

THE IDEA OF THE RENAISSANCE

FROM PETRARCH TO HALLAM

by

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INTRODUCTION

Perhaps no period in history has occasioned more discussion as to its exact nature, its causes, origins, characteristics, and effects than has the Renaissance. Since the Renaissance itself, writers of all nationalities have been trying to determine when it began, why it occurred, who were the men most responsible for it, what its relation was to previous and to succeeding eras, what connections it had with other contemporary movements, and what results it produced, in short, its defining characteristics, but no one theory has met with anything approaching acceptance. And yet, despite the diversity of opinions, all writers are agreed that something vitally significant happened in the course of history in the fourteenth, fifteenth, and sixteenth centuries, and that this "something," because of its obvious importance, must be defined, no matter how difficult the task. A consideration of the attempts to arrive at an understanding of this phenomenon ought therefore to be of some value because a vantage point is thereby afforded from which the different approaches may be studied. As different writers are attracted to the Renaissance, they tend to emphasize one aspect of it at the expense of the others, or to disregard certain features in an effort to substantiate a theory designed to cover the Renaissance as a whole. An historical survey of the attempts to ac-

count for the Renaissance ought to throw light on how the idea of the Renaissance came into existence, how it grew, and how it changed in scope and character.

It is my intention to trace the history of the various explanations of the Renaissance from the Renaissance itself to the year 1830 as they are found in the works of English writers primarily. My concern is not with advancing yet another theory of the Renaissance but in collecting and arranging already existing theories in a comprehensive and orderly survey so that their development may be clearly seen and examined. My purpose is to record as many theories as I am able to find and to record without bias or preference for any one theory. Starting with the ideas of the humanists from Petrarch to Bacon, I trace the development of the idea of the Renaissance in England to the second generation of writers in the nineteenth century. Of course, the choice of Petrarch as a terminus a quo is in itself a kind of theory of the Renaissance, but a beginning must be made somewhere, and, despite the modern tendency to push the Renaissance deeper into the preceding period or to minimize it altogether, the norm which is accepted, even if the critics accept it only to criticize it, is the period falling within the fourteenth to sixteenth centuries. The work of the writers in England from Hallam on the subject of the idea of the Renaissance is of such a scope and importance that it is entitled to separate

consideration. Literature I take to mean more than merely belles lettres, to include historical works on all subjects, travel books, biography, and treatises on scientific subjects.

So far as I have been able to determine, there is at present no dissertation covering the Renaissance problem in the manner which I suggest. With the exception of Professor Ferguson's "Humanist Views of the Renaissance," EHR, XLV (1939), 1-28, which has a narrower scope both in purpose and period than that proposed here, what studies there are along these lines are not directly concerned with the aims just stated here. For example, Professor Jacob's "Changing Views of the Renaissance," History, XVI (1931), 214-29, and Professor Bainton's "Changing Ideas and Ideals in the Sixteenth Century," JMH, VIII (1936), 417-43, are really theories of the Renaissance themselves. Or they are very brief accounts of the history of the idea of the Renaissance, concerned usually with some aspect of nineteenth century contributions to the theory of the Renaissance, such as Professor Fife's "The Renaissance in a Changing World," GR, IX (1934), 73-95. Perhaps these studies are a combination of the above two trends as is exemplified by Professor Bush's first chapter in his The Renaissance and English Humanism. German scholarship on the subject is marked by its controversial tone and the studies are usually in the nature of attacks on previous

theories and defenses of new ones. Despite the hope expressed by Daniel Heinsius that:

An age will, without doubt, arrive, in which an unbiassed judgment will be formed of our times; which will scrutinize our writings without partiality, which will attribute all that weight to truth, which now attaches to personal influence.¹

ours is certainly not the age which meets his specifications. Since the publication of Burckhardt's study, the awareness of the Renaissance problem as such has been greatly increased, and attempts to account for the Renaissance, i.e., to provide a theory to explain it, as distinguished from attempts at writing a history of it, which in the main was the aim of the scholars previous to Burckhardt, well nigh defy enumeration, let alone analysis.² Indeed, a goodly proportion of the studies

1 Daniel Heinsius, letter to de Thou, September 6, 1615, cited in John Collinson, The Life of Thuanus, with some Account of his Writings, and a Translation of the Preface to his History (London, 1807), p. 243.

2 Following are a number of studies in which either the Renaissance problem is discussed or theories of it criticized or both:

Hans Ankwicz, "Neue Literatur zur Geschichte des Humanismus und der Renaissance," Mitteilungen d. Instituts für Österreich. Geschichtsforschung, XXXVIII (1920), 509-30.

_____, "Neue Literatur zur Geschichte des Humanismus und der Renaissance," Jahresbericht für Deutsche Geschichte, VIII (1932), 705-30; IX-X (1933-34), 510-16; XI (1935-36), 407-11.

Roland H. Bainton, "Changing Ideas and Ideals in the Sixteenth Century," JMH, VIII (1936), 417-43.

Hans Baron, "Franciscan Poverty and Civic Wealth in the Rise of Humanistic Thought," Speculum, XIII (1938), 1-37.

_____, "Literaturbericht. Renaissance in Italien," Archiv für Kulturgeschichte, XVII (1927), 226-56; XXI (1930), 97-128, 215-39, 340-56.

- Pierre Bizelli, "La place de la Renaissance dans l'histoire de la civilisation," RLC, XIV (1934), 253-82.
- Karl Borinski, Die Weltwiedergeburtsidee in den Neuren Zeiten. Der Streit um die Renaissance und die Entstehungsgeschichte der Historischen Beziehungsbegriffe Renaissance und Mittelalter, Sitzungsberichte der Bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, München, 1919.
- Karl Brandt, Das Werden der Renaissance, Göttingen, 1910.
- and Fritz Friedrich, "Renaissance und Reformation. Literaturbericht," Vergangenheit und Gegenwart, XVI (1926), 89-96; XVIII (1928), 99-114; XXVII (1937), 54-64; XXVIII (1938), 217-32; XXIX (1939), 217-32.
- Walter Brecht, "Neue Literatur zum Italienischen Humanismus," Deutsche Vierteljahrsschrift für Literaturwissenschaft und Geistesgeschichte, VI (1928), 767-80.
- A. Buck, "Das Problem der Italienischen Renaissance in der Neusten Forschung," Italienische Kulturberichte, II (1939), 179-213.
- Konrad Burdach, "Die Seelischen und Geistigen Quellen der Renaissancebewegung," Historische Zeitschrift, CXLIX (1934), 477-521.
- _____, Reformation, Renaissance, Humanismus, Berlin, 1918.
- _____, Wissenschaftsgeschichtliche Eindrücke Eines Alten Germanisten, Berlin, 1930.
- George L. Burr, "Anent the Middle Ages," AHR, XVIII (1912-13), 710-26.
- Conrad Bursian, Geschichte der Classischen Philologie in Deutschland von den Anfängen bis zur Gegenwart, Munich, 1883.
- Douglas Bush, The Renaissance and English Humanism, University of Toronto Press, 1939.
- Hardin Craig, The Enchanted Glass, the Elizabethan Mind in Literature, Oxford University Press, 1936.
- H. W. Eppelsheimer, "Das Renaissance-Problem," DVLG, XI (1933), 477-500.
- Nathan Edelman, "The Early Uses of Medium Aevum, Moyen Âge, Middle Ages," Romanic Review, XXIX (1938), 3-25; XXX (1939), 327-30.
- Wallace K. Ferguson, "Humanist Views of the Renaissance," AHR, XLV (1939), 1-28.
- Robert H. Fife, "The Renaissance in a Changing World," Germanic Review, IX (1934), 73-95.
- Philipp Funk, "Literaturbericht. Geschichte der Geistigen Kultur. Renaissance," AK, XI (1913), 376-88.
- Emile Gebhardt, "La Renaissance Italienne et la philosophie de l'histoire," Revue des Deux Mondes, CLXXX (1885), 342-79.
- Ludwig Geiger, "Neue Schriften zur Geschichte des Humanismus," HZ, XXXIII (1875), 49-125.
- _____, "Neue Schriften zur Geschichte des Humanismus," Zeitschrift für Vergleich. Literatur-Geschichte und Renaissance-Literatur, II (1888-89), 456-82; III (1890), 248-60, 388-404, 469-90.

- Ludwig Geiger, "Neue Schriften zur Geschichte des Humanismus," Vierteljahrsschrift für Kultur und Literatur der Renaissance, I (1886), 251-96; II (1887), 117-40.
- _____, Renaissance und Humanismus in Italien und Deutschland, Berlin, 1882.
- Walter Goetz, "Mittelalter und Renaissance," HZ, XCVIII (1907), 30-54.
- George Gordon, Medium Aevum and the Middle Ages, S.P.E. Tract #19, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1925.
- Rudolf Gunther, "Zur Geistes- und Kuntsgeschichte der Renaissance," Theologische Rundschau, I (1929), 403-22.
- Henri Hauser, La Modernité du XVIIe Siècle, Paris, 1930.
- J. Huizinga, "Problem der Renaissance," Italien, I (1928), 337-49, 391-404, 444-59.
- E. F. Jacob, "Changing Views of the Renaissance," History, XVI (1931), 214-29.
- _____, "The Fifteenth Century: Some Recent Interpretations," Bulletin of the John Rylands Library, XIV (1930), 386-409.
- Paul Joachimsen, "Aus der Entwicklung des Italienischen Humanismus," HZ, CXXI (1920), 189-233.
- _____, "Der Humanismus und die Entwicklung des Deutschen Geistes," DVLG, VIII (1930), 419-80.
- _____, "Renaissance, Humanismus, und Reformation," Zeitwende, I (1925), 402-25.
- _____, "Renaissance und Reformation. Literaturbericht," VG, II (1912), 57-69; III (1913), 181-92; IV (1915), 183-89; IX (1919), 113-18; X (1920), 113; XII (1922), 217-22; XIV (1924), 227-38.
- _____, "Vom Mittelalter zur Reformation," Historische Vierteljahrsschrift, XX (1920), 426-70.
- Rudolf Kaufmann, Des Renaissancebegriff in der Deutschen Kuntsgeschichtsschreibung, Basel, 1932.
- Otto Kluge, "Das Renaissanceproblem und Sein Jüngster Lösungsversuch," Neuphilologische Monatsschrift, XII (1935), 134-40.
- Godefroit J. F. Kurth, Qu' est-ce que le Moyen Age, Paris, 1909.
- Paul Lehmann, Vom Mittelalter und von der Lateinischen Philologie des Mittelalters, München, 1924.
- Alfred von Martin, "Das Problem der Renaissancekultur," Studien Zu Coluccio Salutati, (Leipzig, 1916), 1-17.
- Norman E. Nelson, "Individualism as a Criterion of the Renaissance," JEGP, XXXII (1933), 316-34.
- Carl Neumann, "Byzantinische Kultur und Renaissance Kultur," HZ, XCI (1903), 215-32.
- _____, "Ende des Mittelalters?" DVLG, XII (1934), 124-71.
- Johan Nordström, Moyen Age et Renaissance, Paris, 1933.
- L. Philoport, "Essai sur le mot et la notion d'humanisme," Revue de Synthèse, IX (1935), 102-16, 203-13.

listed are criticisms of modern theories in which the main concern is methodological rather than historical, so that in recent times attention has been shifted from primary to secondary materials, with the result that speculation rather than evidence has received the greater stress. Professor

-
- Adolf Philippi, Der Begriff der Renaissance Daten zu Seiner Geschichte, Leipzig, 1912.
- Jean Plattard, "'Restitution des bonnes lettres' et 'Renaissance'," in Mélanges offerts par ses amis et ses élèves à M. Gustave Lanson (Paris, 1927), 128-31.
- W. Rehm, Das Werden des Renaissancebildes in der Deutschen Dichtung vom Rationalismus bis zum Realismus, München, 1924.
- _____, "Der Renaissancekult um 1900 und Seine Überwindung," Zeitschrift für Deutsche Philologie, LIV (1929), 296-328.
- H. Reisch, "Neuere Renaissanceeliteratur," Literarischer Handweiser Zunächst für Alle Katholiker Deutscher Zunge, XLVII (1909), 337-82, 610-14, 639-44.
- Hans Rupprich, "Deutsche Literatur im Zeitalter des Humanismus und im Reformation Ein Bericht," DVLG, XVII (1939), 83-113.
- Fritz Schalk, "Die Humanismus- und Renaissanceforschung in Frankreich," Romanische Forschungen, LI (1937), 219-41.
- Franco Simone, "La Coscienza della Rinascita negli Umanisti," La Rinascita, II (1939), 338-71; III (1940), 163-86.
- Rudolf Stadelmann, "Zum Problem der Renaissance," Neue Jahrbücher für Wissenschaft und Jugendbildung, X (1934), 49-63.
- Fritz Strich, "Renaissance und Reformation," DVLG, I (1923), 582-612.
- Ernst Troeltsch, "Renaissance und Reformation," HZ, CX (1913), 518-56.
- A. S. Turberville, "Changing Views of the Renaissance," History, XVI (1932), 289-97.
- Lucie Varga, "Moyen Age et Renaissance," Revue de Synthèse, VII (1934), 129-32.
- Georg Voigt, Die Wiederbelebung des Classischen Alterthums oder das Erste Jahrhundert des Humanismus, ed. Max Lehnerdt, 2 vols., Berlin, 1893.
- Werner Weisbach, "Renaissance als Stilbegriff dem Andenken Jakob Burckhardts," HZ (CXX (1919), 250-80.
- G. Weise, "Der Doppelte Begriff der Renaissance," DVLG, XI (1933), 501-29.
- P. Wernle, Renaissance und Reformation, Berlin, 1912.
- Rudolf Wolkan, "Über den Ursprung des Humanismus," Zeitschrift für die Osterreichischen Gymnasien, LXVII (1912), 241-68.

Ferguson has neatly described the situation:

The conceptions held by the humanists of the course of antiquity, through what has since been called the Middle Ages, to their own time have a double significance. In themselves, they are an important aspect of Renaissance thought, and they had also a not inconsiderable role in shaping the historical ideas of later writers. Yet it is difficult to discover from secondary works what the humanists actually had to say on this interesting subject. There has been much loose generalization from occasional obiter dicta. Those modern scholars who have sought the origins of the Renaissance begriff or of the concept of the Middle Ages in the writings of the humanists have limited their research almost entirely to the use of words implying rebirth or the idea of a medium aevum. This is notably true of Konrad Burdach and Karl Borinski, who have furnished the most exhaustive investigation into the origins of the word and the idea of rebirth in this period. They have, indeed, made valuable contributions to our knowledge of the pagan and Christian origins and early history of religious, political, and chiliastic conceptions of rebirth and reformation. But Borinski is more interested in the symbolical and philosophical expression of ideas of rebirth of the world than in the historical ideas of the Renaissance writers. Burdach, too, has paid little attention to the historical works of the humanists, and his argument suffers from a tendency to press every obscure reference to rebirth, reformation, or regeneration into the service of his thesis that the Renaissance was essentially the conscious rebirth of the human soul, an innerliche Bewegung rising from the subjective religious emotion of the later Middle Ages and re-enforced by a growing consciousness of Italian national rebirth in the age of Dante, Petrarch, and Cola da Rienzi.³

What Professor Ferguson says of the students of the Italian humanists applies with equal force to those who have considered the Renaissance problem as a whole, so that, as far as secondary material is concerned, there is room for

³ Wallace K. Ferguson, "Humanist Views of the Renaissance," AHR, XLV (1939), 2.

a dissertation which has as its object the recording of theories of the Renaissance in an impartial and systematic manner.

The organization of the materials collected is the most difficult problem to be solved in connection with the work, for it is here that distortion is most likely to occur. However, when a large enough amount of material is collected, it can be divided into well-defined clusters of ideas. In other words, it is not necessary to impose an arbitrary arrangement upon the materials, but rather it is possible to separate out ideas from each other and then to place them into a number of unit-ideas. This technique is best explained by the use of an example. In analyzing the English writings in the period from 1800 to 1830, I found that attempts to arrive at an understanding of the Renaissance center around the problem of determining its constituent parts and its relationship to other contemporary movements. Seven topics seem constantly to recur in the discussion of the Renaissance and these are: (1) the revival of the fine arts, (2) the revival of classical learning, (3) the new defence of the Elizabethans, (4) the Renaissance in its relation to the Middle Ages, (5) the Renaissance in its relation to the Reformation, (6) the influence of the rise of commerce, and (7) the Renaissance in its relation to the rise of modern science. These leading ideas have

from three to thirteen subsidiary ideas each. For example, under seven, the Renaissance in its relation to the rise of modern science, we find writers discussing such topics as the reinterpretation of nature in the light of the new experimental science, the revision of psychology, morals, and politics as a consequence of the introduction of hitherto unknown mores revealed by the discoveries, the changes brought about in the ways men think and do by the invention of gunpowder and the compass on the one hand and of the telescope and microscope on the other, and the contributions of Francis Bacon to the making of the new world outlook by "freeing the mind from the hold of monkish ignorance," to use a frequently repeated phrase. In this way, it is possible to see the rise and decline of the ideas involved in the analysis of the Renaissance problem at any given time. For example, the theory that the Renaissance was caused by outstanding individuals which was held in the Renaissance itself gradually declines in favor of the theory of technological improvements, especially printing, which in turn gives way to emphasis upon more abstract causes, such as the rise of individualism.

So far as the organization of the thesis is concerned, a simple chronological arrangement of four periods in the history of the idea of the Renaissance will be used. The

first period runs from Petrarch to Bacon's Of the Proficiencie and Advancement of Learning (1605) and equal attention has been given to the continental and English sources. The second period extends from Bacon to Humphrey Hody's De Graecis Illustribus (1742), the latter being the first English writer to devote a full study to the period of the Renaissance. The writers from Hody to William Roscoe's The Life of Lorenzo De' Medici, Called the Magnificent (1795) will be considered in a third chapter, and the period from Roscoe to Henry Hallam's Introduction to the Literature of Europe in the Fifteenth, Sixteenth, and Seventeenth Centuries (1837-39) will be given attention in the fourth chapter.

To understand what this thesis proposes to do, it is important to recognize what it does not intend to do. First, it is not in any way a theory of the Renaissance. Second, it is not a general cultural history. Third, it is not a history of the idea of progress, nor of the cyclical theory of history, nor of Bacon's reputation, nor of any idea, no matter how important in other connections, which is subsidiary to my theme. Fourth, it is not a study in social psychology. Fifth, it does not select any theory or any combination of theories as the most acceptable explanation of the Renaissance. But the thesis does try to achieve the following ends. First, it intends to record as objectively and as completely as possible

as many theories of the Renaissance as can be found within the limits set. Second, it proposes to organize the component ideas of the theories in such a way that their development and interconnections become clear. Third, it tries to trace the reputation of a decisive period as it is reflected in the minds of generations of writers who found the Renaissance provocative. Fourth, it shows how men try to deal with an idea by bringing to its definition increasing numbers of, and previously neglected, referents for it. The difficulty consists in the fact that the Renaissance as an event in history is gone and past recovery, the men who made it beyond recall, and even what they wrote the subject of endless and perhaps inconclusive interpretation and reinterpretation, so that it is hard enough to determine what they said, let alone to comprehend and characterize the Renaissance as a whole. The Renaissance was to many of the writers who thought about it a kind of mirror in which they saw their own hopes and ambitions reflected, or rather a device by which, under the protective guise of research into the past, they could speak to their contemporaries; it became in their hands an oblique utopianism. In the last analysis, the history of the idea of the Renaissance is important, not so much for what it tells us about the Renaissance, but for what it tells us about how men think and what ideals they set for themselves.

CHAPTER I

THE IDEA OF THE RENAISSANCE FROM PETRARCH TO BACON

I. The Awareness of the Renaissance

Though Burckhardt was the first to bring into prominence the Renaissance problem, it was not until Burdach that an attempt was made to investigate what the writers of the Renaissance thought of it themselves. Burdach was followed by Borinski, Wolkan, Philippi, Plattard, Simone, and Ferguson, to mention but a few scholars who have occupied themselves with this matter, but no systematic survey of the leading writers of the Renaissance has been made. As a matter of fact, for Burdach, Borinski, Wolkan, and, more recently, Simone, the investigation of what the Renaissance thought of itself was but secondary to their attempts to provide their own theories of the Renaissance, and, though they did recognize that the writers of the Renaissance were not unaware of the problem, they did not pursue the subject with the diligence it deserves. Philippi has been interested in tracing through the origin and development of the idea of the renaissance of arts, but the greater portion of his work is devoted to post-Renaissance writers, and the number of Renaissance figures he considers is small. Plattard's article is more in the

nature of a series of jottings for a larger and more systematic survey and is limited to a few French writers. Though Professor Ferguson's article is entitled "Humanist Views of the Renaissance," the only humanists treated are the Italian humanists, and more specifically, the Italian humanist historians. More important, in none of the studies mentioned has the idea of the Renaissance in the Renaissance been considered in its complexity as a comprehensive and widely held theory. It has not been sufficiently appreciated that the men of the Renaissance were quite acutely aware of the fact that they were participating in activities which set them apart from the men of preceding centuries. They did not hesitate to name names or to fix dates or to ascribe causes; they were cognizant that in some manner their period was different, and they tried to account for the difference. In other words, the Renaissance problem was fixed in the Renaissance itself, and, as we shall see, many of the most important ideas which went to make up later theories of the Renaissance owe their origin to the very period which they are intended to explain.

Petrarch recognized that he was living in a world between two worlds. The consciousness of a Renaissance is not yet present, but there is certainly the awareness that his time is a transition period between the old and, if perhaps not the new, then at least the different. He

writes: "...velut in confinio duorum populorum constitutus, ac simul ante retroque in prospiciens."¹ Some time later, in his "Oratio Ad Fantinum Dandulum Praetorem Patavii Pro Gymnasio Patavino," dated 1412, Gasparino Barzizza said:

Etsi maxime oportebat, Praetor optime, stante adhuc, & incolumi hac nostra Universitate, potius tae esse missum ad conservationem ejus, quam ad dignitatem pene extinctam restituendam venisse; tamen propter incredibilem, ac prope singularem, animi tui Sapientiam tantam spem, nostris rebus dies hodiernus attulit, ut illa hoc tuo adventu nunc primum spigitum resumere, & quasi reviviscere novis videatur.²

Barzizza goes on to describe the flourishing state of the University and contrasts the zeal with which the ancient authors are being studied with the lethargy which marked the students but a few years before.

Evidence of how widespread and widely accepted was the idea of a Renaissance is found in a letter of William Herman to James Batt: "Atque vtinam aliquando tandem litterae reuiuiscant, mi Batte."³ Around the same time, but in another country, Lippo Brandolini writes:

...quod omnia quae apud veteres maxima et flor-
entissima erant nunc labefacta et prope extincta

1 Petrarch, Rerum Memorandarum, I, 398, cited in John E. Sandys, Harvard Lectures on the Revival of Learning (Cambridge University Press, 1905), p. 9, n. 1.

2 Gasparino Barzizza, Opera (Romae, 1723), I, 18.

3 William Herman to James Batt, #34, 1494?, in Opvs Epistolarvm Des. Erasmi Roterodami, ed. Percy S. Allen (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1906), I, 134.

sint ita ut degenerare ab se quottidie mundus
et ad finem quodammodo properare videatur...⁴

Addressing the Mayors of Germany, Luther points out that "The world has changed, and things go differently,"⁵ and Machiavelli quite casually refers to "...the great changes which have been seen and are seen every day, beyond all human conjecture."⁶ The enthusiasm of Ulrich von Hutten is but typical of the men of the Renaissance who saw all about them signs of a new era in human history and were happy to be able to participate in the work. "O seculum!" wrote Hutten to Pirckheimer, "O literae! Iuvat vivere, etsi quiescere nondum iuvat, Bilibalde. Vigent studia, florent ingenia. Heus tu, accipe laqueum, barbaries, exilium prospice."⁷ And in France Étienne Dolet was expressing the same sentiments:

Les lettres s'épanouissent avec splendeur, heureuse
et brillante floraison, dont je m'applaudis pour
elles! Les études littéraires sont cultivées avec

⁴ Lippo Brandolini, De Comparatione Reipublicae et Regni, cited in Lynn Thorndike, Science and Thought in the Fifteenth Century (Columbia University Press, 1929), p. 242, n. 36.

⁵ Martin Luther, Letter to the Mayors and Aldermen of All the Cities of Germany in Behalf of Christian Schools, ed. Frederick Eby, Early Protestant Educators the Educational Writings of Martin Luther, John Calvin, and Other Leaders of Protestant Thought (New York, 1931), p. 71.

⁶ Cited by Arthur Burd, The Cambridge Modern History, ed. A. W. Ward, C. W. Prothero, S. Leathes (New York, 1902), I, 210.

⁷ Ulrich von Hutten to Pirckheimer, #90, October 25, 1515, in Ulrichs von Hutten Schriften, ed. Eduard Böcking (Leipzig, 1859), I, 217.

des efforts si grands et si universels que, pour atteindre à la gloire des Anciens, une seule condition nous manque, je veux dire l'antique liberté des esprits, et la perspective de la louange au début de la carrière des arts.... Néanmoins les vices de notre époque n'ont pas rélégué si loin de l'Europe le progrès intellectuel qu'on ne rencontre sous tous les points des coeurs brûlants de ce noble amour. Ah! sans doute, elle a été sans trêve et sans merci, la lutte qui depuis un siècle se livre à la barbarie, et souvent la victoire a chancelé, grâce aux forces prodigieuses dont disposaient les barbares. Mais, enfin, le succès a couronné la phalange du progrès.⁸

The few examples quoted show the prevalence of the recognition of a change in human affairs in the fourteenth, fifteenth, and sixteenth centuries. From Petrarch on, men of different nationalities and working in different fields, are all aware of a difference and they hasten to write to each other about it so that it can be discussed. How they analyzed it, what limits they set to it, what causes they considered were responsible for it, what effects they thought it had, will be considered in the following sections.

⁸ Étienne Dolet, cited in Hubert Gillot, La Querrelle des Anciens & des Modernes en France (Nancy, 1914), pp. 31-32. Cf. Jean de Montreuil, Epistle II, Nicolas de Clamanges, Epistle XLVI, and Guillaume Tardif's preface to Eloquentiae Benedictique Scientiae Compendium, quoted in Franco Simone, op. cit., pp. 849, 850, 854; Tiraqueau's preface to De Legibus Connubialibus, quoted in Jean Plattard, op. cit., p. 129, n. 4: "Litterae, illae quae... humanae vocantur... veluti postliminio revertantur"; Joannes Charron, preface to Adagiorum Des. Erasmi Rotterodami, quoted in Karl Borinski, op. cit., p. 53, n. 4; Lilius Gregorius Gyraldus, De Poetis Nostrorum Temporum, ed. Karl Wotke (Berlin, 1894), p. 22.

II. The Renaissance of the Fine Arts

It was immediately realized in the Renaissance that the events which made it up could not be encompassed by one generalized description. Therefore, different aspects were considered separately by different writers so that a kind of specialization is evident, though of course this development does not approach to anything like the modern situation. It is interesting to notice that in the process of breaking down the Renaissance into simpler units the writers of the Renaissance in almost every case attempted to anchor these concepts to specific and real phenomena. Thus they centered their attention on events they could actually observe, changes in the style of painting, sculpture, and architecture, the recovery of lost texts, the building of libraries, the revision of the curricula of universities, the effects of voyages to unknown lands and of new inventions. In other words, wherever possible, they tried to refer the Renaissance back to concrete occurrences, to events which happened either in the time of their immediate forerunners or in their own time and which in many cases they experienced at first hand by actual participation, or at least from reports of those who had played some rôle in the creations of the changes. It is this circumstance which accounts for the sense of immediacy which their writings exhibit

and for the range and complexity of their theories.

Changes in the style of the fine arts certainly come under the category of observable phenomena and the writers of the Renaissance were quick to detect and account for them. As early as 1382 or thereabouts, Filippo Villani undertook to describe the course of the art of painting from the Greeks to his own day:

A me debbe essere lecito, secondo l'esempio degli antichi scrittori, i quali ne' loro annali e tra gli uomini illustri Zeusi, Policleteo, Cali, Fidia, Prassitele, Mirone, Appelle, Canone, Volario ed altri hanno recitato, e Promateo pe' suoi ingegni e diligenza finsero avere del limo della terra creato un uomo, con questo esempio i miei egregi dipintori fiorentini raccontano, i quali quell'arte somarrita e quasi spenta suscitavano: tra' quali il primo fu Giovanni chiamato Cimabue, che l'antica pittura, e dal naturale già quasi comarrita e vagante, con arte e con ingegno rinvocò; perocchè innanzi a questo la greca e latina pittura per molti secoli avea errato, come apertamente dimostrano le figure nelle tavole e nelle mura anticamente dipinte. Dopo lui fu Giotto di fama illustrissimo, non solo agli antichi pittori eguale, ma d'arte e d'ingegno superiore. Questi restitui la pittura nella dignità antica, e in grandissimo nome, come apparisce in molte dipinture, massime nella porta della chiesa di san Piero di Roma, opera mirabile di mosaico, e con grandissima arte figurata.⁹

In this passage, a number of ideas about the history of painting which are frequently repeated and amplified by succeeding writers are found for the first time. The art of painting reached its height with the Greeks, then

⁹ Giannmaria Mazzuchelli, ed., Le Vite d'Uomini Illustri Fiorentine Scritte da Filippo Villani (Firenze, 1847), p. 47.

declined for many years until Cimabue and later Giotto restored it to its natural style; note too the praise of the Florentines. The natural style is taken to be the classical style and by implication the art of the Middle Ages is disregarded as being unnatural. The Renaissance in art is therefore a return to the natural mode of expression, an idea which is later amplified by Luther and Da Vinci. Villani's account is followed by Matteo Palmieri, Ghiberti, and Alberti, though Ghiberti was willing to ascribe some merit to the work of the Byzantines and Alberti attributed the change in the arts to his contemporaries, Brunelleschi, Donatello, Ghiberti, Luca della Robbia, and others.¹⁰ In his account of the revival of ancient learning, Valla notes that not only painting but "...Scalpendi, Fingendi, Architectandi, aut tandiu tantoque opere degenerauerint, ac peno cum litteris ipsi demortuae fuerint, aut hoc tempore excitentur, ac reuiuiscant: tantusque tum bonorum opificum, tum bene litteratorum prouetus efflorescat."¹¹ Erasmus was well aware of a renaissance in the fine arts. Writing to Cornelius Gerard, he has this to say:

¹⁰ Wallace K. Ferguson, op. cit., pp. 22-23, 27. Filarte is especially strong against the Gothic style.

¹¹ Lorenzo Valla, preface to Lavrentii Vallae Doctissimi Elegantiarum Linguae Latinae Libri Sex (Venetiis, 1572), p. 11.

At nunc, si vltra tercentum aut ducentos annos caelaturas, picturas, sculpturas, aedificia, fabrices et omnium denique officiorum monumenta inspicias, puto et admiraberis et ridebis nimiam artificum rusticitatem, cum nostro rursus aevo nihil sit artis quod non opificum effinxerit industria. Haud aliter quoque priscis saeculis cum omnium artium, tum praecipue eloquentiae studia apprime flourisse constat; atque inde rursus barbarorum increscenta pertinacia ita evanuisse vt ne vestigium reliquum videre fuerit.¹²

Though he is writing a history of contemporary poetry, Gyraldus takes time to point out that not only was there a change in the writing of poetry but similar changes could be observed in the other arts:

Videtis enim nostram hanc aetatem non senio languidam atque defectam, ut ingrati quidi deflent, cum in omni poetica et dicendi arte viros excellentes protulisse tum in reliquis bonis artibus; nam, ut liberales mittam, res militaris, architectonica, pictura, sculptura, reliquae nostro hoc tempore ita florent vigentque, ut non mode aemulari antiquitatem dici possint nostri opifices, sed etiam multa antiquis intentata effingere et conformare; quae quoniam nunc et hora et locus ut commemorem non permittunt et vos alias audivistis, in praesentia praetereo.¹³

Leaving aside Vasari for the moment, it is illuminating to see what a practicing architect had to say about his intentions in reviving ancient art. For Palladio the

¹² Erasmus, op. cit., I, 108. #23 to Cornelius Gerard, June, 1489?.

¹³ Lilius Gregorius Gyraldus, op. cit., p. 10. Cf. Vespasiano Da Bisticci: "In painting, sculpture and architecture we find art on its highest level, as we may see from the works which have been wrought amongst us." The Vespasiano Memoirs Lives of the Illustrious Men of the XVth Century, tr. William George and Emily Waters (New York, 1926), p. 14.

Roman style was supreme in architecture: "...And because I ever was of Opinion, that the antient Romans did far excel all that have come after them, as in many other things so particularly in Buildinge..."¹⁴ so that he bent his efforts to turn contemporary taste away from the crudities of the Gothic style to an appreciation of the classical mode:

Thus Men, by degrees, will learn to lay aside the strange Abuses, the barbarous Inventions, the superfluous Expences, and (what imports them more than all the rest) to avoid the various and continual Ruins which have happened in several Buildings. I have moreover apply'd my self to this Undertaking with the greater Alacrity, because at this time I see abundance of others become studious of this Profession, many of whom are worthily and honourably mention'd in the Books of that rare Painter and Architect, George Vasari Aretino; which makes me hope that the way of Building will be reduced to general Utility, and very soon arrive to that pitch of Perfection, which, in all Arts, is so much desired. We appear to come very near it, in this part of Italy, seeing that not only in Venice (where all the Polite Arts do flourish, and which City alone affords an Example of the Grandeur and Magnificence of the Romans) there began to appear Fabricks of good Taste, since that most celebrated Carver and Architect, Giacomo Sansovino, first introduced the true manner, ...¹⁵

Some time later, in dedicating his edition of Leon Battista Alberti's Of Statues, Cosimo Bartoli was able to amplify Palladio's remarks and to indicate the progress

¹⁴ Andrea Palladio, The Architecture of A. Palladio, ed. Giacomo Leoni (London, 1721), I, Blr.

¹⁵ Ibid., I, Blv.

which had been made:

...Leon Baptista, who in a time wherein little or nothing of Sculpture was known (all good Arts and Sciences being then in a manner annihilated and wholly extinct throughout Italy, by Reason of the many inundations of Barbarians) imploy'd the utmost of his Abilities to open an easy and secure way for our Youth.... No wonder therefore, if from that time forward such wonderful Progress has been made in this Art, as has brought it to that Perfection wherein it is seen flourishing at his Day: So as in this Age of ours, we have no need to envy those so much admired Statues of the most celebrated Sculptors of the Antient Romans, when we shall well consider what has been perform'd by our Countryman Donato, and not many years since the Divine Michael Angelo Buonaroti; as after him, by Baccio Bandinelli, Benvenuto Cellini, and lastly, by your Self.¹⁶

Finally, there is the opinion of Da Vinci to the effect that the revival of the arts was due to a return to nature led by Giotto. "The painter," advises Da Vinci:

will produce pictures of little merit if he takes the works of others as his standard; but if he will apply himself to learn from the objects of nature he will produce good results. This we see was the case with the painters who came after the time of the Romans, for they continually imitated each other, and from age to age their art steadily declined.

After these came Giotto the Florentine, and he,--reared in mountain solitudes, inhabited only by goats and such like beasts--turning straight from nature to his art, began to draw on the rocks the movements of the goats which he was tending, and so began to draw the figures of all the animals which were to be found in the country, in such a way that after much study he not only surpassed the masters of his own time but all those of many preceding centuries. After him art again declined, because all were imitating paintings already done; and so for

¹⁶ Cosimo Bartoli, "To the most Excellent Architect, and Sculptor Bartolomeo Ammanni," Leon Baptista Alberti's Treatise Of Statues, tr. John Evelyn (London, 1723), p. 60.

centuries it continued to decline until such time as Tommaso the Florentine, nicknamed Masaccio, showed by the perfection of his work how those who took as their standard anything other than nature, the supreme guide of all the masters, were wearying themselves in vain.¹⁷

From the evidence cited, it will be evident that when Vasari came to write his Lives, a considerable body of opinion on the history of the arts was available to him. The main outlines of the story had been pretty well fixed; what was needed was amplification and codification of the ideas held by his predecessors and contemporaries. This Vasari undertook to do in a work which has since become basic to any consideration of the Renaissance. Vasari has sometimes been mistakenly considered to have been the first to have introduced the concept of Renaissance into modern historiography, but of course by the time he wrote the idea had become a commonplace; his value lies in the classical statement he gave of the Renaissance idea of the revival of the fine arts. It is likewise unfair to charge Vasari with the neglect of the art of the Middle Ages which was so long in waiting for proper understanding and appreciation; in this Vasari thought

¹⁷ Leonardo De Vinci, Leonardo Da Vinci's Note-Books, ed. Edward McCurdy (New York, 1923), pp. 164-65. Some time between 1508-18. For other ascriptions of the revival of art to Giotto, see Aeneas Sylvius: "...post Jottum surrexere pictorum manus," as cited in Rudolf Wolkan, "Über den Ursprung des Humanismus," Zeitschrift für die Österreichischen Gymnasien, LXVII (1916), 243, and Poliziano's epitaph on Giotto cited by Giannaria Mazzuchelli, op. cit., p. 124.

as his contemporaries did, and besides, as we shall see, his disdain of the art between the fall of Rome and the Renaissance is not so absolute and altogether devoid of appreciation as is commonly held.

Vasari's work is permeated with the desire to account as completely as possible for the excellence of the art which he saw on all sides and which it seemed to him set off his age from preceding eras and gave it an outstanding place in the history of culture. In his dedication to Cosimo De' Medici, he writes:

...I have thought that this labour which I have undertaken--of writing the lives, describing the works, and setting forth the various relations of those who, when art had become extinct, first revived, and then gradually conducted her to that degree of beauty and majesty wherein we now see her, would not be other than pleasing to your Excellency.¹⁸

To set the revival of arts in its proper historical setting, Vasari felt it necessary to trace the course of the arts from their decline to their present state. Even at the time of Constantine, the art of sculpture had already begun its decline, though the barbarians had not yet begun their ravages which destroyed the humanities for so long. But with the inroads of the barbarians, the situation was desperate indeed:

But as fortune, when she has raised either persons or things to the summit of her wheel, very fre-

¹⁸ Giorgio Vasari, Lives of the Most Eminent Painters, Sculptors, and Architects, tr. Mrs. Jonathan Foster (London, 1850), I, I.

quently casts them to the lowest point, whether in repentance, or for her sport, so it chanced that, after these things, the barbarous nations of the world arose, in divers places, in rebellion against the Romans; whence there ensued, in no long time, not only the decline of that great empire, but the utter ruin of the whole, and more especially of Rome herself, when all the best artists, sculptors, painters, and architects, were in like manner totally ruined, being submerged and buried, together with the arts themselves, beneath the miserable slaughters and ruins of that much renowned city.... Every virtue, nay, all true men, had departed together; laws, name, customs, the very language, all were lost; and amidst these calamities, all acting together, and each effecting its own share of the mischief, every exalted mind had sunk in the general degradation, every noble spirit become debased.¹⁹

And to top all this were the effects produced by the Christian religion. Vasari is unique in his denunciation of Christianity as an early impediment; even when the reformers attack the culture of the Middle Ages, they very carefully point out that their opposition is to the Church and not to Christianity, but Vasari does not make this distinction:

But infinitely more ruinous than all other enemies to the arts above named, was the fervent zeal of the new Christian religion, which, after long and sanguinary combats, had finally overcome and annihilated the ancient creeds of the pagan world, by the frequency of miracles exhibited, and by the earnest sincerity of the means adopted; and ardently devoted, with all diligence, to the extirpation of error, nay, to the removal of even the slightest temptation to heresy, it not only destroyed all the wondrous statues, paintings, sculptures, mosaics, and other ornaments of the false pagan deities, but

¹⁹ Ibid., I, 20-21.

at the same time extinguished the very memory, in casting down the honours, of numberless excellent ancients, to whom statues and other monuments had been erected, in public places, for their virtues, by the most virtuous times of antiquity.²⁰

But, perhaps through the operation of the same wheel of fortune which threw it down, art began slowly to rise again; there arose men who "...impelled by nature, and refined, to a certain degree, by the air they breathed, ... set themselves to work, not according to the rules of art, which they no longer possessed, but each according to the quality of his own talent."²¹ From these rude beginnings--and note that to Vasari a return to nature could produce nothing worthwhile without rules--there developed the Gothic style which had to do until better artists appeared who returned to the purer style of the antique. In 1013 some progress has been made, for in the rebuilding of the church of San Miniato sul Monte an attempt had been made to imitate "...the fine proportions and pure taste of the antique..." of the ancient church of San Giovanni in Florence. Painting, he says, likewise slowly began to regain life as is evidenced by the mosaics of San Miniato. At the same time, the remnants of the old Greek artists, as Vasari calls the

²⁰ Ibid., I, 21-22.

²¹ Ibid., I, 23.

Byzantines, taught the Italians what they could, though this was little and crude enough. This condition obtained until about 1250 when "...Heaven, moved to pity by the noble spirits which the Tuscan soil was producing every day, restored them to their primitive condition..." by calling their attention to the ancient ruins all about them so that they could now base their art on the rules of the ancients. Thus, by a happy combination of the urging of nature, the quality of the Tuscan air, and the providence of Heaven, the arts were on the way to their restoration to the ancient splendor. Then followed Cimabue, Gaddo Gaddi, and Giotto, of whom the latter restored art to the path which is the true one, the imitation of the ancient models. What these models are and what qualities they possess, Vasari indicates:

The Laocoon namely, the Hercules, the mighty Torso of the Belvedere, with the Venus, the Cleopatra, the Apollo, and many others, in which softness and power are alike visible, which display roundness and fulness justly restrained, and which reproducing the most perfect beauty of nature, with attitudes and movements wholly free from distortion, but turning or bending gracefully in certain parts, exhibit everywhere the flexibility and ease of nature, with the most attractive grace.³³

Finally, with Da Vinci begins the third manner which Vasari designates the modern. So far as architecture is concerned, it is Brunelleschi who first recovered the measures and

³³ Ibid., II, 380.

proportions of the antique, though Andrea Pisano was a notable forerunner.

To Vasari, the Renaissance was a long drawn and continual process which started deep in the Middle Ages and reached its culmination in his own time. There are three steps in the development of the revival of the fine arts and Vasari himself summarizes their characteristics:

To avoid a too minute inquiry, I adopt the division into three parts, or periods--if we so please to call them--from the revival of the arts, down to the present century, and in each of these there will be found a very obvious difference. In the first, and most ancient, of these periods, we have seen that the three formative arts were very far from their perfection; and that, if it must be admitted that they had much in them that was good, yet this was accompanied by so much of imperfection, that those times certainly merit no great share of commendation. Yet, on the other hand, as it was by them that the commencement was made; as it was they who originated the method, and taught the way to a better path, which was afterwards followed, so, if it were but for this, we are bound to say nothing of them but what is good--nay, we must even accord to them a somewhat larger amount of glory than they might have the right to demand, were their works to be judged rigidly by the strict rules of art.

In the second period, all productions were, obviously, much ameliorated; richer invention was displayed, with more correct drawing, a better manner, improved execution, and more careful finish. The arts were, in a measure, delivered from that rust of old age, and that coarse disproportion, which the rudeness of the previous uncultivated period had left still clinging to them. But who will venture to affirm that there could yet be found an artist perfect at all points? or one who had arrived at that position, in respect of invention, design, and colour, to which we have attained in the present day? Is there any one who has been able so carefully to manage the shadows of his figures, that the lights remain only on the parts in relief? or who has, in like manner, effected

those perforations, and secured those delicate results in sculpture, which are exhibited by the statues and rilievi of our own day? The credit of having effected this is certainly due to the third period only; respecting which it appears to me that we may safely affirm the arts to have effected all that it is permitted to the imitation of nature to perform, and to have reached such a point, that we have now more cause for apprehension lest they should again sink into depression, than ground for hope that they will ever attain to a higher degree of perfection.

Reflecting attentively within myself on all these things, I conclude that it is the peculiar nature, and distinctive characteristic of these arts, that, rising from mean beginnings, they should proceed to elevate themselves, by gradual effort, and should finally attain to the summit of perfection; and I am confirmed in this opinion by the perception of an almost similar mode of progression in others of the liberal arts.²³

If we accept Vasari's premises as to what constitutes good art, his account of the history of art is not unintelligible nor as prejudiced as has been supposed. Vasari held with his contemporaries the opinion that good art was classical art and that classical art was natural art. Therefore, any deviation from this norm was aesthetically bad. In point of fact, Vasari is a judicial and not an historical critic. Having made up his mind as to what constitutes value in art, he proceeds to look for expressions of that value in the past. It is this approach which leads him into the

²³ Ibid., I, 302-03. Cf. ibid., I, 32-33 for another expression of the circular theory of history; also the passage cited supra, p. 36.

exaltation of ancient and Renaissance art at the expense of the art of the Middle Ages, and what defects critics have found in Vasari must be attributed in part at least to the defects of the method employed.

Vasari's work stands as the most effective summary of the Renaissance theory of the revival of the fine arts. It is no part of my purpose to criticize the validity of the theories considered; I am interested only in stating them as I find them. On the subject of the revival of the fine arts, the Renaissance believed that it was the equal to if not the superior of the ancients. It paid respect to the work of the forerunners in what it considered the proper style. Florence was thought to be the center of the revival and Cimabue, Giotto, and Brunelleschi the individuals most responsible for it. The extent of the awareness of the revival of the fine arts is widespread, while the revival itself is taken as a fact. Finally, it is important to note that whenever the revival is considered an attempt is made to point to specific examples exhibiting the characteristics of the change being described.

III. The Revival of Ancient Learning

Interested as were the writers of the Renaissance in the course of the revival of the fine arts, their main attention was centered on the revival of ancient learn-

ing. Their zeal for the discovery of the writings of the ancients knew no limits, nor was the enthusiasm they showed for the works of the Greek and Roman authors ever quenched. Each new discovery of an ancient manuscript was greeted with cries of joy and the pride they took in their slowly but steadily growing libraries of ancient texts was boundless. They eagerly communicated to each other the latest developments in the restoration of the lost texts and the bulk of their voluminous correspondence was concerned with the discovery, examination, interpretation, and editing of the classics. Those who were thought the pioneers in the revival of learning were held in the highest respect, as were the early teachers of Greek. The humanists were engaged in a friendly rivalry to uncover lost documents and a constant pressure was felt to seize the banner of learning from Italy and to plant it in one's native soil. For the most part, the Italians were respected as the innovators in the new learning but this did not deter the humanists of other countries from attempting to wrest the palm from Italy. Though the urge to make one's own country supreme in learning and the envy of the others was a nationalistic impulse, nevertheless the zeal for learning was international and the fruits of scholarship were shared by all as soon as they were made known. As a result of this cosmopolitan activity,

the course of the revival of ancient learning was followed and recorded by writers of all nationalities as soon as it became evident that the revival was a phenomenon of great cultural significance. The recognition of the importance of the revival of learning was almost immediate so that the keen awareness of what they were doing is noteworthy in the humanists from Petrarch on.

As early as 1395 Coluccio Salutati was aware of the revival of letters:

emerserunt parumper nostro seculo studia litterarum;... emerserunt et ista lumina florentina; ut summum vulgaris eloquentie decus et nulli scientia vel ingenio comparandum qui nostris temporibus floruit, aut etiam cuiquam antiquorum, Dantem Alligherium, pretermittam; Petrarca scilicet et Cocaccius, quorum opera cuncta, ni fallor, posteritas celebrabit: qui tamen quantum ab illis priscis differant facultate dicendi nummum arbitror qui recte iudicate valeat ignorare.²⁴

Boccaccio had earlier spoken of his sumptuous edition of Homer as well as his other Greek authors who, as he says, after many centuries had been recalled to Etruria. Some time after Boccaccio wrote, Palmieri in his treatise Della Vita Civile makes the assertion that the liberal studies had been neglected for eight hundred years and goes on to attribute their revival to his friend Leonardo Bruni, though this is to be taken as a gesture of friend-

²⁴ Coluccio Salutati, "A Bartolommeo Oliari Cardinal Padovano," #9, August 1, 1395, in Epistolario di Coluccio Salutati, ed. Francesco Novati (Rome, 1896), III, 84.

ship since the consensus of opinion, as will be seen, was inclined to honor Petrarch as the father of the revival of classical learning.

Bruni himself is more modest for he gives the credit of initiating the new studies to Chrysoloras and Petrarch. In his Rerum Suo Tempore Gestarum Commentarius he speaks with respect of the part played by Chrysoloras in bringing about a knowledge and appreciation of Greek:

Litterae quoque per huius belli intercapedines mirabile quantum per Italiam increvere, accedente tunc primum cognitione litterarum graecarum, quae septingentis iam annis apud nostros homines desiderant esse in usu. Retulit autem graecam disciplinam ad nos Chrysoloras Bisantius, vir domi nobiles ac litterarum graecarum peritissimus. Hic, obsessa a Turcis patria, Ventias mari delatus primo, mox audita eius fama, invitatus benigne ac postulatus et salario publico affectus, Florentiam venit, sui copiam iuvenibus exhibiturus.

Ego per id tempus Iuri Civili operam dabam, non rudis tamen ceterorum studiorum. Nam et natura flagrabam disciplinarum amore et dialecticis ac rhetoribus non segnem operam impenderam. Itaque in adventu Chrysolorae anceps equidem factus sum, cum et studium Iuris deserere flagitiosum ducerem et tantam occasionem litterarum graecarum ediscendarum praemittere scelus quodammodo arbitrarer, saepiusque ipse ad me iuvenile motu inquebam: Tu cum tibi liceat Homerum et Platonem et Demosthenem ceterosque poetas ac philosophos et oratores, de quibus tanta ac tam mirabilia circumferuntur, intueri atque una colloqui, ac eorum mirabili disciplina imbui, te ipsum deseres atque destitues? Tu occasionem hanc divinitus tibi oblatam praetermittes? Septingentis iam annis nemo per Italiam graecas litteras tenuit; et tamen doctrinas omnes ab illis esse confitemur. Quae igitur vel cognitionem utilitas vel ad famam accessio vel ad voluptatem cumulatio tibi ex linguae huius cognitione proveniet? Iuris quidem Civilis doctores passim complurime sunt; nec te deficiet unquam

discendi facultas. Hic autem unus solusque litterarum graecarum Doctor, si ei conspectu se amperet a quo postmodum ediscas nemo reperietur. His tandem rationibus expugnatus, Chrysolorae me tradidi, tanto discendi ardore, ut quae per diem vigilans percepissem, ea noctu quoque dormiens agitarem.²⁵

This lovely autobiographical passage gives a good insight into the minds of the young men of the time who suddenly found themselves on the threshold of a new world. Earlier a young man of talent entered the church or one of the professions; now the whole field of humane learning was opened up and it was no longer necessary to follow the traditional path. Bruni indicates the nature of the choice, but in point of fact there was no question of choice for him; the glorious opportunity to study Homer, Plato, and Demosthenes was too good to miss and so he threw over his career as a lawyer. In his life of Petrarch, Bruni elaborates on the history of the revival of learning. After Rome had fallen because of the loss of liberty under the tyrant emperors, and the destruction of letters had come about, the barbarous Goths overran Italy and destroyed all the remnants of culture. But little by little the Italians regained their liberty and with it letters began to revive:

Francesco Petrarca fu il primo il quale ebbe
tanta grazia d'ingegno, che riconobbe e rivotó

²⁵ Leonardo Bruni Aretino, Rerum Svo Tempore Gestarum Commentarius, ed. Carmine Di Pierro in Rerum Italicarum Scriptores, ed. L. A. Muratori, edd. Giosue Carducci, Vittorio Fiorini, and Pietro Fedele (Castello, 1926), XIX, part 3, 431-32.

in luce l'antica leggiadria dello stilo perduto e spento, e posto che in lui perfetto non fusse, pur da sé vide ed aperse la via a questa perfezione, ritrovando l'opere di Tullio e quelle gustando ed intendendo adattandosi quanto poté e seppe a quella elegantissima e perfettissima facondia: e per certo fece assai, solo a dimostrare la via a quelli che dopo lui avevano a seguire.²⁶

At about the same time that Bruni was writing, the officials of Oxford University were sending letters full of high praise to the Duke of Gloucester for his gifts of books. "Patricino vestro," they wrote, "Grece, que multis jam seculis littere sepulte fuerant, revixere. Nunc Grecos philosophos, bene vivendi magistros, Platonem, Aristotelem, ceteros quoque non superficie tenus, et intute uti per priores translaciones, sed intus et in profundo [Latinis] cervendi copia datur."²⁷ In a later letter Duke Humphrey is told that many new volumes

²⁶ Leonardo Bruni Aretino, "Vita di Dante e del Petrarca notizia del Boccaccio," in Autobiografie e Vite de' Maggiori Scrittori Italiani, ed. Angelo Solerti (Milan, 1903), p. 117. Apparently Bruni's modesty was confined to his writing for, according to Vespasiano, he thought that he alone was responsible for the revival. "...it was firmly held by all men of learning," writes Vespasiano, op. cit., p. 211, "that Friar Ambrogio and Messer Lionardo had revived the Latin tongue which had been dead and buried for a thousand years, or more. At that time there was no other writer who could approach the friar and Lionardo; although Petrarch did much to revive Latin he never approached these two. But the attitude of the two men was quite different; Lionardo of Arezzo always held himself to be the sole restorer of Latin..."

²⁷ "153. To the Duke of Gloucester," 1441, in Epistolae Academiae Oxon., ed. Henry Anstey (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1898), I, 203.

are now appearing which are dedicated to him, eloquent testimony that many sharp-witted and eager young men are pursuing the new studies which his gifts of books have just brought to light.²⁸ And over in France Guillaume Fichet was somewhat pathetically contrasting the present flourishing state of learning with the sad condition which had obtained in his youth. Writing to Robert Gaguin, he says:

Magna me uoluptas capit eruditissime Roberte, quum musas, & omnes eloquentiae partes (quas per aetas ignorauit) in hac urbe florere conspicio. Nam ut me primum adolescentibus annis, boico ex agro luteciam contuli (iudque Aristoteleae disciplinae causa) mirabar fane oratorem, aut poetam phoenice rariorem lutecia tota inuuenire. Nemo Ciceronem (uti plerique nunc faciunt) noctna uersabat maum. uersabat diurna. Nemo carmen singebat legitimum. nemo fictum ab alio, caesuris nouerat librare fuis. desuefacta figdem a latinitate schola parisiensis, ad sermonis rusticitatem, omnis pene deciderat. At lapillo longe meliore dies nostri numerant. quippe quibus di, deaeque omnes (ut poete loquunt) benedicem di artes, indies magis magisque aspirant.... De studior humanitatis restitutone loquor. Quibus (quod ipse coniectura capio) magnum lumen nouor librarior genus attulit. quos nra memoria (sicut qdam equus troianus) quouerso effudit germania.²⁹

Allowing for the evident bias against scholasticism and for the exaggerated enthusiasm for the new learning, Fichet's picture gives an interesting insight into the minds of the humanists. To them there was a real and

28 "175. To the Duke of Gloucester," 1445, *ibid.*, I, 245.

29 Guillaume Fichet, *Épître Adressée à Robert Gaguin le 1er Janvier 1473*, Reproduction Héliographique (Paris, 1889), pp. 1-3.

appreciable change which could be measured in terms of books and scholarship which had come about, as in Fichet's case, within their own life time.

In a more polished manner, Lorenzo Valla traced the course of the revival of learning. For many centuries, he writes, no one spoke in the Latin tongue, nor were the works of the great Latin writers read. Then in our time, the knowledge of true Latinity was recovered and with it came a revival of all the arts, "...aut hoc tempore excitentur, ac reuiuiscant tantoque tum bonorum opificum, tum bene litteratorum prouetus efflorescat. Verum enimvero quod magis superiora tempora infelicia fuere, quibus homo nemo inuentus est eruditus, eod plus his nostris gratulanda est, in quibus (si paulo amplius annitatur) confido propediem linguam Romanam uirere plus quam urbem, & cum ea disciplinas omnes iri restitutum."³⁰

Finally, Vespasiano sums up the attitude of the men of the fifteenth century in his penetrating Memoirs. For a thousand years, he says, no writers were found in Florence until the time of Dante, Petrarch, Boccaccio, Coluccio

³⁰ Lorenzo Valla, op. cit., p. 11. Cf. Bartolommeo Sacchi, In Vitas Summorum Pontificum ad Sixtum IV. Pontificem Maximum, tr. Sir Paul Rycant in A Literary Source-book of the Italian Renaissance, ed. Merrick Whitcomb (Philadelphia, 1898), p. 63; Guillaume Tardif, Eloquentiae Benedicendique Scientiae Compendium as cited by Franco Simone, op. cit., p. 854; Giorgio Merula to Politian as cited in William Roscoe, The Life of Lorenzo De' Medici (London, 1825), II, 75, n. a.

Salutati, and Luigi Marsigli. But, important as were these men in the revival of learning, and Vespasiano singles out the first three named for special commendation, it is:

the present age which has produced many distinguished men in all the faculties, as will appear to posterity if a record be kept of them, . . . In this age all the seven liberal arts have been fruitful in men of distinction, not only in Latin, but also in Hebrew and Greek; men most learned and eloquent and equal to the best of any age. In painting, sculpture and architecture we find art on its highest level, as we may see from the works which have been wrought amongst us.³¹

When we enter the sixteenth century, the volume of comment on the revival of ancient learning increases. A note of even greater assurance of the significance of the revival enters the work of the writers of the sixteenth century, so much so, that it is almost taken for granted. Yet the wonder of it never ceases, the men never fail to respond with a thrill of delight every time it is mentioned, and it would seem that each writer had to discover for himself the sense of privilege in being able to participate in the revival and to communicate his feelings of joy to those who had already preceded him in the work so that the fellowship of scholars could be increased and at the same time be more closely knit together or to exhort those who had not yet taken part to speed up their labors. Thus Iohannis a Trittenham writes to his brother:

³¹ Vespasiano De Bisticci, op. cit., p. 14; cf. pp. 352, 442-43.

Inopiam librorum vetere allegare potuerunt, nos vero potius in opes copia fecit, quoniam impressoria nostris diebus arte apud Moguntiacum inuenta, hodieque per orbe vniuersum dilatata, tot veterum atque nouorum volumina doctorum veniunt in lucem, vt aere iam modico doctus quilibet esse possit. Neque desent hodie bonorum praeceptores, studiorum, sed ubique terrarum abundant in omni varietate disciplinae, non solum in latina, sed in Graeca lingua simul atque Hebraica. Haec sunt vere aurea tempora, in quibus bonarum literarum studia multis annis neglecta refluoruerunt.³³

Johann Reuchlin speaks of the revival of good letters which had been buried for many centuries but which are happily brought to light in our era.³³ In a later letter to Leo X, he very graciously lists the learned Italians who, in his opinion, were responsible for the revival and pays a compliment to the city of Florence:

Ad id provinciae diligenter accivit undequaque doctissimos et veterum autorum peritissimos viros quibus cum rerum scientia etiam satis esset eloquentia, Demetrium Chalcondylen, Marsilium Ficinum, Georgium Vespucium, Christophorum Landinum, Valorem, Angelum Politanum, Joannem Picum Mirandulae comitem, caeterosque orbis eruditissimos, quibus antiquorum solertia et arcana vetustas malignitate casuum oblitterata in lucem rediret.... Florentia illo aevo nihil erat floridius, in qua renascerentur optimarum artium quae ante cecidere omnia, nihil remansit intactum de linguis et literis, quo non exercerentur nobilissimi Florentini.³⁴

32 Iohannis a Trittenham, to Jacobus Tritemius, 1506, in Iohannis Trithemii...Opera Historica (Francofurti, 1601), p. 505.

33 Johann Reuchlin, #101 to Leonhard Widemann, October, 1508, in Johann Reuchlins Briefwechsel, ed. Ludwig Geiger (Tubingen, 1875), p. 104.

34 Johann Reuchlin, #238 to Leo X, March, 1517, ibid., pp. 268-69.

And, of course, Erasmus was well aware of the revival of ancient learning and was constantly on the lookout for any hindrances to its progress. As we shall see later, it was his fear that the Reformers were opposed to the humanistic studies which was in part responsible for his decision to break completely from the Reformation. Yet Melanchthon keenly followed the progress of the revival and wrote in praise of it:

Sed postquam Florentinorum beneficio honestae artes reviviscere coepere, magna utilitas inde ad omnes gentes derivata est, multorum ubique excitata sunt ingenia ad optimarum rerum studium. Nam et Latinos homines Graecorum aemulatio ad patriam linguam instaurandam, quae paene funditus conlapsa erat, exstimulavit. In urbibus leges publicae emendatae sunt, denique expurgata religio, quae iacebat ante monachorum somniis abruta et oppressa. Qua de re quamquam variant hominum iudicia, tamen ego sic existimo bonos viros rectius pervidere vim naturamque religionis hoc tempore firmiora solacia conscientiae tenere, quam fuerunt illa, quae paulo ante monachi traderunt. Non dubium est igitur, quin praeclare Florentia de omnibus gentibus merita est, quae litteras velut e naufragio in portum recepit conservavitque.³⁵

There is an amusing letter from Gargantua to his son Pantagruel in which he contrasts the state of learning when he went to school with the condition which now obtains in the scholarly world:

³⁵ Philippis Melanchthon, "In Laudem Novae Scholae," in Declamationes, (1526), ed. Karl Hartfelder (Berlin, 1891), I, 53-54. Cf. Faber Stapulensis, Commentarii Initiatorii in iv Evang. Praefatio, as cited in Documents Illustrative of the Continental Reformation, ed. Beverford J. Kidd (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1911), p. 545, n. 1.

That Time was darksome and savouring of the Misery and Calamity wrought by the Goths, who had entirely destroyed all good Literature; but by Divine Goodness, its own Light and Dignity had been in my Lifetime restored to Letters, and I see such Amendment therein, that at present I should hardly be admitted into the first Class of the little Grammar-boys, although in my youthful Days I was reputed, not without Reason, as the most learned of that Age....

But now all Methods of Teaching are restored; the Study of the Languages renewed--Greek (without which it is a Disgrace for a man to style himself a Scholar), Hebrew, Chaldean, Latin; Impressions of Books most elegant and correct are in use through Printing, which has been invented in my time by Divine Inspiration, as on the other side, Artillery has been invented by Devilish Suggestion.

All the World is full of knowing Folk, of most learned Preceptors, of most extensive Libraries, so that I am of Opinion that neither in the time of Plato nor Cicero nor Papinian was there ever such Conveniency for Study as is seen at this time. Nor must any hereafter adventure himself in Public or in any Company, who shall not have been well polished in the Workshop of Minerva. I do see Robbers, Hangmen, Freebooters, Grooms, of the present Age more learned than the Doctors and Preachers of my Time.³⁶

The delicious irony in the last part of the passage reveals a sense of humor rather lacking in the work of the other humanists. Though they experienced joy in their study of the ancient texts, it was a serious work and they took themselves seriously. Even their expressions of happiness have a formal air in keeping with the dignity of their profession. Thus Budé writes:

³⁶ Rabelais, "How Pantagruel, being at Paris, Received a Letter from his Father Gargantua, and the Copy Thereof," Rabelais the Five Books and Minor Writings together with Letters and Documents Illustrating his Life, tr. W. F. Smith (London, 1893), I, 246.

Graecarum uero literarum studium luculenter & passim apud nostros efflorescere, quod annos ego complureis sine aemulo deperieram (qui quidem certe quoque modo innotuerit) gaudio triumphabam. Iuuabat enim audire explosam non paucorum hominum disiectamque coitionem, facinorosam & capitalem qui literarum claritati denuo recens exortae, tenebras offundere cimmerias obstinauerant.³⁷

Vives gives a slightly different twist to the standard account of the revival of ancient learning. He begins in the conventional manner by attributing the revival to Petrarch who opened the closed libraries and shook the dust from off the works of the greatest writers. For this reason, Latin owes him a debt of gratitude, though to be sure, he is not as pure a Latinist as one could hope for, but this is owing to the squalor of the times; Boccaccio, he adds, is not to be compared to his master. Then, Vives goes on to say, there was a long silence until we reach the time of our grandfathers. In other words, Vives divides the era of the revival into two parts, the imperfect beginnings made by Petrarch, followed by an interval of almost two hundred years, and the more perfect Latinity of the present.³⁸

There is an interesting passage in John Palsgrave's dedication of The Comedy of Acolastus to Henry VIII. Shall

³⁷ Guillaume Budé, Librorum de Philologia Praefatio ad Henricum Avrelcensem, & Carolum Anglismensa, Regis Filios (Paris, 1533), p. 78.

³⁸ Juan Luis Vives, "De Tradendis Disciplines," (1531), Opera Omnia (Valentine Edetanorum, 1785), VI, 340.

I, he asks, be unable to do what Fullonius the Hollander was able to do, namely, make so fine a work as this because he was able to read the pure Latin authors who had been restored after the decay of the Latin tongue by the Goths, Vandals, and Longobardes, "...iii most barbarous nations, vtterly corrupted?" No, he resolves to learn how to read Latin well, and not only that, but to put the Latin into his native tongue, so that there may be made "...suche an establyshed mariage betwene the two tonges, as may be vnto such of your graces subiectes, as shall succede hereafter, not only stedy, agreed vpon, and permanent, but also an incredible furtheraunce to atteyn the pure latinitie by."³⁹ A more learned account of the revival of ancient learning is given by Thomas Campion:

Learning first flourished in Greece; from thence it was deriued vnto the Romaines, both diligent obseruers of the number and quantity of sillables, not in their verses only but likewise in their prose. Learning, after the declining of the Romaine Empire and the pollution of their language through the conquest of the Barbarians, lay most pitifully deformed till the time of Erasmus, Rewcline, Sir Thomas More, and other learned men of that age, who brought the Latine toong again to light, redeeming it with much labour out of the hands of the illiterate Monks and Friers: as a scoffing booke, entituled Epistolae obscurorum virorum, may sufficiently testifie.⁴⁰

³⁹ John Palsgrave, "To the Moste Excellent Prince...Henry the .viii.," in Prefaces Dedications Epistles Selected from Early English Books 1540-1701, ed. William C. Hazlitt (London, 1874), p. 10.

⁴⁰ Thomas Campion, "On English Verse," (1602), in Elizabethan Critical Essays, ed. George G. Smith (Oxford: Clarendon Press,

The criticism of the monks which Campion makes is no isolated statement and in a later section we shall see the extent of the attack on the monks of the Middle Ages.

Even that apostle of progress, the greatest defender of the moderns in the Renaissance, Louis Le Roy, felt compelled to acknowledge that the moderns owed much to the revival of ancient learning. After republican Rome had been changed into a monarchy, he writes, and as a consequence manners were corrupted, Latin itself was:

also changed and corrupted, losing his natural grace, & goodnes vnder the Emperours. Then the Empire being translated from Rome to Constantinople, many strange nations comming into Italy, altered the tongue, so that men left speaking it, & it remained in books only: which were not red, nor vnderstood, by the space of eight hundred yeres; some of them lost, others eaten by worms, and deuoured by age: til such time as some Greeks and Italians, did by study make these two auncient tongues to reuiue when they were almost dead: by copying out, publishing, and correcting the bookes that remained in some libraries, such as had bin preserued from the rage of those barbarous nations; which hath so happely succeeded, that the said tongues haue recouered great light, with the arts written in them; which we see restored with them; and many inuentions added to antiquitie as shalbe declared hereafter.⁴¹

1904), II, 329. Cf. Richard Mulcaster, The Educational Writings of Richard Mulcaster, (1532-1611), ed. James Oliphant (Glasgow, 1903), p. 182.

41 Louis Le Roy, Of the Interchangeable Covrse, or Variety of Things in the Whole World; and the Concvrrence of Armes and Learning, through the First and Famousest Nations; from the Beginning of Ciuility, and Memory of Man, to this Present. Moreover, Whether It Be True or No, That There Can Be Nothing Sayd, Which Hath Not Bin Said Heretofore: and That

The last remark is typical of Le Roy; he could not let slip an opportunity to praise the moderns even when he was speaking of the revival of the ancients. In a later passage he neatly turns the revival to the advantage of the moderns:

As the Tartarians, Turkes, Mammelucs, and Sophians, have gotten into the East by their valiancy the glorie of Armes, So haue we in these partes towards the West recouered within these two hundred yeares, the excellency of Learning; and set vp the studies of the sciences, after they had long time remained in a manner extinguished. Wherin by the industrious perseuerance, of diuers learned men, the matter hath had such good successe, that at this day our age may compare with the most learned that euer were. For now we see the tongues restored; and not onely the deeds and writings of the auncients brought to light; but also many other goodly things newly inuented. Sithence this time Grammar, Poesie, History, Rhetorick, and Logick haue bin beautified with innumerable expositions, adnotations, corrections, and translations. The Mathematicks were neuer better knowen; nor Astrology, Cosmography, and Nauigation better understood. Naturall Philosophy and Physicke, were not in greater perfection among the auncient Greekes, and Arabians; then they are at this present. The military armes, and instruments, were neuer soe forceable, and impetuous as they are now: nor the dexterity so great in the vse of them. The arts of painting, grauing, cutting, caruing, and building are almost brought to their perfection. And men haue so much laboured in knowledge of Law, and eloquence; that it is not possible, to doe more. The art of Politicke gouernment comprehending, and ruling them all (which seemed as it were laide aside) hath lately receiued great light. Moreouer Theology or Diuinity the worthiest of al, which was much obscured by the

We Ought by Our Owne Inuentions to Augment the Doctrine of the Auncients; not Contenting Ourselues with Translations, Expositions, Corrections, and Abridgments of their Writings,
tr. Robert Ashley (London, 1594), p. 35r.

sophisters, hath bin very much lightened by the knowledge of the Greeke and Hebrew; and the auncient Doctors of the church, which lay in obscurity in the libraries haue likewise bein brought to light: Vnto which worke the Art of Printing hath bin a great helpe; and made the encrease thereof much easier. Seeing then that by the course of things, and succession of time we are come to this age, we wil henceforth consider it not by the particular excellencies of countries; but by the memorable things done or happened, during this space of time, throughout Europe, Asia, Africke, and the New-Found lands, in the East, West, North, and South: and by such graces, as it hath pleased God to imparte, to speciall parsons, in this season, throughout the seuerall countries of the habitable earth.

And as we haue marked thother ages by some famous warriour, and notable power that hath bin in euery mutation; so it seemeth that the meruailles of this age ought to begin in the great and inuincible TAMBERLAN, who affrighted the world with the terrors of his name, about the yere of Christ 1400.⁴²

It is evident that Le Roy has here worked out a comprehensive theory of the Renaissance. He makes the revival of learning part of a larger process which has taken place in all the civilized countries of the world and in many different disciplines. Not only has the narrow field of philology been revived and brought to a flourishing state, but the arts and sciences also show a brilliance never seen before. Moreover, had it not been for the revival of languages, a reformation in religion could not have come about, but even the knowledge of the old languages which brought to light the

⁴² Louis Le Roy, *ibid.*, pp. 107r-107v.

writings of the fathers and made possible a critical approach to the Testaments would not have been so far reaching in its consequences if it had not been for the modern invention of printing. In short, the Renaissance is seen to be all of a single piece, an all inclusive movement composed of many currents of ideas and activities which brought about a distinctive era in human history. Implicit in Le Roy's statement is the idea of progress and we shall see in a later section the importance of this idea to the theory of the Renaissance in the Renaissance.

The revival of ancient learning is celebrated in poetry. M. Antonius Flaminius has written a poetical summary of the course of the revival:

Farnesi pater omnium leporum
Hos tibi lepidissimos poetas
Dono, tempora quos tulere nostra,
Fortunata nimis, nimis beata
Nostra tempora, quae suos Catullos
Tibullos, & Horatios, suosque
Marones genuere. quis putasset,
Post tot saecula tam tenebricosa,
Et tot Ausoniae graues ruinas
Tanta lumina tempore vno in vna
Tam breui regione Transpadana
Oriri potuisse? quae vel ipsa
Sola, barbarie queant fugata
Suum reddere litteris Latinis
Splendorem, veterumque dignitatem,
Salute ò decus, ò perennis aevi
Nostrae gloria candidi poetae,
Quos nouem in tenero suo sorores,
Nutruere finu, suoque digna
Choro Captatio loqui dedere.⁴³

⁴³ M. Antonius Flaminius, "Ad Alexandrum Farnesium Card.,"
M. Antonii Flamini Carminum Liber Secundus Epistolas

That the writers of the Renaissance had a deep interest in the revival of classical learning there can be no doubt. From the middle of the fourteenth century to the end of the sixteenth, we find a steady stream of comment by the humanists of all countries. The course of the revival was traced, its most important initiators given praise, its importance discussed over and over again with never failing enthusiasm. The interesting point is that there is rather substantial agreement on the main facts of the story. The revival took place in the time of Petrarch or a little later and Petrarch was generally considered responsible for it. For the most part, no distinction is made between Greek and Roman authors; it was enough that the ancients had been brought to light. As a matter of fact, the revival is seen largely in terms of a restoration of pure Latinity, rather than in the recovery of Greek and Hebrew, though both receive their share of attention. It is noticeable that there is very little theorizing about the spirit of ancient culture; the ancients are considered a good in themselves and therefore no need is felt to justify the time and labor spent in studying them. With the exception of Le Roy, the writers of the

Continens in Carmina Qvingve Illvstrivm Poetarvm (Florence, 1552), pp. 182-83. Cf. Angelo Politiano, "Oratio in Expositione Homerii," Opervum (Lugduni, 1546), III, 59-60; Baldassare Castiglione, The Book of the Courtier...Done into English by Sir Thomas Hoby Anno 1561, ed. W. B. Drayton Henderson (London, 1928), pp. 54-55.

Renaissance look backward to a past era in which letters flourished. At the most, they think that they have created a period perhaps equal to that of the ancients, but it is the rare exception who thinks that the moderns have gone beyond the ancients in pursuit of the humane studies. It should be pointed out, however, that this attitude is characteristic of the humanists; there was another group of men who thought in other terms and who preached the doctrine of the superiority of the moderns not on the basis of polite letters but because of the advances made by science. In any case, it seems natural for the humanists to think in terms of what they themselves were doing. Their aim was to recover as many of the lost texts as they could find, to edit them carefully, and to appreciate their choice language. As to the use they made of the ideas in the writings they studied, that of course is another matter which does not concern us here. But it is important to recognize that there is no conscious attempt to study the ancients for ideas, though this is not to say that the need for new ideas may not have been a strong impulse which stimulated the revival of the ancients. The point I am making is that there seems to be no self-conscious effort along those lines exhibited by the humanists in the books cited above. In the passages quoted, the emphasis is on the philological as distinct from the ideological aspect of the ancient

documents. The revival of ancient learning seemed to slake a great thirst and the writers of the Renaissance took great gulps without paying much attention to such differences as those between different eras in the history of Greek culture or between Greek and Latin culture. Nor did they stop to argue why it was a good thing that the ancient texts should be restored; the mere fact that what had been lost for so many centuries, as they thought, should now be brought to life was enough to absorb their entire energies. In short, the revival of ancient learning was exactly what its name implies: the finding of what was once lost, and the time for critical appreciation was not yet due. The ancients were often praised not because of any special qualities they were thought to possess but simply because they were the ancients. Working from such premises, it was enough that the writers of the Renaissance should devote their efforts to the recovery and editing of the works of ancient learning.

IV. Renaissance Datings of the Renaissance

One of the most striking features of the Renaissance theory of the Renaissance is the assurance with which dates were set for it. It would seem that there was no hesitation in ascribing a terminus a quo by the writers of the Renaissance themselves. If we take the following

remarks of Coluccio Salutati as indicating that the Renaissance was about to take place or was just in the process of starting, we shall have a convenient place to begin a list of Renaissance datings:

I rejoice not so much in the honour I received from your notice, as for the interests of literature. At a time when the study of the Greek language is nearly lost, and the minds of men are wholly ingrossed by ambition, voluptuousness, or avarice, you appear as the messengers of Divinity, bearing the torch of knowledge in the midst of our darkness.⁴⁴

Following is a list, chronologically arranged, of Renaissance datings of the Renaissance:

Coluccio Salutati: "emerserunt parumper nostro seculo studia litterarum," op. cit., III, 84. 1395.

Coluccio Salutati: "...nec in aliquo videmus nostri temporis tantarum totque rerum esse noticiam, quot et quantarum fuisse decrevimus in antiquis. floruit proculdubio seculum illud priscum omni studio litterarum et adeo in eloquentia valuit, quod non potuerit imitatrix quanvis et studiosa posteritas illem dicendi maiestatem et culmen eloquentie conservare," op. cit., III, 79-80. 1395.

Gasparino Barzizza: "...tamen propter incredibilem, ac prope singularem animi tui Sapientiam tantam spem nostris rebus dies hodiernus attulit, ut illa hoc tuo adventu nunc primum spiritum resumere, & quasi reviviscere nobis videatur," op. cit., I, 18. 1412.

Matteo Palmieri: "...the neglect of letters and all liberal studies had lasted for eight hundred years...", Wallace K. Ferguson, op. cit., pp. 22-23. c. 1440.

Leonardo Bruni Aretino: "Chrysoloras Byzantius, vir magnus quidem ac prope singularis, disciplinam Graecarum litterarum in Italiam retullit, quarum cognitio,

⁴⁴ Coluccio Salutati to Demetrius Cydonius, cited in William Roscoe, op. cit., II, 57.

quae quidem liberaliter erudita foret, septingentos iam annos nulla nostros apud homines habebatur," Bruni Humanistisch-Philosophische Schriften, ed. Hans Baron, cited by Wallace K. Ferguson, op. cit., p. 22, n. 64. c. 1440.

Leonardo Bruni Aretino: "Litterae quoque per huius belli intercapedines mirabile quantum per Italiam increvere, accedente tunc primum cognitione litterarum graecarum, quae septingentis iam annis apud nostros homines desierant esse in usu," op. cit., p. 431. c. 1440.

Officials of Oxford University: "Patrocinio vestro Graece, que multis jam seculis littere sepulte fuerant, revixere. Nunc Grecos philosophos...", op. cit., I, 203. 1441.

