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THE TREATMENT OF ANIMALS IN POETRY FROM POPE TO WORDSWORTH

BY

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SUBMITTED TO THE GRADUATE FACULTY
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PREFACE

For the basic factual character of this paper I owe a debt to Mr. Dix Harwood, Miss Myra Reynolds, and Mr. Arthur Lovejoy. Without the assistance of the personnel of the Virginia State Library and those of the University of Richmond Library the gathering of satisfactory reference material would have been impossible. And lastly may I express my deep respect, admiration, and thankfulness to Professor Ball under whose scrutinizing eye and sympathetic mind this paper was created.

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INTRODUCTION

The general topic of the treatment of Nature in poetry has become somewhat shopworn. Miss Reynolds' excellent coverage of that transitional period from Pope to Wordsworth has crossed the lending library desk into the hands of students and interested readers many times. Her effort is one of the first to reveal in a scholarly fashion a love of Nature and the manners of its expression.

Myra Reynolds considers all aspects of Nature. She seems to leave no stone of information unturned. In stating the paramount characteristics of the treatment of Nature as handled by the classical poets, she notes the following: a general dislike or disregard of the majestic such as the seasons, sea, mountains, and storms; a like attitude toward the mysterious or the remote; a close association with the pleasant and serviceable parts of Nature such as rural farming and good weather; a pleasure in ordered Nature; generalized description; and "an underlying conception of Nature as entirely apart from man, and to be reckoned with merely as his servant or his foe." In the second part of her triple

approach she gives a discussion of poets who diverge from the classical view. The turning away from the rigidity of the classical and the turning to a love of Nature is the theme which interests Miss Reynolds. She emphasizes the majesty of Nature. She discusses gardening and landscape painting, but only spasmodically considers animals in the chain of being. The third part deals with fiction, books of travel, and landscape gardening.

Arthur Lovejoy's The Great Chain of Being considers the graduated scale of inanimate and animate beings, a concept popular in the eighteenth century. Beginning with Plato's conception of the Idea, Lovejoy shows the growth of the Great Chain, from the "principle of plentitude" explained in Timaeus to the concept of "continuity" forcefully delineated by Aristotle. He goes on to Augustine and Aquinas, and then to explain the philosophies of Descartes, Spinoza, Locke, Leibniz, and Shaftesbury.

Lovejoy indicates the philosophical transition concerning the Great Chain. This parallels the change in poetry from indifference to Nature to love of Nature. The early part of the eighteenth century was characterized by the belief that man's environment and all creatures were made for his benefit. As the century progressed, benevolence based upon Plato's philosophy eventually caused man to feel that since God created the universe through love, all the parts of that universe are endowed with that same love; therefore it behooved man to show good affections to all. Cowper exemplifies this

later attitude.

Dix Harwood's Love For Animals and How It Developed in Great Britain considers three stages in the growth of man's love for animals in the literature of the eighteenth century. First, one may reasonably conclude that primitive man was closely associated with animals. This was before man developed an egoistical philosophy. Man's egoism screened off his environment; man became detached from the world. Not until the philosophy of humanitarianism, not until the establishment of the idea that man is one with his environment, and not until the softening effects of Christian dogma did man return to his former close association with animals.

References concerning man's attitude toward animals and its development are few. In my research I found that only scant attention has been given to the treatment of animals in literature. The eighteenth century seems to be open for investigation, yet few have cultivated it. In my own work I have investigated the treatment of animals in the verse of the period. I have also attempted to show that the treatment in philosophical works is parallel. Only in the fables of the century do I find no significant change in attitude from that of the preceeding period.

I have divided my work into three parts. In the first I have attempted to delineate the philosophical background of the Chain of Being and to indicate the change in relationship between man and animal from separate elements in a unified creation to a single

element in that creation governed by "the laws of Nature and of Nature's God." Succeeding this is a general discussion of animals and their treatment by select poets. In the first two divisions the attitude toward animals is shown to change from indifference to love. The final part is devoted to animals as they are found in the fables of the century.

CHAPTER I

THE TREATMENT OF ANIMALS IN THE LIGHT OF THE CHAIN OF BEING

The Scale of Being, or Chain of Being, for purposes of this work, begins with Plato. In the Republic the source of all being is the Idea of Good. This Changeless Good, Absolute, Perfect One is not self-sufficient, having need for other than itself. In Timaeus Plato sets forth the conception of the mortal world. The universe would have been faulty if there were not mortals as well as immortals. It is in the nature of an idea to manifest itself physically. The result of this nature is a "fullness" "of the realization of conceptual possibility in actuality." Mr. Lovejoy refers to this "fullness" as the "principle of plentitude":

> That no genuine potentiality of being can remain unfulfilled, that the extent of abundance of the creation must be as great as the possibility of existence and commensurate with the productive capacity of a 'perfect' and inexhaustible Source, and that the world is the better, the more things it contains.[1]

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[1] Arthur O. Lovejoy, The Great Chain of Being, p. 52.

Aristotle rejects the idea of plentitude. His God creates nothing. The essential quality of this God is self-sufficiency.

> The bliss which God unchangingly enjoys in his never-ending self-contemplation is the Good after which all other things yearn and, in their various measures and manners, strive. But the Unmoved Mover is no world-ground; his nature and existence do not explain why the other things exist, why there are just so many of them, why the modes and degrees of their declension from the divine perfection are so various.[2]

It is from Aristotle that the concept of "continuity" is derived. This was to fuse with the doctrine of "fullness." The characteristics of the world, Aristotle insisted, must be continuous, not divisioned. He recognized that all life is diverse; in this diversity he saw no mutual relation; some creatures may be superior in characteristics to other, and in other characteristics be inferior. This difference in attributes "gave rise to a linear series of classes."[3] Nature, Aristotle maintained, develops so gradually that any demarcation indicating distinction is indistinguishable. The life created by the Absolute is full in variety of forms expressing the Idea of Good, God. That life is so gradual in its insensible minute gradation that it is continuous.

The result of these philosophers' thinking

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[2] *Ibid.*, p. 55.

[3] Shown in Oliver Goldsmith's *A History of the Earth and Animated Nature*, new edition, York, printed by and for T. Wilson and Son, 1808.

> was the conception of the plan and structure 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 hierarchial 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.[4]

"The typically early-eighteenth-century writer was well enough aware that the universe as a whole is physically an extremely large and complicated thing."[5] Pope, in warning against "intellectual presumptuousness," was expressing the popular philosophy of the time. This attitude of mental modesty was very characteristic of this early period. Man must continually be aware of the limits of his mental ability. Pope, in saying that the proper subject for man's study is man, implied that all beyond was not comprehendable. Truth had one dominant quality, simplicity. The Idea or God is "the perfect image of the whole of which all animals — both individual and species — are parts."[6] The necessary fullness of the

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[4] Lovejoy, op. cit., p. 59.
[5] Ibid., p. 8.
[6] Ibid., p. 50

world is Platonistic doctrine — called by Mr. Lovejoy "principle of plentitude." Aristotle's principle of continuity is the overlapping of nature, the lack of sharp division. In Plato there is intimation only that the parts of the world or universe are not equal in rank or excellence.

> In spite of Aristotle's recognition of the multiplicity of possible systems of natural classification, it was he who chiefly suggested to naturalists and philosophers of later times the idea of arranging (at least) all animals in a single graded <u>scala naturae</u> according to their degree of 'perfection.' For the criterion of rank in this scale he sometimes took the degree of development reached by the offspring at birth; there resulted, he conceived, eleven general grades with man at the top and the zoophytes at the bottom.[7]

Everything, except God, had a certain degree of privation. Mr. Lovejoy quotes W. D. Ross' <u>Aristotle</u>: "All individual things may be graded according to the degree to which they are infected with (mere) potentiality."[8]

"Next to the word 'Nature,' 'the Great Chain of Being' was the sacred phrase of the eighteenth century, playing a part somewhat analogous to that of the blessed word 'evolution' in the late nineteenth."[9] The eighteenth century conception of the universe as a Chain of Being and the principles which formed its foundation —

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[7] <u>Ibid</u>., p. 58.
[8] <u>Ibid</u>., p. 59.
[9] <u>Ibid</u>., p. 184.

plentitude, continuity, gradation — was the most widely diffused and accepted. This idea was not compressed from experience, nor was it a truth derived from nature. Writers of all sorts, philosophers, scientists, poets, essayists, and divines, wrote and talked much of this scheme. Dr. Johnson stood alone in thinking the whole concept nonsense. In his life of Pope he has nothing complimentary to say of the Essay on Man, except as to the diction.

It was not to a new enthusiasm for Greek or medieval philosophy that the conception owed its vogue; for different phases had been part of the thought through Augustine, Aquinas, Descartes, Spinoza, Locke, Leibniz, and Shaftesbury. Addison did much to bring ideas before the public.[10] Edmund Law treated of the "fullness" of the universe.[11]

At the same time that men were speculating philosophically, others were busy with animal anatomy, and still others were seeking theological truth through skepticism. From this activity was to develop the previous idea of a static world, the optimistic view, a temporalizing of the Chain of Being, and the idea that the world was a diverse and fluctuating one.

The old cosmography consisted of a world unique in that it housed God's creation, that overflowing Good. The center was Hell,

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[10] Spectator No. 519.
[11] Law's 2nd edition of King's Essay on the Origin of Evil, London, 1732.

located at mid-earth, the circumference was the celestial bodies of space. The earth alone held life, both those creatures lower than man and those free creatures half-material and half-spiritual. Animals, though of a lesser order, held the same uniqueness as man. Man and animals held a small place in such a creation.

Out of the seventeenth century came a force that eventually changed man's attitude toward animals in the superstitious and classical ways of poets before Thomson. The lore of myth was replaced by the questioning of Descartes. The dawning skepticism was to awaken the realization that there were external worlds in which man was not the center. Not only philosophy, but science showed the kinship between man and animal. Men were created in the likeness of the Creator, states the Old Testament. Investigation showed the curious that men and beasts were similar. Biology was virtually unknown when Elizabeth died in 1603; by 1700 there was no specimen unfit for experiment in the laboratory. Cartesianism in England bred bloodthirsty experimenters who went so far that public reaction turned on them as was well witnessed in the Spectator.

As the 1700's advanced, the crusted hard-heartedness of the Restoration slowly began to soften, for the people were glutted with evil made right for the sake of novelty. As the attitude within plays changed, so did poetry. The shepherds were still those of the Restoration, the loving swain never wearying of his love; there still was prattle of streams, meadows, herds and flocks;

there still was the same sophisticated air, that non-fresh air breathed by those before Thomson.

From the old concept, the world, mechanical, with its incorporeal and corporeal beings, developed a change in the "general arrangement of the physical world in space." Spectator No. 519 shows clearly the general philosophy of the Chain of Being of the early eighteenth century. Addison was somewhat familiar with Descartes and later Fontenelle and the Plurality of Worlds. He speaks with a tone of authority in expressing a belief in the peopling of the planets. It is reasonable "that if no part of matter which we are acquainted with, lies waste and useless, those great bodies, which are at such great distance from us, should not be desert and unpeopled, but rather that they should be furnished with beings adapted to their respected situations."[12] Later Soame Jenyns states the principle of the Plurality of Worlds in An Essay on Virtue: there are thousands of suns, and numbers of planets; "unnumber'd species live through ev'ry part"; in earth, air, and sky creatures abound, nothing is without life. The new cosmography, through an expanse of the idea of plentitude, surmised that if it were within reason for life in all its phases to have earthly being, it was also logical for life of a similar nature to inhabit the planets of other orbits. From the new cosmography man was instilled with

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[12] The British Essayists: with Prefaces, Historical and Biographical, vol. 11, p. 201.

a sense of insignificance. The suns and planets with their new discovered life, the distances of outer space, and man now found so akin to that lower life, the animal, created in his consciousness inferiority, in Young's mind a kind of worthlessness. Man in his dual capacity is not only an "heir of glory," "dim miniature of greatness absolute," but a "worm," an "insect infinite." Young, in weaving his subtle and morbid Night Thoughts shows the above aspect of the new cosmography: the flaws in man's make-up are compared to the spotted leopard; man's stealing trust, cheating, deceiving, is like the activity of the rook; disappointment lurks in every prize as bees in flowers, stinging with success. Young considers animals "bless'd animals" for they are too wise to wonder and too happy to complain of their life on earth, not so man; man like the worm crawls endlessly seemingly without aim or direction.

Blackmore's Creation establishes that the cause of the universe as man knows it was God. A survey of nature leads man to "a Cause Supreme, a wise Creating Mind." It is not from chance, nor atoms, that matter and life spring, but from a pre-existent seed. The poet has no use for mechanical explanations of world activity. Not only did God create a universe full and diverse, but that creation was perfect. Pope states: "Whatever is, is right." This good in the universe is recognized in Universal Beauty. In Book III of the poem Brooke notes that chance has no place in the world. All aspects of space, matter, and life are dependent and

ordered by the Sire Divine, the Parent God, "who here, there and every where abounds."[13] Blackmore speaks out against a changeless world. God is the essence of all ideas, of all life; therefore the possible variety of life is unlimited. Besides the corporeal life known to man, it is well within the conceivable that other life of different shapes and variety might spring forth. The poet says that it is not absurd that the boar might have had a trunk, the wolf horns, and that from the mouth of the horse tusks might have protruded. Such possibilities as these would not disturb the chain.

Pope pictures this Chain of Being world as bursting with life in all its expanse.

> Vast chain of being! which from God began;
> Natures ethereal, human, angel, man,
> Beast, bird, fish, insect, what no eye can see,
> No glass can reach; from infinite to thee;
> From thee to nothing —[14]

In "Summer" Thomson expresses that creative power of Nature. He recognizes that numerous group of life which is beyond the scope of "the microscopic eye." If man were able to be conscious of that minute branch of life he would be "stunned with noise." Not only is the universe full, but there is a continuous gradation from that potential not yet realized up through the corporeal

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[13] The Works of the English Poets, edited by Alexander Chalmers, vol. 17, p. 364.

[14] Ibid., vol. 12, p. 219.

beings to man with his dual capacity, who, to Young, was centered; then rising through the sphere of angels to the infinite. The best picture of this gradation is given by Pope.

