 1960.

*Catalogue of the Dickens Collection at the University of Texas*, compiled by Sister Mary Callista Carr (Humanities Research Center, University of Texas), which in this survey easily takes the year's prize for most attractive design, lists an impressive 799 items under the headings "Autograph Manuscripts and Other Original Work" (188 items, including 125 unpublished letters), "Books and Periodicals" (409, not counting duplicates and variant issues), "Extra Illustrations and Portraits" (25), "Dickensiana" (98), and "Biographies and Bibliographies" (79). Fourteen of the books are said to be unrecorded in the standard bibliographies, and thirty-two others are designated as of special interest for condition or provenance.

For the general reader, though scholars may secretly profit from it, there is J. B. Priestley's *Charles Dickens: A Pictorial Biography* (London: Thames and Hudson; New York: Viking Press), a collection of 132 finely reproduced illustrations—of Dickens, his family, acquaintances, houses he lived in, manuscripts, cartoons, playbills, scenes from the novels, and many things else—accompanied by a brief, mainly factual account of Dickens's life. Though it would have saved Mr. Priestley from at least one error (the notion that Ellen Ternan had a child by Dickens), *The Love-Lives of Charles Dickens* (London: Frederick Muller), by C. G. L. DuCann, a barrister who thinks "Charles Dickens as a human being . . . far more interesting than any book which he ever wrote," is an incredibly naive and repetitious work of no great concern to any reader of this survey. His main point—the lack of factual evidence concerning Dickens's relationship with "his Nelly"—is well taken; but it is weakened by contradictory suggestion bordering on the prurient, and one finally concludes that the author best illustrates what he would instead expose: "In the literary world absence of evidence over-stimulates conjecture and speculation."

To show that conjecture and speculation are not restricted to books by amateurs, Wayne Burns's *Charles Reade: A Study in Victorian Authorship* (New York: Bookman Associates) and Robert Lee Wolff's *The Golden Key: A Study of the Fiction of George MacDonald* (Yale University Press), the one intermittently, the other relentlessly, approach their subjects through psychoanalysis. Both books are important for calling attention

to writers widely famous in their own day but now largely forgotten or admired for the wrong reasons. Mr. Burns's study is the more varied and substantial, discussing Reade's emotional, intellectual, and artistic development (in many respects lack of development), his "great system" (the use of vast collections of notebooks and notecards to produce an extreme form of pre-Raphaelite documentary realism), and the most important novels (*Griffith Gaunt* "will bear comparison with George Eliot at her mature best"; the work usually associated with Reade's name is relegated to a critical postscript entitled "Sex, Sadism, and *The Cloister and the Hearth*"). Mr. Burns's thesis, that Reade's failings illuminate a major problem faced by Victorian novelists (the necessity of purifying sexual themes), arises from, but in the long run is subordinate to, his fine exploration of the relationship of notebooks to the novels.

Mr. Wolff's study is the first on the prolific Scottish novelist now remembered only for his children's stories. MacDonald's early weaning, the death of his mother, the usual Victorian rebellion against his father, and a supposed rejection (in a library!) by an older girl of higher social status all figure prominently, almost exclusively, among the "chief sources of his literary inspiration." One easily tires of the results of this kind of approach: "The little boy [in "The Golden Key," a story that Mr. Wolff considers "a little masterpiece, the best thing MacDonald ever did"], like his father long ago, finds his phallus as a child, but does not know where to find the lock to which it belongs. . . . The mossy bed on which he sleeps . . . is surely the pubic hair of maturity. So is the moss on the outer walls of grandmother's cottage, the female organ with no windows, with doors which only grandmother herself may open. . . ." Mr. Wolff claims to read the story (and the works generally) at other levels; but his heart is not in it. There is, however, a wealth of adroit plot summary.

Following the line of Jerome Beaty's recent book, W. J. Harvey, in *The Art of George Eliot* (London: Chatto and Windus; New York: Oxford University Press), feels that George Eliot "has for too long been regarded as a 'natural' genius, deficient in art. . . . This book seeks to redress the balance by stressing the formal characteristics of her work." It is a major contribution, especially good on the distinctive "intricacy of pattern" in her novels—"the interaction of private and public within one