Officials of Oxford University: "Hic enim prisca Graeci Latiniq[ue] sermonis majestas, quam incuria hominum infinitis pene seculis obscuraverat, patrocinio vestro in lucem traducta reflorescit," op. cit., I, 245. 1445.

Ghiberti: "...then followed six hundred years devoid of all art until the Byzantines introduced the awkward maniera Greca; finally came the revival of natural painting with the masterful work of Cimabue and Giotto...", Wallace K. Ferguson, op. cit., p. 27. a. 1455.

Lorenzo Valla: "Cvm saepe mecum nostrorum maiorum res gestas, aliquorumque uel regum, uel populorum considero, uidentur mihi non modo ditionis nostri homines, uerum etiam lingua spagatione caeteris omnibus antcelluisse," op. cit., p. 8. a. 1457.

Guillaume Fichet: "De studior humanitatis restitutone loquor. Quibus (q̄tū ipse coniectura capio) magnum lumen nouor librario genus attulit. quos nra memoria (sicut qdam equus troianus) quoquouerso effudit germania," op. cit., p. 2. 1472.

Bartolommeo Sacchi: "...the Greek and Latin tongues, which had lain hid for six hundred years, at last regained their splendor...", op. cit., p. 63. a. 1481.

Erasmus: "At nunc, si vltra tercentum aut ducentos annos caelaturas, picturas, sculpturas, aedificia, fabricas et omnium denique officiorum monimenta inspicias, puto et admiraberis et ridebis nimiam artificum

resticitatem, cum mostro rursus aeuo nihil sit artis quod non opificum effinxerit industria," op. cit., I, 108. 1489?

Iohannis a Trittenham: "Hac nostra tempestate diuino quodam menere in rei literariae remedium datus, omnes philosophiae partes à caliginosa quorundam sophistarum barbarie vendicauit," op. cit., p. 403. 1492.

Angelo Politiano: "... & uos hi estis F. v. quorum in ciuitate Graeca omnis eruditio, iampridem in ipsa Graecia extincta, sic reuixerit, atque effloruerit; ut & uestri iam homines Graecam publice literaturam profiteantur; & primae nobilitatis pueri, id quod mille retró annis in Italia contigit nunquam, ita sincere Attico sermone, ita facile, expediteque loquantur, ut non deletae iam Athenae, atque a Barbaris occipatae, sed ipsae sua sponte cum proprio auulsae solo, cumque omni (ut sic dixerim) sua supellectile, in Florentinam urbem immigrasse, eique se totas, penitusque infundisse uideantur," op. cit., III, 59-60. a. 1494.

Vespasiano Da Bisticci: "In this age all the seven liberal arts have been fruitful in men of distinction, not only in Latin, but also in Hebrew and Greek;...", op. cit., p. 14. a. 1498.

Vespasiano Da Bisticci: "...it was firmly held by all men of learning that Friar Ambrogio and Messer Lionardo had revived the Latin tongue which had been dead and buried for a thousand years or more," op. cit., p. 211. a. 1498.

Iohannis a Trittenham: "Inopiam librorum veteres allegare potuerunt, nos vero potuis in opes copia facti, quoniam impressoria nostris diebus arte apud Moguntiacum inuenta, hodieque per orbem vniuersum dilatata, tot veterum atque nouorum volumina doctorum ueniunt in lucem, vt aere iam modico doctus quilibet esse possit," op. cit., p. 505. 1506.

François Tissard: "Ajourd'hui s'ouvre le chemin par où nous pourrons leur enlever cette palme des mains. A cette enterpris est promis un facile et prochain succès, si vous voulez. Travaillons donc de concert. Aidons-nous les uns les autres. Et ainsi, après avoir parcouru les éléments du grec, chacun de vous, par son zèle et son travail augmentera, pour ainsi dire, le Gymnase antique et l'Académie d'Athènes, si bien que les Italiens succomberont facilement

dans les lettres grecques et latines, et les céderont enfin aux Français," Hubert Gillot, op. cit., pp. 24-25. 1507.

Johann Reuchlin: "Virorum omnium et integerrime et doctissime mirum in modum gratulor aetati huic nostrae, qua bonae literae quae diu intermortuae sepultaeque fuere, reviviscunt, et in lucem prodeunt: tibi vero vel quam maxime, quippe qui tam de bonis literis meritus sis, quam alius nostro aevo nemo," op. cit., p. 104. 1508.

Erasmus: "Sed tamen in praesentia pene libeat aliquantisper rejuvenescere non ob aliud nisi quod videam futurum ut propediem, aureum quoddam saeculum exoriatur," cited in H. Maynard Smith, Pre-Reformation England (London, 1938), p. 419, n. 3. 1517.

Erasmus: "Video, video prorsus seculum quoddam aureum exoriri, si principibus aliquammultis tuus iste incessat animus," op. cit., III, 588. 1519.

Faber Stapulensis: "Redeunte, inquam, Evangelii luce, quae sese tandem mundo rursum hac tempestate insinuat, qua plerique divina luce illustrati sunt: adeo ut praeter alia multa a tempore Constantini, quo primitiva illa quae paulatim declinabat, desit Ecclesia, non fuerit maior linguarum cognitio, non maior orbis detectio, non ad longinquiora terrarum spatia quam temporibus istis nominis Christi propagatio. Linguarum enim cognitio et maxime Latinae et Graecae (nam postea Hebraicarum litterarum studium a Iohanne Capnione excitatum est) circa tempora Constantinopoleos ab hostibus Christi expugnatae redire coepit: paucis Graecis, nimirum Bessarione, Theodore Gaxa, Georgio Trapezuntio, Emmanuele Chrysolora, illiac in Italiam receptis," op. cit., p. 545, n. 1. 1522.

Juan Luis Vives: "Hinc longo intervallo est descendendum ad proxima nostrae aetatis; Franciscus Petrarcha, ab hinc annos paullo plures ducentis, bibliothecas tamdiu clausas reseravit primus, et pulverem situmque e monumentis maximorum auctorum excussit;...", op. cit., VI, 340. 1531.

François Rabelais: "Qui fit, Tiraquelle, doctissime, ut in hac tanta seculi nostri luce, quo disciplinas omneis meliores singulari quodam deorum munere postliminio receptas videmus, passim inveniantur, quibus sic affectis esse contigit, ut e densa illa gothici

temporis caligine plus quam Cimmeria ad conspicuam solis facem oculos attollere aut nolint, aut nequeant?" Oeuvres de Rabelais, ed. MM. Burgaud des Marets et Rathery (Paris, 1858), II, 582. 1532.

Guillaume Budé: "Graecarum uero literarum studium luculenter & passim apud nostros efflorescere, quod annos ego complureis sine aemulo deperieram (qui quidem certe quoque modo innotuerit) gaudio triumphabam," op. cit., p. 78. 1533.

Estienne Dolet: "Sed tamen antiquam uocum huc pertinentium significationes, usumque demonstrem, literarum dignitati nostra aetate tam feleciter, atque eximie efflorscenti gratulabor:....," Commentarium Linguae Latinae (Lvgovni, 1536), I, 1156. 1536.

Andreas Vesalius: "But when medicine in the great blessedness of this age, which the gods will to entrust to the divine guidance of your royal power, had, together with all studies, begun to live again and to lift its head up from its utter darkness....," "The preface of Andreas Vesalius to his own books on the mechanism of the human body," tr. B. Farrington, Proc. Roy. Soc. of Med., XXV (1932), 1361. 1543.

Lilius Gregorius Gyraldus: "Videtis enim nostram hanc aetatem on senio languidam atque defectam, ut ingrati guidem deflent, cum in omni poetica et dicendi arte viros excellentes protulisse tum in reliquis bonis artibus;....," op. cit., p. 10. 1545.

Henry Parker, Lord Morley: "...in processe aboute the yere of our lorde God a thousand foure hundrith, in the time of the floure and honour of prynces, kynge Edwarde the thyrde of that name, holdynge by ryghte the septrer of thys imperiall realme, as your Grace nowe dothe, there sprange in Italy three excellente clerkes. The fyrst was Dante,.... The next unto thys Dante was Frauncis Petrak,.... The last of thies three, most gratiouse sovereigne Lorde, was John Bocas of Certaldo," John Bocasses his Booke Intitlede in the Latyne Tunge De Praeclaris Mulieribus in Dante in English Literature from Chaucer to Cary, ed. Paget Toynbee (London, 1909), I, 34-35. c. 1545.

Estienne Pasquier: "J'adjousteray encore à vostre discours, par maniere de remplissage, que dedans la mesme centaine d'années dont parlez, qui est l'an mil cinq cents, se trouverent, en matiere de sciences, trois grands hommes (appelez les Innovateurs, ou Heretiques, si voulez) qui voulurent troubler

l'ancienneté," Oeuvres d'Estienne Pasquier (Amsterdam, 1723), II, 605. c. 1550.

M. Antonius Flaminius: "Farnesi pater omnium leporum/Hos tibi lepidissimos poetas/Donc, tempora quos tulere nostra,/Fortunata nimis, nimis beata/Nostra tempora,...," op. cit., p. 182. 1552.

R. Braham: "Neuertheless, lykewyse as it hapned ye same Chaucer to lease us prayse of that tyme wherin he wrote, beyng then when in dede al good letters were almost aslepe, so farre was the grosenesse and barbarousnesse of that age from the vnderstandinge of so deuyne a wryter, that, if it had not bene to this our time, wherin all kides of learnynge (thancked be god) haue as much floryshed as euer they did by any former dayes within this realme,...," Lydgate's Troy-Book, in William C. Hazlitt, op. cit., pp. 18-19. 1555.

F. Alvarez: "Car qui voudra considérer de près, trouvera que jamais un siècle passé ne fut si abondant en matières dignes d'être magnifiées par écrit, que celles qui depuis cinquante ans sont advenues dans notre Europe, ni plus nécessaires d'être transmises à la postérité par vraie écriture, par de doctes et de véritables personnages," Historiale Description de l'Ethiopie, cited in Geoffroy Atkinson, Les nouveaux horizons de la Renaissance Française (Paris, 1935), p. 262. 1558.

Jacques Amyot: "...que ce grand roy François vostre feu pere avoit heureusement fondé et commencé de faire renaistre et florir en ce noble royaume des bonnes lettres,...," Les vies des hommes illustres Grecs et Romains Pericles et Fabius Maximus, ed. Louis Clement (Paris, 1906), c. 1558.

Francesco Guicciardini: "It is certain, that for above a thousand years back...Italy had at no time enjoy'd a State of such compleat Prosperity and Repose, as in the year 1490; and some Time befoe and after," The History of Italy from the Year 1490, to 1532. Written in Italian by Francesco Guicciardini, a Nobleman of Florence, tr. Austin Parke Goddard (London, 1753), I, 3. 1561.

Giovanni Michele Bruto: "Accedebat ad haec propensio in doctos homines quaedam singularis, quorum magno consensu, vni vindicata studia literarum a superiorum temporum barbarie, quae iam pridem liberales artes omnes inquinauerat, tribuebantur," Ioannis Michaelis Brvti Florentinae Historiae Libri Octo (Lvgdvni, 1562), p. 19. 1562.

Louis Le Roy: "Car depuis cent ans, non seulement les choses qui étoient auparavant couvertes par les ténèbres de l'ignorance sont venues en évidence, mais aussi plusieurs autres choses ont été connues qui avoient été entièrement ignorées des anciens:...", Considération sur l'histoire universelle, cited in Geoffroy Atkinson, op. cit., p. 404. 1567.

Louis Le Roy: "...so it seemeth that the meruailles of this age might begin in the great and unuincible TAMERLAN, who afrighted the world with the terrour of his name, about the yere of Christ 1400," op. cit., p. 107v. 1577.

Louis Le Roy: "...and finallie in this age, in which we see almost all auncient, liberal, and Mechanical arts to be restored with the tongues: after that they had been lost almost twelue hundred yeares, and other new, inuented in their places," op. cit., p. 17v. 1577.

George Best: "By this discourse and Mapped, is to be seene, the valiante courages of men in this later age, within these .80. years, that haue so much enlarged the boundes of the Worlde, that now we haue twice and thrice so much scope for oure earthlie peregrination, as we haue hadde in times past,...," The Three Voyages of Martin Frobisher...from the Original 1578 Text of George Best, ed. Vilhjalmur Steffanson and Eloise McCaskill (London, 1938), I, 32. 1578.

Jean Bodin: "...Machiauellus, primus quidem, vt opinor, post annos mille circiter ac ducentos, quam barbaries omnia cumularat, de Republica scripsit, quae omnium ore circumferuntur:...", Methodus ad Facilem Historiarum Cognitionem (Lyons, 1583), p. 150. 1583.

Nicodemus Frischlin: "Inuenias quosdam, qui ignoro quo superstitionis genere fascinati, etiam nostra hac aestate, in tanta omnium rerum luce & veritate, ad fictitium Fortunae numen recurrunt:...", Operum Poeticorum Frischline, Balingensis (Argentorati, 1598), p. 2r. 1598.

Giovanni Pierio Valeriano Bolzani: "Longe igitur miserius atque flebilius est, per universam etiam Europam aetate nostra bonas literas ita fatorum inclementia vexatas, ut nulla jam provincia sit, civitas nulla,

nullum oppidum, in quo quadragesimo abhinc anno non aliqua insignis calamitas in hoc hominum genus incuberit. Ita nostro saeculo tempestas haec in optimos quosque effusa est, atque adeo non nostras tantum regiones, sed & universum terrarum orbem, omnisariae doctrinae luminibus orbavit," De Literatorvm Infelicitate Libri Duo (Amstelodami, 1647), p. 11. a. 1599.

These forty-five representative passages from the writers of the Renaissance show a surprising unanimity. For most of these writers, the revival of the ancients is taking place "in our time," and though our time may range from the middle of the fourteenth century to the end of the sixteenth, nevertheless it refers to a set of events in process of being. This is so because the events which are taken to constitute the Renaissance are always described in the same manner regardless of date. In other words, according to contemporaries, the Renaissance was in continuous existence for over two centuries. And it is important to note that as soon as we take the turn into the seventeenth century, the Renaissance is spoken of as an event in the past, as we shall see in the next chapter, whereas in the passages considered here it is referred to as something which either happened in the previous generation at the most or within the author's life time. Even when the beginning is set at Petrarch, one is made aware that Petrarch was merely the initiator and that the events he set in motion are taking place at the very time the author is writing. In short, there is

a feeling of unity brought about by the possession of a common aim which knitted the writers of the Renaissance together and which made them see it as a continuous process lasting over two centuries.

V. The History of the Renaissance

As can be seen from the above citations, the history of the course of the revival of the fine arts and of ancient learning has had to be pieced together from the writings of many humanists of many lands and working over a long span of time to provide a full picture of the extent and quality of the discussion of the restoration of the humanities. There were no full length studies of the Renaissance because the concept of cultural history had not yet been developed sufficiently; for the most part, history writing was primarily concerned with political and social events as distinct from cultural and ideological phenomena. This does not mean, however, that significant cultural factors were neglected; the body of discussion relative to the revival of the arts and learning is proof enough of that. What was lacking was a single work devoted solely to the consideration of the Renaissance. However, there were five writers who approach to something like a unified discussion of the cultural revival, though to be sure, their treatment of the subject is found in works

whose primary object is something else. Nevertheless, because these passages are so comprehensive and since there is reason to suppose that later writers drew upon them for information about the course of the revival, they assume an importance out of proportion to their length.

Flavio Biondo sums up the course of the revival as it had progressed to about the middle of the fifteenth century. In a passage crammed with information which later writers found useful, he writes:

Genuit etiam eodem tempore Ioannem grammaticum rhetoremque doctissimum, quem solitus dicere fuit Leonardus Aretinus omni in re sed potissime in hac una grauissimus locupletissimusque testis, fuisse primum a quo eloquentiae studia tantopere nunc florentia longo postliminio in Italiam fuerint reducta, digna certe cognitio, quae a nobis nunc illustranda Italia in medium adducant. Vident intelliguntque Latinas literas uero & suo cum sapore degustant, paucos ac prope nullos post doctorum ecclesiae Ambrosii Hieronymi & Augustini, quae & eadem inclinantis Romanorum imperij tempora fuerunt, aliquali cum elegantia suispsisse, nisi illis propinqui temporib. Beatus Gregorius ac uenerabilis Beda, & qui longo post tempore fuit beatus Bernardus, in predictorum numero sint ponendi. primus uero omnium Francisus Petrarca magno uir ingenio maioreque diligintia & poesim & eloquentia excitare coepit, nec tamen is attigit Ciceroniane eloquentiae florem, quo multos in hoc seculo uidemus ornatos, in quo quidem nos librorum magisquam ingenij carentiam defectumque culpamus: ipse emm & si epistolas Ciceronis Lentulo inscriptas Vercellis reperisse gloriatus est, tres Ciceronis de Oratore & Institutionum Oratoriarum Quintiliani libros non nise laceros mutilatosque uidit, ad cuius notitiam Oratoris maioris & Bruti de Oratoribus claris, item Ciceronis libri nulla tenus peruenerunt. Ioannes aut Rauenna, Petrarcham senem puer nouit, nec dictos aliter que Petrarca

uidit libros, neque aliquid quod sciamus a se scriptum reliquit, & tamen suoapte ingenio & quodam dei munere, sicut fuit solitus dicere Leonardus, eum Petrum Paulumque Vergerium, Omnebonum schola Patauinum, Robertum Rossum, & Iacobum Angeli filium Florentinos, Poggiumque, Guarinum Veronessem, Victorinum Feltrensem, ac alios qui minus prosecerunt auditores suos, si non quod plene nesciebat docere potuit, in bonarum ut dicebat literarum amorem Ciceronisque imitationem inflammabat. Interea Emanuel Chrysolora Constantinopolitanus uir doctrina & omni uirtute excellentissimis, quum se in Italiam contulisset partim Venetijs, partim Florentiae, partim in curia, quam secutus, est Romana praedictos pene omnes Ioannis Rauennatis auditores literas docuit Graecas: effectique eius doctrina paucis tam continuata annis, ut qui Graecas nescirent literas Latinis uiderent indoctiores.

Then follows a long list in which the leading humanists are named and the works of the ancient authors they edited mentioned. Biondo continues:

quo ex tot librorum ipsius eloquentiae somitum allato, nostris hominibus adiumento factum uidemus, ut maior meliorque ea quam Petrarcha habuit dicendi copia in nostram peruenerit aetatem. nec paruum fuit cum adiumentum ad discendum eloquentiam, tum etiam incitamentum Graecarum accessio literarum, quod qui eas didicere praeter doctrinam & ingentem historiarum exemplorumque copiam inde comparatam, conati sunt multa ex Graecis in Latinetem uertere, in quo usu aut assiduitate scribendi reddiderunt quam habebant eloquentiam meliorem, aut qui nullam prius habebant, inde aliquam effecerunt. Hinc serbuerunt diu magisque nunc ac magis seruent per Italiam gymnasia, plerique sunt ciuitatibus ludi, in quibus pulcerrimum iucundumque est uidere discipulos, ne dum post quam sunt dimissi, sed quosque etiam sub ipsa ferula declamant & scribunt, praecipitantes dicendi scribendique elegantia superare. Ex his autem quos Ioanni nostro Rauennati diximus fuisse discipulos duo aetate priores, Guarinus & Victorinus, hic Mantuae ille Venetijs, Veronae, Florentiae & demum Ferrariiae infinitam pene turba & in his Ferrarienses Mantuanosque principes erudierunt. Georgius Trapezuntius publico Romae gymnasio Hispanos, Gallos, Germanosque multos,

ut qui nonnulli aliquando sunt magni praestantesque uiri, simul cum Italicis oratoriae ac poetice auditores habet.⁴⁵

I have quoted this passage at some length because it shows so clearly in what detail the events of the Renaissance were followed and recorded. Where similarity of language is as great as it is with the writers of the Renaissance, it is unsafe to look for sources, but I venture to suggest that writers on the revival of ancient learning after Biondo leaned heavily on his work. In his Historiarvm ab Inclinatione Romanorum. Libri XXI, Biondo traces the course of letters from the fall of the Roman empire to the present when the glory of Rome is revived and all the arts flourish once more. He generously praises all the cities of Italy where learning now flourishes, but reserves his greatest praise for Rome.⁴⁶

Just as Biondo sums up the knowledge of the course of the revival in the middle of the fifteenth century, so does Estienne Dolet collect all the information available by the middle of the sixteenth century. Almost an exact century separates Dolet from Biondo, so that in

45 Flavio Biondo, "Italia Illustrata, siue Lustrata," Blondi Flavii Forliviensis. De Roma Triumphate.... Romae Instauratae.... De Origine.... Venetorum.... Italia Illustrata.... Historiarvm ab Inclinatione Ro. Imperio (Basle, 1559), pp. 346-47.

46 Flavio Biondo, "Historiarvm Blondi Forliviensis ab Inclinatione Imperij Romanorum. Decadis Primae, Liber Tertiae," ibid., pp. 30-31.

Dolet's Commentarium Linguae Latinae we have a means of checking on the question whether the Renaissance attitude toward the revival of ancient learning had changed in the course of its development or whether the main outlines of the story remained constant and merely the details were amplified and new information added. Under the heading of "Literae," Dolet writes:

Verbis motus, & otij eo, qui supra positus est, ordine explicatis, nunc ad aliud, quod ab otio pendet, uelut tracti uenimus. Nimirum rem literarum tractare incipimus otio plane adhaerentem, & otio magnam, sine otio nullam. Sed tamen antequam uocum nunc pertinentium significationes, usumque demonstrem, literarum dignitati nostra aetate tam feliciter, atque eximie efflorescenti gratulabor: quarum studia hoc tempore tantis omnium conatibus ubique coluntur, ut quo minus antiquorum gloriam consequamur, nihil desit praeter antiquam ingeniorum libertatem, & artium cum laude exercendarum facultatem. Deest quoque potentium erga doctos amor, deest liberalitas, atque humanitas: deest ad ingenia excitanda, & acuendos studiorum labores Moecenatum fauor, deest eloquentiae ostendendae organum, Senatus aliquis Romanus, atque Resp. in quo propositus sit suus eloquentiae honos, & tributae quondam laudes, quae uel hebetes ad dicendum excitarent: bene natos, & ingenio felici praeditos magis, magisque, incenderet. Pro ijs ad artes amplexandas inuitationibus nonnullos saepe a studijs retardare solet artium apud multos contemptio, in uirtutis amatores risus, seredus sine ulla praemij spe, aut expectatione studiorum labor, degenda sine honore uita, subeundae multorum contumeliae, toleranda Barbarorum tyrannis, atque insoletia, saepe in periculum, & extremum discrimen nonime literarum adducta salus, Quae tamen horum temporum uitia non ita longe ab Europae finibus uirtutem ablegarunt, ut uirtutis amore flagrantibus multos ubique locorum non uideas. Atque tametsi diuturna, & aspera fuit abhinc centum annos Barbarie, & infantia colluctatio, dubiaque saepe ab nimias Barbarorum curis,

potentiamque uictoria, uicit tamen tandem uirtutis
cohors. Acie prima uiam ui secit, aditusque rupit
Lavrentius Valla aequalium suorum centurijs adiutus.
Sed haec fuit tanquam leuis armaturae prima excursio:
eminus magis, quam cominus ad extremum actum est.
Quamquam & uia ui facta & aditus rupti, non tamen
satis Barbariei commota ab hoste cornua. Laurentij
Vallae, & illius aequalium conatus in Barbariem a
Barbaries ducibus iam pene fractos sustentauit
sequens Angeli Politiani, Hermolai Barbari, Pici
Mirandulae, Volaterani, Caelij Rhodigini, Sabellici,
Criniti, Philelphi, Marsilij Ficini, & illorum
illustrium uirorum aetas: quae in Barbariem se
sensim colligentem, & uires recuperantem, quos
modo recensuimus, immisit, eloquentiae armis satis
probe instructos & ad propulsandam Barbariem strenue
animatos illos quidem. Attamen conatibus immortui
uires Barbariae tantum certe impulerunt: non Bar-
baros omnes ad internicionem fuderunt. Integrum
ab ea pugna mansit dextrum Barbariei cornu, sinistro
solum caeso. Ac ecce tibi belli literarij fulmina
tum ex Italiae, tum ex Germaniae, Britanniae, His-
panie, Galliaeque partibus in Barbariem adhuc
stantem ruunt, cristas adhuc iactantem, & osten-
tantem quatiunt, concussam, & manus tandem dedentem
in triumpham ducunt.⁴⁷

Then follows a list of Italian, German, English, Spanish,
and French humanists, numbering over one hundred men. "Ex
Italia iampridem abijet," continues Dolet:

e Germania excessit, et Britannia eausit, ex
Hispania erupit, e Gallia explosa, atque eiecta
est. Carent omnes Europae urbes tam horrendo
prodigio. Coluntur, ut cum maxime, literae:
efflorescunt artium omnium studia: omnes ad
ueri, aequique cognitionem (quae tandiu iacuit)
literarum praesidio euehuntur. Nunc se noscere
mortales didicerunt: nunc in rerum omnium luce
uersantur, qui antea tenebris obducti ad omnia
misere caecutiebant. Nunc demum a brutis uere
differre uidentur animo tam diligenter artibus
exculpto, & sermonis (quo nos a beluis maxime
distare & secerni uolunt) splendore tam accurate
comparato. Literis igitur iure non gratuler?
quae & suam pristinam gloriam recuperarunt, &

⁴⁷ Estienne Dolet, Commentarium Linguae Latinae (Lvcovni,
1536), I, 1156-57.

uitam hominum (quod literarum proprium est) tantis bonis tam cumulate beant? Extinguerentur modo quorundam Barbare. & sine disciplinis educatorum in literas, & literatos inuidia: expellerentur istae hominum pestes: quid tum quisquam ad huius aetatis felicitatem desideraret? At tandem conuenescet perditorum autoritas, & quae hoc tempore recte, literateque instituitur iuuentus, cum literarum dignitate crescet, literarum hostes de gradu deiiciet, publica munera obibit. Regibus in consilijs aderit, rebus gerendis praeficietur, recte omnia administrabit: literas, quibuscum creuerit, inter omnes uigere uolet, quae uitia uitanda monent, uirtutis amorem generant: quae uirtutis, iustitiae, reuerentisque studiosos, atque obseruantes undique a Regibus ascicendos, Regibus habendos, & retinendos iubent: uitiosos homines, assentatores, adultores, uoluptatum administratos (quibus Regum aulae scatent) ut uenenum, sugiendos, arcendosque praecipiant.⁴⁸

Allowing for differences in temperament and bias, it does not seem to me that there is a great difference in the way Biondo and Dolet tell the story of the revival of ancient learning. It is true that Dolet does not mention Petrarch but he plunges into the center of humanistic activity immediately, without paying regard to the forerunners. However, in the general outlines of the history, he is in agreement with Biondo but amplifies the work of the Italian historian and brings the tale up to date.

Louis Le Roy's account of the history of the revival of ancient culture is a combination of the materials supplied by Biondo and Dolet, with an unacknowledged quotation from Vives as well. According to Le Roy, the restitution of tongues began in the reign of Tamberlain and was the

⁴⁸ Estienne Dolet, *ibid.*, p. 1158.

accomplishment of Petrarch who was followed by John of Ravenna whose pupils and followers in the study of the Latin tongue included Bruni, Filelfus, Valla, Poggio, Da Feltra, and Biondo. Soon after came Chrysoloras who taught the students of John of Ravenna Greek which had been supposedly unknown in Italy for over seven hundred years. Le Roy mentions the other learned Greeks who taught in Italy: Bessarion, Gemistus, Trapezuntius, Gaza, Lascaris, Chalcondilus, and others. Not only did the Italians take advantage of the opportunity to study the long dead classical authors but Frenchmen, Dutchmen, Flemings, Englishmen, Scots, Poles, Hungarians, and Spaniards flocked to Italy to study the ancients. Then follows a long list of humanists, warriors, philosophers, writers of Latin, poets, historians, civilians, physicians, mathematicians, painters, sculptors, engravers, architects, antiquaries, and navigators of all nations who made the sixteenth century great; as usual, Le Roy shifts from an account of the revival of the classical authors to praise modern times.⁴⁹ Somewhat more specialized are the writings of Gyraldus and Scaliger for they treat of the revival of poetry. Gyraldus is not unaware of the flourishing state of poetry outside of Italy, though his main purpose is to cover the

49 Louis Le Roy, op. cit., pp. 108v-109v.

poets of his time as thoroughly as he can. In addition to discussing the poets of Italy, he mentions in some detail French, German, and English poets.⁵⁰ Scaliger attributes the revival in the writing of Latin poetry in the classical style to Petrarch and then goes on to consider the leading Italian poets who wrote in Latin.⁵¹

As we have seen, the writers of the Renaissance thought themselves engaged in work of great importance. Their enthusiasm for the revival of ancient letters knew no bounds, and they kept a close watch on its development. They thought that at last after so many years the profession of polite letters was restored to its former splendor and they were filled with professional pride. Learning was no longer neglected and despised; on the contrary, its pursuit was considered one of the finest activities a man could engage in. Truly, it was an age in which the scholar and man of letters could be happy. Unless we understand the attitude of the humanists toward the preceding ages, their adulation of their own age seems excessive. Since the fall of Rome, they believed, learning had been ignored and the men who practiced it scorned. Now there came a

50 Lilius Gregorius Gyraldus, op. cit., pp. 60-71.

51 Julius Caesar Scaliger, Poetices Libri Septem (n.p., 1617), pp. 705-06.

time when by comparison the lot of the secular scholar was vastly improved. He was respected, he was sometimes honored by being given an important position, he was even consulted by princes. For this reason we can understand why so many of the humanists referred to their own time as the golden age. "C'est à n'en point douter un siècle d'or qui a rendu à la lumière les sciences libérales presque éteintes: grammaire, poésie, éloquence, peinture, architecture, sculpture, musique. Et tout cela à Florence!"⁵² So Ficino expressed himself and he was followed by many others. According to Vespasiano:

The city itself, and all those who had the Latin tongue, were under great obligations to him [Poggio Fiorentino], to Messer Lionardo, and Fra Ambrogio, the first exponents of Latin, which had lain obscure and neglected by so many centuries. Thus Florence found itself, in this golden age, full of learned men.⁵³

Iohannis a Trittenham speaks of the golden age in which the study of good letters which for many years had been neglected is now revived and flourishing.⁵⁴ In his study of Erasmus, Huizinga makes mention of Erasmus' repeated remarks about the present being the golden age:

52 Marsilio Ficino as cited by Johan Nordström, Moyen Âge et Renaissance essai historique, tr. T. Hammar (Paris, 1933), p. 18.

53 Vespasiano De Bisticci, op. cit., p. 356.

54 Iohannis a Trittenham, op. cit., p. 505.

In this period [1515-19] Erasmus repeatedly reverts to the glad motif of a golden age, which is on the point of dawning. Perennial peace is before the door. The highest princes of the world, Francis I of France, Charles, King of Spain; Henry VIII of England, and the emperor Maximilian have insured peace by the strongest ties. Uprightness and Christian piety will flourish together with the revival of letters and the sciences. As at a given signal the mightiest minds conspire to restore a high standard of culture. We may congratulate the age, it will be a golden one.⁵⁵

Of course, as we shall see later, Erasmus was to change his tune, but his letter to Wolsey is typical of the way the humanists felt. The restoration of the fine arts and the revival of classical learning made theirs the golden age. It is an interesting commentary on their knowledge of the classical age that they did not compare themselves with the Periclean age; that was left for later writers to do.

VI. Causes of the Renaissance: Individuals

Who, in the opinion of the writers of the Renaissance, was most responsible for bringing about the revival of classical learning? Who were the painters and sculptors who brought about the return to the ancient style? These questions seriously concerned the humanists and the answers they gave have a double significance. In the first place, the attempt to ascribe causes of the Renaissance indicates

⁵⁵ Johan Huizinga, Erasmus, tr. F. Hopman (New York, 1934), p. 126. Cf. Erasmus to Thomas Wolsey, #967, May 18, 1519, op. cit., III, 588.

that the need was felt to explain in some rational manner cultural phenomena. It was not enough to attribute the revival of the arts and learning to divine providence, though as we shall see, this was done in some cases. In the attempt to ascribe the Renaissance to non-supernatural forces we can see a shift in the writing of history; human events are now being considered on the human plane. In the second place, to set the beginning of the revival with an individual is to date it, and this gives corroborating testimony to the opinion that the writers of the Renaissance were aware that it happened in their own life time and therefore did not hesitate to date it.

Of the men who were considered most responsible for initiating the revival of ancient learning, Petrarch is by far the most frequently mentioned. Even during his own life time Boccaccio defended Petrarch against attacks: "For surely he exceeds human limits and far outstrips the power of man. Such praise I utter not of an ancient who died centuries ago, rather of one who, please God, is alive and well; of one whom you, snarling monsters, if you trust not my words, may see with your own eyes, and seeing, believe."⁵⁶ And soon after his death, Coluccio

⁵⁶ Charles G. Osgood, ed., Boccaccio On Poetry Being the Preface and the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Books of Boccaccio's "Genealogia Deorum Gentilium" in an English Version with Introductory Essay and Commentary (Princeton University Press, 1930), p. 92.

Salutati wrote a long letter in which he listed Petrarch's accomplishments and declared that the whole world, and even nature itself, bewailed the loss of so great a scholar and poet.⁵⁷ In a later letter, Salutati again mentions Petrarch's services in reviving ancient learning, and also singles out Dante and Boccaccio for praise.⁵⁸ "Ed ebbe tanta grazia d'intelletto," writes Bruni of Petrarch:

che fui il primo che questi sublimi studi lungo tempo caduti ed ignorati revocò a luce di cognizione: i quali dappoi crescendo, montati sono nella presente altezza, della qual cosa, acciò che meglio s'intenda, facendomi addietro, con breve discorso raccontar voglio.⁵⁹

Biondo attributes the origin of the revival of ancient learning to Petrarch, and in a brief epitome of the history of the revival of learning and of the fine arts Aeneas Sylvius says:

Videmus picturas ducentorum annorum nulla prorsus arte politas; scripta illius aetatis rudia sunt, inepta, incompta: post Petrarcham emergerunt literae; post Joctum surrexere pictorum manus; utraque ad summam jam videmus artem pervenisse.⁶⁰

In his "Catalogvs Scriptorvm Ecclesiasticorvm, sive Illustrivm Virorvm," Iohannis a Trittenham has a place for

57 Coluccio Salutati, "A Roberto Guidi Conte di Battifolle," #15, August 16, 1374, op. cit., I, 176-87.

58 Coluccio Salutati, "A Bartolommeo Oliari Cardinal Padovano," #9, August 1, 1395, op. cit., III, 84.

59 Leonardo Bruni Aretino, ed. Angelo Solerti, op. cit., p. 115.

60 Aeneas Sylvius, #119, cited in William Roscoe, op. cit., II, 175, n. a. Cf. Aeneas Sylvius' letter to Niklas von Wyle, July, 1452.

Petrarch and says of him:

Franciscus Petrarca, natione Etruscus, vir in diuinis scripturis eruditus, & in secularibus literis omnium sui temporis longe doctissimus, philosophus, rhetor, & poeta celeberrimus, qui literas humanitatis post longa silentia mortuas (vt ita dixerim) ab inferis reuocauit ad superos, non minus sancta conuersatione quam scientia clarus emicuit.⁶¹

According to Vespasiano, it was Dante, Petrarch, and Boccaccio who revived the Latin tongue which had been neglected for many centuries.

By the end of the fifteenth century, therefore, the tradition that Petrarch had been the first to bring about the revival of ancient learning, or Petrarch with Dante and Boccaccio, was pretty well established. Despauterius, Vives, Parker, Le Roy, Castiglione, and Scaliger, to mention but a few writers of the sixteenth century, carried on the tradition and gave it even greater currency. In a passage somewhat reminiscent of Le Roy, Samuel Daniel shows that the tradition had taken firm root in England:

And is it not a most apparent ignorance, both of the succession of learning in Europe and the general course of things, to say 'that all lay pittifully deformed in those lacke-learning times from the declining of the Romane Empire till the light of the Latine tongue was reuiued by Rewcline, Erasmus, and Moore'? when for three hundred yeeres before them, about the comming downe of Tamburlaine into Europe, Franciscus Petrarca (who then no doubt likewise found whom to imitate) shewed

⁶¹ Iohannis a Trittenham, op. cit., p. 322.

all the best notions of learning, in that degree of excellencie both in Latine, Prose and Verse, and in the vulgare Italian, as all the wittes of posteritie haue not yet ouer-matched him in all kindes to this day: his great Volumes in Moral Philosophie shew his infinite reading and most happy power of disposition: his twelue Aeglogues, his Affrica, containing Nine Bookes of the last Punicke warre, with his three bookes of Epistles in Latine verse shew all the transformations of wit and inuention that a Spirite naturally borne to the inheritance of Poetrie and iudiciall knowledge could expresse:... And with Petrarch liued his scholar Boccacius, and neere about the same time Iohannis Rauenensis, and from these, tanquam ex equo Troiano, [shades of Fichet!] seemes to haue issued all those famous Italian writers, Leonardus Aretinus, Laur-entius Valla, Poggius, Biondo, and many others.⁶²

Daniel is of course criticizing Campion but there is no guarantee that he knew Petrarch as well as he would have the reader believe, and the whole passage seems to be made up of unacknowledged quotations from Biondo, Fichet, Dolet, and Le Roy.

When the notion that the revival of learning began after the fall of Constantinople in 1453 got into circulation I have been unable to determine, but this much is certain: it surely did not derive from the writers of the Renaissance. We have seen how Bruni respected the learned Chrysoloras who came to Italy as early as 1393. A long succession of writers paid their respects

⁶² Samuel Daniel, "A Defense of Ryme against a Pamphlet Entituled: Observations in the Art of English Poesie Wherein is Demonstratiuely Proued, that Ryme is the Fittest Harmonie of Words that Comportes with Our Language," [1603?] ed. George G. Smith, op. cit., II, 363-69.

to Chrysoloras and his fellow countrymen for the services they rendered in restoring the study of the Greek tongue to its former splendor. Filelfus, Stapulensis, Luther, Gyraldus, Politian, Dolet, Thevet, de Serres, and Daniel are but a few of the later writers to record the rôle played by the learned Greeks. The judgment of the sixteenth century in regard to Chrysoloras is well summed up by Thevet:

Mais vn particulier bien est prouenu à la Chrestienté de ce furieux & turbulent siege, car durant iceluy Ian Paleologue depescha Emanuel Chrysolore pour aller demander secours à tous les Princes de l'Europe à l'encontre du Turc, qui vouloit s'emparer de la Grece. A grand peine nostre Chrysolore fust arriué en Italie, que nouvelles luy furent aportées de la dessaicte de Baiazeth au mont de l'Estoile. Qui fust cause d'y arrester ce Constantinopolitain, qui, ou pour la mort de Iean l'Empereur qu'aucuns desent estre interuenue pendant le siege, ou bien pour le regret de veoir sa patrie si souuent exposée aux courses de ces voleurs, ne voulust reprendre voile en Grece. Partant se mist à enseigner la langue Grecque premierement à Venise, apres à Florence, finalement à Pauie, où le Duc Iean Galeas l'honora de plusieurs & grands presens. D'vne si rare & exquisite plante, est sortie presquere vne infinité de iectons, les plus excellens qu'on puisse penser: & entre autre François Philelphe de Toledé en Espagne, (qui depuis print à femme la fille de son praecepteur, de laquelle il eust deux filz Marius & Cyrus) Ambroise moyne de Colchestre en Angleterre, François Barbare Venitien, Charles & Leonard Aretius, Paulas Destroycy & infinite de plusieurs bons esprits, qui depuis ont publie la louange de cest Emanuel par tout l'vniers. Quelques vns ont voulu subtiliser sur son nom, & ont dict que ce nom d'Emanuel luy estoit escheu par un secret, & diuin presage de al restauration, qu'il deuoit apporter des lettres Grecques en Italie, qui par l'espace de sept cents ans auoient demueré atterées (par le negligence de plusiers, ou par la desbauche de ceux, qui deuoient

mettre la main à la besoigne, & ne tenoient cont des bonnes sciences) dans les vielles mesures d'oubly. De vouloir penetrer si auant au Cabinet celeste ie ne pourroie, bien scay-ie que l'Italie doit a bon droict le refuter pour celuy, qui luy a remis la cognoissance de la langue Grecque. Ce que Poge Florentin son disciple a bien recogneu en l'Epitaphe (qu'icy i'ay inferé) qu'il composa à Constance en l'honneur de son maistre, qui estant là allé au concile general y mourust.

Hic est Emanuel situs
Sermonis decus Attici,
Qui, dum quaerere opem patriae
Afflictae studeret, huc yt.
Res belle cecidit tuis
Votis Italia, hic tibi
Linguae restituit decus
Atticae ante reconditae.
Res belle cecidit tuis
Votis Emanuel, solo
Consecutus in Italo
Aeternum decus es, tibi
Quale Graecia non dedit
Bello perdita Graecia.⁶³

Chrysoloras seems to have been regarded with the greatest respect and affection, but the other learned Greeks were not forgotten. The story of the scholarly refugees is an interesting one in many respects. The Greeks found it difficult to adjust themselves to the new surroundings; some turned out to be less learned than they made out to be, while others refused to learn Latin or Italian in order to make their teaching easier. Yet it is a tribute to the eagerness with which the Italians pursued the study

⁶³ Andre Thevet, Povtraits et vies des hommes illvstres Grecz Latins Payens recueilliz de levr tableaux luires, medalles antiques, et modernes (Paris, 1584), pp. 97v-98r. Cf. Jean de Serres, History of France, tr. Edward Grimestone (London, 1611), p. 380.

of Greek that for the most part they glossed over the defects of the refugees and felt that in honoring them they were honoring the Greek language.

A number of other individuals were credited with bringing about the revival of ancient learning. Bruni is occasionally mentioned; Palmieri attributes the revival to his friend and Vespasiano speaks of Bruni, Poggio, and Fra Ambrogio as the first exponents of Latin. In his article on "Literae" in his encyclopaedic Commentarium, Dolet considers Valla the first to have brought about the revival of ancient learning. In a passage which, as we have seen, Daniel criticized, Campion says:

Learning first flourished in Greece; from thence it was deriued unto the Romaines, both diligent obseruers of the number and quantity of sillables, not in their verses only but likewise in their prose. Learning, after the declining of the Romaine Empire and the pollution of their language through the conquest of the Barbarians, lay most pitifully deformed till the time of Erasmus, Rewcline, Sir Thomas More, and other learned men of that age, who brought the Latine toong again to light, redeeming it with much labour out of the hands of the illiterate Monks and Friers: as a scoffing book, entituled Epistolae obscurorum virorum, may sufficiently testifie.⁶⁴

In the opinion of Bodin, Machiavelli is the first since

64 Thomas Campion, "Observations in the Art of English Poesie. By Thomas Campion. Wherein it is Demonstratiuely Proued, and by Example Confirmed, that the English Toong Will Receiue Eight Seuerall Kinds of Numbers, Proper to It Selfe, Which Are All in This Booke Set Forth, and Were Neuer Before This Time By Any Man Attempted," ed. George G. Smith, op. cit., II, 329.

the ancients to have written on political science.⁶⁵ So far as I have been able to determine, Guicciardini seems to have been responsible for putting into circulation the idea that Lorenzo De Medici brought about the Renaissance, an idea which ultimately culminated in England in William Roscoe's biography. "It is certain," writes Guicciardini:

that for above a thousand years back...Italy had at no time enjoy'd a State of such compleat Prosperity and Repose as in the year 1490; and some Time before and after.

The People too had taken Advantage of this Halcyon Season, and been busied in cultivating all their Lands, as well as Mountains as Vallies; and being under no Foreign Influence, but govern'd by their own Princes, Italy not only abounded with Inhabitants and Riches, but grew renown'd for the Grandeur and Magnificence of her Soverigns; for the Splendor of many noble and well-built Cities; for the Seat and Majesty of Religion; and for a Number of great Men, learned in all Arts and Sciences. She had also no small share of Military Glory, according to the Knowledge and Practice of Arms in those Days.

An happy Concurrence of Causes had preserv'd her in this flourishing Condition. Amongst the rest, common Fame ascribed no small share, to the Virtue and active Spirit of Lorenzo de Medici: A Citizen of such distinguished Merit in the State of Florence, that the Whole Affairs of that Republick were conducted, as he thought proper to advise or direct. And it was, indeed, to the Prudence of her councils, the Happiness of her Situation, and her Opulency, that this Common-Wealth chiefly owed her Power and Influence; for the Extent of its Dominion was not great.⁶⁶

65 Jean Bodin, Methodus ad Facilem Historiarum Cognitionem, (Lyons, 1583), p. 150.

66 Francesco Guicciardini, The History of Italy from the Year 1490, to 1532. Written in Italian by Francesco Guicciardini, a Nobleman of Florence. In Twenty Books. Translated into English by the Chevalier Austin Parke Goddard (London, 1753), I, 3-4.

As part of the nationalistic current which contributed to the formation of the Renaissance, it became the custom to attribute the revival of learning as it took place in each country to the king then reigning. This tendency will be considered later, but it is interesting to note that Le Roy has made a list of the "...Princes that haue most holpen the restitution of artes." He mentions Alphonsus King of Naples, Francis I of France, the kings of Castile and Portugal who were instrumental in bringing about the discoveries both in the east and west, and Cosimo and Lorenzo De Medici, whose libraries are especially mentioned; Henry VIII is not mentioned nor are any of the German princes.⁶⁷

Thus we see the existence of a considerable body of opinion that certain individuals were responsible for the revival of ancient learning. It is important to recognize that no attempt is made to suggest why these individuals felt compelled to do the work which so distinguished them and at the same time distinguished their age from previous periods; as I have suggested above, the work of restoring the ancients was considered a good in itself and required no further justification. It does not seem to have occurred to the writers of the

⁶⁷ Louis Le Roy, op. cit., p. 110v.

Renaissance that the initiators of the movement were motivated by any other reasons than the recovery of the ancient texts. As a matter of fact, they were marked out for special consideration precisely because they set up a current of activity which was cooperatively carried on; the task of bringing to light the long lost classics was essentially a joint scholarly enterprise and individual merit was recognized not because it set apart one scholar from the others but because it showed the height to which all attained and to which each in some measure had contributed. A reading of the letters of the humanists will show that they regarded each new discovery and each new edition as a contribution to a common pursuit because in many cases the editor had discussed his problems with innumerable fellow humanists so that in reality the completed work was a joint production. What individualism there was in the humanists was merged into a common effort toward the achievement of a common goal, the restitution of good letters.

VII. Causes of the Renaissance:
The Reaction against the Middle Ages

To understand the attitude of the men of the Renaissance toward the Middle Ages, we must first understand what they were looking for in art and learning. So far

as art is concerned, they thought that a natural style was best and they defined the natural style in terms of the classic mode which, to them, represented grace, regularity, correctness, and repose. With these qualities as their standard of judgment, it is no wonder that they could find no merit in what they called the Gothic style. In regard to learning, they sought for polish and elegance of diction, ease and wit in expression, and, at the same time they wished to avoid involved argument, subtle distinction, and obscure terminology in the statement of ideas. For all the confusion of contradictory systems in the work of the Florentine Platonists, the fact remains that their intention was to synthesize the best features of many philosophies into a consistent whole and to reduce the disparate elements in them to an understandable simplicity. Though Paracelsus is half-scientist and half-quack, he is motivated by the desire to embrace all the disciplines within one method and it is interesting to note that in the preface to each of his works he specifically states that he is demonstrating how the same approach is possible to different fields. Erasmus' aim was to simplify religious beliefs into a short statement of faith which should appeal to the head and heart at the same time; for him, theological disputations were anathema for they destroyed the essential spirit of religion which was a simple, im-

mediate apprehension of the divine will and goodness. By placing the responsibility for the choice between good and evil directly on the shoulders of the individual without the intervention of institutions, hierarchies, and specialists in religion, the reformers exhibited the universal urge of the time to simplify, to get at the heart of things directly, to reduce all phenomena within a few generally accepted and universally valid laws. That they did not succeed is another matter, for what was lacking basically was the proper method of approach, but the essential thing is the urge to get away from oversubtlety and obscurity. With this ideological preconception in the back of their minds, the men of the Renaissance felt compelled to reject the Middle Ages which to them stood for exactly the opposite of what they were seeking.

In addition to this ideological factor, it is necessary to take into account the fact that the Middle Ages were identified with the Germanic tribes, the monks, and the Arabs and Turks. The first were held to have destroyed the culture of the ancients, the second were thought to have deliberately refused to appreciate the merits of the classics, and the third were ever present threats to European civilization at the very moment the humanists were writing. Each was considered a menace to humane letters and in the minds of the Renaissance writers the three

gradually merged into the single concept of barbarians. In examining the opinions of the humanists on this subject, it is often difficult to separate Goth from monk from Turk; all are lumped together because they lived in the past ages, were unlike the ancients in every respect, and were enemies of culture. For this reason I have not tried to make a distinction between the three in the arrangement of the following materials, but I have tried to indicate where distinctions are either made or neglected in the writings of the humanists.

In all probability, Petrarch is thinking of the monks in the following passage:

Each famous author of antiquity whom I recall places a new offence and another cause of dishonour to the charge of later generations, who, not satisfied with their own disgraceful barrenness, permitted the fruit of other minds and the writings that their ancestors had produced by toil and application, to perish through insufferable neglect. Although they had nothing of their own to hand down to those who were to come after, they robbed posterity of its ancestral heritage.⁶⁸

It will be noted that Petrarch's accusation is directed against those who should have known better, that is, non-barbarians, and therefore the monks, who alone of all classes would have been in a position to preserve what

68 Petrarch, Rerum Memorandum, as corrected by de Nolhac and cited by James H. Robinson and Henry W. Rolfe, Petrarch the First Modern Scholar and Man of Letters (New York, 1893), pp. 25-26.

vestiges of ancient learning were left after the fall of Rome. Bruni's attack is on the barbarians who completed the destruction of classical culture after the loss of Roman liberty under the tyrants had produced a decline in the polite letters and fine arts.⁶⁹ Valla speaks of the time between the fall of Rome and the present as "...superiora tempora infelicia...quibus homo nemo inuentus est eruditus,"⁷⁰ while Politian laments the long period during which Italy was in the hands of the barbarians. To Agricola the Middle Ages were a period of stupid sleep⁷¹ while to Erasmus they were marked by the ever-increasing obstinacy of the barbarians;⁷² in both these it is hard to tell whether the Germanic peoples or the monks are meant or both, though the probability is that both are referred to. Both Iohannis a Trittenham and Joannes Despauterius speak of their own time as having been rescued from the hands of the barbarians

69 Leonardo Bruni Aretino, Historiarum Florentini Populi Liber I, ed. Emilio Santini, in L. A. Muratori, op. cit., XIX, part 3, 23.

70 Lorenzo Valla, "Praefatio," Lavrentii Vallae Doctissimi Elegantiarum Linguae Latinae Libri Sex (Venetiis, 1572), p. 11.

71 Rudolphus Agricola, #5, to Johann Reuchlin, November 9, 1483, in Johann Reuchlins Briefwechsel, ed. Ludwig Geiger (Tubingen, 1875), p. 7.

72 Erasmus, #23, to Cornelius Gerard, June, 1489?, op. cit., I, 108.

without more specific reference, though in one place in his Catalogve Trittenham mentions "...omnes philosophiae partes à caliginosa quorundam sophistarum barbarie vendicavit."⁷³

A direct attack on scholasticism is made by Budé:

Was anyone born under such inauspicious Graces that the dull and obscure discipline (scholasticism) does not revolt him, since sacred literature, too, cleansed by Erasmus' diligence has regained its ancient purity and brightness? But it is still much greater that he should have effected by the same labour the emergence of sacred truth itself out of that Cimmerian darkness, even though divinity is not yet quite free from the dirt of the sophist school. If that should occur one day, it will be owing to the beginnings made in our times.⁷⁴

Melanchthon too attacks the scholastics for they neglected the ancient studies so that for three hundred years after the time of Bede and Alcuin, when a revival would have been possible, their bad influence prevailed.⁷⁵ Huizinga paraphrases an unspecified letter of Erasmus' which continues the attacks on the scholastics:

The world is coming to its own senses as if awaking out of a deep sleep. Still there are some left who recalcitrate pertinaciously, clinging convulsively with hands and feet to their old ignorance. They fear that if bonae literae are reborn and the world

73 Iohannis a Trittenham, op. cit., p. 403.

74 Budé to Tunstall, May, 1517, cited in Johan Huizinga, op. cit., p. 169.

75 Philippus Melanchthon, "De Corrigendis Adulescentiae Studiis," in Declamationes, ed. Karl Hartfelder (Berlin, 1891), I, 14-19.

grows wise, it will come to light that they have known nothing.⁷⁶

Luther is more specific in his condemnation of the monks, for he cites examples:

And the injury resulting from the neglect to procure books and good libraries, when there were men and books enough for that purpose, was afterwards perceived in the decline of every kind of knowledge; and instead of good books, the senseless, useless, and hurtful books of the monks, the Catholicon, Florista, Graecista, Labyrinthus, Dormi Secure, and the like were introduced by Satan, so that the Latin language was corrupted, and neither good schools, good instruction, nor good methods of study remained. And as we see, the languages and arts are, in an imperfect manner, recovered from fragments of old books rescued from the worms and dust; and every day men are seeking these literary remains, as people dig in the ashes of a ruined city after treasures and jewels.⁷⁷

In common with Melanchthon, Luther makes the point that had the monks been really interested in the preservation of humane letters, they could have saved the ancient texts before they were scattered about the four winds and the revival of learning would have come about earlier.

Pantagruel condemns the Middle Ages as a time savoring of the misery wrought by the Goths; in his own person, Rabelais asks his friend Andreo Tiraquello:

How comes it, most learned Tiraqueau, that in the present great Enlightenment of our Age, wherein we see all the better Studies rehabilitated by a singular and almost divine Blessing, there are everywhere found persons so strangely affected, that they cannot, or will not, lift their Eyes

⁷⁶ Johan Huizinga, op. cit., pp. 131-32.

⁷⁷ Martin Luther, op. cit., p. 75.

from the dense and more than Cimmerian Darkness
of the Gothic times to the bright Light of the
Sun?

And he goes on to explain:

...men cling with all their Might, right or wrong,
to their old Loves in the Books to which they have
grown accustomed, even though they see their Skiff
of False Knowledge battered to pieces and full of
Leaks on every side; so much so that, should they
be driven from it, they would think their Soul was
driven from its Abode.⁷⁸

Rabelais has delivered himself of a double-edged shaft:
he accuses the Middle Ages of having been an age of dark-
ness and at the same time criticizes those of his contem-
poraries who would prevent the new learning from spreading
the truth, and in all probability Rabelais is casting his
net farther afield than Erasmus for his attack is directed
against all bigots, scholastics and reformers alike.

Thevet carefully indicates the qualities of classical
culture which the barbarians destroyed; at the same time
he introduces a new idea, namely, that the barbarians
themselves made changes in that culture:

Encores que l'inuire & enuie du temps passé,
captif soubz la dure & austere domination des
nations barbares, nous ayt obscurcy la meilleure
& plus saine partie des richesses antiques, c'est
a scauoir les lettres & sciences, lesquelles
iodis florissoient en perfection avec vne varieté
delectable, vtilité desirable & grauite venerable,
& au lieu d'icelles introduict vne obscure & ri-
dicule barbarie: toutefois encor' l'ignorance
n'a eu ce pouuoir de supprimer entierement le

⁷⁸ Rabelais, dedicatory letter to Tiraquello, July, 1532,
op. cit., II, 499, 500.

lustre & perfection de la vertu & rare Philosophie. Car quoy qu'assez longuement les autheur anciens ayent esté enfeueliz au tombeau d'oubliance entre les desolations & ruynes, si est-ce que finalement se sont reueilliez d'un si profond sommeil, ont quicté leure demeure moisie, & reuiuent pour le present en plus grand'vogue, que iamais ne seirent. Car au lieu que de leur premier cours de naissance ne furent cogneuës les sciences fors de certaines nations particulieres, & en pays & langues non communes, ilz peuuent maintenant quasi par toutes les nations iouyr d'vne gloire parmy vn si grand nombre de peuples.⁷⁹

What these changes are Thevet does not indicate; other writers attributed rhyming in poetry to the barbarians and condemned it both for that reason and for the reason that it had no classical precedent. Thevet's remarks show the difficulties attendant on the loose use of the term barbarians. He does not differentiate between Germanic peoples during the stage of their migrations and the same peoples when they had settled down and were developing nationalistic cultures; at the same time, "vne obscure and ridicule barbarie" might refer to the writings of the scholastics.

Vesalius has an interesting account of the state of medicine in the Middle Ages:

But in bygone times, that is to say [in the West] after the Gothic deluge and [in the East] after the reign of Mansor at Bochara in Persia, under whom, as we know the Arabs still lived as was right on terms of familiarity with the Greeks, medicine began to be sore distempered. Its primary instrument, the employment of the hand in

⁷⁹ Andre Thevet, op. cit., pp. 90r-90v.

healing, was so neglected that it was relegated to vulgar fellows with no instruction whatsoever in the branches of knowledge that subserve the art of medicine....

But it was especially after the ruin spread by the Goths, when all the sciences, which before had flourished gloriously and were practised as was fitting, went to ruin, that more fashionable doctors, first in Italy, in imitation of the old Romans, despising the work of the hand, began to delegate to slaves the manual attentions which they judged needful for their patients, and themselves merely to stand over them like master builders....

But when medicine in the great blessedness of this age, which the gods will to entrust to the divine guidance of your royal power, had, together with all studies, begun to live again and to lift its head up from its utter darkness (so much so, indeed, that it might without fear of contradiction be regarded by some academies as having well nigh recovered its ancient brilliance):...⁸⁰

There is an interesting contradiction in Vesalius' statement: if the old Romans did wrong in delegating the work of the hand to slaves, and if medicine is recovering its ancient brilliance, then modern medicine must be returning to a bad practice. However, Vesalius really means to say that medicine is returning to the status of an empirical science, for later on he writes: "doctors now begin to put faith in their own not ineffectual sight and powers of reason rather than in the writings of Galen." Vesalius is of course a modernist and his confusion is the result

⁸⁰ Andreas Vesalius, "The preface of Andreas Vesalius to his own books on the mechanism of the human body addressed to the most great and invincible emperor the divine Charles V," tr. B. Farrington, Proc. Roy. Soc. Med., XXV (1932), 1358-61.

of paying lip service to an accepted convention about the history of learning.

Foxe directly attacks the church and minces no words in his denunciation:

It is not unknowen, Christeane Reader, that the same clud of ignorance, that long hath darkened many realms under this accurssed kingdome of that Romane Antichrist, hath also owercovered this poore Realme; that idolatrie hath bein manteined, the bloode of innocentie hath bene sched, and Christ Jesus his eternall trueth hath bene abhorred, destested, and blasphemed. But that same God that causes light to schyne out of darknes, in the multitud of his merceyes, hath of long tyme opened the eis of some evin within this Realme, to see the vanitie of that which then was universally embrased for trew religioun; and has gevin unto them strenth to oppose thame selfis unto the same: and now, into these our last and moist corrupt dayis, hath maid his treuth so to triumphe amonges us, that, in despyte of Sathan, hipochrisye is desclosed, and the trew wyrshipping of God is manifested to all the inhabitantis of this realme whose eis Sathan blyndis not, eyther by thair fylthy lustes, or ellis by ambitioun, and insatiabie covetousness, which mack them repung to the power of God working by his worde.⁸¹

Foxe has applied some of the terminology used to describe the Renaissance in order to characterize the Reformation; as we shall see later, the two movements were fused into one by Foxe. William Harrison is more temperate than Foxe and levels his charge against the Germanic tribes:

For what comfort should it be for any good man to see his country brought into the estate of the old Goths and Vandals, who made laws against learning, and would not suffer any skilful man to come into their council-house: by means whereof those people

⁸¹ John Foxe, The Acts and Monuments of John Foxe, ed. Stephen R. Cattley (London, 1837), I, 3.

became savage tyrants and merciless hell-hounds, till they restored learning again and thereby fell to civility.⁸²

Other humanists who attacked the barbarians whose ravages made the Middle Ages barren of learning, in their opinion, were von Hutten, Aeneas Sylvius, Dolet, Palsgrave, Alciat, Parker, Vasari, Bruto, Ascham, Charron, Estienne, Bodin, de Serres, Bartoli, Campion, Castiglioni, Fracastoro, Giovius, and Scaliger.

This does not mean, however, that the men of the Renaissance were altogether devoid of any appreciation of the Middle Ages. As we have seen, both Ghiberti and Vasari recognized the services of the Byzantine artists in helping to bring about the revival of the fine arts. And so far as the revival of ancient learning is concerned, Melanchthon specifically singles out Bede and Alcuin for praise and says that they had effected a slight revival of learning which, for want of support, died out and did not lift its head again for three hundred years after. According to Le Roy, the Arabs took to themselves the honor of learning while the Empire was being attacked by the barbarians and the church was split by inner strife and heresy. Le Roy very fairly lists the accomplishments of the Arabs:

⁸² William Harrison, Elizabethan England: from "A Description of England," by William Harrison (in "Holinshed's Chronicles,") ed. Lothrop Withington (London, 1899), p. 263.

As the learning of the Greekes and Romaines augmented with their power; so did that of the Arabians, or Saracens. And when they were the most mightie of the world, they became most learned: especially in the demonstratiue sciences. Amongst whom Auicenna, Albumasar, Gebber, and Auerrois, got their first praise. Auicen hath bin the most vniversall; being eminent in philosophie, in the Mathematicks, in their Theologie; & in the Arabian poesie: who writing also in Physick, both verie well handled (according to the iudgement of the most learned in this art) the signes and causes of diseases; accomodating vnto them many remedies not vnderstood, nor practised, by the Greeks and Italians. Auerrois hath learnedly expounded all Aristotle. Abumasar vnderstood perfectly al the celestial motions, and their effects: hauing inuented the great coniunctions, and many other goodly things which remained vnknown vntill his time. Gebber a very expert Mathematician, hath found faults in the demonstrations of Ptolomey his Almagests. And others in diuers sciences haue inuented many new things, or reformed those that were inuented before: both Persians, Syrians, Egiptans, Africans, and Spaniards, writing in Arabian; which possessed the schools of the West before the restitution of the Greek and Latin. Which I thought good to speak of by the way; that it might be known, that all learning is not comprised in these two languages, & that the Arabian ought not to be dispised; which comprehendeth a good part. They got such reputation in the Mathematicks, that Alphonsus king of Castile, going about to make his astronomical tables, had his principal recourse to them; because that only they at that season could teach and restore such sciences:....⁸³

Making the point that learning is not the special mark of the ancients and those who follow in their tradition, Bodin includes the Arabs as among those nations which have distinguished themselves in the arts and sciences.⁸⁴

⁸³ Louis Le Roy, op. cit., pp. 101v-102r.

⁸⁴ Jean Bodin, op. cit., pp. 303-10.

Samuel Daniel very proudly mentions learned Englishmen who flourished during the Middle Ages:

And yet long before all these, and likewise with these, was not our Nation behinde in her portion of spirite and worthinesse, but concurrent with the best of all this lettered world; witness venerable Bede, that flourished aboue a thousand yeeres since; Aldemus Durotelmus, that liued in the yeere 739,.... Witnessse Iosephus Deuonius, who wrote de bello Troiano in so excellent a manner, and so neere resembling Antiquitie, as Printing his Worke beyond the Seas they haue ascribed it to Cornelius Nepos, one of the Ancients. What should I name Walteras Mape, Gulielmus Nigellus, Geruasius Tilburiensis, Bracton, Bacon, Ockam, and an infinite Catalogue of excellent men, most of them liuing about foure hundred yeeres since, and haue left behinde them monuments of most profound iudgement and learning in all sciences! So that it is but the clowds gathered about our owne iudgement that makes us thinke all other ages wrapt up in mists, and the great distance betwixt us that causes us to imagine men so farre off to be so little in respect to our selues.⁸⁵

Thomas Wright is able to draw up an imposing list of English schoolmen and philosophers of the Middle Ages:

For what country in any Age did euer represent vnto the World such excellent Wits as England, by yeelding our venerable Bede, who borne in a corner of the World, comprehended the whole world in his boundlesse apprehension and iudgement? what Age did euer see before our Alexander de Hales, a Diuine more irrefragable in all his Doctrine and Opinions, the chiefe master of Schoolemen (before that England sent him into France?) In what Country euer appeared such a myrrour of Learning, of subtiltie, of breuitie, of perspicuitie (in deepest matters and vnto worthy spirits) as when Scotus shewed himselfe in the Chaire at Oxford? who (for his worth) some other Countries (with no lesse vntruth then Ambition) haue challenged for theirs, and would haue bereaued England of one

⁸⁵ Samuel Daniel, op. cit., II, 369-70.

of the Worthies of the World; what might I not say of Ocams, of Bacons, and of Middletons, all in foraine Nations more accounted of then prized at home;...wherefore we may wel glory in this, that our Country hath afforded most of the Masters and of the choisest wits, which at this time both Scottish Reals and Nominals doe follow, either in Philosophie or in Diuinitie...⁸⁶

Though the independence of the humanists from the work of their predecessors in the Middle Ages is something less than they tried to make out, for the most part they refused to acknowledge that any good could come out of the Middle Ages. Indeed, the term itself is a Renaissance invention and it carries with it a theory of history.⁸⁷ It assumes an identity between the Renaissance and classical times, or at least a community of interests, and insists that in the period between the fall of Rome and the middle of the fourteenth century or thereabouts the spirit which distinguished the ancients and the moderns was absent. Whatever the merits of this idea, it has certainly had a long and disputatious history and has colored the work of post-Renaissance students of the Middle Ages. The methodo-

⁸⁶ Thomas Wright, "The Preface to the Reader," The Passions of the Minde in Generall (London, 1630), pp. A5r-A5v.

⁸⁷ Cf. George Gordon, Medium Aevum and the Middle Ages, S.P.E. Tract #19, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1925, and the criticisms and amplifications made by Nathan Edelman, "The Early Uses of Medium Aevum, Moyen Agê, Middle Ages," Romanic Review, XXIX (1938), 3-25; XXX (1939), 327-30.

logical problems which it raises are provocative, because if it is a humanist invention, should it be discounted on the score of obvious bias, or does it have the merit of contemporary testimony?

VIII. Causes of the Renaissance: Nationalism

By nationalism I mean the desire of groups of peoples to differentiate themselves from other groups because of their real or supposed possession of certain characteristics which they are presumed to possess in common and which no other groups have. A part of the complex of nationalism is the wish to be pre-eminent in various fields of human endeavor, and the desirability of success in any field varies in accordance with what is considered a worthwhile pursuit at any given time. In the period of the Renaissance, to be considered the leader in learning and in the practice of letters and arts was thought to be a highly commendable honor and was eagerly sought after. The desire to carry away the palm of learning for one's country was therefore a strongly motivating force behind the work of the humanists.

In Italy, however, where national unity was practically unknown but for a few scholars and dreamers, patriotic zeal was transferred to the cities. Of the Italian cities

where the new learning flourished Florence was almost universally held in the highest esteem. Ficino calls his century the golden age in which all the liberal arts are brought to light and are flourishing, and all that, he exclaims, in Florence. Though not a Florentine himself, Vespasiano feels compelled to acknowledge the pre-eminence of Florence and calls on Venice to follow suit. And Reuchlin and Melanchthon, both foreigners, praise Florence as the leader in the study of the humanities. For the most part, the Italians take it for granted that the leadership in the new learning is theirs without dispute because they were the first to initiate the revival and because they had devoted so much time, energy, and treasure to it; the flocking of foreigners to the schools of Italy was to them a naturally expected homage to their position.

But as the foreigners learned the new languages and grew proficient in their studies, they felt themselves capable of carrying on independent work which, they thought, ought to redound to the credit of their own country. As a consequence, they sought to compete with the Italians and even to vanquish them at their own game. In his Liber Gnomagyricus, Tissard issues a challenge to his fellow humanists. The Italians scoff at us for our ignorance, he says, but we will show them what we can do:

Eh quoi! disent (les Italiens), vous portez contre nous vos armes? Espérez-vous que vous puissiez jamais dominer dans notre patrie si célèbre, si éloquente, si policée? C'est ici, vous, barbares et incultes, légers, superbes et arrogants, chez les Italiens si polis et si cultivés, si réfléchis et si modestes, si humains et si bienveillants pour leurs amis et pour leurs ennemis si durs et si terribles, c'est ici, chez nous, que vous voulez habiter?... Que sont ce nations d'au delà des Monts qui n'ont aucune connaissance des lettres humaines, ni des latines ni des grecques? Qu'ils s'en aillent avec leur sophismes, qu'ils s'en aillent ces ignorants des bonnes lettres et de la parole, dont les yeux sont couverts d'obscurité et qui ne voient pas combien cette obscurité est épaisse. C'est ainsi que parlent les Italiens. Ne savent-ils donc pas combien l'Université de Paris est florissante et ses lettres prospères? C'est ce que reconnaissent eux-mêmes les Italiens sages, doués de science et d'expérience cependant ils affirment audacieusement que les lettres grecques nous manquent, et c'est en cela, du moins, qu'ils se glorifient de l'emporter sur les Français. Aujourd'hui s'ouvre le chemin par où nous pourrions leur enlever cette palme des mains. A cette entreprise est promis un facile et prochain succès, si vous voulez. Travaillons donc de concert. Aidons-nous les uns les autres. Et ainsi, après avoir parcouru les éléments du grec, chacun de vous, par son zèle et son travail augmentera, pour ainsi dire, le Gymnase antique et l'Académie d'Athènes, si bien que les Italiens succomberont facilement dans les lettres grecques et latines, et les céderont enfin aux Français.⁸⁸

By the middle of the sixteenth century, Estienne Pasquier had enough confidence in the achievements of the French to prove that they were the superiors to the Romans in arms and letters; even the old Bards and Druids, from whom stem theology and philosophy, were more advanced in those pursuits than the Romans who in point of fact drew upon

⁸⁸ François Tissard, cited in Hubert Gillot, op. cit., pp. 24-25.

them for inspiration.⁸⁹ The height of French self-confidence is reached by Du Bellay and Amyot. Du Bellay goes so far as to assert the superiority of the French moderns over the ancients:

Sommes-nous doncques moindres que les Grecs ou Romains, qui faisons si peu de cas de la nostre? Je n'ay entrepris de faire comparaison de nous à ceux-là, pour ne faire tort à la vertu Française, la conferant à la vanité gregeoise: et moins à ceux-cy, pour la trop ennuyeuse longueur que ce seroit de repeter l'origine des deux nations, leurs faits, leurs lois, moeurs et manieres de vivre: les consuls, dictateurs et empereurs de l'une, les roys, ducs et princes de l'autre. Je confesse que la fortune leur ait quelquefois esté plus favorable qu'à nous; mais aussy diray-je bien (sans renouveler les vieilles playes de Rome, et de quelle excellence en quel mespris de tout le monde, par ses forces mesmes elle a été precipitée) que la France, soit en repos ou en guerre, est de long intervalle à preferer à l'Italie, serve maintenant et mercenaire de ceux auxquels elle souloit commander. Je ne parleray ici de la temperie de l'air, fertilité de la terre, abondance de tous genres de fruicts necessaires pour l'aise et entretien de la vie humaine, et autres innumerables commodités que le ciel, plus prodigalement que liberalement, a elargy à la France. Je ne conteray tant de grosses rivières, tant de belles forests, tant de villes, non moins opulentes que fortes, et pourvenues de tant de mestiers, arts et sciences qui florissent entre nous, comme la musique, peinture, statuaire, architecture et autres, non gueres moins que jadis entre les Grecs et Romains. Et si pour trouver l'or et l'argent, le fer n'y viole point les sacrées entrailles de nostre antique mere; si les gemmes, les odeurs et autres corruptions de la première generosité des hommes n'y sont point, cerchées du marchand avare: auusi le tigre enragé, la cruelle semence des lyons, les herbes empoisonneresses et tant d'autres pestes de la vie humaine, en sont bien elongnées. Je suis

⁸⁹ Estienne Pasquier, "Lettre .XII. A Monsieur Sebilet, Advocat au Parlement de Paris," Oeuvres d'Estienne Pasquier, (Amsterdam, 1723), II, 20.

content que ces felicités nous soient communes avecques autres nations, principalement l'Italie; mais quant à la piété, religion, integrité de moeurs, magnanimité de courage, et toutes ces vertus rares et antiques (que est la vraye et solide louange) la France a toujours obtenu, sans controvers, le premier lieu.⁹⁰

Thus there emerges a full-blown theory of modern nationalism. Amyot writes in a similar vein:

Et au reste j'espère, Sire, que de vostre grace et liberalité royale, laquelle se monstre aussi bien à recevoir guayement et joyusement les petits presens, comme à donner franchement et liberalement les grands, quand la bonne volonté des offrans excuse l'impuissance de mieulx faire, vous aurez pour agreable l'humble affection que j'ay eue en ce faisant, de recommander à la posterité la memoire de vostre regne, de servir au bien public de voz subjects, et d'enricher nostre langue François, selon la foible portee de mon peu de sens et de littérature: pource que je m'assuere que d'icy à longues annees, quand les survivans trouveront tant de beaux et bons livres translatez des langues Grecque et Latine en la François durant vostre heureux regne, et sous l'inscription de vostre tres illustre nom, lon vous donnera la louange d'avoid glorieusement couronné et achevé l'oeuvre, que ce grand François vostre feu pere avoit heureusement fondé et commencé de faire renaistre et florir en ce noble royaume les bonnes lettres, dont nostre langue va tous les jours de plus en plus recevant tel ornement et enrichissement, que ny l'Italiene, ni l'Hespagnole, ny autre qui soit aujourdhuy en usage par l'Europe, ne se pourra vanter de la surmonter en nombre, ny en bonté des outiliz de sapience, qui sont les livres: et consequement voz subjects en recueilliront ce fruit, que sans se travailler pour apprendre les nobles anciennes langues, qui coustent beaucoup de temps et de peine à apprendre, à cause qu'elles sont mortes, et qu'il les faut tirer hors des monumens des livres, ou elles sont ensevelies, ilz auront en leur maternelle, et chez eulx, par

⁹⁰ Joachim Du Bellay, La Défense et Illustration de la Langue Française, ed. Louis Humber (Paris, 1930), pp. 111-12.

maniere de dire, ce qu'il y a de plus beau et de meilleur en la Latine en en la Grecque.⁹¹

The German humanists were likewise inspired to seize the palm of learning from Italy. Writing to Rudolf von Lange, Agricola says:

...I predict that we shall one day succeed in wresting from proud Italy that ancient renown for eloquence of which she has hitherto retained almost undisputed possession, and shall wipe away that reproach of barbarian slothness, ignorance, poverty of expression and whatever marks an unlettered race, which she unceasingly assails us, and Germany shall be seen to be in learning and culture not less Latin than Latium herself.⁹²

In a letter to Reuchlin, Agricola calls on him to celebrate the fact that Germany is now experiencing the revival of ancient learning. However, as with Italy, there was no national unity the humanists could appeal to, so they were forced to express their pride by speaking of the learned Germans who were now competing with the Italians. For the most part, Reuchlin is considered the first to have brought the new learning to Germany, though Palsgrave mentions Bebelius as the German equivalent of the Italian Valla.

91 Jacques Amyot, "Av Trespvissant et Treschrestien Roy de France Henry Deuxieme de ce Nom," Les Vies des Hommes Illustres Grecs et Romains Pericles et Fabius Maximus, ed. Louis Clement (Paris, 1906), pp. iv-v. De Serres also attributes the revival to Francis I, op. cit., p. 380.

92 Rudolphus Agricola, cited in James B. Mullinger, The University of Cambridge from the Earliest Times to the Royal Injunctions of 1535 (Cambridge University Press, 1873), p. 409.

The course of the revival of ancient learning in England can be traced in greater detail. In a number of letters to the Duke of Gloucester and the Archbishop of Canterbury, the officials of Oxford University lamented the low state of learning. War, the scarcity of food and money, and the slender rewards of merit are held responsible for the small number of students attending the University and their lack of interest in their work.⁹³ And so far as Cambridge University is concerned, Erasmus writes to Bullock:

About thirty years ago [c. 1486] nothing was taught at Cambridge but Alexander, the Parva Logicialia, as they are called, those old 'dictates' of Aristotle, and questions from Scotus. In process of time Good Letters were introduced; the study of Mathematics was added, and a new or at least a renovated Aristotle. Then came some acquaintance with Greek, and with many authors, whose very names were unknown to the best scholars of a former time. Now I ask, what has been the result to the University? It has become so flourishing, that it may vie with the first schools of the age, and possesses men, compared with whom those old teachers appear mere shadows of theologians. This is not denied by the senior men, where you find any of a candid character. They congratulate others on their good fortune, and lament their own infelicity.⁹⁴

93 Cf. "106. To the Duke of Gloucester," 1435, "125. To the Archbishop of Canterbury and other members of the Council now sitting at London," 1438, and "141. To the Duke of Gloucester," 1439, in Henry Anstey, op. cit., I, 128-30, 155-57, 178.

94 Erasmus, #441, to Henry Bullock, August 31, 1516, in The Epistles of Erasmus from His Earliest Letters to his Fifty-first Year Arranged in Order of Time, tr. Francis M. Nichols (London, 1904), II, 331.