> Far as creation's ample range extends,
> The scale of sensual mental powers ascends:
> Mark how it mounts to man's imperial race,
> From green myriads in the peopled grass:
> The mole's dim curtain, and the lynx's beam;
> Of smell, the head long lioness between,
> And hound sagacious on the tainted green,
> Of hearing, from the life that fills the flood,
> To that which warbles through the vernal wood!
> The spiders touch, how exquisitely fine!
> Feels at each thread, and lives along the line:
> In the nice bee, what sense so subtly true
> From poisonous herbs extracts the healing dew!
> How instinct varies in the grovelling swine,
> Compar'd half-reasoning elephant with thine!
> Twixt that, and Reason, what a nice barrier!
> Forever separate, yet forever near!
> Remembrance and Reflection how allied:
> What thin partitions Sense from Thought divide![15]

Contrary to those expressions of Thomson, Pope, and Blackmore, Henry Brooke in Universal Beauty states that the universe is static; that from the creation nothing new had been or could be possible. He is in agreement with the preformation theory of the time. All species and all individual life have been since the beginning. The individuals unlike the species, seem to increase and undergo change; this is but an action, already predelineated "on a minute scale of magnitude, in the primeval germs which lay encased one within another like a nest of boxes." As Brooke puts it, the

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[15] Chalmers, op. cit., p. 219.

Almighty Power

could infinitude confine,
And dwell *immense* within the minim shrine;
The eternal species in an instant mould
And endless worlds in seeming atoms hold,
Plants within plants, and seed enfloding seed,
For ever — to end never —[16]

The poet says that man's lower neighbors are just as expressive of the benevolence and beauty of God as are the other parts of the universe. Each is adapted to its state. Man should recognize the goodness of animals and plants, for if they are good enough for God's care, they are certainly good for the care of man. Man would be very much surprised if he could glimpse behind the curtain of the Deity. So much would be revealed that man's sense of lowliness and inferiority would be increased; he would not strive beyond his station, and would be more humble toward the "Grand Supreme."

How would the vain disputing wretches shrink,
And shivering wish they could no longer think;
Reject each model, each reforming scheme,
No longer dictate to the Grand Supreme,
But waking, wonder whence they dar'd to dream![17]

From ancient times through the Middle Ages not only was there the attitude that animals were merely part of the universal machine, but there was the view that those orders of beings below man were the servants of man. This utilitarian attitude pertained more to

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16 *Ibid.*, vol. 17, Book III, p. 347.
17 *Ibid.*, p. 359.

domestic than to wild animals. Blackmore expresses this utilitarian view; Somervile's The Chase shows the delight of man in the use of animals to satisfy his thirst for sport, sport which always ends unhappily for the timid hare and stag. This is a man's world; animals are for the benefit of man.

> The brute creation are his property,
> Subservient to his will, and for him made:[18]

The poet justifies his attitude by attempting to trace the hunt from ancient times. How different this brutal joy is from Pope's condemning man for his maltreatment of man; how different from Thomson who abhorred the hunt. The utilitarian attitude is not in accord with the benevolent universe, nor is it in harmony with Shaftesbury's view of the species benefiting from the activity of the individual.

The change in man's ways toward animals may be laid at the door of science, for through physical examination man found that the beast was too much like himself to be treated antagonistically or indifferently. The mental change of man toward animals was largely due to the popularity of Shaftesbury's philosophy. The nature of man and the design of his creator connect man closely with lower animals.

James Burnett[19] observes that it seems to be nature's law

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[18] Chalmers, op. cit., vol. 11, Book IV, p. 166.

[19] James Burnett, Lord Monboddo, Of the Origin and Progress of Language, vol. 1, Book II, Chaps. 2, 4.

that species do not develop at once but by progression. The nature lover knows the difference in appearance between the embryo and the animal. This jurist recognized that the faculties of animals end with the body. The mind of man is that which differentiates the two. In man's development from the embryo to that intellectual middle being, he passes through those stages of advancement of lower life, both plant and animal. Burnett is of Jenyns' view in saying of man, "He has in his body all the elements of which the inanimate world is composed; he has the growth and nutrition of the vegetable; and he has sense, memory, and imagination, belonging to the animal life; and last of all, he acquires reason and intellect."[20] This is the Scale of Being for man. How memory and imagination are active in the animal is not revealed. It is felt by Burnett that the <u>orang outang</u> is the highest type of animal. Two faculties lacking in the make-up of this near-man are speech and reasoning. No doubt it would have these if its environment included civility and the arts.

Shaftesbury shows the difference in the weakness of man's society and the stability in that of animals. More than man do animals express the goodness of God. It was the third Earl, and his school of benevolence, that influenced Thomson and the minor writers; this school with variations of Bolingbroke was the

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20 <u>Ibid</u>., Book I, p. 182.

pattern for Pope's Essay on Man. Shaftesbury's world was one of Good, for it was based on the Platonic plan; evil is good as defined by the teacher of benevolence. All are subservient to one another for the good of the whole. The insect is the prey of both the bird and the fish. The happiness of the bird and the fish must be considered, not the fate of being an insect. Bernard Mandeville with his The Grumbling Hive opposed Shaftesbury with the thesis "that private vices redound to public benefit." Both men agreed that between men and beasts there was a natural sympathy. Animals have a feeling of acquaintanceship, although they may have no sense for kinship. Man should be as sensitive to the well being of lower life as he is to his own. Bolingbroke acknowledged man as the superior inhabitant of this planet, but that superiority is only one of degree and of minute degree. Man's place is to appreciate the beauty and show love toward animals; Brooke is of Shaftesbury's philosophy in noting that the activity of all is for the well-being of all. Particularly pointed out is the care of the young. Not only does the poet see the Goodness of the Creator in the society of animals as did Shaftesbury, but he sees a "universal and benign Providence" expressing Goodness in the physical change made by animals. In his notes the poet suggests that such an observation "may be looked on as allegorical, and representative of the present state of man and his future hopes."

Soame Jenyns expresses the same idea of communal good. All are formed with faculties to share in the Creator's Good. The law by which all live is the eternal law "that all contribute to the general bliss."

> Nature so plain this primal law displays,
> Each living creature sees it, and obeys;
> Each, form'd for all, promotes through private care
> The public good, and justly tastes its share.[21]

The optimistic view of the eighteenth century was that this is the best of worlds. If evil is felt in the world, the result of that evil is good. The policy of Pope was to submit to the weaknesses man finds in himself, for the limitations of each species of creature are necessary to the differentiation of things in which the plentitude of the universe consists. Each creature, if filling the station assigned by the Creator, would know no evil. The writers of the optimistic view saw good in the carnivorous habits of man and animal. Pope was not giving the true point when he said that man feeds animals on which he intends to feast, and until that time considers them blest. The carnivorous habit made for more variety and greater numbers of animals.

Pope's Essay on Man brings out that man should not be envious of characteristics held by lower beings: the acute smell of the hound and lioness, the fine touch of the spider spinning its

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[21] Chalmers, op. cit., vol. 17, pp. 596-7.

thread, the nice bee with its ability to extract healing dew from poisonous herbs. Man, by the Creator, was endowed with attributes which suited his station, and which when used in the light of the laws of Nature, make for the good of the whole. The same truth holds for the animals and their attributes. If any part, man or animal, shows a pride of acquiring characteristics beyond his or its station, then that part is working against God's Chain of Being.

> On Superior powers
> Were we to press, inferior might on ours;
> Or in the full creation leave a void,
> Where, one step broken, the great scale's destroy'd:
> From Nature's chain whatever link you strike,
> Tenth or ten thousandth, breaks the chain alike.[22]

The trend away from the utilitarian and the "man's world" idea involved more poets as time went on. James Thomson was one of the first to give voice to the trend. He speaks against "tyrant man" in his lack of obligation to animals. Where Blackmore felt that philosophy showed the way other than to God, Thomson, in the closing section to "Summer," mentions that philosophy makes man rise above his low desires so that it is recognized that "the chain of causes and effects" is traced to God. Without philosopy man is rough, unpolished. Because, in Thomson's eyes, all within the universe, the vegetable and animal worlds, "all this innumerous color'd scene of things," and the middle being, and the incorporeal

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[22] Chalmers, op. cit., p. 219.

of the spiritual world are God's beings, man's duty was a reverence to those beings. Shenstone in "Rural Elegance" says that nature is not for man alone in joy and happiness; animals are entitled the qualities too. The Guardian cautions man to be mindful of his obligations to the lower creatures.[23]

In Pleasures of Imagination there is found a humanitarian attitude toward the Chain of Being. Previously there had been faint hints of such a trend, but nothing tangible. All those poets considered in this chapter, except Thomson and Akenside, believed

> The bliss of man (could pride that blessing find)
> Is not to act or think beyond mankind;
> No powers of body or of soul to share,
> But what his nature and his state can bear.[24]

Expressed in the Pleasures of Imagination is the idea that God in creating the universe from His own love endowed man with not only a descriminating mind, but "finer organs" which enable him through imagination to store the qualities of nature, and to respond to them. This is a characteristic of that middle station in which man finds himself. In tracing the beauty of nature "through various being's fair proportioned scale," the poet found that beauty and benevolence are found in "the least and lowliest," and gather

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[23] The British Essayists, edited by James Ferguson, vol. 14, Guardian No. 61, p. 32.

[24] Chalmers, op. cit., p. 219.

splendor as they ascend to the "full meridian." Akenside has put Shaftesbury's Characteristicks in verse: the test of truth through ridicule, the idea of benevolence as expressed through good affections, and the original intention of good by the Creator. The poet goes far back to the Platonic concept of the Idea of Good. The nature of the Idea was so acceptable to the Eternal One that He

> viewed the forms,
> The forms eternal of created things;
> . . . . From the first
> Of days, on them his love divine he fixed,
> His admiration: till in time complete,
> What he admired and loved, his vital smile
> Unfolded into being.[25]

From Blackmore to Akenside and the later eighteenth century the workings of science and philosophy pressed and pulled the Chain of Being to that phase where animals, plants, and matter were not of the mechanical, subservient side of a static universe. All were of God and were to be realized as such. Through those faculties endowed by the Creator creatures had the wherewithal to ascend the scale. In this ascent, man pressing on superior powers and inferior pressing on man, no void was created, no step broken destroying the scale. In this complete universe no step is empty. This transitional century saw the humanizing of man's environment.

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[25] Chalmers, op. cit., vol. 14, p. 61.

From the indifferent and utilitarian place of animals developed compassion, love, and appreciation. The animals of Thomson became the companions of Cowper and Burns.

CHAPTER II

THE GENERAL TREATMENT OF ANIMALS

It has been within the last two centuries and a half that man's attitude toward animals has come to the stage of moral kindness. Today man is almost as horrified at conspicuous maltreatment of an animal as of a child. As man's Western civilisation has developed, his attitude toward animals has changed.

Over the centuries two characteristic views toward beasts have become prominent. At times man has held the anthropomorphic view that man and animal are very similar, having basically identical emotions and mental power.[1] During other periods man held the anthropocentric idea that the world was created for man and that an unbridgeable gap separates the two species. In earliest times, it may be surmised, man developed a sense of closeness toward certain animals and a definite aloofness toward others.

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[1] Sidney Herbert Mellone, "Anthropomorphism," Encyclopaedia Britannica, 1947 edition, vol. 2, p. 59.

Regardless of relationship man seems to have a trait of seeing the river, ocean, tree, mountain, and animal in terms of his own experience. The theologians of Christianity fostered the philosophy that this is man's world, made so by God; the environment in which man found himself was meant for his service. Secondary to and less forceful than the belief of the churchmen, was the idea, held by that segment of society close to the soil, that beasts feel and act like men and may even receive the sacrament of the Christian faith. Manifestations of the latter opinion may be seen in the animal trials of the Middle Ages and miracles performed, as exemplified by the story of St. Thekla, devout follower of St. Paul. The former doctrine may be found in the preaching of St. Thomas Aquinas and other representatives of the Church.

> In the Biblical account of the creation, God gave Adam authority to name the animals and to feed on every living thing -- Man is master of all things not in the image of God, and "the life of animals and plants is preserved not for themselves but for man."[2]

For a time the anthropomorphic and anthropocentric attitudes existed, on the one hand in the minds of men with the plow, on the other in the minds of the learned. Slowly, under pressure from the Church, the anthropocentric began to predominate until by the middle of the thirteenth century it was universal. There were ex-

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[2] Dix Harwood, Love For Animals and How It Developed in Great Britain, p. 13.

ceptions to this thought during the five hundred years interim to the opening of the eighteenth century, but so few are they, no mention will be made here.

The rebirth of the idea of the resemblance between man and animal came consciously by the eighteenth century. Sympathy and affection for animals, and understanding of them were latent qualities in poetry which, prior to the era of Pope, reached the highest feeling in Shakespeare. The spirit of the Restoration verse was stateliness, although the enthusiasm for this was short-lived. Stateliness had nothing of the senses, merely form. Poetry lacked emotional language; it was occasional and eloquent. Simplicity was formulated, description diffused. Expression was controlled by the ways of the ancients, and form followed traditional patterns. The theme of verse was wit, the capacity of the poet to stimulate imaginative memory. Dryden was the standard appealing to the next generation of versifiers.