character, of past and present, of the small society and the great world outside, of one character and another, of all the various interactions between character and society"—and her use of the omniscient author convention (here defended), her treatment of time, and her imagery. Much of it is intended as a refutation of Henry James, and Mr. Harvey is throughout concerned with the bad influences especially of James and Shakespeare critics on modern criticism of the novel, and with the limitations of that criticism. Stressing the moral concerns of fiction, he is aware that we cannot apply moral criteria to art as if it were life, but is also aware of "the opposite danger . . . that by neatly smoothing away the blurred edges and tying up all the loose ends [the critic] . . . may convert the novel into a precise pattern, a beautifully articulated jigsaw which is yet unfaithful to the vision of life inherent in the novel." Similarly he points up the dangers of a too rigid thematic approach ("we may see at the heart of the book our own general and satisfying . . . statement, instead of the complex and sometimes annoyingly muddled particulars which actually compose the work") and a too exclusive preoccupation with imagery ("liable to precisely the same kind of abstraction as the thematic approach . . . [but] even more vulnerable to mere ingenuity"). Mr. Harvey writes clearly, defines terms carefully, even—a rare practice these days—summarizes his points from time to time. Any critic on the novel would find wisdom and good example in the book.

K. A. McKenzie's *Edith Simcox and George Eliot* (London: Oxford University Press) is a short, scholarly "true story of a remarkable Victorian spinster"—journalist, shirt manufacturer, trade union organizer, school board member, and worshipper of George Eliot—based partly on her manuscript "Autobiography of a Shirt Maker," acquired by the Bodleian Library in 1958. It is good to have this virtually unknown figure brought to light, but somewhat of a pity that her busy and useful outward life must inevitably be overshadowed by her unreciprocated homosexual "love-passion," which, apart from some ardent passages in the "Autobiography," manifested itself mainly in ridiculous attempts to kiss the middle-aged novelist's feet.

In Norman Kelvin's *A Troubled Eden: Nature and Society in the Works of George Meredith* (Stanford University Press), Meredith is shown to have "switched" from theme to theme in



the manner of a smoker changing brands. "Nature and society are the controlling themes in Meredith's works, but they alternate in ascendancy. His first important novel, *The Ordeal of Richard Feverel* (1859), is successful because it converts a view of nature into a pattern for tragedy. His work of the '60's, on the other hand, reflects the fact that Meredith had turned his attention to society. . . . The '70's brought . . . 'Rationalism' . . ." and so on. The trouble is that these lumpish abstractions (the quotation is from Mr. Kelvin's introduction) are not much more sharply defined as the book progresses; it is pretty much "nature" and "society" throughout. Though we get a clearer account of the novelist-poet's political views, it seems naive at this late date to concentrate so exclusively on his ideas; Meredith does not emerge as one of the great philosophic minds of the period. It is now more art, less matter, that we should attend.

Two volumes of Gissing's letters appeared during the year. *The Letters of George Gissing to Eduard Bertz, 1887-1903*, edited by Arthur C. Young (Rutgers University Press), prints a series of 189 letters and postcards now at Yale; and *George Gissing and H. G. Wells: Their Friendship and Correspondence*, edited by Royal A. Gettmann (University of Illinois Press), gives the texts of 104 documents mainly by Gissing from the Wells Collection at the University of Illinois. Together the books offer a variety of new facts concerning Gissing's life, opinions, travels, and reading, writers of the time, publishing practices, and much else. Both correspondences are ably edited and annotated (though it is a failing that Mr. Young did not number his letters). Mr. Young confines his introduction to the Gissing-Bertz relationship and Bertz's varied and interesting life; Mr. Gettmann, while he does not neglect Wells, provides a bonus in the form of an excellent brief critique of Gissing's fiction.

#### IV

Three works on Mill fall (one would not say thunderously) within my survey. In *John Stuart Mill and the Harriet Taylor Myth* (Australian National University Social Science Monograph No. 19; Melbourne University Press, 1960), H. O. Pappe holds that the "myth" of Harriet's intellectual ascendancy over Mill "could arise only from a misinterpretation of Mill's