Despite Erasmus' enthusiasm, however, the situation had not improved too greatly even by the middle of the sixteenth century. For one thing, there was a demand for men trained in the professions needed by business and which required little education in the liberal arts. This complaint is voiced by the Doctor in John Hales' dialogue written around 1549:

Doctor: ...for nowe a dayes, when men send their sonnes to the vniuersities, they suffer theim no longer to tarie theare then they may haue a litle of the latine tongue; and they take theim awaye, and bestowe theim to be clarkes with some men of lawe, or some Auditor and Receivour, or to be a secretorie to some gentleman or other, and so to get a livinge; wherby the vniuersities be in a maner emptied. And as I thinke wil be occasion that this Realme within a shorte space wilbe made as emptie of wise and (pollytyque) men, and consequently barbarous, and at the last thrall and subject to other nations wherof we weare lordes before.⁹⁵

For another thing, the liberal arts were not held in any esteem:

Doctor: Of truethe theare be to few of theim that can skill of theise sciences [the liberal arts] nowe a dayes; and of those that be, fewe are esteemed anie thinge the more for their counsell. And therefore others, seinge theise sciences nothings estemed or set by, they fall to other sciences that they see in some price, as to divinitie, or to the lawe, and to phisique; though they can not be perfecte in none of theise withoute knowledge of the sciences above towched. And therefore it is ordeyned by the vniuersities that first men should be bachelers, and maisters of arte, ere they should medle with divinite. And theise artes be the Seaven Liberall Sciences;

⁹⁵ John Hales (?), A Discourse of the Common Weal of This Realm of England, ed. Elizabeth Lamond (Cambridge University Press, 1893), p. 22.

as Gramer, Logicque, Retorique, Arithmaticque, Geometrie, Musicke, and Astronomy.⁹⁶

Finally, the confusion attendant on the change in religion left men's minds in an unsettled state and unfit for the study of good letters:

Doctor: Marie, haue youe not sene how manie learned men haue bene put to trouble of late, within these xij or xvj yeares, and all for declaringe theire opinions in thinges that haue risen in controversie? haue youe not sene whan one opinion hathe bene set furthe, and who so ever saide against it weare put to trouble; and shortly after that, whan the contrarie opinion was furthered and set furthe, weare not the other, that prospered before, put to trouble for sayinge theire myndes against the latter opinions: And so neither parte escaped business; either first or laste he came to it, of whether side so euer he was; excepte it weare some wise fellowes, that could chaunge theire opinions as the more and stronger parte did chaunge theires. And what weare they that came to theise troubles? the singulerst fellowes of bothe partes; for theare came none other to the concertation of theise thinges but suche; who, sekynge honour and preferment, weare with dishonour and hinderance recompensed for a rewarde of learninge. A man will rather put his child to that science, that maye bringe him to better fruicte then this, or what scholler shall haue anie courage to studie to come to this ende? And the rarietie of schollers and solitude of the vniuersities, dothe declare this to be truer then anie man with speache can declare.⁹⁷

96 John Hales, ibid., pp. 28-29.

97 John Hales, ibid., pp. 31-32. For two aspects of the struggle for a state of civil liberties in which a free learning and scholarship could exist at this time, see William M. Clyde, The Struggle for the Freedom of the Press from Caxton to Cromwell, Oxford University Press, 1934, and Wilbur K. Jordan, The Development of Religious Toleration in England from the Beginning of the English Reformation to the Death of Queen Elizabeth, Harvard University Press, 1932. Elyot places the blame for the decay of learning on "The pride, avarice, and negligence of

The destruction of the libraries in the monasteries was lamented by John Bale:

But thys is hyghly to be lamented, of all them that hath a naturall loue to their contrey, eyther yet to lerned Antiquyte, whyche is a moste syngular bewty to the same. That in turnynge ouer of the superstycyouse monasteryes, so lytle respecte was had to theyr lybraryes for the sauegarde of those noble and precyouse monumentes. I do not denye it, but the monkes, chanons, and fryres, were wycked both wayes, as the oyled Byshoppes and prestes for the more part are yet styll. Fyrst for so much as they were the professed souldyours of Antichrist, and next to that, for so muche as they were moste execrable lyuers. For these causes, I must confesse them most iustly suppressed. Yet this would I haue wysed (and I scarcely vtter it without teares) that the profytable corne had not so vnaduyesedly and vngodly perysed wyth the unprofytable chaffe, nor the wholsome herbes with the vnwholsome wedes,...

Auaryce was the other dyspatcher, whych hath made an ende both of our lybraryes and bokes wythout respecte lyke as of other moste honest commodityes, to no small decaye of the comen welthe....

Neuer had we bene offended for the losse of our lybraryes, bynge so many in nombre, and in so desolate places, for the more parte, yf the chief monumentes and most notable workes of our excellent wryters, had not bene reserued. If there had bene in euery shyre of Englande, but one solemyne lybrary, to the preseruacyon of those noble workes, and preferment of good lernynges in our posteryte, it had bene sumwhat. But to destroye all without consyderacyon, is and wyll be vnto Englande for euer, a moste horryble infamy among the graue senyours of other nacyons. A greate nombre of them whych purchased those superstycyouse mansyons, reserued of those lybrarye bokes, some to serue theyr iakes, some to scoure theyr candelstyckes, and some to rubbe their bootes. Some they solde to the grossers and sope sellers, & some they sent ouer see to the bokebynders, not in small nombre, but at

tymes whole shyppes full, to the wonderynge of the foren nacyons. Yea, the vnyuersytees of of [sic] thys realme, are not all clere in this detestable fact. But cursed is the bellye, whyche seketh to be fedde with such vngodly gaynes, and so depelye shameth hys natural contreye. I knowe a merchaunt man, wych shall at thys tyme be namelesse, that boughte the contentes of two noble lybraryes for xl. syllynges pryce, a shame it is to be spoken. Thys stuffe hath he occupied in the stede of graye paper by the space of more than these x. yeares, and yet he hath store ynough for as many yeares to come....

Oure postertyte maye wele curse thys wycked facte of our age, thys vnreasonable spole of Englandes most noble Antiquytees, vnlesse they be stayed in tyme, and by the art of pryntyng. The monkes kepte them vndre duste, the ydle headed prestes regarded them not, theyr lattre owners haue moste shamefullye abused them, and the couetouse merchauntes haue solde them away into foren nacyons for moneye.⁹⁸

It is convenient to divide the revival of learning in England into three periods. In the first phase, from about 1450 to about 1520, England was developing a group of humanists in direct contact with the leaders of humanistic activity in Italy and who undertook to carry on the Italian humanistic tradition in England. A considerable number of learned men visited in England during this period and though it is not possible to trace their influence it is not improbable they were looked on by those who were already feeling the touch of the new learning as models

⁹⁸ John Bale, "To the Reader," The Laborouse Journey & Serche of John Leylande, for Englandes Antiquitees Geuen of As a Newe Years Gyfte to Kyng Henry the viii. In the .xxvii. Yeare of His Reygne, with Declaracyons Enlarged: by John Bale, ed. W. A. Copinger (Manchester, 1895), pp. 15-21.

to be imitated.⁹⁹ Then, of course, there were the English scholars who went to Italy and who established a considerable reputation for learning.¹⁰⁰ It is during this period that the English develop humanists of a stature great enough to challenge the Italians. Polydore Vergil writes: "Iisdem temporibus perfectae literae similiter Latinae atque Graecae... sese trans Alpes effunderunt,"¹⁰¹ and Aldus Manutius says of Linacre:

And still I hope he will soon publish those and his other most useful works on Physics and Medicine, so that from the same Britain whence formerly a barbarous and unlearned literature made its way to us,

99 See Howard L. Gray, "Greek Visitors to England in 1455-56," in Haskins Anniversary Essays in Mediaeval History, ed. Charles H. Taylor and John La Monte (Boston, 1929), pp. 81-116.

100 See Montagu Burrows, "Memoir of William Grocyn," in Collectanea Second Series, Oxford Historical Society, ed. Montagu Burrows (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1890), pp. 332-78; Ingram Bywater, Four Centuries of Greek Learning in England, Oxford, 1919; Mandell Creighton, "The Early Renaissance in England," in Historical Lectures and Addresses, ed. Louise Creighton (London, 1903), pp. 188-212; Lewis Einstein, The Italian Renaissance in England, Columbia University Press, 1913; Vincent J. Flynn, "Englishmen in Rome during the Renaissance," MP, XXXVI (1938), 121-38; Albert Hyma, "The Continental Origins of English Humanism," HLQ, IV (1940), 1-25; H. Maynard Smith, Pre-Reformation England, London, 1938; George R. Stephens, The Knowledge of Greek in England in the Middle Ages, Philadelphia, 1933; Arthur Tilley, "Greek Studies in Early Sixteenth-Century England," EHR, LIII (1938), 221-39, 438-56; Elizabeth Wright, "Continuity in XV Century English Humanism," PMLA, LI (1936), 370-76.

101 Cited by Howard L. Gray, op. cit., p. 102.

occupying and still holding our Italian citadel, we who are now learning to speak Latin, and as becomes men of learning, shall receive a knowledge of true science, and, having with British aid put barbarism to flight, win back our citadel. We shall thus recover it by the use of the very weapons which caused the disaster.¹⁰²

Duke Humphrey is almost universally spoken of as the initiator of the revival of classical learning in England.

Aeneas Sylvius writes of the Duke as follows:

Congratulor tibi & Angliae: quia iam uerum dicendi ornatum suscepisti. Sed magnae ob hanc causam referendae sunt grates clarissimo illi & doctissimo principi Clocestriae duci, qui studia humanitatis summo studio in regnum uestrum recepit. Qui sicuti mihi relatum est & poetas mirisice colit, & Oratores magnopere ueneratur.¹⁰³

At the same time, others received their share of praise. Jacopo Sadoletto pays his respects to Erasmus for bringing the new learning to England,¹⁰⁴ while George Lily thinks that it was William Grocyn who first introduced the study of Greek and Latin into England. But the religious, social, and political troubles of the next forty years interfered with the normal development of humanistic studies in England and the conditions which Hales described prevailed;

¹⁰² Aldus Manutius, Preface to Linacre's Sphere of Proclus, October 14, 1499, cited in Montagu Burrows, op. cit., p. 350.

¹⁰³ Aeneas Sylvius to Adam de Molin, #64, Opera (Basle, 1571), p. 548.

¹⁰⁴ Jacopo Sadoletto, to Henry VIII, July 10, 1515, Epistolae (Romae, 1759), p. 127. Cf. Hoyt H. Hudson, "John Leland's List of Early English Humanists," HLQ, II (1939), 301-04.

this is the second phase.

When learning re-emerged after the accession of Elizabeth to the throne, it was something different than it had been in the first phase, for it had passed through the pressures of the Reformation and of English nationalism. Scholarship was still considered a good in itself but more than that it had become useful; it had become part of the equipment of the English gentleman. But most important of all, it had become the sub-stratum out of which English literature developed; its direction was re-oriented in terms of imaginative composition. As a result, the English felt it was no longer necessary to go to Italy for learning. As Sidney writes:

As for Italy, I knowe not what wee have or can have to doe with them, but to buy their silks and wines; and for the other provinces, excepting Venice, whose good lawes and customes wee can hardly proportion to ourselves, because they are quite of a contrary government; there is little there but tyrannous oppression, and servile yielding to them that little or noe rule over them; and for the men, you shall haunt them, although some indeed be excellently learned, yett are they all given to love counterfeit learning, as a man shall learne of them more false grounds of things then in any place else I do know;...105

To such a low state had Italian scholarship fallen. Daniel goes beyond Sidney:

105 "A Letter Written by Sir Phillip Sidney, to a Brother of His, Touching the Direction of his Travayle. Ms.," in Somers Tracts, ed. Walter Scott (London, 1809), I, 496.

O that the Ocean did not bound our stile
Within these strict and narrow limites so:
But that the melodie of our sweete Ile,
Might now be heard to Tyber, Arne and Po:
That they might know how far Thames doth out-go
The musike of declined Italy:
And listning to our Songs another while,
Might learne of thee, their notes to purifie.

O why may not some after-comming hand
Vnlocke these limites, open our confines,
And breake asunder this imprisoning band,
T'inlarge our spirits, and publish our designes;
Planting our Roses on the Apenines?
And teach to Rheyne, to Loyre, and Rhodanus
Our accents, and the wonders of our Land,
That they might all admire and honour vs.

Whereby great Sydney and our Spencer might,
With those Po-singers being equalled,
Enchant the world with such a sweet delight,
That their eternall Songs (for euer read)
May shew what great Elizaes raigne hath bred.
What musicke in the kingdome of her peace
Hath now beene made to her, and by her might,
Whereby her glorious fame shall neuer cease.¹⁰⁶

According to Harvey, all learning has left Europe to come
to England:

It is not long, since the goodlyest graces of the
most-noble Common-wealthes vpon Earth, Eloquence
in speech, and Ciuility in manners, arriued in
these remote parts of the world: it was a happy
reuolution of the heauens, and worthy to be chron-
icled in an English Liuy, when Tiberius flowed
into the Thames; Athens remoued to London; pure
Italy, and fine Greece planted themselues in rich
England; Apollo with his delicate troupe of Muses,
forsooke his old mountaines, and riuers; and fre-

¹⁰⁶ Samuel Daniel, "To the Comtesse of Pembroke," The Tragedies of Cleopatra, in The Complete Works in Verse and Prose of Samuel Daniel, ed. Alexander B. Grosart (London, 1885), III, 26-27.

quented a new Parnassus, and an other Helicon, nothinge inferiour to the olde, when they were most solemnely haunted of diuine wittes, that taught Rhetorique to speake with applause, and Poetry to sing with admiration. But euer since that flourishing transplantation of the daintiest, and sweetest lerning, that humanitie euer tasted; Arte did but springe in such, as Sir Iohn Cheeke, and M. Ascham: & witt buud in such, as Sir Phillip Sidney, & M. Spencer; which were but the violetes of March, or the Primeroses of May...¹⁰⁷

As a result of the feeling that England was now the home of the Muses, a search was made into the past in an attempt to establish that England had been pre-eminent in culture even before the continental nations, and that it had not been necessary to turn to others for inspiration. This led to the discovery of Chaucer who was held to be the father of English poetry, though Erasmus thought that Skelton had taught the Muses to speak English words instead of Latin. In any case, a native English tradition of good letters was insisted on and became an important part of the cultural nationalism which swept over England.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁷ Gabriel Harvey, Pierces Supererogation or A New Prayse of the Old Asse, in The Works of Gabriel Harvey, ed. Alexander B. Grosart (London, 1884), II, 49-50. Cf. Thomas Edwards, "To the Honorable Gentlemen & True Fauourites of Poetrie," Cephalvs & Procris. Narcissvs, ed. W. E. Buckley (London, 1882), p. 4.

¹⁰⁸ Cf. Hans Kohn, "The Genesis and Character of English Nationalism," Journal of the History of Ideas, I (1940), 69-94; Ruth Wainwright, "Nationalism in the Literature of the English Renaissance," Vassar Journal of Undergraduate Studies, VI (1932), 108-49.

The sixteenth-century Englishman's attitude toward his native land is summed up by George Best:

By this Discourse, it may please your Honour to behold the greate industrie of our perfect age, and the inuincible mindes of our Englishe nation, who haue neuer lefte anye worthy thing vnattempted, nor anye part almoste of the whole world vnsearched, whome lately, neyther stormes of Seas by long and tedious voyages, danger of darke fogs and hidden rockes in vnknown coastes, congealed and frozen Seas, with mountaines of fleeting Ise, nor yet present death dayly before their face, could any white dismay, or cause to desiste from intended enterprises: but rather preferring an honourable death before a shameful retourne, haue (notwithstanding the former daungers,) after many perillous repulses recouered their desired Port. So that, if now the passage to CATAYA thereby be made open vnto vs, (which only matter hytherto hath occupied the finist heades of the world, and promiseth vs a more riches by a nearer way than eyther Spaine or Portingale possesseth) whereof the hope (by the good industrie and great attemptes of these men is greatly augmented) or if the Golde Ore in these newe Discoueries founde out, doe in goodnesse, as in greate plentie aunswere expectation, and the successe do folow as good, as the prooffe thereof hitherto made, is great, we may truely infer, that the Englishman in these our dayes, in his notable discoueries, to the Spaniard and Portingale is nothing inferior: and for his hard aduentures, and valiant resolutions, greatly superior. For what hath the Spaniarde or Portingale done by the Southeast and Southwest, that the Englishman by the Northeast and Northweaste hath not counter-uailed the same?¹⁰⁹

So strong is the force of his patriotism that Best's prose soars to lyrical heights and is better than a good deal of the verse written on the same subject.¹¹⁰ It was in Eliza-

¹⁰⁹ George Best, op. cit., p. 6.

¹¹⁰ Cf. Roger Portington, "In Commendation of this Booke," in Mamillia, in The Life and Complete Works in Prose and

beth's reign that the tradition that the Elizabethan age was the golden age of English literature was built up. In this, the English acted as did the men of other nations during the same period.

IX. The Relation of the Renaissance to the Reformation

What was the relation of the revival of learning to the reformation of religion? Were these two contemporary movements independent of each other, or did one lead to the other, and if so, which and why? Was the revival inimical to the changes which were shaking the old religion to its foundation or was it that the reformation threatened the very existence of the new learning? These were some of the questions which the men of the Renaissance asked themselves about the two movements which as it seemed to them were so profoundly affecting the world. The point to stress is not that these questions remained unanswered, or rather received contradictory answers, but that they were raised at all, for to have raised them

Verse of Robert Greene, ed. Alexander B. Grosart (London, 1881-86), II, 11-12; Maurice Kyffin, "The Blessedness of Brytaine," in Fugitive Tracts Written in Verse, ed. W. C. Hazlitt (London, 1875), I, n.p.; Fulke Greville, "A Treatise of Monarchy. Of Commerce," in The Works in Verse and Prose Complete of the Right Honourable Fulke Greville, Lord Brooke (London, 1870), I, 148.

shows a very heightened awareness of contemporary ideological tendencies. In fact, it was over these very problems that Erasmus was led to break with Luther.

To understand Erasmus' attitude toward the Reformation it is necessary to discover what his objectives were. His aim was not revolution, but reform, and in point of fact, he wished to go back to the more simple and less sophisticated forms of the Christian faith. As early as 1499, he pays his respects to Colet for his efforts in restoring to its pristine brightness and dignity the old and true theology which had been obscured by the subtleties of the scholastics. As Colet himself said, the way to reform the Church is not to enact new laws but to go back to the teachings of Christ and honestly to observe the laws which already exist; in short, the trouble with Christianity is that it has never been tried. To Erasmus Christianity was not a matter of theological disputation but a sincere profession of faith and the less argument over subtle points of doctrine the better for true religion. And he thought that reforms could be brought about within the Church; he came not to destroy the schoolmen but to reform them:

Non quod optem hoc theologiae genus, quod hodie receptum est in scholis, obliterari; sed quod accessione veteris versaeque literaturae, cupiam et locupletius reddi.... Neque enim hunc vacillabit sacrarum litterarum aut theologorum auctoritas, si quaedam posthac emendata legentur..., aut rectius intelligentur.¹¹¹

¹¹¹ Erasmus to Wolfgang Capito, Feb. 26, 1517, cited in

He looked on the new learning as a means of helping bring about this reformation. As Huizinga says:

In spite of the great expectations he cherished of classical studies for pure Christianity, he saw one danger: "that under the cloak of reviving ancient literature paganism tries to rear its head, as there are those among Christians who acknowledge Christ only in name but inwardly breathe heathenism." This he writes in 1517 to Capito. In Italy scholars devote themselves too exclusively and in too pagan guise to bonae literae. He considered it his special task to assist in bringing it about that those bonae literae "which with the Italians have thus far been almost pagan, shall get used to speaking of Christ."¹¹²

His scholarly efforts are directed toward clearing the texts of the seminal works of Christian thought from their accumulated dross of commentary and exegesis so that the reader can see for himself what was meant.

Now, Luther had the same attitude toward the new learning as did Erasmus; it was to be used to restore the Christian religion to its primitive purity:

For a time no one understood why God had revived the study of the languages; but now we see that it was for the sake of the Gospel, which he wished to bring to light and thereby expose and destroy the reign of Anti-Christ. For the same reason he gave Greece a prey to the Turks, in order that Greek scholars, driven from home and scattered abroad, might bear the Greek tongue to other countries, and thereby excite an interest in the study of languages.... For immediately after the age of the apostles, when the languages ceased to be cultivated, the Gospel, and the true faith, and Christianity itself, de-

Robert H. Murray, Erasmus and Luther: Their Attitude to Toleration (London, 1920), p. 27, n. 1.

¹¹² Johan Huizinga, op. cit., p. 216. Cf. #563B to Cardinal Wolsey, 1518, in Francis M. Nichols, op. cit., III, 383.

clined more and more, until they were entirely lost under the Pope. And since the time that the languages disappeared, not much that is noteworthy and excellent has been seen in the Church; but through ignorance of the languages many shocking abominations have arisen. On the other hand, since the revival of learning, such a light has been shed abroad, and such important changes have taken place, that the world is astonished, and must acknowledge that we have the Gospel almost as pure and unadulterated as it was in the time of the apostles, and much purer than it was in the days of St. Jerome and St. Augustine. In a word, since the Holy Ghost, who does nothing foolish or useless, has often bestowed the gift of tongues, it is our evident duty earnestly to cultivate the languages, now that God has restored them to the world through the revival of learning.¹¹³

But if Erasmus and Luther each held the same opinions as to the proper use of the new learning in the reformation of religion, how does it happen that after 1518 Erasmus misses no opportunity to accuse the reformers of being enemies of learning and good letters? The quarrel ultimately goes back to the question of the proper tactics to use in effecting the reformation. As I have said, Erasmus thought the reformation could be brought about within the Church; he saw the problem as essentially a cleaning up process in which those who did not live up to the true faith would be eased out of positions of responsibility within the Church by the reformers working either through their own offices or through the influence of men in high places who realized the necessity of bringing about the

¹¹³ Martin Luther in Frederick Eby, op. cit., pp. 59, 61-62.

reforms and therefore cooperated with the reformers. As a matter of fact, it was mainly toward this latter group that Erasmus seems to have devoted his greatest efforts, for he saw in them a sense of toleration and a love of letters which appealed to his own tastes. Any attack on the Church was therefore to him an attack on the men who sponsored the revival of learning and who exemplified its finest traits.

But the reformers knew that it would be hopeless to expect any fundamental and far-reaching reforms from those in power within the Church, and they certainly did not trust those very men Erasmus appealed to because they seemed to the reformers to stand for those very pagan ideas Erasmus himself had castigated. In short, the struggle was the basic one of seizure of power and the reformers held to the position that only a frontal attack on the Church could effect the desired reforms; this fundamental problem is thoroughly analysed in Calvin's The Necessity of Reforming the Church: Presented to the Imperial Diet at Spires, A.D. 1544 in which the conclusion is reached that the ruling clique cannot be expected to give up its power of its own will and that only a struggle for control will lead to the desired results. Now, it is exactly this idea of struggle which Erasmus cannot tolerate so that when finally the issue was presented to him

sharply and clearly, to attack the Church on all fronts or to accept it as it was, he chose the latter. Thinking to remain aloof from the struggle, he found himself on the side of those whose policies he opposed.

As he attempts to extricate himself from this dilemma and finds that he cannot, he increasingly places the blame for his uncomfortable position on the reformers who, if they had not forced the issue, would not have caused him his ideological difficulties. So he turns on those who would put his own ideas to the test of action and accuses them of subverting letters:

Haec eo liberius dico quo modis omnibus sum a Reuchlini Lutherique causa alienissimus. Nec enim ipse velim eiusmodi scribere, nec eam doctrinam mihi arrogo vt ab aliis scripta velim tueri: sed mihi non tempero quin illud mysterium aperiam, istos longe alio tendere quam ore prae se ferant. Iampridem male habet eos efflorescere bonae literae, efflorescere linguas, reuisiscere veteres authores, quos antehoc exedebant tineae puluere opertos, mundum ad fontes ipsos reuocari. Timent suis lacunis, volunt videri quicquam nescire, metuunt ne quid maiestati ipsorum decedat. Hoc hulus cum diu presserint, nuper tamen erupit, dolore vincente dissimulationem. Antequam exirent libri Lutheri, iam magnis studiis hoc agebant, maxime Praedicatorum et Carmelitarum; quorum vtinam plurimi non essent sceleratiorum quem indocti! Vbi libri Lutheri prodissent, velut ansam nacti ceperunt linguarum, bonarum literarum, Capnionis ac Lutheri, imo et eam causam eodem fasce complecti, non solum male offerentes verum etiam male diidentes. Primum enim quid rei bonis studiis cum fidei negotio? deinde quid mihi cum causa Capnionis et Lutheri? Sed haec arte commiscuerunt, vt communi inuidia degrauarent omnes bonarum literarum cultores.¹¹⁴

114 Erasmus, #1033, to Albert of Brandenburg, October 19,

So Erasmus continues to attack Luther: he has engaged in hostile and seditious actions, he will not rest until he has destroyed the study of languages and good learning, he has thrown the apple of discord into the world: "Vbi-cumque regnat Lutherianismus, ibi litterarum est interitus; et tamen hoc genus hominum maxime litteris alitur."¹¹⁵

Some notion of how deeply the Renaissance and Reformation and their inter-relationships had sunk into the minds of contemporaries is afforded from the description of a comedy played at Augsburg in the presence of the Emperor and his Court made by Robert H. Murray:

A man clothed in the robe of a doctor threw on the stage a bundle of sticks, some straight, some crooked, and retired. This was Reuchlin. Another entered, endeavouring to arrange them side by side,

1519, in P. S. and H. M. Allen, *op. cit.*, IV, 104-05. It should be noted that Erasmus' attitude toward Reuchlin is variable; sometimes he links him with Luther, sometimes he berates Luther to him.

¹¹⁵ Erasmus, #1977, to Willibald Pirckheimer, March 20, 1528, in P. S. and H. M. Allen, *op. cit.*, VII, 366. Cf. #1155, to Reuchlin, November 8, 1520, IV, 372; #1167, to Lorenzo Campegio, December 6, 1520, IV, 403: "Porro quum me non fugeret quorsum illi tenderent, nimirum vt res natura disiunctas vno fasce inuoluerent, et dictis ac scriptis priuatim ac publice testatus sum nihil esse commune Reuchlino cum causa Lutheri, nihi cum vtroque: nisi quod plusculum erat cum Reuchlino, quicum mihi vnum aut alterum intercesserat colloquium, et commune studium prouehendi linguas ac bonas literas, et ex huius libris olim nonnihil didici; cum Lutherus mihi ne de facie quidem vnquam sit notus, nec eo progressus sit in linguarum aut peritioris literaturae peritia, vt huius causa quicquam pertineat ad eorum studiorum fautores."

but, not succeeding, he gathered them into the shape of a pile, then fled. He was Erasmus. An Augustinian monk came next with a burning chafing-dish, flung the crooked sticks into the fire, and blew into it to make a blaze. He was called Luther. A new man, bearing the Imperial insignia, tried to extinguish the fire with his sword, which naturally kindled the flames all the more. This was the Emperor. Last of all came one with pontifical robe and triple crown. Startled by the blaze he looked about and saw two buckets, the one filled with oil, the other with water. He seized the water first, but emptied in mistake the oil on the fire, which naturally assumed such enormous proportions that he fled in dismay. This was Leo X.¹¹⁶

Foxe describes the relationship between the two movements as being more amicable than they actually were:

It happened moreover, about this time, that many were provoked, by Erasmus's learned works, to study the Greek and Latin tongues; who perceiving a more gentle and ready order of teaching than before, began to have in contempt the monks' barbarous and sophistical doctrine; and especially such as were of a liberal nature and good disposition. Luther began to study the Greek and Hebrew tongue, to this end, that after he had learned the phrase and property of the tongues, and drawn the doctrine from the very foundations, he might give more sound judgment.¹¹⁷

¹¹⁶ Robert H. Murray, op. cit., pp. 318-19. This account must be read with considerable scepticism. Murray does not cite his source but refers to a similar piece played in Paris, Sculteus Grunbergensis, Tragoedia, Paris, 1524, to be found in the second volume in Böcking's edition of Hutten's works.

¹¹⁷ John Foxe, op. cit., IV, 262. Cf. IV, 253: "Furthermore, after these wits stirred up of God, followed others besides, increasing daily more and more in science, in tongues, and perfection of knowledge; who now were able not only to discern in matters of judgment, but also were so armed and furnished with the help of good letters, that they did encounter also with the adversary, sustaining the cause and defence of learning against barbarity; of verity against error; of true religion against superstition. In

As we have seen, the split between Erasmus and Luther came over the problem of the extent of the politicalization of the new learning. In line with the main tradition of the Italian humanists, Erasmus insisted that the study of good letters was ultimately a value in itself, though, like Valla, who received his approval, it could be used to clear away errors and confusion. On the other hand, Luther, and with him Calvin and Melancthon, both humanists of repute it should be remembered, thought that the full implications of the new learning should be carried out even if it meant the destruction of the Church as an institution. Erasmus saw the problem as an intellectual one in which all that was needed was the rectification of error; Luther saw the Church as an institution whose basic strength was in the ideological sphere as well as in its social, political, and economic ramifications and which

number of whom, amongst many other here unnamed, were Picus, and Franciscus Mirandula, Laurentius Valla, Franciscus Petrarca, Doctor Wesalia, Revelinus, Grocinus, Doctor Colet, Rhenamus, Erasmus, &c. And here began the first push and assault to be given against the ignorant and barbarous faction of the pope's pretended church; who, after that by their learned writings and laborious travail, they had opened a window of light unto the world, and had made, as it were, a way more ready for others to come after: immediately, according to God's gracious appointment, followed Martin Luther, with others after him; by whose ministry it pleased the Lord to work a more full reformation of his church, as by their acts and proceedings hereafter shall follow (Christ willing) more amply to be declared."

therefore had to be attacked all along the line. From Erasmus' point of view, it was the intransigent attitude of the radicals which caused the tragedy as he called it; according to Luther, it was the intransigence of the conservatives who would not suffer any changes to be made in the status quo lest one change bring in its wake a complete reformation which forced the reformers to break with the Church.¹¹⁸

X. Causes of the Renaissance:
The Rise of Science

In the work of the writers we have considered up to this point, there is one common characteristic which binds them all. It is this, that all the writers look backward;

¹¹⁸ See Hans Baron, "Zur Frage des Ursprungs des Deutschen Humanismus und Seiner Religiösen Reformbestrebungen Ein Kritischer Bericht über die Neuere Literatur," HZ, CXXXII (1925), 413-46; Robert H. Fife, "Humanistic Currents in the Reformation Era," GR, XII (1937), 75-94; J. Haller, "Humanismus und Reformation," Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte, XLII (1923), 328-31, XLIII (1924), 169-73; Hajo Holborn, Ulrich Von Hutten and the German Reformation, tr. Roland H. Bainton, Yale University Press, 1937; Paul Joachimsen, "Renaissance, Humanismus, und Reformation," Zeitwende, I (1925), 402-25; Paul Joachimsen, "Vom Mittelalter zur Reformation," Historische Vierteljahrschrift, XX (1920), 426-70; Paul Kalkoff, "Die Stellung der Deutschen Humanisten zur Reformation," ZK, XLVI (1928), 161-231; Hans Rupprich, "Deutsche Literatur im Zeitalter des Humanismus und im Reformation Ein Bericht," DVLG, XVII (1939), 83-133; Fritz Strich, "Renaissance und Reformation," DVLG, I (1923), 582-612; Ernst Troeltsch, "Renaissance und Reformation," HZ, CX (1913), 518-56.

to them the revival is literally that, a return to the world of a way of life which had disappeared for a thousand years but which now was back. It is as though the ancient civilization had flourished, had disappeared, and had reappeared without change, except that the men of the Renaissance looked up to the ancients for the wonders they had achieved. So far as the writers of the Renaissance were concerned, the Middle Ages were a blank; they looked on themselves as the inheritors and continuers of a tradition which had lapsed, and it would not be putting it too strongly to say that they felt themselves the contemporaries of the ancients.

Now, there was another group of men whose faces were not turned backward but rather forward. They too thought that the ancients had accomplished great things, they thought too that the Middle Ages had been unfruitful, but what distinguishes them is the fact that they thought their own age was different both from the classical period and the Middle Ages. In other words, it was their belief that the era of the Renaissance represented a way of life which was unique and which had never before existed on the face of the earth. In their estimation, what distinguished the modern period was the rise of science, which to them meant the discoveries and the new information they uncovered, the invention of instru-

ments the ancients had not known, the effects of these inventions, and finally the application of science toward more discoveries and inventions in increasing numbers of disciplines so that the outlook for the future was not one of sameness but of continuous change and change to the better.

The genesis of this attitude of mind goes back to the feeling that the modern world is not necessarily like the ancient. Boccaccio expresses this feeling but does not elaborate:

Indeed, the close observer sees that the modern world has not only departed from the pathway of the former world, whereon I touched above, but that it has turned its feet in quite the opposite direction.¹¹⁹

Another element which goes to make up this attitude is the belief that the ancients were not as perfect as was supposed. Petrarch hints at this:

Of a truth I believe Aristotle was a great and learned man; but after all he was only a man. It was possible for him to be ignorant of some, nay, of many things. Moreover--and why should we hide it?--Aristotle made mistakes, and this even in the most important matters.¹²⁰

119 Boccaccio, "Life of Dante," in The Earliest Lives of Dante Translated from the Italian of Giovanni Boccaccio and Lionardo Bruni Aretino, ed. James R. Smith (New York, 1901), pp. 10-11.

120 Cited in Pierre de Nolhac, Petrarch and the Ancient World (Boston, 1907), p. 13. To get into the anti-Aristotelian movement of the Renaissance at this point would be to stray from the subject, since, properly speaking, its main bearing is not on the ancient-modern controversy. The early attack on Aristotle has been

Boccaccio makes an interesting defence of his use of modern authorities:

I suppose they will also complain that I have cited as my authorities both such ancients as are obscure or unheard of, and such moderns as have no reputation--in neither case such as they are ready to trust. Indeed this criticism carries some weight. However recent they once may have been who are now the Ancients, yet that which has been preserved through many ages has been approved by great lapse of time, and thence gains its authority. But as to all moderns, the right verdict concerning them, whatever their merit, seems to many to be still in suspense. I am of opinion that no writer will last long whose very novelty is not approved, since their very novelty is the necessary source of approval. Thus I have dared cite as my authorities moderns whom I have known or known personally, or whom by their merits I recognize as exceptional and reliable men. I know by every sign that they have spent nearly their whole lives in sacred studies, that they have ever mingled with men eminent for their attainments both of learning and character, they have lived laudable lives, are without stain or taint of any kind, and that both their writings and conversation are approved by the wisest. On such terms, I think, their modernity should offset the age of others.¹²¹

But, in the last analysis, how does one determine progress in the humanities? It is this difficulty which forces the moderns to turn to science to substantiate their claim that the Renaissance era was different from and even superior to the ancient world.

treated by John W. Taylor in Georgius Gemistus Pletho's Criticism of Plato and Aristotle, Menasha, 1921. The question of whether Platonism advanced the formation of the modern scientific temper and Aristotelianism hindered it or vice versa, has been debated by Burt and Strong.

¹²¹ Boccaccio, in Charles G. Osgood, op. cit., pp. 111-12.

Louis Le Roy sets the pattern which the moderns followed and elaborated on:

Toutefois, si nous balayons le mal avec le bien, nous ne trouverons point qu'il y ait eu, par le passé, un siècle où les entendements et les arts libéraux soient parvenus à une plus grande perfection que maintenant. Non au temps du premier Cyrus...auquel vécut Pythagoras et Thalès...non au temps d'Alexandre le Grand, quand la Grèce produisit ce qu'elle a eu de plus excellent en lettres, armes, et tous les arts, lorsque Platon, Euripide, Démosthènes, Aristote... furent. Non au temps d'Auguste...César, Pompée, Horace, Ovide... Non au temps des Sarrasins, entre lesquels fleurirent Averroès, Avicenne, Abenzoar... Car depuis cent ans, non seulement les choses qui étoient auparavant couvertes par les ténèbres de l'ignorance sont venues en évidence, mais aussi plusieurs autres choses ont été connues, qui avoient été entièrement ignorées des anciens: nouvelles mers, nouvelles terres, nouvelles façons d'hommes, moeurs, lois, coutumes, nouvelles herbes...arbres...minéraux...nouvelles inventions trouvées, comme celles de l'imprimerie, l'artillerie et l'usage de l'aiguille et de l'aimant pour les navigations...des anciennes langues restituées...¹²²

Alvarez, Ramus, Surius, and Postel agree with Le Roy that their century has seen greater progress in men and learning than has been seen in the whole course of the previous fourteen centuries. Now, on what basis did they make this astounding claim?

There is no doubt that their optimism and confidence is based on their belief in progress grounded on science. In his Of the Interchangeable Course, or Variety of Things, Le Roy has worked out the philosophy of progress in relation

¹²² Louis Le Roy, Considération sur l'histoire universelle (Paris, 1567), pp. 7-9, cited in Geoffroy Atkinson, Les nouveaux horizons de la Renaissance Française (Paris, 1935), pp. 404-05.

to science which is the manifesto of the moderns:

The beginnings of the Artes haue bin small, and the greatest difficulties, was in the first inuenting of them, then by the industrie of the learned, they were by little and little augmented; correcting such thinges as were euill obserued, and supplying such as were omitted: but yet, without making any thing entirely absolute; wherevnto there might nothing be added. Nothing is begun and ended at one time; but by succession of time, things are increased, amended, and become better polished. Almost all the Artes haue bin inuented by Use and Experience; and after wardes gathered and made by obseruation and reason: and then consequently reduced into better forme, and more certain, by Diuisions, Definitions, Argumentations, and Demonstrations; by generall precepts and rules drawn from nature, nor from opinion, and tending to the same ende: not by staying and resting on that which men had formerly done, said, or written; nor by only imitating of them, after the manner of slouthfull, and cowardly persons: but by the adding of somewhat of their owne, by some that came after, according as the matters from time to time discovered, and cleared themselues; the honour commonly remaying to the last commers, as the most exquisite, and accomplished. By whose example we ought to trauaile courageously, with hope to make our selues better than them; aspiring continually to perfection, which as yet is not seene any where: considering that there remayne more thinges to be sought out, then are already inuented, and founde. And let vs not be so simple, as to attribute so much vnto the Auncients, that wee beleieue that they haue knowen all, and said all; without learning anything to be said, by those that should come after them. They haue not bin so arrogant, as to looke that none should meddle, or deale with those matters which they had handeled: But on the contrarie, considering the difficultie of knowledge, and the weaknes of mans vnderstanding; they haue exhorted others to trauile therin; speaking rather to stir them vp, and prouke them thereunto, then to keepe them back, or stay them from writing. Let vs not thinke that nature hath giuen them all her good gifts, that she might be barren in time to come: but that as she hath in times past brought forth certain noble personages, who haue manifested many of her secrets; so she can againe bring foorth, such as by the influence of heauen, and a singular inclination, by liuelynes of vnderstanding,

and persuerance of labour, shall attain tither; whither long experience, diligent obseruation, and subilitie of reason, haue not pierced to this present. She is the same that she was in the former famous ages: The world is such as it was before: The heauen and the time keepe the same order which they did; The Sunne, and thother Planets, haue not changed their courses; and there is no starre removed out of his place: The Elements haue the same power; men are made of the same matter, & in the same sort disposed as they were in the old time. And were not the maner of lyuing corrupted, which we use, preferring idlenesse before diligence, pleasure before profit, and vices before vertue; nothing would let, but this age might bring foorth as eminent personages in Philosophie as were Plato, and Aristotle; in Physick as Hippocrates, and Galen; or in the Mathematicks as Euclide, Archimedes, and Ptolomey. Considering the help which we receiue of their books, the examples wherwith antiquitie hath instructed vs, so many obseruations, and inuentions sithence their time, and so long experience of all things: In such sort, that (if we consider it well) there was neuer age more happie for the aduancement of learning, then this present; if weying the shortnes of mans life, we resolute to employ our whole endeouour & industrie, on the studie of true knowledge. Wisdom hath not fulfilled her work; much remaineth, and will alwaies remaine: and there will be neuer be wanting occasion to add therunto. Trueth doth offer her selfe to all those that wil seek her, and are of capacitie to receiue her:... All the maysteries of God and secrets of nature, are not discouered at one time. The greatest things are difficult, and long in comming. How many are there, not yet reduced into art? How many haue bin first knowen and found out in this age? I say, new lands, new seas, new formes of men, manners, lawes, and customes; new diseases, and new remedies; new waies of the Heauen, and of the Ocean, neuer before found out; and new starres? Yea, and how many remaine to be knowen by our posteritie? That which is now hidden, with time will come to light; and our successours will wonder that wee were ignorant of them. 123

Here is a complete statement of the argument of the moderns:

progress, scientific method, perfectibility, the plenitude of nature, the attack on decay, even the title of the most complete exposition of the aims and methods of the moderns.

Even Paracelsus was motivated by the scientific temper:

Since Medicine alone among all branches of learning is necessarily accorded the commendable title of a divine gift by the suffrage of writers both sacred and profane, and yet very few doctors deal with it felicitously at this day, it has seemed expedient to restore it to its former illustrious dignity, and to purge it as much as possible from the dross of the barbarians, and from the most serious errors. We do not concern ourselves with the precepts of the ancients, but with those things which we have discovered, partly by the indications found in the nature of things, and partly by our own skill, which also we have tested by use and experience. For who does not know that very many doctors at this time, to the great peril of their patients, have disgracefully failed, having blindly adhered to the dicta of Hippocrates, Galen, Avicenna, and others, just as though these proceeded like oracles from the tripod of Apollo, and wherefrom they dared not diverge a finger's breadth. From these authorities, when the gods please, they may indeed be begotten persons of prodigious learning, but by no means physicians. It is not a degree, nor eloquence, nor a faculty for languages, nor the reading of many books, although these are no small adornment, that are required in a physician, but the fullest acquaintance with subjects and with mysteries, which one thing easily supplies the place of all the rest. For it is indeed the part of a rhetorician to discourse learnedly, persuade, and bring over the judge to his opinion, but it behoves the physician to know the general causes, and symptoms of affections, to apply his remedies unto the same with sagacity and industry, and to use all according to the best of his ability.¹²⁴

According to Pasquier, Copernicus, Paracelsus, and Ramus

¹²⁴ Paracelsus, "Concerning the Alchemical Degrees and Composition of Recipes and of Natural Things," The Hermetic and Alchemical Writings of Aureolus Philippus Theophrastus Bombast, of Honheim, called Paracelsus the Great, tr. Arthur E. Waite (London, 1894), II, 169-70. Cf. II, 3.

have laid the foundations of a new method superior to the ancients:

J'adjousteray encore à vostre discours, par maniere de remplissage, que dedans la mesme centaine d'années dont parlez, qui est l'an mil cinq cents, se trouverent, en matiere de sciences, trois grands hommes (appelez les Innovateurs, ou Heretiques, si voulez) qui voulurent troubler l'ancienneté. Copernic dedans l'Allemaigne, en Mathematique, qui par nouvelles demonstrations voulut faire accroire, que la Terre estoit mobile, le Ciel immobile, la Lune chaude, le Soleil froid, & plusieurs autres telles propositions paradoxes: Paracelse, qui par nouveaux principes de Medecine, incognus à Hippocrat & Galien, quoy que soit, non par eux touches, sit une infinité de grandes & extraordinaires guerisons. Et dedans cette France, la Ramée, dit Ramus, qui par Livres exprés en la Logique, voulut censurer la doctrine d'Aristote, receuë & approuvée d'un long-temps par toutes les Universitez.¹²⁵

In two different fields, surgery and the investigation of magnetism, their leading exponents claim superiority over the ancients.¹²⁶ Thus the way toward a complete working out of the method and implications of science had been laid before Bacon.

Of the innovations made by the rise of science none received more attention than the discoveries and the invention of gunpowder, the compass, and printing. In his

125 Estienne Pasquier, "Lettre V. A Monsieur de Raimond, Conseiller en la Cour de Parlement de Bourdeaux," op. cit., II, 605-06.

126 Ambrose Parey, "The Authors Epistle Dedicatory to Henry III.," The Works of that Famous Chirurgeon Ambrose Parey, Translated out of Latin, and Compared with the French, by Th. Johnson (London, 1678), p. A4r; William Gilbert, "Preface to the Candid Reader, Studious of the Magnetic Philosophy," On the Magnet, Magnetic Bodies Also, and on the Great Magnet the Earth (London, 1900), pp. *iir-*iiv.

autobiography, Cardan expresses the sentiments of the moderns when he says:

Among the extraordinary, though quite natural circumstances of my life, the first and most unusual is that I was born in this century in which the whole world became known; whereas the ancients were familiar with but little more than a third part of it.

On the one hand we explore America--I now refer to the part particularly designated by that name--Brazil, a great part of which was before unknown, Terra del Fuego, Patagonia, Peru, Charcas, Parana, Acutia, Caribana, Picora, New Spain, Quito, of Quinira the more Western part, New France and regions more to the South of this toward Florida, Cortereal, Estotilant, and Marata. Besides all these, toward the East under the Antarctic we find the Antisicians somewhat like the Scythians, and some Northern peoples not yet known, as well as Japan, Binarchia, the Amazonas, and a region which is beyond the Island of the Demons, if these be not fabled islands--all discoveries sure to give rise to great and calamitous events in order that a just distribution of them may be maintained.

The conviction grows that, as a result of these discoveries, the fine arts will be neglected and but lightly esteemed, and certainties will be exchanged for uncertainties. These things may be true sometime or other, but meanwhile we shall rejoice as in a flower-filled meadow. For what is more amazing than pyrotechnics? or than the fiery bolts man has invented so much more destructive than the lightning of the gods?

Nor of thee, O Great Compass, will I be silent, for thou dost guide us over boundless seas, through gloomy nights, through the wild storms seafarers dread, and through the pathless wilderness.

The fourth marvel is the invention of the typographic art, a work of man's hands, and the discovery of his wit--a rival, forsooth, of the wonders wrought by divine intelligence. What lack we yet unless it be the taking of Heaven by storm! Oh, the madness of man to give heed to vanity rather than the fundamental things of life. Oh, that arrogant poverty of intellectual humility not to be moved to wonder!¹²⁷

Vespucci was well aware of the importance of his discoveries. Writing to Lorenzo Pietro Di Medici, he says:

On a former occasion I wrote to you at some length concerning my return from those new regions which were found and explored with the fleets, at the cost, and by the command of this Most Serene King of Portugal. And these we may rightly call a new world. Because our ancestors had no knowledge of them, and it will be a matter wholly new to those who hear about them. For this transcends the view held by our ancients, inasmuch as most of them hold that there is no continent to the south beyond the equator, but only the sea which they named the Atlantic; and if some of them did aver that a continent there was, they denied with abundant argument that it was a habitable land. But that this their opinion is false and utterly opposed to the truth, this my last voyage has made manifest; for in those southern parts I have found a continent more densely peopled and abounding in animals than our Europe or Asia or Africa, and, in addition, a climate milder and more delightful than in any other region known to us, as you shall learn in the following account wherein we shall set succinctly down only capital matters and the things more worthy of comment and memory seen or heard by men in this new world, as will appear below.¹²⁸

In his Histoire Generale des Indes Occidentales & Terres Neues, Qui Iusques à Present Ont Esté Descourtes and translated by Fumée Sieur de Marly le Castel, Francisco Lopez de Gomara delivers a scathing attack on the ancients' knowledge of geography. He shows that the world is round, that it is inhabited, that there are inhabitants on the other hemispheres, that the ancients did not know how to

Liber), tr. Jean Stoner (London, 1931), pp. 189-90.

¹²⁸ Amerigo Vespucci, Mundus Novus Letter to Lorenzo Pietro Di Medici, tr. George N. Northup (Princeton University Press, 1916), p. 1.

compute correctly longitude and latitude, all of which the ancients did not know and which the moderns had found out. Le Roy lists the new things which have come into the world as a result of the discoveries: sugar, pearls, spices, herbs, trees, fruit, and gold; Best makes a similar list. Finally, Best shows how the discoveries have brought about an economy of abundance:

For when was there euer heard of such abundance of gold and siluer (whiche no doubt being well used, is the great benefite and good blessing of God to Mankind) as in these our dayes. No, Salomon himselfe, with all the pretious metall of Ophir, which he (one only King) had in that only place, can not be comparable to the greate store of golde, and all other mettals, which dayly are digged out of the bowels of the earth, almost in all parts of the world, and now lately in the supposed hard and congealed frozen Lands, almost under the Poles. Yea now euery priuate man can witness this with me, that he is more contented with the wealth and riches that his Auncestors hadde, but thinkes himselfe base minded, if by his industrie he encrease not his priuat welth proportinallie, as the whole world increaseth in common wealth, and not only of gold & siluer is of such great encrease, but also of all other things, seruing as well for pleasure, and delightes of the mind, as for the necessarie vses of mans life. For as we are placed in these lower Elementes, firste to know and acknowledge ye high Creator, and then thankfully to take the fruition of things for oure mayntenance, which are especially two, that is, meate and drinke, to susteyne the body, and couerture, to defend the same from the rigor of heate and cold, and so thereby to glorifie God in his workes: what age hath bin euer heertofore, that hath so abounded with store, not only of necessarie meates, but also of pleasant & delectable confections, to delight man withal? for whatsoeuer sundry sorte of corne, grayne, & meates former yeares haue had, we not only haue all the same in farre greater abundance, but therevnto are added thousandes of new things simple and compound, neuer heeretofore seene or heard of. And as

for couerture to defende the bodye, the matter is growen to such excellencie of Architecture and building, to such finenesse of cloth and silkes of all sortes and coloures, that man studieth no more to multiplie the encrease thereof, so muche as to devise fashions, to make it serue more ornament, than for necessarie vses.¹²⁹

The importance of the invention of printing was soon recognized, especially from the point of view of its effects on the Reformation. Many writers of the Renaissance discuss the significance of printing and the consensus of opinion is that printing has brought about a great increase in the diffusion of knowledge and has been instrumental in causing the revival itself. But it is John Foxe who brings the praise of the printing press to its highest pitch. In a section called "The Invention and Benefit of Printing," Foxe discusses the date of the invention of the press, considers the various claimants to its invention, and describes the process. He concludes with a recital of its accomplishments: it has come from God to abolish the papal tyranny, to confute the Church of Rome, and to bring about the victory of the truth; it has diffused knowledge, reduced the price of books, made learning and reading more easily accessible, has encouraged the composition of worthwhile books, and has caused God's word to prevail.¹³⁰

¹²⁹ George Best, op. cit., p. 14.

¹³⁰ John Foxe, op. cit., III, 718-22.

The result of this activity in the sciences was the formulation of a doctrine of progress. It was held that the modern world was different from previous worlds because it knew more, did more, and hoped to accomplish more. The future seemed to promise ever increasing inventions and discoveries of such magnitude as made the present achievements seem small by comparison, not that the present was bad, but that the future would be better. There therefore was no turning back to the past for only the future mattered.¹³¹ The rise of science then, introduced a new element into the Renaissance idea of the Renaissance. Men were aware of their era not because it was like another period which had died away and was re-born but because it was different from any other era; its uniqueness was its mark.

XI. Ideological Preconceptions

In the work of the writers who have been considered here, there are a number of assumptions about the course

¹³¹ A full-length study of the idea of progress in the Renaissance is lacking. Bury's book is more concerned with the eighteenth century theories of progress as is Professor Jones' study with seventeenth century theories. In the Appendix to his Erasmus and Luther, Robert H. Murray has an article on "The Conception of Progress in Classical and Renaissance Writers," which is valuable in that it suggests the outlines of the story but is much too brief otherwise.

of history, that is to say, the way men act and under what impulses, whether recognized by them or not, which help to explain the attitudes they have taken toward the Renaissance; sometimes these assumptions are explicit, but most often they are implicit in the work itself. By this I mean that these writers have certain ways of looking at past events which enable them to make intelligible patterns out of the flux of phenomena, for in dealing with history at all, the mere recognition of events implies some sort of preconceived way of looking at them imposed on the material beforehand: a fact is not a fact because it is a raw piece of information, whatever that might mean, but because it is a recognizable part of a scheme into which it fits. Now, in the Renaissance there were six methodological assumptions about the course of history which in varying degrees affected the theory of the Renaissance. These are the idea of progress, which has been considered in the previous section, the theory of the plenitude of nature, the climate theory, the cyclical theory of history, the doctrine of uniformitarianism, and the idea of decline. Of these, roughly speaking, the first three provided a favorable soil in which the idea of the Renaissance could grow, the last three hindered a rapid advance in the development of the idea.

While the theories of the purposes and methods of history in the Renaissance are too many and complex to be

illustrated briefly, nevertheless some notion of them may be obtained from the following two passages, the first from Luther to illustrate the conception of the purpose of history, the other from Vasari to show the attitude toward method:

When one thoroughly considers the matter, it is from history, as from a living fountain, that have flowed all laws, sciences, counsel, warning, threatenings, comfort, strength, instruction, foresight, knowledge, wisdom, and all the virtues; that is to say, history is nothing else than an indication, recollection, and monument of divine works and judgments, showing how God maintains, governs, hinders, advances, punishes, and honors men, according as each one has deserved good or evil. And although there are many who do not recognize and regard God, yet must they take warning from history, and fear that it may go with them as with many a one therein portrayed, whereby they are moved more than by mere admonition in words; as we read not alone in the Holy Scriptures, but also in heathen books, how men introduced and held up the examples, words, and works of their ancestors, when they wished to accomplish something with the multitude, or to teach, admonish, warn, or terrify.

Therefore historians are most useful people and most excellent teachers, whom we can never sufficiently honor, praise, and thank, and it should be a care of our great lords, as emperors and kings, to have histories of their times written and preserved in libraries, and they should spare no expense to procure persons capable of teaching.... But it requires a superior man to write history, a man with a lion-heart, who dares without fear to speak the truth. For most men write in such a way, that, according to the wishes of their rulers or friends, they pass over the vices or degeneracy of their times, or put the best construction upon them; on the other hand, through partiality for their fatherland and hostility to foreigners, they unduly magnify insignificant virtues, and eulogize or defame according to their preferences or prejudices. In this way histories become beyond measure untrustworthy, and God's work is obscured. Since history describes nothing else than the ways of God, that is, grace and anger, which we should believe as if

they stood in Scripture, it ought to be written with extreme care, fidelity, and truth.¹³²

In the introduction to the second part of his Lives, Vasari analyses the methods to be employed in the proper writing of history:

But I remembered that the writers of history,--such of them, that is to say, as by common consent are admitted to have treated their subject most judiciously,--have in no case contented themselves with a simple narration of the occurrences they describe, but have made zealous inquiry respecting the lives of the actors, and sought with the utmost diligence to investigate the modes and methods adopted by distinguished men for the furtherance of their various undertakings. The efforts of such writers have, moreover, been further directed to the examination of the points on which errors have been made, or, on the other hand, by what means successful results have been produced, to what expedients those who govern have had recourse, in what manner they have delivered themselves from such embarrassments as arise in the management of affairs: of all that has been effected, in short; whether sagaciously or injudiciously, whether by the exercise of prudence, piety, and greatness of mind, or by that of the contrary qualities, and with opposite results; as might be expected from men who are persuaded that history is in truth the mirror of human life. These writers have not contented themselves with a mere dry narration of facts and events, occurring under this prince or in that republic, but have set forth the grounds of the various opinions, the motives of the different resolutions, and the character of the circumstances by which the prime movers have been actuated; with the consequences, beneficial or disastrous, which have been the results of all. This is, without doubt, the soul of history. From these details it

¹³² Martin Luther, Vorrede D.M.L. auf die Historia Galeatii Capellae vom Herzog zu Mailand, cited in Franklin Painter, op. cit., pp. 160-62. This passage is an interesting example of the fusion of theological and secular attitudes toward the purpose of history to form a humanistic theory in which the purpose of history remains to teach but not so much by example, as in the medieval conception, as by understanding of the wider purposes of God and men.

is that men learn the true government of life; and to secure this effect, therefore, with the addition of the pleasure which may be derived from having past events presented to the view as living and present, is to be considered the legitimate aim of the historian.¹³³

With these explicit statements as to the aims and methods of history, we can now turn to a consideration of the assumptions on which the work of the writers we have considered have been based.¹³⁴

The theory of the plenitude of nature holds that, contrary to the beliefs of those who hold to the idea of retrogression, nature is not running down, that men are as good as they once were, and that it is perfectly just to expect continued improvements in the arts and sciences. This point of view is in reality an attack on the doctrine of the superiority of the ancients; at the same time, it makes possible, as we have seen in the work of Le Roy, a justification for the study of science. For if nature has run down, there is nothing new to discover, and if men's wits are becoming feebler, there is no possibility

133 Giorgio Vasari, op. cit., I, 300-01.

134 For a more complete discussion of the stated aims and methods of the Renaissance historians, there are the standard studies by Flint and Feurter as well as Hans Baron, "Das Erwachen des Historischen Denkers in Humanismus des Quattrocento," HZ, CXLVII (1933), 5-20; Paul Joachimsen, Geschichtsauffassung und Geschichtsschreibung in Deutschland unter dem Einfluss des Humanismus, Leipsic, 1910. Dr. Leonard Dean has written an unpublished dissertation at the University of Michigan on the writing of history in the Renaissance, with special reference to England.

of increasing knowledge. The defence of the plenitude of nature takes different forms. Gabriel Harvey points out that reason still functions as well as it always did:

You make a wonderful greate matter of it, that reason, contrarye to all reason and ye custom of former ages is forcibely constraynid to yeelde her obedience, and to be in a manner vassal unto appetite. See, I beseech you, howe you overshoote yourselfe and mistake the matter, in beinge over credulous to beleeve whatsoever is unadvisedly committid to writinge. Here is righte a newe comedye for him that were delightid with overthwarte and contrary Supposes. You suppose the first age was the goulde age. It is nothingse soe. Bodin defendith the goulde age to flourishe nowe, and our first grandfathers to have rubbid thorowghe in the iron and brasen age at the beginninge when all thinges were rude and unperfitt in comparison of the exquisite finesse and delicacye, that we are growen unto at these dayes.¹³⁵

Richard Eden points out that the great advances made in geometry, astronomy, architecture, music, painting, arms, inventions, and the like, in modern times are an indication that men can now be the superiors to the ancients for they have the same abilities as the ancients; furthermore, since the number of things to be found out is infinite, so the number of inventions and discoveries is infinite.¹³⁶ Le Roy reports that there is a frequent complaint to the effect that manners are getting worse

¹³⁵ Gabriel Harvey, Letter-Book of Gabriel Harvey, A.D. 1573-1580, ed. Edward J. L. Scott (London, 1884), pp. 85-86.

¹³⁶ Richard Eden, The First Three English Books on America. [?1511]-1555 .A.D. Being Chiefly Translations, Compilations, &c., by Richard Eden, ed. Edward Arber (Birmingham, 1885), pp. xlvi-xlvii.

daily, but if this were so, he asks, then men should "...ere this haue come to the height of iniquitie; and there should now be no more integrities in them: which is not true."¹³⁷ Bodin makes a strong attack on the idea of retrogression in his Methodus:

Quod si res humanae in deterius prolaberentur, iampridem in extremo vitiorum ac improbitatis gradu consitissimus: quo quidem antea peruentu esse opinior. sed cum flogitiosi homines nec vlterius progredi, nec eodem loco stare diutius possent, sensim regredi necesse habuerunt, vel cogente pudore, qui hominibus inest a natura: vel necessitate, que in tantis scelleribus societas nullo modo coli poterat: vel etiam, quod verius est, impellente Dei bonitate.¹³⁸

What the theory of the plenitude of nature contributed to the idea of the Renaissance was the belief that it was possible to equal, if not overtake, the ancients.

According to the climate theory of history, the influence of the elements may bring about changes in men's affairs. Thus Vasari points out that the air the early painters breathed stimulated them to produce the works of art which help bring about the revival of the arts. While Bodin is most closely identified with this idea, it was not unknown to other writers. Thomas Proctor writes:

The Climate, or Region of the firmament, vnder which euery Countrey is planted & settled, hath great force and influence, for the temperature & complexion of mens bodies, which also worketh

137 Louis Le Roy, op. cit., p. 124v.

138 Jean Bodin, op. cit., pp. 306-07.

sundrie effectes & motyons in the myndes & disposityons of them, ...¹³⁹

Bodin makes the point that a concurrence of the proper climatic conditions will bring about changes in history and that certain areas are more favorable for the cultivation of the arts and sciences than others; he does not, however, work this out in connection with his own times.¹⁴⁰

The assumption about the course of human history which is most widely held in the Renaissance is the circular or tide theory. According to this point of view, men and nations and the arts have their origin, rise, flourishing, and decay; when the process is completed once, it does not stop but repeats itself over and over again. Or if we take the tide image, civilizations ebb and flow, and ebb and flow, and again the process is a continuous one. Seen in relationship to the idea of the Renaissance, this theory may be a help or hindrance to its development, dependent at what point in the circle an historian wishes to place it. If the Renaissance is seen as part of the ascending curve, it will be described as the apex of human

¹³⁹ Thomas Proctor, Of the Knowledge and Conducte of Warres, (London, 1578), p. viiir. Proctor links up the influence of the climate with that of the humours in the manner of the Zodiack.

¹⁴⁰ Jean Bodin, op. cit., pp. 78-79. Fulke Greville tries to account for Sidney's virtues on the ground of the climatic conditions in England in The Life of the Renowned Sir Philip Sidney, in the Works, op. cit., IV, 79-80.

history up to that point; on the other hand, if it is part of the descending arc, it will be looked on as a state of decay in comparison with the peak reached by the ancients; in point of fact, both approaches are to be found.

Machiavelli expresses the idea of circular change in The History of Florence:

In the changes that are incident to all governments, they often degenerate into anarchy and confusion; and from these emerge again to good order and regularity. For since it is ordained by Providence that there should be a continual ebb and flow in the things of this world; as soon as they arrive at their utmost perfection, and can ascend no higher, they must of necessity decline; and on the other hand, when they have fallen, through any disorder, to the lowest degree that is possible, and can sink no lower, they begin to rise again. And thus there is a constant succession of prosperity and adversity in all human affairs. Virtue is the mother of peace; peace produces idleness; idleness, contention and misrule; and from thence proceed ruin and confusion. This occasions reformation and better laws; good laws make men virtuous; and public virtue is always attended with glory and success.¹⁴¹

Harvey applies the circular theory to the course of learning and especially to its history in his own lifetime:

There is a variable course and revolution of all thinges. Summer gettith the upperhande of wynter, and wynter agayne of summer. Nature herselfe is changeable, and most of all delightid with vanitye; and arte, after a sorte her ape, conformith herselfe to the like mutabilitye. The moone waxith and wanythe; the sea ebbith and flowith; and as flowers so ceremonyes, lawes, fashions, customs, trades of livinge, sciences, devises, and all thinges else in

¹⁴¹ The Works of Nicholas Machiavel, Secretary of State to the Republic of Florence, Newly Translated from the Originals;...By Ellis Farnsworth (London, 1763), I, 213-14. Cf. Guicciardini, op. cit., I, 2; Vasari, op. cit., I, 20-21, 32-33.

a manner flourisheth there tyme and then fade to nothinge. Nothing to speake of ether so restorative and comfortable for delighte or beneficiall and profitable for use, but beinge longe together enjoyed and continued at laste ingenderith a certayne satietye, and then it soone becumeth odious and lothsum. So it standith with mens opinions and iudgmentes in matters of doctrine and religion. On fortye yeares the knowledge of the tunges and eloquence karrieth the creddeite and flauntith it owte in her sattin doblets and velvet hoses. Then exspirith the date of her bravery, and everye man havinge enoughe of her, philosophy and knowledge in divers naturall morall matters, must give her the Camisade and beare ye swaye an other while. Every man seith what she can doe. At last cumith braverye and ioinith them bothe.¹⁴²

Le Roy attributes the greatness of the several notable eras in history, including the Renaissance, to the circular course of events:

By the same order and interchangeable course, the Arts and Sciences being small at beginning, do augment by little and little, and come vp to their perfection: whether after they are once come, they fall eftsoones, and finally perish thorough the slouth of men, or by the calamitie of warres long continued, or by the tyrannie of barbarous people: Then when they haue bin a while let downe, they arise againe, and successiuelie recouer their former strength. Which hath giuen occasion to some excellent Philosophers, and Astrologers to thinke, that the same Sciences haue sundrie times bin inuented before, time out of minde, and lost againe; as they may be againe also in time to come: seeing that power and wisdom leaue not long each other; but ordinarily keepe good companie together. As I haue obserued within these three thousand yeares to haue falne out fiue or sixe times at certain seasons, finding the excellency of armes, and learning, to haue bin first in Egipt, Assyria, Persia, and Asia the lesser: consequently in Greece, Italie, and Sarasmenia: and finallie in this age, in which we see almost all auncient, liberal, and Mechanical

¹⁴² Gabriel Harvey, op. cit., p. 37.

arts to be restored with the tongues: after that they had bin lost almost twelue hundred yeares, and other new, inuented in their places.¹⁴³

As a dynamic theory of history, the idea that events have their rise, flourishing state, and fall enabled the writers of the Renaissance to account for the emergence of a new way of life when, in their estimation, there had been no changes in human affairs for a millennium.

The central doctrine of the theory of uniformitarianism holds that human nature never changes, that men at all times and places have always been the same, and that therefore there is nothing new under the sun. Thus Montaigne makes the point that the world is neither in a state of decrepitude nor in a state of progress; it is as it always has been, and nature has neither lost its power nor suddenly produced men of outstanding qualities.¹⁴⁴ And Charron takes the very evidence which led Le Roy to announce the doctrine of progress to arrive at the conclusion that the

143 Louis Le Roy, op. cit., pp. 17r-17v. Cf. Jean Bodin, Les Six Livres de la Repvbligue (Paris, 1583), pp. 503-04. Pasquier discusses the relation of the state of arts to the state of society in "Lettre V. Au Chevalier de Montereau," op. cit., II, 9-10. Fulke Greville versifies on the subject of the rise and fall of kingdoms and the arts in "A Treatise of Monarchy," op. cit., I, 42-43, 46, and in "A Treatise of Warre," II, 118-19. While the circular theory has its classical counterparts, the influence of the wheel of fortune should not be overlooked.

144 Michel De Montaigne, "Of Coaches," The Essays of Michel De Montaigne, ed. Jacob Zeitlin (New York, 1936), III, 115-16.

world has not seen nor ever will see anything new:

By that which we have learned of the discovery of the new world, the East and West-Indies, we see first, that all our ancient Writers have been deceived, thinking to have found the measure of the habitable earth, and to have comprehended the whole Cosmography, except some scattered Islands, doubting of the Antipodes: for now behold another world, almost such as ours is, and that all upon firm land inhabited, peopled, politically governed, distinguished by Realms, and Empires, beautified with Cities, that excell in beauty, greatness, opulency, all those of Asia, Africa, Europe, many thousand years ago: And who doubteth, but that in time hereafter there will be discovered divers others? If Ptolomy, and other our ancient Writers, have been heretofore deceived, why should not he be likewise deceived that affirmeth, that all is already found and discovered: Say it he that will, I will believe him as I list.

Secondly, we see that the Zones, which were thought inhabitable by reason of their excessive heat and cold, are habitable.

Thirdly, that in these new countries, almost all things which we so much esteem of here, and hold that they were first revealed and sent from Heaven, were commonly believed and observed, (from whence they came, I will not say, who dares determine it?) Yea many of them, were in use a thousand years before we heard any tydings of them, both in the matter of Religion, as the belief on one only Man, the father of us all, of the universal deluge, of one God who sometimes lived in the form of a man undefiled and holy, of the day of judgment: the resurrection of the dead, circumcision like to that of the Jews, and Mahomet: And in the matter of policy, as that the elder should succeed in the inheritance, that he that is exalted to a dignity, loseth his own name, and takes a new; tyrannical subsidies, armouries, tumblers, musical instruments, all sorts of sports, Artillery, Printing. From all these discourses, we may easily draw these conclusions: That this great body which we call the world, is not that which we think and judge it to be; That neither in the whole, nor parts thereof, it is always the same, but in perpetual flux and reflux; That there is nothing said, held, believed at one time, and in one place, which is not likewise said, held, believed in another, yea and contradicted, reproved, condemned

elsewhere; the spirit of man being capable of all things; the world always tumbling, sometimes the same, sometimes divers; That all things are settled and comprehended in their course and revolution of nature, subject to encrease, changing, ending, to the mutation of times, places, climates, heavens, airs, countries. And from these conclusions we learn, to marry ourselves, to swear to nothing; to admire, to trouble our selves at nothing; but whatsoever shall happen, whatsoever men talk of and trouble themselves about, to resolve upon this point, that it is the course of the world, that it is nature that worketh these things; but yet wisely to provide that nothing hurt us by our own weakness and dejection of mind.¹⁴⁵

It is interesting to note that the doctrine of uniformitarianism was held rather extensively by writers on military affairs. The influence of gunpowder had led some writers to declare that the science of military strategy would have to be completely altered to meet the changed conditions produced by the use of artillery and firearms. But the most influential authorities on military matters denied this claim and insisted that the ancient tactics still held good, and there are even texts which show the disposition of artillery on the basis of the rules of the ancients. Thus in the preface to their work on strategy, Thomas Digges says he has consulted with soldiers on the use of the Roman military discipline in modern times and

¹⁴⁵ Pierre Charron, Of Wisdome: Three Bookes, tr. Samson Lennard (London, 1670), p. 231. The epistemological basis of Charron's position had been worked out by Henry Cornelius Agrippa in The Vanity of Arts and Sciences. Professor Buckley's Atheism in the English Renaissance discusses the rôle played by rationalism and allied movements in England.

has received the answer:

that the Time was chaunged, the Warres were altered, and the furie of Ordinaunce such, as all those Romane orders were meere toyes once to be talked of in these our dayes: As though the Heauens and Elements had chaunged their Natures, or Men and Weapons so altered, as no humaine reason might attaine to consider the difference. Or as though the Romane Orders for the field (a verie few excepted) were not more conuenient, more seruiceable, and more Inuincible, (all alterations considered) euen in these our dayes, than they were for that age wherin they were used and practiced.¹⁴⁶

And Sir John Smythe in his anger against those who would deny the worth of the long-bow in modern wars condemns all the modern innovations:

Euen as the wisdom and humilitie of the notable men of later ages, haue giuen greater honor to the excellencie of men in all Artes and Sciences of former ages and greater antiquitie, than to themselues; not onlie acknowledging themselues to be inferiours vnto them, but also, that the greatest skil and knowledge which they haue attained vnto, hath (in the greatest part) proceeded from such notable men, either by hearing and obseruing their opinions, or by reading of their works, or els by reading of others that haue written of the iudgement and actions of such excellent men, and chieflie of our Nation in this our time (I mean within these twentie yeares) haue so exceeded and superabounded, that they haue not been ashamed, not onlie to attribute vnto themselues greater wisdom and sufficiencie in all Arts and Sciences, and speciallie in the Arte Militarie, than to the notable men and great Captaines of former ages and greater antiquitie, but also to dishable them in respect of themselues and their sufficiencie, and all others also yet liuing, that are men of greater yeares and antiquitie, than they are, both of our owne Nation, as also forraine, that haue beene and serued in the well ordered warres of Emperours or Kings, in times past; saying, (to make the same more probable) that their warres are now

¹⁴⁶ Thomas Digges, "Preface," A Arithmetical Warlike Treatise, Named Stratiotics (London, 1579), p. Biiir.

growne to greater perfection, and greatlye altered from the warres of times past; vnder pretence whereof, they haue of late fought both by publique and priuate perswasions and inducements, to reduce all our auncient proceedings in matters Militarie, which they are vtterlie ignorant of, to their owne errors and disorders, procuring also (as much as they can) by their vaine and friuolous obiections against our Archerie, to suppress and extinguish the exercise and seruiceable use of Long-bowes.¹⁴⁷

By denying the possibility of change or progress, the doctrine of uniformitarianism helped to put a damper on the enthusiasm for the achievements of the modern world. Its influence was more pervasive than I have indicated and it continued to exercise a retarding effect on the idea of progress into the seventeenth century.

Finally, there is the idea of decay which held that the world was on the down grade. The best period in history had been at the beginning of the world and history was but the record of the increasing degeneracy of man and his works. Nature itself was running down and there was no

¹⁴⁷ Sir John Smythe, Certain Discourses...Concerning the Formes and Effects of Diuers Sorts of Weapons (London, 1590), pp. *2r-*2v. Robert Barret in The Theorike and Practike of Moderne Warres (London, 1598), pp. 2-3, laconically dismisses the use of archers, "...then was then, and now is now." Cf. Matthew Sutcliffe, The Practice, Proceedings, and Lawes of Armes (London, 1593), p. Biv. And of course Machiavelli believed in the superiority of the ancient discipline; in the Art of War he sadly but naively remarks: "...but if fortune had indulged some years ago with a territory fit for such an undertaking, I think I should have convinced the world of the excellency of the ancient military discipline; for I would either have encreased my own dominions with glory, or at least not have left them with infamy and disgrace," op. cit., II, 163.

hope for the present, and certainly none at all for the future. Thus there is developed a strong strain of pessimism which, when applied to the idea of the Renaissance, denied either the uniqueness or the advances made in modern times. If we add to this, the theological opposition to the things of this world and its insistence on the depravity of man, we get a steady counter-current to the idea of progress.

Basic to the idea of decay is the belief in the existence of a past golden age from which all subsequent history is judged and found wanting:

So oft as I with state of present time,
The image of the antique world compare,
When as mans age was in his freshest prime,
And the first blossome of faire vertue bare,
Such odde I finde twixt those, and these which are,
As that, through long continuance of his course,
Me seemes the world is runne quite out of square,
From the first point of his appointed sourse,
And being once amisse growes daily wourse and wourse.¹⁴⁸

Fulke Greville's "A Treatise of Monarchy" begins with a description of the golden age:

1.

There was a time before the times of story
When Nature raign'd instead of Laws or Arts,
And mortal gods, with men made up the glory
Of one Republick by united hearts.
Earth was the common seat, their conversation
In saving love, and our's in adoration.

148 Edmund Spenser, The Faerie Queene Book V, ed. Frederick M. Padelford, et al, in The Works of Edmund Spenser. A Variorum Edition, ed. Edwin Greenlaw, et al (The Johns Hopkins Press, 1936), V, 1.

2.

For in those golden days, with Nature's chains
Both King and People seem'd conjoyn'd in one;
Both nurst alike, with mutual feeding veins,
Transcendcy of either side unknown;
Princes with men using no other arts
But by good dealing to obtain good hearts.

3.

Power then maintained itself ever by those arts
By which it grew: as Justice, Labor, Love;
Reserved sweetness did it self impart
Even unto slaves, yet kept it self above,
And by a meek descending to the least,
Enviless swayed and govern'd all the rest.

4.

Order there equal was; Time courts ordain'd
To hear, to judge, to execute, and to make
Few and good rules, for all griefs that complain'd:
Such care did princes of their people take
Before this art of Power allay'd the Truth:
So glorious of Man's greatness is the youth.

17.

But by decree of Fate this corporation
Is alter'd since, and Earth's fair globe miscarried,
Man's craft, above these gods in estimation,
And by it Wisdome's constant standard varied;
Whereby the sway of many years are gone
Since any godhead rul'd an earthly throne.

18.

Whether it were man's false pygmean wit
Captiving Envy, or the giant's pride,
Which forc't these Worthies to abandon it
I know not; but some disproportion'd tyde
Of Time's self-humours hath that commerce drown'd
To which this image shews those times were bound.

19.

And when those golden days were once expired
Time straight claim'd her succession in the brass,
And to her ends new instruments inspired,
With narrow selfness staining all that was:
Power still affects more inequality,
Which made mankind more curious to be free.

20.

Divided thus, kings quit their Father's hand
In government, which men did earst adore,

The golden age theme brings with it a feeling of pessimism, of lack of faith in progress and in the ability of human reason to deal adequately with the problems which confront man; and this is a strain of anti-intellectualism which merges very easily into theological distrust of the reason, as in the poems of Davies and Norden. The Renaissance has been described as the optimistic age; it is also the pessimistic age, for on all sides one hears the cry: "We are fallen into the barren age of the worlde," and "Our age, and aged world, even doating olde," and "...the world declineth to old age, and bringeth not forth his fruite with that vigour and vertue it hath done in times past;... the vertue and goodnesse of men seemeth to defect from that of former ages, and to wax old and decay...."¹⁵⁰ The idea of decay is perhaps the strongest impediment to the immediate acceptance of the idea of the Renaissance and so

¹⁵⁰ William Covell, Polimanteia, or, the Meanes Lawfull and Vnlawfull, to Ivdge of the Fall of a Common-wealth, ed. Alexander B. Grosart (Manchester, 1881), p. 5; Johannes Sprint, "To the Author...", in Thomas Storer, The Life and Death of Thomas Wolsey, Cardinall (London, 1215), p. xii; Sir Richard Barckley, A Discourse of the Felicitie of Man (London, 1603), p. 315. A number of studies of Renaissance pessimism have recently appeared: Don C. Allen, "The Degeneration of Man and Renaissance Pessimism," SP, XXXV (1938), 202-27; Johan Huizinga, The Waning of the Middle Ages, tr. F. Hopman, London, 1924; L. C. Knights, "17th Century Melancholy," The Criterion, XIII (1933), 97-112; Arnold Williams, "A Note on Pessimism in the Renaissance," SP, XXXVI (1939), 243-46; George Williamson, "Mutability, Decay, and Seventeenth Century Melancholy," ELH, II (1935), 121-50.

great was its influence that it needed the full efforts of Bacon and his followers to put an end to its vogue in the philosophical area though it kept alive by becoming a convention in poetry.

The six ideological preconceptions which have been considered affected the course of the idea of the Renaissance, and in some senses, the conflict between the idea of progress and the idea of decay in the seventeenth century determined the history of the idea of the Renaissance in England for some time after. In any case, it is important to recognize that the writers of the Renaissance did not approach the problem of defining the Renaissance naively. They realized that so complex a cultural phenomenon required an adequate philosophy of history to account for it and they attempted to justify their explanations in terms of large cultural patterns. It is true that judged by modern standards their notions of cultural history are inadequate and their philosophies of history thin, but credit should be given them for attempting to account for the appearance of the Renaissance and to view it from as many different angles of approach as they could think of, when it would have been just as easy to have continued the medieval tradition of chronology or to have failed to recognize it at all. In point of fact, the extensive theorizing and philosophizing which

has marked the history of the idea of the Renaissance owes its origin to the Renaissance itself.