The character of eighteenth-century poetry was a fusion of traditionalism and ingenuity. The concept of the gentleman, rather than merely seventeenth-century ornamentalism, showed him to be compassionate without concern, moral, and useful. There was agreement that art was an imitation of Nature: an imitation not realistic, but within the confines of essential principles. Art was almost completely directed to the upper classes, hence the prevalence of novelty. To Pope, Nature, the practice of the

ancients, and the ancient rules were equally important in poetic doctrine. The traditionalists of the early eighteenth century had precedent for procedure; a certain kind of poem was attempted — an epic, an ode, an elegy, a pastoral, a ballad, or a satire. For this occupation the poet drew from a stockpile of forms and phrases which accumulated from past masterpieces of a particular genre. With this precedent developed a concept of liberty, liberty within the law. This new view opened other doors of tradition. A number of non-classical traditions came on the scene. Before 1700 the classical genre was at its height. Milton had reached greatness in the epic; Richard Blackmore showed only a desire for greatness. There was a turn to modification of patterns. Although form had not lost weight in the poet's mind, doctrine became paramount as exemplified by Blackmore's Creation, Young's Night Thought (1742), and Pope's Essay on Man. Moral reflection and description found appropriate patterns for expression. Pope is the epitome of this early period: in him diverse traditions meet.[3]

Before Pope put the philosophy of Bolingbroke into couplets and Gay wittily laughed at traditional pastorals, Lady Winchilsea had retired to Eastwell. There in abundant leisure she became acquainted with the Nature of her manor park. From the solitude and

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[3] A Literary History of England, edited by Albert C. Baugh, Book III, Chapter 7.

shade she was inspired to pen "To the Nightingale" and "A Nocturnal Reverie." Of the forerunners of Thomson, this gentlewoman was among the first to show an appreciation of external nature. She had an acute sense of sound: the horse stepping as it fed, the gay and melancholy qualities of the nightingale, the rustling voice of the leaves. Only personal observation could give the accuracy found in the above poems. Man does not influence this bird as in the pastorals. Nature was not merely background for man's activity; Nature influenced man just as the nightingale excited the emotion of Lady Winchilsea. This emotion certainly may be that same emotion experienced by Shelley with the skylark and Burns with the daisy or mouse. There is no wonder Wordsworth found appreciation in "A Nocturnal Reverie"; the night is made audible; we hear the owl's hoot, the sheep pulling at the grass; the curlew's cry, the partridge's call piercing the dark. Each creature is as clear to the mind as the "scatter'd glow-worms." This conscious and truthful representation of natural things for their own sake indicates that Lady Winchilsea was in advance of her time. "This forms, in fact, her principal claim to the notice of posterity."[4]

In the interim between the emotional pleasure that the mistress of Eastwell derived from the nightingale's song and "Winter" of Thomson, verse was personal and dealt with moral re-

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[4] The Poems of Anne Countess of Winchilsea, edited by Myra Reynolds, p. cxxi.

flection. London was the hub of English life, and the interests of the day were morals and manners with a gentler touch than Wycherley and Vanbrugh. Gentlemen found relief and entertainment in the tavern rather than in a country retreat. Gay enjoyed the hubbub of the walks, Pope loved the city and loathed the country beyond the well kept greens of Twickenham. Writers great and small concerned themselves with man and his society; animals came in generally by way of simile or in the satires of Swift. Except for the rural estates such as that of Lady Winchilsea in Kent, the country was distasteful, a habitation for birds and cattle. Gay and Pope are compassionate without concern. Neither emotionalism nor hints of outright humanitarianism are found in Gay's two outstanding poems. Rural life is sweet and animate, but only as seen from a coach door opening or through a manor window. The poet's knowledge of fishing might well not come from actually sitting beside a tranquil stream anticipating the catch, but from Izaak Walton's Complete Angler. The attitude is utilitarian; rural sports are for the pleasure of man. If Gay admits fish have pain, fear, and hunger, these characteristics are unemphasized. The animals of the hunt do not stimulate emotions of glee, but the sounds and sight of the prey as each meets its fate. No sentiment toward wild or tame is shown. "There is no hint of the feeling toward animals that made Thomson and Cowper abhor hunting. There is simply a thoroughly sportsmanlike knowledge of details, a sense

of pleasurable excitement in the chase and joy in victory."[5] The animals found in the Shepherd's Week are not the important element, as the pastorals of Pope will show later. They are atmosphere, not mentioned for their own sake, but only to vivify the characters. The barnyard lot — ox, cow, hog, hen, cat — and the goldfinch, magpie, raven, owl, with the deer, and the fox, are found in the rustic environment of England; the labor, care, and sport of these animals is for the benefit of the farmer and the sportsman. One receives the impression that animals are more dependent upon man than man upon animals. Nature is the environment, the realm, in which man has his being. Gay holds the idea that animals are governed by Nature's laws, but whether man is within or without the laws is not clear.

Although "On a Lap Dog" hints of the gentleness of Lady Winchilsea, Gay is stabbing at man's hard-heartedness.

> He's dead. Oh! lay him gently in the ground!
> And may his tomb be by this verse renown'd:
> "Here Shock, the pride of all his kind, is laid:
> Who fawn'd like man, but ne'er like man betray'd."[6]

Pope moralizes similarly:

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[5] Myra Reynolds, The Treatment of Nature in English Poetry Between Pope and Wordsworth, pp. 64-5.

[6] The Works of the English Poets, edited by Alexander vol. 10, p. 486.

> Beast, urged by us, their fellow-beasts pursue,
> And learn of man each other to undo.[7]

In these instances and others the mood is against cruelty to animals. The object of speaking out against this cruelty is to prevent such cruelty from growing into cruelty of man to man.

Kindness to beasts is the theme of short poems by a master of Westminster.[8] The straying worm, the jackdaw, "Sweet Poll," and the chirping cricket, are all of the uneventful life of Vincent Bourne. The light, brief verse of this minor poet aided the humanitarian trend.

The weak anthropomorphic voice of poetry found strength in philosophical writings and through the essayists. While Shaftesbury and Mandeville were striving to reach the same goal, and the novelists were speaking out for social betterment, the essayists were not idle. Not only did these writers criticize the morals and manners, and lampoon and gossip; they also showed interest in the lower creatures. Steele wonders why the custom of baiting innocent animals at the stake is not abandoned. "The virtues of tenderness, compassion, and humanity, are those by which men are distinguished from brutes, as much as by reason itself."[9] A year later the Spectator (1711) speaks of the intricate structure of

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[7] Ibid., vol. 12, p. 152.

[8] The Dictionary of National Biography, edited by Leslie Stephen and Sidney Lee, vol. 2, p. 940.

[9] Tatler, No. 134 (1709-10).

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animals; how each twisted fibre fits the creature for its particular way of life. Reason is developed only to that stage which "immediately regards his own preservation or the continuance of his species."[10] In the next issue the same writer points out that in all lower creatures are found the basic parts of man's nature, the passions and senses in their greatest strength and perfection. The conclusion is reached "that the same variety of wisdom and goodness runs through the whole creation, and puts every creature in a condition to provide for its safety and subsistence in its proper station."[11]

It has been previously suggested that poetry of the eighteenth century may be segmented into three phases. The first phase is marked by the consideration of Nature as a reservoir of "similitudes illustrative of human actions and passions." This representation of Nature is classical in mood. An inspection of the similitudes indicates that they were picked from a limited scope of the natural. The lamb, linnet, nightingale, bees, lark, and wren — these are those most used. If there were any attempts at accuracy, it is not apparent. The total emphasis was on man. The use of similes from Nature was superficial. "They were consciously sought for as a part of the necessary adornment of poetry."[12]

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[10] Spectator, No. 120.
[11] No. 121.
[12] Reynolds, op. cit., p. 28.

In "A Discourse on Pastoral Poetry" Pope states that the pastoral is supposed to be an expression of shepherd felicity; therefore the elements surrounding the life of the shepherd should be used to heighten this expression of happiness. The natural way of the animal makes for the happy atmosphere.

> Hear how the birds, on every bloomy spray,
> With joyous music wake the dawning day!
> Why sit we mute, when early linnets sing,
> When warbling Philomel salutes the spring?[13]

The clumsy ox turning sod, the flocks straying out to pasture, the bee attacking blossoms for their sweet — these are the shallow figures on the backdrop before which Alexis and Strephon expressed love. Felicity is not the rule, for there may be a lamentation for lost or frustrated love. When the bleating sheep sympathize, the industrious bee neglects its task, and the nightingale laments, there is reflected the melancholy attitude of man. The animals found in the pastorals of the century are handled as traditionally as the diction.

Through the growing concern over cruelty to animals, and the emotionalism which began with Lady Winchilsea, the interest in the country and consequently in animals began to widen. The ground having been prepared by Shaftesbury, Gay, and the essayists, James Thomson arrived in London. Born in the rural environment of Ednam, he was filled with scenes and observations of his never- to-

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13 Chalmers, op. cit., vol. 12, p. 145.

forgotten childhood. Through the help of his fellow countryman Mallet, "Winter," the poem which he began merely as something to do, was published. Thomson's treatment of animals is in agreement with the attitude that there is goodness and wisdom throughout the universe. He has a love for all Nature. This love is expressed in a language which animates. It is through the senses that the activity of external Nature in the separate seasons is expressed: the love-making and nest building of birds in "Spring," the lowing of the cattle as they sniff the approaching storm in "Winter," the troops of insects coming out into the sun, the sheep-washing, the wasp which escapes the snap of the sleepy dog, the daw, magpie, and rook flitting among the shades of the oaks, the "quick-eyed trout" and "darting salmon" warming themselves in "Summer," and the bird migration in "Autumn." Thomson is not didactic; he pictures Nature as it is -- cold, difficult, and precarious; new, fresh, full of love and development; alive, mature; and turning into another cycle. The descriptive adjectives clearly show physical nature: "labourer ox," "udder'd mother," and "steep-ascending eagle." The poet gathered all the activity of Nature into his consciousness. His observations are alive, warm, sensitive. The emotion of Lady Winchilsea is given vigor in the Seasons. The attitude is appreciative, sympathetic, loving, and occasionally sentimental. From early youth Thomson had developed a sense of nearness to the rural scene and its animal inhabitants, as at-

tested by letters to Dr. Cranston. In "Winter" is shown an appreciation of the "dun-coloured flocks," the "clamorous rook," the cattle seeking shelter. He speaks sentimentally of the redbreast cautiously tapping at the window, and understands the case of the hare and hind scratching for bits of food under the snow. In "Summer" Thomson digresses, mentioning Behemoth, of which an excellent description is made in the book of Job.[14] It is in the torrid zone that the birds with the gayest hues are found, but Nature has balanced their character by humbling their song. In order to heighten his expression the poet brings in animals from far-off lands. He speaks of troops of wolves pouring down from the Alps and Apennines, the "green serpent," the leopard, tiger, hyena, and lion; all have the disposition of the zone, fiery and wild. There is the "small close-lurking minister of fate"; Thomson indicates that the snake was "form'd to humble man, this child of vengeful nature."

Previous poets were interested in the surface beauty of nature. Pope has little heart for the pheasant rising from the field, but he is quick to express a drawing-room delight in the plumage.

> See! from the brake the whirring pheasant
> springs,
> And mounts exulting on triumphant wings:

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[14] Chap. XI, pp. 15-24.

Short is his joy; he feels the fiery wound,
Flutters in blood, and panting beats the ground,
Oh! what avail his glossy, varying dyes,
His purple crest, and scarlet-circled eyes,
The vivid green, his shining plumes unfold,
His painted wings, and breast that flames with
gold?[15]

Although Gay spoke out against "barb'rous men" and their use of the resounding "lashing whip," and desired to protect the fish at the peril of the otter, yet he had as much love for the hunt as did Somervile and Tickell. The sport of the chase has been considered worth while and noble from ancient times. William Somervile appreciated the activity of hunting as perhaps no other poet of the time did. The Chase is primarily based on that part of Virgil's Georgics that deals with the hunt. The origin of the hunt came through the necessity of man seeking food. As God gave green things, so He gave all other living things. Hunting of necessity was without guilt. Hunting in developing into a sport retained its guiltless complex. From the time of William the Conqueror the English huntsmen learned finer arts: cheering the hounds, sorting the various breeds, rearing, caring, and disciplining the pack in the field. Somervile is enthusiastic. He reveals the means to enjoy the pleasures of the sport. He is stirred by the "swift-stretching" steed, the hounds "opening in concerts of harmonious joy, but breathing death." To the poet this is man's world; animals are for the benefit of man.

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15 Chalmers, op. cit., vol. 12, p. 152.

> The brute creation are his property,
> Subservient to his will and for him made.[16]

Somervile agrees that the proper study of man is man. The Muse of this lover of the chase is instructive, handling the lesson in an impersonal, objective manner. While expressing the pleasures received from hunting, and the glee with which man sees the social and the antisocial animals mangled and gored by the bloodthirsty hounds, the poet intermittently describes minutely the various hounds and their uses in hunting. He pictures the ideal hound which is very similar to Tickell's.[17]

> See there with countenance blithe,
> And with a courtly grin, the fawning hound
> Salutes the cowering, his wide opening nose
> Upward he curls, and his large sloe-black eyes
> Melt in soft blandishments, and humble joy;
> His glossy skin, or yellow-pied, or blue,
> In lights or shades by Nature's pencil drawn,
> Reflects the various tints; his ears and legs
> Fleck'd here and there, in gay enamell'd pride,
> Rival the speckled pard; his rush-grown tail
> O'er his broad back bends in an ample arch;
> On shoulders clean, upright and firm he stands;
> His round cat foot, strait hams, and wide-spread thighs,
> And his low-dropping chest, confess his speed,
> His strength, his wind, or on the steepy hill,
> Or far-extended plain.[18]

Although here and there one may find a hint of Thomson, there is not in Somervile the love of animals for their own sake. The interest in the sport found here is for the joy and excitement de-

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16 *Ibid.*, vol. 11, p. 166.

17 "A Fragment of a Poem on Hunting."

18 Chalmers, *op. cit.*, vol. 11, Book I, p. 157.

rived from the activity of the hounds and the hunted, not because they are creatures of God, nor for humanitarian reasons. Change the atmosphere of the swift steed, the "stanch pack," the "timid hare" and the cornered stag, to the tranquillity of the Seasons, and for Somervile the emotion would be gone. For him the chase is a

> Delightful scene!
> Where all around is gay; men, horses, dogs,
> And in each smiling countenance appears
> Fresh-blooming health, and universal joy.[19]

Pope prefers bloodshed in the chase to that in war.

> No more my sons shall dye with British blood
> Red Iber's sands, or Ister's foaming flood:
> Safe on my shore each unmolested swain
> Shall tend the flocks, or reap the bearded grain;
> The shady empire shall retain no trace
> Of war or blood, but in the sylvan chase;
> The trumpet sleep, while cheerful horns are blown,
> And arms employed on birds and beasts alone.[20]

Only with the coming of the Messiah shall there be complete peace.