thought." In less than fifty pages, he proceeds reasonably, if somewhat swiftly, by examining Mill's own statements about her, the documents published by F. A. Hayek in *John Stuart Mill and Harriet Taylor*, and Mill's writings "before, during, and after the Harriet period," to the unexceptionable conclusion that, since there was no perceptible break in Mill's intellectual penetration under her supposed "influence," therefore the "wide claims made by Mill's new biographers [Hayek and Packe in particular] . . . cannot be substantiated." My own *The Early Draft of John Stuart Mill's "Autobiography"* (University of Illinois Press) presents a text of the earliest complete draft (formerly owned by Jacob H. Hollander and now in the University of Illinois Library), with canceled readings in footnotes to the text and a section of excerpts from thirty rejected leaves preserved at the end of the manuscript. Besides dealing with textual matters—provenance, dating, the manuscript's relationship to the final draft at Columbia—the introduction (in which I more or less assumed Mr. Pappe's conclusion) attempts on the evidence of the manuscript along with some letters at Yale to explain Mill's special attachment to Harriet and his extraordinary claims of dependence on her. The third work, Thomas Woods's *Poetry and Philosophy: A Study in the Thought of John Stuart Mill* (London: Hutchinson), uses Wordsworth on Mill as a "test case" of "the influence that poets and their poetry have on philosophers and their philosophy." With the briskness of an undergraduate, Mr. Woods busily points out "question-begging," "notorious blunders," "analogy that is positively disastrous," "shift . . . too flagrant to be acceptable," and many "obvious" fallacies in Mill's thought; on his announced subject, the influence of Wordsworth, he goes no deeper than Mill himself in the *Autobiography*. If he did, one might then object to his frequent citation of *The Prelude* and other works that Mill almost certainly never read.

Waldo Hilary Dunn's *James Anthony Froude: A Biography* (Oxford: Clarendon Press), covering the first thirty-eight years of the much abused historian's life, is an old-style "life and letters" woven (rather patched) together from Froude's draft of an autobiography, his letters, and passages assumed to be autobiographical from his *Shadows of the Clouds* and other published writings—Mr. Dunn taking the part of master of ceremonies, editor, and annotator rather than biographer.

Despite its aims, conveyed in some impressive opening quotations from Froude and Carlyle on the nature of biography, the work cannot be said to get at "all the inward springs and relations" of Froude's character; nor does it give a balanced account of externals. But, aside from the notable fact that it is the first biographical work on Froude since Herbert Paul's *Life* of 1905, it is quite valuable simply for the unpublished manuscript material it presents—from documents bequeathed to the author by Froude's daughter in 1935. Roughly three-fourths of the space is given to Froude's own words, transcribed in smaller type mainly from the fragmentary autobiography. That draft breaks off, and Mr. Dunn ends his volume, at 1856; in the promised second volume, covering the remaining half of the life, Mr. Dunn will be rather more on his own.

John D. Rosenberg's *The Darkening Glass: A Portrait of Ruskin's Genius* (Columbia University Press) is the best of the forty works glanced at in this survey. Putting Ruskin together is no easy task; Mr. Rosenberg, who comes marvelously close to fulfilling Arnold's concept of a complete critic, succeeds beautifully, writing with a persuasive authority that wins and holds the reader's confidence throughout. In sections headed "Art," "Architecture," "Society," "Wilderness," and "Peace" he focuses on five books—*Modern Painters*, *The Stones of Venice*, *Unto This Last*, *Fors Clavigera*, *Praeterita*—to uncover the individuality of Ruskin's "point of view": "To isolate that point of view without crushing its vitality or denying its contradictions, to trace its development through his criticism of art and of society, to perceive it in his analysis of the forms of clouds, the composition of a painting, or the structure of an ideal commonwealth is the aim of this book. For the wonder of Ruskin is both his disorder and oneness—the triumph of a unified vision over an often divided and ravaged mind." The completeness and balance of this study, from Ruskin's Romantic heritage to his influence on Frank Lloyd Wright, British Socialists, Gandhi, and Proust, are wholly admirable. Ruskin needed this kind of study; he will ever after be the better for Mr. Rosenberg's labor of love.

For dessert there is A. E. Housman's *Selected Prose*, edited by John Carter (Cambridge: University Press), a delightful little volume that might better have been given a title on the order of Bowers's "Textual and Literary Criticism." Between

the first and last items, "Introductory Lecture" (1892) and "The Name and Nature of Poetry" (1933), Mr. Carter prints selections from the prefaces to editions of Manilius and Juvenal, a section of "Reviews, Adversaria and Letters to the Press," a paper on "The Application of Thought to Textual Criticism," and a half-dozen biographical and ceremonial pieces. The point of the collection—to demonstrate that Housman "was just as much an artist in prose as he was in verse"—is well made. There is a narrowness of concerns, but much that is graceful and entertaining, especially in witty and pungent exposures of the failings of other scholars and editors. Despite Mr. Carter's prefatory attempt to "forestall the objections of the learned minority"—indeed, despite Housman's own letter of 1933, "I hope the proof-reading will be careful: the Cambridge Press cannot be trusted implicitly"—the texts are handled rather cavalierly, and there *are* misprints. But then I remind myself, as Housman wrote, "A textual critic engaged upon his business is not at all like Newton investigating the motions of the planets: he is much more like a dog hunting for fleas."

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