XII. Conclusion

From the evidence which has been presented above, it is obvious, I think, that Thode's and Burdach's thesis as to the religious background of the Renaissance idea will not hold water. If anything, the idea of the Renaissance is a secular notion and it seems to me to owe nothing to the Christian idea of rebirth. Burdach's fault is, of course, a too narrow philological preoccupation with a word which may have had religious uses to be sure but which was immediately stripped of any such connotations and overtones and applied to different uses. Burdach has made the error of lifting the term out of its context, for wherever I have found the words "renovatio," "rinascita," "renaissance," "revival," they have been used to identify the same cultural movement we have come to recognize as the Renaissance.

It seems to me that the origin of the idea of the Renaissance goes back to the humanists themselves; it is, to put it briefly, a humanist invention. That is to say, the men who themselves took part in those activities which characterize the Renaissance accounted for those activities by the idea of the Renaissance. The idea of

the Renaissance is therefore of Renaissance origin. Furthermore, it should be pointed out that the treatment of the idea of the Renaissance in the Renaissance is almost exclusively in the hands of the humanists; literary men, that is, those who concern themselves with belles lettres, whose work we speak of as showing the Renaissance spirit, do not appear to have concerned themselves with the term. They either took the idea for granted or simply failed to recognize it, so that any awareness on their part of differences between themselves and past ages must be sought for elsewhere.

The nature and extent of the theories of the Renaissance in the Renaissance are noteworthy for several reasons. In the first place, the tendency to refer back the description of any aspect of the Renaissance to a concrete event or to a specific person, in other words, to indicate that to the writers of the Renaissance at least the Renaissance was a real thing which actually happened is of importance in helping to determine whether it really took place. Second, there is no hesitation in dating the Renaissance, again an attempt to localize it by means of specific references. Third, there is the complexity of the idea of the Renaissance in the Renaissance. The concept was broken down into a number of component parts each of which received special consideration. It was

recognized that the idea of the Renaissance was made up of several simultaneous movements which interacted on each other. The revival of the fine arts was discriminated from the revival of ancient learning; the Middle Ages were distinguished from the modern era; the effects of nationalism were estimated; the relationship between the Reformation and Renaissance was established; the influence of the rise of science, and this term too was broken down into smaller unit ideas, was studied; and at the same time it was felt that the Renaissance was the synthesis of these movements, that it made up a whole of which these movements were the parts. Yet it would be going too far to say that the Renaissance was considered a thing in itself, something greater than and different from the parts out of which it was made.

So far as the situation in England is concerned, it must be pointed out that in comparison with the range of continental discussion of the idea of the Renaissance, the English contributions are quite meagre. It is possible that had the humanist movement in England taken its normal course, speculation on the subject might have been in proportion to the continental contributions. But by the time men were free again to devote time to such efforts attention had shifted to other fields, and besides by that time the idea had gained enough currency and had been so widely

treated that there was very little for the English to say. It was not until Bacon that the idea of the Renaissance came into prominence in England. Moreover, it was Bacon and his followers who turned it in a direction which made English speculation about it quite distinctive for a time. Bacon linked it with the idea of progress and with the ancient-modern controversy and therefore tied it up with the rise of science.

It would be tempting to ask the question whether the Renaissance awareness of itself is itself a criterion of the Renaissance, that is to say, whether one of the ways of determining whether the Renaissance took place and when is the Renaissance idea of the Renaissance. If self-awareness is the modern trait it is supposed to be, then surely the Renaissance is modern. But this leads us into dangerous speculations about the Renaissance problem with which we must not concern ourselves here. It is sufficient for our purposes to have stated as clearly and as accurately as possible the Renaissance idea of the Renaissance.

CHAPTER II

THE IDEA OF THE RENAISSANCE IN ENGLAND

FROM BACON TO HUMPHREY HODY'S DE GRAECIS ILLUSTRIBUS (1742)

I. Introduction

With the appearance of Bacon's Of the Proficiencie and Advancement of Learning in 1605, the course of the history of the idea of the Renaissance in England took a new turn which was not changed for more than a century. As we have seen, the idea of the Renaissance in the Renaissance was in reality a complex of ideas in which those who themselves participated in the making of the Renaissance attempted to record the movements of ideas and events which to them constituted it. Their aim was comprehensiveness, and they tried to be as complete as they could in their enumeration and description of the phenomena comprising the Renaissance. No single idea was emphasized at the expense of the others, nor is any real bias to be discovered in their treatment of any of the major ideas; even the treatment accorded the Middle Ages is, allowing for the misinterpretations resulting from imperfect scholarship and the prejudice which identified the Middle Ages with papal tyranny and ignorance, considerably more in advance of subsequent studies of the

same period for nearly two hundred years. After Bacon, however, one element in the idea of the Renaissance leaped into unquestioned prominence and dominated all discussion of the Renaissance for over a hundred years. This was the idea of science which finally settled once and for all the ancient-modern controversy and resulted in the victory of the idea of progress. Bacon took men from their studies and put them in laboratories; he turned their eyes away from the past and fixed them on the future. The Renaissance came to be looked on not so much as a clearly defined epoch, which in the main is the Renaissance conception of itself, but as an introductory stage in which the scientific movement first manifested itself to start its gradual climb toward perfection. The attitude of those who followed Bacon is well expressed by the anonymous English translator of Guido Pancirollus' The History of Many Memorable Things Lost, which Were in Use among the Ancients: and an Account of Many Excellent Things Found, Now in Use among the Moderns, both Natural and Artificial, a book much used by the mod-

erns:

The ingenious Author of the foregoing Work lived in an Age which afforded him a double Prospect; the One backward, when Ignorance and Darkness overwhelmed all Nations, and Learning was at so low an Ebb, that scarce so much as the knowledge of the Latin Tongue was any where to be found: The Other forward, when Learning began to revive, and Arts and Sciences to be enquired after. The Times of Ignorance he hath fully described, and shewed in many Instances the

Losses sustained by it; but Learning and Knowledge were in Embryo only in his Time, and so he could give us but little or no Account of any Improvements made in it. Had he lived to see the great Progress in Letters and Arts made in these later Times, no doubt he would have been as copious in describing the Restoration of them, as he has been in representing the Loss.¹

This does not mean that accounts of the revival of the fine arts and of ancient learning were lacking but rather that these events were now taken for granted as a necessary step forward. But from Bacon on the energies and attention of men were concentrated on establishing the supremacy of the moderns by asserting and demonstrating the superior values of science.

In the minds of those who heeded the call of Bacon's bell, and especially in the Restoration, the Renaissance gradually merged into the present, and became a part of the modern era which merely began in the Renaissance but which had either reached, or is now reaching, or was about to reach its culmination. Thus Dryden fuses the Renaissance with his own age when he writes:

Is it not evident, in these last hundred years (when the study of philosophy has been the business of all the Virtuosi in Christendom), that almost a new nature has been revealed to us? that more errors of the school have been detected, more noble secrets in optics, medicine, anatomy, astronomy, discovered, than in all those credulous and doting ages from Aristotle to us?--so true it is, that nothing spreads

¹ "The Preface to the Appendix to Pancirollus," The History of Many Memorable Things Lost (London, 1715), II, 417-18.

more fast than science, when rightly and generally cultivated.²

But in proportion as the Renaissance is taken for granted so attention is more and more centered on the present and the future. The consequence is a disregard for history, for the past, antiquity and the Middle Ages alike, and, as the victim of the general scorning of the past, for the Renaissance itself. So the moderns pass by the Renaissance, glad, it is true, to acknowledge its importance if they but had the time to do so, but much too busy with experiments and projects to do other than assume it.

Something of the temper of those who followed Bacon may be understood by a reading of the conclusion of Experimental Philosophy, the work of Henry Power, one of the most enthusiastic proponents of the new science. Having listed the various impediments to the promotion of science, Power goes on to say:

Had the winged Souls of our modern Hero's been lime-twig'd with such noble Conceptions as these, they had never flown up to thos rare Inventions with which they have so enrich'd our latter dayes; we had wanted the useful Inventions of Guns, Printing, Navigation, Paper, and Sugar; we had wanted Decimal and Symbolical Arithmetick, the Analytical Algebra, the Magnetical Philosophy, the Logarithms, the Hydragyral Experiments, the glorious Inventions of Dioptrick Glasses, Wind-guns, and the Noble Boyle's Pneumatick Engine.

Nay, what strangers had we been at home, and within the circle of our own selves? We had yet never known the Mesenterical and Thoracical Lacteae, the Blood's Circulation, the Lymphiducts, and other admirable Curiosities in this fabrick of our Selves.

² John Dryden, An Essay of Dramatic Poesy, in The Works, ed. Sir Walter Scott, ed. George Saintsbury (London, 1892), XV, 293-94.

All which incomparable Inventions do not only solícite, but, me-thinks, should inflame our endeavours to attempt even Impossibilities, and to make the world known. There are not difficulties enough, in Philosophy, for a vigorous and active Reason: 'Tis a Noble resolution to begin there where all the world has ended; and an Heroick attempt to salve those difficulties (which former Philosophers accounted impossibilities) though but in an Ingenious Hypothesis: And, certainly, there is not Truth so abstruse, nor so far elevated out of our reach, but man's wit may raise Engines to Scale and Conquer it: Though Democritus his pit be never so deep, yet by a long Sorites of Observations, and chain of Deductions, we may at last fathom it, and catch hold of Truth that hat so long sitt forlorn at botton thereof.

But these are Reaches that are beyond all those of the Stagyrite's Retinue, and Solutions of all those former Difficulties are reserved for you (most Noble Souls, the true Lovers of Free, and Experimental Philosophy) to gratifie Posterity with all.

You who are the enlarged and Elasticall Souls of the world, who, removing all former rubbish, and prejudicial resistances, do make way for the Springy Intellect to flye out into its desired Expansion. When I seriously contemplate the freedom of your Spirits, the excellency of your Principles, the vast reach of your Designs, to unriddle all Nature; me-thinks, you have done more than men already, and may well be placed in a rank Specifically different from the rest of groveling Humanity.

And this is the Age wherein all mens Souls are in a kind of fermentation, and the spirit of Wisdom and Learning begins to mount and free itself from those drossie and terrene Impediments wherewith it hath been so long clogg'd, and from the insipid phlegm and Caput Mortuum of useless Notions, in which it has endured so violent and long a fixation.

This is the Age wherein (me-thinks) Philosophy comes in with a Spring-tide; and the Peripatetics may as well hope to stop the Current of the Tide, or (with Xerxes) to fetter the Ocean, as hinder the overflowing of free Philosophy: Me-thinks, I see how all the old Rubbish must be thrown away, and the rotten Buildings be overthrown, and carried away with so powerful an Inundation. These are the days that must lay a new Foundation of a more magnificent Philosophy, never to be overthrown: that will Empirically and Sensibly canvass the Phaenomena of Nature, deducing the Causes of things from such

Originals in Nature, as we observe are producible by Art, and the infallible demonstration of Mechanics: and certainly, this is the way, and no other, to build a true and permanent Philosophy:³

Power does indeed mention some of the most noteworthy contributions made by the Renaissance, but these are spoken of only in passing, and it is obvious that Power's imagination has been captured by the future, and in this he is representative of the Baconians.

II. The Revival of Learning and of the Fine Arts

The essential features of the story of the revival of classical learning and of the fine arts as laid down by the writers of the Renaissance were repeated through the seventeenth century and first half of the eighteenth century with little change or addition, except that the sense of contemporaneity which characterized the Renaissance writings on the subject is of course lacking. To the writers on these subjects, the Renaissance continues to be looked on as a distinct epoch in the course of human affairs. In his Letters on the Study and Use of History, Lord Bolingbroke defines the term era and uses as an outstanding example the period of the Renaissance:

I say, then that however closely affairs are linked together in the progression of governments, and how much soever events that follow are dependent on those

³ Henry Power, Experimental Philosophy (London, 1664), pp. 190-92.

that precede, the whole connection diminishes to sight as the chain lengthens; till at last it seems to be broken, and the links that are continued from that point bear no proportion nor any similitude to the former. I would not be understood to speak only of those great changes that are wrought by a concurrence of extraordinary events; for instance, the expulsion of one nation, the destruction of one government, and the establishment of another: but even of those that are wrought in the same governments and among the same people, slowly and almost imperceptibly, by the necessary effects of time, and the flux condition of human affairs. When such changes as these happen in several states about the same time, and consequently affect other states by their vicinity, and by many different relations which they frequently bear to one another; then is one of those periods formed, at which the chain spoken of is so broken as to have little or no real or visible connection with that which we see continue. A new situation, different from the former, begets new interests in the same proportion of difference; not in this or that particular state alone, but in all those that are concerned by vicinity or other relations, as I said just now, in one general system of policy. New interests beget new maxims of government, and new methods of conduct. These, in their turns, beget new manners, new habits, new customs.... Such a period therefore is, in the true sense of the words, an epocha or an era, a point of time at which you stop, or from which you reckon forward....

The end of the fifteenth century seems to be just such a period as I have been describing, for those who live in the eighteenth, and who inhabit the western parts of Europe. A little before, or a little after this point of time, all those events happened, and those revolutions began, that have produced so vast a change in the manners, customs, and interests of particular nations, and in the whole policy, ecclesiastical and civil, of these parts of the world.⁴

Lord Bolingbroke's predecessors and contemporaries con-

⁴ Henry St. John, Lord Bolingbroke, Letters on the Study and Use of History, in The Works (Philadelphia, 1841), II, 238-39.

curred in his opinion and found the subject of the revival of learning interesting enough to write on, though not very extensively.

Apparently the revival of learning was a topic upon which the seventeenth century gentleman was expected to be able to say a few words, for in that popular handbook on how to be a gentleman, Henry Peacham writes that after Joseph of Exeter there was a long tract of ignorance until the days of Henry VIII, which time Erasmus called the Golden Age of Learning.⁵ A more learned account of the fortunes of letters from the fall of Rome to the Renaissance is given by John Barclay:

But if we obserue the turnings of the Romane Empire, and the passages of times neare vnto vs, we shall more certainly discover the changeable Geniuses of the ages. Vnder Augustus, Rome in peace had adorned her greatnesse, with all the dresses of true humanity: and among other things, her language was then in the height of purity.... Those few yeares, from Nero to Traian, had many Poets,...in whom the declining of the Romane language did plainly appeare;... At the same time, in the reigne of Nero, that peace was broken, which had long settled the Rome Empire, and all the world was filled with combustion;...in the age that followed, the elegance of language was wonderfully lost;... Yet humanity stroue against those mischiefes, vntill forraine Nations inunded the Empire; and what of all things was most miserable, no memory was left of the lost sciences; those that were borne in these times, seemed to be borne, though not to a fierce, yet a blinde barbarisme;...

The other Arts wer taught in more rude and vnpolish'd wayes, or else wer altogether lost. Not long

⁵ Henry Peacham, The Compleat Gentleman in Critical Essayes of the Seventeenth Century, ed. Joel E. Spingarn (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1908), I, 130.

after, men were againe growne to the loue of learning; but such was the vnhappinesse of the times, that bred them, that they might seeke learning, but not attaine it; if we call that learning, which is the knowledge of antiquity, and judgment, not onely in the school subtilties, but in the highest and noblest things:...

There was notwithstanding, a kinde of learning then vsed, agreeable to the dispositions of those times: as with great disputation, and eager cauling...

Last of all, in this age, that darke mist is vanished away from the minds of men, which are now composed of all kind of light and subtilty.

Nor is this change onely to be obserued in the schooles of learning, the affairs of kingdomes and Common-wealths are more cunningly administred; warres offensive, and defensive, are made with more skill, and dexterity; and so great a curiosity in many trades, that whatsoeuer is rude or vnpolished now, we vse with scorne to censure it, as made or likely to be made in the dull times of our ancestors.⁶

George Hakewill links the Renaissance to the cyclical theory of history. "There is," he writes, "both in wits and Arts, as in all things besides, a kind of circular progresse: they have their birth, their growth, their flourishing, their failing, their fading, and within a while after their resurrection, and reflourishing againe." Hakewill then traces the progress of learning from the Persians to the Chaldeans, Egyptians, Greeks, and Romans until

the inundation of the Gothes, Hunnes, & Vandals, who ransacked Libraries, and defaced almost all the monuments of Antiquity, insomuch as that lampe seemed againe to be put out by the space of almost a thousand yeares, & had longer so continued, had not first Mensor King of Africa & Spaine raised up & spurred forward the Arabian wits to the restauration of good letters by proposing great rewards and encouragements unto them. And afterwards Petrarch a man of a singu-

⁶ John Barclay, The Mirror of Mindes, tr. Thomas May (London, 1633), pp. 33-38.

lar wit & rare naturall endowments, opened such Libraries as were left undemolished, beate off the dust from the moth-eaten bookes, and drew into the light the best Authors:⁷

Expanding Bacon's division of the history of science into three periods to include the arts as well, Sprat considers the Renaissance as the last of these eras:

And now I am come to the Time within our View and to the third great Age of the flourishing of Learning. Whether this Recovery of Knowledge did happen by the benefit of Printing, invented about that Time, which shew'd a very easy Way of communicating Men's Thoughts one to another; or whether it came from the Hatred, which was then generally conceiv'd against the Blindness, and Stupidity, of the Roman Fryars; or from the Reformation, which put Men upon a stricter Inquiry into the Truth of things; whatever the Cause was, I will not take much Pains to determine: but I will rather observe, what Kinds of Knowledge have most flourish'd upon it. If we compare this Age of Learning, with the two former; we shall find, that this does far exceed both the other in its Extent: there being a much larger Plat of Ground, sown with Arts and Civility at this time, than either when the Grecian or Roman Empires prevail'd. For then (especially under the Romans) so many Nations being united under one Dominion, and reduc'd into the Form of Provinces: that Knowledge which they had was chiefly confin'd to the Walls of the Imperial Cities themselves. But now (not to insist on the Learning of far remote Countries, of which we have only imperfect Relations; but to contract our Observation to Christendom alone) there being so many different States, and Governments in Europe, every Country sets up for itself: amost in every place, the liberal Arts (as they are call'd) are cherish'd, and publick Allowance is made for their Support. And in this Compass, the infinite Numbers of Wits, which have appear'd so thick for these many Years, have been chiefly taken up about some of these three Studies; either the Writings of the Antients, or Controversies of Religion, or Affairs of State.⁸

⁷ George Hakewill, An Apologie or Declaration of the Power and Providence of God in the Government of the World (Oxford, 1635), pp. 259-60.

⁸ Thomas Sprat, The History of the Royal Society (London, 1734), pp. 22-23.

Sprat raises here a number of interesting problems, such as the effects of the invention of printing, the relationship of the Renaissance to the Reformation, and the influence of nationalism in stimulating learning, but he passes them by because his interest in the present and in science is so great that these historical problems have no attraction for him.

As we have seen in the first chapter, the writers of the Renaissance knew better than to date the beginning of the revival of learning at the fall of Constantinople in 1453, but by the time of the Restoration, the distance which separated the Restoration from the Renaissance was so great that the sharpness of observation which marked the writers of the Renaissance had become dulled and history could no longer be treated accurately by enthusiastic amateurs. So far as I have been able to determine, the origin of the text-book misconception in regard to the taking of Constantinople is owing to the latter part of the seventeenth century, and though Sir William Temple is probably not the first to make this error, he is among the first in England and certainly one of the most widely read writers to repeat it. "When the Turks took Constantinople," he writes:

about two hundred years ago ["An Essay upon Ancient and Modern Learning" is dated 1689], and soon after possessed themselves of all Greece, the poor natives, fearing the tyranny of those cruel masters, made their

escapes in great numbers to the neighbouring parts of Christendom, some by the Austrian territories into Germany, others by the Venetian into Italy and France; several that were learned among these Grecians (and brought many ancient books with them in that language) began to teach it in these countries; first to gain a subsistence, and afterwards found favour in some Princes or great men's courts, who began to take a pleasure or pride in countenancing learned men. Thus began the restoration of learning in these parts, with that of the Greek tongue; and soon after, Reuchylen and Erasmus began that of the purer and ancient Latine....with the restitution of these two noble languages, and the books remaining of them (which many Princes and Prelates were curious to recover and collect) learning of all sorts began to thrive in these Western regions: and since that time, and in the first succeeding century, made perhaps a greater growth than in any other that we know of in such a compass of time, considering into what depths of ignorance it was sunk before.⁹

Andrew Fletcher likewise dates the Renaissance from the fall of Constantinople, but other writers are less specific

⁹ Sir William Temple, "An Essay upon the Ancient and Modern Learning," The Works (London, 1814), III, 467-78. Cf. the essay "On Poetry" in which Temple points out that with the resurrection of other sciences and of the ancient languages, poetry revived, and though it was different from the ancient models, it had its own peculiar charms, especially those of grace and sweetness, ibid., III, 432. Dryden expresses somewhat the same idea in his "Epistle the Sixth. To the Earl of Roscommon, on his Excellent Essay on Translated Verse," op. cit., XI, 27:

Till barbarous nations, and more barbarous times,
Debased the majority of verse to rhymes;
Those rude at first; a kind of hobbling prose,
That limped along, and twinkled in the close.
But Italy, reviving from the trance
Of Vandal, Goth, and monkish ignorance,
With pauses, cadence, and well-vowell'd words,
And all the graces a good ear affords,
Made rhyme an art, and Dante's polished page
Restored a silver, not a golden age.
Then Petrarch followed; and in him we see,
What rhyme improved in al its height can be;
At best a pleasing sound, and fair barbarity.
The French pursued their steps; and Britain, last,
In manly sweetness all the rest surpassed.

about dating. Edward Hyde, the Earl of Clarendon, sets the revival of the Greek and Latin languages after the year 1400, Dryden the age of Lorenzo and Leo, Rymer the beginning of the last century, Gildon the beginning of the last century but two, Leonard Welsted not much more than a century ago, Arbuthnot about the time of Charles V and Francis I, and William Guthrie the reign of Henry VIII.¹⁰

Hody's De Graecis Illustribus marks the return to a more exact study of the Renaissance. His work is divided into two books, the first containing the lives of eight learned Greeks who brought the knowledge of the Greek tongue and of humane letters to Italy before the fall of Constantinople, the second containing the lives

¹⁰ Andrew Fletcher, A Discourse of Government with Relation to Militia's in The Political Works (London, 1732), p. 10; Edward Hyde, Earl of Clarendon, "Of the Reverence due to Antiquity," A Collection of Several Tracts (London, 1727), p. 229; John Dryden, "Essay on Satire," op. cit., XIII, 13-14; Thomas Rymer, A Short View of Tragedy (London, 1693), p. 51; Charles Gildon, The Complete Art of Poetry (London, 1718), I, 78; Leonard Welsted, A Dissertation Concerning the Perfection of the English Language in Critical Essays of the Eighteenth Century 1700-1725, ed. Willard H. Durham (Yale University Press, 1915), p. 357; John Arbuthnot, A Brief Account of Mr. John Gunglicutt's Treatise concerning the Altercation or Scolding of the Ancients in The Life and Works of John Arbuthnot, ed. George A. Aitken (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1892), p. 385; William Guthrie, An Essay upon English Tragedy (London, 1748?), p. 7. Williar Derham has an account of the revival of learning which is practically a word for word repetition of the passage cited from Hakewill in Physico-Theology, or, a Demonstration of the Being and Attributes of God, from his Works of Creation (London, 1734), I, 387, n. f.

of nineteen learned Greeks who brought classical learning to Italy and the other Western nations after the fall of Constantinople. While Hody is not motivated by any broad philosophical impulses and in no place attempts a large view of the Renaissance as a whole, he tries to obtain as accurate information about the lives of these learned Greeks, most of them extremely obscure, as he can and he thus lays the foundation for a more sound and objective study of the Renaissance; he is especially valuable because he goes to, and describes, the source material and in this manner points to a more intensive study of humanism. Hody may be said to lead the way to a study of the Renaissance which is both sound and at the same time, and this is a tendency which is already evident in the Renaissance itself, philosophical, finally culminating in the eighteenth century in the work of Gibbon, Robertson, and Roscoe. Finally, Hody's book signals the end of the ancient-modern controversy in so far as this controversy impinges on the development of the idea of the Renaissance and the book marks the return to a more catholic approach to the Renaissance problem.

It might be well at this point to consider the effect which the invention of printing was supposed to have had upon the revival of learning. According to Donald Lupton, before the invention of printing good authors were neglected and

all good Discipline might have perished with the Authors thereof, if this Art had not beene found out in convenient and happie time. By this all kinde of Learning hath encreas'd, and the noble Acts of all Nations are manifest to all the world: In like manner the memory and remembrance of ancient antiquity is restored hereby, and the divine Wisedome of the Philosophers, and whatsoever hath laine hidden in few written Copies these many ages in a few places, is now by this set forth to all immortality.¹¹

This is fairly representative, for, in an encomium of printing written nearly a century later, Francis Burges makes the same claims for printing:

For, since the Art of Printing was found out, which is not yet three hundred Years, all Sorts of Learning have been more diffused and cultivated, than in a Thousand Years before; And what great Advances, and mighty Progress is daily made, in finding out abstruse Secrets, and discovering the hidden Mysteries of Art and Nature, those that are conversant among Books do very well know: And all this is justly to be attributed to this incomparable Art, which gives Men such an Advantage of Communicating their Thoughts to each other, in so plain and easy a Manner, as the Ages, before this Invention, were ignorant of. And therefore Erudition and Learning, the Improvement of all the Works of Nature, and the Perfection of all Arts and Sciences, are the genuine Effects of this noble Mystery, and an evident Demonstration of its Usefulness, as well as its Excellency.¹²

The translator of Pancirollus points out that the invention of printing has been one of the most effective instruments for the attaining of knowledge:

And here it must be granted, by all equal Judges, that since the late Invention of Printing has been communi-

¹¹ Donald Lupton, Emblems of Parities (London, 1636), pp. 90-91.

¹² Francis Burges, Some Observations on the Use and Original of the Noble Art and Mystery of Printing in Harleian Miscellany (London, 1745), III, 148-49.

cated to the World, the Moderns have been put into a much better and easier way of attaining Knowledge of all Arts and Sciences than the Ancients had. Books of all sorts have been made more plentiful and cheap; the writings of the Ancients have been brought out of their Cloisters and Retirements, and the Press has rather wanted worthy writers to commend to the world, than Authors the Press to publish their Works. Libraries are infinitely increased, and though that of Ptolomey Philadelphus in Egypt, and others at Constantinople and Rome, are much celebrated by Lovers of Antiquity, yet it is morally impossible that they should equal the Modern Libraries of the Vatican at Rome, Medicaean at Florence, Venetian at St. Mark's, the Bodleian at Oxford, and other Libraries in great Multitudes in Colleges, Monasteries, Churches, Kings and Noblemans Palaces, and with private Men; and that chiefly, because many of the most celebrated Writers were not in Being, and if they had been, the Treasures of the greatest Princes could not have paid Transcribers if enough of them could have been found.¹³

The translator has here introduced the ancient-modern controversy in which printing, along with other inventions, mainly scientific, played an important part and which will be considered below. Likewise, opinions concerning the effects of the invention of printing on the Reformation will be treated in the following pages.

So far as the revival of learning is treated at all, it is treated with some sympathy or at least neutrally as a phenomenon which has happened and therefore to be discussed in histories of the past ages. But Thomas Furnet thought differently; to him the learning of the Renaissance was essentially belles lettristic and hence not solid. In

¹³ "An Appendix of Things Newly Found Out," op. cit., II, 421.

his opinion it was somewhat superficial; certainly it was not real learning in his sense of the term. Real learning was science, the product of his own age.¹⁴ Burnet is here voicing the general suspicion of his contemporaries that

14 Thomas Burnet, The Sacred Theory of the Earth (London, 1816), pp. 602-03. The translator of Pancirollus has something of the same notion as Burnet in "An Appendix of Things Newly Found Out," op. cit., II, 422-23: "...after the Darkest Night, many times comes a bright and glorious Day; So after these Times of Ignorance, rose a Generation of Men of vigorous, inquisitive and Subtil Spirits, who, asham'd of the Sottishness of Priests and Monks (the Men that alone professed the Knowledge of Letters) set themselves to recover the lost Arts, and in a few Years, not only brought in an earnest Emulation of understanding the learned Languages, and fetched the ancient Authors out of the dusty Cells, to which for some Ages they had been chained as Prisoners in a Jayl, but printing them as correct as they could, caus'd them to be diffused through all Parts of the civiliz'd World; and so were the Instruments, not only of a Reformation of Religion, but of communicating all useful Knowledge to all Persons and Places.

"Near a whole Century was spent in this Work, and 'twas thought a sufficient Employment for the most laborious and ingenious, to inform themselves in the Writings of the Ancients, and see how far they had gone in the Knowledge of Nature and Art, and Communicate their Sentiments, by Systems, Abridgments, and Translations to such, as were to be trained up in Learning in the Schools or Universities. But all these Studies and Searches, did only serve to quicken Mens Appetites the more after Knowledge. They found the Philosophy of the Ancients wrapped up in dark and obscure Terms, clogged with many strained Principles and Maxims, and ty'd up to many tedious Distinctions and Rules, which rather burthened than instructed the Mind, and seem'd devised on purpose to conceal Ignorance by certain strange Amusements. It seem'd to these wise and ingenious Persons, a thing very disagreeable to the human Soul to be confined in its Thoughts to the Dictates of the most learned, and follow Errors, though in good Company; whereupon, making use of what the Ancients had well invented and carried on, they endeavoured to bring to it a Perfection, and wherein they had erred, to rectify and amend it, and of what they

knowledge divorced from life and from experimental verification is to be looked on with suspicion. Bacon had said that ultimately knowledge and power were one, that is to say, mastery over the laws of nature enabled men to live intelligently and well, and to his followers, the study of the ancient texts, already suspect because they were the products of the discredited past, did not seem to be able to yield fruitful results. Burnet is merely the most outspoken of the moderns who, true to their declared intention not to engage in wordy disputations, did not so much attack the writings of the ancient authors, with the exception of a few ancient philosophers, notably Aristotle, but rather disregarded them. Another criticism of the revival of ancient learning is one which might well be expected of an

were wholly ignorant, to bring it into the Light, that the World might not want many useful Arts or Sciences. Hence it is, that within the compass of less than a Century last past, such wonderful Improvements had been made in most of them, that the Ancients can hardly be thought to have understood much more than some Principles or Elements of them."

Burnet and the anonymous translator make explicit a process which went on continually during the seventeenth century. First, there was an appreciation of the Renaissance for restoring classical learning which was eagerly studied. Then, as this learning became to be more and more disregarded, the Renaissance, as its conveyer, tended also to be disregarded, till with the glorification of modern scientific learning and the victory of the moderns over the ancients, the study of the Renaissance is relegated to the background and even forgotten. It is this process which accounts in part for the lack of interest in the Renaissance from 1605 to 1742 in England.

age in which protestantism and capitalism had such close affinities. After describing the course of the revival of ancient culture in Italy, Andrew Fletcher goes on to say:

But as mankind from a natural propension to pleasure, is always ready to chuse out of every thing what may most gratify that vicious appetite; so the arts the Italians first applied themselves to improve, were principally those that had been subservient to the luxury of the antients in the most corrupt ages, of which they had many monuments still remaining. Italy was presently filled with architects, painters and sculptors; and a prodigious expence was made in buildings, pictures and statues. Thus the Italians began to come off from their frugal and military way of living, and addicted themselves to the pursuit of refined and expensive pleasures, as much as the wars of those times would permit. This infection spread itself by degrees into the neighbouring nations. But these things alone had not been sufficient to work so great a change in government, if a preceding invention, brought into common use about that time, had not produced more new and extraordinary effects than any had ever done before; which probably may have many consequences yet unforeseen, and a farther influence upon the manners of men, as long as the world lasts; I mean, the invention of the needle, by the help of which navigation was greatly improved, a passage opened by sea to the East-Indies, and a new world discovered. By this means the luxury of Asia and America was added to that of the antients; and all ages, and all countries concurred to sink Europe into an abyss of pleasures; which were rendered the more expensive by a perpetual change of the fashions in clothes, equipage and furniture of houses.

These things brought a total alteration in the way of living, upon which all government depends. 'Tis true, knowledge being mightily increased, and a great curiosity and nicety in every thing introduced, men imagined themselves to be gainers in all points, by changing from their frugal and military way of living, which I must confess had some mixture of rudeness and ignorance in it, though not inseparable from it. But at the same time they did not consider the unspeakable evils that are altogether inseparable from an expensive way of living.¹⁵

¹⁵ Andrew Fletcher, op. cit., pp. 10-12.

Though it is difficult to find many instances of the kind of criticism represented by Burnet and Fletcher, they are all the more important to take into account in estimating the attitude taken toward the Renaissance at this time because they fit so neatly into the prejudices of the dominant Restoration classes, scientist, divine, and capitalist, and are therefore hardly ever openly expressed.

Fletcher's reference to the revival of the fine arts calls to attention the accounts given of this occurrence in the period under consideration. It is significant that we do not get any observations on the revival of the fine arts until only a short while before the Restoration. It is of course not true to say that the Puritans were inimical to the fine arts, but I think that it must be allowed that the struggles of the seventeenth century did not leave much time or inclination to study anything not immediately connected with the civil war in any of its aspects, and in this category the fine arts must be included. With the Restoration, men felt once again free to think about the refinements of life and the study of the history of the fine arts was resumed. In his Account of Architects and Architecture, John Evelyn writes:

...it is the Antient Greek and Roman Architecture only, which is here Intended, as most entirely answering all those Perfections required in a Faultless and Accomplish'd Building; such as for so many Ages were so Renowned and Reputed, by the Universal Suffrages of the Civiliz'd World, and would doubtless have still subsisted, and made good their Claim, and

what is Recorded of them; had not the Goths, Vandals and other Barbarous Nations, Subverted and Demolish'd them, together with that Glorious Empire, where those stately and pompous Monuments stood; Introducing in their stead, a certain Fantastical and Licentious manner of Building, which we have since call'd Modern (or Gothic rather) Congestions of Heavy, Dark, Melancholy and Monkish Piles, without any just Proportion, Use or Beauty, compar'd with the truly Antient....

It was after the Irruption, and Swarms of those truculent People from the North; the Moors and Arabs from the South and East, over-running the Civiliz'd World; that wherever they fix'd themselves, they soon began to Debauch this Noble and Useful Art.

Evelyn instances a number of Gothic buildings which seem to him to bear out his strictures: in England, Henry VIII's Chapel at Westminster, the cathedrals of Westminster, Canterbury, Salisbury, Peterborough, Ely, Wells, Beverley, Lincoln, Gloucester, York, and Durham; in France, the cathedrals of Amiens, Paris, Rouen, Tours, and Lyons; and in Spain, the cathedral of Seville and the Alahambra. This condition obtained until

Bramante, Raphael, Mich. Angelo, Palladio, (Bernini,) and other Heroes and Masters of our Parallel, Recover'd and even Raised this Art to Life again, and Restor'd her to her Pristine Splendor and Magnificence, after so tedious and dismal a Night of Ignorance and Superstition, in which Architecture had lain buried in Rubbish, and sadly deform'd for so many Ages: The same may likewise be affirm'd of all those other Arts attendant upon her, Sculpture and Painting especially, and indeed of Letters, and all good Learning too, which had about this time, their Resuscitation also.¹⁶

Dryden's epistle to the artist Kneller expresses somewhat the same idea:

¹⁶ John Evelyn, An Account of Architects and Architecture in A Parallel of Antient Architecture with the Modern (London, 1723), pp. 9-11.

Rome raised not art, but barely kept alive,
And with old Greece unequally did strive;
Till Goths and Vandals, a rude northern race,
Did all the matchless monuments deface.
Then all the Muses in one ruin lie.
And rhyme began to enervate poetry.
Thus, in a stupid military state,
The pen and pencil find an equal fate.
Flat faces, such as would disgrace a screen,
Such as in Bantam's embassy were seen,
Unraised, unrounded, were the rude delight,
Of brutal nations, only born to fight.
Long time the sister arts, in iron sleep,
A heavy Sabbath did supinely keep;
At length, in Raphael's age, at once they rise,
Stretch all their limbs, and open all their eyes.
Then rose the Roman, and the Lombard line;
One coloured best, and one did best design.
Raphael's, like Homer's, was the nobler part,
But Titian's painting looked like Virgil's art.¹⁷

The Earl of Shaftesbury has left some rather cryptic notes on the revival of painting:

History of revival of painting. How far owing to Roman hierarchy. But liberty withal, viz. the hierarchy itself (archon for life, ephori, generals of orders, jesuits etc.), and also civil liberty, the free states of Italy as Venice, Genoa, and then Florence also and other places. Besides that, meeting and as it were co-habiting as private men, but grandees, in one city (as in Rome, or at a carnival in Venice). This reduces things to a parity with a free state and independency which sets painters and artists free, erects a public, a nation, Italy..., excites emulation etc., creates a taste, judgment.¹⁸

Shaftesbury is apparently trying to determine the relationship between freedom, nationalism, and the arts, but his

¹⁷ John Dryden, "Epistle the Sixteenth. To Sir Godfrey Kneller," op. cit., XI, 84-85. Cf. Dryden's preface to The Art of Painting by C. A. Du Fresnoy, ibid., XVII, 311-12.

¹⁸ Anthony Ashley Cooper, Earl of Shaftesbury, Second Characters or the Language of Forms, ed. Benjamin Rand (Cambridge University Press, 1914), p. 123.

utterances here are too obscure and I have been unable to find any other reference in his work to this subject.

In Choice Observations upon the Art of Painting, William Aglionby uses the dialogue to trace the course of the fine arts and to give his observations on art and artists. The Friend asks the leading questions; the Traveller has ready answers to them all. The Friend wants to know how long the arts lay buried in oblivion and on being told from the decay of the Roman empire till its revival within these four hundred years in Tuscany, asks for the reasons for that decay. The Traveller makes this reply:

Besides the Barbarity of the Times, in which Men were continually employed in Wars, Rapines and Murders; the Zeal likewise of Christian Religion, did not a little contribute to stifle the Ingenuity of the best Artists; for after a long Contest with the Religion of the Gentiles, the Christian having prevailed at last, the Bishops and Pastours of the Christian Assemblies laboured all they could to extinguish the very Memory of the Heathen Gods; and therefore threw down all those wonderful Statues, Sculptures, Paintings and other Ornaments of their Temples; which they did not out of any hatred they had to those Arts, but out of a Blind Zeal, to extinguish their Superstitious Worship; by which, they nevertheless so crushed those Arts themselves, that for many hundreds of Years they lay buried and neglected.

Friend.

How came they at last to recover themselves?

Traveller.

There remained in Graece some little footsteps of the Art; and from thence it was that about the year 1250, there came some Painters, who could hardly be called Masters, having scarce any more knowledge of the Art than just to draw the Out-lines without either Grace or Proportion; the first

Scholler they made in Italy, was at Florence, and was called Cimabue.¹⁹

It is evident that Aglionby has studied his Vasari well; his strictures on the Christians are somewhat daring and Aglionby has probably relied on the authority of Vasari to defend his sentiments. Jonathan Richardson is more careful in his criticism of the effect of the Christian religion on the course of the fine arts for he attributes its decay in part to the church during the Middle Ages:

When the Roman power was broken, and dissipated; and Arts, Empire, and Common Honesty were succeeded by Ignorance, Superstition, and Priest-Craft, the Dishonour of Humane Nature was Completed; for 'twas Begun long before in Greece, and Asia. In these Miserable times, and for Ages afterwards, God knows there was no Connoisseurs! to Write, and Read was then an Accomplishment for a Prince to value himself upon. As the Species began to Recover themselves, and to gain more Strength, Literature, and Painting also lifted up their heads; but however not Equally; That Degree of Vigour that serv'd to produce a Dante in Writing, could rise no higher than a Giotto in Painting.

Arts went on in this proportion 'till the Happy Age of Rafaele, which was productive of several very great Men in All Kinds; and These parts of the World began to be Re-civiliz'd.

Our own Countrey...Shook off its Gothic Rust, and began early to Imitate its Neighbours in Politeness; in which it has already (for this Revolution was but about 200 Years ago) Equall'd, if not gone Beyond the rest in a great many Instances;...²⁰

¹⁹ William Aglionby, Choice Observations upon the Art of Painting (London, 1719), pp. 64-65.

²⁰ Jonathan Richardson, A Discourse on the Dignity, Certainty, Pleasure and Advantage, of the Science of a Connoisseur (London, 1719), pp. 220-21. Cf. p. 70 of the same treatise for a very unsympathetic criticism of the art of the Middle Ages.

Richardson was an enthusiastic advocate of the fine arts in England and he believed that England was on the verge of producing artists who would put the Italians of the Renaissance to shame; he argued that proficiency in the practice and appreciation of the arts should be one of the accomplishments of a gentleman.

A more interesting account of the history of the fine arts than those considered above is that by George Turnbull. In his Treatise on Ancient Painting, he proposes to consider the state of painting in Greece by comparing it with its condition at the time of Raphael for he considers that there is a very considerable likeness between those two ages of the art. He does this by making a very detailed comparison between Apelles and Raphael and is able to find many surprising similarities, especially in regard to biographical details. In regard to the history of the art of painting during the two eras, he has this to say:

...that Art must have been very anciently in great Reputation and Perfection; and...it may have undergone many Revolutions in Greece, or have been lost and revived again there, perhaps more than once: But this I leave to others to determine. It is sufficient to our purpose to observe, that at whatever time it begun to be cultivated, it must in all probability have begun and proceeded, as it did when it was revived in Italy in the latter Age of it by very ordinary low Greek Painters, from Cimabue their Disciple to Massaccio;... And we find it advancing from a Massaccio to a Raphael, in the same manner that it did from Panoenus to an Apelles, with wonderful Celerity.²¹

21 George Turnbull, A Treatise on Ancient Painting, con-

Having worked out this relationship for nearly fifty folio pages, Turnbull comes to the conclusion that

a remarkable Likeness in the Progress of Painting to its Perfection, at two different Periods. It was cultivated and improved in the same manner, and brought to a very like degree of Beauty and Excellence in both, by Similar Steps, and by very analogous Means and Causes. We owe the Improvements of this Art in the last Age of it to such a Succession of Masters, as that, to which its Perfection in the first is attributed by ancient Authors. So like are these two Ages of painting in every respect, that there is hardly any Character of a Painter in the one Age, that hath not its Parallel in the other; nor indeed any remarkable Circumstance or Event with regard to the Art, or any of its Professors in the one, that was not, as it were, reiterated in the other. Both, it is well known, were Ages in which all the other Parts of useful and polite Learning were greatly promoted and encouraged, and accordingly made very eminent Advances, as well as Painting and Sculpture. And indeed, I need not stay to prove, that it is by no means likely, that Painting, which stands so much in need of help from all the other Arts, could have made such a wonderful Progress in the last Age of it, if the Taste of all politer Literature had not been revived at that time by the Study of Ancient Authors, and the Remains of ancient Arts, and had not been very earnestly cultivated. In both Ages of the Art the Learned willingly gave all the assistance they were able to the Artists, of whom many were themselves very learned, and every one was exceeding willing to take Instructions from those who were.²²

Turnbull is an early and notable instance of a writer who is searching the values of one era to apply to another; he does this with the classical period and the Renaissance but it is interesting that he does not take the final step

taining Observations on the Rise, Progress, and Decline of that Art (London, 1740), p. 39.

²² Ibid., pp. 47-48.

of suggesting that these values ought to be applied to his own age; that process was reserved for the nineteenth century to develop.

An interesting opportunity to compare Dryden's and Pope's skill as poets is afforded by placing side by side their verses on the revival of learning and the fine arts. Dryden's have already been given; Pope's follow:

Learning and Rome alike in empire grew;
And arts still follow'd where her Eagles flew;
From the same foes, at last, both felt their doom,
And the same age saw Learning fall, and Rome.
With Tyranny, then Superstition join'd,
As that the body, this enslav'd the mind;
Much was believ'd, but little understood,
And to be dull was constru'd to be good;
A second deluge Learning thus o'er-run,
And the Monks finish'd what the Goths begun.

At length Erasmus, that great injur'd name,
(The glory of the Priesthood, and the shame!)
Stemm'd the wide torrent of a barb'rous age,
And drove those holy Vandals off the stage.

But see, each Muse, in Leo's golden days,
Starts from her trance, and trims her wither'd bays,
Rome's ancient Genius, o'er its ruins spread,
Shakes off the dust, and rears his rev'rend head.
Then Sculpture and her sister-arts revive;
Stones leap'd to form, and rocks began to live;
With sweeter notes each rising Temple rung;
A Raphael painted, and a Vida sung....

But soon by impious arms from Latium chas'd,
Their ancient bounds the banish'd Muses pass'd;
Thence Arts o'er all the northern world advance,
But Critic-learning flourish'd most in France....
But we, brave Britons, foreign laws despis'd,
And kept unconquer'd, and unciviliz'd,
Fierce for the liberties of wit and bold,
We still defy'd the Romans, as of old.
Yet some there were, among the sounder few
Of those who less presun'd, and better knew,
Who durst assert the juster ancient cause,
And here restor'd Wit's fundamental laws.³³

³³ Alexander Pope, An Essay on Criticism in The Poetical Works, ed. Adolphus L. Ward (London, 1930), pp. 66-67.

Pope's remarks serve as a convenient and representative summary of the ideas held by the writers of the period under consideration on the subjects of the revival of learning and of the fine arts. It must be confessed that these ideas are neither profound or original; they do not represent an improvement on the Renaissance conceptions, and if anything, they are a step backward. The plain fact of the matter is that from 1605 to 1742 there was in England but little interest in the study of the Renaissance as a literary and artistic phenomenon. The revival of learning and of the fine arts was by now taken for granted and no need was felt to go beyond what the Renaissance writers had said on these matters. In short, the remarks of the writers who have been considered up to this point may well be characterized as the observations of educated gentlemen on a subject they could be expected to speak on with finish and perhaps wit, but not necessarily with exact scholarship. Finally, there is no doubt that the ideas of the Renaissance writers on the revival of learning and the fine arts had gradually diffused until they had become part of the equipment of the educated.

III. The Reputation of the Elizabethans

Recent scholarship has demonstrated that the claim of Lamb and his contemporaries to be the first to appreciate the Elizabethan poets and dramatists must be con-

siderably modified and that the revival of appreciation of Elizabethan literature dates from about the middle of the eighteenth century.²⁴ It seems to me, however, that the notion of a revival of interest in Elizabethan literature is somewhat misleading since it implies a period in which there was no appreciation of that literature. It is true that the volume of writing on the Elizabethans is matched by no group previous to the romantics, but this does not mean that the Elizabethans were neglected, even at those times which are usually regarded as the most unresponsive to the attraction of Shakespeare and his contemporaries.

Properly to understand the attitude of the writers of the seventeenth century and first half of the eighteenth, it is necessary first to take into account the high regard in which the Elizabethan age as a whole was

24 See Francis S. Miller, "The Historic Sense of Thomas Warton, Junior," ELH, V (1938), 71-92, an article based on Dr. Miller's dissertation The Historic Sense in Eighteenth Century English Literature, The Johns Hopkins University, 1935; Clarissa Rinaker, "Thomas Warton and the Historical Method in Literary Criticism," PMLA, XXX (1915), 79-109; Odell Sheppard, "Thomas Warton and the Historical Point of View in Criticism," JEGP, XVI (1917), 153-63; David N. Smith, "Warton's History of English Poetry," Proc. Brit. Acad., XV (1929), 73-100; Earl R. Wasserman, "The Scholarly Origin of the Elizabethan Revival," ELH, IV (1937), 213-43, based on Dr. Wasserman's dissertation, The Elizabethan Revival: its Background and Beginning, The Johns Hopkins University, 1937; Robert D. Williams, "Antiquarian Interest in Elizabethan Drama before Lamb," PMLA, LIII (1938), 434-44, based on Dr. Williams' dissertation of the same name, University of Michigan, 1937.

held. In the opinion of succeeding eras, the reign of Elizabeth was considered the high point in English history and it was Elizabeth herself who was held responsible for the brilliant successes of her reign. Even during her lifetime she was greeted with an adulation which, discounting the flattery and extravagance characteristic of the Elizabethan, still left her accomplishments and influence on a very high level. After her death, to the already strong stream of praise was added the nostalgia and the disregard of defect which the present lavishes on the past. Bacon has paid his queen a glowing tribute in the first book of The Proficiencie and Advancement of Learning:

But for a tablet or picture of smaller volume, (not presuming to speak of your Majesty that liveth,) in my judgment the most excellent is that of queen Elizabeth, your immediate predecessor in this part of Britain; a prince that, if Plutarch were now alive to write lives by parallels, would trouble him, I think, to find for her a parallel amongst women. This lady was endued with learning in her sex singular, and rare even amongst masculine princes; whether we speak of learning of language or of science; modern or ancient; divinity or humanity. And unto the very last year of her life she accustomed to appoint set hours for reading, scarcely any young student in an university more daily or more dully. As for her government, I assure myself I shall not exceed if I do affirm that this part of the island never had forty-five years of better times; and yet not through the calmness of the season, but through the wisdom of her regiment. For if there be considered of the one side, the truth of religion established; the constant peace and security; the good administration of justice; the temperate use of the prerogative, not slackened, nor much strained; the flourishing state of learning, sortable to so excellent a patroness; the convenient estate of wealth and means, both of crown and subject; the habit of obedience, and the moderation of discontents; and there be consid-

ered on the other side, the differences of religion, the troubles of neighbour countries, the ambition of Spain, and opposition of Rome; and then that she was solitary and of herself: these things I say considered, as I could not have chosen an instance so recent and so proper, so I suppose I could not have chosen one more remarkable or eminent, to the purpose now in hand; which is concerning the conjunction of learning in the prince with felicity in the people.³⁵

Bacon was followed by a long line of admirers of Elizabeth and everything connected with her reign. A frequently used image to convey a strong sense of Elizabeth's accomplishments was that of the sun dispelling the clouds:

The cloud thus set, that threatned more stormes, and a quiet calme happening when the rage was at highest, that wished Sunne then ascended our Horizon, whose rayes (as had been hoped) presently dispelled all foggy Mists from Englands faire Skie; which was, the most milde Princesse Lady Elizabeth, ...³⁶

The Earl of Clarendon applied the same praises which Bacon had given to Elizabeth to her reign as a whole; at that time, he says, the English refined their manners and corrected their past errors; they were much superior in piety, learning, wisdom, and good manners to all previous ages; they were characterized by a love of justice and a willingness to abide by it, by a taste for the arts and sciences, and by a desire for peace and plenty at home and good re-

²⁵ Francis Bacon, Of the Proficiencie and Advancement of Learning in The Works, ed. James Spedding, Robert L. Ellis, and Douglas D. Heath (New York, 1869), VI, 152-53.

²⁶ John Speed, The History of Great Britaine (London, 1614), p. 331. Cf. Laurence Echard, The History of England (London, 1707), p. 787.

lations abroad.²⁷ So far as our period is concerned, the adulation of Elizabeth and her reign reaches its culmination in Lord Bolingbroke who devotes #137 of The Craftsman and sixty pages of his Remarks on the History of England to an analysis of the problems which confronted Elizabeth and the solutions she adopted to meet them; Bolingbroke finds nothing but praise for her actions and by implication suggests that contemporary statesmen might do well to follow them.²⁸ The effect of this admiration for Elizabeth was to spread to everything connected with her reign; apart from the intrinsic merits of Elizabethan literature, it would have been read if only because of its connection with the golden era of English history, and as it was, it was read as evidence of the brilliance of the period.

Thus Peacham speaks of the time of Elizabeth as "... truly a golden Age (for such a world of refined wits and excellent spirits it produced, whose like are hardly to be hoped for in any succeeding Age)."²⁹ And Owen Feltham refers to

...our Halcyon dayes, we have had now
Wits, to which, all that after come, must bow.
And should the Stage compose her selfe a Crowne

27 Edward Hyde, Earl of Clarendon, op. cit., pp. 236-37.

28 Henry St. John, Viscount Bolingbroke, #137, The Craftsman, IV (1731), 134-41; Remarks on the History of England (London, 1780?), pp. 144-204.

29 Henry Peacham, op. cit., I, 133.

Of all those wits, which hitherto sh'as knowne:
Though there be many that about her brow
Like sparkling stones, might a quick lustre throw:
Yet Shakespeare, Beaumont, Johnson, these three shall
Make up the Jem in the point Verticall.
And now since Johnsons gone, we may well say,
The Stage hath seene her glory and decay.³⁰

According to Sir Richard Baker, "Poetry was never more Re-
splendent, nor never more Graced; wherein Johnson, Silvester,
Shakespere, Beaumont, Fletcher,...not only far excelled their
own Countrymen, but the Whole World besides."³¹

Sir John Denham was an admirer of Elizabethan litera-
ture. In his poem on Cowley, he writes:

Old Chaucer, like the morning Star,
To use discovers day from far,
His light those Mists and Clouds dissolv'd,
Which our dark Nation long involv'd;
But he descending to the shades,
Darkness again the Age invades.
Next (like Aurora) Spencer rose,
Whose purple blush the day foreshows;
The other three, with his own fires,
Phoebus, the Poets God, inspires;
By Shakespear's, Johnson's, Fletcher's lines,
Our Stages lustre Rome's outshines:³²

30 Owen Feltham in Jonsonus Viribus (London, 1638), pp. 42-43 as cited in The Shakspeare Allusion-Book, ed. Edmund Chambers (Oxford University Press, 1932), I, 415. Cf. Samuel Sheppard, "Third Pastoral," Epigrams Theological, Philosophical, and Romantick (London, 1651), p. 239; ibid., II, 13; Henry Belasyse, An English Traveler's First Curiosity or the Knowledge of his Owne Countrey, ibid., II, 86.

31 Sir Richard Baker, Chronicle of England (London, 1660), p. 503, in Edmund Chambers, loc. cit., II, 86. Cf. Richard Flecknoe, A Short Discourse of the English Stage (London, 1664), p. 65, ibid., II, 85; Anonymous, "Prologue," to James Shirley's Love Tricks, ibid., II, 138.

32 Sir John Denham, "On Mr Abraham Cowley His Death and Burial amongst the Ancient Poets," in The Poetical Works, ed. Theodore H. Banks, Jr. (Yale University Press, 1923), pp. 149-50.

Edward Phillips undertakes to defend the style of the Elizabethans against the charge that it was rude and unpolished. He points out that while it is true that the writers before the time of Henry VIII were "uncouth, strange, and unpleasant," nevertheless the poetry of the Elizabethan era is well worth the attention of contemporary poets for its general excellence both in style and matter; it is interesting to note that he exempts Chaucer from his strictures on the poetry antecedent to the time of Henry VIII.³³ John Oldham looks on Ben Jonson as the founder of the modern stage:

Hail mighty Founder of our Stage! for so I dare
Entitle thee, nor any modern Censures fear,
Nor care what thy unjust Detractors say;
They'll say perhaps, that others did Materials bring,
That others did the first Foundations lay.
And glorious 'twas (we grant) but to begin:
But thou alone could'st finish the design,
Some bold Advent'urers might have been before,
Who durst the unknown world explore;
By them it was survey'd at distant view,
And here and there a Cape, and Line they drew,
Which only serv'd as hints, and marks to thee,
Who wast reserv'd to make the full discovery:
Art's Compass to thy painful search we owe,
Whereby thou went'st so far, and we may after go,
By that we may Wit's vast, and trackless Ocean try,
Content no longer, as before,
Dully to coast along the shore,
But steer a course more unconfin'd, and free,
Beyond the narrow bounds, that pent Antiquity.

II.

Never till thee the Theater possess
A Prince with equal Pow'r, and Greatness blest,

³³ Edward Phillips, Theatrum Poetarum, or a Compleat Collection of the Poets in Joel E. Spingarn, op. cit., II, 263-64.

No Government, or Laws it had
To strengthen and establish it,
Till thy great hand the Scepter sway'd,
But groan'd under a wretched Anarchy of Wit:....
No sooner did thy Soul with active Force and Fire
The dull and heavy Mass inspire,
But strait throughout it let us see
Proportion, Order, Harmony,
And every part did to the whole agree,
And strait appear'd a beautiful new made world of
Poetry.³⁴

It is to be noted that both Denham and Oldham speak of Chaucer, Spenser, and Jonson in terms of a revival of poetry, while Oldham thinks that Jonson has outstripped the ancients in those very qualities which made them so attractive to his contemporaries.

Dryden defended Shakespearean tragedy from the attacks made on it by Rymer. Rymer had accused the Elizabethan tragedies of being irregular and Dryden admitted the charge but argued that they showed genius, especially the Shakespearean tragedies and "...Genius alone is a greater Virtue (if I may so call it) than all other qualifications put together."³⁵ Both Flecknoe and Blackmore contrast the literary productions of their own day with those of the Elizabethan era to the disadvantage of the former. Flecknoe writes:

If any the difference would know,
Betwixt the Ancient Playes and Modern now;

³⁴ John Oldham, "Upon the Works of Ben. Johnson," The Works (London, 1703), pp. 327-30.

³⁵ John Dryden, Letters upon Several Occasions (London, 1696), p. 55, in Edmund Chambers, op. cit., II, 402.

In Ancient Times none ever went away,
But with a glowing bosome from a Play,
With somewhat they had heard, or seen so fired,
They seem to be Celestially inspir'd.
Now you have onely some few light conceits,
Like Squibs & Crackers, neither warms nor heats;
And sparks of Wit as much as you'd desire,
But nothing of a true solid fire:
So hard 'tis now for any one to write
With Johnson's fire, or Fletcher's flame and spright:
Much less inimitable Shakspear's way,
Promethean-like to animate a Play.³⁶

And Blackmore:

How happy were the old unpolished Times,
As free from Wit as other modern Crimes!
As our Forefathers Vig'rous were and Brave,
Detesting both alike the Wit and Knave.
They justly Wits and Fools believ'd the same,
And Jester was for both the common Name.
Their Minds, for Empire form'd, would never quit
Their noble Roughness, and dissolve in Wit.
For Business born, and bred to Martial Toil,
They rais'd the Glory of Britannia's Isle.
Then she her dreadful Ensigns did advance,
To curb Iberia, and to conquer France,
But this degenerate, loose, and foolish Race
Are all turn'd Wits, and their great Stock debase.³⁷

In his anger at the critics who had handled him roughly indeed, Blackmore praises the Elizabethans for the very virtues which the Elizabethan satirists lamented the lack of in their contemporaries; from the safety of over a hundred years distance, Blackmore uses the Elizabethans as a measuring stick by which to judge the writers of his own day and to find them wanting. The important point is that

36 Richard Flecknoe, "Of the Difference betwixt the Ancient and Modern Playes," Epigrams (London, 1670), p. 71, in Edmund Chambers, loc. cit., II, 163.

37 Sir Richard Blackmore, "A Satyr against Wit," in Joel F. Spingarn, op. cit., III, 325.

Blackmore did not so much find these values in the Elizabethans, but finding them lacking in his contemporaries, professed to discover them in the Elizabethans. This process is similarly evident in Paul Whitehead's lines on Brooke's Gustavas Vasa which had been refused a licence; Whitehead is speaking of the Elizabethan stage:

Bold and unlicens'd in Eliza's days,
Free flow'd her numbers, flourish'd her fair bays.
On Briton's stage majestic, unconfin'd,
She tun'd her patriot lessons to mankind;
For mighty heroes ransack'd ev'ry age,
Then beam'd them glorious in her Shakespear's page.³⁸

Thus there is built up an unquestioned appreciation of the Elizabethans. But at the same time the tendency to use the term modern to include the period extending from the Renaissance to the time of the writer imperceptibly blurs over sharpness of distinction. We therefore find writers of the Restoration praising modern literature and using as examples writers ranging from Shakespeare to Dryden. Dryden himself falls into this confusion:

For if we, or our greater fathers, have not yet brought the drama to an absolute perfection, yet at least we have carried it much further than those ancient Greeks; who, beginning from a chorus, could never totally exclude it, as we have done; who find it an unprofitable encumbrance, without any necessity of entertaining it amongst us, and without the possibility of establishing it here, unless it were supported by a public charge.³⁹

38 Paul Whitehead, "To Mr Brooke, on the Refusal of a Licence to his Play, Entitled, Gustavus Vasa," The Gentleman's Magazine, IX (1739), 266.

39 John Dryden, "Dedication of the Third Miscellany," in Scott and Saintsbury, op. cit., XII, 52.

Charles Gildon points out that the moderns are superior in judgment and would never be guilty of the improprieties and absurdities which mar the works of the ancients. He goes on to say that the upholders of the ancients deny the moderns the right to be called poets because they have not strictly observed the rules of Aristotle but in his opinion this shows the ancients ignorant of the chief end of poetry which is pleasure:

Now, it cannot be deny'd but he is the best Poet who takes the surest means to obtain the end he aims at; in which, regard must be had to the Humour, Custom, and Inclination of the Auditory; but an English Audience will never be pleas'd with a dry, Jejune and formal Method that excludes Variety as the Religious observation of the Rules of Aristotle does. And all those that exclaim against the Liberty some of our English Poets have taken, must grant that a Variety that contributes to the main Design, cannot divide our Concern: And if so, 'tis certainly an Excellence the Moderns have gain'd above the Ancients. This wou'd be plainer if I had room and time to instance in Particular.⁴⁰

What Gildon says may be applied equally to Shakespeare and Dryden; his use of the word modern does not make any differentiation between the two, nor is any probably intended. This failure to distinguish between the Elizabethan and Restoration stage is manifest also in J. Drake's The Antient and Modern Stages Survey'd. Drake is of the opinion that the moderns are superior to the ancients in respect to the

⁴⁰ Charles Gildon, "To my Honoured and Ingenious Friend Mr. Harrington, for the Modern Poets against the Ancients," in Willard H. Durham, op. cit., pp. 16-17.

"General Moral of their Fables." He adduces three reasons: first, the moderns do not interest Providence in promoting villainy; second, Providence is never used to oppress virtue; and third, in modern plays, malefactors are punished nor are they permitted to escape by the intervention of the gods. For these reasons, the modern drama is superior to the ancient since the balance of religion inclines to its side. Furthermore, the moderns have united the moral and pathetic to effect a new species of tragedy which is a considerable improvement over the ancient forms. Finally, the moderns are the creators of the system of poetic justice: "Thus the Moral, the highest, and most serviceable improvement that ever was, or ever can be made of the Drama, is of Modern Extraction, and may very well be pleaded in bar to all claim laid in behalf of the Antients."⁴¹ Again, what Drake says is capable of being applied to the Elizabethan and Restoration tragedy; the point is that Drake himself makes no distinction.

Now, I should like to suggest that so far as the theory of the Renaissance is concerned the failure to distinguish clearly the boundaries of the concept "modern" leads ultimately to a disregard of the Renaissance and a tendency to exalt the present at the expense of the past.

⁴¹ J. Drake, The Antient and Modern Stages Survey'd (London, 1699), pp. 229-30. Cf. pp. 218-19 and 225-26.

I do not mean to suggest that this is the only reason for the depreciation of the Elizabethans but it is a factor to be reckoned with along with the influence of neo-classical ideas. Thus we get the common Restoration complaint that the Elizabethan poets fell short of the rules and decencies and hence their productions were crude and unpolish'd. "It is therefore my part," writes Dryden, "to make it clear, that the language, wit, and conversation of our age, are improved and refined above the last," and many of his contemporaries agreed with him.⁴² The superior, if not patronizing, attitude which the Restoration poets took toward their predecessors is well expressed by Addison:

Long had our dull forefathers slept supine,
Nor felt the raptures of the tuneful Nine;
'Till Chaucer first, a merry bard, arose,
And many a story told in rhyme and prose.
But age has rusted what the poet writ,
Worn out his language, and obscur'd his wit:
In vain he jests in his unpolish'd strain,
And tries to make his readers laugh in vain.
Old Spenser, next, warm'd with poetic rage,
In ancient tales amus'd a barb'rous age;
An age that yet uncultivate and rude,
Where'er the poet's fancy led, pursu'd
Through pathless fields, and unfrequented floods,
To dens of dragons, and enchanted woods.

⁴² John Dryden, Defence of the Epilogue; or, an Essay on the Dramatic Poetry of the Last Age in Scott and Saintsbury, op. cit., IV, 227. Cf. Dryden's "Epilogue. Almanzor and Almahide: or, the Conquest of Granada by the Spaniards. A Tragedy. The Second Part," ibid., IV, 224:
Wit's now arrived to a more high degree;
Our native language more refined and free.
Our ladies and our men now speak more wit
In conversation, than these poets writ.

But now the mystic tale, that pleas'd of yore,
Can charm an understanding age no more;...⁴³

The Earl of Shaftesbury accuses Shakespeare, Fletcher, and Milton of having debased their styles by infantile punning and quibbling.⁴⁴ But it is not necessary to labor a point which has long been recognized, namely, that during the Restoration and first half of the eighteenth century the Elizabethans were looked down on as strong but rude writers. Nevertheless, it is necessary to balance this opinion by the fact that there was as strong an appreciation of the Elizabethans as there was a depreciation of them. There was therefore a continuous tradition of appreciation of the work of the Elizabethans; the scholars of the eighteenth century brought new tools to the study of Elizabethan literature, but they did not create a taste for it, for the simple reason that the taste for Shakespeare and his fellows had never been lost.

43 Joseph Addison, "An Account of the Greatest English Poets," in The Works, ed. George W. Greene (Philadelphia, 1880), I, 142. Jabez Hughes expresses pretty much the same idea in his poem "Upon Reading Mr. Dryden's Fables," cited in Caroline F. E. Spurgeon, Five Hundred Years of Chaucer Allusion Criticism and Allusion 1357-1900 (Cambridge University Press, 1925), I, 294.

44 Anthony Ashley Cooper, Earl of Shaftesbury, "Treatise III. Advice to an Author," Characteristicks of Men, Manners, Opinions, Times (London, 1714), I, 217.

IV. The Renaissance and the Middle Ages

Though the Renaissance was in many respects antagonistic to the Middle Ages, its opposition was mild when compared to that of the seventeenth century. Though the closeness of the Renaissance to the Middle Ages accounts in part for its antagonism, the very proximity forced the Renaissance to acknowledge that the Middle Ages were not as dark as the writers of the Renaissance would have us believe. But the seventeenth century did not have this control and took over the Renaissance's antipathy to the Middle Ages without its qualifications. As a result, there is very little appreciation of the part played by the Middle Ages as a transmitter of ancient culture and an initiator of modern movements. In the passages already quoted from Barclay, Hakewill, and Evelyn some notion of the seventeenth century attitude toward the Middle Ages may be gained. Furthermore, the moderns identified the Middle Ages with the schoolmen against whose method they were in revolt. Typical is Milton's attack:

On the other hand, where no arts flourish, where all knowledge is banished, where indeed there is no trace of a good man, there savageness and frightful barbarism rage about. Of this fact I call to witness not one state or province or race, but a fourth part of the world, Europe, from the whole of which during several early centuries all good arts had perished; for a long time the presiding Muses had abandoned all the universities of that

age: blind Ignorance had pervaded and taken possession of everything; nothing was heard in the schools except the absurd dogmas of most stupid monks. Forsooth, having donned a gown, from empty platforms and pulpits, from musty cathedrals, the profane and misshapen monster, Ignorance, vaunted itself. The Piety for the first time went into mourning, and Religion expired and went to ruin; so that from its deep wound, late and with difficulty, it has recovered even to this day.⁴⁵

Milton was but following the lead established by Bacon in

The Novum Organum:

For out of the five and twenty centuries over which the memory and learning of men extends, you can hardly pick out six that were fertile in sciences or favourable to their development. In times no less than in regions there are wastes and deserts. For only three revolutions and periods of learning can properly be reckoned; one among the Greeks, the second among the Romans, and the last among us, that is to say, the nations of Western Europe; and to each of these hardly two centuries can justly be assigned. The intervening ages of the world, in respect to any rich or flourishing growth of the sciences, were unprosperous. For neither the Arabians nor the Schoolmen need be mentioned; who in the intermediate times rather crushed the sciences with a multitude of treatises, than increased their weight.⁴⁶

Both Swift and his patron took occasion to heap scorn on the Middle Ages, Swift in his ode to Temple, and Temple himself in his essay "Of Poetry."⁴⁷

45 John Milton, "An Oration Delivered in the Chapel in Defense of Knowledge," The Prolusions of John Milton, ed. Donald L. Clark, tr. Bromley Smith, in The Works, ed. Frank A. Patterson et al (Columbia University Press, 1936), XII, 259-61.

46 Francis Bacon, The New Organon; or, True Directions concerning the Interpretation of Nature, in Spedding, Ellis, and Heath, op. cit., VIII, 110. Sprat has an extended attack on the schoolmen in The History of the Royal Society, op. cit., pp. 15-23.

47 Jonathan Swift, "Ode to the Honble Sir William Temple,"

A short summary of the seventeenth century charges against the schoolmen is found in William Molyneux's dedication to the Royal Society of his book on optics:

'Tis wonderful to consider, how the Schools were formerly overrun with a senseless kind of Jargon, which they call'd Philosophy; and which men studied with the greatest Labour and Assiduity, that they might attain the name of Wise and Learned. This certainly was the greatest Cheat was [sic] ever imposed on the mind of Man:...had the former Ages of the World been at half that Labour and Study for the Advancement of real Knowledg, which they spent in promoting verbose Stuff; Mankind by this time might have been by many Degrees more wise, and consequently more happy even in this Life; for Wisdom only makes men so.

But in this last Age the generous Undertakings of the Philosophick Societies of Europe (to whom your Institution has shewn the way, and been an illustrious Example) have dissipated these dark Mists, and have abdicated this kind of empty Stuff; which had crept into even Natural Disquisitions; and like a Leprosie had quite over-run the whole Body of Philosophy, deforming its Beauty, and ruining its Strength. Men are not satisfied now with Noisy Words, and nothing else; but require more solid Foundations of Knowledge, and believe no farther than they can find good Proofs.

This great Change, which Philosophy or the Prosecution of Knowledge in general has received of late years, is manifest in all its Parts; but in none more than in natural Enquiries. To these you have given a clearly new Turn, wholly different from the Methods, by which they were formerly prosecuted in the Schools.⁴⁸

In the introduction to the second volume of the first edition of Anthony a Wood's Athenae Oxoniensis, James Harrington

in The Poems, ed. Harold Williams (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1937), I, 27; Sir William Temple, "Of Poetry," op. cit., III, 432.

⁴⁸ William Molyneux, "To the Illustrious Royal Society," Dioptrica Nova. A Treatise of Dioptricks (London, 1709), pp. Air-Aiv.

has a short account of the course of culture. He divides the history of learning into four signal epochs, the Chaldean, the Grecian, the Roman, and "...in honour of those that were the chief favourers and promoters of the restoration of letters, the Alfonsine or Medicean." But before he deals with the Renaissance, Harrington gives a sketch of the state of learning during the Middle Ages:

Afterwards when the Northern nations invaded Europe, and the Saxons at last seated themselves in Britain; all arts and sciences fell in the ruin of the Roman empire, and from thence commenc'd the dark age of barbarity, superstition, and ignorance.

At that time all things concurr'd not only to the gradual loss, and decay, but to the sudden and final extirpation of learning: at once inundations and fires destroy'd her choicest libraries; and rapine, force, and envy, as it were combining with those natural causes, carried away the last remains of her treasure.... Monasteries indeed in this age there were without number, but such as were design'd to be the seats of devotion, not of learning, and whose ancient orders rather respected the severity of discipline and regulation of manners, than the improvement of arts and sciences...yet, whether it proceeded from the laziness of the monks, the ignorance of the age, or the want of foreign correspondence, certain it is that little of value was ever produced by the cloister, but what receives its price from its antiquity.

Harrington goes on to criticize the logic, painting, study of languages, mathematics, history, and poetry of the Middle Ages, calling them sterile and backward, and continues:

It is confess'd, in the mean time, that the rudeness or ignorance of our ancestors, the meanness of their studies, or the carelessness of their performances was not the fault of our nation, but the age: Gildas and Bede challenge the precedence of the most antient historians of our neighbouring nations: our Alcuine gave learning to one of the most flourishing universities of Europe; none elsewhere were more subtil

than our schoolmen, nor more learned than our canonists: So that in that universal cloud of ignorance, Britain enjoy'd, if not always the dawn of the day, yet at least comparatively the least share of night.... For when in the middle of the 14th century the art of printing was discover'd, and a few years afterwards Constantinople was taken; then the exil'd Grecians, who had before given learning to Italy, now by the encouragement of Alphonso in Naples, and the family of the Medicee's in Florence, restor'd it to the world.

And it was the particular happiness of England, that as soon as the Italian learning could reach this Northern island, about the first date of this work in the beginning of the 15th century, then concurr'd a third cause of the restoration and increase of learning among us, the discovery of America, the encouragement of our navigation, and the extent of our foreign correspondence.⁴⁹

The sentiments of the men who wrote between 1605 and 1742 are pretty well expressed by John Oldmixon: "A Man who has any Warmth in his Imagination, and any Delicacy in his Taste, cannot be always raking in the Rubbish of barbarous Ages, and groping in Gothick Darkness. A good Proof of the small Talent necessary for this Work is, that there hardly ever was an Author among these Monkish Antiquaries, but his Language was as barbarous as his Subject."⁵⁰

Nevertheless, it would be incorrect to say that the services of the Middle Ages in helping bring about the Renaissance were unacknowledged at this time. For example, Charles Gildon points out that there was some literary ac-

⁴⁹ James Harrington, "The Introduction, or, Preface to the Second Volume in the First Edition," Anthony a Wood, Athenae Oxoniensis, ed. Philip Bliss (London, 1813), I, clxxii-clxxvi.

⁵⁰ John Oldmixon, An Essay on Criticism (London, 1728), p. 78.

tivity in England from the fifth century on, and he mentions Gildas and Joseph of Exeter; also, he refers to the Song of Roland and praises provençal poetry as the beginning of modern poetry through its influence on Petrarch.⁵¹ The services of the Arabs in keeping alive learning during the Middle Ages are mentioned with some respect by Hake-will and Burnet, while John Freind's The History of Physick contains an account of Arabian medicine whose disparaging tone is belied by its length.

It is around the figure of Chaucer that the accomplishments of the Middle Ages in England are centered. To some writers the promise which Welsted saw in "The great rude Writers of our Nation, in early Times" had been already fulfilled in Chaucer and he was looked on as the bringer of light in an age of darkness. Thus Thomas Freeman writes:

Pitty ô pitty, death had power
Our Chaucer, Lidgate, Gower:
They that equal'd all the Sages
Of these, their owne, of former Ages,
And did their learned Lights advance
In times of darkest ignorance,
When palpable impurity
Kept knowledge in obscurity,
And all went Hood-winkt in this Ile
They could see and shine the while;
Nor Greece, nor Rome, could reckon vs,
As then, among the Barbarous:
Since these three knew to turne perdy
The scru-pin of Phylosophy

⁵¹ Charles Gildon, op. cit., p. 80.

As well as they; and left behind
As rich memorials of the mind.⁵²

We have seen that Denham in his poem on Cowley and Addison in his "Account of the Greatest English Poets" praised Chaucer for having been the first to restore poetry and learning to England. The same idea is elaborated on by John Dart:

In early Time he rear'd his rev'rend Head,
When Learning was with thickening Mists oer'spread;
When rhyming Monks in barb'rous Numbers try
The Lives of Saints, and Feats of Errantry;
Above such trifling idle Tales as these
His Muse disdain'd by vulgar Ways to please:
On the fam'd Grecian Bard he fix'd his Sight.
And saw his Beauties thro' a Cloud of Night;
With Flight advent'rous dar'd the darksome Way,
And gave the promise of a following Day;
And that he might his Meaning better meet
He made the Mantuan Verse a Lanthorn to his Feet
Justly design'd, and with a stedly View
And piercing Eye he look'd all Nature thro',
Not thro' the gaudy Prism and painted Glass,
But saw her plain, and drew her as she was.⁵³

Thus the opposition to the Middle Ages was modified in some degree by a patriotic interest in England's antiqui-

⁵² Thomas Freeman, "Runne and a Great Cast," Epigrams (London, 1614), cited in Caroline F. E. Spurgeon, op. cit., I, 188-89.

⁵³ John Dart, "Westminster Abbey, a Poem," in Caroline F. E. Spurgeon, loc. cit., I, 361. The anonymous author of a poem titled "In Praise of Chaucer," ibid., I, 387, writes:

Long veil'd in Gothick mists our Britain lay,
Ere dawning science beam'd a cheering ray,
Dark monkish systems, and dull senseless rhymes
Swell'd the vain volumes of those ruder times:
When Chaucer rose, the Phoebus of our isle,
And bid bright art on downward ages shine;
His genius pierc'd the gloom of error through,
And truth with nature rose at once to view.

ties. Nevertheless, when compared to the observations of the Renaissance on the Middle Ages, the remarks of the writers of the seventeenth century and first half of the eighteenth seem narrow and uninspired.

V. The Renaissance and the Reformation

The problem of the relationship of the Renaissance and Reformation continued to agitate the writers of the period between 1605 and 1742. However, though the problem was recognized, it was not debated with any great acumen, the reason being, I should like to suggest, the philosophical nature of the question which the seventeenth and early eighteenth century historians had not the technique to grasp. With the development of a more philosophical history in the latter half of the eighteenth century, the problem was raised more sharply and received more serious and acute treatment.

According to Sir Robert Naunton, it was the revival of letters, and not the Reformation, which brought about the destruction of "the Romane ignorance."⁵⁴ More considered is the account given by Samuel Parker:

Must we now, after all these and many more Discoveries about natural Bodies, confine our selves to what we find in Aristotile, who never dream'd of any such

⁵⁴ Sir Robert Naunton, Fragmenta Regalia, ed. Edward Arber (London, 1870), p. 15.

things? Is it possible that so many new Appearances should not alter the Frame of Philosophy, may rather hazard the pulling down of the old ruinous House that had too narrow Foundations, that it may be built again with more Magnificence?.... Why then must Philosophy alone be bound up still in its Infant Swadling-Bands? And there being the same reason, why should we not allow the same liberty of expatiating?...