> The lambs with wolves shall graze the verdant mead,
> And boys in flowery bands the tiger lead;
> The steer and lion at one crib shall meet,
> And harmless serpents lick the pilgrim's feet.
> The smiling infant in his hand shall take
> The crested basilisk and speckled snake,
> Pleased, the green lustre of the scales survey,
> And with their forky tongue shall innocently play.[21]

Except for Thomson's humanitarianism, utilitarianism predominated.

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19 Ibid., Book II, p. 159.

20 Ibid., vol. 12, p. 154.

21 Ibid., p. 150.

Concerning the hunt this humanist likened man to the lion, the wolf, and the tiger, who kill for food; but worse, man kills those creatures which have been of assistance to him. The beasts of prey deserve to die, but what have domestic animals done to deserve such a fate?

> And the plain ox,
> That harmless, honest, guileless animal,
> In what has he offended? He, whose toil,
> Patient, and ever ready, clothes the land
> With all the pomp of harvest; shall he bleed,
> And struggling groan beneath the cruel hands
> E'en of the clown he feeds?[22]

Thomson refers to Pythagoras because of the philosopher's principle of abstaining from animal food. Pillage of the nightingale's nest and the beehive force Thomson to refer to man as "tyrannic lord."

The attitude of Thomson toward the sport of fishing is certainly in contrast to hunting. The poet had a taste for angling. He was familiar with the "well dissembled fly" and knew the time and place to cast the colorful lure.

> Long time he, following cautious, scans the fly;
> And oft attempts to seize it, but as oft
> The dimpled water speaks its jealous fear.
> At last, while haply o'er the shaded sun
> Passes a cloud, he desperate takes the death,
> With sullen plunge. At once he darts along
> Deep-struck, and runs out all the lengthen'd line;
> Then seeks the furtherest ooze, the sheltering weed,
> The cavern'd bank, his old secure abode,
> And flies aloft, and flounces round the pool,
> Indignant of the guile.[23]

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22 *Ibid.*, p. 416.
23 *Ibid.*

This description of the trout is far more animated than Gay's.

William Shenstone parallels Thomson in rejecting the utilitarian or anthropocentric attitude. In the "Prefatory Essay on Elegy" he states that his elegies picture Nature, the picture from observation. If he describes any part or draws sentiment from the rural scene, it is from the spot and he does not "counterfeit the scene." The importance of Shenstone is in his forthright attitude toward nature. The "Rural Elegance" scorns the pursuers of the "timorous hare," and those that disturb the flocks, those having no appreciation of Nature except for what they can get out of it. Here is a defense of the idea that the beauty of nature is reason for its being. Shenstone still clings to the classical Philomel; animals are treated in the traditional Latin style. Through the elegies are scattered very vague references to animals: vocal birds, timorous lambs, scaly glutton, and labouring hind.[24] The whole landscape is the interest of the poet, not its parts. Shenstone's letters abound with references to his love of the country and his activities. He finds pleasure "in rearing all sorts of poultry; geese, turkeys, pullets, ducks."[25] One may find cheap amusement in a rural environment. Shenstone and Jago exchanged correspondence pertaining to verse and a general love of the barnyard lot. In writing Jago about his birds, Shenstone

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[24] "The Sky-lark," "Winter," "Hope."

[25] The Works in Verse and Prose of William Shenstone, edited by J. Dodsley, vol. 3, p. 159.

worried over them as he would over children and gave them personalities in order to be closer to them. Since Shenstone was so engrossed in poultry raising, it is clear why his schoolmistress cared so earnestly for her poultry that they came into the house. The attention to insignificant matters found in his correspondence is also abundant in his verse; he is too sentimental.

The minor poets of the first half-century echo Blackmore, Young, Gay, and Pope in controlled expression and the idea of liberty within the law. William Broome, George Pitt, and Ambrose Philips used the stock patterns of their predecessors. In the pastorals Broome speaks of "frisking flocks," "fleet roes," and "skipping fawns"; Philips uses "frisking heifer" and "unyoked heifers." The nightingale still wears the Roman garb. The lark and linnet give atmosphere to spring, and usher in each day.

> The tuneful linnet's warbling notes,
> Are grateful to the shepherd-swain.[26]

The "frightened hind" compared to the grieved lover, the song of birds mirroring the frustration of the shepherd, the happy murmuring of the bees — these pad the rural scene. John Hughes and Elijah Fenton see Nature in terms of self-pleasure. Shallow, without emotion or enthusiasm — these are the characteristics of that deep furrow in which most of poetry was nurtured.

William Thompson sees the rural scene in terms of the bee,

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26 Thompson's "The Milkmaid."

the "golden daughter of Spring." He shows an appreciation of the qualities of Nature as a whole through enthusiasm. In general form he shows the influence of James Thomson, but the diction does not reach the height of the Seasons. The poet's love of Nature is not big enough to recognize that Nature is more than beauty; it is an expression of the Divine.

David Mallet's close association with Thomson influenced this poet's one outstanding work, The Excursion. In the correspondence of these two may be found advice and criticism. The likeness between the Seasons and this less lustrous poem of Mallet is apparent: the storm, the retreat of the animals, the song of birds; after the storm the birds and beasts filling the woodland with rejoicing, and "reflections on the inspiration to be gained from Nature." The animals of Thomson are not painted, but move and have their being; The Excursion pictures animals and scenes of nature as the poet's fancy led him, or as "his knowledge enabled him to describe." Mallet never seemed to gain that life-giving quality of Thomson, that ability to animate. Had Mallet's writing come first, it would have indicated a definite step forward in the new concept of Nature.

John Dyer obtains the same exhilaration from Nature as did Thomson. His two longest and most ambitious poems, The Ruins of Rome and The Fleece, are not of prime importance here. The Fleece is a didactic work concerned with the technical knowledge in all phases of wool, from sheep raising to domestic and foreign use.

Dyer does give descriptive references to external Nature, but his attitude is utilitarian. "Grongar Hill" and "The Country Walk" are of interest, for the poet draws on his personal experience in describing the fair face of Nature. He spends a great deal of time in expressing the joy received from the "shady vales and mountains bright" and "the thousand flaming flowers." He notices the "yellow linnet" and the "tuneful nightingale," recognizing that these, like the plants, are part of Nature's show. He pictures different fragments of rural life for their own sake. He is conscious of the nature of the raven, fox, toad, and adder, as well as the barnyard lot and the birds. The deep realization of goodness and wisdom within Nature is lacking in Dyer; therefore benevolence is without strength. The utilitarian point of view of Dyer is found in Grainger's The Sugar-cane.[27] The "Preface" acknowledges the didacticism of this work. In speaking of the foretelling of rain, mention is made as to the ways of the mosquito, sandfly, cockroach, and speckled lizard. These in seeking shelter parallel animal habits pictured by Dyer, Mallet, and Thomson. Contrasted to these, doves return from flight to sit on roofs where they watch the gathering clouds. There is an excellent description of the hummingbird stealing nectar; Grainger notices the bright "burnish'd neck" and the vehemence with which the bird attacks the cup. This appreciation of external Nature links the poet with Dyer, Mallet,

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[27] Chalmers, op. cit., vol. 14, p. 478.

and Thomson.

"The ablest men of the second half of the century still were proponents of reason and common sense, but they were also likely to be men of strong emotional natures."[28] If Swift and Pope are compared with Cowper and Burns, there is not an advance of intellectual power, but an advance in the "delight of subjective emotional states." "The later century tends to glorify the individual's sensations whether merely thrilling or revelatory of new vague truths."[29] The concept of uniformity was replaced by a love of diversity. The poet's personality became a part of his understanding his art. Poets began to be creatures of mood rather than the eloquent "announcers of general truths." Collins and Cowper illustrate this trend. Those who applied their enthusiasm to less titanic subjects than "The Desent of Odin" or "The Progress of Poesy" became poets of humble life, and with emotionalism anticipated Wordsworth. Goldsmith, in writing "The Deserted Village" without attention to genre, shows the emancipation of the late-century poets. "The subject matter of literature in the later eighteenth century thus added new and varied materials, and at the same time writers became in manner and form less dependent on the classical genre."[30] Advancement was in the increased effort for

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28 Albert C. Baugh, op. cit., p. 967.
29 Ibid., p. 968.
30 Ibid., p. 975.

emotional appeal.

In his ode "On the Spring" Gray notes the tranquillity of the season in contrast to the "ardour of the crowd." He sees the rustic state of Nature, "the untaught harmony of spring," the "Attic warbler," the cuckoo, the "insect youth." The activities of Nature are a pointed example to man. The classical phase of Gray's poetry indicates the conventional use of Nature. In contrast to the "Ode on the Death of a Favourite Cat" and that above, the use of Nature in the "Elegy Written in a Country Church-yard" is artistic in that it embodies what was often thought but never so well expressed. The theme is a human one, and the rural environment is duly subordinated. "The church yard abounds with images which find a mirror in every mind, and with sentiments to which every bosom returns an echo."[31] "The lowing herd," the beetle's "droning flight," the "moping owl," the "swallow twittering," the echoing horn, the sounding cock — these, each in its gentle way, contribute to preparing the mind for the coming reflections on death. How different the morning is from those pictured previously! The birds and animals do not come bursting to life. All seem to sense the atmosphere of death, just as the pastoral bird senses the loving joy or melancholy of Strephon.

> The breezy call of incense-breathing Morn,
> The swallow twittering from the straw-built shed,

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31 Chalmers, op. cit., vol. 14, p. 143.

> The cock's shrill clarion, or the echoing horn,
> No more shall rouse them from their lowly bed.[32]

The picture of the landscape expresses the sadness of "the last bitter hour."

> The lowing herd winds slowly o'er the lea . . .
> Beneath those rugged elms, that yew-tree's shade,
> Where heaves the turf in many a mouldering heap . . .[33]

There are some lively lines on birds:

> Forgetting of their wintry trance
> The Birds his presents greets,
> But chief the Sky-lark warbles high
> His trembling thrilling ectacy
> And less'ning from the dazzled sight,
> Melts into air and liquid light.[34]

and,

> There pipes the woodlark, and the song-thrush there
> Scatters his loose notes in the waste of air.[35]

The above examples represent Gray's dominant attitude toward Nature, "his knowledge of sweet, homely things."[36]

The interests of Collins were not of his day, if his odes are an indication. He admired Euripides, Aeschylus, and Sophocles rather than Virgil and Horace.[37] In English poetry he admired Shakespeare, Spenser, and Milton, rather than Dryden and Pope.[38]

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[32] Ibid., p. 147.
[33] Ibid.
[34] "Ode on the Pleasure Arising from Vicissitude."
[35] "Couplet about Birds."
[36] Reynolds, op. cit., p. 136.
[37] "Ode to Pity," "Ode to Fear," "Ode to Simplicity."
[38] "Ode to Fear," "Ode on the Poetical Character," "An Epistle to Sir Thomas Hanmer."

Though Collins was bred in town, his imagery is not of the conventional sort in the later poems. In breaking away from precedent the poet refers to Dutch superstition and insignificant facts in history. In the "Ode on the Popular Superstitions" the landscape of "the dank dark fen," the shallow soil "bleak and bare" is the fit home for the "unbodied troop." Appreciation of Nature is shown in "Ode to Evening." Outstanding is the ability of the poet through simplicity and directness of a few details to create a complete picture.

> Now air is hush'd save where the weak-ey'd Bat,
> With short shrill Shriek flits by on leathern Wing,
> Or where the Beetle winds
> His small but sullen Horn,
> As oft he rises 'midst the twilight Path.[39]

Collins could hardly have written such lines without being familiar with the hour of the day. The same quiet that marks the "Elegy" is significant here. In the glimpse of the bat and the beetle there is a certain stimulation that is refreshing after the stiffness of the "auspicious crow" and the like. In this "Ode" Collins reaches perfection in simplicity.

Joseph Warton may be characterized as having a definite dislike for the city and an enthusiasm for places "where Nature seems to sit alone." He expresses his distaste for Nature formalized. The nightingale no longer laments on love, but soothes the wanderer of the night; the sounds of birds are "artful sounds." Although

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[39] The Poems of Gray and Collins, edited by Austin Lane Poole, p. 273.

he recognizes the fierceness of "the bristly boar or hungry lion," he speaks with enthusiasm of the primitive. The luxury of modern living reduces appreciation of the beauties of Nature. "The choral birds," "the neighing steed," the "lowing ox," and the "playful lamb,"

> all, all conspire
> To raise, to sooth, to harmonize the mind.[40]

Far excelling an orchestra are the "moaning dove," the "shrill lark," and the "love-sick Philomel." For the poet the Attic realm could not compare to that of the fearful fawn, brisk squirrel, busy bee, and thrush. The bards of old were friendly to the haunts of these; they learned morality there. He relished the colors of the butterfly, "ten thousand various blended tints," matching its environment. Again there is the familiar outcry against cruelty to animals:

> How oft your birds have undeserving bled,
> Linnet or warbling thrush, or moaning dove,
> Pheasant with gaily-glistering wings,
> Or early-mounting lark![41]

Thomas Warton held the same love of Nature as did his older brother. In "The First of April," Nature opens her door anew; there are seen the new born beans, a wandering bee, the swallow, plover, butterfly, and, after the sun warms, the lark. The poet

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[40] Chalmers, op. cit., vol. 18, p. 161.
[41] "Ode on Shooting."

loved to study Nature.

> The lonely poet loves to mark
> How various greens in faint degrees
> Tinge the tall groupes of various trees.[42]

How close is the observation of the fisher who "bursting through the crackling sedge,"

> Startles from the bordering wood
> The bashful wild duck's early brood.[43]

of evening,

> And on each moss-wove border damp
> The glow-worm hands his fairy lamp.[44]

Little of summer activity misses the poet. He is conscious of the "shrill-tinkling" team, the sound of the blackbird through the valley, the crimson butterfly, and the tranquillity of evening.

> These poems mark a new phase in the feeling toward Nature, because, with little description, with no theory to propound, no moral to teach, no human interest to exemplify, the poet with a rapt fervor and intensity cries out for solitary communion with Nature as necessity of his own being.[45]

The Enthusiast of William Whitehead holds the same enthusiasm for Nature and its beauty as that of Joseph Warton, except that the voice of reason kills that contemplation which points the road

> Through Nature's charms to Nature's God!