But methinks I hear some Men say, All Innovations are dangerous; Philosophy and Divinity are so interwoven by the Schoolmen, that it cannot be safe to separate them; New Philosophy will bring in new Divinity, and Freedom in the one will make Men desire a Liberty in the other.... Learning and Knowledge will break forth like Fire, and pierce like Lightning thro all Impediments; Politeness and Elegancy hath long ago subdued Monastick Barbarism. Erasmus and Melanchthon, with the rest of those Restorers of Learning, have made Holcot and Bricot quite out of fashion; and the inquisitive Genius of latter years, like a mighty Wind, hath brush'd down all the Schoolmens Cobwebs. There is an infinite Desire of Knowledge broken forth in the World; and Men may as well hope to stop the Tide, or bind the Ocean with Chains, as hinder free Philosophy from overflowing: 55

The reformers, then, breaking the bonds of monkish ignorance, made freedom of inquiry possible and consequently facilitated the advance of the new philosophy. This idea is shared by Thomas Sprat who says that the Reformation "...put Men upon a stricter Inquiry into the Truth of things" and Thomas Burnet who writes:

A writer of great name and authority in this respect, attributes the decay of letters among the antient Romans to the loss of their liberty. And it is certain in fact, that arts and sciences never flourished so much as in free states: witness, those of Greece, as well as that of Rome, in all which both arts and liberty rose and fell together. And it is no less

55 Samuel Parker, A Brief Account of the New Sect of Latitude-Men: together with Some Reflections upon the New Philosophy in The Phenix (London, 1738), pp. 515-16.

observable, that as it was undoubtedly owing to the Papal tyranny that the world was afterwards kept so long in ignorance, agreeably to its avowed principles and interest; so that it was when its oppressive yoke began to be shaken off, that learning revived, and emerged from under those thick clouds of darkness, which had so long obscured it. And indeed the restoring of learning was one of the chief means of retrieving the knowledge of the true religion.

For the Wickliffites and Hussites having had recourse to the scriptures in order to find out the true faith, and detect the errors and corruptions of the church of Rome, brought the study of the divine oracles into vogue. Several universities and public schools of learning were erected in this and the following century, which contributed much towards the dispelling of ignorance, and popish errors and superstitions. The disputes between the Latin and Greek churches, about the beginning of the fifteenth century, occasioned the writers of controversy to study the Greek and Latin fathers in their originals: and the taking of Constantinople by the Turks, about the middle of it, having obliged the Christians of the Greek church to betake themselves for refuge into Italy, Germany, and France, and being there well received by the family of the Medici, and other patrons of learning, the study and knowledge of the Greek language was still farther promoted in these western parts, where it was become such a stranger, that it was scarce known for some hundreds of years before.⁵⁶

In this interesting passage, Burnet has fused together a number of separate concepts: in order to break the bonds of papal tyranny, the pre-reformers had to go to the scriptures, but before they could do that, they had to have learning; thus, there is a mutual dependence between the Reformation and the Renaissance. And John Edwards writes that "...we, by the Divine Blessing, are free'd from that Ignorance and Bondage; which we owe to the Reformation,

⁵⁶ Thomas Burnet, op. cit., pp. 601-02.

whereby that Darkness was dispell'd, and that Vassalage removed. And now we are no longer tied up in the dark, we both see and walk, and we daily make progress in Divine Learning."⁵⁷ In his Life of Dr. John Colet, Samuel Knight makes the point that no period in English history is so little known as the fifty years preceding the Reformation in which time both true religion and useful dawned upon the world through the efforts of such religious humanists as Erasmus and Colet, and in his Life of Erasmus, Knight makes the same point in regard to Erasmus:

In his Epistles now extant...as well as in his other Writings, there is easily discoverable not only an hearty Zeal towards the Advancement of Learning, and restoring it from that deplorable State, into which it had been long sunk; but also very great efforts towards giving the World a true Tast of the rational and genuine use of Religion, which was then, and had been long before, sunk into the very dregs of Error, Superstition, and Bigotry.⁵⁸

Now, in the passages just quoted, there is a common idea, namely, the Reformation established a liberty of thought which enabled men to destroy ignorance and to establish a freer mode of life. But when we place the following passage from Anthony Collins side by side with the others, especially those by Parker and Burnet, we find a

57 John Edwards, A Compleat History of All the Dispensations and Methods of Religion (London, 1699), II, 636.

58 Samuel Knight, The Life of Dr. John Colet (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1823), p. xii; The Life of Erasmus (Cambridge, 1726), p. xix.

similarity of idea but applied to different objects:

...let Men be restrain'd from thinking on any Science or any part of a Science, they must be ignorant so far as the Restraint goes. And if a few Men take now and then a little liberty, and break thro the establish'd Restraint, their Thoughts will never be so perfect as if all Men were allow'd and encourag'd to think of that matter: but their Progress in thinking will be only proportionable to that degree of Free-Thinking which prevails. Thus before the Restoration of Learning, when Men were subject to the Impositions of Priests, a Prodigious Ignorance prevail'd. And when they began to think, their first Notions were reude and imperfect, and Time and Pains were necessary to bring them to that degree of Justness they are at present.⁵⁹

Thus, we see begun a process which gains in increasing complexity and confusion, namely, the attribution of similar effects to different causes, and conversely, the attribution of similar causes to different effects. For example, we have seen how certain writers dealt with the rôle of printing in bringing about the revival of learning; another group thought that printing had been instrumental in effecting the Reformation. John Edwards writes:

The Seasonableness of this Noble Invention may be discovered from this, That it was so unspeakably Serviceable to the bringing on the Reformation: For by the Benefit of Printing the World was blessed with the excellent Labours of Learned and Pious Men who lived in that Time; and thus by this means the Popish Ignorance was laid open, the Errors and Impieties of the church of Rome were expos'd to view, and whereas before Learning was lock'd up in Cloysters, now it spread it self over all Europe, and the Truth of the Gospel was Propagated almost to a Miracle.⁶⁰

59 Anthony Collins, A Discourse of Free-Thinking (London, 1713), pp. 7-8.

60 John Edwards, op. cit., II, 625-26.

Francis Burges, who had attributed the revival of learning to printing, likewise attributes the Reformation to it:

This noble Mystery has illustriously shewn its Usefulness in the Assistance it has given to the Propagation of the true Religion; having banished that Cimmerian Darkness that had overspread the Face of the Earth, and caused the glorious Light of the Gospel to shine forth with a resplendent Lustre, by the Printing that incomparable Treasure of a Christian The Holy Scriptures.⁶¹

Note that the same language which is used to describe the effects produced by the revival of learning is used to describe the effects of the Reformation. While it is true that these examples of confusion are somewhat simple, they develop increasingly involved and perplexing forms as historical method becomes more scientific and at the same time more philosophical.

It should be pointed out that while it might be expected that the Reformation would, of all the movements connected with the Renaissance, escape detraction, it too had its critics. In The Advancement of Learning, Bacon terms the three distempers of learning, fantastical, contentious, and delicate. Referring to the last of these, or vain affectations, Bacon says:

Martin Luther, conducted (no doubt) by an higher Providence, but in discourse of reason finding what a province he had undertaken against the Bishop of Rome and the degenerate traditions of the church,

⁶¹ Francis Burges, op. cit., III, 149.

and finding his own solitude, being no ways aided by the opinions of his own time, was enforced to awake all antiquity, and to call former times to his succors to make a party against the present time; so that the ancient authors, both in divinity and in humanity, which had long time slept in libraries, began generally to be read and revolved. This by consequence did draw on a necessity of a more exquisite travail in the languages original wherein those authors did write, for the better understanding of those authors and the better advantage of pressing and applying their words. And thereof grew again a delight in their manner of style and phrase, and an admiration of that kind of writing; which was much furthered and precipitated by the enmity and opposition that the propounders of those (primitive but seeming new) opinions had against the schoolmen; who were generally of the contrary part; and whose writings were altogether in a differing style and form; taking liberty to coin and frame new terms of art to express their own sense and to avoid circuit of speech, without regard to the pureness, pleasantness, and (as I may call it) lawfulness of the phrase or word. And again, because the great labour then was with the people, (of whom the Pharisees were wont to say, Execrabilis ista turba, quae non novit legem,) for the winning and persuading of them, there grew of necessity in chief price and request eloquence and variety of discourse, as the fittest and forciblest access into the capacity of the vulgar sort. So that these four causes concurring, the admiration of ancient authors, the hate of the schoolmen, the exact study of languages, and the efficacy of preaching, did bring in an affectionate study of eloquence and copie of speech, which then began to flourish. This grew speedily to an excess; for men began to hunt more after words than matter; and more after the choiceness of the phrase, and the round and clean composition of the sentence, and the sweet falling of the clauses, and the varying and illustration of their works with tropes and figures, than after the weight of matter, worth of subject, soundness of argument, life of invention, or depth of judgment.⁶²

62 Francis Bacon, Of the Proficiencie and Advancement of Learning, in Spedding, Ellis, and Heath, op. cit., VI, 118-19.

Both the revival of learning and the Reformation are criticized by Bacon, but especially the latter for having introduced the need for the former. Though the charge is not made explicit, Bacon, like Burnet who had probably read his Bacon well, accuses the learning of the Renaissance of being belles-lettristic, not solid, and, by extension, unscientific. Another type of criticism is made by Sir John Denham:

Then Darkness, Europe's face did over-spread
From lazy Cells, where superstition bred,
Which, link'd with blind Obedience, so encreast
That the whole world, same ages they opprest;
Till through those Clouds, the Sun of Knowledg brake,
And Europe from her Lethargy did wake:
Then, first our Monarchs were acknowledge here
That they, their Churches Nursing-Fathers were.
When Lucifer no longer could advance
His works on the false ground of Ignorance,
New Arts he tries, and new designs he laies,
Then, his well-study'd Master-piece he plays;
Loyola, Luther, Calvin he inspires
And kindles, with infernal Flames, their fires,
Sends their fore-runner (conscious of th' event)
Printing, his most pernicious Instrument:
Wild Controversie then, which long had slept,
Into the Press from ruin'd Cloysters leapt;
No longer by Implicite faith we were,
Whilst every Man's his own Interpreter;...⁶³

But the very freedom of thought which Denham thought so reprehensible, the Duke of Buckingham thought the Reformation had betrayed:

But when the reformers had cast off the unsufferable bondage of Rome, and rescued the gospel from the impositions and impostures of that church, one would have imagined they should have cast away that odious

⁶³ Sir John Denham, "The Progress of Learning," The Poetical Works, op. cit., p. 118.

maxim of confining, and imposing on the consciences of those they had set free; and never have dreamed of persecuting them for making use of that liberty they had pretended to establish, by requiring an implicit faith in them and their doctrines, when they would not allow it to those of the church they had forsaken for her errors and tyranny. For to me it is very unaccountable, that they should pretend to tell us, that we should now freely consult the word of God, and, at the same time, deny us to understand it for ourselves; since that is but to fool us with the name of liberty, without letting us possess the thing, and we might as well continue under our old masters, as be slaves to new lords. And this I believe has stopped the progress of the Reformation. For when the first heat once was over, and considering men began to reflect, that the reformation offered nothing but words, that it gave no entire freedom on conscience and inquiries, they saw no satisfactory motive to the quitting their old Mumsimus for a new Sumsimus; and could find no real advantage in withdrawing from father Peter, to father Martin, and father John; since, though these disclaimed the infallibility the other usurped, yet they still, without that guard, demanded our belief of their doctrines, though no less absurd and ridiculous.⁶⁴

Buckingham's daring statement presages a more scientific attitude toward the Reformation than his contemporaries were capable of adopting, but it required more than a century of scholarship before a saner attitude toward the Reformation could be taken by English protestant historians, and even the nineteenth century historians could not free themselves of their bias in favor of the English Reformation.

64 George Villiers, Duke of Buckingham, "Letter II. To Mr. Clifford, on his Human Reason," The Works, ed. T. Evans (London, 1775), II, 207-08.

VI. The Triumph of Science

It must be admitted that it has been necessary to search over a wide area to discover the attitude of the men of the seventeenth century and first half of the eighteenth toward the revival of learning and of the fine arts, the Middle Ages, and the Reformation. But when we turn our attention to the relationship between the Renaissance and the rise of science, the problem becomes one of limiting materials. On all sides, in the work of men of differing points of view, the rise, progress, and triumph of science is sung. We have seen how the rise of science was one element out of many in the complex of the Renaissance idea of the Renaissance. But after Bacon it becomes the central node into which and from which many of the most important ideas of the seventeenth century flow. It is hard to think of a field of activity which did not feel the touch of science or which was not involved in the ancient-modern controversy. The triumph of science meant ultimately the victory of the moderns over the ancients and the final establishment of the modern era as dating from the Renaissance as a distinct stage in human history. For this reason, it is impossible to neglect the seventeenth century discussion of science in tracing the idea of the Renaissance. The course of the idea of the Renaissance flows into the ancient-modern

controversy which is grounded in the efforts of the English scientists to settle securely the methods and aims of science.

To set the backdrop against which the drama of the rise of science was played, it is necessary to determine the temper of those who held the leading rôles. "I have been often heard," writes John Evelyn to Robert Boyle, "to exult in the felicity of this Conjunction of ours, which (since those prodigies of Virtue, the illustrious Ticho, Bacon, Gilbert, Harvey, Digby, Galileo, Peiresky, De Cartes, Gasseni, Bernier...and...Jacomo Maria Favi &c.) has produc'd us nothing, which will support the comparison with you."⁶⁵ And let us listen to Joseph Glanvill:

Me thinks this Age seems resolved to bequeath posterity somewhat to remember it: And the glorious Undertakers, wherewith Heaven hath blest our Days will leave the world better provided then they found it. And whereas in former times such generous free-spirited Worthies were, as the Rare newly observed Stars, a single one the wonder of an Age: In ours they are like the lights of greater size that twinkle in the Starry Firmament: And this last century can glory in numerous constellations. Should those Heroes go on, as they have happily begun; they'll fill the world with wonders. And I doubt not but posterity will find many things, that are now but Rumors, verified into practical Realities.⁶⁶

How accurate Glanvill's predictions were may be tested by

65 John Evelyn, "To the Honourable, ...Robert Boyle Esq.," Sculptura, ed. C. F. Bell (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1906), p. C2v.

66 Joseph Glanvill, The Vanity of Dogmatizing, ed. Moody E. Prior (Columbia University Press, 1931), pp. 181-82.

the list of future inventions he gives: a voyage to the south pole, flying, increased longevity, scientific agriculture, and the art of communication without wires--or radio to use our term. The sense of the superiority of the age was not confined to the sciences alone. Jonathan Richardson writes:

There is a Haughty Courage, an Elevation of Thought, a Greatness of Taste, a Love of Liberty, a Simplicity, and Honesty amongst us, which we inherit from our Ancestors, and which belong to us as Englishmen; and 'tis in These this Resemblance consists. I could exhibit a long Catalogue of Soldiers, Statesmen, Orators, Mathematicians, Philosophers, &c. and all living in, or near our own Times, which are proofs of what I advance, and consequently do Honour to Our Countrey, and to Humane Nature. But as I confine my self to Arts,...I will only instance Inigo Jones for Architecture, and Shakespear, and Milton, the one for Dramatick, the other for Epic Poetry, and leave them to seat themselves at the Table of Fame amongst the most illustrious of the Ancients.⁶⁷

Now, how did this state of mind come about? What factors produced it? To answer these questions, it is necessary first to discover what ideas the moderns felt constrained to single out for attack.

First of all, there were those who looked on the productions of the ancients as the acme of perfection, beyond which it was impossible to go and which it was foolish for the moderns even to strive to attain. Sir William Temple

67 Jonathan Richardson, An Essay on the Theory of Painting (London, 1715), pp. 209-11. Cf. Thomas Sprat, Observations on Monsieur de Sorbier's Voyage into England (London, 1665), pp. 290-92.

asks: "May there not have been, in Greece or Italy of old, such prodigies of invention and learning in philosophy, mathematics, physic, oratory, poetry, that none has ever since approached them, as well as there were in painting, statuary, architecture?" and those who were of his persuasion agreed that there were.⁶⁸ "That the Musick of the Antients could command farther than the Modern, is past Dispute," stated Jeremy Collier with every assurance in the world, though of course he had never heard any, while Edward Manwaring is of the opinion that "The greatest Impediment, as I know of, to true Learning, is a vain Opinion, that we equal, or rather exceed, the Ancients, in all kinds of Knowledge and Learning," and he too instances ancient music as an example of the superiority of the ancients.⁶⁹

Another group of writers was either sceptical of or altogether antagonistic to the moderns. Writing to his daughter-in-law, Lord Conway says:

My paper would faile me as I beleave your patience doth you, if I should reckon up the several bookes and opinions which are now new and never grew old and those which have bin revived and live, as the

68 Sir William Temple, An Essay upon the Ancient and Modern Learning, op. cit., III, 463.

69 Jeremy Collier, "Of Musick," Essays upon Several Moral Subjects (London, 1700), pp. 23-23; Edward Manwaring, "Dedication to Dr. Pepusch," Of Harmony and Numbers, in Latin and English and English Prose, and in English Poetry (London, 1744), pp. Alr-Aiv.

notes in Musique, printing, Gunpowder, and divers things both in Physicke and Anatomy, but it is good to try all things and to hold that which is best, and untill experience have confirmed to suspend the assent.⁷⁰

It was against this scepticism of conservatism that men such as Power and Sprat poured their floods of enthusiasm for the new philosophy. The Duchess of Newcastle was more outspoken: referring to the modern writers on natural philosophy, she has this to say:

Nor do I think their weak works will be able to overcome the strong Wits of the Ancients; for, setting aside some few of our Moderns, all the rest are but like dead and withered leaves, in comparison to lovely and lively Plants; and as for Arts, I am confident, that where there is one good Art found in these latter Ages, there are two better old Arts lost, both of the Egyptans, Grecians, Romans, and many other Ancient Nations;...⁷¹

The most outstanding critic of the moderns is Sir William Temple who in his Essay upon the Ancient and Modern Learning and in Some Thoughts upon Reviewing the Essay of Ancient and Modern Learning goes into great detail to disparage the modern accomplishments in philosophy, grammar, rhetoric, poetry, astronomy, medicine, anatomy, music, magic, architecture, mathematics, painting, sculpture, science, philology,

⁷⁰ "14. Lord Conway to his Daughter-in-law," in Conway Letters the Correspondence of Anne, Viscountess Conway, Henry More, and their Friends, 1642-1684, ed. Marjorie H. Nicolson (Yale University Press, 1930), p. 32.

⁷¹ Margaret Cavendish, Duchess of Newcastle, Observations upon Experimental Philosophy (London, 1668), pp. b2r-b2v. The Duchess is especially bitter against the microscope and telescope; she thinks they have contributed nothing, and cannot possibly contribute anything, to the advancement of knowledge.

and divinity. He excepts navigation only and that because it was due to the merely fortuitous discovery of the compass. Temple goes so far as to assert unequivocally that the ancients produced better men and better institutions, both for use and pleasure. Typical of his disparaging attitude, for Temple depends a good deal on the tone of his style to cast doubt on the moderns, is his criticism of the Renaissance:

It is very true and just, all that is said of the mighty progress that learning and knowledge have made in these western parts of Europe, within these hundred and fifty years; but that does not conclude, it must be at a greater height than it had been in other countries, where it was growing much longer periods of time; it argues more how low it was then amongst us, rather than how high it is now.⁷²

A third attack on the modern position was made directly on science. Donne's well-known lines beginning "And new Philosophy calls all in doubt" reflect the sentiments of a large number of seventeenth century writers. Lord Conway attacked science on the grounds that it is a prying into matters which should not be the concern of men for if god had wanted men to know the facts which science was now uncovering, He would have revealed them long before. The importance of this point of view is attested by the number of arguments against it. "Although the Astronomers teach by demonstration," writes Lord Conway, "yet cannot I per-

⁷² Sir William Temple, An Essay upon the Ancient and Modern Learning, op. cit., III, 465.

swade my selfe to give assent to all that they say, and I am esteemd by any Astronomer very ignorant, but God sayth he made two great lights, and he made allso the Starres, now the Astronomers tell of very many starres, every one very much exceeding the Sunne in bignes."⁷³ Though this argument may sound merely obstinate to our ears, it was treated with great consideration by the seventeenth century scientists, and much of Boyle's reputation was owing to the skill with which he was able to show to the satisfaction of his contemporaries that science and religion were compatible and indeed necessary to each other. The sceptical approach to science was voiced by Bolingbroke who argued that ultimately the results obtained by science were uncertain since they were the products of human endeavor.⁷⁴ Finally, the moderns were subjected to ridicule by their classically trained opponents, typical of whom are William King, who satirized the moderns in Dialogue IX in his Dialogues of the Dead, and Tom Brown, who made sport of the ancient-modern controversy in "The Philosophical or Virtuosi Country"; Swift's Battle of the Books is the high point of a line of belles-lettristic

73 "15. Lord Conway to his Daughter-in-law," op. cit., p. 33.

74 Henry St. John, Lord Bolingbroke, Letters or Essays, Addressed to Mr. Pope. Essay I. Concerning the Nature, Extent, and Reality of Human Knowledge in The Philosophical Works, ed. David Mallet (London, 1754), I, 53-55.

criticisms of the moderns.⁷⁵

75 William King, "IX. Modern Learning," in Dialogues of the Dead in A Miscellany of the Wits, ed. K. N. Colville (London, 1920), pp. 69-80; Tom Brown, "The Philosophical or Virtuosi Country," in Amusements Serious and Comical, Calculated for the Meridian of London, ed. Arthur L. Hayward (London, 1927), p. 77. The impact of science on belles lettres has been studied by Carson S. Duncan, The New Science and English Literature in the Classical Period, Menasha, 1913. The technique used by the satirists was clearly indicated by Sir William Temple in a passage marked by more bitterness than is usual with him; it is found in Some Thoughts upon Reviewing the Essay of Ancient and Modern Learning, op. cit., III, 516-17: "What has been produced for the use, benefit, or pleasure of mankind, by all the airy speculations of those who have passed for the great advancers of knowledge and learning these last fifty years (which is the date of our modern pretenders), I confess I am yet to seek, and should be very glad to find. I have indeed heard of wondrous pretensions and visions of men, possessed with notions of the strange advancement of learning and sciences on foot in this age, and the progress they are like to make in the next: as, the universal medicine, which will certainly cure all that have it; the philosopher's stone, which will be found out by men that care not for riches; the transfusion of young blood into old men's veins, which will make them as gamesome as the lambs from which it is to be derived; an universal language, which may serve all men's turn, when they have forgot their own; the knowledge of one another's thoughts, without the grievous trouble of speaking; the art of flying till a man happens to fall down and break his neck; double-bottomed ships, whereof none can ever be cast away, besides the first that was made; the admirable virtues of that noble and necessary juice called spittle, which will come to be sold, and very cheap, in the apothecaries shops; discoveries of new worlds in the planets, and voyages between this and that in the moon, to be made as frequently as between York and London; which such poor mortals as I am, think as wild as those of Ariosto, but without half so much wit, or so much instruction; for there these modern savages may know where they may hope in time to find their lost senses, preserved in phials, with those of Orlando."

The circular theory of history constituted another obstacle which the moderns had to surmount. Though the circular theory had in it elements which might make for the idea of progress, its effect was one of quiet pessimism; what is here now will pass away, to return elsewhere, and again to fade. To the proponents of the idea of progress, such a cosmic nostalgia seemed debilitating for it offered an excuse to do nothing here and now. In A Cypresse Grove, Drummond sets the prevailing tone of the circular theory:

Empires, States, Kingdomes, haue by the Doome of the Supreame providence their fatall Periods, great Cities lye sadlie buried in their dust, Artes and Sciences haue not onelie their Eclipses, but their waining, & deathes; the gastlie Wonders of the World, raised by the ambition of Ages, are ouerthrowne and trampled; some Lights aboue (deseruing to bee intituled Starres) are loosed and neuer more seene of vs; the excellent fabricke of this Vniuerse it selfe shall one day suffer ruine, or a change like a ruine, and poore Earthlings thus to be handled complaine!⁷⁶

Drummond's is an extreme statement of the circular position and shows how easily it merges into the idea of decay. A more moderate statement is that by Sir Thomas Pope Blount, that mirror of seventeenth century ideas:

All things here below run in a kind of Circle; And as in Arts and Sciences, so likewise in the Manners of Men there is a Vicissitude and Revolution. Virtue and Vice have no settled Hesitation; every Climate hath had its turn: Sometimes one Countrey carries it

⁷⁶ William Drummond, A Cypresse Grove, in The Poetical Works, ed. L. E. Kastner (Manchester University Press, 1913), II, 73.

for Vertue and Learning, and sometimes another.... Every Nation hath its Achme, or highest pitch of Elevation; And when once the spoke of the Wheel is uppermost, it soon whurries to the bottom. As a Kingdom rises in Empire, so it enlarges both in Vertue and Vice; and when it declines, so the Declension of these is proportionable. And though as to particular Kingdoms, one time may be either better or worse than another, we shall find that Humane Nature is much at the same Standard, as it was formerly; And as we commonly observe of the Sea, That as it gets in one place, it loses in another; so every Age may make the same Observation of the Vertues and Vices of Mankind.⁷⁷

Blount concludes with an idea which cuts both ways in the ancient-modern controversy. By the ancients, the idea of uniformitarianism was used to argue that since human nature has at all times in all places been the same, it is no use to expect anything new or different from the present; the moderns turned the argument around to assert that since human nature is the same now as it always has been, there is no cause for alarm that human powers are declining and that what the ancients could do, the moderns could at least equal, and once having made that argument, the moderns then went on to declare the idea of progress.

But the most pervasive and important idea the moderns had to combat was the idea of decay. In a contribution to The Microcosm, John Hookham Frere noted that "...the idea of gradual and progressive degeneracy obtained very

⁷⁷ Sir Thomas Pope Blount, "Essay V. Whether the Men of the Present Age Are any Way Inferiour to Those of Former Ages; either in respect of Virtue, Learning, or Long Life," Essays on Several Subjects (London, 1693), pp. 102-03.

strongly;...its prevalence was unlimited, and its authority unquestioned."⁷⁸ Power singled out the idea of decay for special attention:

...there is one more general Impediment, which is an Authentick discouragement to the promotion of the Arts and Sciences, and that is, The Universal Exclamation of the World's decay and approximation to its period; That both the great and little World have long since pass'd the Meridian, and, That the Faculties of the one doe fade and decay, as well as the Fabricke and Materials of the other; which though it be a Conceit that hath posses'd all ages past, as nearly as ours, yet the Clamour was never so high as it is now: Something, therefore, I shall here offer, that will abate and qualifie the rigour of this Conception.⁷⁹

while the most important book in the ancient-modern controversy, Hakewill's Apologie, was written with the specific purpose of breaking down the idea of decay. W. Parkes dedicates his Curtaine-Drawer of the World "To this waxing waning World" and Robert Ward thinks it necessary to begin his treatise Animadversions of Warre with a chapter on "The Mvtability of Flovrishing Kingdomes" in which he points out that war and subsequent decay are inseparable from human institutions. In his Mythomystes,

⁷⁸ John Hookham Frere, "Contributions to The Microcosm, Monday, May 7, 1787," The Works, ed. W. E. Frere (London, 1874), II, 23. Frere seems to have been the first student of the Renaissance and the seventeenth century to be aware of the significance of the idea of decay, Samuel Johnson excepted, but interest in the subject lapsed until modern scholarship investigated it. Probably the prevailing notion of the Renaissance as an optimistic age blinded scholars to an idea which contradicted that notion.

⁷⁹ Henry Power, op. cit., p. 188.

Henry Reynolds writes:

I haue thought vpon the times wee liue in, and am forced to affirme the world is decrepit, and, out of its age & doating estate, subiect to all the imperfections that are inseparable from that wracke and maime of Nature, that the young behold with horror, and the sufferers thereof lye vnder with murmur and languishment. Euen the generall Soule of this great Creature, whereof euery one of ours is a seuerall peece, seemes bedrid, as vpon her deathbed and neere the time of her dissolution to a second better estate and being; the yeares of her strength are past, and she is now nothing but disease, for the Soules health is no other than meerely the knowledge of the Truth of things: Which health the worlds youth inioyed, and hath now exchanged for it all the diseases of all errors, heresies, and different sects and schismes of opinions and vnderstandings, in all matter of Arts, Sciences, and Learnings whatsoever.⁸⁰

And in his "Verses, on the Prospect of Planting Arts and Learning in America," Berkeley laments Europe's decay but hopes for "Time's noblest offspring," America, to grow great and strong, nor, by the way, was Berkeley alone in this opinion.

The first idea, therefore, which the moderns had to refute in order to establish their position was the idea of decay. The lead was taken by Bacon:

But by far the greatest obstacle to the progress of science and to the undertaking of new tasks and provinces therein, is found in this--that men despair and think things impossible. For wise and serious men are wont in these matters to be altogether distrustful; considering with themselves the obscurity of nature, the shortness of life, the deceitfulness of the senses, the weakness of the judgment, the

⁸⁰ Henry Reynolds, Mythomystes, in Joel E. Spingarn, op. cit., I, 144.

difficulty of experiment and the like; and so supposing that in the revolution of time and of the ages of the world the sciences have their ebbs and flows; that at one season they grow and flourish, at another wither and decay, yet in such sort that when they have reached a certain point and condition they can advance no further. If therefore any one believes or promises more, they think this comes of an ungoverned and unripened mind, and that such attempts have prosperous beginnings, become difficult as they go on, and end in confusion. Now since these are the thoughts which naturally present themselves to grave men and of great judgment, we must take good heed that we be not led away by our love for a most fair and excellent object to relax or deminish the severity of our judgment; we must observe diligently what encouragement dawns upon us and from what quarter; and, putting aside the lighter breezes of hope, we must thoroughly sift and examine those which promise greater steadiness and constancy. Nay, and we must take state-prudence too into our counsels, whose rule is to distrust, and to take the less favourable view of human affairs. I am now therefore to speak touching Hope; especially as I am not a dealer in promises, and wish neither to force nor to ensnare men's judgments, but to lead them by the hand with their good will. And though the strongest means of inspiring hope will bring men to particulars; especially to particulars digested in my Tables of Discovery (the subject partly of the second, but much more of the fourth part of my Instauration), since this is not merely the promise of the thing but the thing itself; nevertheless that everything may be done with gentleness, I will proceed with my plan of preparing men's minds; of which preparation to give hope is no unimportant part. For without it the rest tends rather to make men sad (by giving them a worse and meaner opinion of things as they are than they now have, and making them more fully to feel and know the unhappiness of their own condition) than to induce an alacrity or to whet their industry in making trial. And therefore it is fit that I publish and set forth those conjectures of mine which make hope in this matter reasonable; just as Columbus did, before that wonderful voyage of his across the Atlantic, when he gave the reasons for his conviction that new lands and continents might be discovered besides those which were known before; which reasons, though rejected at first, were afterwards

made good^e by experience, and were the causes and beginnings of great event.⁸¹

Not only did Bacon determine the nature of the problem and the direction of the solutions to it, but he also set the tone of discussion: reason, moderation, facts.

The title of Hakewill's book tells the whole story of its contents: An Apologie or Declaration of the Power and Providence of God in the Government of the World. Consisting in an Examination and Censvre of the Common Errovrs Tovching Natvres Perpetuall and Universall Decay. A brief summary of the book will give an accurate account of the arguments advanced by the moderns. In his dedication to the University of Oxford, Hakewill sets the problem by attacking the idea of the decay of the present. The men of the present, he says, are as capable of thinking and producing as the ancients; what is needed is courage and a sense of power, for if we do not accomplish anything, it will not be the fault of nature but our own. Book I treats of decay in general and gives an account of the arguments advanced by the proponents of decay. Book II deals with the decay in the heavens, elements, and elementary bodies and shows

⁸¹ Francis Bacon, The New Organon, in Spedding, Ellis, and Heath, op. cit., VIII, 128-29. Bacon's statement confirms Professor Lovejoy's view that it was the Middle Ages which placed man in the center of the universe and snugly built it around him. Bacon did not see fit to use the argument that the results of science demonstrated the wisdom of god in his creation; this was first used by Hakewill and then taken up by the Restoration scientists and divines.

that the decay of the substance, motion, light, warmth, and influences of the heavenly bodies, and the decay of the elements, temper of the air, waters and fish, and earth, plants, beasts, and minerals, as argued by the opponents of the moderns, are false. The subject of Book III is the decay of mankind in regard to age, duration, strength, stature, arts, and wits. Hakewill devotes as much attention to the first four arguments as to the latter two. Twelve sections are devoted to proving that the moderns live as long as the ancients and seventeen sections to showing that they are as tall as the ancients. Turning to arts and sciences, Hakewill argues that the ancients were ignorant of divinity, the Middle Ages did not have any learning at all, while modern law and medicine are superior to the ancient. And in regard to chronology, cosmography, civil and ecclesiastical history, poetry, military tactics, grammar, rhetoric, logic, astronomy, geometry, metaphysice, painting, architecture, navigation, inventions, printing, gunpowder, and compass, the moderns are superior to the ancients. Space does not permit any detail in reproducing Hakewill's arguments but they are extremely comprehensive and detailed. The last book treats of the decay of manners and Hakewill devotes eleven chapters to show the paganism, bad laws, inability of the ancient moralists to do good, cruelties, covetousness, incontinence, gluttony, luxury in building and dress, and

arrogance of the ancients, especially the Romans. These, then, are the arguments which Hakewill used to achieve his purposes which are, one, to redeem captivated truth, two, to vindicate the creator's honor and power, three, to spur on progress and learning, four, to make men careful of their future, and five, to show how weak the argument of decay is, being based on the fictions of the poets, the morosity of old men, the overvaluing of antiquity, and the underestimation of the present. Hakewill's importance in the ancient-modern controversy cannot be overestimated. The ideas the advocates of the ancients advanced were those Hakewill had seen fit to take up and attack; the arguments used by the moderns were in large part derived from him.

The attack on the idea of decay continued with unabated vigor during the seventeenth century. Milton wrote a Latin poem "Naturam non pati senium" which as the title indicates criticized the notion of decay. According to Glanvill, "...the sole Instances of those illustrious Heroes, Cartes, Gassendus, Galiloeo, Tycho, Harvey, More, Digby; will strike dead the opinion of the worlds decay, and conclude it, in its Prime."⁸² Cowley's preface to his Proposition for the Advancement of Learning denies that the world is exhausted and argues that there is yet a "Terra Incognita"

⁸² Joseph Glanvill, op. cit., p. 240.

left for men to work on. The extent of the controversy may be seen from the fact that Sir Thomas Pope Blount wrote an essay on the subject, "Of the Ancients: and the respect that is due unto them; that we should not too much enslave our selves to their opinions" in which he argues against decay, his essay being as usual a tissue of unacknowledged quotations from his contemporaries. Both Gildon and Farquhar vindicate literature from the charge that it has decayed in quality from the ancients; Farquhar writes:

But in the first Place, I must beg you, Sir, to lay aside your Superstitious Veneration for Antiquity, and the usual Expressions on that Score; that the present Age is illiterate, or their taste is vitiated; that we live in the Decay of Time, and the Dotage of the World is fall'n to our share----'Tis a mistake, Sir, the World was never more active or youthful, and true downright Sense was never more Universal than at this very Day; 'tis neither confin'd to one Nation in the World, nor to one part of a City, 'tis remarkable in England as well as France; and good genuine Reason is nourish'd by the Cold of Swedeland as by the warmth of Italy....then why shou'd we be hamper'd so in our Opinions, as if all the Ruins of Antiquity lay so heavily on the Bones of us, that we coul'd not stir Hand nor Foot: No, no, Sir, ipse dixit is remov'd long ago, and all the Rubbish of old Philosophy, that in a manner bury'd the Judgment of Mankind for many centuries, is now Carry'd off; the vast Tomes of Aristotle and his Commentators are all taken to pieces, and their Infallibility is lost with all Persons of a free and unprejudic'd Reason.

Then above all Men living, why shou'd the Poets be hoodwink'd at this rate; and by what Authority shou'd Aristotle's Rules of Poetry stand so fixt and immutable. Why, by the Authority of two thousand Years standing, because thro' this long Revolution of time the World has still continu'd the same---- By the Authority of their being receiv'd at Athens, a City, the very same with London, in every particular; their Habits the same, their Humours alike,

their publick Transactions and private Societies Alamode France; in short, so very much the same in every Circumstance, that Aristotle's Criticisms may give rules to Drury Lane; the Areopagus give Judgment upon a Case in the Kings Bench, and old Solon shall give Laws to the House of Commons.⁸³

Farquhar's sarcasm affords a measure of the change in attitude toward the ancients from the humanists in the Renaissance to the moderns of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. This is not taken to mean, however, that there was no longer any respect for the ancients or that they did not have their ardent followers. What has happened is that while the virtues of the ancients are recognized, their defects are now not slighted.

The moderns had also to conduct a campaign against the weight of authority as such. It was felt that the practice of the learned to cite authorities, and especially ancient authorities, without end, could not lead to any progress in learning, since if there were no authority who could be quoted to support a point it would not be accepted, and since so much of what the moderns were doing had no precedent in the writings of the ancients, it would fail of acceptance for reasons not connected with its validity. In "The Plan of the Work" to The Great Instauration, Bacon pointed the way to a new method of procedure, one based on

⁸³ George Farquhar, A Discourse upon Comedy, in Reference to the English Stage in Willard H. Durham, op. cit., pp. 263-64. Cf. Charles Gildon, An Essay at a Vindication of the Love-Verses of Cowley and Waller, &c., ibid., p. 4.

hesitating acceptance, suspended judgment, and the desire not to dispute with words but to convince by fact. "Nor need any one be alarmed at such suspension of judgment," he writes, "in one who maintains not simply that nothing can be known, but only that nothing can be known except in a certain course and way; and yet establishes provisionally certain degrees of assurance, for use and relief until the mind shall arrive at a knowledge of causes in which it can rest."⁸⁴ Taking this point of view as their standard, the moderns declared that authority not based on experimental verification had no weight in establishing truth. This is the position taken by Sir Thomas Browne:

But the mortallest enemy unto Knowledge, and that which hath done the greatest execution upon truth, hath been a peremptory adhesion unto Antiquity, and more especially, the establishing of our belief upon the dictates of Antiquity. For (as every capacity may observe) most men of Ages present, so superstitiously do look on Ages past, that the Authorities of the one exceed the reasons of the other: Whose persons indeed being far removed from our times, their works, which seldom with us pass uncontroled, either by contemporaries, or immediate successors, are now become out of the distance of Envy: and the farther removed from present times, are conceived to approach the nearer unto truth it self. Now hereby methinks we manifestly delude our selves, and widely walk out of the track of Truth.

For first, Men hereby impose a Thralldom on their Times, which the ingenuity of no Age should endure, or indeed, the presumption of any age did ever yet enjoyn....

Secondly, Men that adore times past, consider not that those times were once present; that is, as our

⁸⁴ Francis Bacon, "The Plan of the Work" to The Great Instauration in Spedding, Ellis, and Heath, op. cit., VIII, 52.

own are at this instant, and we our selves unto those to come, as they unto us at present; as we relye on them, even so will those on us, and magnifie us hereafter, who at present condemn our selves....

Thirdly, The Testimonies of Antiquity and such as pass oraculously amongst us, were not, if we consider them, always so exact, as to examine the doctrine they delivered....

Fourthly, While we so eagerly adhere unto Antiquity, and the accounts of elder times, we are to consider the fabulous condition thereof....

Fifthly, We applaud many things delivered by the Ancients, which are in themselves but ordinary, and come short of our own conceptions....

Sixthly, We urge Authorities in points that need not, and introduce the testimony of ancient Writers, to confirm things evidently believed, and whereto no reasonable hearer but would assent without them;....

Lastly, While we so devoutly adhere unto Antiquity in some things, we do not consider we have deserted them in several others. For they indeed have not onely been imperfect, in the conceit of some things, but either ignorant or erroneus in many more. They understood not the motion of the eighth sphear from West to East, and so conceived the longitude of the Stars invariable. They conceived the torrid Zone uninhabitable, and so made frustrate the goodliest part of the Earth. But we now know 'tis very well empeopled, and the habitation thereof esteemed so happy, that some have made it the proper seat of Paradise; and been so far from judging it uninhabitable, that they have made it the first habitation of all. Many of the Ancients denied the Antipodes, and some unto the penalty of contrary affirmations; but the experience of our enlarged navigations, can now assert them beyond all dubitation. Having thus totally relinquisht them in some things, it may not be presumptuous, to examine them in others; but surely most unreasonable to adhere to them in all, as though they were infallible, or could not err in any.⁸⁵

Sir Thomas continues his attack in the next chapter with a refutation of the use of authority in science. And Francis Osborne asserts in reference to the use of authorities that

⁸⁵ Sir Thomas Browne, Pseudodoxia Epidemica in The Works, ed. Geoffrey Keynes (London, 1928), II, 42-50.

"...Nor is there hope of any further or more happy Progress till these rotten Carcasses be removed out of the way."⁸⁶ Finally, the use of scientific scepticism in the determination of truth did much to undermine the prestige of authority. Glanvill points out that our best natural knowledge is imperfect and that when we conclude a thing is impossible we do so on the basis of our narrow principles and little schemes of opinion.⁸⁷

From attacking the idea of authority, it is but a natural and easy step to attack the ancients themselves, and this the writers on the side of the moderns did unceasingly throughout the seventeenth century. Even Ben Jonson urged moderation in accepting the authority of the ancients. "For to all the observations of the Ancients," he wrote in Timber, "we have our owne experience: which, if we will use and apply, we will have better meanes to pronounce. It is true they open'd the gates, and made the way that went before us; but as Guides, not Commanders: Non Domini nostri, sed Duces fuere. Truth lyes open to all; it is

86 Francis Osborne, "Conjectural Queries, or, Problematical Paradoxes concerning Reason, Speech, Learning, Experiments, and Other Philosophical Matters," The Works (London, 1673), pp. 582-83.

87 Joseph Glanvill, "Essay I. Against Confidence in Philosophy, and Matters of Speculation," Essays on Several Important Subjects in Philosophy and Religion (London, 1676), p. 15.

no mans severall."88 As might be expected, Bacon set the pace for the attack on the ancients. In The New Organon, he points out that even in those ages when the ancients flourished most in learning, little attention was paid to science, and therefore, to useful learning; moreover, "...men have been kept back as by a kind of enchantment from progress in the sciences by reverence for antiquity."89 He then goes on to say that properly the present age of the world is the truly antique age since it is the oldest and therefore more stocked with experiments and observations, a paradox repeated faithfully by his followers. In the introduction to his Anatomical Exercises on the Generation of Animals, Harvey took occasion to criticize subservience to the ancients:

But when we acquiesce in the discoveries of the ancients, and believe (which we are apt to do through indolence) that nothing farther remains to be known, we suffer the edge of our ingenuity to be taken off, and the lamp which they delivered to us to be extinguished. No one of a surety will allow that all truth was engrossed by the ancients, unless he be utterly ignorant (to pass by other arts for the present) of the many remarkable discoveries that have been lately made in anatomy...90

88 Ben Jonson, Discoveries 1641 Conversations with William Drummond of Hawthornden, ed. G. B. Harrison (London, 1923), pp. 9-10.

89 Francis Bacon, The New Organon, in Spedding, Ellis, and Heath, op. cit., VIII, 116.

90 William Harvey, Anatomical Exercises on the Generation of Animals in The Works, ed. Robert Willis (London, 1847),

Probably the most vigorous onslaught on the ancients was made by Glanvill, who never allowed an opportunity to pass without demonstrating the ill results of reliance on antiquity. In The Vanity of Dogmatizing, he writes:

Another thing, that engageth our affections to unwarrantable conclusions, and is therefore fatal to Science; is our doting on Antiquity, and the opinions of ours of Fathers. We look with a superstitious reverence upon the accounts of praeter lapsed ages: and with a supercilious severity, on the more deserving products of our own....the most slight and chaffy opinion, if at a great remove from the present age, contracts such an esteem and veneration, that it outweighs what is infinitely more ponderous and rational, of a modern date.... And thus, while every age is but another shew of the former; 'tis no wonder, that Science hath not out-grown the dwarfishness of its pristine stature, and that the Intellectual world is such a Microcosm....

Now if we enquire the reason, why the Mathematicks, and Mechanick Arts, have so much got the start in growth of other Sciences: We shall find it probably resolv'd into this, as one considerable cause: that their progress hath not been retarded by that reverential awe of former discoveries, which hath been so great an hinderance to Theoretical improvements....

Upon a true account, the present age is the Worlds Grandaevity; and if we must to Antiquity, let multitude of days speak. Now for us to supersede further disquisition, upon the infant acquirements of those Juvenile endeavours, is foolishly to neglect the nobler advantages we are owners of, and in a sense to disappoint the expectations of him that gave them.⁹¹

Another powerful attack on the authority of the ancients was made by the Earl of Clarendon in the essay "Of the Reverence due to Antiquity." He makes a particular point of

pp. 152-53. Cf. Henry Vaughan, Hermetical Physick in The Works, ed. Leonard C. Martin (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1914), II, 548.

⁹¹ Joseph Glanvill, The Vanity of Dogmatizing, op. cit., pp. 136-41. Cf. Scepsis Scientifica, ed. John Owen (London, 1885), pp. 163-64, and "Essay I. Against Confidence in Philosophy, and Matters of Speculation," op. cit., pp. 25-26.

the allegation that the moderns are superior to the ancients in matters of religion and argues that the moderns owe it to god to surpass the ancients since he has allowed their discoveries to become known to the moderns and therefore expects them to go beyond. In the "Defence of the Epilogue; or, an Essay on the Dramatic Poetry of the Last Age," Dryden boldly states that "...we live in an age so sceptical, that as it determines little, so it takes nothing from antiquity on trust," and in An Essay of Dramatic Poesy he goes on to say that so far as the ancients are concerned:

We own all the helps we have from them, and want neither veneration nor gratitude, while we acknowledge, that to overcome them we must make use of the advantages we have received of them: but to these assistances we have joined our own industry; for, had we sat down with a dull imitation of them, we might then have lost somewhat of the old perfection; but never acquired any that was new. We draw not therefore after their lives, but those of nature; and having the life before us, besides the experience of all they knew, it is no wonder if we hit some airs and features which they have missed.⁹²

With this proud declaration the superiority of the moderns over the ancients seemed assured.

As part of the attack on the ancients was the criticism made of the authority of Aristotle. "Whatever the schoolmen may talk," writes John Wilkins, "yet Aristotle's works are

⁹² John Dryden, "Defence of the Epilogue; or, an Essay on the Dramatic Poetry of the Last Age," in Scott and Saintsbury, op. cit., IV, 226; An Essay of Dramatic Poesy, ibid., XV, 302. Cf. Robert Hooke, A General Scheme, or Idea of the Present State of Natural Philosophy, and How Its Defects May be Remedied in The Posthumous Works, ed. Richard Waller (London, 1705), p. 4.

not necessarily true, and he himself hath by sufficient arguments proved himself to be liable unto error," and his opinion was seconded by many of his contemporaries.⁹³ Harvey insists that Aristotle did not say the last word on all subjects while Glanvill states absolutely that the Aristotelian philosophy is inept for new discoveries and consequently of no use; he offers six reasons why he believes this: "(1.) That 'tis meerly Verbal, and (2.) Litigious. That (3.) It gives no account of the Phaenomena. Nor (4.) dothe it make any discoveries for the use of common Life. That (5.) 'tis inconsistent with Divinity, and (6.) with it self."⁹⁴ Note that by this time the Aristotelian philosophy had become inconsistent with Christian religion; certainly this is a measure of a shift in attitude from the Middle Ages.

The rôle played by the inventions and discoveries of the moderns is of considerable significance in the ancient-modern controversy for the inventions served as concrete evidence of the superiority of the moderns. Bacon singled out for special praise printing, gunpowder, and the compass:

Again, it is well to observe the force and virtue

⁹³ John Wilkins, A Discourse concerning a New Planet in The Mathematical and Philosophical Works (London, 1802), I, 138.

⁹⁴ Joseph Glanvill, Scepsis Scientifica, op. cit., p. 137. Cf. Samuel Parker, A Free and Impartial Censvre of the Platonick Philosophie (Oxford, 1666), pp. 45-46.

and consequences of discoveries; and these are to be seen nowhere more conspicuously than in those three which were unknown to the ancients, and of which the origin, though recent, is obscure and inglorious; namely, printing, gunpowder, and the magnet. For these three have changed the whole face and state of things throughout the world; the first in literature, the second in warfare, the third in navigation; whence have followed innumerable changes; insomuch that no empire, no sect, no star seems to have exerted greater power and influence in human affairs than these mechanical discoveries.⁹⁵

Sir Thomas Browne echoes Bacon's sentiments in his Religio Medici. But these inventions had already been noticed in the Renaissance; the seventeenth century was able to enlarge the list very considerably. Samuel Parker mentions telescopes, the discoveries of new stars, planets, and comets, the work of Galileo and Tycho, the magnetical observations of Gilbert, optical discoveries, the microscope, the air pump, new discoveries in geography, and the anatomical experiments of Harvey. Glanvill's "Essay III. Modern Improvements of Useful Knowledge" is designed to show "...the Incouragements we have to proceed, from the Helps and Advantages we enjoy, beyond those of remote Antiquity" and this he does by citing the accomplishments of the moderns in all the fields of natural science; in conclusion, he states that the moderns have a larger world than Aristotle possessed for they have new lands, new discoveries, new heavens, new commerce, and new instruments. Sir Matthew

⁹⁵ Francis Bacon, The New Organon, in Spedding, Ellis, and Heath, op. cit., VIII, 162.

Hale makes a similar list in his Primitive Origination of Mankind to show that there has been a gradual progress since the creation of man, as do Edwards and Derham for the same reason. William Wotton's Reflections upon Ancient and Modern Learning is intended as a refutation of Temple's Essay and this is how he states his aim and method:

It will however be some Satisfaction to those who are concerned for the Glory of the Age in which they live, if, in the first place, it can be proved, That as there are some parts of real useful Knowledge, wherein not only great Strictness of Reasoning, but Force and Extent of Thought is required thoroughly to comprehend what is already invented, much more to make any considerable Improvements, so that there can be no Dispute of the Strength of such Men's Understandings, who are able to make such Improvements; so in those very Things, such, and so great Discoveries have been made, as will oblige impartial Judges to acknowledge, that there is no probability that the World decays in Vigour and Strength, if (according to Sir William Temple's Hypothesis) we take our Estimate from the Measure of those Men's Parts, who have made these Advancements in these later Years; especially, if it should be found that the Ancients took a great deal of pains upon these very Subjects, and had able Masters to instruct them at their first setting out: And Secondly, if it should be proved, that there are other curious and useful Parts of Knowledge, wherein the Ancients had equal Opportunities of advancing and pursuing their Enquiries, with as much Facility as the Moderns, which were either slightly passed over, or wholly neglected, if we set the Labours of some few Men aside: And Lastly, if it should be proved, that by some great and happy Inventions, wholly unknown to former Ages, new and spacious Fields of Knowledge have been discovered, and, pursuant to those Discoveries, have been viewed, and searched into, with all the Care and Exactness which such noble Theories required.⁹⁶

⁹⁶ William Wotton, Reflections upon Ancient and Modern Learning (London, 1694), pp. 9-10. Cf. Sir Thomas Browne, Religio Medici in The Works, op. cit., I, 33; Samuel Parker, op. cit., II, 513; Joseph Glanvill, "Essay III. Modern Im-

Wotton proceeds to divide the arts and sciences into three categories: in those things in which the ancients are supposed to have excelled, for example, moral and political knowledge, the moderns are equally as proficient as the ancients; in the second are the arts of eloquence, poetry, grammar, architecture, sculpture, and painting in which the moderns are on an equal footing with the ancients; and in the last, the moderns have an unquestioned superiority over the ancients in learning, mathematics, logic, metaphysics, instruments, anatomy, chemistry, natural history, astronomy, optics, music, medicine, natural philosophy, philosophy, and theology. What Wotton has done of course is to take Temple's list of modern deficiencies and by examples turn the tables on his opponent. The translator of Pancirollus makes a list of twenty-seven modern inventions which incontrovertibly demonstrate the superiority of the moderns and concludes his observations with a statement of the significance of the modern inventions which neatly sums up the attitude of his contemporaries towards them:

Handicraft Employments, notwithstanding they have been most of them used many Ages, yet have received

provements of Useful Knowledge," Essays on Several Important Subjects in Philosophy and Religion, op. cit., pp. 1-56; Sir Matthew Hale, The Primitive Origination of Mankind, Considered and Examined according to the Light of Nature (London, 1677), p. 152; John Edwards, op. cit., II, 621-34; William Derham, op. cit., I, 388-93.

most of them many Improvements from the Experiments of these learned Inquiries. It was the Fault of the Ancients, that they made all their Natural Philosophy utterly useless in respect of the good of Mankind, reserving it for the Retirements of their wise Men, without any Help or Benefit designed for the Vulgar, either in City or Country. But our Modern experimental Philosophers are now resolved to bring Learning down again into Mens sight and Practise, and put it into a condition of standing out against the Invasions of Time and Barbarism, by establishing it upon such a Foundation, as that Men must lose their Lives and Hands, before they can be made to forget, or willing to part with such Pleasures and Conveniences of Life.⁹⁷

Thus, the ultimate justification of science is its essential democracy, its use in providing the basis for a fuller life for all men.⁹⁸

97 "An Appendix of Things Newly Found Out," op. cit., II, 439.

98 This last statement is a very condensed resumé of an extremely complex seventeenth century sociological phenomenon which has its nub in the relationship between protestantism, capitalism, and science. The bibliography is extensive; some of the most stimulating accounts are: G.N. Clark, Science and Social Welfare in the Age of Newton, Oxford, 1937, well reviewed by Joseph Needham, Eco. Hist. Rev., VIII (1937-38), 198-99; Kemper Fullerton, "Calvinism and Capitalism," Harvard Theological Review, XXI (1928), 163-95; B. Hessen, "The Social and Economic Roots of Newton's Principia," Science at the Crossroads (London, 1931), pp. 147-212; Christopher Hill, "Soviet Interpretations of the English Interregnum," Eco. Hist. Rev., VIII (1938), 159-67; Margaret James, Social Problems and Social Policy during the Puritan Revolution, London, 1930; Richard F. Jones, Ancients and Moderns a Study of the Background of the "Battle of the Books", Washington University Studies in Language and Literature, n.s., #6, 1936; Harold Laski, The Rise of European Liberalism, London, 1936; Robert K. Merton, "Science, Technology and Society in Seventeenth Century England," Osiris, IV (1938), 360-632; Hector M. Robertson, Aspects of the Rise of Economic Individualism, Cambridge, 1933; Dorothy Stimson, "Puritanism and the New Philosophy in Seventeenth Century England," Bull. Inst.

Bacon's reputation as an innovator began immediately after his death and gradually there was built around him the idea that it was he who was most responsible for the rise of modern science. Writing "On the Death of the Most Honoured Gentleman, Sir Francis, Viscount St. Albans, Baron Verulam, Incomparable Man," H. T., a fellow of Trinity College, says that "...Verulam restores our old arts, and himself founds new."⁹⁹ Gilbert Wats considers Bacon to have been the most learned man since the decay of the Greek and Roman empires and the first to join "...Rationall & Experimental Philosophy in a regular correspondence; which before was either a subtlety of words, or a confusion of matter."¹⁰⁰ Probably the high point in seventeenth century

Hist. Med., III (1935), 321-34; R. H. Tawney, Religion and the Rise of Capitalism, New York, 1926; Ernst Troeltsch, The Social Teaching of the Christian Churches, tr. Olive Wyon, 2 vols., London, 1931; P. C. Gordon Walker, "Capitalism and the Reformation," Eco. Hist. Rev., VIII (1937-38), 1-19; Max Weber, The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism, tr. Talcott Parsons, London, 1930; Alfred N. Whitehead, Science and the Modern World, New York, 1927. It is a curious fact that while modern scholarship on this subject ultimately derives from Marx and Engels very little attention is paid them. Weber's work is a deliberate inversion of a fundamental Marxian idea and the result is a little like the city of the scientists in Swift.

⁹⁹ E. K. Rand, A Translation of Thirty-Two Latin Poems in Honor of Francis Bacon Published by Rawley in 1626 (Boston, 1904), p. 43.

¹⁰⁰ Gilbert Wats, Of the Advancement and Proficiencie of Learning (Oxford, 1640), p. 32v.

appreciation of Bacon is Cowley's ode "To the Royal Society."
The ode begins with a description of the low state philo-
sophy was in until Bacon came:

3.

Authority, which did a Body boast,
Though 'twas but Air condens'd, and stalk'd about,
Like some old Giant's more Gigantic Ghost,
To terrifie the learned Rout
With the plain Magique of true Reason's Light,
He chac'd out of our sight;
Nor suffer'd living Men to be misled
By the vain shadows of the Dead:
To Graves, from whence it rose, the conquer'd Phantome
fled.

He broke the monstrous God which stood
In midst of th' Orchard, and the whole did claim,
Which with a useless Sith of Wood,
And something else not worth a name,
(Both vast for shew, yet neither fit.
Or to Defend, or to Beget;
Ridiculous and senceless Terrors!) made
Children and Superstitious Men afraid.
The Orchard's open now, and free;
Bacon has broke that Scar-crow Deitie;...

4.

From words, which are but Pictures of the Thought,
(Though we our Thoughts from them perversely drew)
To Things, the Mind's right Object, he it brought;
Like foolish Birds to painted Grapes we flew;
He sought and gather'd for our use the Tru;
And when on heaps the chosen Bunches lay,
He prest them wisely the Mechanic way,
'Till all their juyce did in one Vessel joyn,
Ferment into Nourishment Divine,
The thirsty Soul's refreshing Wines....

5.

From these and all long Errors of the Way,
In which our wandring Predecessors went,
And like th' old Hebrews many Years did stray,
In Desarts but of small extent,
Bacon, like Moses, led us forth at last;
The barren Wilderness he past,
Did on the very Border stand
Of the blest promis'd Land,

And from the Mountains Top of his Exalted Wit,
Saw it himself, and shew'd us it.¹⁰¹

Bolingbroke speaks very highly of Bacon in the first and second letters to Pope as does Thomson in the section "Summer" in The Seasons:

The great deliverer he, who, from the gloom
Of cloistered monks and jargon-teaching schools,
Led forth the true philosophy, there long
Held in the magic chain of words and forms
And definitions void: he led her forth,
Daughter of Heaven! that, slow-ascending still,
Investigating sure the chain of things,
With radiant finger points to Heaven again.¹⁰²

These, then, are the steps by which the moderns arrived at their sense of belonging to an age separate from all previous eras and one which possessed distinctive features, characteristics which enabled them to dare to place

¹⁰¹ Abraham Cowley, "To the Royal Society," The Complete Works in Verse and Prose, ed. Alexander B. Grosart (Edinburgh University Press, 1881), I, 167-68.

¹⁰² James Thomson, "Summer," The Seasons, in The Complete Poetical Works, ed. J. Logie Robertson (Oxford University Press, 1908), p. 110. Cf. Isaac Hawkins Browne, "On the Immortality of the Soul," tr. Soame Jenyns, Poems upon Various Subjects (London, 1768), p. 56. This does not mean that Bacon was accepted by all seventeenth century writers; for example, Alexander Ross criticizes Bacon severely in Arcana Microcosmi:...With a Refutation of...the Lord Bacon's Natural History (London, 1652), pp. 263-64. Bacon also shared honors with Hobbes, Newton, and Des Cartes as the reviver of true philosophy. For Hobbes, cf. Abraham Cowley, "To Mr. Hobbes," Select Works, ed. Richard Hurd (Dublin, 1772), I, 141-43; for Newton, John Arbuthnot, An Essay on the Usefulness of Mathematical Learning (Oxford, 1721), p. 9 and James Thomson, "To the Memory of Sir Isaac Newton," The Complete Poetical Works, loc. cit., p. 437; for Des Cartes, Joseph Addison, "An Oration in Defense of the New Philosophy," in Literature and Science, ed. Grant McColley (Chicago, 1940), pp. 193-94.

their age side by side with all others and to feel secure of its superiority. "And surely," writes Bacon in the Conclusion to The Proficiencie and Advancement of Learning:

when I set before me the conditions of these times, in which learning hath made her third visitation or circuit, in all the qualities thereof; as the excellency and vivacity of the wits of this age; the noble helps and lights which we have by the travails of ancient writers; the art of printing, which communiceth books to men of all fortunes; the openness of the world by navigation, which hath disclosed multitudes of experiments, and a mass of natural history; the leisure wherewith these times abound, not employing men so generally in civil business, as the states of Graecia did in respect of their popularity, and the state of Rome in respect of the greatness of their monarchy; the present disposition of these times at this instant to peace; the consumption of all that ever can be said in controversies of religion, which have so much diverted men from other sciences; the perfection of your Majesty's learning, which as a phoenix may call whole vollies of wits to follow you; and the inseparable propriety of time, which is ever more and more to disclose truth; I cannot but be raised to this persuasion, that this third period of time will far surpass that of the Graecian and Roman learning: only if men will know their own strength and their own weakness both; and take one from the other light of invention, and not the fire of contradiction; and esteem of the inquisition of truth as of an enterprise, and not as of a quality or ornament; and employ will and magnificence to things of worth and excellency, and not to things vulgar and of popular estimation.¹⁰³

Bacon's injunctions were heeded; even during the civil wars, he was not forgotten, and, with the coming of peace to England, the cultivation of science flourished as never before.

The final, and perhaps most important idea which played

¹⁰³ Francis Bacon, Of the Proficiencie and Advancement of Learning, in Spedding, Ellis, and Heath, op. cit., VI, 391-92.

a prominent part in the ancient-modern controversy, was the idea of progress which received during the seventeenth century the stamp of science which it never lost. Up to the rise of science in the Renaissance and seventeenth century, there had indeed been an idea of progress but its roots were in a stream of thought far different from science; these roots were primarily religious and stemmed from the eschatological elements in Christianity; this idea of progress was essentially other-worldly and looked for perfection not here and now but far in the future and in another world. But with the advance of science, the idea of progress came to mean the opportunity for all men to live fully here in this world-if not right now, then at least in the immediate future,-and the daily discoveries of science were the earnest of that promise. Thus, John Wilkins writes in his Discovery of a New World:

It was a great great while ere the planets were distinguished from the fixed stars; and some time after that, ere the morning and evening star were found to be the same; and in greater space (I doubt not) but this also, and other as excellent mysteries will be discovered. Time, who hath always been the father of new truths, and hath revealed unto us many things which our ancestors were ignorant of, will also manifest to our posterity that which we now desire, but cannot know.... Time will come, when the endeavours of after-ages shall bring such things to light, as now lie hid in obscurity. Arts are not yet come to their solstice; but the industry of future times, assisted with the labours of their forefathers, may reach that height which we could not attain to.... As we now wonder at the blindness of our ancestors, who were not able to discern such things as seem plain and obvious; so will our posterity admire our

ignorance in as perspicuous matters. 104

The excellent mystery Wilkins referred to was the ability of men to fly; how accurate his prediction was we have learned only too well. The moderns were now triumphant; the modern world was established. 105

104 John Wilkins, The Discovery of a New World in The Mathematical and Philosophical Works, op. cit., I, 109-10.

105 It should be noted that even in the seventeenth century there was a religious bias to the idea of progress. In order to destroy the notion of the eternity of the world and with it the deistic belief in the primitiveness of religion, it was necessary to prove that the world had grown from rude beginnings to a better state. Thus for the Mosaical account was substituted a kind of foreshadowing of evolution both in geology and natural history so that the end result, the world as it now is, was the outcome of a process which gradually made it adaptable to man's uses. The arts and sciences, and also religion, exhibited the same growth from immaturity to their present high peak. Professor Crane has worked out this movement in "Anglican Apologetics and the Idea of Progress, 1699-1745," MP, XXXI (1934), 273-306, 349-82. Professor Crane has discussed the work of Edwards, Sherlock, Berriman, Worthington, and Law, but he tends to over-emphasize the religious elements in the development of the idea of progress. It should also be pointed out that since I have discussed the idea of science only in so far as it impinges on the idea of the Renaissance, many significant aspects of the rise of science at this time have been necessarily omitted. For these aspects, of which the idea of the Renaissance has been an hitherto unrecognized one, and which in turn throw light on it, see, in addition to the works of Professors R. E. Jones, L. K. Merton, and A. N. Whitehead, Paul R. Anderson, Science in Defense of Liberal Religion, New York, 1933; Louis I. Bredvold, The Intellectual Milieu of John Dryden, The University of Michigan Press; Edwin A. Burt, The Metaphysical Foundations of Modern Physical Science, New York, 1937; Charles M. Coffin, John Donne and the New Philosophy, Columbia University Press, 1937; J. F. Fulton, "Robert Boyle and his Influence on Thought in the Seventeenth Century," Isis, XVIII (1932); Edwin Greenlaw, "The New Science and English Literature in the Seventeenth Century," Johns Hopkins Alumni Magazine, XIII (1925), 331-59; Foster

E. Guyer, "C'est Nous Qui Sommes Les Anciens," MLN, XXXVI (1921), 257-64; Charles T. Harrison, "Bacon, Hobbes, Boyle, and the Ancient Atomists," Harvard Studies and Notes in Philology and Literature, XV (1933), 191-218; Charles T. Harrison, "The Ancient Atomists and English Literature of the Seventeenth Century," Harvard Studies in Classical Philology, XLV (1934), 1-79; Arthur O. Lovejoy, The Great Chain of Being, Harvard University Press, 1936; Arthur O. Lovejoy, "The Parallel of Deism and Classicism," MP, XXIX (1932), 281-99; Clara Marburg, Sir William Temple a Seventeenth Century "Libertin", Yale University Press, 1932; Katharine Maynard, "Science in Early English Literature (1550-1650)," Isis, XVII (1932), 94-126; Grant McColley, "The Ross-Wilkins Controversy," Annals of Science, III (1938), 153-89; Grant McColley, "The Seventeenth Century Doctrine of a Plurality of Worlds," Annals of Science, I (1936), 385-430; Marjorie Nicolson, "The Microscope and English Imagination," Smith College Studies in Modern Languages, XVI (1934), 1-92; Marjorie Nicolson, "The 'New Astronomy' and English Literary Imagination," SP, XXXII (1935), 428-62; Marjorie Nicolson, "A World in the Moon," Smith College Studies in Modern Languages, XVII (1935), 1-72; Marjorie Nicolson, "The Telescope and Imagination," MP, XXXII (1935), 233-60; Martha Ornstein, The Role of Scientific Societies in the Seventeenth Century, University of Chicago Press, 1938; Walter Pagel, "Religious Motives in the Medical Biology of the 17th Century," Bull. Inst. Hist. Med., III (1935), 97-128, 213-31, 265-312; Moody E. Prior, "Joseph Glanvill, Witchcraft, and Seventeenth Century Science," MP, XXX (1932), 167-93; Preserved Smith, A History of Modern Culture the Great Renewal 1543-1687, New York, 1930; Dorothy Stimson, "Amateurs of Science in 17th Century England," Isis, XXI (1939), 32-47; Dorothy Stimson, "Dr. Wilkins and the Royal Society," Jour. Mod. Hist., III (1931), 539-63; Dorothy Stimson, The Gradual Acceptance of the Copernican Theory of the Universe, New York, 1917; Edward W. Strong, Procedures and Metaphysics: a Study in the Philosophy of Mathematical-Physical Science in the 16th and 17th Centuries, Berkeley, 1936; Basil Willey, The Seventeenth Century Background, London, 1934; Basil Willey, The Eighteenth Century Background, London, 1940; Philip P. Wiener, "The Tradition behind Galileo's Methodology," Osiris, I (1936), 733-46; A. Wolf, A History of Science, Technology, and Philosophy in the 16th and 17th Centuries, New York, 1935.

VII. Conclusion

It is evident that the writers of the seventeenth century and first half of the eighteenth century in England were not (too) seriously interested in the literary, artistic, and scholarly aspects of the Renaissance. Their main concern with the Renaissance was that it was an integral part of the rise of science; it marked for them the beginning of the modern era. They were close enough to the Renaissance to feel themselves part of it yet far enough removed to realize that so far as science was concerned, and to them science was their main business, the Renaissance was but the beginning of a movement which now seemed to be very near the pinnacle. Thus, their attention was completely on the present, and the past was interesting only in so far as it pertained to the immediate needs of the present.

Furthermore, the idea of progress resulted in a turning away from the past. Men were indeed anxious about the future before this time but never in this way. Now the emphasis was on achieving a kind of society which would be able to bring within reach of all men without regard to distinction as many of the good things of life as human ingenuity could devise. What stirred the moderns so strongly was the fact that for the first time in human history an economy of abundance was seen to be possible. Hitherto, happiness was thought to be possible only in another world;

now it was possible here on this earth. The shift in thinking from an economy of scarcity to an economy of abundance accounts in great part for the seventeenth century enthusiasm for science. So far as the Renaissance itself is concerned, however, a preoccupation with the future was not helpful to further a study of the past, especially since the past was associated with a kind of society which the moderns now saw would have to be completely changed to bring it in line with the implications of science.

Nor should the effect of the civil wars be overlooked as a reason why not more attention was given to the Renaissance at this time. Again, the needs of the present overwhelmingly overweighed the urge to study the past; except for polemical history, that is, history in which the main object is to discover in the past some precedent or parallel which will justify some action in the present, history writing was not extensively cultivated. And when the wars were over, the problems of reconstruction engaged men's attention; again, the present asserted its claims over the past. This is to be noted in literature and philosophy as well as politics. In criticism, for example, emphasis was on the judicial, the setting up of proper standards of judgment, and not on an historical survey of the past. And in philosophy, the emphasis was placed on epistemology rather than on that kind of historical philosophy so characteristic of the nineteenth century. In

short, the period under consideration in this chapter was marked by an extremely strong sense of the present; other conditions were necessary to provide a basis upon which proper historical study would be possible.

This does not mean, however, that the contribution of the writers from 1605 to 1742 was small. On the contrary, they linked the idea of the Renaissance indissolubly to some of the most significant currents which go to make up the stream of modern thought. Though it is true that the writers of the Renaissance were aware that the Renaissance was as much a looking forward as a rebirth, it was the writers of the next hundred years who established the connection and made it secure. Henceforth, and for a long time to come, the Renaissance was the demarcation point between the old and new; the ages before the Renaissance were not part of the modern era because they had no science, the ages after were the modern era because in them science flourished, and it was the Renaissance which first saw its beginnings.

CHAPTER III

THE IDEA OF THE RENAISSANCE IN ENGLAND FROM
HODY TO WILLIAM ROSCOE'S
THE LIFE OF LORENZO DE' MEDICI, CALLED THE
MAGNIFICENT, (1795)

I. Introduction

By the middle of the eighteenth century, England had settled down after the tumults of the civil wars and the wrenchings of the readjustments after the Restoration and 1689. With peace and commercial success there came the leisure for the cultivation of the arts, and the study of the past became to be looked upon as fit occupation for gentleman and scholar alike. Indeed, from this period may be dated the rise of the professional scholar; learning could no longer be looked on as a polite embellishment but required the full attention of the individual engaged in its pursuit. At a time when the concept of specialization and differentiation of labor was first gaining ground, there developed a new type of labor, namely, that of scholarship, with its own standards, mores, and rewards. As a consequence, the growth of historical studies is immeasurably accelerated and with this increase in interest in the past generally comes an increased awareness of the significance of the Renaissance. Indeed, the subject of the Renaissance Gibbon thought worthy of his consideration.

As a young man casting about for a subject which should secure him a place in the world of letters, he wrote in his Journal:

I have another in view, which is the direct contrast of the former. The one is a poor, virtuous state which emerges into glory and liberty, the other, a republic rich and corrupt, which, by degrees, loses its independency and sinks into the arms of a master. Both lessons equally usefull. I mean, The History of the Republic of Florence, under the house of Medicis. I would after a proper introduction enter on the history of Florence about the year 1420 when John de Medicis began to make a figure in the Republic and conduct it to 1569 when Cosmo de Medicis sole master of his country and of all Tuscany confirmed his power by receiving from Pope Pius V the title of Grand Duke. This period is a chain of revolutions worthy the pen of Vertot. The Medicis four times expelled, and as often recalled; singular events singular characters, the Republic often asserting its ancient liberty and at last yielding only to the arms of Charles V. and the refined policy of Cosmo. What makes this subject still more precious are two fine morceaux for a Philosophical historian, and which are essential parts of it, the Restoration of Learning in Europe by Lorenzo de Medicis and the character and fate of Savanarola. The Medicis (stirps quasi fataliter nata ad instauranda vel fovenda studia, Lips. Epist. ad German: et Gall:; Ep. vii) employed letters to strengthen their power and their enemies opposed them with religion. The design I believe I shall fix upon; but when, or how shall I execute it? This is a thing I can say little at present. It is besides coming too near
Res altâ terrâ, et caligine mersas.¹

Unfortunately for our purposes, Gibbon did not execute the design, but turned his attention to another subject; one wonders what his reputation would have been had he kept to his original resolution and written on a less controversial

¹ Edward Gibbon, Journals to January 28th, 1763, ed. D. M. Low (New York, 1929), pp. 104-05. Entry dated July 26, 1762.

subject than The Decline and Fall. However, his contemporaries did write on the Renaissance and what they said constitutes an important chapter in the history of the idea of the Renaissance which I am considering.

The significant contribution of the writers between 1742 and 1795 in England is that they brought the historical method to maturity. The transition from history writing which is but a short step removed from chronicle to a more philosophical and comprehensive view of the subject matter of history is illustrated by Lyttleton in his dialogue between Boileau and Pope:

Pope.

Voltaire has shewn us, that the events of battles and sieges are not the most interesting parts of good history, but that all the improvements and embellishments of human society ought to be carefully and particularly recorded there.

Boileau.

The progress of arts and knowledge, and the great changes that have happened in the manners of mankind, are objects far more worthy of a reader's attention than the revolutions of fortune. And it is chiefly to Voltaire that we owe this instructive species of history...

Pope.

Are you not pleased with that philosophical freedom of thought, which discovers itself in all the works of Voltaire, but more particularly in those of an historical nature?

Boileau.

If it were properly regulated, I should reckon it among their highest perfections. Superstition, and bigotry, and party spirit, are as great enemies

to the truth and candour of history, as malice or adulation. To think freely, is therefore a most necessary quality in a perfect historian.... To speak without a metaphor, the study of history, both sacred and profane, requires a critical and laborious investigation. The composer of a set of lively and witty remarks on facts ill examined, or incorrectly delivered, is not an historian.²

The movement toward history as the record of civilization and not of isolated aspects of a particular era is exemplified by Gilbert Stuart:

It is usual to treat law, manners, and government, as if they had no connection with history, or with each other. Law and manners are commonly understood to be nothing more than collections of ordinances and matters of fact; and government is too often a foundation for mere speculation and metaphysical refinements. Yet law is only a science, when observed in its spirit and history; government cannot be comprehended but by attending to the minute steps of its rise and progression; and the systems of manners, which characterise man in all the periods of society which pass from rudeness to civility, cannot be displayed without the discrimination of these different situations. It is in the records of history, in the scenes of real life, not in the conceits and the abstractions of fancy and philosophy, that human nature is to be studied.

But, while it is in the historical manner that laws, customs, and government, are to be inquired into, it is obvious, that their dependence and connection are close and intimate. They all tend to the same point, and to the illustration of one another. It is from the consideration of them all, and in their union, that we are to explain the complicated forms of civil society, and the wisdom and accident which mingle in human affairs.³

The application of this method of historical research to the Renaissance resulted in a renewed appreciation of the

² Lord George Lyttleton, "Dialogue XIV. Boileau.-Pope," Dialogues of the Dead (Worcester, Mass., 1797), pp. 108-10.

³ Gilbert Stuart, A View of Society in Europe, in its Progress from Rudeness to Refinement; or, Inquiries concerning the History of Law, Government, and Manners (Dublin, 1778), pp. iii-iv

complexity and range of the problem. This was fully realized by Roscoe:

The close of the fifteenth and the beginning of the sixteenth century, comprehend one of those periods of history which are entitled to our minutest study and inquiry. Almost all the great events from which Europe derives its present advantages are to be traced up to those times. The invention of the art of printing, the discovery of the great western continent, the schism from the Church of Rome, which ended in the Reformation of many of its abuses and established the precedent of reform, the degree of perfection attained in the fine arts, and the final introduction of true principles of criticism and taste, compose such an illustrious assemblage of luminous points, as cannot fail of attracting for ages the curiosity and admiration of mankind.

A complete history of these times has long been a great desideratum in literature; and whoever considers the magnitude of the undertaking will not think it likely to be soon supplied. Indeed, from the nature of the transactions which then took place, they can only be exhibited in detail and under separate and particular views. That the author of the following pages has frequently turned his eye towards this interesting period is true, but he has felt himself rather dazzled than informed by the survey. A mind of greater compass and the possession of uninterrupted leisure would be requisite, to comprehend, to select, and to arrange the immense variety of circumstances which a full narrative of those times would involve; when almost every city of Italy was a new Athens, and that favoured country could boast its historians, its poets, its orators, and its artists, who may contend with the great names of antiquity for the palm of mental excellence; when Venice, Milan, Rome, Florence, Bologna, Ferrara, and several other places, vied with each other, not in arms, but in science and in genius, and the splendour of a court was estimated by the number of learned men who illustrated it by their presence; each of whose lives and productions would, in a work of this nature, merit a full and separate discussion.⁴

⁴ William Roscoe, The Life of Lorenzo de' Medici, Called the Magnificent (London, 1825), I, v-vi.

Though there is no such work during this time as Roscoe hoped for, a consideration of the ideas of his contemporaries on the subject of the Renaissance will serve to show what perhaps, had he decided to write on the Renaissance, Gibbon would have done, or what a collective view, made up of the separate studies as suggested by Roscoe, of the subject by the writers in England between 1742 and 1795 would be like.