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42 Chalmers, op. cit., vol. 18, p. 105.
43 Ibid.
44 "Approach of Summer."
45 Reynolds, op. cit., p. 140.

To look to Nature with a lover's eye was the desire of John Langhorne. This writer of simple nature held a sensitiveness toward animals as shown in his poems on birds and his protest against their caging. The redbreast near the poet's table is certain to get a crumb and also a word of caution to stay away from man, for he get pleasure from destruction. Nature's influence on man recognized by Thomson is stated plainly.

> For him sweet Hope disarms the hand of Care,
> Exalts his pleasures, and his grief beguiles.[46]

Langhorne lacks appreciation for "courtly domes of high degree." He is happiest, like the Wartons, when spending "delightful hours" climbing to the "mountain's airy brow," relaxing to the murmur of the woods, listening to the woodlark, and seeing Nature smile "through all her animated reign."

The early writings of Christopher Smart were in the traditional language of his predecessors. Conscious of sounds which seemed to fit the mood of mind, Smart associates the croak of the toad, the cry of the bittern, the "querulous frog," the ear-piercing hern and screaming plover, and "millions of humming gnats," with bad humour.[47]

Smart is a poet with the eye of a painter developed to an unusually high degree. He has the ability to compose a picture with the "painter's sense of physical texture."

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[46] "The Vision of Fancy."

[47] The Collected Poems of Christopher Smart, edited by Norman Callan, p. 122.

For, as the storm rides on the rising clouds,
Fly the fleet wild-geese far away, or else
The heifer towards the zenith rears her head,
And with expanded nostrils snuffs the air:
The swallows too their airy circuits weave,
And screaming skim the brook; and fen bred frogs
Forth from their hoarse throats their old grutch recite:
Or from her earthly coverts the ant
Heaves her huge eggs along the narrow way.[48]

Here is shown the sensitiveness and broad imagery of Thomson and Mallet. Smart is not only appreciative of the sylvan green, but the speckle-headed duck with "unctuous plumes," "sable crows obstreperous of wing," and Asia's feather'd flock." The poet, drawing on childhood experiences as a source, gives pictures of Nature for the sake of beauty. Smart is not aware of that sense of unity of man and animal which is developing around him, but which has not reared its head. The use of animals and their association with Biblical characters is haphazard, with the exception of Daniel and the lion, and the ram and Abraham. Of course, the lamb is a symbol.

It is in Smart's most celebrated poem, A Song to David, that a new vigor and strength is found. That portion of the poem where animals are used has to do with "the creative energy of God, the song of praise that is eternally his from all existence," and the strength of God in man. The illustrations from Nature are

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[48] Ibid., Book II, p. 153.

abundant. The first theme is expressed of the fowl,

> Which chear the winter, hail the spring,
> That live in peace or prey:
>
> Of fishes — every size and shape,
> Which nature frames of light escape,
> Devouring man to shun:
>
> Of beasts — the beaver plods his task;
> While the sleek tigers roll and bask,
> Nor yet the shades arouse.[49]

Smart moralizes in advising man to "be good to him that pulls thy plough." In the song of adoration, activity from every part of Nature swells harmonious; birds build nests, the spotted ounce and her cubs play, "the pheasant shows her pompous neck," the squirrel hoards his nuts; the bulfinch, redbreast, sparrow, and swallow, are active. The activity of all Nature is in praise of God. There is power in the personification of strength.

> Strong is the lion — like a coal
> His eyeball — like a bastion's mole
> His chest against the foes:
> Strong, the gier-eagle on his sail,
> Strong against the tide, th' enormous whale
> Emerges as he goes.[50]

A point to be noted is the strange combination of animals. The lion, bee, sleek tiger, beaver, and kid, are collected to celebrate the creative power of God; the least apt to suggest each other are brought together.

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[49] Ibid., pp. 353-54.
[50] Ibid., p. 365.

Richard Jago is concerned with rural charms and tranquil scenes in which there is a definite love of animals. Nature has the quality of "stilling ev'ry tumult in the breast," for it was formed beautiful and harmonious. The poet receives simple delight from the blackbird, and though the raven and lark are beautiful, they do not excel this "fairest of the feather'd train."

> But does the raven's sable wing
> Excel the glossy jet of mine?
> Or can the lark more sweetly sing,
> Than we, who strength with softness join?[51]

He expresses that same abhorrence of useless slaughter shown earlier by Thomson. Similarly in "The Goldfinches" the poet feels an association with the tragedy, and condemns the truant schoolboy for wantonly robbing the nest.

> O plunderer vile! O more than adders fell!
> More murth'ous than the cat, with prudish face!
> Fiercer than kites in whom the furies dwell,
> And thievish as the cuckow's pilf'ring race!

Yet in spite of the theme, there is a conscious emotion in gentle spring with its happy life of the woodlark and thrush seated in a soft retreat. He notes the relationship of the birds, the early song, the mature joys which crowned the infant nest, and the almost human quality in this stanza:

> And now what transport glow'd in either's eye?
> What equal fondness dealt th' allotted food?
> What joy each other's likeness to descry,
> And future sonnets in the chirping brood!

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[51] "The Blackbird."

If man possesses that guiding instinct which he finds in the swallows, he should prepare for that change which is nobler than that of the bird. Man should feel no sorrow in leaving this world for that beyond. Here we find Gray's attitude that Nature is a pointed example to man. Lady Winchilsea's imperfect vision has now become clear and meaningful. The anthropomorphic attitude has developed from a bud into a flower expressing the physical unity of man and animal; the influence of Nature upon man has been fully recognized.

In the later century scientists and writers were to see an alliance between their fields of interest. Behind this was the heightening fever of curiosity; museums began to spring up to house the least oddity; newspapers of the nineties indicated the variety of these museums. The studies of Sir Joseph Banks stimulated the public mind and pen. By the latter part of the century books of natural history came regularly from the publishers.[52] Thomas Pennant urged the poet of 1766 to study the natural sciences, to tap the wealth of material which had enriched the verse of

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[52] A sampling of titles will indicate the broad field. Dates and titles are taken from the British Museum Catalogue. William Borlase, Natural History of Cornwall, 1758; George Edward, Natural History of Uncommon Birds and Other Rare and Undescribed Animals, 1743-1751; Thomas Pennant, Arctic Zoology, 1784-1787; John Ellis, Natural History of Many Uncommon Zoophytes, 1786. On the Continent Baron Cuvier attempted a scientific classification of biology in 1798, not influential, but following the trend of science.

Milton and Thomson.

> But to come to what is more particular of the object of our inquiries; animal and vegetable life are the essence of landscape, and often are secondary objects in historical paintings; even the sculptor in his limited province would do well to acquire a correctness of design with a perfect knowledge of the muscles of animals . . . Descriptive poetry is still more indebted to natural knowledge, than either painting or sculpture: the poet has the whole creation for his range; nor can his art exist without borrowing metaphors, allusions, or descriptions from the face of nature, which is the only fund of great ideas. The depths of the sea, the internal caverns of the earth, and the planetary system are out of the painter's reach; but can supply the poet with the sublimest conceptions: nor is his knowledge of animals and vegetables less requisite, while his creative pen adds life and motion to every object.[53]

Science and humanitarianism were beginning to unite. Although Pennant believed in the man's world, the never-ending fight for existence between living things was distasteful.

Gilbert White and Goldsmith are excellent examples of popularizers of the scientific. The popularity of The Natural History of Selborne is in the simple manner in which the author tells of birds and beasts which fell under his observation. Though he approves of the hunt, he reproves unreasonable slaughter. Most of White's time was devoted to birds: mating, food, nest-building, and care of the young. He found "a wonderful spirit of sociality in the brute creation, independent of sexual attachment. The

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[53] Thomas Pennant, British Zoology, Preface.

congregating of gregarious birds in the winter is a remarkable in-
instance."[54]

Oliver Goldsmith took a wider province in his History of the Earth and Animate Nature, 1774. Like White he shows compassion for animals. When dealing with animals outside the British Isles, he relies upon his source, Buffon,[55] but he is at home in speaking of animals of his own country.

The poetry of Goldsmith is certainly in contrast to his "History." The traveler is concerned with customs and manners. When he stands on an Alpine brow his thoughts are not of Nature, but of man as "creation's heir." In Switzerland it is the peasant who catches his eye, not the natural environment. The human side is again fingered in the melancholy notes of "The Deserted Village." The dejection of theme does not echo the sounds of birds.

> The hollow-sounding bittern guards its nest;
> Amidst the desert walk the lapwing flies,
> And tries their echoes with unvary'd cries.[56]

The poet is more concerned with the social significance of the deserted village, than with gentle thoughts of the lowing herd, noisy geese, or bark of the watch dog. To Goldsmith the sounds of Nature have become other than gay and sweet because man has violated the principle that the country is the right environment for man. He

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[54] Gilbert White, The Natural History of Selborne, Letter XXIV.

[55] "Natural History," 1786.

[56] Chalmers, op. cit., vol. 16, p. 494.

neglects the idea that Nature is the expression of the Divine; the spirit, beauty, and animation of life are constant, because they are of God. Cowper recognizes this and that is why he urges man to seek unity with Nature for the benefit of his being. Goldsmith shows "direct and simple-hearted pleasure in the open-air world." But he does not touch Nature's magic qualities; his nature is of the surface; of the spiritual he knew nothing.

Perhaps there was no greater lover of animated nature than William Cowper. He loved the country for its influence on man, an influence known through his own experience. His letters abound with references to the enjoyment he derived from seeing a musically disposed ass,[57] the bees who pay him for their honey by a hum "agreeable to my ear, as the whistling of my linnets,"[58] Mungo, his dog, from whom he derived courage during a thunderstorm,[59] a mouse, and his hares, especially Puss. His eye and ear were extremely sensitive.

> The grass under my window is all bespangled with dew-drops, and the birds are singing in the apple trees, among the blossoms. Never poet had a more commodious oratory in which to invoke his Muse.[60]

This love of animals is delineated in his correspondence more than

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[57] To William Unwin, July 3, 1784.
[58] To John Newton, September 18, 1784.
[59] To Joseph Hill, June 25, 1785.
[60] Letter to Lady Hesketh, May 29, 1786.

in his poetry. Cowper's realm of Nature was narrow not only because of his ill health and his remaining close to Olney, but because he described only what he had seen.[61] Although he made imaginary journeys to far-off places through reading, his writing expresses only his first-hand knowledge, the scenes about Olney.

Cowper, in his youth, loved the rural scene. The color and sound of Nature touched his senses. He observed that man, in aging, usually loses the precious things of youth. But for Cowper,

> scenes that sooth'd
> Or charm'd me young, no longer young, I find
> Still soothing, and of power to charm me still.[62]

In the sounds of "ten thousand warblers," the poet realized that

> Sounds inharmonious in themselves and harsh,
> Yet heard in scenes where peace forever reigns,
> And only there, please highly for their sake.[63]

and that Nature is perpetual motion.

> Constant rotation of th' unwearied wheel,
> That Nature rides upon, maintains her health,
> Her beauty, her fertility. She dreads
> An instant's pause, and lives but while she moves.[64]

The law of Nature "by which all creatures else are bound, binds man, the lord of all." This certainly leads to the Wordsworthian

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61 In a letter to Rev. William Unwin, October 10, 1784, Cowper wrote, "My descriptions are all from nature, not one of them second-handed. My delineations of the heart are from my own experience: not one of them borrowed from books, or in the least degree conjectural."

62 Chalmers, _op. cit._, vol. 18, Book I, p. 667.

63 _Ibid._, p. 668.

64 _Ibid._, p. 669.

idea that the activity of Nature guides man's soul.

Cowper knows of one hare who is innocent of the "destested sport," for she has known the care of the poet's kind hand. That same close association of man and animal in sympathy and understanding shown by Jago is strengthened by the pen of Cowper. Not only is the hare fed and housed, but her confidence is gained. The poet recognizes gratitude and love in the hare, in all animals for that matter.

> The tim'rous hare
> Grown so familiar with her frequent guest,
> Scarce shuns me; and the stockdove unalarm'd
> Sits cooing in the pine trees, nor suspends
> His long love ditty for my near approach.[65]

Cowper and animals are warm friends. This friendship is that of Wordsworth.

To illustrate the simple truth of Cowper's writing, note the felicitous description of the squirrel:

> flippant, pert, and full of play:
> He sees me, and at once, swift as a bird,
> Ascends the neighb'ring beech; there whisks his
> brush,
> And perks his ears, and stamps, and cries aloud,
> With all the prettiness of feign'd alarm,
> And anger insignificantly fierce.[66]

Other descriptions of simplicity are of the redbreast flitting from twig to twig, the dog who attends the woodsman, the chickens

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65 Ibid., Book VI, p. 700.
66 Ibid.

gossiping and trooping to the housewife's feeding call, the sparrows peeping, and the scavengers of the footpath.

> Cowper had the mind that watches and receives. He looked about him and wrote down in simple, sincere words the loveliness he found. He took notes, but they were of the right sort, mental and unconscious, the inevitable imprint on a sensitive mind of scenes that had ministered to his deepest needs.[67]

That Cowper was devoted in everything he did is well shown in his account of caring for Puss, Tiney, and Bess.[68]

The shorter poems are occasional and indicate the happenings of the Olney locale. The observations are just as acute as in The Task: the woodpecker's search for worms,[69] the goldfinch who deserted her cage through curiosity,[70] the death of Puss,[71] and the menagerie which went into the decoration of Mrs. Montagu's room.

The simplicity of description is given warmth because the reader is conscious of Cowper's personality. The reader senses a companionship in going down the sheltered path and hearing him talk about the nooks and shades he loved so well. The reader acquires that same companionship with the squirrel, redbreast, hare, and mole, which gave joy and peace to the poet. Langhorne's

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[67] Reynolds, op. cit., p. 189.

[68] The Gentleman's Magazine and Historical Chronicle for the year 1784, Sylvanus Urban, Printed for John Nichols and others, London, 1784, p. 412.

[69] "On a Mischievous Bull."

[70] "The Faithful Bird."

[71] "Epitaph on a Hare."

redbreast becomes intimate with Cowper. The desire of Pennant is fulfilled in The Task.[72] The poet succeeded in showing that the country was the right environment for man. He uses nature to amplify his thesis. The new attitude toward the country had already been spoken; Cowper propagandized it. Man must be urged from the "perverted and ruinous life of towns to the simplicity of Nature."[73]

The enemy of rationalism, William Blake, stood aside from the poets of his day, "the Voice of one crying in the Wilderness." Cowper's intimacy with Nature placed him in communion with God. To Blake, intimacy with Nature was of the Devil, because it was of physical reality, a physical reality fettered by Reason, to Blake known as "The Ratio of the Five Senses." He believed in an emancipation from reality to a reality of the mind. The flowering of physical reality is through the senses, limited as they are; the flowering of mental reality is through the unlimited imagination. The exercise of this imagination "involved, not merely a metaphorical, but an actual and total rejection of the world revealed to us by our senses, and a substitution for images of things, as we perceive them sensuously, of other images perceived by the unaided mind."[74] To Blake his imagination was the faculty by which

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[72] Pennant, loc. cit.

[73] Reynolds, op. cit., p. 193.

[74] Basil De Selincourt, William Blake, p. 94.

he is able to "walk with God." In his early years, as did his contemporaries, he saw God in Nature. But, later, the mystic craving of a deeper communion clouded over his initial attitude, and he sought a purer vision which caused him to rise above the world of sense, to see himself transfigured, discovering "that the ultimate secret of his life is the identity of the Divine and Human natures." This vision was a reservoir of unlimited inspiration. Blake believed that reason methodized life. But beyond reason, man has a faculty of spiritual perception "which brings him in touch with a world of experience wider than the familiar world of sights and sounds."

Although the references to rural creatures abound, and spasmodically indicate an observational quality of Gilbert White, animals appear metaphorically or as incorporated personifications.

Thou hearest the Nightingale begin the Song of Spring:
The Lark, sitting upon his earthly bed, just as the morn
Appears, listens silent; then springing from the waving
    corn-field, loud
He leads the Chior of Day — trill! trill! trill! trill!
Mounting upon the wings of light into the great Expanse,
Re-echoing against the lovely blue and shining heavenly
    Shell;
His little throat labours with inspiration; every feather
On throat and breast and wings vibrates with the effluence
    Divine.
All Nature listens silent to him, and the awful Sun
Stands still upon the mountain looking on this little Bird
With eyes of soft humility and wonder, love and awe.
Then loud from their green covert all the Birds begin
    their song:
The Thrush, the Linnet and the Goldfinch, Robin and Wren
Awake the sun from his sweet revery upon the mountain:

> The Nightingale again assays his song, and thro' the day
> And thro' the night warbles luxuriant; every Bird of song
> Attending his loud harmony with admiration and love.
> This is a vision of the lamentation of Beulah and Ololon.[75]

The use of animals is not allegorical, it is visionary. The poet, child, and lamb are one, because each mirrors the universal being.[76] The same principle of unity in vision is seen in the Songs of Experience.

> Am not I
> A fly like thee?
> Or art not thou
> A man like me?[77]

In the concluding lines of Visions of the Daughters of Albion, Blake speaks of the divinity of breathing things.

> The sea-fowl takes the wintry blast for a cov'ring to
> her limbs,
> And the wild snake the pestilence to adorn him with gems
> and gold;
> And trees, and birds, and beasts, and men behold their
> eternal joy.
> Arise, you little glancing wings, and sing your infant
> joy!
> Arise, and drink your bliss, for everything that lives
> is holy!

Lyca is lost in the forest. She is discovered by beasts who take her to their cave. Lyca's parents go seeking her. In their path they meet a lion who indicates that he will take them to Lyca. They come upon her surrounded by a wild menagerie. In the first

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[75] The Poetical Works of William Blake, edited by John Sampson, p. 379.

[76] "The Lamb."

[77] "The Fly."

incident the beasts see the unity of being in all; in the other incident the parents see the end of their fears through that same unity of being, and so all live together. Blake's humanitarianism is greater than that of Cowper, because of an inward significance. Cowper felt that cruelty to animals was unjustifiable because they were God's creatures; Blake can see another's woe, because of the unity of being.

> A robin redbreast in a cage
> Puts all Heaven in a rage.
> A dove-house fill'd with doves and pigeons
> Shudders Hell thro' all its regions.
> A dog starv'd at his master's gate
> Predicts the ruin of the State.
> A horse misus'd upon the road
> Calls to Heaven for human blood.
> Each outcry of the hunted hare
> A fibre from the brain does tear.
> A skylark wounded in the wing,
> A cherubim does cease to sing . . .
> The wanton boy that kills the fly
> Shall feel the spider's enmity.
> He who torments the chafer's sprite
> Weaves a bower in endless night . . .
> The bleat, the bark, bellow, and roar
> Are waves that beat on Heaven's shore.[78]

The idea that the five senses frustrate man's ability to expand his consciousness is put in the question,

> How do you know that ev'ry Bird that cuts the airy way,
> Is an immense World of Delight, clos'd by your senses five?[79]

In "Proverbs of Hell" the poet uses the animal family in similes to illustrate truths conjured in his mind.

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78 "Auguries of Innocence."
79 "The Marriage of Heaven and Hell."

> The pride of the peacock is the glory of God.
> The lust of the goat is the bounty of God.
> The wrath of the lion is the wisdom of God. . . .
> The eagle never lost so much time as when he
> submitted to learn of the crow.[80]

Blake speaks of a monster of his imagination, the colors of which he likens to "streaks of green and purple like those on a tiger's forehead." Again he mentions opening the Bible which suddenly became a deep pit in which are seven houses, one of which contained "a number of monkeys, baboons, and all of that species." All these conjured fantasies are vague and born of the fuzziness of imagination. Blake's eye is not corporeal, but of the mind. The mystic of Felpham aimed

> To open the eternal worlds! To open the immortal
> eyes
> Of man inwards; into the worlds of thought: into
> eternity
> Ever expanding in the bosom of God, the human
> imagination.

Whatever direction his mind took he followed. Those devices of the imagination were used to fulfill this aim. The confused philosophy of the poet-painter was based on unity of being, the inclusion of the Deity in the universal whole; heretofore He had been a separate essence.

Cowper saw through the eye the divine relationship between man and animal; Blake saw through imagination the unity of being in all. Robert Burns, though knowing the essence of Cowper, and

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[80] Ibid.

sensing that of Blake, could not reach beyond physical reality. The environment of Scotland, before and after the Act of Union of 1707, made for the crudest rusticity. Because Burns, a peasant close to the soil, understood his lot, and felt the emotions of that position, he never developed an anxiety to move to greener grass. From birth to the grave there was a sensitiveness of Nature within him. He was one with the environment he knew best.

> I have never heard the loud, solitary whistle of the curlew in a summer noon, or the wild mixing cadence of a troop of grey plover in an autumnal morning, without feeling an elevation of the soul like the enthusiasm of devotion or poetry.[81]

In the society of Burns the oppression of the "have-nots" by the "haves" was obvious. This oppression caused the poet not only to write against it, but to turn sympathetically to the oppressed whom he knew so well. He warmed to the farmer and the old cotter, the country dog, the barnyard lot, and the mouse, turned out of its cozy home by the plow. Farmer Burns actually lived with the domestic tribes; he was familiar with them through partnership. "The difference in the feeling of Burns and Cowper toward beasts seems environmental rather than temperamental." The barnyard tragedy that every farmer knows is summed up in "The Death and Dying Words of Poor Mailie." It is noteworthy that Burns laments her friendship, not her value.

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[81] Letter to Mrs. Dunlop, January 1, 1789.

It's no the loss o' warl's gear
That could sae bitter draw the tear,
Or mak our bardie, dowie, wear
The mourning weed.
He's lost a friend and neebor dear,
In Mailie dead.[82]

This rural partnership is genuine in Burns. The same understanding neighborliness is indicated in "The Auld Farmer's New Year Morning Salutation to His Auld Mare Maggie." As a colt she trotted home with his bride upon her back; she did her share of the toils of the farm. Now that she is old, the poet will care for her — a reward for honest loyalty. Theirs has been a true partnership, not the usual relationship of master and beast. Burns had the true anthropomorphic view. In speaking of the distressed mouse, his words are tender and sympathetic, as if a child had been hurt. In hearing the winter wind he remains sleepless for thinking of the "ourie cattle," the helpless bird, the "cow'r" with "chittering wing," and sheep.[83]

Burns' limited practical education, steeped in hatred for the gentleman's society, and touched indelibly with a love of the oppressed, was broadened by his sparse reading. This reading,[84] extreme in sentimentality, colored his attitude enough to result in a sickly sentimentalism rather than humanitarianism. Although

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[82] "Poor Mailie's Elegy."
[83] "Winter."
[84] Thomson's Seasons, Shenstone's "Elegy," and "The Schoolmistress," in poetry; Pamela, Ferdinand Count Fathom, and The Man of Feeling, in prose.

Burns' attitude toward domestic animals is sincere, its sound falls short of the true, mixed as it is with a misunderstood sentimentality. The old farmer's affection for his loyal mare, the mouse evicted from his dark abode, the loss of Mailie's friendship — these are blown up with emotion seldom felt by an earthy farmer.

This sentimentality created in the poet a scorn for hunting. The source and inspiration of poetry comes from

> The chanting linnet, or mellow thrush,
> Hailing the setting sun, sweet, in the green thorn bush;
> The soaring lark, the perching red-breast shrill,
> Or deep-ton'd plover, grey, wild-whistling o'er the hill.

For savage man to destroy this by ruthless deeds makes warm poetic hearts inly bleed.[85] This same feeling against the hunter causes Burns to cry out:

> Inhuman Man! curse on thy barb'rous art,
> And blasted by thy murder-aiming eye:
> May never pity sooth thee with a sigh,
> Nor ever pleasure glad thy cruel heart.[86]

In a letter to Alexander Cunningham, Burns describes how the poem came into being.

> One morning lately, as I was out pretty early in the fields sowing some grass-seed, I heard the burst of a shot from a neighboring plantation, and presently a poor little wounded hare came crippling by me. You will guess my indignation at the inhuman fellow who could shoot a hare at this season, when they all of them have young ones. Indeed there is something in that business of destroying, for our sport, individuals in the animal creation that do not injure us

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85 "The Brig of Ayr."
86 "On Seeing a Wounded Hare Limp by Me."

materially, which I could never reconcile to my
ideas of virtue.[87]

Burns wonders why he cannot share the gifts of Nature with the waterfowl, because such are "common friend to you and me." He answers by saying that the "would be lord of all" who sees creatures for his own pleasure keeps him from those desired friends.[88]

The poet, in depicting the wild life below the peaks of Arran not only shows sympathy conditioned by poverty, but a beauty characteristic of Thomson, Shenstone, and Cowper.

clam'ring craiks at close o' day,
Mang fields o' flow'ring clover gay;

and

Ye grouse that crap the heather bud;
Ye curlew calling thro' a clud;
. . . .
Ye duck and drake, wi' airy wheels
Circling the lake.[89]

Not only was there delight in movement as above, but in sound.

The sober laverock, warbling wild,
Shall to the skies aspire;
The gowspink, music's gayest child,
Shall sweetly join the chior:
The blackbird strong, the lint white clear,
The mavis mild and mellow;
The robin pensive autumn cheer,
In all her locks of yellow.[90]

In appraising Burns' attitude toward animals, one must con-

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87 No. LXXIII, May 4, 1789.
88 "On Scaring Some Water Fowl."
89 "Elegy on Captain Matthew Henderson."
90 "The Humble Petition of Bruar Water."

sider that he was a man of the soil who was aware that his social state was one of survival through struggle. This developed a keen emotion partially colored by his literary education. His first-hand observation, his joy in the seasons and Nature, and his cognizance of the relationship of animal, man, and God, indicate that the lad of Alloway cottage was the truest of the eighteenth-century lovers of animals.

The early formative years of William Wordsworth had a twofold influence: one phase, objective, a youthful appreciation of Nature; the other, personal, a contact with negative social traits. His childhood, with its familiarity with external nature, and the liberality of his early education gave him an optimistic start in the world. The first incident which turned Wordsworth from undirected appreciation of the Lake Country to boyish contemplations of life was the death of his father. His reflections on this tragedy are incorporated in "The Vale of Esthwaite" (1787). The next incident which embittered the boy was the "Lonsdale affair." This business forced Dorothy and William into a dependency through which came anxieties known better to her than him.

In their aloneness the Wordsworths turned to external Nature for something to fill the vacancy. The poet sought relief from the unhappiness of the lack of normal domestic relations in the "twilight glens," which brought again those "departed pleasures."

> In youth's keen eye, the livelong day was bright,
> The sun at morning, and the stars of night,

> Alike, when heard the bitterns hollow bill,
> Of the first woodcocks roam'd the moonlight hill.[91]

Here is that same love of beauty for its own sake found in Cowper. Wordsworth saw Nature "in thoughtless gaiety."