II. The Revival of the Fine Arts

The second half of the eighteenth century saw a resurgence of interest in the history of the revival of the fine arts. In this connection, the influence of Vasari continues to grow until his work is taken as standard. In a letter to Burke, James Barry describes a tour through the galleries of Florence and remarks:

Vasari has been an excellent guide to me, he is a most candid noble minded fellow, and the warmth and enthusiasm with which he speaks of his countrymen he will never be accountable for, with any intelligent man who sees what they have done; as I now perfectly agree with Vasari in all that he has said of the times from Cimabue to Da Vinci at least. It will be to no purpose my repeating any thing after him, and if you recollect the three proems to his lives, they are invaluable.⁵

This influence is seen very clearly in Barry's own writings

⁵ James Barry, The Works (London, 1809), I, 180.

on the history of art, for in the course of his first lecture on the progress of the arts delivered at the Royal Academy, he stated:

The deplorable calamities of wars, rapine, and every misery, which for so many years deluged Italy during the ambitious contests of rival emperors, elected by the different bands of legions of soldiery; the incursions of the northern barbarians, who destroyed them, and divided the spoils, and the struggles of these, with the succeeding inundations of other northern hordes, equally savage; their long contests in the aggregate masses, and afterwards in the no less mischievous fragments into which they were frittered, left them no leisure, but wholly occupied it in contriving for the necessary security of mere bodily existence. However, though late, this fermentation did at last more or less subside into settled governments; and the embers of the arts of design, and indeed all the other arts and knowledge which had been providentially kept alive by the monks of the Greek and Latin churches, were again kindled into a flame by a people who now felt themselves at ease, and in a condition to cultivate intellectual enjoyments.

In the thirteenth century, John Cimabue, the disciple of a Greek mosaic painter at Florence, was the glorious instrument of the resurrection of the arts of design in Italy; which a happy situation and combination of moral causes had greatly contributed to advance and perfect. The Christian religion, which was then universally established, opened a new and large field for the exercise of the arts, in order to provide pictures and statues for their churches, as necessary helps and furtherances to piety, serving at once for books intelligible to the unlettered, and for memorials to assist the recollection, and give fervour to the hearts of those who were better informed: and whenever the works of art have not answered these purposes, it is an abuse to which every, even the best things, are liable, as the fault lies not, in the arts, but in the artists, or in the employer who suffers the abuse.⁶

⁶ James Barry, *ibid.*, I, 371-73. However, in a letter to the Burkes, Barry writes that he is sceptical of the claims of Cimabue to be considered the restorer of the arts. He

Barry is indeed more sympathetic to the Christian religion than Vasari but his lectures, which were well attended, are clearly indebted to the Italian historian. Sir Joshua Reynolds is very insistent on the classical origins of modern art in his Discourses. In the first, dated January 2, 1769, he says:

Raffaello, it is true, had not the advantage of studying in an academy; but all Rome, and the works of Michael Angelo in particular, were to him an academy. On the sight of the Capella Sistina, he immediately, from a dry, Gothic, and even insipid manner, which attends to the minute accidental discriminations of particular and individual objects, assumed that grand style of painting, which improves partial representation by the general and invariable ideas of nature.⁷

Nor did he have occasion to change his mind, for five years later, in the sixth Discourse, December 10, 1774, he wrote:

But we must not rest contented even in this general study of the moderns; we must trace back the art to its fountain-head; to that source from whence they drew their principal excellencies, the monuments of pure antiquity. All the inventions and thoughts of the Antients, whether conveyed to us in statues, bas-reliefs, intaglios, cameos, or coins, are to be sought after and carefully studied: the genius that hovers over these venerable reliques, may be called the father of modern art.⁸

cites a Greek painting and a Russian calendar, ibid., I, 175-76.

⁷ Sir Joshua Reynolds, "Discourse I," The Discourses (London, 1924), p. 3.

⁸ Sir Joshua Reynolds, ibid., p. 94. Cf. John Grattan, "On Sculpture," Oxford English Prize Essays (Oxford, 1836), I, 26. A more extended analogy is made by William Godwin in The Enquirer (Philadelphia, 1797), pp. 9-31; also Adam Ferguson, An Essay on the History of Civil Society (London, 1768), p. 373.

An interesting account of the revival of the arts in Italy is given by William Beckford in "Dreams Waking Thoughts and Incidents." Beckford raises the question, whether, when the fine arts have once attained their zenith, it is possible for them to continue for long in this state of perfection. So far as Italy is concerned, he writes:

You know how it stood with respect to antient Greece and Rome; the only two countries, besides modern Italy, where the fine arts can be said to have grown to maturity. Although modern Italy should be found to resemble her two great ancestors in this matter; yet, from so scanty a number of examples, it would be unphilosophical, perhaps, to attempt the decision: I have, therefore, another good reason for not meddling with it.

Although Constantine removed a great number of the beautiful remains of antiquity from Rome, and other parts of Italy, to adorn his new capital in the East; though the northern barbarians destroyed a considerable part of those he left; and the nonsensical zeal of bigots and devotees led them in after-times, to mutilate some of the finest models that had escaped the blind fury of the Goths and Huns, Rome was, nevertheless, fortunate enough to have preserved in part, and partly to have discovered, a multitude of inestimable gems, statues, vases, bas-reliefs, and relics of architecture. The Venetians, as the fruit of commerce, or of conquest, brought home many precious monuments from Greece; and the Florentines are obliged to the taste and opulence of the Medicis, for the finest collection of antiques in every kind, that the world ever saw. But Florence, and indeed all Europe, acknowledges a still greater obligation to this family, for having placed these models before the artists of their times; and given the most generous patronage to the successful imitation of them. The eyes of all Italy were soon opened to works of genius, and the fine arts made the most rapid progress towards their antient splendor. Most of the great artists of that age were contented with their near approach to perfection, in producing models, that might be opposed to the antique. Michael Angelo, however, soared still higher; and, perhaps, it may be safely affirmed, that his Moses on the tomb of Julius the Second, has a force and sublimity of expression, beyond any relic of anti-

quity. Some of his statues, likewise, which adorn the tombs of the Medici, in the church of St. Lawrence at Florence, boast the noblest expression....

In the ages of ignorance and barbarity, which preceded that of the Medicis, architecture, at once the most beautiful and useful of the fine arts, seemed totally lost. They, from whom alone its patronage and encouragement were to be expected, employed themselves more in destroying the admirable monuments of antiquity, than in imitating them. The palaces of princes and nobles, were then, for the most part, little else than a confusion of towers, united by strong walls, without symmetry, taste, or idea of architecture. These fortresses were asylums, where violence and rapine secured themselves with impunity, and, indeed, were calculated for nothing better. The antient gothic buildings of the same time, dedicated to the service of religion, were nothing but long, dark, and massive vaults, without the least ornament, or beauty; and the same judgment may safely be formed of all their public buildings, from such remains of them as are still subsisting. But, at the period I am speaking of, architecture revived with the other arts. The Popes, and sovereign princes of Florence, Modena, Mantua, Ferrara, not to mention the nobles of the state of Genoa and Venice, left such superb and beautiful edifices behind them, as will, for ages to come remain indisputable proofs of their taste for antient architecture.

Beckford goes on to discuss ancient decoration, vases, gems, and painting and their revival in the Renaissance, and, having confessed that ancient painting is not up to the standard of modern achievements, concludes his account:

It was from the ancient gems, bas-reliefs, statues, and bronzes, that the painters of that age caught their first idea of excellence. They then turned their eyes upon Nature herself; and, soon, raised the art of painting to that pitch of perfection, which it knew not before, and has not known since.⁹

Beckford's remarks are typical of the ideas on the subject

⁹ William Beckford, The Travel-Diaries, ed. Guy Chapman (Cambridge University Press, 1928), I, 254-58.

of the revival of the fine arts held by the writers of the latter half of the eighteenth century. It is interesting to observe that of all the aspects of the culture of the Middle Ages which were at this time beginning to be appreciated, the arts were the last to be recognized.

A brief survey of the course of the art of painting in the Renaissance is given by John Stedman in his Laelius and Hortensia; or, Thoughts on the Nature and Objects of Taste and Genius, in a Series of Letters to Two Friends; he dates the revival from the time of the Medicis while John Noorthouck and James Harris cling to the Vasari tradition of using Cimabue as the terminus a quo.¹⁰ In a letter to Barry, Burke points out that the artists of the Renaissance were successful not because they imitated the ancients mechanically, but because they studied nature along the lines laid down by the ancients. Robert Bromley is concerned with the fact that so many of the great Renaissance artists were Catholics. Since the purpose of art as he sees it is moral instruction, he asks what effect the Catholic faith has on art; he is of course writing as a protestant historian. "It was some misfortune to Raphael," he states,

¹⁰ John Stedman, Laelius and Hortensia (Edinburgh, 1782), pp. 244-47; John Noorthouck, An Historical and Classical Dictionary (London, 1776), I, n.p.; James Harris, The Works, ed. the Earl of Malmesbury (London, 1801), II, 535.

although to the art it was a seasonable happiness, that he was born in the age that brought him forth: but the art itself has to lament he was bred in that religion, which led him to sacrifice considerably to a system of superstition. The patronage of Julius and Leo were noble patronages, they were men of noble minds: and for once we will rejoice in the Vatican, that they filled it's chair, and stimulated a Raphael to fill it's chambers. But they were the heads of a church; and Raphael's harmony in faith left to his sense or his complaisance less room for its struggles. We speak not merely of a papal tincture marking many of his religious subjects. Some of his most considerable pieces were express compliments to the papal power, or express records of papal miracles. We need not to specify particulars; all who know his works will rightly apply these observations. In the cartons indeed, which are now at Windsor, and which are the latest and best of his works, he has more happily preserved the purity of mind, and purity of instruction, which should ever flow from the pencil.... If there be justice in this criticism of Raphael, whose judgement was as great as the strength of superstition will ever leave to most men, we cannot suppose that there has not been full as much room for the same criticism on others. The fact is, that the first pencils of Italy have all had their share in it. The religion of their country is conspicuous, wherever the subject of their paintings is religious. This has usurped the most considerable proportion of their time and their labours. Hence the long catalogue of Romish saints, which meet us in every place, and to which we object only because they are embraced as saints, and with reference to circumstances or events which tradition or legend has represented as important to their saintship. Hence too all the peculiarities of the Roman communion, such as the sacraments, &c. which have either been made the specific subjects of paintings, or have been occasionally introduced where the subjects would permit, and indeed where the subjects should never have permitted them. Even in the transfiguration Raphael could not refrain from placing two monks on the mountain.

It is indeed to be lamented that an art, whose display is so powerful, and whose instruction therefore comes so home to our feelings, should be clogged with any peculiarities of sentiment, which may retard it's beneficial impression on any portion of mankind. But it can never be otherwise, where the mind sustains a

bias of superstitious faith so strong and so peculiar as that of which we are speaking. No system of religious belief clings so fast to the mind, and possesses it so completely, as that of the Romish church, where it obtains at all...no peculiarities of religious faith whatever, no private system of doctrines, ought to have place in the instruction of the pencil. If the subject be religious, let it be the plain and broad truths contained in the pages of revelation, not in the tenets of a particular communion. These are spots upon the canvas, which not all the embellishments of the art can efface or hide. In no circumstance is the art so much committed to neglect, and it's success to peril, as by the admission of sentiments which are not of a universal standard. We can bear with the thought that is low and puerile: we are not absolutely offended by that which is singular and unmeaning: but when we are met by that which would impose on our understandings, and beguile us with false principles, we look no further; we see no beauties in the most masterly execution.¹¹

Bromley's wrestlings with the ideological content of art are interesting in that they begin with a declaration that art is to have no specific referents, and then, when he realizes that such art would in all probability be vague and innocuous to the point of boredom, and since at the same time he is basically a propagandist himself, Bromley turns around and demands a content which will meet with his approval. The situation is further complicated when we read in Barry's works that the greatness of the Renais-

¹¹ Robert A. Bromley, A Philosophical History of the Fine Arts, Painting, Sculpture, and Architecture (London, 1793), I, 32-35. Bromley's attitude toward the Greeks is crisply stated, ibid., I, 94: "...we have not meant to set forth the Greeks in any of their situations as a people perfect in manners. We have no thoughts of finding among them an Utopian society, any more than an Utopian country."

sance artists is to be attributed to their study of the ancients and of nature which resulted in sublime, just, and original productions; at the same time, Barry asserts that the superiority of the ancients over the moderns arose from moral causes and from the advantages of their mode of education.¹² Contradictory as these statements are, however, they are significant in that they mark the beginnings of a critical history of the art of the Renaissance.

In opposition to Bromley's ideas, Roscoe holds that the influence of the Catholic Church, combined with that of the remains of ancient art, stimulated the revival of the arts. After criticizing the work of the artists previous to Michael Angelo, Roscoe writes:

Nor was it until the time of Michelangelo that painting and sculpture rose to their true object, and, instead of exciting the wonder, began to rouse the passions and interest the feelings of mankind.

By what fortunate concurrence of circumstances the exquisite taste evinced by the ancients in works of art was revived in modern times, deserves inquiry. It has been generally supposed that these arts, having left in Greece some traces of their former splendour, were transplanted into Italy by Greek artists, who, either led by hopes of emolument, or impelled by the disastrous state of their own country, sought, among the ruins of the western empire, a shelter from the impending destruction of the east. Of the labours of these masters, specimens indeed remain in

¹² James Barry, op. cit., I, 227-28, 380-82.

different parts of Italy; but, in point of merit, they exceed not those of the native Italians, and some of them even bear the marks of deeper barbarism. In fact, these arts were equally debased in Greece and in Italy, and it was not therefore by an intercourse of this nature that they were likely to receive improvement. Happily, however, the same favourable circumstances which contributed to the revival of letters took place also with respect to the arts; and if the writings of the ancient authors excited the admiration and called forth the exertions of the scholar, the remains of ancient skill in marble, gems, and other durable materials, at length caught the attention of the artist, and were converted from objects of wonder into models of imitation. To facilitate the progress of these studies, other fortunate circumstances concurred. The freedom of the Italian governments, and particularly that of Florence, gave to the human faculties their full energies. The labours of the painter were associated with the mysteries of the prevailing religion, whilst the wealth and ostentation of individuals and states held out rewards sufficient to excite the endeavours even of the phlegmatic and the indolent.¹³

In his lecture on design, John Opie indicates the similarity between ancient and Renaissance art:

The progress of the arts in every country is the exact and exclusive measure of the progress of refinement: they are reciprocally the cause and effect of each other; and hence we accordingly find that the most enlightened, the most envied, and the most interesting periods in the history of mankind are precisely those in which the arts have been most esteemed, most cultivated, and have reached their highest points of elevation. To this the brightest aeras of Alexander the Great and Leo X. owe their strongest, their most amiable, and their most legitimate claims to our respect, admiration, and gratitude; this is their highest and their only undivided honour; and, if not the column it self, it is certainly (to borrow a metaphor from a celebrated

¹³ William Roscoe, op. cit., II, 189-92. Cf. Henry Fuseli, "Lecture II.--Art of the Moderns," Lectures, ed. R. N. Wornum (London, 1848), pp. 376-78.

orator) the Corinthian capital of their fame.¹⁴

Opie's remarks indicate that the arts are by this time taken as an index of the state of culture at a given era; the history of the arts is now part of the history of civilization.

Of the other arts, sculpture and music received treatment and it is in the second half of the century that the writing of the history of music secures a place side by side with the accounts of the other arts. As a matter of fact, the histories of music by Burney and Hawkins, so far as Renaissance music is concerned, are more properly speaking accounts of the revival of learning, so far had the tendency to see the arts as evolving simultaneously and responding to the same stimuli gone. John Brown points out that music first appeared at "...the faint revival of Arts in the eleventh Century" when Guido invented the art of counterpoint which, at the time of the Medicis, became so indecorous that it was ordered banned from the church by Pius IV. On the revival of learning, Brown states, poetry was divorced from music and the art became the province of the specialist.¹⁵

¹⁴ John Opie, "Lecture I. On Design," Lectures, ed. R. N. Wornum, loc. cit., pp. 239-40.

¹⁵ John Brown, A Dissertation on the Rise, Union, and Power, the Progressions, Separations, and Corruptions, of Poetry and Music (London, 1753), pp. 209-10, 196-97. Cf. Charles

Though the history of the fine arts as written during the second half of the eighteenth century in England is not extensive, it is marked by a return to the detailed treatments of the subject characteristic of the Renaissance. Moreover, it begins to exhibit the philosophical strain in historical writing which reaches its culmination in the next century. Finally, with the development of a more complex history, there comes an increase in disagreement between writers working with the same materials; similar facts yield differing interpretations, and what is more dangerous, differing interpretations and theories result in varying approaches to fact.

III. The Revival of Ancient Learning

The study of the revival of ancient learning was continued by English scholars during the period under consideration. Not only was there more solid and detailed learning at this time so far as the study of the Renaissance is concerned when compared to the work of the previous century, but new factors in the history of the revival were discovered, and though these did not loom large in the minds of

Burney, The Present State of Music in France and Italy; or, the Journal of a Tour through those Countries, Undertaken to Collect Materials for a General History of Music (London, 1771), pp. 2-3.

the men who first considered them, they presage the development of a more philosophical treatment of the Renaissance in England. This period sees a shift from the descriptive accounts of the Renaissance in the Renaissance and seventeenth century to an emphasis on ideological factors as causative agents. Also, there is evident a tendency to judge the revival, to list its good features, and to criticize its results.

The tradition that the revival of classical learning had its origin with Petrarch continues strong at this time. "One of the first and brightest luminaries," writes Vicesimus Knox in his essay "Cursory Remarks on the Life, Style, Genius, and Writings of Petrarch," "which appeared in the literary horizon, after a long and dismal night was the illustrious Francesco Petrarca."¹⁶ Petrarch was also mentioned with others, notably Dante and Boccaccio, as constituting the earliest group to revive learning. "Few authors," says William Hayley, "have rendered more essential service to the republic of letters than Boccaccio, as he not only contributed very much to the improvement

¹⁶ Vicesimus Knox, The Works (London, 1824), I, 480. Cf. William Russell, The History of Modern Europe: with an Account of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire; and a View of the Progress of Society, from the Rise of the Modern Kingdoms to the Peace of Paris, in 1763 (London, 1837), I, 504; Charles Burney, A General History of Music from the Earliest Ages to the Present Period, ed. Frank Mercer (New York, 1935), I, 632.

of his native language, but was particularly instrumental in promoting the revival of ancient learning: a merit which he shared with Petrarch."¹⁷ Gibbon points out that Petrarch was preceded by Barlaam in beginning the work of the revival but Petrarch's services were considerably more important; Petrarch was followed by Boccaccio and Leo Pilatus.¹⁸

The notion that the revival of letters began with the fall of Constantinople had respectable support at this time. In his Biographical Memoirs of Medicine, John Aikin writes:

It is impossible exactly to mark out the commencement of such a period as that of the revival of literature. Several gradual steps led in succession to this desirable event; and the proportional advance towards it was much greater in some countries than in others. In Italy, there existed elegant writers formed on the best models of the antients, at a time when all the rest of Europe was sunk in barbarism. If any one circumstance, however, may be pointed out as peculiarly instrumental in propagating liberal and useful learning throughout the western world, it is perhaps that of the taking of Constantinople by the Turks in the year 1453, which occasioned the dispersion of several learned men skilled in the Greek language, who carried their knowledge and their books to their places of refuge.¹⁹

¹⁷ William Hayley, "Notes to the Third Epistle of an Essay on Epic Poetry," Plays and Poems (London, 1785), IV, 66. Cf. Sir John Hawkins, A General History of the Science and Practice of Music (London, 1875), I, 376-77; Edward Gibbon, Miscellaneous Works, ed. Lord John Sheffield (London, 1796), II, 428.

¹⁸ Edward Gibbon, The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire (London, 1866), pp. 1208-09.

¹⁹ John Aikin, Biographical Memoirs of Medicine in Great

Thus the popular notion that the fall of Constantinople marked the beginning of the revival of learning was firmly established by the end of the eighteenth century.

However, the main body of opinion on the subject recognized the contributions the learned Greeks made to the study of ancient culture before 1453. The popular misconception was criticized by Hawkins:

The migration of learning from the east to the west, is an event too important to have escaped the notice of historians. Some have asserted that the foundation of musical practice now in use was laid by certain Greeks, who, upon the sacking of Constantinople by the Turks under Mahomet the Great, in 1453, retired from that scene of horror and desolation, and settled at Rome, and other cities of Italy. To this purpose Mons. Bourdelot, the author of *Histoire Musique et ses Effets*, in four small tomes, relates that certain ingenious Greeks who had escaped from the sacking of Constantinople, brought the polite arts, and particularly music, into Italy: for this assertion no authority is cited, and though recognized by the late reverend and learned Dr. Brown, it seems to rest solely on the credit of an author, who, by a strange abuse of the appellation, has called that a history, which is at best but an injudicious collection of unauthenticated anecdotes and trifling memoirs.

To ascertain precisely the circumstances attending the revival of learning in Europe, recourse must be had to the writings of such men as have given a particular relation of that great event; and by these it will appear, that before the taking of Con-

Britain (London, 1780), p. 21. Cf. John Brown, op. cit., pp. 209-10; James Harris, op. cit., II, 535; Robert Henry, op. cit., X, 110; Lord Monboddo, Of the Origin and Progress of Language (Edinburgh, 1774), III, 441; Joseph Priestley, Lectures on History, and General Policy (London, 1826), p. 283. However, Lord Monboddo expresses another point of view in a letter to Professor Dalzel cited in William Knight, Lord Monboddo and some of His Contemporaries (London, 1900), pp. 47-48.

stantinople divers learned Greeks settled in Italy, and became public teachers of the Greek language; and that Dante, Boccace, and Petrarch, all of whom flourished in the fourteenth century, availed themselves of their instructions, and co-operated with them in their endeavours to make it generally understood. The most eminent of these were Leontius Pilatus, Emanuel Chrysoloras, Theodorus Gaza, Georgius Trapezuntius, and Cardinal Bessarion. To these, at the distance of an hundred years, succeeded Joannes Argyropylus, Demetrius Chalcondyles, and many others, whose lives and labours have been sufficiently celebrated.²⁰

The normal opinion of scholars on this question was well expressed by Roscoe:

The study of the Greek language had been introduced into Italy, principally by the exertions of the celebrated Boccaccio, towards the latter part of the preceding century, but on the death of that great promoter of letters it again fell into neglect. After a short interval, another attempt was made to revive it by the intervention of Emanuel Chrysoloras, a noble Greek, who, during the interval of his important embassies, taught that language at Florence and other cities of Italy, about the beginning of the fifteenth century. His disciples were numerous and respectable. Amongst others of no inconsiderable note, were Ambrogio Traversari, Leonardo Bruni, Carlo Marsuppini, the two latter of whom were natives of Arezzo, whence they took the name of Aretino, Poggio Bracciolini, Guarino Veronese, and Francesco Filelfo, who, after the death of Chrysoloras, in 1415, strenuously vied with each other in the support of Grecian literature, and were successful enough to keep the flame alive till it received new aid from other learned Greeks, who were driven from Constantinople by the dread of the Turks, or by the total overthrow of the eastern empire. To these illustrious foreigners, as well as to those eminent Italians, who shortly became their successful rivals, even in the knowledge of their national history and language, Cosmo afforded the most liberal protection and support.²¹

²⁰ John Hawkins, op. cit., p. 276.

²¹ William Roscoe, op. cit., I, 21-23. Cf. John Noorthouck,

The command over the source materials for the study of the Renaissance which was noted as beginning with Hody is shown by Roscoe in connection with the rôle played by the learned Greeks:

Whatever may have been the opinion in more modern times, the Italian scholars of the fifteenth century did not attribute to the exertions of their own countrymen the restoration of ancient learning. That they had shewn a decided predilection for those studies, and had excited an ardent thirst of further knowledge, is universally allowed; but the source from which that thirst was allayed was found in Emanuel Chrysoloras, who, after his return to his native country from his important embassies, was prevailed upon by the Florentines to fix his residence among them. The obligations due to Chrysoloras are acknowledged in various parts of their works, by those who availed themselves of his instructions;...²²

From the evidence cited in the first chapter, we know this to be true. In other words, it was no longer possible to consider the subject of the Renaissance as part of polite but superficial learning; it had become the province of the scholar.

The house of Medici was since the Renaissance itself placed in intimate connection with the revival of learning and the arts, and the steady stream of praise reached its culmination in Roscoe's widely read and approved Life of Lorenzo, one of the most popular histories of the eighteenth

op. cit., under Gaza, Lascaris, Trapezuntius; Hester Lynch Piozzi, Observations and Reflections made in the Course of a Journey through France, Italy, and Germany (Dublin, 1789), p. 196; Vicesimus Knox, op. cit., II, 57-60.

²² William Roscoe, ibid., II, 56.

and early nineteenth centuries. But Roscoe was not the only writer to recognize the important rôle of the Medici. For example, Bromley writes:

When we speak of the house of Medici, the name sounds sweetly to every ear; admiration, delight, and almost homage follow that love of letters and of the arts in that family, which gave so brilliant a resurrection to both, after a long extinction: and although we know that the reverse of letters, and of the arts, and of virtues disgraced some of the last branches of that house, who sunk in wretchedness of mind by the same proportion in which their forefathers had risen to glory, yet cannot that extinguish the reverence which in all enlightened minds will never cease to meet the name of Medici.²³

Of the Medici, it is Lorenzo who is most often singled out for approbation. Lorenzo's part in stimulating the artists of the Renaissance to produce their great work is pointed out by Roscoe:

But it was not the industry, the liberality, or the judgment shewn by Lorenzo in forming his magnificent collection, so much as the important purpose to which he dedicated it, that entitles him to the esteem of the professors and admirers of the arts. Conversant with the finest forms of antiquity from his youth, he perceived and lamented the inferiority of his contemporary artists, and the impossibility of their improvement upon the principles then adopted. He determined therefore to excite among them, if possible, a better taste, and, by proposing to their imitation the remains of the ancient masters, to elevate their views beyond the forms of common life, to the contemplation of that ideal beauty which alone distinguishes works of art from mere mechanical productions. With this view he appropriated his gardens, adjacent to the monastery of S. Marco, to the establishment of a school or academy for the study of the antique, and furnished the different buildings

²³ Robert Bromley, op. cit., I, 106. Cf. Gibben's opinion in the Miscellaneous Works, op. cit., II, 431.

and avenues with statues, busts, and other pieces of workmanship.... To this institution, more than to any other circumstance, we may, without hesitation, ascribe the sudden and astonishing proficiency which, towards the close of the fifteenth century, was evidently made in the arts, and which commencing at Florence, extended itself in concentric circles to the rest of Europe.²⁴

Leo X is sometimes thought of as the reviver of letters; Noorthouck refers to him in his Dictionary and says that he "...was not sparing either of care, or money, in making researches, and to procure very good editions; in his time all the arts and sciences began to revive, and lift their heads out of the graves in which they had long been buried."²⁵ However, John Aikin criticizes such praise of Leo because the "golden days" which were supposed to be characteristic of his reign did not come until after his death.²⁶

The climax of eighteenth century accounts of the revival of learning is reached in Roscoe's Lorenzo. Designed as a biography, the work is in reality a history of the Renaissance for Roscoe held that Lorenzo's life could not be properly understood unless the backgrounds of his life

²⁴ William Roscoe, op. cit., II, 200-01. In another place, Roscoe writes that the interest of the wealthy in the early part of the fifteenth century announced the approach of more enlightened times, ibid., I, 24-25.

²⁵ John Noorthouck, op. cit., p. C3v. Cf. William Hayley, op. cit., II, 41; Henry James Pye, Poems on Various Subjects (London, 1787), II, 140.

²⁶ John Aikin, Letters from a Father to his Son, on Various Topics, relative to Literature and the Conduct of Life (London, 1796), II, 226.

were completely filled in. Therefore, he treated as fully as he could the political, religious, economic, and cultural transactions which Lorenzo participated in, which of course means all the leading events of the Renaissance. Moreover, Roscoe tried to recreate the atmosphere at the time of the revival of letters; by copious citation from the work of the humanists, he tried to show what problems agitated them, what motives animated them, what they expected to accomplish, and what they did achieve. Finally, he saw the Renaissance as a broad movement in which the revival of arts and learning were but subsidiary streams, and it is to his credit that he was the first writer on the subject of the revival of ancient learning to treat more than casually the influence of Platonism at that time. Roscoe's work lays the foundation and opens the way for the large-scale nineteenth century treatment of the Renaissance.

The Renaissance is attributed a cause by Roscoe and his contemporaries which has not been met with before. Roscoe's theory is that the Italian struggles over political liberty resulted in an activity of mind which ultimately produced the revival of learning. This is stated by Roscoe:

Florence has been remarkable in modern history for the frequency and violence of its internal dissensions, and for the predilection of its inhabitants for every species of science, and every production of art. However discordant these characteristics may appear, it is not difficult to reconcile them. The same active spirit that calls forth the talents

of individuals for the preservation of their liberties, and resists with unconquerable resolution whatever is supposed to infringe them, in the moments of domestic peace and security seeks with avidity other objects of employment. The defence of freedom has always been found to expand and strengthen the mind; and though the faculties of the human race may remain torpid for generations, when once roused into action they cannot speedily be lulled again into inactivity and repose.

A few pages on, Roscoe illustrates this point by considering the influence of the struggles between the Guelphs and Ghibelines:

These disadvantages were however amply compensated by the great degree of freedom enjoyed by the citizens of Florence, which had the most favourable effects on their character, and gave them a decided superiority over the inhabitants of the rest of Italy. The popular nature of the government, not subjected to the will of an individual, as in many of the surrounding states, nor restricted, like that of Venice, to a particular class, was a constant incitement to exertion. Nor was it only on the great body of people that the good effects of this system were apparent; even those who claimed the privileges of ancestry, felt the advantages of a rivalry which prevented their sinking into indolence, and called upon them to support, by their own talents, the rank and influence which they had derived from those of their ancestors. Where the business of government is confined to a few, the faculties of the many become torpid for want of exercise; but in Florence, every citizen was conversant with, and might hope, at least, to partake in the government; and hence was derived that spirit of industry, which in the pursuit of wealth, and the extension of commerce, was, amidst all their intensive broils, so conspicuous, and so successful. The fatigues of public life, and the cares of mercantile avocations, were alleviated at times by the study of literature or the speculations of philosophy. A rational and dignified employment engaged those moments of leisure not necessarily devoted to more important concerns, and the mind was relaxed without being debilitated, and amused without being depraved. The superiority which the Florentines thus acquired was universally acknowledged; and

they became the historians, the poets, the orators, and the preceptors of Europe.²⁷

According to Robert Hall in his Apology for the Liberty of the Press, it was liberty of discussion which made the Renaissance possible:

If we have recourse to experience, that kind of enlarged experience in particular which history furnishes, we shall not be apt to entertain any violent alarm at the greatest liberty of discussion; we shall there see that to this we are indebted for those improvements in arts and sciences, which have meliorated in so great a degree the condition of mankind. The middle ages, as they are called, the darkest period of which we have any accounts, were remarkable for two things: The extreme ignorance that prevailed, and an excessive veneration for received opinions; circumstances, which, having been always united, operate on each other, it is plain, as cause and effect. The whole compass of science was in those times subject to restraint; every new opinion was looked upon as dangerous. To affirm the globe we inhabit to be round, was deemed heresy, and for asserting its motion, the immortal Galileo was confined in the prisons of the Inquisition. Yet, it is remarkable, so little are the human faculties fitted for restraint, that its utmost rigour was never able to effect a thorough unanimity, or to preclude the most alarming discussions and controversies. For no sooner was one point settled than another was started, and as the articles on which men professed to differ were always extremely few and subtle, they came the more easily into contact, and their animosities were the more violent and concentrated. The shape of the tonsure, the manner in which a monk could shave his head, would then throw a whole kingdom into convulsions. In proportion as the world has become more enlightened, this unnatural policy of restraint has retired; the sciences it has entirely abandoned, and has taken its last stand on religion and politics. The first of these was long considered of a nature so peculiarly sacred,

²⁷ William Roscoe, op. cit., I, 3, 7-8. Cf. William Russell, op. cit., I, 497-98; Edward Gibbon, The Decline and Fall, op. cit., p. 1203.

that every attempt to alter it, or to impair the reverence for its received institutions, was regarded under the name of heresy as a crime of the first magnitude. Yet, dangerous as free inquiry may have been looked upon, when extended to the principles of religion, there is no department where it was more necessary, or its interference more decidedly beneficial.²⁸

Proceeding somewhat along the same lines as Roscoe, both Adam Ferguson and Lord Kames make the point that both the Greek city-states and the Italian republics were disturbed by internal disorders which then produced the favorable result of sharpening men's wits by making them keenly aware of their rights and duties; this sharpness of wit was useful in promoting letters and the arts.²⁹ In an interesting passage on the comparison between ancient and modern wit, Bishop Hurd indicates that both flourished in free and liberal states, and, that as soon as tyranny encroached on men's liberties, wit turned licentious and crude.³⁰ Thus there was built up the concept of liberty as the initiator and stimulator of the revival of learning and of the arts.

But another group of writers turned this concept a-

²⁸ Cited in Theodore Schroeder, ed., Free Press Anthology (New York, 1909), pp. 32-33.

²⁹ Adam Ferguson, An Essay on the History of Civil Society (London, 1768), p. 373; Lord Kames, Sketches of the History of Man (Edinburgh, 1788), I, 190-91.

³⁰ Richard Hurd, The Works (London, 1811), I, 237-38.

round completely; according to these writers, it was the Renaissance which caused the spread of liberty and free inquiry; in short, these blessings were the consequence and not the cause of the Renaissance. The Renaissance resulted in a loosening of the shackles of the mind and the spread of free inquiry, wrote Godwin, Harris, Knox, and Warton.³¹ Another theory which was advanced was that the Renaissance, instead of being the product of, had rather resulted in the dawning of, liberty.³² Here is a clear case of the confusion of cause and effect which seems to go along with the growth of a more philosophical and complex mode of history writing. Another point to be noticed in connection with this movement is that the Renaissance is judged and not merely described; it is seen as a sig-

31 William Godwin, The Enquirer. Reflections on Education, Manners, and Literature (Philadelphia, 1797), p. 31; James Harris, op. cit., II, 294; Vicesimus Knox, op. cit., III, 128-29; Thomas Warton, The History of English Poetry, from the Close of the Eleventh Century to the Commencement of the Eighteenth Century, ed. Richard Price (London, 1840), III, 7; Thomas Warton, The Life of Sir Thomas Pope (London, 1780), pp. 136-38.

32 Robert Anderson, ed., The Works of the British Poets. With Prefaces, Biographical and Critical (London, 1795), II, 607; William Robertson, The Works, ed. Dugald Stewart, (London, 1827), VI, 27; N. William Wraxall, The History of France, from the Accession of Henry the Third, in 1574, to the Death of Henry the Fourth, in 1610. Preceded by a View of the Civil, Military, and Political State of Europe, between the Middle, and the Close of the Sixteenth Century (London, 1814), I, 323.

nificant factor in determining and influencing the course of modern history.

So far the effects attributed to the Renaissance may be considered as beneficial, but this is by no means a universal sentiment. The chief objection to the Renaissance was that the revival of classical letters led to so servile and confining an imitation of the style and thought of the ancients that it became impossible to produce original works of merit; in this respect, the influence of Bacon probably played a large part. Hume terms the manner of composition of the writers of the Renaissance "Asiatic," and says of it:

On the revival of letters, when the judgment of the public is as yet raw and unformed, this false glitter catches the eye, and leaves no room, either in eloquence or poetry, for the durable beauties of solid sense and lively passion. The reigning genius is then diametrically opposite to that which prevails in the first origin of the arts. The Italian writers, it is evident, even the most celebrated, have not reached the proper simplicity of thought and composition; and in Petrarch, Tasso, Guarini, frivolous witticisms and forced conceits are but too predominant. The period, during which letters were cultivated in Italy was so short as scarcely to allow leisure for correcting this adulterated relish.

The more early French writers are liable to the same reproach, Voiture, Balzac, even Corneille, have too much affected those ambitious ornaments, of which the Italians in general, and the least pure of the ancients supplied them with so many models. And it was not till late, that observation and reflection gave rise to a more natural turn of thought and composition among that elegant people.

A like character may be extended to the first English writers; such as flourished during the reigns of Elizabeth and James, and even till long afterwards. Learning, on its revival in this island, was attired in the same unnatural garb, which it wore at the time

of its decay among the Greeks and Romans. And, what may be regarded as a misfortune, the English writers who were possessed of great genius before they were endued with any degree of taste, and by that means gave a kind of sanction to those forced turns and sentiments, which they so much affected.³³

Nevertheless, Hume's statement did not go unchallenged; for example, Knox had this to say about the style of writing at the time of the revival:

About the time of the revival of learning, every scholar was early taught to compose in Latin; and to excel in it was one of the first objects of his literary ambition. Many most honourable testimonies are extant, of the success of those indefatigable students; and I believe, if a taste for the manners and pursuits of that age were adopted, it would be a circumstance equally favourable to virtue and letters.... Caesar, Cicero, Virgil, Horace, Livy, Sallust, have kept their ranks as standards for imitation, during eighteen hundred years; and a careful imitation of them has produced such writers, in Italy, as Dante, Boccace, Petrarch, Ariosto, Casa, Galileo; in France, Racine, Moliere, Boileau, Bossuet, Fenelon; in England, Milton, Dryden, Addison, Pope, and a thousand others, who, altogether, have improved and innocently delighted myriads of the human race.³⁴

On the score of the criticisms of the revival of classical learning, the writers of the previous century seem to have a better grasp on the essential, belles-lettristic nature of the Renaissance as developed by the humanists.

33 David Hume, "Appendix to the Reign of James I," The History of England, from the Invasion of Julius Caesar to the Revolution in 1688 (London, 1770), VI, 211-12. Cf. Edward Gibbon, Miscellaneous Works, op. cit., II, 437; Oliver Goldsmith, The Works, ed. J. W. M. Gibbs (London, 1885), II, 397; Thomas Warton, The History of English Poetry, op. cit., III, 21; Thomas Warton, Observations on the Fairy Queen of Spenser (London, 1807), I, 1-3.

34 Vicesimus Knox, op. cit., IV, 428-29.

This is an appropriate point to consider the state of the appreciation of the Elizabethans at this time and its relationship to the idea of the Renaissance in England. At the outset, it may be said that the so-called Elizabethan revival did not result in any heightening of the awareness of the Renaissance. The scholars who were then so laboriously bringing to light the range of Elizabethan literature were not motivated by broad philosophical ideas and to most of them, so far as their written work allows us to judge, the concept of the Renaissance was unknown. What this means is that the idea of the Renaissance pursued an independent course; starting in the Renaissance, it did not depend for its existence on the state of appreciation of a particular national literature, but by linking itself with the main ideological streams which go to make up the modern mind and becoming itself one of them, the idea of the Renaissance was not subject to the state of appreciation of Elizabethan literature at any time. It is therefore safe to say that had the Elizabethan revival not taken place, the history of the idea of the Renaissance in England would have remained substantially the same. This assertion is confirmed by the fact that the romantics, in whom the Elizabethan revival reached a climax, were of all the writers of their generation the least interested in the idea of the Renaissance. For these reasons, therefore, it is not neces-

sary to consider the state of appreciation of Elizabethan literature at this time.³⁵

35 The impression has been given by some students of the Elizabethan revival that its influence was pervasive and that both the creative arts and scholarship responded to its stimulus. Dr. Miller has shown that so far as the drama is concerned, between 1700 and 1749 there were five plays dealing with the Tudor period, while between 1750 and 1800 there were seven plays with a Tudor setting, all out of a total of 111 historical dramas dealing with England. Nor did these plays possess an authentic Tudor atmosphere; historical coloring was lacking. So far as scholarship is concerned, Vicesimus Knox was not alone in his opinion when he wrote in his essay "On the Prevailing Taste for the Old English Poets," op. cit., I, 245-47: "The antiquarian spirit, which was once confined to inquiries concerning the manners, the buildings, the records, and the coins of the ages that preceded us, has now extended itself to those poetical compositions which were popular among our forefathers, but which have gradually sunk into oblivion through the decay of language, and the prevalence of a correct and polished taste. Books printed in the black letter are sought for by the English antiquary with the same avidity with which he peruses a monumental inscription, or treasures up a Saxon piece of money. The popular ballad composed by some illiterate minstrel, and which has been handed down by tradition for several centuries, is rescued from the hands of the vulgar, to obtain a place in the collection of a man of taste. Verses which, a few years past, were thought worthy the attention of children only, or of the lowest and rudest orders, are now admired for that artless simplicity which once obtained the name of coarseness and vulgarity....

"Our earlier poets, many of those whose names and works are deservedly forgotten, seem to have thought that rhyme was poetry. And even this constituent requisite they applied with extreme negligence. It was, however, good enough for its readers, most of whom considered the mere ability of reading as a very high attainment. It has had its day, and the antiquary must not despise us, if we cannot peruse it with patience....

"In perusing the antiquated pages of our English bards, we sometimes find a passage which has comparative merit, and which shines with the greater lustre, because it is surrounded with deformity.--While we consider the rude

The latter part of the eighteenth century in England saw a return to the comprehensive approach to the revival of learning characteristic of the Renaissance itself. But in addition to the trend toward a more scholarly study of the Renaissance, there was manifest the beginning of the movement to ascribe more and more abstract causes for the Renaissance and to criticize it. Finally, with the development of a more exact scholarship, there is evident a confusion in meaning between different writers apparently concerned with the same subject. What to one student is a cause is to another an effect, while similar causes produce different effects and similar effects are given different causes. Scholarship becomes more scientific but it also becomes more disputatious.

state of literature, the want of models, the depraved taste of readers, we are struck with the least appearance of beauty. We are flattered with an idea of our own penetration, in discovering excellencies which have escaped the notice of the world. We take up the volume with a previous determination to prove that it contains valuable matter. We are unwilling that our pains should be unrewarded. We select a few lines from a long work, and, by a little critical refinement, prove that they are wonderfully excellent. But the candid are ready to confess, that they have not often discovered in this department a sufficient degree or quantity of absolute merit to repay the labour of a profound and laborious search." So difficult was it for the scholars of Elizabethan literature to bring about a change in taste and point of view.

IV. The Middle Ages and the Renaissance

If the claim of the latter half of the eighteenth century to the honor of being the first to appreciate the Elizabethans is not altogether just, it can count on the authenticity of its primacy in the appreciation of the civilization of the Middle Ages. "At a time, when truths of every kind are so eagerly investigated, and those of history in particular," wrote Joseph Berington in the preface to The History of the Lives of Abeillard and Heloisa, "I have chosen a dark period; and if I can bring it before the public in any form that may raise attention, my design will be satisfied."³⁶ It is significant that Berington is not afraid to bring to the notice of the eighteenth century reading public an era which had since the Renaissance been treated with very little sympathy. The point is that Berington was not alone in his researches into the Middle Ages; historians of all subjects recognized that to trace through properly and systematically developments in politics or literature or science it was necessary to investigate the culture of the Middle Ages.

Moreover, students of the Renaissance soon perceived

³⁶ Joseph Berington, The History of the Lives of Abeillard and Heloisa; comprising a Period of Eighty-four Years, from 1079 to 1163. With their Genuine Letters, from the Collection of Amboise (Birmingham, 1788), p. vi.

that a number of trends in different fields which they thought had first appeared in the Renaissance could be found in the Middle Ages and turned their attention to the study of that neglected era. "I have chosen, indeed, the dark ages," continues Berington in his preface:

those times, which it has long been the fashion to depreciate; over which ignorance is thought to have spread the dark mantle of barbarism and superstition, under which few traces can be found which the improved and enlightened minds of these days can survey undisgusted. The judgment is unequitable. I will not say that there was not much darkness; but also that there were many rays, dispersed on characters, and beaming from events, which the less fastidious historian can collect and view with pleasure. The darkness was the necessary effect of causes which, in every circumstance, were organized to produce it.

The Goths, the Huns, the Vandals, the Franks, the Burgundians, and the Lombards, had descended, like clouds of locusts, from the north, and proudly fixed their iron thrones on the ruins of the western world. Triumphant in their strength, they despised the puny nations they had easily subdued. Arms and the animating sports of the field could alone gain their attention. To them the arts were an unmanly occupation, and as they knew nothing of science, it even sank lower in their estimation. The manners and taste of the ruling party are soon communicated to the other orders of society. These even will desert every former pursuit, and throw off the character they before esteemed, the better to conciliate the favour, and to make their way to the notice, of their new masters. Thus did the people, whom the barbarians had conquered, soon themselves become barbarous; the pursuits of science languished; and the powers of reason, for a time disused, seemed to have lost their native energy.

But as this disposition of things, from the natural instability of man, could not long continue, so did science soon revive, and the arts of peace were cultivated. Indeed, even in the worst moments, they were not utterly extinguished, as we know from the annals of the times. But in speaking of events, a general view only can be exhibited. I said that science soon revived, and with it the arts. In their

revival they are but little superior to the imperfection of their first growth; languid, tardy, and elementary. Even in the eleventh century, the period I have chosen, when the new kingdoms were firmly established, the view of society is often uninviting, and sometimes disgusting from its barbarous and unenlightened character. But perhaps too severe a prepossession had engaged the judgment. When I consider the enlarged minds and virtuous endowments of some men, who then lived, I am inclined to think it. The reader will determine.

About the fifteenth century, when the more elegant productions of antiquity began to be more generally read, to decry the monkish writers was deemed a proof of great discernment. Their language, indeed, was barbarous, compared with better models; but I would rather read a monkish composition, of which at least the ideas are sometimes original, than the works of those fastidious critics. Affectedly imitative of Ciceronian elegance, they are vapid and disgusting. But we ourselves have been led away by the puerile judgment of the men, I allude to. We do not sufficiently reflect that, in the dark ages, even the most cultivated mind must have wanted language with which to clothe his ideas. Latin had long ceased to be spoken, and the modern tongues of Europe were as yet barren and unexpressive. They wrote in Latin. What judgment, let me ask, would posterity form of the classical elegance, at least, even of these times, if modern authors were tied down to the use only of the dead languages. I know not that the editor of Bellendenus, whom some admire, could promise to himself a never-fading breath of glory. Yet for these four hundred years, have the ages which preceded them been principally despised, because the language of their authors was rude and unharmonious.

Another circumstance has contributed to strengthen the unfavourable impression. When the Reformation began, in the sixteenth century, it was thought necessary to justify the measure by every plausible pretext. It was owing to the darkness in which the world had been involved, they said, that error had so successfully made its way, and had sapped the foundations of religious truth. In all their writings the first reformers dwell on this idea. The more gloomy the representation can be made, the more expedient becomes their work, and the greater success would attend their endeavours. Success did attend them; and their successors in the ministry have not been less sedulous to keep alive the same impression on the minds of the people. There was truth in the

general view; but the deep colouring seemed sometimes to disguise its strongest features.³⁷

This is an extremely ingenious defense of the Middle Ages. Berington rightly lays his finger on two of the most powerful forces inimical to a proper understanding of the Middle Ages, the humanists and the reformers of the Renaissance and Reformation, and then adapts to his purpose of defending the literature of the Middle Ages the very argument which scholars had previously used to make general the appreciation of the Elizabethans.

Furthermore, the beginnings of modern enlightenment were pushed yet deeper into the Middle Ages. According to Harris and Warton, there was no time during the Middle Ages when learning was altogether extinguished. Russell held that the beginnings of the revival dated back to the times of Alfred and Charlemagne but were succeeded by darkness only to be revived again in the twelfth century. Robertson placed the beginning of improvement in civilization at the end of the eleventh century while Gibbon linked

³⁷ Joseph Berington, op. cit., pp. xxxiv-xxxvi. Berington neatly disposes of the problem of using Catholic sources, ibid., p. xxvi: "These I have mentioned are Roman Catholic historians; and it will be asked, if I have relied implicitly on their representations?--Let it be observed that, I am describing times which preceded the existence of Protestantism four hundred years; the sources of my information therefore must necessarily be Catholic. As to modern writers, I chose those, in whom, it seemed, I could place most confidence; nor did I once think what mode of religion they had professed."

the commencement of letters to the origins of liberty in the twelfth century.³⁸ However, scholarly attention was centered not so much on datings as on discovering what groups during the Middle Ages kept learning alive.

Despite familiarity with the work of the learned Greeks in the Renaissance, little was known of the course of learning in Byzantium before the eastern invasions. Gibbon praised the Byzantine Greeks for transmitting the cultural traditions of the ancients to the west, but blamed them for failing to make any significant use of ancient learning themselves.³⁹ James Harris attempted a sketch of the history of learning in Byzantium, but his knowledge of the subject was extremely scanty, and it was only until the researches of Berington and Hallam in the early nineteenth century that any real appreciation of the Byzantine services was possible.⁴⁰

38 James Harris, op. cit., II, 419; Thomas Warton, The History of English Poetry, op. cit., II, 545-46; William Russell, op. cit., I, 500-01; William Robertson, op. cit., III, 20; Edward Gibbon, Miscellaneous Works, op. cit., II, 416.

39 Edward Gibbon, The Decline and Fall, op. cit., pp. 1010-12.

40 James Harris, op. cit., II, 421-25; 444-62. In a letter to Monboddo, Harris writes: "I cannot enough admire your noble attempt to bring the Greek Philosophy again in fashion. To speak my mind freely, I think, though there was a time, when Plato and Aristotle were much more in fashion than they are now, they were cultivated or understood in Western or Latin Europe as they ought; and as I believe many of the learned Greeks cultivated them, even down to the taking of Constantinople," cited in William Knight, op. cit., p. 91.

The part played by the Arabs in keeping learning vigorous during the Middle Ages was analyzed in detail by a considerable number of writers during the second half of the eighteenth century. Scattered references in the pages of Adam Anderson's An Historical and Chronological Deduction of the Origin of Commerce attest to his recognition of the significant contributions made by the Arabs during the Middle Ages. According to him, they invented algebra, were learned astronomers, introduced chemistry into Europe, were excellent geographers, translated Aristotle, and in general communicated learning to Europe at a time when the Christians did not possess even the rudiments of science.⁴¹ According to Thomas Astle, the Arabians translated into Arabic Plato, Aristotle, Euclid, Archimedes, Apollonius, Diophantus, Hippocrates, Galen, and Ptolemy so that "...from them, the first rays of science and philosophy began to enlighten the western hemisphere, and in time, dispelled the thick cloud of ignorance, which for some ages had eclipsed literature." He goes on to say:

It will hereafter appear, that it was from the Arabians that these western parts became first acquainted with the Greek philosophy; and from them, several branches of science were introduced into Europe as early as the ninth century, and even into Britain before the end of the eleventh, in which, and in the

⁴¹ Adam Anderson, An Historical and Chronological Deduction of the Origin of Commerce, from the Earliest Accounts (London, 1801), I, 94, 188, 476.

three succeeding centuries, several Englishmen travelled into Arabia and Spain, in search of knowledge; amongst others, Adelard, a Monk of Bath; Robert, a Monk of Reading; Retinensis, Shelly, Morley, and others.⁴²

In his Principles which Lead and Direct Philosophical Inquiries; Illustrated by the History of Astronomy, Adam Smith speaks highly of the Arabian efforts to keep learning alive:

The ruin of the empire of the Romans, and, along with it, the subversion of all law and order, which happened a few centuries afterwards, produced the entire neglect of that study of the connecting principles of nature, to which leisure and security can alone give occasion. After the fall of those great conquerors and civiliziers of mankind, the empire of the Califfs seems to have been the first state under which the world enjoyed that degree of tranquillity which the cultivation of the sciences requires. It was under the protection of those generous and magnificent princes that the ancient philosophy and astronomy were restored and established in the East; that tranquillity, which their mild, just, and religious government diffused over their vast empire, revived the curiosity of mankind, to inquire into the connecting principles of nature. The fame of the Greek and Roman learning, which was then recent in the memories of men, made them desire to know, concerning these abstruse subjects, what were the doctrines of the so much renowned pages of those two nations....

The victorious arms of the Saracens carried into Spain the learning, as well as the gallantry, of the East; and along with it, the tables of Almamou, and the Arabian translations of Ptolemy and Aristotle; and thus Europe received a second time from Babylon, the rudiments of the science of the heavens. The writings of Ptolemy were translated from Arabic into Latin; and the Peripatetic philosophy was studied in Averroes and Avicenna with as much eagerness and with as much submission to its doctrines in the West, as it had been in the East....

The schoolmen, who received, at once, from the Arabians, the philosophy of Aristotle, and the astronomy of Hipparchus, were necessarily obliged to reconcile

⁴² Thomas Astle, The Origin and Progress of Writing (London, 1784), pp. xvi-xvii.

them to one another, and to connect together the revolutions of the Eccentric Circles and Epicycles of the one, by the solid Spheres of the other. Many different attempts of this kind were made by many different philosophers: but, of them all, that of Purbach, in the fifteenth century, was the happiest and most esteemed....

When you have convinced the world, that an established system ought to be corrected, it is not very difficult to persuade them that it should be destroyed. Not long, therefore, after the death of Regiomontanus, Copernicus began to meditate a new system, which should connect together the celestial appearances, in a more simple as well as a more accurate manner, than that of Ptolemy.⁴³

Gibbon, Harris, Hayley, Maclaurin, Monboddo, Priestley, Pye, Robertson, Russell, and Warton likewise take occasion to acknowledge the extent and depth of Arabian learning during the Middle Ages, and, like Smith, to indicate its influence on the growth of modern science.⁴⁴

Several of the most important medieval institutions were praised for their contributions in maintaining learning at a time when it was extremely difficult to do so, and this despite a lively anti-Catholic and anti-aristo-

43 Adam Smith, The Works, ed. Dugald Smith (London, 1811), V, 119-22.

44 Edward Gibbon, The Decline and Fall, op. cit., pp. 981-83; Edward Gibbon, Miscellaneous Works, op. cit., II, 407; James Harris, op. cit., II, 483-500; William Hayley, op. cit., II, 36; Colin Maclaurin, An Account of Sir Isaac Newton's Philosophical Discoveries (London, 1748), pp. 40-41; Lord Monboddo, op. cit., III, 441; Joseph Priestley, op. cit., p. 288; Henry James Pye, "The Progress of Refinement, A Poem," Poems on Various Subjects (London, 1787), II, 135; William Robertson, op. cit., VI, 26; William Russell, op. cit., I, 501; Thomas Warton, The History of English Poetry, op. cit., I, xci-xcv.

cratic prejudice which saw the blighting hands of the Pope and the nobleman everywhere in the Middle Ages. However, of all the movements and institutions connected with the church, only the monasteries were singled out for commendation. The most extensive treatment of the monasteries is made by Anna Barbauld who lists nine services performed by them which aided in protecting and fostering learning. They preserved classical learning, continued the habit of study when it was in danger of disappearing from disuse, maintained schools for the instruction of the young, provided a means of communication by cherishing Latin, practiced the art of polite composition, helped break down medieval isolation by encouraging members to travel, gave the poor but intelligent an opportunity for advancement through study and learning, harbored the pre-reformers of the church from its attacks, and kept alive the sentiments of charity, poverty, and chastity which ultimately aided in bringing about a more refined culture.⁴⁵

Vicesimus Knox anticipates the modern scholarly concept of Christian humanism when he links the learned ecclesiastics of the Middle Ages with the devout humanists of the Renaissance in his essay "On the Obligations which

⁴⁵ Anna Laetitia Barbauld, Memoir, Letters, and a Selection from the Poems and Prose Writings, ed. Grace A. Ellis (Boston, 1874), II, 216-33.

Learning Owe to the Christian Religion":

A considerable knowledge of history, and something of chronology and philosophy, was necessary in studying and defending the Scriptures, even in the earliest ages; and many Christians appeared well skilled in those parts of learning, at a time when they were generally neglected. Religion and conscience operated as a stimulus, when all other motives were insufficient to retard the mind in its swift progress down the declivity of ignorance and degeneracy.

With a view, and solely with a view, to enable ecclesiastics to read and understand the Scriptures, even in the most dismal night of ignorance, there were some places of instruction, in cathedrals and monasteries, in which the embers of literature, if we may venture to use that expression, were preserved from total extinction; in which a spark lay latent, which was one day to relume a light destined to lighten the universe.

The little learning of those unfortunate ages, though it did not enable the persons who possessed it to taste and understand the beauties of the ancient poets and philosophers, yet gave them some idea of the value of books in general, and enabled them to transcribe, with tolerable accuracy, even what they did not entirely or accurately understand. Thus were those inestimable treasures of all elegant and pleasing knowledge, the old Greek and Latin authors, handed down to happier ages; to those who were able to unlock them, and pour out their riches for the general utility. Nor are we indebted to Christians for the classics only; but also for the Roman law, and the codes of Justinian and Theodosius. Books, which were destroyed by ignorant and angry kings and conquerers, found a safe asylum in religious houses; and even Monkery, which has been justly reprobated as one of the follies of human nature, became, under the direction of Providence, the instrument of many of those blessings which now contribute greatly to the happiness and dignity of an enlightened empire.

The revival of learning, as it is termed, or its emancipation from churches and monasteries, and general diffusion over the world, is greatly owing to the efforts of ecclesiastics. There arose, in the auspicious morning of learning restored, a constellation of polite and profound Christian scholars, whose effulgence has scarcely been outshone by any succeeding luminaries in the literary horizon.⁴⁶

⁴⁶ Vicesimus Knox, op. cit., I, 546-47. Cf. Edward Gibbon,

That the destruction of the monasteries was an impediment to the progress of learning was an idea which was occasionally voiced. The Catholic historian, Hugh Tootell, asserts that "...the nation suffered very much as to learning and improvement in the liberal sciences, by the dissolution of the monasteries" and cleverly quotes in support of his statement such staunch Protestant historians as Jeremy Collier, Thomas Tanner, John Bale, Thomas, and Anthony Wood.⁴⁷

Another medieval institution which came in for its share of attention and praise was that of chivalry. The attitude of the new school of medievalists towards chivalry may be gathered from a study of Gilbert Stuart's interesting account of feudalism. Stuart writes:

Thus war, gallantry, and devotion, conspired to form the character of the knight. And these manners, so lofty and so romantic, were for ages to give a splendour to Europe, by directing the fortunes of its nations, and by producing examples of magnanimity and valour, which are unequalled in the annals of mankind. But their effects in policy and war, however conspicuous, are of little consideration, when compared with the permanent tone they communicated to society. The

Miscellaneous Works, op. cit., II, 409, 708; James Harris, op. cit., II, 565-73; William Hayley, op. cit., II, 31.

47 Hugh Tootell, The Church History of England, from the Year 1500, to the Year 1680. Chiefly with regard to Catholics (Brussels, 1737), I, 112-13. Cf. Horace Walpole, Anecdotes of Painting in England, ed. James Dalloway (London, 1828), I, 103: "...and there is no forgiving him that destruction of ancient monuments, and gothic piles, and painted glass by the suppression of monasteries; a reformation, as he called it, which we antiquaries almost devoutly lament."

spirit of humanity, which distinguishes modern times in the periods of war, as well as of peace; the gallantry which prevails in our conversations and private intercourse, in our theatres, and in our public assemblies and amusements; the point of honour which corrects the passions, by improving our delicacy, and the sense of propriety and decorum; and which, by teaching us to consider the importance of others, makes us value our own; these circumstances arose out of chivalry, and discriminate the modern from the ancient world.⁴⁸

It is Stuart's purpose to show that feudalism fell, not because of outside factors operating on it, but because of its own inner decay, and he applies this method to the dissolution of chivalry as well:

While the varying situation of fiefs and chivalry was to produce the most important consequences in polity and government, it was to be no less powerful in changing the general picture of society; and the manners, which were to figure in this state of confusion and disorder, are a contrast to those which attended their elevation and greatness. The romantic grandeur and virtue which grew out of the feudal association, in its age of cordiality and happiness, could not exist when that cordiality and happiness were decayed. The disorders of fiefs had operated on chivalry, and the deviations of both from perfection, affecting strongly the commerce of life and the condition of the female sex, were to terminate in new modes of thinking, and new systems of action.

The disastrous state of fiefs, disuniting the interests of the lord and vassal, gave rise to oppressions and grievances. These produced a proneness to venality and corruption. All ranks of men, from the sovereign to the slave, seemed at variance. Rapacity and insolence were to characterise the superior and the master; chicane and disaffection, the vassal and the servant. A relaxation of morals, total and violent, was to prevail. Chivalry, losing its renown, the purity of the knightly virtues was to be tarnished. When it fell as a military establishment, its generous manners were not to remain in vigour. The women were

48 Gilbert Stuart, op. cit., p. 70.

to lose their value and their pride. The propensity to vice, fostered by political disorder, and the passion for gallantry, driven to extremity by the romantic admiration which had been paid to the sex, were to engender a voluptuousness, and a luxury which, in the circle of human affairs, are usually to distinguish and to hasten the decline and fall of nations.⁴⁹

Robertson is particularly enthusiastic about chivalry and holds that it refined manners, introduced liberal sentiments, and kept alive the feelings of such cultivated standards as humanity, courtesy, and honor.⁵⁰ But Boswell, perhaps speaking from personal experience in a field in which he had had ample opportunity for investigation, took it upon himself to throw cold water on the tendency to admire chivalry:

...that strange system of manners called Chivalry, the offspring of wild Gothick imagination, and of which the amazing prevalence must ever be held as one of the most astonishing facts in the history of human nature. By that system, Love was fancifully made a species of devotion, and the woman, who was the object of it, a divinity. The utmost prostration, therefore, was understood to have nothing more of meanness in it than the profound humility of religious adoration. And now, though the system be worn away in the progress of time, a certain degree of its delusion and mode of expression remains, as we find the Heathen Gods and Goddesses introduced into our poems, though we have no belief in the Grecian or Roman mythology.⁵¹

49 Gilbert Stuart, ibid., pp. 146-47.

50 William Robertson, op. cit., III, 65-68. Cf. Joseph Phillimore, "Chivalry," Oxford Prize Essays, op. cit., II, 136-37; William Russell, op. cit., I, 146, 502; Thomas Warton, Observations on the Fairy Queen of Spenser, op. cit., II, 322.

51 James Boswell, "On Love," #12, September, 1778, in The Hypochondriack, ed. Margery Bailey (Stanford University Press, 1928), I, 189. Cf. Vicesimus Knox, op. cit., V, 211-14, where "...the boasted age of chivalry" is casti-

The crusades were accorded a high place in effecting the transition from the Middle Ages to the Renaissance.

Robertson is particularly zealous in advancing the claims of the crusades to have brought about the birth of the modern era:

It was not possible for the crusaders to travel through so many countries, and to behold their various customs and institutions, without acquiring information and improvement. Their views enlarged; their prejudices wore off; new ideas crowded into their minds; and they must have been sensible, on many occasions, of the rusticity of their own manners, when compared with those of a more polished people. These impressions were not so slight as to be effaced upon their return to their native countries. A close intercourse subsisted between the East and the West during the two centuries; new armies were continually marching from Europe to Asia, while former adventurers returned home, and imported many of the customs to which they had been familiarized by a long residence abroad. Accordingly, we discover, soon after the commencement of the crusades, greater splendour in the courts of princes, greater pomp in public ceremonies, a more refined taste in pleasure and amusements, together with a more romantic spirit of enterprise, spreading gradually over Europe; and to these wild expeditions, the effect of superstition or folly, we owe the first gleams of light which tended to dispel barbarism and ignorance.⁵²

The general opinion agreed with Robertson that the crusades

gated as "...an age of folly, madness, and misery," and scorn is heaped on those writers who "...have lately arisen, pretending to extraordinary degrees of the distinctive faculty of man, pretending to the most unbounded philanthropy, but at the same time regretting that the age of chivalry is no more," the truth of the matter being that "...the spirit of chivalry was highly favourable to the spirit of despotism."

⁵² William Robertson, op. cit., III, 25.

brought the west into contact with a more refined culture which penetrated into Europe through commercial channels and effected a change in sentiments and in the social organization of feudalism. Thus Adam Anderson writes:

The Holy War made the nations of the west acquainted with the manufactures and productions of the east, and with the ports of the Levant. Even the Danes, as well as the Frisons and English, says Maimbourg in his History of the Crusade, had their fleets in that war. Although in succeeding times, especially in the more northern parts of Europe, the resort to the east fell into disuse, which was chiefly occasioned by the Turks overpowering the Greek empire. Several cities of Europe also, by advancing money for supplying the equipment of their lords-paramount to the Holy War, had gained immunities as enabled them greatly to improve their commerce, by which the old feudal constitution gradually lost ground in most parts; and the plants, fruits, drugs, &c. of the east were brought into the west, and some of them were naturalized in Italy, and from thence, by degrees, introduced into France, Germany, Spain, England, and the Netherlands.⁵³

The crusades as a factor in the breakdown of feudalism are linked with the rise of commerce in promoting the Renaissance as will be seen below.

Turning now to an examination of the cultural traditions of the Middle Ages which, it was thought, had important repercussions on the Renaissance, we find two aspects of medieval thought singled out for discussion. The first of these is an appreciation of provençal literature, and

⁵³ Adam Anderson, op. cit., I, 248. Cf. Henry James Pye, op. cit., II, 134; Joseph Priestley, op. cit., p. 363; Mary Wollstoncraft, An Historical and Moral View of the Origin and Progress of the French Revolution; and the Effect it has Produced in Europe (London, 1794), p. 22.

its place is given detailed treatment by Robert Alves:

The nature of the feudal government strongly biassed in favour of liberty; the establishment of freedom in towns; the gallant regard paid to women, along with the practice of chivalry and the duel; all tended to the civilization of manners, and to mitigate that ferocity and barbarity that disgraced the dark or Gothic ages.

About this time a new race of writers started up, and a new world of literature opened to view; different in kind, indeed, from that of the Greeks or Romans; yet marked with genius, and gradually rising to dignity and importance. Even those regions that in the time of the elegant ancients, could produce nothing but barbarity or savage valour, now gave birth to sciences and arts, and enjoyed, in their turn, the splendid sunshine of knowledge and refinement.

Britain, Germany, France, and Spain, climates hitherto inhospitable to literature; and that from time immemorial brought forth nations only agitated with discord, sunk in ignorance, or torpid with sloth; at last awakened from their long dream, and threw off those chains that seemed both their disgrace and misery. Europe assumed a new face; in it mankind began to feel their natural powers; and nations the most savage and unpolished shared more or less in the general information.

Italy, however, was the first that figured in this restoration of learning; and produced such examples of genius in the fine arts, as left not much to be improved upon, even by the most eminent of their successors.

It is worth while to observe, that this was chiefly owing to the Troubadours, or Provencal poets; who, about the time of the Crusades, attended the courts of the different European princes, and were greatly admired for the smoothness of their language, and their talents in poetic composition.

But no where, were they more caressed and encouraged than in Italy. Romantic love and feats of chivalry chiefly employed their songs, and were described with all that enthusiasm for which the times were so remarkable. They, likewise, dealt in satire and morals, and were particularly severe against the clergy, the dissoluteness of whose lives, in those days, was shockingly notorious.

The Italians insensibly caught their manner, and applying it to their own manner and tongue, (which grew every day more refined), they at last supplanted that of the Provencals, whose language as well as

poetry, after lasting for two or three centuries, fell into disuse, and in the fourteenth century, entirely disappeared.

However, to this set of strolling bards was owing that remarkable revolution in literature that took place sooner or later in the different kingdoms of Europe. Dante, Petrarch, and Boccace, in Italy; Chaucer and Spenser, in England, as well as other poets in France and Spain; all formed themselves upon the provencal poetry; chose much the same objects, and breathed a spirit of wild romance and humours, extremely characteristic of the times.⁵⁴

James Beattie has something of the same notion in his dissertation On Fable and Romance:

To investigate all the causes that brought about the revival of letters, is now impossible. The ages immediately preceding this great event were profoundly ignorant; and few memorials of them remain. The crusades, bloody and unnatural as they were, seem to have given a new, and a favourable impulse to the human soul. For the heroes of those wars, who lived to return home, brought along with them marvellous accounts of Asia, and of the misfortunes, triumphs, and other adventures that had there befallen them. Thus, it may be supposed, that the imagination of Europeans would be elevated, their memory stored with new ideas, and their curiosity awakened. The human mind, thus prepared, naturally betakes itself to invention. Or if we believe the dawn of modern literature to have been previous to, or coeval with, the first crusade, it is not absurd to imagine, that the same spirit of activity, however raised, which made men think of signaling themselves in feats of arms at home, or in quest of adventures abroad, might also stimulate the mental powers, and cause genius to exert itself in new ways of thinking, as well as of acting. The wars of Thebes and of Troy are undoubtedly to be reckoned among the causes that gave rise to the literature of Greece.

Be this however it will, certain it is, that about the beginning of the twelfth century, or perhaps a little earlier, there appeared, in the country of Provence, a set of men, called Troubadours, who are

⁵⁴ Robert Alves, Sketches of a History of Literature (Edinburgh, 1794), pp. 61-63.

to be considered the fathers of modern learning. That country, known of old by the name of the Roman province, is situated in a genial climate; and, from its vicinity to Marseilles, which was a Greek colony, and from having so long enjoyed the benefit of Roman arts and manners, we need not wonder, that, when all the rest of Europe was in a rude state, it should retain some traces of antient discipline. An obvious advantage it must have had, in this respect, over Rome; owing to its distance from the seat of Papal despotism: which in those days, was friendly to ignorance; though in a later period, under Leo, it favoured the cultivation of arts and sciences.

The Crusades were in many other respects beneficial to Europe. They enlarged mens ideas of commerce, improved their taste, and refined their manners; and occasioned new distributions of property: whereby the sovereigns acquired greater power, the laws became more effectual, the aristocracy became less formidable, and the people by degrees emerged into liberty. These causes, by a slow and almost imperceptible energy continued through several ages, brought on at last a total reformation of the Feudal System.⁵⁵

The other aspect of medieval culture which was considered of significance was scholasticism. "The scholastic theology," wrote Robertson, "was the first production of the spirit of enquiry after it began to resume some degree of activity and vigour in Europe." Scholasticism, Robertson declared:

...occasioned a fermentation of mind that put ingenuity and invention in motion, and gave them vigour. It led men to a new employment of their faculties, which they found to be agreeable as well as interesting. It accustomed them to exercises and occupations which tended to soften their manners, and to give them some relish for the gentle virtues, peculiar to

⁵⁵ James Beattie, Dissertations Moral and Critical (Dublin, 1783), II, 291-93. Cf. Joseph Priestley, op. cit., p. 290 in, 1783), II, 291-93. Cf. Joseph Priestley, op. cit., p. 290.

people among whom science has been cultivated with success.⁵⁶

Nevertheless, for a real understanding of scholasticism, scholarship had to wait for the nineteenth century, and some students of medieval philosophy would argue that only in recent times has scholasticism really received adequate study.

Several features of feudalism as a political structure were thought worthy of commendation by the late eighteenth century students of medieval society. One of these was the establishment of law and order by means of a fixed system of justice; the revival of Roman law was recognized to have played an important part in stabilizing the feudal system. Robertson holds that this process was one of the most important in effecting the transition from a state of barbarism to a peaceful civilization, and he traces three steps by which the transition was achieved: 1) the abolition of the right of individuals to wage war on their own initia-

⁵⁶ William Robertson, op. cit., III, 72. Cf. Edward Gibbon, The Decline and Fall, op. cit., p. 1208; William Russell, op. cit., I, 295. Godwin writes with a somewhat fatuous superiority in the Annual Register for 1785: "With all the misapplication of their talents, the school divines and philosophers were many of them great men. Thomas Aquinas in particular had extraordinary abilities, which, if they had been properly directed, might have rendered him very useful to mankind. Nor is it to be imagined that everything in him is trifling and ridiculous. There are, it is believed, parts of his works which might even now be read with pleasure and advantage." Cited in C. Kegan Paul, William Godwin (London, 1876), I, 100-01.

tive; 2) the prohibition of trial by judicial combat; and 3) the establishment of the right of appeal from the courts of the barons to those of the king. The end result of this development was the growth of a class of men to whom the preservation of justice was a virtue superior to military prowess, and who made possible respect and admiration for the civil professions.⁵⁷ This point is likewise made by John Dalrymple in his study of feudalism:

The Spirit of laws first suggested in France, and the considerations upon forfeiture first suggested in England, that it was possible to unite philosophy and history with jurisprudence to write even upon a subject of law like a scholar and a gentleman.

That discovery being made, it appeared, that a system of law, once so universal, and still so much revered; during the progress of which, men arrived from the most rude to the most polished state of society; a system which has been the cause of the greatest revolutions both civil and military; a system connected equally with the manners and with the governments of modern Europe; deserved an enquiry in the republick of letters, independent of the present particular use of that enquiry, in any particular nation.⁵⁸

Another feature which was noticed was the rise of a system of representative government. As the feudal bonds broke, the lower and middle ranks of society demanded a place in the political apparatus. The tide of commercial

57 William Robertson, op. cit., III, 39-65.

58 John Dalrymple, An Essay towards a General History of Feudal Property in Great Britain (London, 1759), pp. ix-x. Cf. Adam Anderson, op. cit., I, 147; Henry James Pye, op. cit., II, 136-77; William Russell, op. cit., I, 294.

prosperity washed over Europe but it was in the cities where it reached its high water mark. As a consequence, the middle class, by virtue of its financial power, demanded and received special privileges, first, in the protection of its trade, then in securing independence for the cities where the wealth and merchandise were accumulated, and finally, in an ever increasing share of political power. That is the way the scholars of the half century under consideration saw the political and social history of the Middle Ages. In his "Essay on the Origin and Structure of the European Legislatures," Adam Macconochie writes:

The fall of the feudal system was accomplished, in the principal states of Europe, at a period when the revival of learning had diffused in society a spirit of reflection, and communicated, to the better sort, some knowledge of the history of the Greek and Roman republics. As it was, in general, the kings who conducted the attack on the privileges of the feudal nobility, the principal part of the spoils had fallen naturally to their share. But the people were warlike, the nobles were still animated with the pride of rank, of family, and of their ancient consequence, and men, in general, had begun to speculate on their rights, and were unaccustomed to perceive, with satisfaction, the whole powers of government centered in the crown. Hence the rights of the kings, of the nobility, and of the people, came to be a matter of general discussion. And as men are usually prejudiced in favour of the wisdom of their remote ancestors, and derive their more common notions of their political rights from what was customary in ancient times, the merits of the dispute were universally supposed to turn on the historical question of fact, What constitution was adopted by the original founders of each particular nation.

Hence the first researches into the ancient history of the European governments were made with a view to support the tenets of political factions. Those who

wished to gain the favour of courts laboured to prove the ancient sovereignty of the Gothic kings, and founded their systems on the despotic powers of the leader of a conquering army, and the absolute nature of a right of conquest; from whence they inferred, that the privileges of aristocracy were usurpations on the crown, and the rights of the people the grants of its bounty. The partizans of the people again endeavoured to trace the political rights of the commons to a remote antiquity, and exhibited them as understood and exercised in the fullest manner in the earliest ages of the constitution; and they contended, that the happiness of those times was to be restored only, by the people resuming the constitutional powers which kings and nobles had alternately usurped. In fine, those who had imbibed from the Greek and Roman classics, or from family-connections, a profound reverence for aristocratic manners, delighted to espouse the cause of the falling nobility, to display the ancient powers of the order, and to confute their antagonists, by tracing the circumscribed limits of the royal prerogative in remote times, the oppressions under which the commons laboured, and the little importance they possessed in national affairs.⁵⁹

Maconochie thus traces the ideological struggles in which the basic economic, political, and social issues of the late Middle Ages are reflected. Robertson devotes considerable attention to the rise of the cities, the origin of the representative system of government, and the freeing of the lower classes.⁶⁰

⁵⁹ Adam Maconochie, "Essay on the Origin and Structure of the European Legislatures," Transactions of the Royal Society of Edinburgh, I (1788), 3-4. Maconochie shows a good command over the history of ideas method.

⁶⁰ William Robertson, op. cit., III, 28-39. Cf. Edward Gibbon, The Decline and Fall, op. cit., p. 1208; William Russell, op. cit., I, 290.

The natural consequence of the development of these notions was the formation of a theory of nationalism, that is to say, of the rise of separate nations, each with an individual policy aimed at securing the maximum benefits for itself by planting colonies and by establishing a balance of power, a task, our writers tell us, inherited with all its difficulties by the eighteenth century. Samuel Johnson writes:

The present system of English Politics may properly be said to have taken rise in the Reign of Queen Elizabeth. At this time the Protestant Religion was established, which naturally allied us to the reformed States, and made all the Popish Powers our Enemies.

We began in the same Reign to extend our Trade, by which we made it necessary to ourselves to watch the Commercial Progress of our Neighbours; and, if not to incommode and obstruct their Traffick, to hinder them from impairing ours.

We then likewise settled Colonies in America, which was become the great Scene of European ambition; for, seeing with what Treasures the Spaniards were annually enriched from Mexico and Peru, every Nation imagined, that an American Conquest or Plantation would certainly fill the Mother Country with Gold and Silver. This produced a large Extent of very distant Dominions, of which we, at this Time, neither knew nor presaw the Advantage or Incumbrance: We seem to have snatched them into our Hands, upon no very just Principles of Policy, only because every State, according to a Prejudice of long Continuance, concludes itself more powerful as its Territories become larger.

The Discoveries of new Regions, which were then every Day made, the Profit of remote Traffick, and the Necessity of long Voyages, produced, in a few Years, a great Multiplication of Shipping. The Sea was considered as the wealthy Element; and, by Degrees, a new Kind of Sovereignty arose, called Naval Dominion.

As the chief Trade of the World, so the chief maritime Power was at first in the Hands of the Portugese and Spaniards, who, by a Compact, to

which the consent of other Princes was not asked, had divided the newly-discovered Countries between them; but the Crown of Portugal having fallen to the King of Spain, or being seized by him, he was Master of the Ships of the two Nations, with which he kept all the Coasts of Europe in Alarm, till the Armada, which he had raised at a vast Expence for the Conquest of England, was destroyed, which put a Stop, and almost an End, to the naval Power of the Spaniards.

At this Time the Dutch, who were oppressed by the Spaniards, and feared yet greater Evils than they felt, resolved no longer to endure the Insolence of their Masters: They therefore revolted; and after a struggle, in which they were assisted by the Money and Forces of Elizabeth, erected an independent and powerful Commonwealth.

When the Inhabitants of the Low-Countries had formed their System of Government, and some Remission of the War gave them Leisure to form Schemes of future Prosperity, they easily perceived, that as their Territories were narrow, and their Numbers small, they could preserve themselves only by that Power which is the Consequence of Wealth; and that, by a People whose Country produced only the Necessaries of Life, Wealth was not to be acquired, but from foreign Dominions, and by the Transportation of the Products of one Country into another.

From this Necessity, thus justly estimated, arose a Plan of Commerce, which was for many Years prosecuted with Industry and Success, perhaps never seen in the World before, and by which the poor Tenants of mudwalled Villages and impassable Bogs, erected themselves into high and mighty States, who put the greatest Monarchs at Defiance, whose Alliance was courted by the proudest, and whose Power was dreaded by the Nation. By the Establishment of this State there arose to England a new Ally, and a new Rival.

At this Time, which seems to be the Period destined for the Change of the Face of Europe, France began first to rise into Power; and, from defending her own Provinces with Difficulty and fluctuating Success, to threaten her Neighbours with Incroachments and Devastations. Henry the Fourth having after a long Struggle, obtained the crown, found it easy to govern Nobles exhausted and wearied with a long Civil War, and having composed the Disputes between the Protestants and the Papists, so as to obtain at least a Truce for both Parties, was at Leisure to accumulate Treasure, and raise Forces which he

proposed to have employed in a Design of settling for ever the Balance of Europe. Of this grand Scheme he lived not to see the Vanity, or to feel the Disappointment; for he was murdered in the Midst of his mighty Preparations.⁶¹

This succinct account of the rise of continental nationalism lacks but a sketch of the rise of English nationalism and this was supplied by John Dalrymple in his Memoirs of Great Britain and Ireland where he traces the rise to power of the Tudors and describes the national unity which centered about Elizabeth.⁶² Robertson's story of the rise of nationalism which follows pretty much Johnson's account is criticized by Hume who argues that nationalism is not necessarily characteristic of the modern era but can be found in ancient times as well. But Roscoe very shrewdly points out in defence of Robertson that

...the transactions in Italy, during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, bear indeed a strong resemblance to those which took place among the Grecian states; but it was not till nearly the close of the latter century that a system of general security and pacification was clearly developed, and precautions taken for insuring its continuance. Simple as this idea may now appear, yet it must be considered that, before the adoption of it, the minds of men, and consequently the maxims of states, must have under-

61 Samuel Johnson, "An Introduction to the Political State of Great Britain: Written in the Year 1756," Miscellaneous and Fugitive Pieces (London, 1774), I, 35-37.

62 John Dalrymple, Memoirs of Great Britain and Ireland (London, 1771), I, 14-15.

gone an important change: views of aggrandizement were to be repressed; war was to be prosecuted, not for the purpose of conquest, but of security; and, above all, an eye was to be found that could discern, and a mind that could comprehend, so extended an object.⁶³

Thus the intimate relationship between nationalism and the Renaissance which was recognized in the Renaissance itself but neglected for the next hundred and fifty years is once again brought to light and studied. It is important to note that the rise of nationalism is considered as part of the break-down of the Middle Ages and not as an aspect of the rise of the modern era by the medievalists of the second half of the eighteenth century. Moreover, from this time on, no account of the Renaissance is considered complete without taking into consideration the influence of nationalism.

Finally, those outgrowths of feudalism which in time came to produce the modern state are not the only reasons the historians of our period find for praising the institution, for in itself feudalism carried the seed from which could spring a decent and noble way of life. "While the greatness and simplicity of those manners," writes Stuart:

which the conquerors of Rome brought with them from their woods, continued to animate their

⁶³ William Roscoe, op. cit., II, 5-6. Cf. Joseph Phillimore, op. cit., II, 130-32; William Robertson, op. cit., III, 78-113; John Stedman, op. cit., pp. 306-08; Gilbert Stuart, op. cit., p. 131.

prosperity, the feudal association was noble in its principles, and useful in its practices. The solitudes, and the mercenary spirit which rise up with commerce, were unknown, and the fullest scope was given to nature and the passions. The actions and conduct of men were directed by sentiment and affection. In the ardour of private confederacies, the general feelings of generosity were augmented. The emotions of the heart increased their force of confinement. And the lord and vassal were linked to each other in the closest connection. The arms and zeal of his followers were the strength and the bulwark of the chief or supporter. The bounty and power of the chief or of the superior, were the subsistence and protection of the followers or the vassals. Their interests and their passions were the same; and a constant communication of good offices kept alive their attachments.⁶⁴

Stuart's statement indicates a tradition which, though it touches on the problem under consideration, I have not studied here. It is of course common knowledge that the northern invaders were looked on as barbarians. On the other hand, there is a tradition, which goes back to the ancient primitivistic writings, which regards them in another light. It was held that Rome fell because it had become effete and corrupt, and the Germanic invaders performed a great service to the human race by destroying a worn-out people and by infusing their own vitality into the European stock. The affinities of this notion with the myth of the noble savage and with the idea of German superiority are immediately obvious, and from this point the ramifications lead away from the subject. But some

64 Gilbert Stuart, op. cit., pp. 73-74.

eighteenth century writers hold that the Goths gave to the Middle Ages a vigor, a sense of heroism, and a taste for romance which carried over into the Renaissance; this is the focal point of Hurd's essays on romance and of Warton's notes on the Faerie Queene. Thus, as Alves states the case:

That a barbarous people coming from the north should at once overthrow an empire of such duration and renown as that of Rome, is at first view surprising; and indeed various causes must have concurred to bring about so remarkable an event. But as every thing human is variable, and subject to change; so it was necessary that the empire of Rome should cease to exist at a period when those causes ceased to operate, that alone could support its existence.

It had lost its liberty, its virtue, and its martial spirit. That love of their country, which like a sacred flame, spread from bosom to bosom, through a long succession of generous patriots, and contributed, with ambition, to raise their dominion to an enormous height, had long ago begun to languish, and was now totally extinguished....

No wonder, then, that a brave, a free people, however unpolished in arts and arms, should overturn an empire already tottering by its own weight, and half-expiring by wounds of its own affection....

They were, besides, actuated by a spirit of heroism peculiar to themselves; and which seemed to be inspired into them by their first founders and leaders, whom they worshipped as gods, and who had taught them peculiar doctrine.

That species of poetry which they sung, upon going into battle, must have breathed an uncommon spirit of romantic enthusiasm.⁶⁵

65 Robert Alves, op. cit., pp. 57-59. Cf. Mrs. Piozzi's observation: "It is difficult, if not impossible, however, to withhold one's respect for those barbarians who could thus change the face of art, almost of nature; who could overwhelm courage and counteract learning; who not only devoured the works of wisdom and the labours of strength, but left behind them too a settled system of feudatorial life and aristocratic power, still undestroyed in Europe, though hourly attacked, battered by commerce, and sapped by civilization," op. cit., p. 89. The attacks on the

All these studies of the relationship between the Middle Ages and the Renaissance brought about a sincere appreciation of a period of history which had long been neglected, and which the Renaissance, in its endeavors to establish itself, had taken the lead in deprecating. But from this time on, the study of the Middle Ages came into its own, though it was not until recent times that the investigation of the Middle Ages was pursued independently of its tie-up with the Renaissance. Nevertheless, the essential aspects of the Middle Ages were analyzed and studied during the latter half of the eighteenth century. This is one of the most important contributions of the historians from 1742 to 1795 in England to the development of a more sound and scientific history of civilization.

V. The Renaissance and the Reformation

The writers of the latter half of the eighteenth century asked a number of interesting questions about the relationship of the Renaissance to the Reformation. Did the

French monarchy before the revolution as a survival of feudalism seem somewhat exaggerated to modern ears, but the evidence shows that, in the political sphere at least, it was thought that the Renaissance had effected no change at all. This is precisely the burden of Mary Wollstonecraft's complaint, op. cit., p. 3.

same causes which produced one movement produce the other? Did the Renaissance result in the Reformation or was the process the other way about? Was the Reformation of benefit or a hindrance to the Renaissance? Conversely, was the spirit of the Renaissance inimical to that of the Reformation? Finally, did both movements yield similar results, and were these results compatible with, or antagonistic to, each other? Of course, not all of these questions received equal attention, but it is significant that they were raised at all and they indicate a growing appreciation of the complexity of historical research.

It is remarkable that of the writers who consider the problem of the causes of the Reformation all are agreed that the spirit of active and free inquiry resulted in a zeal for truth which ultimately led to the Reformation, but whence this spirit of inquiry is derived is not shown; here again is an instance of the tendency to ascribe abstract causes to historical phenomena. A typical expression of the view just stated is that by John Gregory:

Yet the effects of religious controversy have sometimes proved beneficial to Mankind. That spirit of free inquiry, which incited the first Reformers to shake off the yoke of ecclesiastical tyranny, naturally begot just sentiments of civil liberty, especially when irritated by persecution. When such sentiments came to be united with that bold enthusiasm, that severity of temper and manners that distinguished some of the Reformed Sects; they produced those resolute and inflexible Men, who alone were able to affect the cause of liberty, in an age when the Christian world was enervated by luxury or superstition; and

to such Men we owe that freedom, and happy constitution, which we at present enjoy.⁶⁶

Now, since it was the spirit of free inquiry which led to the Reformation, what was the material manifestation of this spirit, through what agency did it express itself? The answer was unanimous: it was the invention of printing which made possible the spread of useful knowledge which ultimately made the power of the church crumble. So great were the services rendered by printing that at the meeting of the Friends to the Freedom of the Press on June 15, 1793, the following ode was recited:

When crush'd beneath a barbarous host
Rome's Arts were with her Empire lost,
A midnight darkness gathered round
Mankind in mental thraldom bound;
Confin'd to cloistered walls alone,
The light of Science dimly shone,
And only serv'd to show how thick the gloom,
Like the faint lamp that glimmers in the tomb.

For superstition held her reign;
Whilst priests combined, a ready train,
Her throne on ignorance to rear,
And rule her slaves by hope and fear;
Obsequious, 'midst the trembling crowd,
Slaves of their arts, ev'n monarchs bow'd;
Force join'd with fraud to aid th' unhallow'd plan
And Tyrants leagued with Priests, the foes of man.

Long was the night, and thick the gloom,
'Till from Invention's fruitful womb
That Art sprung forth, whose happy birth
Again had Science bless the earth,--

66 John Gregory, A Comparative View of the State and Faculties of Man with those of the Animal World (London, 1777), pp. 265-66. Cf. Richard Mant, "On Commerce," Oxford Prize Essays, op. cit., II, 53-54; Henry James Pye, op. cit., II, 142-43.

O, Art, whose magic spell can bind
The wand'ring offspring of the mind;
And when mature, to due perfection brought,
Immortal stamp the fleeting form of thought!

Taught in one centre to combine,
By thee the rays of Science shine;
While in thy strong illumin'd page
Beams forth the light of many an age;
Learning, no more to schools confin'd,
Her lustre sheds to all mankind;
Secur'd from time from every enemy's base controul,
She spreads from clime to clime, from soul to soul.

Arous'd at length, tho' long deprest,
As from a dream, the slumb'ring breast,
To life and energy awoke,
Spurn'd superstition's galling yoke;
Fetter'd no more by slavish rules,
And the vile jargon of the schools,
It learn'd its powers and privilege to scan,
And claim its freedom, Heaven's best gift to man.

The chains of Rome then Britain broke,
Impatient of a foreign yoke:
Her sons to freedom ever dear,
Were foremost in the proud career!
And long her Princes strove in vain
To rivet a domestic chain:
No end of fierce contest Europe saw
'Till liberty was fix'd on the firm base of law.⁶⁷

Armstrong's poem makes the Renaissance and Reformation the joint products of a similar cause, while both have an identical historical mission. Vicesimus Knox has an essay "On the Moral, Political, and Religious Effects of Printing" in which he lists nine effects produced by the invention of printing. These are a change in the manners and senti-

67 "Ode for the Meeting of the Friends to the Freedom of the Press. At London the 15th of June, 1793. By Mr. Armstrong," in Archibald Bruce, Reflections on Freedom of Writing; and the Impropriety of Attempting to Suppress it by Penal Laws (Edinburgh, 1794), pp. 166-67.

ments of the people, the diffusion of philosophy through all the ranks of society, the circulation of pamphlets on all subjects to all classes, the refinement of the lower classes through an increase in learning, the exhibition of virtue as well as vice, the spread of truth but of error too, the development of the idea of improvement, the growth of the idea of superiority, and the increase of science. He concludes his essay with these observations:

Before the introduction of printing, the student who revolted at the idea of languishing in the sloth of monkery, had scarcely any scope for his industry and talents, but in the puerile perplexities of a scholastic philosophy, as little adapted to call forth the virtues of the heart, as to promote valuable knowledge; but since that important aera in the annals of learning, every individual, even the poorest of the muses' train, has been enabled to obtain, without difficulty, the works of those great masters in practical and speculative ethics, the Greek and Roman philosophers....

Whatever tends to diffuse new light on the understandings of a whole people, or to effect a change in the general system of manners, soon produces a similar revolution in their political character. Airy fabrics, which, when seen through the mists of ignorance, were supposed to be realities, vanished at the light of learning, as the enchantment is dissolved by the operation of the talisman. The sun of science arose, the prospect cleared around, and they who had shuddered at the ideal phantoms of the night, ventured to walk forth and examine every object that solicited attention. The prejudices on the subject of civil government, formed by ignorance, and fostered by the policy of power, when once the art of printing had multiplied books, and roused the spirit of inquiry, soon gave way to the dictates of instructed reason. The natural rights of mankind became well understood, the law of nations was attended to, implicit obedience was neither exacted on the one part with the same rigour as before, nor paid on the other with equal servility. What re-

mained of the feudal institutions could not long submit, when more liberal ideas of the nearer equality of mankind were imbibed from books, and when a great degree of dignity and power was attainable, not only by birth and riches, but by mere literary eminence. The distinction of vassal and lord soon ceased to be the only one in the community, when men were led, by the ease with which books were procured, to aspire after the fine arts, philosophy, and erudition. Such studies infused a noble generosity of spirit, which scorned to pay an abject homage to ignorant opulence. Ignorant opulence, indeed, could not maintain, or even exact by force, that truly valuable respect which is naturally due, and cheerfully paid, to personal dignity. Men, by reading, were led to reflect, and by reflection discovered that they had been under an error when they looked up to their governors as to a superior order of beings; but at the same time the happiness of living under a well-regulated constitution, the duty of obedience in return for protection and the political necessity for subordination. History, and treatise of politics, suggested just notions of civil society, and a sense of expediency produced at length that voluntary acquiescence which was once exacted by pretensions to divine right, or by the immediate interposition of authority. The lust of dominion, which disgraced the iron reign of the sullen and unlettered tyrant, was succeeded, in the enlightened father of his people, by a spirit of benevolence and philosophical moderation. That power, which was once placed on the sandy foundation of popular prejudice and fear, when those fears and prejudices were dissipated by free disquisition, acquired an establishment on the basis of reason.

Nor let it be deemed idle speculation to attribute these salutary consequences to the invention of printing, since to him who attentively considers all its remote as well as proximate effects, it will appear fully adequate to their production. When all ranks of people on a sudden were enabled to exert with vigour the faculty of accurate and comprehensive thought, which had only lain dormant for want of opportunity, the effect on the moral and political world must be as striking, as that which takes place in the physical, at the return of day after night, and spring after winter.

Thus has Faustus and Mentz, by an art invented and exercised with views of private emolument, ultimately contributed more to the empires, and caused more important events in their history, than all the efforts

of the renowned conquerers and lawgivers of antiquity....

To the art of printing, however, it is acknowledged, we owe the Reformation. It has been justly remarked, that if the books of Luther had been multiplied only by the slow process of handwriting, they must have been few, and would easily have been suppressed by the combination of wealth and power: but, poured forth in abundance from the press, they spread over the land with the rapidity of an inundation, which acquires additional force from the efforts used to obstruct its progress. He who undertook to prevent the dispersion of books once issued from the press, attempted a task no less arduous than the destruction of the Hydra. Resistance was vain, and religion was reformed: and we who are chiefly interested in this happy revolution must remember, amidst the praises bestowed on Luther, that his endeavours had been ineffectual, unassisted by the invention of Faustus.⁶⁸

In this interesting passage, Knox has linked the theory of democracy, the revival of learning, and the Reformation to the invention of printing and at the same time made them all parts of a sweeping movement which effected the change from the old world of the Middle Ages to the new world of the modern era.⁶⁹ The beneficial results which were attributed to printing by Anderson and Knox were ascribed to the liberty of the press by Archibald Bruce:

Every person, who is but moderately informed, knows how much the liberty of the press hath contributed to the downfall of tyranny, and the expulsion of ignorance and bigotry, and in what a pitiable state of

⁶⁸ Vicesimus Knox, op. cit., II, 86-39.

⁶⁹ Cf. Robert Henry, op. cit., X, 200; William Roscoe, op. cit., I, 43-45; John Stedman, op. cit., pp. 450-51. Oliver Goldsmith expresses a somewhat similar notion in his History of England from the Earliest Times to the Death of George II (London, 1797), II, 143.

slavery the human mind is held, where it is jealously restrained. The freedom of preaching and writing were the principal means of accomplishing the Protestant reformation, as they have ever been the maintenance of it. Hereby learning lifted its head from its long slumber: truth darted forth its irresistible [sic] beams through the vast obscure; religion burst from its long confinement; superstition and tyranny were shown in their native ugliness; the reign of priesthood and mysterious imposition were at an end; the enchanting spell of venerated names and titles, --of mother church, and holy canons and bulls, was broken. The people who sat in darkness wondering saw a great light and rejoiced; while those whose deeds were evil, and who loved to dwell and act in darkness, were startled and affrighted, as much as Pluto in the fable, when the sun beams penetrated through an opening chasm, into his gloomy region.⁷⁰

To adduce examples of the belief that the Reformation broke the Popish hold on the minds of men would be a work of supererogation. The Protestant anti-Catholic bias of the English writers of the latter half of the eighteenth century could see no good in an era which was dominated by Catholic ideology, and as a consequence saw in the Reformation not only an attack on the ecclesiastical prerogatives of the Catholic church, but also the first beginnings of the emancipation of the human mind and the establishment of the free exercise of reason. "As monkery increased," writes John Stedman:

...taste and sound philosophy declined. The schools and the convents in which any vestige of literature was to be found, adopted the systems which they thought to be best suited to support the doctrines of Christianity. Some of them making selections from the different systems of Greece, and frequently

⁷⁰ Archibald Bruce, op. cit., p. 13.

interlarding these with their own opinions, framed systems unheard of before, and calculated rather to perplex than to enlighten the mind. In the sixteenth century, when the several states of Europe had shaken off the papal yoke, mens minds, feeling the sweets of relaxation, after so long and so heavy a bondage, learned to think with more liberality, and to disclose new opinions with less reserve. While the sciences were cherished, and freedom of inquiry began to obtain in the reformed states, Galileo was persecuted in Italy for physical discoveries and doctrines which are, at this day, universally recognized as certain truths: and Copernicus, in an earlier period, would have shared the same fate, had not a natural death prevented his persecution, when he had just seen the first impression of his works.⁷¹

A letter addressed to Junius which appeared in the Public Advertiser dated October 8, 1771 and signed "An Advocate in the Cause of the People" links the Reformation to the liberal philosophy:

Credulity and superstitious veneration have ever held in darkness the human mind. It was not till the Pope and his priests had forfeited their character of holiness and infallibility that the Reformation took place, and mankind began to think for themselves; the Scriptures began to be understood in their original meaning, though many to this day interpret them, not as they have considered them in their own minds, but as, by their priests or their parents, they are taught to believe.⁷²

And by a simple process of extension the Reformation was held responsible not only for the destruction of the Roman church but generally for having set the light of reason ablaze, for freeing the human mind, and for producing a

⁷¹ John Stedman, op. cit., pp. 393-94.

⁷² C. W. Everett, ed., The Letters of Junius (London, 1927), p. 370.

spirit of inquiry.⁷³ Thus, the same results were attributed to the Reformation as were ascribed to the revival of learning, as we have already seen.

From the theory that the Reformation made possible the spirit of free inquiry, it is an easy step to assert that the atmosphere of liberty of thought and expression made possible by the Reformation ultimately led to the Renaissance. Praising the writers who flourished under Elizabeth, George Ellis asserts that the "...literary splendour of this reign may be justly attributed to the effects of the Reformation."⁷⁴ Burney holds that had it not been for the Reformation and the invention of printing the art of music would have remained the monopoly of the church while Goldsmith suggests that it was the Reformation which created the taste for literature which led to the great works of the Renaissance.⁷⁵ The intimate relationship between the Renaissance and Reformation is described by Samuel Johnson in his Life of Ascham:

Ascham entered Cambridge at a time when the last great Revolution of the intellectual World was filling every academical Mind with Ardour or Anxiety. The Destruction of the Constantinopolitan Empire had driven the Greeks with their Language into the interior Parts of

73 David Mallet, The Works (London, 1759), III, 241; William Robertson, op. cit., IV, 12; N. William Wraxall, op. cit., I, 479, II, 189.

74 George Ellis, op. cit., II, 158.

75 Charles Burney, op. cit., I, 704; Oliver Goldsmith, op. cit., V, 308.

Europe, the Art of Printing had made the Books easily attainable, and Greek now began to be taught in England. The Doctrines of Luther had already filled all the Nations of the Romish Communion with Controversy and Dissention. New Studies of Literature, and new Tenets of Religion, found Employment for all who were desirous of Truth, or ambitious of Fame. Learning was at that Time prosecuted with that Eagerness and Perseverance which in this Age of Indifference and Dissipation it is not easy to conceive. To teach or to learn was at once the Business and the Pleasure of the academical Life; and an Emulation of Study was raised by Cheke and Smith, to which even the present Age perhaps owes many Advantages, without remembering or knowing its Benefactors.

Ascham soon resolved to unite himself to those who were enlarging the Bounds of Knowledge, and immediately upon his admission into the College, applied himself to the Study of Greek. Those who were zealous for the new Learning, were often no great Friends to the old Religion; and Ascham as he became a Grecian, became a Protestant.⁷⁶

Alves points out that both Melanchthon and Erasmus were students of the great works of the ancients and reformers as well and shows the skill in editing which had been developed as a result of the revival of ancient texts was applied to the holy books.⁷⁷ Finally, it was recognized at this time that Erasmus epitomized in his life and works the totality of Renaissance-Reformation relationships. Two attitudes towards Erasmus have always seemed to prevail; one, cynical and realistic, emphasizes Erasmus' refusal to follow out in action the logic of his thinking, while the other tends to skim over his hesitations but

⁷⁶ Samuel Johnson, The Life of Roger Ascham in Miscellaneous and Fugitive Pieces, op. cit., I, 235.

⁷⁷ Robert Alves, op. cit., pp. 106-07.

concentrates on his services to learning and the goodness of his character. The first is held by James Murray who in a terse sentence sums up his point of view: "Erasmus, before Luther appeared, had exposed the absurdities of the Church of Rome, though he either had not sufficient courage, or never intended to go so far as Luther did."⁷⁸ On the other hand, the more sympathetic attitude towards Erasmus is expressed by Knox in a very warm appreciation of the humanist:

It pleases Almighty God to raise up, from time to time, men of extraordinary abilities, combined with virtues no less extraordinary; who, in the dark night of ignorance and prejudice, shine like the nocturnal lamp of Heaven, with solitary but serene lustre; obscured indeed at first by the gathering clouds of envy, unseen awhile through the voluntary blindness of self-interest; almost extinguished by civil and ecclesiastical bigotry; but at length, bursting through every obstacle, and reflecting a steady light on those labyrinths of error which lead to misery. Such was Erasmus; a name, at the mention of which, all that is great and good, and learned and free, feels a sentiment of cordial respect, and rises to pay a voluntary obeisance.

God had given him an intellect in a state of vigour rarely indulged in the sons of men. Trained in the school of adversity, he sought and found in it the sweet solace of learning and virtue. He there cultivated his native talents by early and constant exercise; and thus accumulated, by indefatigable industry, a store of knowledge; which, by means of an eloquence scarcely exceeded in the golden ages, he lavishly disseminated over the world, at that time barren, dark, and dreary, to enlighten and to fertilize.

God had given him not only a preeminent intellect,

⁷⁸ James Murray, A History of the Churches in England and Scotland, from the Reformation to this Present Time (Newcastle upon Tyne), I, 4.

but a gift still more estimable, a good and feeling heart, a love of truth, a warm philanthropy, which prompted him to exert his fine abilities, totally regardless of mean honours, or sordid profits, in diffusing most important information, in an age when human misery was greatly augmented by gross ignorance, and when man, free-born but degraded man, was bound down in darkness, with double shackles, in the chains of a twofold despotism, usurping an absolute dominion, both in church and state, over the body and the soul.

These two gifts combined formed Erasmus; a man justly deemed and called the Phoenix of his age. He it was who led the way both to the revival of learning and the restoration of religion. Taste and polite letters are no less indebted to him than rational theology. Liberty acknowledges him as one of her noblest assertors. Had he not appeared and fought on the side of humanity, with the spear of truth and the lash of ridicule, Europe, instead of enjoying or contending for freedom at this hour, might perhaps have still been sunk in the dead repose of servitude, or galled with the iron hand of civil tyrants; allied, for mutual aid, in a villainous confederacy, with the despotism of ecclesiastics. Force and fraud, availing themselves of the superstitious fears of ignorance, had united against the people, conspired against the majority of men, and dealt their curses through the land without mercy or controul. Then rose Erasmus, not indeed furnished with the arms of the warrior, but richly adorned with the arts of peace. By the force of superior genius and virtue, he shook the Pontiff's chair under him, and caused the thrones of the despots to tremble. They shrunk, like the ugly birds of the evening, from the light; they wished to hide themselves in the smoke that they had raised around them; but the rays of his genius penetrated the artificial mist and exposed them to the derision of the deluded and oppressed multitude. The fortress of the tyrant and the mask of the hypocrite were both laid open on the combined attack of argument and ridicule.⁷⁹

The writers who have been considered up to this point have been favorably impressed by the Reformation's services

⁷⁹ Vicesimus Knox, op. cit., V, 407-08.

in promoting or creating an atmosphere advantageous for the production of good studies and literature. On the other hand, there was an equally respectable group of writers who thought that the Reformation was prejudicial to the Renaissance. Warton carefully traces the progress of learning in England and comes to the conclusion that the Reformation hindered the study of humane letters by destroying the monasteries, by embroiling the minds of men in religious disputes, and by turning attention away from learning to the securing of wealth by plundering the monasteries, a state of affairs which continued into Elizabeth's reign, at which time it

...might have been expected to produce a speedy change for the better, puritanism began to prevail, and for some time continued to retard the progress of ingenious and useful knowledge. The English reformed clergy, who during the persecutions of queen Mary had fled into Germany, now returned in great numbers; and in consideration of their sufferings and learning, many of them were preferred to eminent stations in the church. They brought back with them those narrow principles about church-government and ceremonies, which they had imbibed, and which did well enough, in the petty states and republics abroad, where they lived like a society of philosophers; but which were inconsistent with the genius of a more extended church, established in a great and magnificent nation, and requiring a settled system of policy, and the observance of external institutions. However, they were judged proper instruments to be employed at the head of ecclesiastical affairs, by way of making reparation and to make the reformation at once effectual. But unluckily, this measure, specious as it appeared at first, tended to draw the church into the contrary extreme. In the mean time their reluctance or absolute refusal to conform, in many instances, to the established ceremonies, and their speculative theology, tore the church into violent divisions, and occasioned endless absurd disputes, unfavourable to

the progress of real learning, and productive of an illiterate clergy, at least unskilled in liberal and manly science.⁸⁰

Thus the way is prepared for an outright condemnation of the Reformation. In the first part of The Age of Reason, "Christianity and Education, in the Light of History," Paine first praises the Reformation but immediately reverses his judgment:

It is an inconsistency scarcely possible to be credited that anything should exist, under the name of a religion, that held it to be irreligious to study and contemplate the structure of the universe that God made. But the fact is too well established to be denied. The event that served more than any other to break the first link in this chain of despotic ignorance is that known by the name of the Reformation by Luther.

From that time, though it does not appear to have made any part of the intention of Luther, or of those who are called reformers, the sciences began to revive, and liberality, their natural associate, began to appear. This was the only public good the Reformation did; for with respect to religious good it might as well not have taken place. The mythology still continued the same, and a multiplicity of National Popes grew out of the downfall of the Pope of Christendom.⁸¹

But the most outspoken opponent of the Reformation was Hume. Writing of the Lutherans, he says:

The quick and surprizing progress of this bold sect may justly in part be ascribed to the late invention of printing, and the revival of learning: Not that reason bore any considerable share, in opening men's eyes with regard to the impostures of the Roman church:

80 Thomas Warton, The Life of Sir Thomas Pope, op. cit., pp. 153-54. Cf. James Barry, op. cit., II, 210-14; Thomas Warton, The History of English Poetry, op. cit., III, 7-8.

81 Thomas Paine, The Works, ed. M. Van der Weyde (New Rochelle, 1925), VIII, 66-67.

For of all branches of literature, philosophy, had as yet, and till long afterwards, made the most inconsiderable progress; neither is there any instance where argument has been able to free the people from that enormous load of absurdity, with which superstition has every where overwhelmed them: Not to mention, that the rapid advance of the Lutheran doctrine, and the violence, with which it was embraced, prove succinctly, that it owed not its success to reason and reflection. The art of printing and the revival of learning forwarded its progress in another manner. By means of that art, books of Luther and his sectaries, full of vehemence, declamation and a rude eloquence, were propagated more quickly, and in greater numbers. The minds of men, somewhat awakened from a profound sleep of so many centuries, were prepared for every novelty, and scrupled less to tread in any unusual path, which was opened to them. And as copies of the Scriptures and other antient monuments of the Christian faith became more common, men perceived these innovations, which were introduced after the first centuries; and though argument and reasoning could not give conviction, an historical fact, well supported, was able to make impression on their understandings.⁸²

82 David Hume, The History of England, from the Invasion of Julius to the Revolution in 1688 (London, 1770), IV, 41-42. Of course, Hume's cynical attitude did not long go unchallenged. In his Observations on Mr. Hume's History of England in Tracts on Political and other Subjects (London, 1796), I, 323-25, 328, Joseph Towers replies point by point to Hume's criticisms, and has this to say of the passage quoted above: "Our historian also mentions 'the invention of printing,' and the 'revival of learning,' as among the causes of the progress of the Reformation. And it is true, that both these causes did considerably contribute to facilitate that great event. But notwithstanding what he has insinuated to the contrary, neither of these causes would have operated in any great degree in favour of the Reformation, if the Romish religion had not been of such a nature, that the extension of knowledge, and the increase of books, must tend to render its absurdity, and the injustice of its pretensions, more obvious and more generally known. As men became more enlightened, in consequence of the resurrection of letters, and of the facility with which books were multiplied by the important invention of the art of printing, it was highly natural,

The body of opinion on the relationship between the Renaissance and the Reformation as developed between 1742 and 1795 represents a considerable advance over the previous period covered. Not only are more facets of the relationship treated at this time, but they are given more mature and sophisticated handling. Once more there is evidence that the complexity of history is increasingly being recognized, while at the same time attempts are being made to develop new methods to meet the problems being raised. The crucial questions connected with the relationship between the Renaissance and the Reformation were asked at this time in a form which later scholarship accepted while the answers given found many followers in later years.

that a system of superstition should give way, which had derived its existence from the ignorance and credulity of mankind, and which was utterly incapable of standing the test of free inquiry and rational examination. But Mr. Hume gives it as his opinion, that reason did not bear 'any considerable part in opening men's eyes with regard to the impostures of the Romish church,' and in another place he says, that the Reformation 'owed not its success to reason and reflection.' Indeed, our historian seems to have had but a very low idea of the efficacy of reason in religious controversy.... But Mr. Hume was willing to admit any supposition, however improbable, rather than acknowledge, that the Reformation owed its success to the force of truth and reason." On pp. 316-18 and 319-20 of his tract, Towers prints extracts from the 1754 edition of Hume's History which were even more antagonistic to the Reformation, but which were dropped from subsequent editions.

VI. The Rise of Commerce and the Renaissance

The period between 1742 and 1795 in England is noteworthy for having been the first systematically to work out the relationship between the state of the arts and sciences on the one hand and the economic and political structure of society. Though this is not the place to discuss that development, it must be at least mentioned since it affected the study of the idea of the Renaissance. The decisive rôle played by the rise of large-scale commerce is seen as a powerful factor in destroying the feudal system, for it did away with provincialism, introduced new commodities, created new tastes, brought men into contact with different customs and new ideas, raised a more liberal class of men to power, and made possible the soil in which the arts and learning could flourish. "It is an observation I have already made in some former publications," writes Paine in his Letter to the Abbé Raynal, on the Affairs of North America: in which the Mistakes in the Abbé's Account of the Revolution of America are Corrected and Cleared Up:

that the circle of civilization is yet incomplete. Mutual wants have formed the individuals of each country into a kind of national society, and here the progress of civilization has stopped. For it is easy to see, that nations with regard to each other (notwithstanding the ideal civil law, which every one explains as it suits him) are like individuals in a state of nature. They are regulated by no fixed principle, governed by no compulsive law, and each does independently what it pleases or what it can.

Were it possible we could have known the world when in a state of barbarism, we might have concluded

that it never could be brought into the order we now see it. The untamed mind was then as hard, if not harder, to work upon in its individual state, than the rational mind is in its present one. Yet we have seen the accomplishment of one, why then should we doubt that of the other?

There is a greater fitness in mankind to extend and complete the civilization of nations with each other at this day, than there was to begin with the unconnected individuals at first; in the same manner that it is somewhat easier to put together the materials of a machine after they are formed, than it was to form them from original matter. The present condition of the world, differing so exceedingly from what it formerly was, has given a new cast to the mind of man, more than what he appears to be sensible of. The wants of the individual, which first produced the idea of society, are now augmented into the wants of the nation, and he is obliged to seek from another country what before he sought from the next person....

A change in the mode of life has made it necessary to be busy; and man finds a thousand things to do now which before he did not. Instead of placing his ideas of greatness in the rude achievements of the savage, he studies arts, agriculture, and commerce, the refinements of the gentleman, the principles of society, and the knowledge of the philosopher.

There are many things which in themselves are neither morally good or bad, but they are productive of consequences, which are strongly marked with one or the other of these characters. Thus commerce, though in itself a moral nullity, has had considerable influence in tempering the human mind. It was the want of objects in the ancient world, which occasioned in them such a rude and perpetual turn for war. Their time hung on their hands without the means of employment. The indolence they lived in afforded leisure for mischief, and being all idle at once, and equal in their circumstances, they were easily provoked or induced to action.

But the introduction of commerce furnished the world with objects, which in their extent, reach every man, and give him something to think about and something to do; by these his attention is mechanically drawn from the pursuits which a state of indolence and an unemployed mind occasioned, and he trades with the same countries, which in former ages, tempted by their productions, and too indolent to purchase them, he would have gone to war with.

Thus, as I have already observed, the condition of the world being materially changed by the influ-

ence of science and commerce, it is put into a fitness not only to admit of, but to desire, an extension of civilization.⁸³

It is to be noticed that Paine associates the rise of commerce with the idea of progress and looks upon commerce as the chief civilizing force which breaks down national barriers and promotes international cooperation.

The close connection between the spread of commerce and the development of the arts is traced by Burney:

Before the Reformation, as there was but one religion, there was but one kind of music in Europe, which was Plain Chant, and the discant built upon that foundation; and as this music was likewise only applied to one language, the Latin, it accounts for the Compositions of Italy, France, Spain, Germany, Flanders, and England, keeping pace with each other, in style and excellence. All the arts seem to have been the companions, if not the produce, of successful commerce; and they will, in general, be found to have pursued the same course, which an admirable modern Historian has so well delineated: that is, like Commerce, they will be found, upon enquiry, to have appeared first in Italy; then in the Hanseatic towns; next in the Netherlands; and by transplantation, during the sixteenth century, when commerce became general, to have grown, flourished, matured, and diffused their influences in every part of Europe.

If this were a place to illustrate such an idea, it would be easy to shew, that ecclesiastical music in the middle ages, was all derived from the Papal chapel, and court of Rome; that counterpoint was first cultivated for their use; that it travelled thence to the Hanseatic towns, and the Netherlands, where the affluence, which flowed from successful commerce, afforded encouragement and leisure for its cultivation; till about the middle of the sixteenth century, when, by the general intercourse which traffic and the new art of printing introduced, all the improvements in harmony, which had been made in Italy and the low countries, were communicated

⁸³ Thomas Paine, op. cit., pp. 166-70.

to every other part of Europe; which not only stimulated the natives to adopt and imitate them, but to improve and render them more different, by their own Inventions and Refinements.⁸⁴

This concept of the importance of commerce won the approval of Adam Smith for in the third chapter of the third book on the progress of opulence in different nations in An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations, he writes:

The cities of Italy seem to have been the first in Europe which were raised by commerce to any considerable degree of opulence. Italy lay in the centre of what was at that time the improved and civilized part of the world. The crusades too, though, by the great waste of stock and destruction of inhabitants which they occasioned, they must necessarily have retarded the progress of the greater part of Europe, were extremely favourable to that of some Italian cities. The great armies which marched from all parts to the conquest of the Holy Land gave extraordinary encouragement to the shipping of Venice, Genoa, and Pisa, sometimes in transporting them thither, and always in supplying them with provi-

⁸⁴ Charles Burney, op. cit., I, 807-08. The historian referred to is Robertson who writes in his History of Charles V, op. cit., III, 77: "Commerce tends to wear off those prejudices which maintain distinction and animosity between nations. It softens and polishes the manners of men. It unites them by one of the strongest of all ties, the desire of supplying their mutual wants. It disposes them to peace, by establishing in every state an order of citizens bound by their interest to be the guardians of public tranquillity. As soon as the commercial spirit acquires vigour, and begins to gain an ascendant in any society, we discover a new genius in its policy, its alliances, its wars, and its negotiations. Conspicuous proofs of this occur in the history of the Italian states, of the Hanseatic league, and the cities of the Netherlands during the period under review. In proportion as commerce made its way into the different countries of Europe, they successively turned their attention to those objects, and adopted those manners, which occupy and distinguish polished nations."

sions. They were the commissaries, if one may say so, of those armies; and the vast destructive frenzy that ever befel the European nations, was a source of opulence to those republics.

The inhabitants of trading cities, by importing the improved manufactures and expensive luxuries of countries, afforded some food to the vanity of the great proprietors, who eagerly purchased them with great quantities of the rude produce of their own lands. The commerce of a great part of Europe in those times, accordingly, consisted chiefly in the exchange of their own rude, for the manufactured, produce of more civilized nations. Thus the wool of England used to be exchanged for the wines of France, and the fine cloths of Flanders, in the same manner as the corn in Poland is at this day exchanged for the wines and brandies of France, and for the silks and velvets of France and Italy.

A taste for the finer and more improved manufactures, was in this manner introduced by foreign commerce into countries where no such works were carried on. But when this taste became so general as to occasion a considerable demand, the merchants, in order to save the expence of carriage, naturally endeavoured to establish some manufactures of the same kind in their own country. Hence the origin of the first manufactures for different sale that seem to have been established in the western provinces of Europe, after the fall of the Roman empire....

The increase and riches of commercial and manufacturing towns, contributed to the improvement and cultivation of the countries to which they belonged, in three different ways.

First, by affording a great and ready market for the rude produce of the country, they gave encouragement to its cultivation and further improvement....

Secondly, the wealth acquired by the inhabitants of cities was frequently employed in purchasing such lands as were to be sold, of which a great part would be frequently uncultivated....

Thirdly, and lastly, commerce and manufactures gradually introduced order and good government, and with them, the liberty and security of individuals, among the inhabitants of the country, who had before lived almost in a continual state of war with their neighbours, and of a servile dependency upon their superiors. This, though it has been the least observed, is by far the most important of all their effects.⁸⁵

The effects of commerce in stimulating the arts and learning at the time of the Renaissance are noted by Anderson, Gibbon, Goldsmith, Mant, Piozzi, Priestley, Russell, and Warton, while Robertson treats the rise of commerce in considerable detail.⁸⁶ Thus the connection between the rise of commerce and the state of the arts and learning in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries was established.

The flourishing of commerce was seen as a point of similarity between the Renaissance and the Reformation by the historians of our period. Adam Anderson undertakes to reply to De Mailly's assertion that the Genoese and Florentines lost their valor as they indulged in commerce "...by observing that the valour of the ancient free states of Greece, was never higher than when their commerce was in its most flourishing condition. The same we conceive may be said of the state of Venice, of Pisa, and of Florence, and even in a great degree of Genoa itself, whose great commerce alone enabled them to perform such mighty exploits in support of the expeditions to the Holy Land."⁸⁷

86 Adam Anderson, op. cit., I, 400; Edward Gibbon, The Miscellaneous Works, op. cit., II, 428; Oliver Goldsmith, op. cit., II, 313-15; Richard Mant, op. cit., II, 33, 53-54; Hester Lynch Piozzi, op. cit., pp. 93-94; Joseph Priestley, op. cit., p. 382; William Robertson, op. cit., III, 72-77; William Russell, op. cit., I, 497-98; Thomas Warton, The History of English Poetry, op. cit., II, 546.

87 Adam Anderson, op. cit., I, 317. Cf. Richard Mant, loc. cit., II, 47-48.

In a dialogue between Cosmo de Medici and Pericles, Lord Lyttleton suggests that both eras were similar in that each was a flourishing state ultimately based on a benevolent despotism exercised through guile:

PERICLES.

In what I have heard of your character and your fortune, illustrious COSMO, I find a most remarkable resemblance with mine. We both lived in republics where the sovereign power was in the people; and, by mere civil arts, but more especially, by our eloquence, attained, without any force, to such a degree of authority, that we ruled those tumultuous and stormy democracies with an absolute sway, turned the tempests which agitated them upon the heads of our enemies, and after having long and prosperously conducted the greatest affairs, in war and peace, died revered and lamented by all our fellow citizens.

COSMO.

We have indeed an equal right to value ourselves on that noblest of empires, the empire we gained over the minds of our countrymen.--Force or caprice may give power, but nothing can give a lasting authority, except wisdom and virtue. By these we obtained, by these we preserved, in our respective countries, a dominion unstained by usurpation or blood, a dominion conferred on us by the publick esteem and the publick affection.⁸⁸

In connection with the state of politics at the time of the Renaissance, it is to be noticed that there were some writers who were not at all sure that that time was as free and flourishing as contemporary enthusiasts would have one believe. In an essay "A Review of the Present State of Society in this Century," Richard Cumberland

⁸⁸ Lord George Lyttleton, op. cit., pp. 122-23.

writes:

From the accession of Henry the Seventh to the breaking out of the great rebellion, the power of the sovereign was all but absolute; the rapacity of that monarch, the brutality of his successor, the persecuting spirit of Mary, and the imperious prerogative of Elizabeth left scarce a shadow of freedom in the people; and, in spite of all the boasted glories of Elizabeth's golden days, I must doubt if any nation can be happy, whose lives and properties were no better secured than those of her subjects actually were.⁸⁹

Scanty though these observations are, they represent a distinct contribution to the history of the idea of the Renaissance and they foreshadow a development which in more recent times has occupied an increasingly large place in the discussion of the idea of the Renaissance. It would be incorrect to say, of course, that the remarks studied in this section can be classified under the economic interpretation of history; more properly, they constitute the anticipatory thinking which ultimately resulted in the economic interpretation. Why did it require at least two centuries before it was recognized that there was a tie between the economic base and the cultural superstructure? No really satisfactory answer occurs to me, but one or two factors may be suggested for consideration. For one thing, the revival of classical learning brought

⁸⁹ Richard Cumberland, The Observer (London, 1822), II, 270. Cf. Joseph Priestley, An Essay on the First Principles of Government, and on the Nature of Political, Civil, and Religious Liberty (London, 1771), pp. 32-33; Mary Wollstoncraft, op. cit., p. 3.

with it a number of ancient attitudes, one of which was the classical disdain of all the activities we associate under the term economic. For another, the business ethic had not yet achieved acceptance in the Renaissance and indeed it was not until about the period under discussion that the capitalistic mode finally became the characteristic modern way of organization; coincidental with its acceptance, therefore, came an interest in its past. Finally, not until the eighteenth century did all the features of business civilization finally manifest themselves so that scholars could study the phenomenon in its entirety. These suggestions are merely tentative and are not intended as a complete explanation of why it was not until this time that the relationship between the rise of commerce and the Renaissance was discussed. However that may be, it is the contribution of this period and should be noted as such.

VII. Science and the Renaissance

The part played by the rise of science in the making of the Renaissance was recognized by the writers between 1742 and 1795. The first aspect of the rise of science which was considered at this time was the rôle of inventions as promoters of the Renaissance. Some writers single out the invention of the compass as of central importance

in bringing about a new direction in the course of human events. To them, the invention of the compass resulted in improved navigation facilities which made possible the new discoveries which in turn gave Europe the luxuries and leisure necessary for artistic endeavors.⁹⁰ On the other hand, Anderson thought that the early discoveries made imperative the invention of the compass and the improvement in shipping facilities.⁹¹ The discovery of gunpowder which was eagerly discussed in the seventeenth century is at this time barely mentioned, but Gibbon and Priestley realized that gunpowder, by changing the mode of warfare, had forced a breach in the feudal structure, for, with the development of professional armies, the feudal bond was shattered.⁹² The use of double-entry accounts and decimal arithmetic is considered of importance in developing commerce.⁹³ Both the microscope and telescope are mentioned but are not linked up with the development of scientific method and certainly do not receive the en-

90 Joseph Priestley, Lectures, op. cit., p. 294; William Robertson, op. cit., VI, 35.

91 Adam Anderson, op. cit., I, 538-40. Cf. William Robertson, loc. cit., VI, 48.

92 Edward Gibbon, The Decline and Fall, op. cit., p. 1194; Joseph Priestley, Lectures, loc. cit., pp. 288, 493.

93 Adam Anderson, loc. cit., II, 3.

thusiastic treatment accorded them in the seventeenth century.⁹⁴ But of all the inventions attributed to the time of the Renaissance, printing is held to have had the greatest significance. We have seen how it was considered to have played an effective rôle in bringing about the Reformation, but it was also given a more general function in that it was thought to have helped diffuse useful knowledge.⁹⁵ Two interesting sidelights on the rôle played by inventions in the promotion of the Renaissance ought to be mentioned. The liberal clergyman Knox was of the opinion that

The greatest scholars, poets, orators, philosophers, warriors, statesmen, inventors and improvers of the arts, arose from the lowest of the people. If we had waited till courtiers had invented the art of printing, clock-making, navigation, and a thousand others, we should probably have continued in darkness to this hour.⁹⁶

94 Colin Maclaurin, op. cit., pp. 42-43; Joseph C. Walker, Memoirs of Alessandro Tassoni (London, 1815), pp. lxxxix-lxxxii.

95 Edward Gibbon, The Miscellaneous Works, op. cit., II, 437; Joseph Priestley, Lectures, op. cit., p. 289; Henry James Pye, op. cit., II, 141; William Russell, op. cit., I, 501; Samuel Street, "On the Art of Printing," Oxford Prize Essays, op. cit., II, 236.

96 Vicesimus Knox, op. cit., V, 247-48. Knox also thought that the reformation was made by men of the lower classes, ibid., V, 246-47: "Who were the great reformers to whom we of England and all Europe are indebted for emancipation from the chains of superstition? Erasmus and Luther; Erasmus, as the monks of his day objected to him, laid the egg, and Luther hatched it. But was it Archbishop Erasmus? Lord Luther, Marquis Luther, Sir Martin Luther? Did they, either of them, seek the favor of courts? Were they not among the swinish multitude?"

In view of the recent tendency to attribute the events of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries to the rising middle class, this assertion is of some interest. And after all the praise of the inventions under consideration, James Harris' statement that clocks, telescopes, paper, gunpowder, compass, and printing had all been known in the Middle Ages but had produced no appreciable effects shows the folly of promiscuous attribution.⁹⁷

Following the lead established in the seventeenth century, the writers of the second half of the eighteenth century in England saw in Francis Bacon the focus of all the forces which had gone to make up the concept of science in the Renaissance. As a precursor of Sir Francis Bacon, Roger Bacon is mentioned several times as one who struggled in vain to break the strangle-hold on thought held by scholasticism, but it is Francis Bacon who actually accomplished that task.⁹⁸ To Bacon is attributed the breakdown of scholasticism, the leadership in the struggle against Aristotelianism, the development of a new methodology which set the mind on a new path, and the emancipation of reason.⁹⁹ But, despite appreciation of Bacon because, as

97 James Harris, op. cit., II, 573.

98 Edward Gibbon, The Miscellaneous Works, op. cit., II, 422; Oliver Goldsmith, op. cit., V, 145; Robert Henry, op. cit., IV, 25-29; David Mallet, op. cit., III, 238.

99 Oliver Goldsmith, loc. cit., IV, 146; Sir John Hawkins,

Benjamin Martin puts it, he

began to perceive those imperfections in the reigning Philosophy, which he afterwards so effectually exposed, and thereby not only overturned that Tyranny, which prevented the Progress of true Knowledge, but laid the Foundation of that free and useful Philosophy, which has since produced so many great and glorious Discoveries.¹⁰⁰

eighteenth century interest in Bacon was centered on the results of his work as they manifested themselves in the application of his methodology, notably by Newton and his followers. This is indicated by Richard Cumberland:

I have always regarded Bacon as the father of philosophy in this country; yet it is no breach of candour to observe, that the darkness of the age which he enlightened affords a favourable contrast to set off the splendour of his talents: but do we, who applaud him, read him? Yet if such is our veneration for times long since gone by, why do we not? The fact is, intermediate writers have disseminated his original matter through more pleasing vehicles, and we concur, whether commendably or not, to put his volumes upon the superannuated list, allowing him however an unalienable compensation upon our praise, and reserving to ourselves a right of taking him from the shelf, whenever we are disposed to sink the merit of a more recent author by a comparison with him.¹⁰¹

This indicates that Bacon was not read in the original but was interpreted by eighteenth century writers who considered

op. cit., I, xvi-xvii; Lord Kames, op. cit., III, 424; Vicesimus Knox, op. cit., I, 276; David Mallet, loc. cit., III, 243; Joseph Priestley, Lectures, op. cit., p. 289; John Stedman, op. cit., pp. 403-04; Joseph Towers, op. cit., I, 412-13. Towers defends Bacon's reputation as a philosopher from Hume's criticisms.

¹⁰⁰ Benjamin Martin, Biographica Philosophica (London, 1764), p. 223.

¹⁰¹ Richard Cumberland, op. cit., II, 214.

themselves Baconians but whether they were truly in the Baconian tradition or not is a question outside of the present discussion. Though Bacon is usually regarded as the philosopher most strenuous in his opposition to Aristotelianism, Ramus, Patricius, Bruno, and Descartes are mentioned in the same connection.¹⁰² The part played by Platonism in the attack on scholasticism is not mentioned except by the Earl of Charlemont, and at that but sketchily.¹⁰³

Though the ancient-modern controversy reached its height in the period before the one under consideration, it continued with vigor between 1742 to 1795, the only difference being that the moderns had not the opposition they had had in the seventeenth century and could state their point of view with greater certainty. There was, however, a group of writers who were willing to compromise to the extent that the ancients were superior in one class of activities and the moderns in another. Thus

¹⁰² James Anderson, Recreations in Agriculture, Natural-History, Arts, and Miscellaneous Literature (London, 1799), III, 359-60; William Benwell, "In what Arts have the Moderns Excelled the Ancients?" Oxford Prize Essays, op. cit., I; Lord Kames, op. cit., III, 223-25; David Mallet, op. cit., III, 242-43; Mary Wollstonecraft, op. cit., p. 236.

¹⁰³ The Earl of Charlemont, "Some Hints concerning the State of Science at the Revival of Letters, Grounded on a Passage of Dante in his Inferno, Canto IV, v. 130," Transactions of the Royal Irish Academy, VI (1797), 10.

Thomas Kershaw writes:

This short essay is intended to point out the excellencies of the ancients in the imitative arts: yet, at the same time, to allow the moderns their due share of fame, in having, not only made some improvements, but inventions, of which the ancients were entirely ignorant.¹⁰⁴

Kershaw then goes on to demonstrate the superiority of the ancients in sculpture and their inferiority in painting, and he considers landscape design, etching, engraving, mezzotint, and aquatint to be modern innovations. Other writers extend the catalogue: the ancients are given the palm for architecture, moral philosophy, education, language, serious composition, mythology, oratory, and history, that is, the liberal arts, while the moderns are praised for science, music, astronomy, chemistry, the experimental philosophy, and the art of satire.¹⁰⁵

But to an even larger group of writers, compromise was out of the question. The absolute superiority of the

¹⁰⁴ Thomas Kershaw, "On the Comparative Merit of the Ancients and Moderns, with respect to the Imitative Arts," Memoirs of the Literary and Philosophical Society of Manchester, I (1785), 406.

¹⁰⁵ William Benwell, op. cit., I, 216; Hugh Blair, Lectures on Rhetoric and Belles Lettres (New York, 1815), pp. 387-544; William Crotch to Charles Burney in A General History of Music, op. cit., II, 1037; Vicesimus Knox, op. cit., I, 118-19; George Richards, "On the Characteristic Differences between Ancient and Modern Poetry," Oxford Prize Essays, op. cit., I, 271; John Thelwall, The Peripatetic; or, Sketches of the Heart, of Nature and of Society (London, 1793), pp. 11-13; Joseph Warton, essays 127 and 133 in The Adventurer (London, 1793), pp. 154-60, 191-98.

moderns was asserted and a long list of excellencies was drawn up. According to John Aikin, the moderns were superior in knowledge; to James Beattie, they were superior because they had a more various literature, more varied manners, a sense of humor, and possessed the concept of romantic love. Sir John Hawkins considers that his main task is to defend the superiority of modern music while Roscoe asserts the superiority of modern poetry in a very interesting passage:

The province of the poet is not, however, confined to the representation, or to the combination of material and external objects. The fields of intellect are equally subject to his control. The affections and passions of the human mind, the abstract ideas of unsubstantial existence, serve in their turn to exercise his powers. In arranging themselves under his dominion, it becomes necessary that they should take a visible and substantial form, distinguished by their attributes, their insignia, and their effects. With this form the imagination of the poet invests them, and they then become as subservient to his purpose as if they were objects of external sense. In process of time, some of these children of imagination acquire a kind of prescriptive identity; and the symbolic forms of pleasure, or of wisdom, present themselves to our minds in nearly as definite a manner as the natural ones of Ajax, or of Achilles. Thus embodied, they become important actors in the drama, and are scarcely distinguishable from human character. But the offspring of fancy is infinite; and however the regions of poetry may seem to be peopled with these fantastic beings, genius will still proceed to invest, to vary, and to combine.

If the moderns excel the ancients in any department of poetry, it is in that now under consideration. It must not indeed be supposed that the ancients were insensible to the effects produced by this powerful charm, which more peculiarly than any other may be said

To give to airy nothing
A local habitation and a name;

but it may safely be asserted, that they have availed themselves of this creative faculty much more sparingly, and with much less success, than their modern competitors. The attribution of sense to inert objects is indeed common to both; but that still bolder exertion which embodies abstract existence, and renders it susceptible of ocular representation, is almost exclusively the boast of the moderns. If, however, we advert to the few authors who preceded Lorenzo de' Medici, we shall not trace in their writings many striking instances of those embodied pictures of ideal existence which are so conspicuous in the works of Ariosto, Spenser, Milton, and subsequent writers of the higher class, who are either natives of Italy, or have formed their taste upon the poets of that nation.¹⁰⁶

Roscoe uses the word prosopopeia to designate the superior poetical power of the moderns but it must be obvious that he is laboriously trying to work out the rationale of romanticism. Other arguments in favor of the moderns were that modern life was capable of yielding more refined pleasures; the moderns were in possession of greater comforts and luxuries; the art of government was raised to a height not attained by the ancients; the possession of scientific methodology is the decisive factor in the superiority of the moderns; human genius at the present day is at least the equal of, if not superior to, ancient powers; the world, far from decaying, shows greater improvements

¹⁰⁶ William Roscoe, op. cit., I, 262-64; cf. John Aikin, op. cit., I, 27; James Beattie, Essays: On Poetry and Music, as they Affect the Mind; on Laughter, and Ludicrous Composition; on the Usefulness of Classical Learning (London, 1779), pp. 421-41; Sir John Hawkins, op. cit., II, 917-18.

with each new year.¹⁰⁷ Something of the easy sureness of the moderns may be sensed from Boswell's essay "On Past and Present" in The Hypochondriack:

We have the advantages of all the modern discoveries in science and in art; and of the numerous conveniences and elegant aids to pleasure, unknown to our ancestors. So that we may have more happiness in one day in London, than they could have in a large portion of their lives. It is narrow thinking to maintain, that it is more desirable to have few wants; I hope I have shown in a former paper, my opinion that the more innocent pleasures we enjoy the better we are.

But I feel with peculiar fondness the advantage of this age over ancient times in civility of manners; not the constrained affection and deceit recommended by a celebrated nobleman; but such an habitual complacency and politeness as is intended only for the mutual happiness of social intercourse.¹⁰⁸

But the most doughty champion of the moderns is the eccentric but learned Sir John Hawkins who, though a lawyer by profession, spent the best years of his life in the preparation of a history of music, only to see it superseded in popular favor but a few years after its publication by Burney's work on the same subject. Hawkins delivers an attack on the upholders of the ancients which is so devastating in its range and so shrewd in its method that it compares favorably with the giant moderns of the seven-

¹⁰⁷ Vicesimus Knox, op. cit., I, 357; Thomas Paine, The Political Works (Chicago, 1879), p. 125; Mary Wollstonecraft, op. cit., p. 3; Edward Young, Conjectures on Original Composition (London, 1759), pp. 46-47.

¹⁰⁸ James Boswell, op. cit., II, 148-49. The "celebrated nobleman" mentioned in the text is Chesterfield.

teenth century:

The loss of arts is a plausible topic of declamation, but the possibility of such a calamity by other means than a second deluge, or the interposition of any less powerful an agent than God himself is a matter of doubt; and when appearances every where around us favour the opinion of our improvement not only in literature, but in the sciences and all the manual arts, it is wonderful that the contrary should ever have gotten a footing among mankind.

As to the general prejudices in behalf of antiquity, it has been hinted above that a reason for them is to be found in that implicit belief which the course of modern education disposes us to entertain of the superior virtue, wisdom, and ingenuity of those, who in all these instances we are taught to look on as patterns the most worthy of imitation; but it can never be deemed an excuse for some writers for complimenting nations less enlightened than ourselves with the possession or enjoyment of arts which it is pretended we have lost; as they do when they magnify the attainments of nations comparatively barbarous, and making those countries on which the beams of knowledge can scarcely be said to have yet dawned the theatres of virtue and the schools of science, recommend them as fit exemplars for our imitation.

Of this class of authors, Sir William Temple and Isaac Vossius seem to be the chief; the one a statesman retired from business, an ingenious writer, but possessed of little learning, other than what he acquired in his later years, and which it is suspected was not drawn from the purest sources; the other a man of great erudition, but little judgment, the weakness whereof he manifested in a childish credulity, and a disposition to believe things incredible.

Hawkins proceeds to refute with great skill and learning the opinions of Temple and Vossius, and also of Goguet, on the superiority of the ancients and the Chinese. He then turns to consider the specific case of music and it is his method of attack which is of particular significance:

...The method hitherto pursued by those writers who have attempted to draw a parallel between the ancient and modern music, has been to bring together into one point of view the testimonies in favour of the former, and to strengthen them by their own suffrages, which

upon examination will be found to amount to just nothing; for these testimonies being no more than verbal declarations or descriptions, every reader is at liberty to supply them by ideas of his own: ideas which can only have been excited by that music which he has actually heard or at least perused and contemplated. An instance borrowed from the practice of some critics in painting, may possibly illustrate this sentiment: the works of Apelles, Parrhasius, Zeuxis, and Protogenes, together with those of other artists less known, such as Bularchus, Euphanor, Timanthes, Polygonotus, Polycletes, and Aristides, all famous painters, have been celebrated in terms of high applause by Aristotle, Philostratus, Pliny, and the poets; and those who attend to their descriptions of them, associate to each subject ideas of excellence as perfect as their imaginations can suggest, which can only be derived from such works of later artists as they have seen; in like manner as we assist the descriptions of Helen in Homer and of Eve in Milton, with ideas of female beauty, grace, and elegance, drawn from our observation: the result of such a comparison in the case of painting, has frequently been a determination to the prejudice of modern artists; and the works of Raphael, Domenichino, and Guido have been condemned as not answering to those characters of sublime and beautiful, which are given to the productions of the ancient artists. In like manner to speak of music, we can form ideas of the perfection of harmony and melody, and of the general effect resulting from the artful combination of musical sounds, from that music alone which we have actually heard; and when we read of the music of Timotheus and Antigenides, we must either resemble it to that of the most excellent of the modern artists, or forbear to judge about it; and if in the comparison of such critics as Isaac Vossius, Sir William Temple, and some others, reject the music of the moderns as unworthy of attention or notice, how egregiously are they deceived, and what do they but forgo the substance for the shadow?¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁹ Sir John Hawkins, op. cit., I, xxiii-xxv. If I may be allowed an aside for the expression of a personal prejudice, Hawkins' History appears to me to be superior to Burney's in vigor of style and philosophic grasp over the movement of ideas, and I rather suspect that Burney owes Hawkins an idea or two which he neglected to acknowledge.

Hawkins then proceeds to demonstrate that modern music is as capable of moral influence as ancient music is supposed to have been. He asks the crucial question: "...where are those productions of the ancients that must decide the question? Lost, it will be answered, in the general wreck of literature and the arts. If so, they cease to be evidence." Hawkins' remarks represent the high water mark in the ancient-modern debate as it was conducted in the latter half of the eighteenth century and they served to clinch the case for the moderns. From this time on, the ancient-modern controversy disappears from the history of the idea of the Renaissance and indeed from literature generally. It is possible, however, to consider the romantic-classical debate in the first half of the nineteenth century as a mutant of the ancient-modern controversy, but this is a point which will be taken up in the next chapter.

While the late eighteenth century contributions to the discussion of the relationship of the rise of science to the Renaissance are not original or particularly profound, they serve to maintain a tradition begun in the Renaissance itself. It is possible that since by this time there was no question that science had established itself there was no need to come to its defence. Scientists are notoriously unhistorical and they felt no need in this period to assert the value of what they were doing,

a task which to the seventeenth century scientist was as important as his experiments. As I have pointed out before, it is at this time that the concept of the specialization of labor reaches its maturity and its effect on scientific activity resulted in the idea of science qua science, or let the scientist stick to his laboratory, and with it the divorce of science from society. Furthermore, as a result of the great increase in technical knowledge it became more and more difficult for the historian to write the history of science, and since the scientists could not or would not undertake to do so, the result, for the time being at least, was that the study of the relationship between the idea of the Renaissance and the rise of science was not on the same level as the study of the relationship between, say, the Middle Ages and the Renaissance.

VIII. Late Eighteenth Century Theories of History and the Idea of the Renaissance

Since the period from 1742 to 1795 is characterized by a flourishing of historical studies, some consideration of the attitudes towards historical study held by the writers who have been treated in this section will help to account for their choice of historical problems to solve and the methods of solution they adopted, especially in connection with the idea of the Renaissance. In this way,

it is possible to form an estimate of the contributions of the late eighteenth century writers not only to the idea of the Renaissance itself but to the methodology for the study of the idea of the Renaissance.

One of the most persistent views in the history of historiography is that which regards history as performing the rôle of moral teacher. History, it is held, teaches a salutary lesson by exhibiting instances of good and bad conduct. On a slightly higher plane this attitude is expressed by Bolingbroke's aphorism: "History is philosophy teaching by example." And in an essentially didactic age this view of history can hardly be said to be lacking.¹¹⁰ But a broader approach toward the study of history was gaining acceptance. For example, it was recognized that adequately to explain a movement, discussion of major figures was not enough, but that the ramifications of an idea had to be traced wherever they led. Burney makes this clear:

It may be thought a useless labour by some to have drawn from the tomb the names of so many obscure and barbarous authors, whose insipid productions, if preserved, would but degrade human nature, and shew the imbecility of their endeavours; but the progress of science, and the principles of its declension, can only be discovered by tracing the steps by which it has advanced towards perfection or tended to corruption.¹¹¹

¹¹⁰ John Aikin, op. cit., II, 234; Anna Barbauld, op. cit., II, 393-407; C. Baker, "On the Use of History," Oxford Prize Essays, op. cit., I, 125-40; John Hawkins, op. cit., I, 211-12; Joseph Priestley, Lectures, op. cit., pp. 1-64.

¹¹¹ Charles Burney, op. cit., II, 1204-05.

Again, the necessity for studying a problem in its historical setting and evolution before a correct understanding of it can be attained was emphasized. James Harris criticizes Locke for failure to do so in a letter to Lord Monboddo:

I freely subscribe to your ideas of Mr. Locke. Ignorant of all Ancient Literature, he had an inclination to spin out everything from his own brain, as if so stupendous a work as an Analysis of the Human Understanding could be raised by the effort of one unassisted man. Euclid and Archimedes among the ancients, Copernicus, Kepler, and Galileo among the moderns, preceded our illustrious Newton. 'Twas thus that Homer and Tasso pointed out the road to Milton.112

A reaction set in against histories which were mere compilations of political, military, and personal events. What was demanded was a rounded view of a past era, and Henry, Hume, Robertson, Russell, and Wraxall undertook to write histories which should include an account of cultural progress in the eras selected for consideration. This is indicated by Hume:

It may not be improper, at this period, to make a pause; and to take a survey of the state of the kingdom, with regard to government, manners, finances, arms, trade, learning. Where a just notion is not formed of these particulars, history can be very little instructive, and often will not be intelligible.113

Similar progress was made in the field of literary history.

112 Cited in William Knight, op. cit., p. 79. Dated May 14, 1773.

113 David Hume, op. cit., VI, 177.

The essence of the method of literary study which came into greater prominence each year was clearly perceived by Johnson in his letter of commendation to Thomas Warton on his Observations:

...I now pay you a very honest acknowledgment, for the advancement of the literature of our native country. You have shewn to all, who shall hereafter attempt the study of our auncient authours, the way to success; by directing them to the perusal of the books which these authours had read. Of this method, Hughes and men much greater than Hughes, seem never to have thought. The reason why the authours, which are yet read, of the sixteenth century, are so little understood, is, that they are read alone; and no help is borrowed from those who lived with them, or before them. Some part of this ignorance I hope to remove by my book, which now draws towards its end.¹¹⁴

Of course, Johnson exaggerated the importance of Warton as an innovator for he was preceded in the use of the new method by Theobald, Upton, and Grey in their editions and commentaries on Shakespeare, by Seward in his edition of Beaumont and Fletcher, by Whalley and Newton on Milton, and again by Grey and Upton on Butler and Jonson; however, Johnson is pointing in the right direction. Finally, we get the work of the new school of historians of culture, Adam Anderson, Barry, Beattie, Bromley, Burney, Dalrymple, Ferguson, Harris, Hawkins, Kames, Monboddo, Price, Stuart,

¹¹⁴ Dated July 16, 1754, in George B. Hill, ed., Boswell's Life of Johnson together with Boswell's Journal of a Tour to the Hebrides and Johnson's Diary of a Journey into North Wales, ed. L. F. Powell (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1934), I, 270-71.

and Wollstonecraft, all of whom are characterized by their attempts to grasp the course of events philosophically, by ascribing one or more ideological causative agents as decisive, by penetrating below the surface of history to its deepest roots. Certain of these key conceptions will repay investigation for they throw light on how the idea of the Renaissance was treated at this time.

The influence of the climate in molding the character of a people and in affecting their works of art is a theory of long standing and it found its adherents in the latter half of the eighteenth century. Whatever may be said against this notion, it at least has the merit of forcing a larger view of the historical process than that held by the moral teaching school on the historian.¹¹⁵ But the climate theory is obviously naive and it was rather severely handled. John Armstrong writes a vigorous and biting refutation of it in his essay on "The Influence of the Climate upon Genius":

There are many people so bigoted to some particular theory, to false opinions and prejudices, as indolently to surrender even their own sensations to them. There are in this island some renegades ab-

¹¹⁵ Henry Fuseli, op. cit., pp. 348-49; Oliver Goldsmith, op. cit., III, 470; Vicesimus Knox, op. cit., II, 202-03; George Richards, op. cit., I, 341.

surd enough to tell you, that Britain lies at too great a distance from the sun to produce any genius. It is really paying too much attention to such tasteless, ignorant, superficial connoisseurs, to ask them, what country in Europe, what climate the nearest to the sun, has displayed a richer bloom of genius, in almost any department, than has spontaneously sprung up in this foggy island; without even any kind fostering influence from the superior powers--excepting those alone of heaven and nature.--In what kind of genius is this island inferior to any nation under the sun?--How many geniuses has the happy climate of Italy produced, in any shape, since the days of Augustus?--The genial fruitful latitude of Greece has now lain quite fallow for near two thousand years. Spain should be ashamed to boast of, or even to own her noble, generous, her delightful Cervantes, whom she pitifully suffered to starve.--But what great geniuses has ever the warm climate of Africa produced? from the coast of Barbary to that of Guinea? from the mouth of the Nile to the Cape of Good-Hope?¹¹⁶

Likewise of ancient repute, but less vulnerable to attack, because less specific and more plausible, is the cyclical theory of history which held that all human institutions have their rise from lowly origins, ascend slowly to the height of perfection, and then inevitably decay.¹¹⁷ On the other hand, a group of theorists thought that there was no evidence of a circular progress, but rather that institutions are in a constant state of decline from an original perfect and uncorrupted condition.¹¹⁸

¹¹⁶ John Armstrong, Miscellanies (London, 1770), pp. 333-34. Cf. James Barry, op. cit., II, 176-79; Adam Ferguson, op. cit., pp. 165-67.

¹¹⁷ James Beattie, op. cit., I, 212, II, 270; Charles Burney, op. cit., II, 2104; Adam Ferguson, loc. cit., p. 319; Oliver Goldsmith, op. cit., III, 237-40, 475, 530; James Harris, op. cit., II, 574-85; William Robertson, op. cit., II, 19; John Stedman, op. cit., pp. 461-62.

¹¹⁸ John Armstrong, loc. cit., II, 170; James Barry, op.

But as a gay writer said in a flippant essay on the ancient-modern controversy, the best way to flatter a scholar is to lament the decay of the world, and, having paid your respects to his prejudices, go on to enjoy the new worlds which are daily being discovered in ideas, government, social relations, and the good things of life generally. For, popular as were the theories of decay and degeneracy at this time, they did not represent the basic temper of the time which was grounded in the optimism of the idea of progress. "Reason, as well as tradition and revelation," Richard Price assures us:

lead us to expect that a more improved and happy state of human affairs will take place before the consummation of all things. The world has hitherto been gradually improving. Light and knowledge have been gaining ground, and human life at present compared with what it once was, is much the same that a youth approaching manhood is compared with an infant.

Such are the natures of things that this progress must continue. During particular intervals it may be interrupted, but it cannot be destroy'd. Every present advance prepares the way for farther advances; and a single experiment or discovery may sometimes give rise to so many more as suddenly to raise the species higher, and to resemble the effects of opening a new sense, or of the fall of a spark on a train that springs a mine. For this reason, mankind may at last arrive at degrees of improvement which we cannot now even suspect to be possible. A dark age may follow an enlightened age; but, in this case, the light, after being smothered for a time, will break out again with a

cit., I, 49-51; John Brown, op. cit., p. 341; Adam Ferguson, op. cit., pp. 328-31; David Hume, The Works, op. cit., III, 146-49; Lord Kames, op. cit., I, 300; Lord Monboddo as cited in William Knight, op. cit., pp. 276-77; Vicesimus Knox, op. cit., V, 144-46; John Stedman, op. cit., pp. 408-11.

brighter lustre. The present age of increased light, considered as succeeding the ages of Greece and Rome and an intermediate period of thick darkness, furnishes a proof of the truth of this observation. There are certain kinds of improvement which, when once made, cannot be entirely lost. During the dark ages, the improvements made in the ages that preceded them remained so far as to be recovered immediately at the resurrection of letters, and to produce afterwards that more rapid progress in improvement which has distinguished modern times.

There can scarcely be a more pleasing and encouraging object of reflection than this. An accidental observation of the effects of gravity in a garden has been the means of discovering the laws that govern the solar system, and of enabling us to look down with pity on the ignorance of the most enlightened times among the ancients. What new dignity has been given to man, and what additions have been made to his powers, by the invention of optical glasses, printing, gun-powder, &c. and by the late discoveries in navigation, mathematics, &c.

Who could have thought, in the first ages of the world, that mankind would acquire the power of determining the distances and magnitudes of the sun and planets?--Who, even at the beginning of this century, would have thought, that, in a few years, mankind would acquire the power of subjecting to their wills the dreadful force of lightening, and of flying in aevo-static machines?--The last of these powers, though so long undiscovered, is only an application of a power always known.--Many similar discoveries may remain to be made, which will give new directions of the greatest consequence to human affairs; and it may not be too extravagant to expect that (should civil governments throw no obstacles in the way) the progress of improvement will not cease till it has excluded from the earth most of its worst evils, and restored that Paraisaical state, which, according to the Mosaic History, preceded the present state. 119

119 Richard Price, Observations on the Importance of the American Revolution, and the Means of Making it a Benefit to the World (London, 1785), pp. 3-5. The ideas in this passage simply cry for extended analysis but this would fall outside the scope of the dissertation. However, it ought to be pointed out that while the idea of progress and the golden age myth may seem contradictory logically,

The high point in the exposition of the idea of progress occurs in Joseph Priestley's Essay on Government:

Man derives two capital advantages from the superiority of his intellectual powers. The first is, that, as an individual, he possesses a certain comprehension of mind, whereby he contemplates and enjoys the past and the future, as well as the present. This comprehension is enlarged with the experience of every day; and by this means the happiness of man, as he advances in intellect, is continually less dependent on temporary circumstances and sensations.

The next advantage resulting from the same principle, and which is, in many respects, both the cause and effect of the former, is that the human species itself is capable of a similar and unbounded improvement; whereby mankind in a later age are equally superior to mankind in a former age, the individuals being taken at the same time of life. Of this progress of the species, brute animals are more incapable than they are of that relating to individuals. No horse of this age seems to have any advantage over other horses of former ages; and if there be any improvement in the species, it is owing to our manner of breeding and training them. But a man at this time, who has been tolerably well educated, in an improved Christian country, is a being possessed of much greater power, to be, and to make happy, than a person of the same age, in the same, or any other country, some centuries ago. And, for this reason, I make no doubt, that a person some centuries hence will, at the same age, be as much superior to us.

The great instrument in the hand of divine providence, of this progress of the species towards perfection, is society, and consequently government. In a state of nature the powers of any individual are dissipated by an attention to a multiplicity of objects. The employments of all are similar. From generation to generation every man does the same that every other does or has done, and no person begins where another ends; at least, general improvements are exceedingly slow, and uncertain. This we see exemplified in all

they are not necessarily so in the history of ideas. As a matter of fact, it would be profitable to examine socialism as a combination of these two ideas plus the equally important idea of anti-institutionalism as expressed in the parenthesis. This is what John Gregory attempted to do in the preface to his very stimulating but little-known Comparative View; he combines the three ideas mentioned above for the purpose of making "...human life more comfortable and happy."

barbarous nations, and especially in countries thinly inhabited, where the connections of the people are slight, and consequently society and government very imperfect; and it may be seen more particularly in North America, and Greenland. Whereas a state of more perfect society admits of a proper distribution and division of the objects of human attention. In such a state, men are connected with and subservient to one another; so that, while one man confines himself to one single object, another may give the same undivided attention to another object.

Thus the powers of all have their full effect; and hence arise improvements in all the conveniences of life, and in every branch of knowledge. In this state of things, it requires but a few years to comprehend the whole preceding progress of any one art or science; and the rest of a man's life, in which his faculties are the most perfect, may be given to the extension of it. If, by this means, one art or science should grow too large for an easy comprehension, in a moderate space of time, a commodious subdivision will be made. Thus all knowledge will be subdivided and extended; and knowledge, as Lord Bacon observes, being power, the human powers will, in fact, be enlarged; nature, including both its materials, and its laws, will be more at our command; men will make their situation more easy and comfortable; they will probably prolong their existence in it, and will grow daily more happy, each in himself, and more able (and, I believe, more disposed) to communicate happiness to others. Thus, whatever was the beginning of the world, the end will be glorious and paradisaical, beyond what our imaginations can now conceive. Extravagant as some may suppose these views to be, I think I could show them to be fairly suggested by the true theory of human nature, and to arise from the natural course of human affairs. But, for the present, I waive this subject, the contemplation of which always makes me happy. 120

120 Joseph Priestley, An Essay on the First Principles of Government, op. cit., pp. 1-5. Again, there is no necessary contradiction between anti-institutionalism and faith in government; the radical is anti-institutional when he is out of power, but thinks that the state of mankind will improve if he is in control of the state apparatus. It is a noteworthy fact that the politically radical scientist insists on the close connection between science and society

Not only was Priestley made happy by the contemplation of the notion of perfectibility but so many of his contemporaries were too that it unmistakably colored all their thinking.