Wordsworth's youthful attitude toward Nature is essentially that of Cowper, Blake, and Burns, for he believed that those qualities of "this blank of things" rid grief and care from the consciousness. As the American Bryant said later,

> The calm shade
> Shall bring a kindred calm, and the sweet breeze
> That makes the green leaves dance, shall waft a balm
> To thy sick heart.[92]

so the youthful Lake poet talks of

> a harmony,
> Home-felt, and home-created, comes to heal
> That grief for which the senses still supply
> Fresh food; for only then, when memory
> Is hushed, am I at rest.[93]

Not only does Nature tranquilize the senses, but Wordsworth, like Gray, found wisdom in the "high objects." For the poet, Nature stimulated the passions, not with the "works of Man,"

> But with high objects, with enduring things,
> With life and nature; purifying thus
> The elements of feeling and thought,
> And sanctifying by such discipline
> Both pain and fear, — until we recognize
> A grandeur in the beatings of the heart.[94]

In the felicity of the swan the poet sees the domestic love

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91 "An Evening Walk."
92 "Inscription For the Entrance to A Wood."
93 "Written in Very Early Youth."
94 "Influence of Youthful Objects."

he misses deeply. Separation through death has not troubled the swan family. As evening advances and the mother comes forth with her young, Wordsworth sees the maternal love and is able to appreciate it.[95]

> The female with a meeker charm succeeds,
> And her brown little-ones around her leads,
> Nibbling the water lilies as they pass,
> Or playing wanton with the floating grass.
> She, in a mother's care, her beauty's pride
> Forgets, unwearied watching every side;
> She calls them near, and with affection sweet
> Alternately relieves their weary feet;
> Alternately they mount her back, and rest
> Close by her mantling wings' embraces prest.[96]

The mother is blessed "by all a mother's joys"; the cygnets are fortunate in that they have maternal protection and "the security and numerous advantages of a home ideally situated admist the wonders of Nature." Felicity like this is not know to the human

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[95] This appreciation of parental love is expressed in "The Vale of Esthwaite" mentioned above. The poet's respect for motherly love is indicated in an earlier poem which laments the death of a "lovely Starling." In addressing the dead bird, Wordsworth speaks with feeling:

> Yet art thou happier far than she
> Who felt a mother's love for thee.
> For while her days are days of weeping,
> Thou in peace, in silence sleeping
> In some still world, unknown, remote
> The mighty Parent's care hast found,
> Without whose tender guardian thought
> No sparrow falleth to the ground.

No source material being available, this was taken from a footnote, G. W. Meyer, Wordsworth's Formative Years, p. 56.

[96] "An Evening Walk."

mother, for she finds slight joy in the surroundings of the swans. It is in this contrast that Wordsworth shows "his early consciousness of a vast discrepancy between the world of nature and the world of man."

In the sounds, as well as the sights, which make up the carefree gaiety of Nature, the poet's passions are raised, but there seems to be an undertone of envy in the harmony of the lake shore.

> Sweet are the sounds that mingle from afar,
> Heard by calm lakes, as peeps the folding star,
> Where the duck dabbles 'mid the rustling sedge,
> And feeding pike starts from the waters edge,
> Or the swan stirs the reeds, his neck and bill
> Wetting, that dripping upon the water still;
> And heron, as resounds the trodden shore,
> Shoots upward, darting his long neck before.[97]

This envy springs from the fact that his domestic situation is uncongenial, and that in Nature he observes all that is desirable. Wordsworth is so intent in seeing what he wants to see that he misses the misfortunes seen by Cowper, Blake, and Burns. Reflection being foremost in his mind, the vigor of "youth's keen eye" is not as strong or as noted in "Tinern Abbey"; the emphasis has changed. Nature is subordinated to the "sole wish, sole object of my life," the acquiring of "the cottage home and domestic felicity whose specifications had long existed in his and Dorothy's imagination."[98]

The descriptions of life at noon echo Thomson and Shenstone.

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[97] Ibid.
[98] George Wilbur Meyer, Wordsworth's Formative Years, p. 49.

In rambling the poet notices the show of Nature, the restless movement of the herds and deer, the horse left behind by his master; all come beneath the "humming elm." As Burns saw the duck and drake "wi' airy wheels circling the lake," so Wordsworth saw another bird:

> near the midway cliff, the silver'd kite
> In many a whistling circle wheels her flight.[99]

It is not until mild evening that he wishes to wander more, for there is a pleasantness in viewing the landscape not found at other times. This is the hour when the sensitive observer derives deep pleasures. The landscape's changing hue, the "traveling flock" raising a cloud of dust, the "rustic chime" of the lonesome chapel, the resounding of the ponderous timber-wain; of deeper evening are heard the "shout that wakes the ferryman," followed by "his hollow parting oar," and the "complaining owl" and the "mill-dog's howl" — these are the "simple charms found by the verdant door of mountain farms."

Although "An Evening Walk" is reflective, Wordsworth cannot resist inserting the description of a cock suggested by L' Agriculture of P. F. Rosset:

> Sweetly ferocious, round his native walks,
> Pride of his sisters-wives, the monarch stalks;
> Spur-clad his nervous feet, and firm his tread;
> A crest of purple tops his warrior head.
> Bright sparks his black and haggard eye-ball hurls

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99 "An Evening Walk."

Afar, his tail he closes and unfurls;
Whose state, like pine-trees, waving to and fro.
Droops, and o'er-canopies his regal brow;
On tiptoe rear'd he strains his clarion throat,
Threaten'd by faintly-answering farms remote.[100]

"An Evening Walk" is the summation of Wordsworth's desire to establish the essence of that domestic felicity seen in Nature, and a mode of life which will satisfy his emotional temperament.

The deep pleasures of the pedestrian traveler are essentially the same as those of the sensitive observer. The "delicious scene" of "Descriptive Sketches" is so similar to that of "An Evening Walk" that one unconsciously senses, not the border of Como, but the lake which, at "eve's mild hour," is clothed with insects. The early descriptive passages of "Descriptive Sketches" are similarly subordinated as in the earlier poem. Wordsworth is concerned with his desire: to establish the essence of that domestic felicity seen in Nature. The passages previous to the 283rd line are little more than a restatement of the ideal life sought.

Wordsworth was particularly open to "sense impressions" developed through his environment in youth. Although these impressions were colored by personal misfortune, the revolution, and his turn to conservatism, they were so indelible that they never left him. The poet's mind held that Nature's show was a manifestation of the

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100 "An Evening Walk."

divine, and he implies that he is grateful for the sights and sound which stimulate the heart and mind.

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[101] The opinions above concerning Wordsworth's attitude toward Nature are based upon G. W. Meyer's Wordsworth's Formative Years.

CHAPTER III

THE POETICAL ATTITUDE TOWARD ANIMALS IN THE FABLES

Gliding down a shady waterway on the S.S. Owen Brennan, Possum, Turtle, and Alligator discuss a deep subject. Possum cannot understand how Pelican "could of made the Lou'siana Purchase." Fingering the strings of his banjo, Alligator simplifies the question by remarking that anything may be done in a free country. Turtle injects a contrary thought in observing that it is not a free country, if Pelican had to pay cash for his purchase. With a puff on his cigar Alligator explains in understandable language.

> Natural, its the law of profits an' economixup . . .
> Deflation is inflated the dollar so the sover-
> eignity on the fundements is en-tire in escrow.
> So even if you gives a thing away you still gotta
> git paid for it or the whole fiascal system becomes
> a automatic infield out or a groun' rule double.[1]

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[1] "Pogo," by Walt Kelly, comic section of the Richmond Times-Dispatch, vol. 103, No. 223, August 11, 1953.

When an alligator explains how a pelican could have made the "Lou'siana Purchase," there is material for a fable. Such nonsense, as may be surmised from animal talk on such matters, is the basis of the popularity of Walt Kelly's "Pogo." Such satire, enjoyed by comic readers today, is not a far cry from the fables of the eighteenth century. Whenever the occasion arises, the majority of fables are the means of holding up to ridicule the ways of man and his society.

The nature of the eighteenth-century fable was to illuminate the precepts of virtue and morality. The popularity of the fable is attested by Addison. "Fables were the first pieces of wit that made their appearance in the world, and have been still highly valued not only in times of greatest simplicity, but among the most polite ages of mankind."[2] The point of the fable is not to offend, but to remind humorously of the "duties and relations of life." Of the three classes of fables, we are interested in the emblematic. This kind presents the personification of animals narrating circumstances opposed to nature; the capacity of man is in all things. The earliest popular author associated with this class was Aesop. Closer to our time is one who is a leading writer of the eighteenth century fable, La Fontaine.

This French fabulist managed his material in a simple manner,

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[2] Spectator No. 183, September 29, 1711.

never breaking the illusion of the fable by extending the purpose. His animals are appropriate for the portrait in which they appear; artificiality is lacking. The lion, dog, ass, monkey, and fox show the qualities which tradition has assigned to them. La Fontaine is able to entertain humorously and instruct slyly. Prior to the Frenchman the fable was brief and concise and had a moral explicitly stated. La Fontaine broke away from this limited concept to add novelty and adornment. Addison showed respect for the French fables in saying that La Fontaine "by this way of writing is come more into vogue than any other author of our time."[3]

With the opening of the eighteenth century there grew new and extended interest in fables. The Latin translation of Aesop was used in the schools and the prose version held popular favor. The new enthusiasm was due to La Fontaine, whose first six books of *Fables* appeared between 1668 and 1679, and the twelve books in 1694. The 1692 edition of Sir Roger L'Estrange showed additional fables published on the continent.

Much earlier, fuel had been added to the political fire by Dryden's *The Hind and the Panther*. The importance of *The Hind and the Panther Transvers'd to the Story of the Country-mouse and the City-mouse* is in the story of its conception. During the reign of Charles the Second, Matthew Prior acquired the friendship of

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[3] *Ibid.*

Charles Montagu, later the Earl of Halifax, who was "a perfect master of polite literature." This association soon gave Prior the opportunity to display his talents.

Shortly after King James ascended the throne, he professed himself a papist. Dryden with the purpose of illustrating the strength of Catholicism and to ingratiate himself at court published in 1686 <u>The Hind and the Panther</u>. The Hind was the "advocate for the Church of Rome, and the Panther a weak defender of the Church of England."[4] The next year Prior and Charles Montagu jointly published their satirical answer to this outspoken fable. The birth of this answer owes more to accident than to design.

Prior made a visit to the London lodgings of Montagu, who in his presence read the first four lines of Dryden's poem. Reflecting upon his reading he observed to Prior

> how foolish it was to commend a four-footed beast for not being guilty of sin, and said the best way of answering that poem would be to ridicule it by telling Horace's fable of the City Mouse and the Country Mouse in the same manner, which agreed to, Mr. Prior took the book out of Mr. Montagu's hands, and in a short time after repeated the first four lines, which were after printed in the City Mouse, and the Country Mouse, viz.
>
> A milk white mouse, immortal and unchanged,
> Fed on soft cheese, and o'er the dairy ranged,

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[4] Matthew Prior, <u>Poems on Several Occasions</u>, 5th edition, vol. 2, p. xvi.

> Without unspotted, innocent within,
> She feared no danger for she knew no gin.[5]

Whereupon Montagu and Prior wrote further; the collaboration was afterwards published anonymously.

Not only was it foolish to commend a beast for not being guilty of sin, but it was foolish to commend an animal for any characteristic other than those giving pleasure to man. These collaborators were not concerned with the hind and the panther as beings. They were concerned with the absurdity which Dryden showed in assigning human characteristics to animals.

Little needs be said of Prior's fables. They are part of the tide of the time, having the same ebb and flow as the other followers of La Fontaine. These pieces may be classed with his tales in that "the language is easy, but seldom gross, and the numbers are smooth without appearance of care."[6] Prior makes no effort to characterize the cat in "When the Cat Is Away the Mice May Play" and "The Widow and Her Cat." The merit of these fables is in the telling.

One of the century's first fable-writers was Lady Winchilsea. Almost exclusively she follows the concept of La Fontaine; she does not invent fables, nor does she twist the fable to suit an oc-

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[5] Quoted in A. Dobson's Selected Poems of Matthew Prior, p. 214, from L. G. Wickham Legg, Matthew Prior: A Study of His Public Career and Correspondence, p. 9.

[6] The Works of the English Poets, edited by Alexander Chalmers, vol. 10, p. 114.

casion. In following her models she shows varied degrees of fidelity. Some pieces are mere translations of the French; others may be in imitation of L'Estrange or La Fontaine. She elaborates individual lines, omits, and condenses as it suits her purpose. Details are changed to admit local English color; two fables are created out of one; morals are altered or added. No matter how she handles the material, her expression is in the "smooth, graceful, amplified narrative" of La Fontaine. She shows concern for the fable animals even when half-humanized. The same concern Lady Winchilsea held for the nightingale underlies the animals of her fables.

> In looks my Young do all excel,
> Nor Nightingales can sing so well.
>
> You'd joy to see the pretty Souls,
> With wadling Steps and frowzy Poles,
> Come creeping from their secret Holes.[7]

Gloster Ridley in writing his Nine Fables[8] found pleasant relief from his sermons, poems, and translations. He used the fable for its basic purpose; to ridicule the short-comings of man. The effect of each moral is like a tap on man's shoulder, reminding him of his duties and relations to his fellow beings.

"The Bear and Monkey" is a satirical stab at the gentleman of the town. Man should leave the antics of monkeys to monkeys; man

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[7] "The Owl Describing Her Young Ones."

[8] Gloster Ridley, Nine Fables, In A Select Collection of Poems, vol. 8, pp. 123-134.

should be only that which is natural to him. Ridley laughs at the ladies of society in "The Two Ladies and the Magpie." The ladies hold the magpies, "these nasty squalling toads," in disgust because they are so noisy. The magpies listen to one of their number tell of his experience of captivity within a lady's house. He concludes by saying,

> And always, when I say my prayers,
> Return my thanks to heaven, that made me
> A simple magpie, and no lady.

Ridley is not interested in the good or evil of animals. The fable is the important element. Particular animals are chosen because they exemplify the characteristics at which he laughs, or they are chosen because they act out their part in such an absurd manner that the same effect is obtained.

Ridley's language is easy, without grossness. He places the moral at the end, so that the tale does not lose its effectiveness.

Before Thomson appeared in London with his new view of animals, the Queen Anne wits made numerous references to them. These town-loving poets dressed them in the superficial attire of man, topknots, wigs, patches, and stays. To go with their dress these misrepresented animals preached "sundry edifying homilies on the ways of men." Only vaguely did the beasts of the fables show those qualities for which La Fontaine used them so well. In "Aesop at Court" (1702) Thomas Yalden expands the use of the fable to include political nonsense: proof that Whiggism was dangerous to an inno-

cent country.[9] L'Estrange and Samuel Croxall issued fables not for amusement and universal morality, but to throw out political hints. Discriminating animals always supported the favored faction. In the hands of Gay and Swift the fable became the instrument of pointed satire. The poets' chief purpose was the belittling of man and his society, or to slander a political faction. In "The Beasts Confession" the wolf, the ass, the swine, and the ape personify the evil traits of man.

> Wherein the moralist design'd
> A compliment on human-kind:
> For here he owns, that now and then
> Beasts may degenerate into man.

Gay states the effectiveness of animals used in fables. The introductory fable emphasizes that Nature is a pointed example to man. Although Gay knew the animal world, it was from a distance. The poet shows the same aloofness here that is found in _The Shepherd's Week_ and "Rural Sports."

The _Fables_ (1726), originally written for the enlightenment of the Duke of Cumberland, developed into an affront to the courtiers and statesmen of the time.

> My worth sagacious courtiers see,
> And to preferment rise, like me.
> The thriving pimp, who beauty sets,
> Hath oft' enhanc'd a nations debts;
> Friend sets his friend, without regard;

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[9] "The Fox and the Flies," "The Bear and Mountebank," "An Owl and the Sun."

> And ministers his skill rewards.
> Thus, train'd by man, I learnt his ways,
> And growing favour feasts my days.[10]

The ways of courtly life may well teach the stealthy fox new arts.[11] The representatives of Nature are the device through which Gay points up the evils of mankind. He has no human interest in the animals which he steers so conveniently. Man's concern is with man and the society he has created.

Gay's Fables have not stood the test of time. Here and there one may be stimulated, but there is not the easy flow of La Fontaine, nor is there the spontaneity; reality is destroyed by the Augustan language of the animals and by political references. The animals are merely puppets through which Gay throws his voice. The witty value of the fables is overshadowed by such disadvantages.

Johnson, in evaluating Somervile's Fables, indicates they are "generally stale, and therefore excite no curiosity. Of his favorite, "The Two Springs," the fiction is unnatural, and the moral inconsequential."[12] Taken from Aesop and Phaedrus, these fables hold the same shallowness as those of Gay. The animals are forced in their characterizations; there is no novelty nor elaboration of the source. What belief can one get from the stiff language of the fly?

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[10] "The Setting-Dog and the Partridge."

[11] "The Spaniel and the Cameleon," "The Monkey Who Had Seen the World."

[12] Chalmers, op. cit., vol. 11, p. 150.

> Friend Clodpate, know, 'tis not the mode
> At court to own such clowns as thee,
> Nor is it civil to intrude
> On flies of rank and quality.[13]

Fables for the Female Sex is really a misnomer, for there are those, such as "The Eagle and the Assembly of Birds," whose moral may apply to men as well as women. Although Moore states in the preface to the first edition that the fables were written in idle hours, they were not by the hand of a dilettante as seems to be implied. Moore owes the general form to Gay's second edition. The poet relied neither on adaptation nor translation; "careful search among surviving collections has revealed no analogues to these fables."[14]

John Belfour, the early nineteenth-century fabulist, preferred Moore's fables to Gay's.

> Moore had a greater spirit of poetry than Gay; there is more of beautiful imagery, and a pleasing harmony of numbers. His fables, in their construction and in their moral, are more perfect than Gay's, and he perhaps exceeds that popular fabulist in just delineation of human life.[15]

The language of the animals has a certain charm and descriptive beauty. Moore is at his best when he lets them speak simply. The attached morals are of a high-flown language of the conventional; the language of the fable, homely and plain. Note the contrast of the moral,

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[13] "The Ant and the Fly."
[14] John Homer Caskey, The Life and Works of Edward Moore, p. 21.
[15] Ibid., p. 19.

The prudent nymph, whose cheeks disclose
The lily, and the blushing rose,
From public view her charms will screen,
And rarely in the crowd be seen;
This simple truth shall keep her wise,
'The fairest fruits attract the flies.'[16]

and the tale,

The slander's here — 'But there are birds,
Whose wisdom lies in looks, not words;
Blund'rers, who level in the dark,
And always shoot beside the mark.'
He names not me; but these are hints,
Which manifests at whom he squints;
I were indeed that blund'ring fowl,
To question if he meant an owl.[17]

The voice of the moral is of Moore; that of the fable is the animal. The basic character of the animal is not lost; the horse is generous of heart, the fox is deeply cunning, the glow-worm an elegant creature, the swan superior. Each remains in the confines of his own world. The illusion of the fable is not broken, as in Gay's fables, by expansion beyond the normal limits of the genre. Within these fables is the earthy description of Thomson; Moore writes what he sees.

The master saw his woful plight,
His limbs that totter'd with his weight,
And, friendly, tb the stable led,
And saw him litter'd, dress'd, and fed.
In slothful ease all night he lay;
The servants rose at break of day;
The market calls. Along the road
His back must bear the pond'rous load;
In vain he struggles, or complains,
Incessant blows reward his pains.[18]

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16 "The Nightingale and Glow-worm."

17 "The Eagle and the Assembly of Birds."

18 "The Colt and the Farmer."

This Burns could easily have seen. Here is indicated a humanitarianism not found in Gay's fables.

Moore shows the re-establishment of the animal as a living part of the fable. Failure to break away from the conventional language in the moral hampered him. His genius would have been brighter had he held to the simple, homely language of his animals. Moore's work is important when contrasted with the political fabulists and those who were satisfied to revise and translate old tales.

The first of Christopher Smart's fables appeared in the Midwife in 1750. In the 1752 volume of Smart's poems a few more original fables appeared. Later he made translations of Phaedrus with the appendix of Gudius. All are indebted to the popularizer Gay, to whom he pays tribute.

"The English Bull Dog, Dutch Mastiff, and Quail" holds the theme that man is of a divine race. Although man is "to malice, and to mischief prone," he is inherently good. In "A Story of a Cock and a Bull" the poet pronounces that humanitarianism close to his heart: Be kind to domestic animals. The cock voices Smart's sentiment.

> 'Rise neighbour, from that pensive attitude,
> Brave witness of vile man's ingratitude;
> And let us both with spur and horn,
> The cruel reasoning monster scorn.

Smart believed that the function of the fabulist was to laugh or ridicule misdoers into common sense. "Humbly Addressed to the

Hissers and Cat-Callers Attending Both Houses, "The Snake, the Goose, and Nightingale" is an astute telling of the disagreement between the gray goose and a snake. Each accused the other of counterfeiting his hissing. The Nightingale cleverly reconciles the two by showing the common traits of each. "The Pig" is an example of Smart's shrewdness. This fable shows an audience's lack of ability to distinguish between the squeal of a real pig and a facsimile. The moral of honest Hodge indicates Smart's attitude toward critics in general.[19]

> Behold, and learn from this poor creature,
> How much you critics know of Nature.

The fables are more readable than much of Smart and are amusing in their nonsense. Chalmers' praise of his fables seems a bit too enthusiastic for, though they fulfill the purpose of the poet, there is lacking simple description and simple language.

> His fables are entitled to high praise, for ease of versification and delicacy of humour; and although he may have departed from the laws which some critics have imposed on this species of composition, by giving reason to inanimate objects, it will be difficult by any laws to convince the reader that he ought not to be delighted with the Tea-pot and the Scrubbing-brush, the Bag Wig and the tobacco-pipe, or the Brocaded Gown and Linen Rag.[20]

The fables of William Wilkie, which are like Gay's fables,

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[19] Edward G. Ainsworth and Charles E. Noyes, Christopher Smart, p. 54.

[20] Chalmers, op. cit., vol. 16, p. 14.

Much of the information available concerning Nathaniel Cotton is found in the Gentleman's Magazine.[22] In his own day the physician of "Collegium Insanorum" was a popular poet, contributing to Dodsley's "Collection." His best known work, "Visions in Verse," is "an attempt, both in meter and subject, to moralise for children the fables of Gay."[23] Cotton emphasizes the tale. His pieces are light, easy reading, not weighted with allegory and moral. He is interested in animals for themselves. He personalizes some creatures by naming them; Kitty, the busy bee, and Phe, the wise ant. Although the animals lack sense and character, they hold certain human qualities. The barnyard menagerie is able to share the farmer's miseries;[24] the animals of the undergrowth have feelings and rights like those of man.[25]

John Hall-Stevenson wrote "with no worse intent than to promote good humour and cheerfulness, by fighting against the taedium vitae."[26] The preface indicates that Hall-Stevenson owed the quality of his fables to "Prior's wit and La Fontaine's ease and spirit." Coarse tastes dominated his life. He repeatedly avowed that his sole aim in life was to amuse himself. His early and

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22 Vol. lxxvii, June 1807, p. 500.

23 The Dictionary of National Biography, edited by Leslie Stephen and Sir Sidney Lee, vol. 4, p. 1232.

24 "The Farmer and the Horse."

25 "The Snail and the Garden," "The Beau and the Viper."

26 The Works of John Hall-Stevenson, Esq., Preface, 1795.

long association with Laurence Sterne did not curtail his selfishness. This poetaster gained some public attention by his verses. Of interest here is Fables for Grown Gentlemen (1761 and 1770).

Hall-Stevenson makes no attempt at reality. In contrast to Moore and Cowper, the ducklings move and speak like parrots. The cock, the dog, cat, fly, spider, and owl are distinguished in name only. If anyone was delighted with the dull nonsense of these fables, it was the poetaster himself.

Not long after he published his first fables, association with John Wilkes turned his mind to politics. In reaction to the political excitement of the time Hall-Stevenson turned abuse on all professional politicians. The Makarony Fables and the new "Fables of the Bees" (1767) have the same superficiality as the political stabbings of Gay. All characters are dressed up to suit the purpose.

One of the strongest satirists of the later-century was John Wolcot, who wrote under the pseudonym of "Peter Pindar." Most of his back-handed slaps, insinuations, and ridicule are in the form of odes.[27] No matter what form the poet chose, holding up the foibles of man to mockery is his pleasure. So much satirical nonsense as Wolcot instills into his fables squeezes the animals

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[27] "Farewell Odes to Academicians," "Ode upon Ode, or a Peep at St. James," "Sir Joseph Banks and the Boiled Fleas."

out of the picture. So much importance is placed on the telling of the tale and the moral that little notice is made of the actors. One seems to be screened off from the spider, peacock, frogs, owl, and parrot. One senses a ventriloquial effect when the spider cautions Susan.

> Fie, Susan! Lurks there murder in that heart?
> O barb'rous, lovely Susan! I'm amaz'd;
> O can that form, on which so oft I've gaz'd,
> Possess of cruelty the slightest part?[28]

In the fables of Wolcot he faintly abhors man's cruelty to man. Man's cruelty to animals will lead to man's cruelty to man.

Few fables of the century are less obviously didactic than those of William Cowper. The poet's interest in this genre developed in youth when he sat intently listening to the fables of Gay.

Cowper's humanitarian belief that animals as well as man are the creatures of God is as deeply rooted in the fables as in The Task. The unselfish act of the dog in getting the water-lily from the Ouse, the loving companionship of the cat, are positive examples for man to follow.[29] Negative examples, wherein the idea is expressed that men should not seek to destroy another, but should have love and concern for one another are found in "The Poet, the Oyster and Sensitive Plant," "The Pine-Apple and the

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[28] "Susan and the Spider."
[29] "The Dog and the Water-lily," "The Retired Cat."

Bee," and "The Nightingale and Glow-worm."

> Hence jarring sectaries may learn
> Their real int'rest to discern;
> That brother should not war with brother,
> And worry and devour each other;

These fables are all of the same mood: the simple love displayed by animals is a pointed example to man.[30] Cowper saw good and wisdom in all. The thought of Pope, that "whatever is, is right" is touched upon in "The Poet, the Oyster, and Sensitive Plant." It is nonsense for one to feel his life is wretched in comparison to another's. It is wrong to believe that the grass is greener on the other side of the fence. One should take his lot in life and develop that capacity for good which is there.

The animals of Cowper's fables have the same characteristics as his animal friends of Olney. There is the same reverence for the glow-worm, nightingale, and dove as expressed in The Task. The dog is the same who accompanied Cowper along the shady walk, or moved contentedly about the greenhouse. In these tales the animal is brought to the foreground. There is truth in their beings, for they have character and sense, and their language is simple.

> "Did you admire my lamp," quoth he,
> "As much as I your minstrelsy,
> You would abhor to do me wrong,
> As much as I to spoil your song;
> For 'twas the selfsame pow'r divine

---

30 "The Doves."

> Taught you to sing, and me to shine;
> That you with music, I with light,
> Might beautify and cheer the night.[31]

Coupled with the idea of animals being the creatures of God, there is the thought that all in the universe is beautiful, designed that way by God.

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[31] "The Nightingale and Glow-worm."

CONCLUSION

Whether man's society is the cause for a drift away from Nature has been questioned. Certainly the society of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries placed man at a distance from, if not out of sight of Nature. Animals were held in indifference. Sophisticated man was above and beyond the lower creatures. Then science discovered that man and animals showed remarkable similarities. The nature poets sounded the same key. As in a musical crescendo the chord of humanitarianism swelled to reach the mysticism of Blake and the spirituality of Wordsworth.

The later poets of the century show how adaptable the germ of humanitarianism expressed by Thomson became to widely different views and schools of thought. The orthodox, the deist, and scientist had by the end of the century, discarded the anthropocentric idea and Descartes' curiosity for the creed of brotherly love between all species of life. By the nineteenth century there was general acceptance of man's moral duty to all living things.

The gentleman had
grown in moral stature by the opening of

> the nineteenth century, and even as democratic emotions prompted him to declare liberty, fraternity, and equality in politics and religion, so it was pleasant to those in the van of humanitarianism to pull mankind the mighty from his seat, and then to exalt the humble and meek.[1]

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[1] Dix Harwood, Love For Animals and How It Developed in Great Britain, p. 370.

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VITA

David Kingsley Johnston was born on the tenth of January 1917 in Richmond, Virginia. At the prescribed age he attended the William Fox School. In the year 1923 his family moved to Southern California.

During adolescence he led the happy life of youth. He attended the local public schools, graduating from Los Angeles High School in 1935. This same year he enrolled at the Los Angeles Junior College, taking a two year semi-professional course, which dragged on into three years because of scholarship misfortunes.

After wandering for two years he again turned to school, entering Santa Barbara State College. This schooling was interrupted by five years of service in the Army.

After being discharged from the Army in December of 1945, he returned to Virginia, married, and entered the University of Richmond in order to complete that college work begun so long before. He received his undergraduate degree in June 1948. He

enrolled in the graduate school of the university, completing the residential requirements the next year.

At present he is a teacher in Hanover County.