The idea of progress assumed a future state in which all men would be free to develop their personalities to the utmost and where therefore the arts and sciences would flourish. From this point of view it is an easy transition to the idea that without liberty the arts and sciences were impossible. Under a despotic government, personal initiative was crushed, and the only arts possible were degraded by a fawning servility, really no arts at all. But a people living under a free constitution, enjoying the exercise of their personal liberties, created the soil in which an independent and vigorous art could flourish. This was the lesson drawn from an analysis of the relations between government and the arts in ancient times, in the Renaissance, and in eighteenth century England. History taught that a

while the conservative scientist, politically speaking, insists just as strongly on the separation between the two. Cf. on the idea of progress, John Aikin, op. cit., I, 18; James Barry, op. cit., I, 342, II, 196; James Beattie, Essays, op. cit., p. 442; Archibald Bruce, op. cit., pp. 42-43; Charles Burney, op. cit., I, 703; Thomas Gordon, The Humorist. Being Essays on Several Subjects (London, 1741), II, 133; John Gregory, op. cit., pp. iv-xvi; Henry Headley, ed., Select Beauties of Ancient English Poetry (London, 1870), I, x-xiii; Samuel Johnson, The Works (New York, 1842), I, 416-17; Lord Kames, op. cit., I, 136; Mary Wollstonecraft, op. cit., p. 1; Edward Young, op. cit., pp. 13-20.

free people produce great art, and the hope was held out that as society inevitably progresses toward greater improvements and consequently more liberties, the better the art which will arise under these optimum conditions. Such was the view of a considerable number of writers between 1742 and 1795.¹²¹ Indeed, so widespread and pervasive was

¹²¹ John Bartlam, "Liberty," Oxford Prize Essays, op. cit., II, 318; James Barry, op. cit., I, 362-65; James Beattie, Dissertations, op. cit., I, 198; Robert Bromley, op. cit., I, 32-35; Archibald Bruce, op. cit., pp. 11-12; Charles Burney, op. cit., I, 341; Robert Burns, "To the Editor of the Edinburgh Evening Courant," dated November 8, 1788, in The Letters of Robert Burns, ed. J. De Lancey Ferguson (Oxford: Clarendon Press), I, 269-70; Edward Gibbon, The Miscellaneous Works, op. cit., III, 541; Oliver Goldsmith, op. cit., III, 469; David Hume, The Works, op. cit., III, 303; Samuel Johnson, Miscellaneous and Fugitive Pieces, op. cit., II, 2-7; Vicesimus Knox, op. cit., I, 60-61; Richard Mant, op. cit., II, 53-54; Thomas Paine, op. cit., V, 85; Joseph Priestley, Essays, op. cit., pp. 68-69; Joseph Priestley, Lectures, op. cit., pp. 320-21; William Robertson, op. cit., I, 497-98; John Upton, Critical Observations on Shakespeare (London, 1746), p. 33; N. W. Wraxall, op. cit., I, 322. In less enthusiastic and more candid passages, Gibbon, Hume, and Knox pointed out that arts have flourished under despotisms, and especially in the Renaissance, but this did not prevent the theory of the relationship between the arts and liberty from being widely held. The connection between the idea of progress and the theory of liberty is made explicit by Boswell in his Account of Corsica (London, 1769), pp. 33-38: "Liberty is so natural, and so dear to mankind, whether as individuals, or as members of society, that it is indispensibly necessary to our happiness. Every thing great and worthy ariseth from it. Liberty gives health to the mind, and enables us to enjoy the full exercise of our faculties. He who is in chains cannot move either easily or gracefully; nothing elegant or noble can be expected from those, whose spirits are subdued by tyranny, and whose powers are cramped by restraint.... Liberty is indeed the parent of felicity, of every noble virtue, and even of every art and science. Whatever vain attempts have been

the view that liberty was the indispensable foundation for the arts and sciences and for mankind generally that it affected the theory of history. John Gregory is very determined on this point:

But the principal and most important end of History, is to promote the interests of Liberty and Virtue, and not merely to gratify curiosity. Impartial History will always be favourable to these interests. The elegance of its stile and composition, is chiefly to be valued, as it serves to engage the reader's attention. But if an Historian has no regard to what we here suppose should be the ultimate end of History, if he considers it only as calculated to give an exercise and amusement to the Mind, he may undoubtedly make his work answer a very different purpose.... There is a certain species of impartiality with which no man, who has good principles, or a sensible heart, will sit down to write History; that impartiality which supposes an absolute indifference to whatever may be its consequences on the minds of the readers. Such an indifference, in regard to the result of our enquiries, is natural and proper in the abstract Sciences, and in those Philosophical disquisitions, where

made to raise the generous plants under an oppressive climate, have only shewn more evidently the value of freedom.... They who entertain an extravagant veneration for antiquity, would make us believe, that any appearances of it which are to be found in modern times, are but feeble and dim. They would make us believe that the world is grown old, that the strength of human nature is decayed, and that we are no more to expect those noble powers which dignified man in former ages. But the truth is, that human nature is the same at all times, and appears in different lights merely from a difference of circumstances. In the language of the schoolmen, the substance is fixed, the accidents only vary. Rome has yet seven hills on which the conquerors of the world dwelt, and these are inhabited by Romans. Athens still occupies the space from which philosophy and genius diffused a radiance to all the nations around, and is possessed by Athenians. But neither of these people now retain any resemblance of their illustrious ancestors; this is entirely owing to the course of political events, which has produced a total change in their manners. That the spirit of liberty has flourished in modern times, we may appeal to the histories of the Swiss, and of the Dutch; and the boldest proofs of it are to be found in the annals of our own country."

truth is the single and ultimate object, not connected with any thing that may engage the affections or essentially affect the interests of Mankind. But a candid Historian, who is the friend of Mankind, will disclaim this coldness and insensibility: He will openly avow his attachment to the cause of liberty and virtue, and will consider the subserviency of his History to their interests as its highest merit and honour. He will be persuaded that Truth, that impartial History, can never hurt these sacred interests; but he will never pretend so far to divest himself of the feelings of a Man, as to be indifferent whether they do or not.¹²²

The theories of history and the ideological preconceptions underlying them which have been discussed in this section enabled the writers of the late eighteenth century in England to develop a more comprehensive theory of the Renaissance than had their predecessors. The tendency of their theoretical thinking pointed in the direction of a broader kind of historical writing, one in which all the activities of man were seen as forming a large pattern for the historian to study and later to philosophize about. Though the attempts at writing the history of culture seem at this time scanty and somewhat naive, they form the indispensable ground work upon which later and more successful theories were erected. This is a period of training in the kind of thinking which resulted in the philosophical histories of the nineteenth century. As a consequence of the efforts to view history in its largest compass, the idea of the Renaissance gained in complexity and richness, though at the same time

¹²² John Gregory, op. cit., pp. 221-25.

a greater degree of contradiction and confusion in the understanding of the concept filtered in. Nevertheless, the attitudes towards history which enabled the nineteenth century to become the high point in historical studies existed in embryo in the period between 1742 and 1795. As soon as the historical process was seen as a large, complex, and diversified movement which required both accurate scholarship and philosophic grasp over the interconnections of ideas to understand, the essential features of nineteenth century methodology were revealed, and they were shown in their origin and early development in the period just discussed.

IX. Conclusion

The period 1742 to 1795 in England represents a distinct advance in the history of the idea of the Renaissance. For one thing, it marks a return to the more comprehensive and more balanced view of the Renaissance characteristic of the Renaissance itself. Equal attention is given to the revival of the fine arts and of classical learning as to science, and no one aspect is given a disproportionate place in the discussion of the idea of the Renaissance. For another, the importance of the relationship between the Renaissance and Middle Ages is fully recognized and the essential features of the relationship studied. Third, the rôle

of the Reformation in bringing about the Renaissance as well as the opposite movement are brought into prominence; again, this foreshadows later and more thorough studies. A fourth contribution of this period is the first recognition of the relationship between the economic base and cultural superstructure and the application of this method of historical investigation to the study of the Renaissance. Sketchy though the late eighteenth century efforts along these lines may be, they represent a development which has gained greater prominence all along. Finally, there is to be noted at this time a decided superiority in the methodological techniques for the study of history. The enlightened conception of the function of history coupled with the idea of progress led to the tendency to go far afield in the description of a past era, to the choice of decisive eras for particular analysis, and to the selection of more fundamental principles as the guiding lines of historical evolution. The late eighteenth century marks the beginning of the effort to describe the Renaissance in terms of abstract ideological causes, but though this represents an advance in historical thinking, it is an advance which costs more and more as the complexity of description increases. The picture of the Renaissance becomes increasingly complicated as causes and effects merge into each other, and the tendency to seek for underlying motives results in approaches to the Renaissance problem which turn

out to be nothing more than the selection of facts to fit a pre-determined pattern, however brilliant that pattern may turn out to be. Though this aspect of the history of the idea of the Renaissance is not to be found in the period under consideration in this chapter, it is foreshadowed by the developments in the broadening of historical methodology at this time. Indeed, the importance of these new concepts for the study of history generally and of the Renaissance particularly is seen in the fact that while the next fifty years after 1795 seem to swarm with discussions of the idea of the Renaissance, scant attention is paid to the methodological problems involved. In other words, the techniques worked out by the late eighteenth century began to yield results in the early nineteenth, for in each of the fields touched at this time, there are to be seen later on, not new departures, but rather a widening and deepening of the understanding of the problems involved.

CHAPTER IV

THE IDEA OF THE RENAISSANCE IN ENGLAND FROM ROSCOE

TO HENRY HALLAM'S INTRODUCTION TO THE LITERATURE OF EUROPE IN THE FIFTEENTH, SIXTEENTH, AND SEVENTEENTH CENTURIES (1837)

I. Introduction

With the turn into the nineteenth century, interest in the Renaissance spurts ahead and the idea of the Renaissance becomes one of the major subjects for research and speculation on the part of English scholars. The efflorescence of studies of the idea of the Renaissance may best be shown by a statistical survey of works in English dealing with this theme which appeared in the thirty years between 1800 and 1830. In that period, the idea of the Renaissance appeared in the work of thirteen bibliographers, thirty biographers of Renaissance figures, six compilers of biographical dictionaries, fourteen travellers, ten universal historians, three historians of the Middle Ages, one historian of the Arabs, eight historians of England, five historians of England up to and including Elizabeth's reign, four historians of the universities, four historians of the church, two historians of London, four historians of architecture, five historians of art, two historians of music, two historians of printing, nine historians of science, nine editors of collections of early poetry and drama, and twenty-three

historians of literature. These figures represent only works where the Renaissance problem is discussed, and is not intended as a bibliographical record of the literary activity of the period as a whole. The fact that over a hundred and fifty writers in the short span of thirty years find occasion to treat the Renaissance problem shows that it has become a subject of considerable interest.

Both Elizabethan literature and the revival of learning were popular lecture subjects at this time. Coleridge's and Hazlitt's lectures are of course well known; the bibliographer Thomas F. Dibdin delivered a series of twenty-eight lectures on English literature from the beginnings to Raleigh in 1806-08 at the Royal Institution which were apparently well attended, while William Beloe, Charles Butler, and Francis Horner intended to write full length histories of the revival of literature. Moreover, it is at this time that the word Renaissance first begins to be used in England. So far as I have been able to determine, Scott is the first to use the word in the sense of designating the period and not merely as a word in the title of a French work on the subject. In the curious work called Paul's Letters to his Kinsfolk, Scott refers to the Museum des Monumens Français of Le Noir in Les petits Augustins and says of it:

You accompany, therefore, at once the progress of the arts and that of history, as you wander from hall to hall, and compare the rude images of Clovis

and Pharamond with what the Italian chisel produced to commemorate departed greatness, in that happy epoch which the French artists call Le Siècle de la Renaissance.¹

This is dated 1815, but the next appearance of the word is not until 1846 when Henry Cary, the son of Henry Francis Cary, in his "Introductory Sketch of the History of French Poetry" to a volume of translations by his father writes:

We are now approaching that period of the history of French literature, to which French authors have given the very questionable name of La Renaissance.²

Cary's suspicion of the word is not made explicit and we have no way of telling what Cary had in mind but it may have been that Cary saw that as the word gained in prominence it tended to be used as an explanation of the phenomenon it was coined to describe.

As I pointed out in the previous chapter, the early part of the nineteenth century in England was not specially interested in historical theories but concentrated on greater accuracy in detail. For the most part, the characteristic attitude toward the past was summed up by Macaulay's aphorism: "For, in fact, it is the age that forms the man, not the man that forms the age." The clue to the attitude toward scholarship taken at this time is furnished by the intense bibli-

¹ Sir Walter Scott, The Miscellaneous Prose Works (Edinburgh, 1848), V, 236-37.

² Henry Cary, "Introductory Sketch," The Early French Poets, a Series of Notices and Translations, by the Late Rev. Henry Francis Cary (London, 1846), IV, xxxix.

graphical activity, for from this period stems the endeavor to discover and describe all extant Renaissance and particularly Elizabethan books. Scholarship comes into its own and while no new departures in the history of the idea of the Renaissance may be expected, a more accurate approach to it will be found. Finally, it is during this period that the foundations are laid for the intensive historical activity which marked the latter half of the nineteenth century.

II. The Revival of the Fine Arts

The history of the revival of the fine arts occupied a respectable place in the attention of the writers between 1795 and 1837. However, the essential features of the story remained the same as in the previous period while any changes which were made were made in detail. The one great contribution of this period to the history of the arts is the recognition of the merits of medieval art and especially medieval architecture, but this will be taken up in a later section. A typical account of the revival of the fine arts and one which shows how slowly appreciation of medieval art grew is that by Michael Bryan:

The arts, which had continued to degenerate among the Romans from the reign of Nero, appear to have perished with the Colossus of the Roman empire, and to have been totally lost in the succeeding dominion of barbarism. If they preserved a degraded existence in a miserable asylum in Greece, they owed it to the piety

of the people, rather than the protection of the government. The artist was employed, not honoured. The exercise of his talent procured him a wretched subsistence, by colouring what were called images, rudely stained, for the purposes of public worship, which were chiefly admired for the gold and precious stones with which they were ornamented. It was, however, to Greece, where the art had languished in that state of decrepitude, that Italy was indebted for the origin of what is called the modern school. Although its renovation has been generally attributed to Cimabue, it is sufficiently proved by the Italian writers on art, that painting was practised at Pisa, Florence, and other parts of Italy nearly two centuries before him. It is, however, universally admitted, that he was the first that rescued the art from the gross and barbarous state in which it was previously practised.³

The influence of Vasari is obvious as it is in Hewson Clarke's and John Dougall's account of the revival of the arts in their Cabinet of Arts.⁴

The subject of art was as interesting to Hazlitt as literature and no small part of his work is devoted to art criticism. While he wrote no unified account of the revival of the fine arts, there are occasional references to it to attest to his interest in the subject. In an essay titled "Why the Arts are not Progressive? A Fragment" which appeared in The Round Table: A Collection of Essays

3 Michael Bryan, A Biographical and Critical Dictionary of Painters and Engravers, from the Revival of Art under Cimabue, ...to the Present Time (London, 1816), I, 276.

4 Hewson Clarke and John Dougall, The Cabinet of Arts, or General Instructor in Arts, Science, Trade, Practical Machinery, the Means of Preserving Human Life, and Political Economy (London, 1817), pp. 317-19. Cf. Alexander Chalmers, The General Biographical Dictionary (London, 1813), IX, 380.

on Literature, Men and Manners, 1817, he makes the point that the arts have usually sprung full blown into perfection without any gradual progression toward it and uses the art of the Renaissance to make his case clear:

Nothing is more contrary to the fact than the supposition that in what we understand by the fine arts, as painting and poetry, relative perfection is only the result of repeated efforts, and that what has been once well done constantly leads to something better. What is mechanical, reducible to rule, or capable of demonstration, is progressive, and admits of gradual improvement: what is not mechanical or definite, but depends on genius, taste, and feeling, only soon becomes stationary or retrograde, and loses more than it gives by transfusion. The contrary opinion is, indeed, a common error, which has grown up, like many others, from transferring an analogy of one kind to something quite distinct, without thinking of the difference in the nature of the things, or attending to the difference of the results. For most persons, finding what wonderful advances have been made in biblical criticism, in chemistry, in mechanics, in geometry, astronomy, etc.,--i.e., in things depending on mere inquiry and experiment, or on absolute demonstration, have been led hastily to conclude, that there was a general tendency in the efforts of the human intellect to improve by repetition, and in all other arts and institutions to grow perfect and mature by time. We look back on the theological creed of our ancestors, and their discoveries in natural philosophy, with a smile of pity: science, and the arts connected with it, have all had their infancy, their youth, and manhood, and seem to have in them no principle of limitation or decay; and, inquiring no farther about the matter, we infer, in the height of our self-congratulation, and in the intoxication of our pride, that the same progress has been, and will continue to be, made in all other things which are the work of man. The fact, however, stares us so plainly in the face, that one would think the smallest reflection must suggest the truth, and overturn our sanguine theories. The greatest poets, the ablest orators, the best painters, and the finest sculptors that the world ever saw appeared soon after the birth of these arts, and lived in a state of society which was, in other respects, comparatively barbarous. Those arts,

which depend on individual genius and incommunicable power, have always leaped at once from infancy to manhood, from the first rude dawn of invention to their meridian height and dazzling lustre, and have in general declined ever after. This is the peculiar distinction and privilege of each, of science and of art; of the one, never to attain its utmost summit of perfection, and of the other, to arrive at it almost at once. Homer, Chaucer, Spenser, Shakspeare, Dante, and Ariosto (Milton alone was of a later age, and not the worse for it), Raphael, Titian, Michael Angelo, Correggio, Cervantes, and Boccaccio--all lived near the beginning of their arts--perfected, and all but created them. These giant sons of genius stand, indeed, upon the earth, but they tower above their fellows, and the long line of their successors does not interpose anything to obstruct their view, or lessen their brightness. In strength and stature they are unrivalled, in grace and beauty they have never been surpassed. In after ages, and more refined periods, (as they are called), great men have arisen one by one, as it were by threes and at intervals: though in general the best of these uncultivated and artificial minds were of an inferior order, as Tasso and Pope among poets, Guido and Vandyke among painters. But in the earliest stages of the arts, when the first mechanical difficulties had been got over, and the language as it were acquired, they rose by clusters and in constellations, never to rise again.⁵

This is indeed a formidable attack on some of the most cherished eighteenth century ideas, progress, training, the superiority of science, and perfectionism. As a matter of fact, while the passage does contain a kind of rationale of romanticism, other romantics would not necessarily agree with Hazlitt, as for example, Shelley in his views on science. The temper of the period, though usually designated as romantic, was far from that, so that this

⁵ William Hazlitt, The Complete Works, ed. P. P. Howe (London, 1930), IV, 161-62.

passage does not represent the views of most historians of the time who believed with the eighteenth century in a slow evolution from rude beginnings to modern superiority.

In the first lecture of the 1818 series as reported by J. H. Green, Coleridge spoke on the "General Character of the Gothic Mind in the Middle Ages" and undertook to explain the relationship between the art of the Middle Ages and of the Renaissance:

He then proceeded to describe the generic character of the Northern nations, and defined it as an independence of the whole in the freedom of the individual, noticing their respect for women, and their consequent chivalrous spirit in war; and how evidently the participation in the general council laid the foundation of the representative form of government, the only rational mode of preserving individual liberty in opposition to the licentious democracy of the ancient republics.

He called our attention to the peculiarity of their art, and showed how it entirely depended on a symbolical expression of the infinite,--which is not vastness, nor immensity, nor perfection, but whatever cannot be circumscribed within the limits of actual sensuous being. In the ancient art, on the contrary, everything was finite and material. Accordingly, sculpture was not attempted by the Gothic races till the ancient specimens of the paintings of modern ages, as in those of Giotto and his associates in the cemetery at Pisa, this complexity, variety, and symbolical character are evident, and are more fully developed in the mightier works of Michel Angelo and Raffael. The contemplation of the works of antique art excites a feeling of elevated beauty, and exalted notions of the human; but the Gothic architecture impresses the beholder with a sense of self-annihilation; he becomes, as it were, a part of the work contemplated. An endless complexity and variety are united into one whole, the plan of which is not distinct from the execution. A Gothic cathedral is the petrification of our religion. The only work of truly modern sculpture is the Moses of Michel Angelo.⁶

⁶ Thomas M. Raysor, ed., Coleridge's Miscellaneous Criticism (Harvard University Press, 1933), pp. 6-7.

Coleridge's merging of the Gothic into the modern is an extremely significant phenomenon for it indicates a shifting of the definition of modern; this will be considered in a later section. John S. Memes compares the age of the Renaissance to that of Pericles:

Notwithstanding the very considerable attainments already exhibited, to the perfection of Sculpture there yet wanted greater ease and grace of execution, more perfect and elevated expression, more refined selection of form and composition,--more, in short, of that heightening charm which fancy lends to reality--of that which constitutes the poetry, not the fictions of art. The first blush of the times, too, at the commencement of the sixteenth century, seemed to promise a most propitious era for the accomplishment of these remaining improvements. In Italy, yet the only fixed and native seat of art, a spirit of refinement and a love of elegance, a high and general respect for art, pervaded all ranks. Universal activity, also, and energy of character, growing out of the conscious dignity of independence, animated the republican cities. Each vied with its neighbour in the splendour of public buildings, and in munificence of patronage. Florence, indeed, from her peculiar advantages and superior opulence, sooner distanced rivalry; but her schools were open to all, and her Medici, the most enlightened of patrons, were as yet but merchants and simple citizens. In those states, too, where free and popular government was not yet established, kings and princes affected to love and encourage the arts. Literature, in most of the countries of Europe, had spread its lights around; the ancient models of eloquence were known, at least in their precepts, to all who laboured in the fields of genius; and even in sculpture, some of the most breathing fragments had been, or, in the course of the century, were restored to day. The stir of spirit had penetrated even the recesses of papal domination and priestly ease. Means of empire were now to be essayed more congenial to the complexion of the times, and to the minds of men, than spiritual weapons, unhallowed in every church, because unscriptural, or than--more unjustifiable still, when wielded by ministers of peace--secular arms. Rome was to be rendered the home and habita-

tion of art, as of religion. She was to contain the temple vainly hoped to become the Zion of the Christian world. All these causes, favourable as they were to general developement of talent, tended with a peculiar energy to the advancement of sculpture, in which, with the exception of poetry, the greatest progress had yet been accomplished since the revival of intelligence. The path, too, which had here been pursued, led directly to excellence. Nothing was to be unlearned. The era bore a striking resemblance in its leading features to that of Pericles; there was wanting only a Phidias to realize its expectancy; and in Michael Angelo, the genius of Greece seemed to be supplied.⁷

Memes links the revival of the arts to the rise of the city republics as well as to the revival of letters and the entire spirit of activity which characterized the Renaissance; incidentally, Memes' praise of Angelo is representative of his age, for Angelo was thought to be the apex of Renaissance art.⁸

The state of architecture in England during Elizabeth's reign is described by Scott in an essay "On Landscape Gardening" which appeared in the Quarterly Review for 1828:

If the reader will imagine a house in the irregular form of architecture which was introduced in Elizabeth's time, its varied front, graced with projecting oriels, and its angles ornamented with turrets; its columnar chimneys, so much adorned as to make that a

⁷ John S. Memes, History of Sculpture, Painting, and Architecture (Edinburgh, 1829), pp. 100-01.

⁸ Cf. William A. Cadell, A Journey in Carniola, Italy, and France, in the Years 1817, 1818 (Edinburgh, 1820), I, 138; George Miller, Lectures on the Philosophy of Modern History (Dublin, 1820), IV, 487; John Platts, A New Universal Biography (London, 1825), III, 356; Alexander F. Tytler, Elements of General History (Concord, N.H., 1825), 180; J. D. Sinclair, An Autumn in Italy (Edinburgh, 1829), pp. 132-37; Sharon Turner, The History of England from the Earliest Period to the Death of Elizabeth (London, 1839), XI, 3.

beauty which is generally a deformity; its fair halls, banqueting-rooms, galleries, and lodgings for interior accommodation,--it will afford us no uncomfortable notion of the days of good Queen Bess. In immediate and close connexion with the mansion lie its gardens, with their terraces, urns, statues, staircases, screens, alcoves, and summer-houses; its dry paved or turfed walks, through a succession of interesting objects, the whole line of architecture corresponding with that of the house, with its Gothic labels and entablatures, but assuming gradually a plainer and more massive character, as the grounds extended and seemed to connect themselves with the open country.⁹

But not all students of Elizabethan architecture were as enthusiastic about it as was Scott. Edmund Aikin writes:

On the whole, this, though a glorious period for literature, was lost for the fine arts. The incongruous mixture of the conflicting principles of Grecian and Gothic architecture produced buildings, more truly barbarous, more disgusting to a cultivated taste, than the rudest Norman work.¹⁰

John Milner and Southey criticize the ecclesiastical architecture of the Tudor era for the reason that it was a bad imitation of medieval architecture debased by extraneous influences.¹¹ Indeed, John C. Eustace went so far as to criticize the whole of Renaissance architecture because it fell short of the ancient standards. He writes:

⁹ Sir Walter Scott, op. cit., XXI, 94-95.

¹⁰ Edmund Aikin, "On the Domestic Architecture of the Reign of Elizabeth," in Lucy Aikin, Memoirs of the Court of Queen Elizabeth (London, 1818), II, 515.

¹¹ John Milner, A Treatise on the Ecclesiastical Architecture of England, during the Middle Ages (London, 1811), pp. 116-17; Robert Southey, "Review of Britton's Cathedral Antiquities," Quarterly Review, XXXIV (1826), 306-07.

At length a happier period succeeded in the fifth era, the arts and sciences smiled once more upon their ancient seat, and architects of high name and reputation succeeded each other; their exertions were called forth and rewarded by the authority and munificence of Pontiffs; they had sites formed by nature before them, and every material ready prepared at hand. In such circumstances, and with such models as Rome presents on every side, who would not have expected to see architecture carried to its highest perfection, and even the ideal fair and beautiful, so long conceived in theory, at length realized in practice? But such was not the event. Architects imagined that with so many advantages it would be mean to copy, and easy to surpass antiquity. They sought in the luxuriancy of an irregular imagination forms more fair, combinations more majestic, and even proportions more beautiful than the ancient world had beheld. They all made the attempt; they have all failed; and have proved by their failure that in the same proportion as we follow or abandon the ancients, we approach or deviate from perfection.¹³

This survey of the history of the revival of the arts during 1795 to 1837 does not show the real extent of scholarship devoted to the study of Renaissance art, but while this scholarship is detailed, it is not imaginative nor given to speculation. It would seem as though the Renaissance were now taken for granted but what was needed was a more complete cataloguing of the treasures of Renaissance art, and this the historians of this period tried to supply. Thus, while attention is directed to Renaissance art, it is not directed at the same time to the idea of the Renaissance.

¹³ John C. Eustace, A Classical Tour through Italy (London, 1817), III, 213-14.

III. The Revival of Classical Learning

The study of the revival of classical learning continued to overshadow discussion of the revival of the arts. However, the main outlines of the story remain the same, though there is this innovation, namely, that more attention is paid to the results effected by the revival of learning than at any previous period. This is the consequence not so much of a growth in theoretical studies of the Renaissance as in the maturing of scholarship which opened up new aspects of the Renaissance to study. While the word Renaissance is not used, there is a tendency to use the concept of the revival of learning, which is but one factor in the idea of the Renaissance, for the Renaissance as a whole.

The tradition that the revival of classical learning began with Petrarch or with Petrarch, Dante, and Boccaccio had many followers at this time. William Shepherd calls Petrarch and Boccaccio "those eminent revivers of letters" while Roscoe shows that Dante, Petrarch, and Boccaccio were both restorers of learning as well as critics of the church.¹³ The rôle played by Petrarch in bringing about

¹³ William Shepherd, The Life of Poggio Bracciolini (Liverpool, 1802), p. 3; William Roscoe, The Life and Pontificate of Leo the Tenth (Liverpool, 1805), III, 139-40. Roscoe's Life of Leo was not as popular as his Lorenzo which continued to be admired in the early nineteenth century. Southey says

the revival of letters is analyzed by George Burnett:

About the middle of the fourteenth century, Dante, Petrarca, with his pupil and friend, Boccace, in Italy; and soon after, Chaucer and Gower in England, by the cultivation of their vernacular languages commenced a new aera in literary taste, and contributed to enlarge the sphere of intellectual pleasures. Petrarca was organized for the higher and more refined; and his genius, inspired by the most pure and exalted passion, expressed his glowing feelings in language of correspondent truth and delicacy. The strings of the human heart, vibrating in harmony, acknowledged the touch of nature; and the poetry of Petrarca creating a finer intellectual tact, produced in a few minds, a distaste for romantic imagery and the peculiarities of Gothic manners. This incipient diffusion of a juster sentiment, prepared the way for the complete establishment of classical refinement in the succeeding century.¹⁴

The concluding section of Berington's Literary History of the Middle Ages contains an account of the revival beginning with Petrarch which is extensive; Chalmer's sketch of Petrarch's influence is taken from Berington.¹⁵

According to Hazlitt, Dante was the father of modern literature, "the first lasting monument of modern litera-

of it in his Letters from England: by Don Manuel Alvarez Espriella. Translated from the Spanish (London, 1808), II, 121: "...even the Italians have thought worthy of translation. The libraries of Florence were searched for materials for this work, and many writings of Lorenzo himself first given to the world in Liverpool. This work of Mr. Roscoe's has diffused a general taste for the literature of Italy."

14 George Burnett, Specimens of English Prose-Writers (London, 1807), I, 307-08.

15 Joseph Berington, A Literary History of the Middle Ages (London, 1814), pp. 466-510; Alexander Chalmers, op. cit., XXIV, 399-401. Cf. Allaston Burgh, Anecdotes of Music (London, 1814), I, 242-43.

ture." He first mentions this idea in a review of Sismondi's Literature of the South which appeared in the Edinburgh Review for 1815 and elaborated on it three years later in the first lecture of the Lectures on the English Poets:

Dante was the father of modern poetry, and he may therefore claim a place in this connection. His poem is the first great step from Gothic darkness and barbarism; and the struggle of thought to burst the thralldom in which the human mind had been so long held, is felt in every page. He stood bewildered, not appalled, on that dark shore which separates the ancient and modern world; and saw the glories of antiquity dawning through the abyss of time, while revelation opened its passage to the other world. He was lost in wonder at what had been done before him, and he dared to emulate it.¹⁶

On the other hand, Byron gave his praise to Petrarch in the thirtieth verse of the fourth canto of Childe Harold's Pilgrimage:

There is a tomb in Arqua; reared in air,
Pillared in their sarcophagus, repose
The bones of Laura's lover; here repair
Many familiar with his well-sung woes,
The Pilgrims of his Genius. He arose
To raise a language, and his land reclaim
From the dull yoke of her barbaric foes:
Watering the tree which bears his Lady's name
With his melodious tears, he gave himself to Fame.¹⁷

Among the improvements in learning which took place during the twelfth and fifteenth centuries, according to Hallam, was the cultivation of new languages by Dante, Petrarch, and Chaucer; coincidental with the rise of modern vernacu-

¹⁶ William Hazlitt, op. cit., XVI, 40, V, 17.

¹⁷ Lord Byron, The Works, ed. Ernest H. Coleridge and Rowland E. Prothero (London, 1918), II, 350.

lars was the revival of classical learning which was aided by those who were the first to compose in the new languages.¹⁸ Leigh Hunt did not fail to express his appreciation of Petrarch; according to him, Petrarch "...was the greatest light of his age; ...although so fine a writer himself, and the author of a multitude of works, or rather because he was both, he took the greatest pains to revive the knowledge of the ancient learning, recommending it everywhere, and copying out large manuscripts with his own hand."¹⁹ Coleridge has an interesting note to his poem "The Garden of Boccaccio" in which he points out Boccaccio's contributions to the revival of ancient letters:

Mid gods of Greece and warriors of romance,
See! Boccace sits, unfolding on his knees
The new-found role of old Maeonides;
But from his mantle's fold, and near the heart,
Peers Ovid's holy book of Love's sweet smart!

¹⁸ Henry Hallam, View of the State of Europe during the Middle Ages (New York, 1866), III, 389-445.

¹⁹ Leigh Hunt, "On Receiving a Sprig of Laurel from Vaucluse," in Essays (Selected), ed. J. B. Priestley (London, 1929), pp. 104-05. The essay is from The Indicator for 1820. In a later work, "An Essay on the Cultivation, History and Varieties of the Species of Poem Called the Sonnet" in The Book of the Sonnet, ed. Leigh Hunt and S. Adams Lee (London, 1867), I, 28, Hunt adds Boccaccio to his list of the influences which brought about the revival of classical learning: "Literary ambition, too, at that period was turned into new directions by the novels of Petrarca's friend Boccaccio, by the increasing discoveries of ancient classics, by the substitution of the Greek language itself for translations of its authors through Arabic and Latin versions, and lastly, by the disturbed condition of Italy in Church and State, the rise of petty sovereignties, and the downfall of republics."

I know few more striking or more interesting proofs of the overwhelming influence which the study of the Greek and Roman classics exercised on the judgments, feelings, and imaginations of the literati of Europe at the commencement of the restoration of literature, than the passage in the *Filocolo* of Boccaccio: where the sage instructor, Racheo, as soon as the young prince and the beautiful girl Biancofiore had learned their letters, sets them to study the Holy Book, Ovid's *Art of Love*.²⁰

The period under consideration is noteworthy for two full length studies of Petrarch and it is significant that both are agreed on the rôle played by Petrarch. Ugo Foscolo writes:

The important object of Petrarch's study and ambition was to dissipate the darkness which during the middle ages, had enveloped the literature of the ancients. But what genius and ardour could have been equal to the magnitude of this undertaking? He has so far succeeded, however, in clearing the road to the study of antiquity as to acquire the title, which he still justly retains, of the Restorer of Classical Learning.²¹

And Thomas Campbell has something of the same idea in his extensive study of Petrarch:

After the deluge of barbarism in modern Europe had subsided, he stood, like a post-diluvian patriarch, connecting our knowledge of the old world with that of the new: and he had over his head a rainbow of genius, promising that the flood of ignorance should never return.²²

Campbell's rather lush imagery sums up very well the attitude taken by the writers of the early nineteenth century

20 Samuel Taylor Coleridge, The Complete Works, ed. Professor Shedd (New York, 1853), VII, 320.

21 Ugo Foscolo, Essays on Petrarch (London, 1823), p. 95.

22 Thomas Campbell, Life of Petrarch (London, 1841), I, 3-4.

in England toward the part Petrarch played in bringing about the revival of ancient learning.

Another group of scholars investigated the influence of the learned Greeks before the fall of Constantinople. In this connection, Hody's little book was not forgotten and it is safe to say that the biographical dictionaries drew their information from Hody. It is perhaps not necessary to repeat in any detail the accounts given at this time of the learned Greeks, especially since they do not supersede Hody, Mavor, Greswell, Beloe, Chalmers, Stewart, Morrell, Tannehill, Platts, and Turner discuss the work of the learned Greeks and serve to show that this aspect of the revival of classical learning was not neglected.²³

The cliché about the fall of Constantinople did not fail to find adherents at this time. Coleridge must be numbered among them for in the first number of The Watchman

23 William Mavor, Universal History, Ancient and Modern (New York, 1804), XVI, 269-70; William P. Greswell, Memoirs of Angelus Politianus, Joannes Picius of Mirandula, etc. (Manchester, 1805), pp. 75-77; William Beloe, Anecdotes of Literature and Scarce Books (London, 1811), V, 81-82, 87; Alexander Chalmers, op. cit., IX, 303; Dugald Stewart, Dissertation: Exhibiting the Progress of Metaphysical, Ethical, and Political Philosophy, since the Revival of Letters in Europe in The Collected Works, ed. Sir William Hamilton (Edinburgh, 1854), I, 27; Thomas Morrell, Studies in History (London, 1823), I, 328; Wilkins Tannehill, Sketches of the History of Literature, from the Earliest Period to the Revival of Letters in the Fifteenth Century (Nashville, 1823), p. 334; John Platts, op. cit., III, 505, 484, 481, IV, 253-54; Sharon Turner, op. cit., XI, 4-7.

he wrote:

Among the calamities, which eventually have produced the most important blessings, we may particularize the capture of Constantinople by the Turks in 1453. The number of learned Greeks, whom this event drove into the West, in conjunction with the recent discovery of printing, kindled the love of knowledge in Europe, and supplied opportunities for the attainment of it. Princes emulated each other in the patronage of men of ability, and endeavoured to excite a spirit of literature among their subjects by every encouragement which their rude policy suggested, or the genius of the age would permit. The first scanty twilight of knowledge was sufficient to shew what horrors had resulted from ignorance; and no experience had yet taught them that general illumination is incompatible with undelegated power. This incipient diffusion of truth was aided by the Lutheran schism, which roused the clergy of Europe from their long doze of sensuality, and by the keen goading of religious controversy forced each party into literary exertion.²⁴

It is curious that naivete' about one subject should be matched by sophistication on another. It is significant that the theory that the revival of classical learning took place after 1453 was most prominently displayed in the popular historical works such as those by Kett, Tytler, and Platts; it is interesting too, that in each case the invention of printing was held to have helped the spread of the old learning. This is exemplified by Platts who also adds a suggestion about the rise of nationalism:

About this time [1453], learning also began to revive in Europe, where it had long been lost; and the invention of printing, which happened at the same time, rendered it impossible for barbarism ever to take place in such a degree as formerly. All nations of

²⁴ Samuel Taylor Coleridge, The Watchman, I (1796), 1.

the world, indeed, seem now to have laid aside much of their former ferocity; and though wars have by no means been given up, they have not been carried on with such circumstances of fury and savage cruelty as before. Instead of attempting to enrich themselves with plunder, and the spoils of their neighbours, mankind in general have applied themselves to commerce, the only true and durable source of riches. This soon produced improvements in navigation; and these improvements led to the discovery of many regions formerly unknown. At the same time, the European powers being at last thoroughly sensible that extensive conquests could never be permanent, applied themselves more to provide for the security of those dominions which they already possessed, than to attempt the conquest of one another; and this produced the policy to which so much attention was lately paid, namely, the preventing any one of the nations from acquiring sufficient strength to overpower another.²⁵

Henry Soames writes that "Previous to the fall of Constantinople, the habits of thinking, which had occupied Europeans of superior intelligence from the period when they partially emerged from the Cimmerian darkness which succeeded the age of Charlemagne, were rapidly becoming obsolete, and the minds of inquisitive men were diligently seeking new modes of intellectual communication" and after 1453 ancient learning spread throughout Europe which "... gave a new direction to the minds of those men, who think for their contemporaries." The invention of printing followed and the "...unwonted flood of light, which thus illumined the intellectual horizon, unsettled the minds of

²⁵ John Platts, op. cit., IV, 2. Cf. Henry Kett, op. cit., I, 249-54; Alexander F. Tytler, op. cit., p. 162.

men, and disposed them to regard with distrust or contempt the principles amidst which their fathers had passed through life."²⁶ At the same time that the writers discussed in this paragraph hold to a mistaken notion of the dating of the Renaissance, they do try to develop a more sophisticated view of the revival; this is notably true of Soames.

Mention of the rôle of printing in the passages just considered brings up its influence on the revival of classical learning. In addition to the opinions expressed by Coleridge, Tytler, Kett, Platts, and Soames on this relationship, Alexander Bower writes that the "...discovery of the art of printing had, by this time, promoted considerably the revival of learning" while in his Sir Thomas More, Southey has More say that "...the press was then too much occupied in preserving such precious remains of antiquity as could be rescued from destruction."²⁷ However, the bulk of discussion centering about the effects of printing is to be found in the consideration of the relationship between printing and the rise of science.

The special problem of the course of the revival of

²⁶ Henry Soames, The History of the Reformation of the Church of England (London, 1826), I, 105-06.

²⁷ Alexander Bower, The Life of Luther (Philadelphia, 1834), p. 35; Robert Southey, Sir Thomas More: or, Colloquies on the Progress and Prospects of Society (London, 1822), II, 372.

learning in England received some attention, though not as much as might be expected. In his History of the University and Colleges of Cambridge, G. Dyer discusses the influence of Erasmus in promoting the study of ancient culture and says of him that "...in the wise and critical use of ancient manuscripts, in liberalizing our universities, and in breaking the long-riveted shackles of their superstitions and ignorance, by writing, no one did so much as this man--and as to other matters--Homo fuit atq. humanus Erasmus." Dyer goes on to consider the work of Crooke, Smith, Cheke, and Ascham and points out that with them the advocacy of Protestantism and the pursuit of the new learning were indissolubly connected.²⁸ The situation in England during the reign of Elizabeth is described by John Bigland in his History of England:

The character of the English nation, during this period, is more worthy of attention and praise than that of the princess who swayed the sceptre. It exhibits the glorious and interesting spectacle of a people emerging from barbarity to civilization, from ignorance to science and learning. The vices and virtues, the happiness or misery of a nation, depends in part, but not wholly on the disposition of the sovereign. Many causes must concur to produce these important effects. It was not owing to Elizabeth alone that England owed its rising prosperity. This was an age in which a new illumination had just been diffused, and a new spirit of adventure excited throughout Europe. The revival of learning, and its dissemination by printing, had enlightened the minds of the people;

²⁸ G. Dyer, The History of the University and Colleges of Cambridge (London, 1914), I, 165-71.

the reformation had given rise to independence of thought; and the discovery of America had extended the sphere of commercial speculation. England was not among the nations that first profited by this concurrence of favorable circumstance; but, amidst the general resuscitation of Europe, she could not remain in a state of apathy. In the reign of Elizabeth, the people, as it were by a sudden impulse, began to exert all their native vigour, and genius put forth all its powers. An increasing commerce produced an influx of wealth and a naval strength, by which England acquired greater power than she had ever derived from the foreign conquests and splendid victories of her celebrated kings.... It would be tedious to enumerate the various manufactures and mechanical arts that were introduced, invented, or improved during this period. Industry and commerce enriched the people; agriculture was improved: the feudal system began rapidly to disappear; and the influx and diffusion of wealth excited and disseminated a spirit of liberty which gradually produced the present happy and free constitution of this kingdom.

Among the glories of this reign must be reckoned the flourishing state of learning.... Bacon freed philosophy from the jargon of the schools, and fixed it on rational principles.²⁹

Bigland has not only an emancipated view of historical methodology but of the idea of the Renaissance as well, for he sees the revival of learning as part of a broader movement which made decisive changes in a number of fields of endeavor. Thomas Morrell is more conventional; he confines himself to the revival exclusively:

The intellectual darkness which had long prevailed, continued undiminished till the death of Henry VII., except that, in a few solitary instances, (like those of Grocyn and Tilly, eminent scholars, who flourished in that reign,) literature was cultivated

²⁹ John Bigland, The History of England, from the Earliest Period, to the Close of the Year 1812 (New York, 1815), I, 130-32.

with ardour and success. But the accession of Henry VIII. forms a memorable aera in the history of learning in this kingdom. Then many literary institutions, which had fallen into decay, renewed their youth; and many branches of science, which had been long neglected, began to flourish.³⁰

A provocative account of the progress of learning and of civilization generally in England is given by Leigh Hunt in "The Streets of the Metropolis: their Memories and Great Men," which forms part of the introduction to his London Journal:

Erasmus wrote in the time of Henry the Eighth, when the civil wars had terminated in a voluptuous security, and when the pride of the court and nobility was at its height. Knighthood was becoming rather a shew than a substance; and the changes in religion, the dissolution of the monasteries, and above all, the permission to read the Bible, set men thinking, and identified history in future with the progress of the general mind. Opinion, accidentally, set free by a tyrant, was never to be put down, though tyranny tried never so hard. Poetry revived in the person of Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey; and, by a maturity natural to the first unsophisticated efforts of imagination, came to its height in the next age with Shakespeare. The monasteries being dissolved, London was become entirely the commercial city it has remained ever since, though it still abounded with noblemen's mansions, and did so till a much later period....

In this age of Elizabeth, ever worthy of honour and gratitude, the illustrious Bacon set free the hands of knowledge, which Aristotle had chained up, and put into them the touchstone of experiment, the mighty mover of the ages to come. This was the great age also of English poetry and drama. Former manners and opinions now began to be seen only on the stage; intellect silently gave a man a rank in society he never enjoyed before; and nobles and men of letters mixed together in clubs. People now also began to speculate on government as well as religion; and the first evidences of that unsatisfied reasoning spirit

³⁰ Thomas Morrell, op. cit., I, 444.

appeared, which produced the downfall of the succeeding dynasty, and ultimately the Revolution and all that we now enjoy.

The governments of Elizabeth and James, fearing that the greater the concourse the worse would be the consequence of sickness, and secretly apprehensive, no doubt, of the growth of large and intellectual bodies of men near their head-quarters, did all in their power to confine the metropolis, to its shen# limits but in vain. Despotism itself, even in its mildest shape, cannot prevail against the spirit of an age; and Bacon was at that minute fore-seeing the knowledge that was to quicken, increase, and elevate human intercourse, by means of the growth of commerce.³¹

The passages from Bigland and Hunt indicate a strongly growing tendency, which, as we have seen, began in the latter half of the eighteenth century, to ascribe results to the revival of learning. It is at this point that the revival of learning becomes, in the minds of a number of writers, synonymous with the Renaissance as a whole. If we examine the opinions of the writers of the period under consideration on the subject of the results of the revival of learning, it ought to be possible to draw some conclusions as to the attitude taken toward it at this time. According to Peter Beckford, the fifteenth century in Italy, like the age of Pericles and of Augustus, had the happy faculty of drawing forth genius.³² To Greswell, the same period saw the freeing of philosophy from the dust of barbarism and

31 Leigh Hunt, Leigh Hunt's London Journal (London, 1835), I, iii. #This is corrected to "then" in The Town (London, 1848), p. 19.

32 Peter Beckford, Familiar Letters from Italy, to a Friend in England (Salisbury, 1805), II, 272.

the establishment of criticism on a manly and rational basis, both the direct consequence of the revival of letters.³³ "The revival of classical learning about the middle of this century," wrote George Burnett, "created a new aera in literature, and in human affairs, auspicious to every species of improvement."³⁴ Thomas Thomson holds that the revival, which was both the cause and the result of the new spirit of inquiry sweeping through Europe, ultimately led to the foundations of modern science; this is an idea shared by a considerable number of writers and will be considered later on. Another view is taken by John Bigland who writes that commerce and civilization "...had made a considerable progress" during the reign of Henry VIII "...and throughout Europe, the human mind was beginning to display those energies, which had long been buried in the gloom of obscurity."³⁵

In a review of Dugald Stewart's Dissertation, Sir James Mackintosh had this to say about the revival of literature:

The revival of literature produced a revolution at once in the state of society, and in the mode of philosophizing. It attracted readers from the common ranks of society, who were gradually led on from

33 William P. Greswell, op. cit., pp. 75-77.

34 George Burnett, op. cit., I, 306.

35 John Bigland, op. cit., p. 49.

eloquence and poetry, to morals and philosophy. Philosophers and moralists, after an interval of almost a thousand years, during which they had spoken only to each other, once more discovered that they might address the great body of mankind with the hope of fame and of usefulness. Inter-course with this great public, supplied new materials, and imposed new restraints. The feelings, the common sense, the ordinary affairs of men, presented themselves again to the moralist.³⁶

According to Mackintosh, More, Machiavelli, and Montaigne were the leaders in this movement to bring philosophy back to the problems which affected men in the more practical spheres of life. In his Essay on English Poetry, Thomas Campbell writes:

Shakspeare's genius was certainly indebted to the intelligence and moral principles which existed in his age, and to that intelligence and to those moral principles the revival of classical literature undoubtedly contributed.³⁷

It is the opinion of Edward Nares that the revival of learning was "...an extraordinary stimulus given to the minds of men, to awaken them effectually from the deep sleep, the superstitious apathy, into which they had fallen, and in which they had been ignominiously buried for so many centuries."³⁸ Four pages later Nares writes that the Reformation coincided with the spirit of inquiry which the revival

36 Sir James Mackintosh, "Review of Dugald Stewart's Dissertation," Edinburgh Review, XXVII (1816), 207-08.

37 Thomas Campbell, An Essay on English Poetry (London, 1848), p. 44.

38 Edward Nares, Memoirs of the Life and Administration of the Right Honourable William Cecil, Lord Burghley (London, 1826), I, 25.

of learning had stimulated and provoked. A more detailed statement of the effects produced by the revival of literature is given by Robert Thomson:

The change which took place on the revival of letters in Europe was equally rapid and prodigious. Whether the human intellect had continued dormant throughout the darkness of the middle ages, or had been nursing its vigour, as has been ingeniously maintained, in mental exercises, which, though not conducive to immediate use, tended to sharpen and quicken the understanding, it is evident that a new day burst on society with the discovery of ancient literature, or rather with the revival of a taste for what had been possessed, in some measure, before, without any proper notion of its value. The cultivation of ancient literature did not tend to fetter the free exercise of the human faculties, as it might probably have done, if the public taste and habits of thinking had been previously formed upon it. The European nations brought to the study of this literature a character, habits of thinking, and a course of history and tradition, which were quite original; and hence the introduction of ancient literature served not to fetter but to invigorate their powers of thought, by opening up new fields of research and illustration. The ages of learning, which followed the revival of literature, were thus most eminently distinguished for intellectual exertion and scientific discovery.

Thomson goes on to show that the Reformation made freedom of discussion possible, liberty was established on a firm foundation, commerce opened up new worlds, science began its triumphant march, and he concludes his observations as follows:

The same age in England was the most scientific, the most learned, and the most poetical that has ever occurred since the revival of letters. Bacon was contemporary with Shakespeare. Newton and Leibnitz, Locke and Clarke, flourished nearly at the same time with Milton. Many of the distinguished events now alluded to were at a considerable distance from each other in point of time; but they all arose from the same original impulse that was given, when the human

mind awaked from the long slumber of ages, and again began, like a giant refreshed.³⁹

Thomson's last statement recalls Leigh Hunt's introduction to his London Journal, already quoted, in which he points out that the English Revolution was ultimately the product of the revival of learning.

The keenest and most penetrating student of the effects of the revival of learning at this time was Sharon Turner, one of the foremost authorities of his generation on early English history. His History of England from the beginnings to the death of Elizabeth runs to twelve volumes and is marked by exact scholarship, lucid style, and a speculative bent. Turner was as much interested in intellectual history as in political and social events; the first part of the eleventh volume of his history, which may properly be called an intellectual history of the Renaissance, serves to show his ability and range. Turner begins by stating that

...if a new aera in the mind and history of mankind was felt by some of the most distinguished of his contemporaries to be accompanying the age and reign of Henry VIII. it is still more manifest to us, who can now look back thro the three centuries of events which have since succeeded, that an extraordinary and beneficent revolution, still enlarging in its consequences, was then advancing on Europe, and beginning to penetrate into the British Islands. A simultaneous activity; a desire of improvement, and of personal distinction connected with the progress;

³⁹ Robert Thomson, Treatise on the Progress of Literature, and its Effects on Society (Edinburgh, 1834), pp. 32-33.

new directions of thought, and new facts or opinions resulting from industrious research and very varied pursuits, appeared to be rising in every department of human exertion and inquiry.

The labors and the results were not, as in former times, partial and limited; the mind began to act with an universality and with an emulous diversity which preceding ages had never equally witnessed. In science; in art; in war; in literature; in mechanical inventions; in navigation; in civil polity and in a more diffused and elaborate education, as well as in the venerated topics of religion and its establishments, individuals from every class of life, and in every region on the continent, emerged into notice by their activity, their improvements, their speculations, and their discoveries. The intellectual principle, which animates and guides the human frame, displayed in all things an excited and an investigating curiosity; awakening from the sleep of its former contentedness, and never to be deadened or satiated again.

This great commotion and new evolution of mind began in the fourteenth century; and in Italy and England more decidedly than in any other nation. In both these countries, Literature suddenly ascending out of its vernacular rudeness, yet deviating from ancient models, assumed original forms and topics of composition, which kindled future genius, and interested the public heart. They became the general study and conversation both to the noble and middle ranks; and by this happy effect diffused the taste and means of mental cultivation, and gave to society at large, improving as well as additional sources of individual enjoyment.⁴⁰

Of the revival of classical learning, Turner says that "...it diffused a taste for elegance of style, for discrimination and delicacy of expression and meaning, and for an aspiring philosophy of thought which was too stimulating, and often too rash, not to excite the alarm of the well intentioned, and at last the enmity of those who,

⁴⁰ Sharon Turner, op. cit., XI, 1-3.

for selfish purposes, wished the torpid submission of the human mind to be its unaltering condition, and its contented degradation."⁴¹ As a result, there was a succession of excitements which impelled all who felt and thought to new views and new paths; these excitements were printing, architecture, oil painting, optical glasses which "...increased the general admiration of the human capacity, and an individual desire to be among those who would be memorialized for enlarging or enriching it," the Copernican theory, chemistry, pulpit oratory, navigation, anatomy, botany, mathematics, freedom of the sexes, the introduction of the venereal diseases into Europe, the destruction of the Moorish kingdom, the expulsion of the Jews from Spain, the destruction of Venetian greatness, the invasions of Italy, the inroads of the Turks into Europe, and the growth of commerce and manufactures: "To be distinguished, and to excel in some line of human action, or other, was the general passion."⁴² It must be obvious that Turner is lacking but two words to express succinctly what he has in mind: the first, the Renaissance, to designate the wide extent of the activity of the era he is discussing; and the second, individualism, to specify the nature of the

41 Ibid., XI, 5.

42 Ibid., XI, 8-26. The first citation is from p. 10, the other from p. 14.

motivating force which animated the Renaissance. This is not to suggest that Turner anticipated Burckhardt, but it would certainly seem as though Turner had something of the same concept in mind, though of course he did not push it to the extremes which Burckhardt did in his work.

The example of Turner shows conclusively, it seems to me, that the term revival of learning was beginning to bear more weight than it could legitimately carry before confusion set in. A better word was needed to convey the idea of a broad movement in which the revival of learning could be clearly studied as but one aspect, and it is significant that the next generation of writers on the subject of the Renaissance in England took over the word and used it freely. As a check on this notion, it is important to note that so far as criticisms of the revival of learning are concerned, they specifically have reference to the new taste produced by the revival of ancient literature. The chief complaint was that the revival served to stifle new genius because it brought with it servile imitation.

In his Lectures on Belles Lettres and Logic, William Barron asserts:

The transition from the use of the Latin language, in which almost all the modern authors began to write after the revival of learning, and the hesitation under which literary men long remained, whether they should relinquish that language, and cultivate their own more imperfect languages, repressed considerably the efforts of modern genius.⁴³

⁴³ William Barron, Lectures on Belles Lettres and Logic (London, 1806), II, 16.

Coleridge voices the conventional criticism of the revival of classical learning but gives it a twist of his own:

The revival of classical literature, like all other revolutions, was not an unmixed good. One evil was the passion for pure Latinity, and a consequent contempt for the barbarism of the scholastic style and terminology. For awhile the schoolmen made head against their assailants; but alas! all the genius and eloquence of the world was against them, and by an additional misfortune the scholastic logic was professed by those who had no other attainments, namely, the monks, and these, from monkishness, were the enemies of all genius and liberal knowledge. They were, of course, laughed out of the field as soon as they lost the power of aiding their logic by the post-predicaments of dungeons, fires, and faggot. Henceforth speculative philosophy must be written classically, that is, without technical terms--therefore popularly--and the inevitable consequence was that those sciences only were progressive which were permitted by the apparent as well as real necessity of the case to have a scientific terminology--as mathesis, geometry, astronomy, and so forth--while metaphysics sank and died, and an empirical highly superficial psychology took its place.⁴⁴

A middle of the road position was taken by Francis Jeffrey in his review of Henry Weber's edition of Ford which appeared in the Edinburgh Review for August, 1811:

In the times of which we are speaking, classical learning, though it had made great progress, had not yet been permitted to subdue men's minds to a sense of hopeless inferiority, or to condemn the moderns to the lot of humble imitators.... while they enriched the imagination, and insensibly improved the taste of their successors, they did not at all restrain their freedom, or impair their originality. No common standard had yet been erected, to which all the works of European genius were re-

⁴⁴ Samuel Taylor Coleridge, Anima Poetae. From the Unpublished Notebooks, ed. Ernest H. Coleridge (London, 1895), pp. 274-75.

quired to conform; no general authority was acknowledged, by which all private or local ideas of excellence must submit to be corrected.... Men, indeed, seldom took to writing in those days, unless they had a great deal of matter to communicate;... They were habituated, therefore, both to depend upon their own resources, and to draw upon them without fear or anxiety; and followed the dictates of their own taste and judgment, without standing much in awe of the ancients, of their readers, or of each other.⁴⁵

In the first lecture of the series on the dramatic literature of the age of Elizabeth, Hazlitt points out that the ancient classics prohibited the efforts of native genius from gaining recognition for some time.⁴⁶

The study of the revival of classical learning in the period under consideration, while it did not pioneer in any new directions, dug more deeply into the established traditions and gave them a factual basis which had hitherto been lacking. As a result of this more intensive scholarship, it was seen that the period of the Renaissance was made up of many interconnecting strands of thought and action. As soon as this was recognized, the need was immediately felt for a work which would integrate the diversity of the Renaissance; this was supplied in the latter half of the nineteenth century. Also to be noted is the fact that the results of the revival are increasingly studied, which means that the Renaissance is at last suf-

⁴⁵ Francis Jeffrey, Contributions to the Edinburgh Review (New York, 1864), p. 300.

⁴⁶ William Hazlitt, op. cit., VI, 179-80.

ficiently removed for it to be examined all around and studied. This leads one to wonder whether the idea of the Renaissance has by now played out its part in the establishment of the modern mind along with other leading ideas; its essential task done, it leaves the arena of active debate and becomes a subject for scholarship to investigate. It is for this reason that the aggressive, manly tone which has characterized the idea of the Renaissance up to this point now becomes reflective and subtle. Unlike another idea with which it has been very closely associated up to this point, namely, the idea of progress, the idea of the Renaissance does not continue to activate the minds of men generally nor to serve as a strongly motivating and deep-rooted preconception, but becomes the almost exclusive property of scholars to be analyzed and dissected; its energizing days are over. This does not mean of course that interest in the idea of the Renaissance dies down; on the contrary, after this time, it is one of the chief centers of scholarly activity, but that is exactly where the difficulty comes in, for in proportion as it finds itself possessed by scholarship, it loses its tremendous vitality. In the idea of the Renaissance are reflected the narrow, though none the less interesting, assumptions and aims of scholarship, and while these aims may be said to be related to the fundamental problems of society, to trace the bond is so long and devious a search, that the

connection is often forgotten and even deliberately denied.

IV. The New Defence of the Elizabethans

It is of course unnecessary to point out that the period under consideration is the high water mark in the appreciation of the Elizabethans, especially since the writers at this time were agreed among themselves that they were the first to understand the Elizabethans properly. Wordsworth is very critical of Johnson's Lives:

We open the volume of Prefatory Lives, and to our astonishment the first name we find is that of Cowley!--What is become of the morning-star of English Poetry? Where is the bright Elizabethan constellation? Or, if names be more acceptable than images, where is the ever-to-be-honoured Chaucer? Where is Spenser? Where Sidney? And lastly, where he, whose rights as a poet, contradistinguished from those which he is universally allowed to possess as a dramatist, we have vindicated,--where Shakspeare?--These, and a multitude of others not unworthy to be placed near them, their contemporaries and successors, we have not. But in their stead, we have (could better be expected when precedence was to be settled by an abstract of reputation at any given period made, as in this case before us?) Roscommon, and Stepney, and Phillips, and Walsh, and Smith, and Duke, and King, and Spratt--Halifax, Granville, Sheffield, Congreve, Broome, and other reputed Mag-nates--metrical writers utterly worthless and useless, except for occasions like the present, when their productions are referred to as evidence what a small quantity of brain is necessary to procure a considerable stock of admiration, provided the aspirant will accommodate himself to the likings and fashions of his day.⁴⁷

⁴⁷ William Wordsworth, "Poetry as a Study," The Prose Works, ed. A. B. Grosart (London, 1876), II, 124-35.

Wordsworth is as prejudiced in his way as those he accuses of bias, and he not only wrongs Johnson, but fails to take into account, just as Lamb and Coleridge and Hazlitt failed to acknowledge, first, the continuous tradition of appreciation of the Elizabethans, and second, the work of the scholars and bibliographers of the eighteenth century and of his own time without which a deepened appreciation of the Elizabethans would have been impossible. Nevertheless, the prevailing opinion was well expressed by T. Barnes when he said that "In the present age, ...the passion for ancient English literature has become almost epidemic."⁴⁸ Robinson reports that Tieck boasted that he had read every accessible printed drama before and contemporaneous with Shakespeare and had come over to England to inspect manuscript copies and rare editions.

But when we inspect the justifications made at this time for the adulation of Elizabethan literature, we find them to be elaborate recastings of the same ideas which the eighteenth century first developed. This is true with but one exception, namely, that of the classical-romantic, or ancient-modern, discussion which, taken over from the Germans, occupied the attention of but a small number of early nineteenth century writers as we shall soon see. As

⁴⁸ T. Barnes, "Stafford's Niobe," The Reflector, I (1810), p. 59.

to the more conventional type of defense, this is to be found in greater numbers and among more varied writers. Scott's life of Dryden contains a mature appreciation of the writers who flourished during the reigns of Elizabeth and James I, while Southey's Select Works of the British Poets from Chaucer to Jonson attempted to supply the deficiencies in Johnson's Lives noted by Wordsworth. Typical of the attitude taken towards the Elizabethans is Sir Egerton Brydges' statement in his Imaginative Biography:

But every thing concurred, in the Elizabethan aera, to give a vigour and a range to genius, to which neither prior nor subsequent times have been equally propitious. An heroic age, influenced with the discovery of new worlds, gave increased impulse to fancies enriched by access both to the recovered treasures of ancient literature, and the wild splendours of Italian fiction. A command of language equal to the great occasion was not wanting.⁴⁹

According to Isaac Disraeli, it was in the age of Elizabeth that "...the English mind took its first bent; a new-born impulse in the nation everywhere was working out its religion, its legislation, and its literature. In every class of genius there existed nothing to copy; everything that was to be great was to find a beginning."⁵⁰ Finally, the

49 Sir Egerton Brydges, Imaginative Biography (London, 1834), II, 191. Cf. Thomas Zouch, Memoirs of the Life and Writings of Sir Philip Sidney (York, 1809), p. 9; Thomas De Quincey, "Homer and the Homerides," The Collected Writings, ed. David Masson (Edinburgh, 1893), VI, 73; Samuel Taylor Coleridge, Biographia Literaria, ed. J. Shawcross (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1907), II, 119.

50 Isaac Disraeli, "Bacon," Amenities of Literature, ed. Benjamin Disraeli (London, 1859), II, 284.

culmination of appreciation comes in the work of Francis Jeffrey:

The aera to which they belong, indeed, has always appeared to us by far the brightest in the history of English literature,--or indeed of human intellect and capacity. There never was, any where, any thing like the sixty or seventy years that elapsed from the middle of Elizabeth's reign to the period of the Restoration. In point of real force and originality of genius, neither the age of Pericles, nor the age of Augustus, nor the times of Leo X., nor of Louis XIV., can come at all into comparison:⁵¹

So far as I have been able to determine, the discussion of the difference between classical and romantic occurs in the work of Coleridge, Hazlitt, Scott, Robinson, and De Quincey, with the bulk of exposition centering in Coleridge and De Quincey. Considering the number of writers at work at this time, it is hard to understand why the idea was not treated more extensively, especially since it had the prestige of the major writers of the period behind it. For this reason, the importance of the classical-romantic debate must be estimated with considerable caution. The main question in the debate was how to determine the difference between ancient literature and modern productions, especially between the two dramas. Now, the reason why this discussion is of interest to us here is that it raised the problem of what lines of demarcation could be set between the ancient and the modern world. Did the unique characteristics of

⁵¹ Francis Jeffrey, op. cit., p. 299.

the Elizabethan drama signify a new era in human history? If Elizabethan literature was a romantic literature as distinguished from the ancient or classical literature, what was the position of medieval romance; to which was it more closely allied? As we shall see, it was sometimes thought that Gothic and Elizabethan literature were alike considered modern literature in distinction from Greek and Roman work.

Under the entry dated January 29, 1811 in his diary, Henry Crabb Robinson reports the following conversation with Coleridge:

I walked with Coleridge to Richman's, where we dined. He talked on Shakespeare, particularly his Fools. These he regarded as supplying the place of the ancient chorus. The ancient drama, he observed, is distinguished from the Shakespearian in this, that it exhibits a sort of abstraction, not of character, but of idea. A certain sentiment or passion is exhibited in all its purity, unmingled with anything that could interfere with its effect. Shakespeare, on the other hand, imitates life, mingled as we find it with joy and sorrow. We meet constantly in life with persons who are, as it were, unfeeling spectators of the most passionate situations. The Fool serves to supply the place of some such uninterested person, where all the other characters are interested.⁵²

Coleridge makes another point of comparison between the ancient and modern stages in the first lecture of the 1813-14 series:

The Greeks were polytheists, their religion was local, the object of all their knowledge, science, and taste, was their gods; their productions were therefore (if the expression may be allowed) statuesque. The moderns

⁵² Henry Crabb Robinson, Diary, Reminiscences, and Correspondence, ed. Thomas Sadler (Boston, 1870), I, 208-08.

we may designate as picturesque; the end, complete harmony. The Greeks reared a structure, which, in its parts and as a whole, filled the mind with the calm and elevated expression of perfect beauty and symmetrical proportion. The moderns, blending materials, produced one striking whole. This may be illustrated by comparing the Pantheon with York Minster or Westminster Abbey. Upon the same scale we may compare Sophocles with Shakespeare: in the one there is a completeness, a satisfying, an excellence, on which the mind can rest; in the other we see a blended multitude of materials, great and little, magnificent and mean, mingled, if we may so say, with a dissatisfying, or falling short of perfection, yet so promising of our progression, that we would not exchange it for that repose of mind which dulls the forms of symmetry in acquiescent admiration of grace. This general characteristic of the ancient and modern poetry might be exemplified in a parallel of their ancient and modern music: the ancient music consisted of melody by the succession of pleasing sounds; the modern embraces harmony, the result of combination and effect of the whole.⁵³

In the tenth lecture of the 1818 series, on Dante, Coleridge adds yet another element to the catalogue of differences:

In studying Dante, therefore, we must consider carefully the differences produced, first, by allegory being substituted for polytheism; and secondly and mainly, by the opposition of Christianity to the spirit of pagan Greece, which receiving the very names of its gods from Egypt, soon deprived them of all that was universal. The Greeks changed the ideas into finites, and these finites into anthropomorphi,

⁵³ Samuel Taylor Coleridge, Shakespearean Criticism, ed. Thomas M. Raysor (Harvard University Press, 1930), I, 263-63. Cf. the passage in the same volume, p. 222: "Ancients, statuesque; moderns, picturesque. Ancients, rhythm and melody; moderns, harmony. Ancients, the finite, and, therefore, grace, elegance, proportion, fancy, dignity, majesty,-- whatever is capable of being definitely conveyed by defined forms or thoughts. The moderns, the infinite and [the] indefinite as the vehicle of the infinitive; hence more [devoted] to the passions, the obscure hopes and fears--the wandering thro' [the] infinite, grander moral feelings, more august conceptions of man as man, the future rather than the present,--sublimity."

or forms of men. Hence their religion, their poetry, nay, their very pictures, became statuesque. The reverse of this was the natural effect of Christianity, in which finites, even the human form, must, in order to satisfy the mind, be brought into connexion with, and be in fact symbolical of, the infinite; and must be considered in some enduring, however shadowy and indistinct, point of view, as the vehicle or representative of moral truth.

Hence resulted two great effects; a combination of poetry with doctrine, and, by turning the mind inward on its own essence instead of letting it act only on its outward circumstances and communities, a combination of poetry with sentiment. And it is this inwardness or subjectivity, which principally and most fundamentally distinguishes all the classic from the modern poetry.

Coleridge then compares vv. 119-236 of the sixth book of the Iliad with stanzas 20-22 of the first book of the Orlando Furioso and points out that Ariosto's own feelings are more important to him than the story he is telling; Homer of course does not comment. Coleridge continues:

The two different modes in which the imagination is acted on by the ancients and modern poetry, may be illustrated by the parallel effects caused by the contemplation of the Greek or Roman-Greek architecture, compared with the Gothic. In the Pantheon, the whole is perceived in a harmony with the parts which compose it; and generally you will remember that where the parts preserve any distinct individuality, there simple beauty, or beauty simply, arises; but where the parts meet undistinguished into the whole, there majestic beauty, or majesty, is the result. In York Minster, the parts, the grotesques, are in themselves very sharply distinct and separate, and this distinction and separation of the parts is counterbalanced only by the multitude and variety of those parts, by which the attention is bewildered;--whilst the whole, or that there is a whole produced, is altogether a feeling in which the several thousand distinct impressions lost themselves as in a universal solvent. Hence in a Gothic cathedral, as in a prospect from a mountain's top, there is, indeed, a unity, an awful oneness;--but it is, because all distinction evades the eye. And just such is the distinction between the Antigone

of Sophocles and the Hamlet of Shakespeare.⁵⁴

Note that in this passage Coleridge has identified the medi-
eval with the modern while in his Table Talk for August 18,
1833, he pushes the separating line even farther back:

Claudian deserves more attention than is generally
paid to him. He is the link between the old classic
and the modern way of thinking in verse. You will
observe in him an oscillation between the objective
poetry of the ancients and the subjective mood of the
moderns. His power of pleasingly reproducing the
same though in different language is remarkable, as
it is in Pope. Read particularly the Phoenix, and
see how the single image of renascence is varied.⁵⁵

Finally, in a passage on classical and romantic drama, Cole-
ridge links these terms to ancient and modern:

...I have named the true genuine modern poetry the
romantic; and the works of Shakespeare are romantic
poetry revealing itself in the drama. If the traged-
ies of Sophocles are in the strict sense of the word
tragedies, and the comedies of Aristophanes comedies,
we must emancipate ourselves of a false association
from misapplied names, and find a new word for the
plays of Shakespeare. They are in the ancient sense
neither tragedies nor comedies, nor both in one, but
a different genus, diverse in kind, not merely dif-
ferent in degree,--romantic dramas, or dramatic ro-
mances. And even a recurrence to my recent explana-
tion of Romance would make a presentiment that the
deviation from the simple forms and unities of the
ancient stage is an essential principle and, of
course, an appropriate excellence, of the romantic;
that these unities are to a great extent the natural
form of that which in its elements was homogeneous,
and its representations addressed eminently to the
outward senses; and tho' both fable, language and
characters appealed to the reason rather than the
mere understanding, inasmuch as they supposed an
ideal state rather than referred to an existing re-
ality, yet it was a reason which must strictly ac-

54 Samuel Taylor Coleridge, The Miscellaneous Criticisms,
op. cit., pp. 148-50.

55 Ibid., p. 436.

commodate itself to the senses, and so far became a sort of more elevated understanding. On the other [hand], the romantic poetry, the Shakespearian drama, appealed to the imagination rather than to the senses, and to the reason as contemplating our inward nature, the workings of the passions in their most retired recesses. But the reason, as reason, is independent of time and space; it has nothing to do with them. Hence the certainties of reason have been called eternal truths; ex. gr., the endless properties of the circle--what connection have they with this or that age, this or that country? The reason is aloof from time and space; the imagination [has] an arbitrary control over both; and if only the poet have such powers of exciting our internal emotions as to make us present to the scene in imagination chiefly, he acquires the right and privilege of using time and space as they exist in the imagination, obedient only to the laws which the imagination acts by. These laws it will be our object and aim to point out as the examples recur which illustrate them; but once more let me repeat what can never be too often reflected on by all who would intelligently study the works either of the Athenian dramatists or of Shakespeare--that the very essence of the former consists in the sternest separation of the diverse in kind; the latter delights [in variety?] 56

In summary, then, Coleridge points out that modern literature is distinguished for its realism, its picturesque qualities, its diversity and complexity, its striving towards the infinite, its subjectivity, and its imagination; these are characteristics of the literature and art of the medieval era as well as of the work of modern poets and artists. This suggests that in Coleridge's mind the trans-

56 Shakespearean Criticism, op. cit., I, 197-98. I have not tried to identify German borrowings; this has been done fully by Professor Raysor who has also demonstrated Coleridge's technique of source adaptation as well as his reasons for such close borrowings.

ition between the ancient and the modern world took place with the introduction of Christianity which possesses the features noted above.

Hazlitt definitely acknowledges the influence of the Germans in his discussion of the classical and romantic, while he follows Coleridge in comparing the ancient drama to ancient architecture and Shakespearean drama to Westminster Abbey. According to Hazlitt, antique or classical drama (the synonyms are Hazlitt's) is characterized by naturalness, dignity, selection, and unity. On the other hand, the Gothic or romantic (again, the synonyms are Hazlitt's) has a larger design and boldness, is freed from a close connection with time and space, and has range and variety in the language; this is typical of Shakespearean drama. He continues:

Sophocles differs from Shakespear as a Doric portico does from Westminster Abbey. The principle of the one is simplicity and harmony, of the other richness and power. The one relies on form or proportion, the other on quantity and variety and prominence of parts. The one owes its charm to a certain union and regularity of feeling, the other adds to its effects from complexity and the combination of the greatest extremes. The classical appeals to sense and habit: the Gothic or romantic strikes from novelty, strangeness and contrast. Both are founded in essential and indestructible principles of human nature. We may prefer the one to the other, as we chuse, but to set up an arbitrary and bigotted standard of excellence in consequence of this preference, and to exclude either one or the other from poetry and art, is to deny the existence of the first principles of the human mind, and to war with nature, which is the height of weakness and arrogance at once.⁵⁷

57 William Hazlitt, op. cit., VI, 347-48.

However, Hazlitt's most extensive contribution to the discussion of the difference between the classical and romantic was made in the Edinburgh Review for February, 1816 in an article entitled "Schlegel on the Drama." "The most obvious distinction between the two styles, the classical and the romantic," he writes:

is, that the one is conversant with objects that are grand or beautiful in themselves, or in consequence of obvious and universal associations; the other, with those that are interesting only by the force of circumstances and imagination. A Grecian temple, for instance, is a classical object; it is beautiful in itself, and excites immediate admiration. But the ruins of a Gothic castle have no beauty or symmetry to attract the eye; and yet they excite a more powerful and romantic interest from the ideas with which they are habitually associated. If, in addition to this, we are told that this is Macbeth's castle, the scene of the murder of Duncan, the interest will immediately be heightened to a sort of pleasing horror. The classical idea or form of any thing, it may also be observed, remains always the same, and suggests nearly the same impressions; but the association of ideas belonging to the romantic character, may vary infinitely, and take in the whole range of nature and accident.

Hazlitt then instances Antigone waiting near the grove of the Furies and Electra offering sacrifice at the tomb of Agamemnon as examples of the classical temper, while Florimel sitting on the ground in the Witch's hut, Othello's handkerchief, and Lear are examples of the romantic spirit; also, he contrasts in some detail the different characteristics of the Furies of Aeschylus and the Witches of Shakespeare. He shows how like Greek poetry and sculpture are: they are exquisite imitations of nature, and are perfect ideas of the subjects described. But in the details of

representation and in the vividness of depiction, the ancient poet was inferior to the sculptor, but the modern poet does not admit this deficiency.

The ideas of the ancients were too exact and definite, too much attached to the material form or vehicle in which they were conveyed, to admit of those rapid combinations, those unrestrained flights of fancy, which, glancing from heaven to earth, unite the most opposite extremes, and draw the happiest illustrations from things the most remote. The two principles of imitation and imagination indeed, are not only distinct, but almost opposite. For the imagination is that power which represents objects, not as they are, but as they are moulded according to our fancies and feelings. Let an object be presented to the senses in a state of agitation and fear--and the imagination will magnify the object, and convert it into whatever is most proper to encourage the fear. It is the same in all other cases in which poetry speaks the language of the imagination. This language is not the less true to nature because it is false in point of fact; but so much the more true and natural, if it conveys the impression which the object under the influence of passion makes on the mind....

The great difference, then, which we find between the classical and the romantic style, between ancient and modern poetry, is, that the one more frequently describes things as they are interesting in themselves,--the other for the sake of the association of ideas connected with them; that the one dwells more on the immediate impressions of objects on the senses--the other on the ideas which they suggest to the imagination. The one is the poetry of form, the other of effect. The one gives only what is necessarily implied in the subject; the other all that can possibly arise out of it. The one seeks to identify the imitation with an external object,--clings to it,--is inseparable from it,--is either that or nothing; the other seeks to identify the original impression with whatever else, with the range of thought or feeling, can strengthen, relieve, adorn or elevate it. Hence the severity and simplicity of the Greek tragedy, which excluded everything foreign or unnecessary to the subject. Hence the unities: for, in order to identify the imitation as much as possible with the reality, and leave nothing to mere imagination, it was necessary to give the same coherence and consistency to the different parts of a story, as to the different limbs of

a statue. Hence the beauty and grandeur of their materials; for, deriving their power over the mind from the truth of the imitation, it was necessary that the subject which they made choice of, and from which they could not depart, should be in itself grand and beautiful. Hence the perfection of their execution; which consisted in giving the utmost harmony, delicacy, and refinement to the details of a given subject. Now, the characteristic excellence of the moderns is the reverse of all this. As, according to our author, the poetry of the Greeks is the same as their sculpture; so, he says, our own more nearly resembles painting,--where the artist can relieve and throw back his figures at pleasure,--use a greater variety of contrasts,--and where light and shade, like the colours of fancy, are reflected on the different objects. The Muse of classical poetry should be represented as a beautiful naked figure: the Muse of modern poetry should be represented clothed, and with wings. The first has the advantage in point of form; the last in colour and motion.

Hazlitt thinks these differences may be traced to the differences in physical organization, situation, religion, and manners. The Greeks were in tune with nature; the stern aspects of the North drove men into introspection. The Greeks lived in harmony with each other; in the ages of chivalry and romance, the bonds were loosed and men were free to range at will, both on earth and in the mind, while this freedom, combined with Christianity, led to the freedom of the sexes, and hence the spirit of chivalry, romantic love, and honor. The pagan religion was material and definite; the Christian religion, spiritual and abstract. The Greeks were circumscribed by the bounds of their language, customs, and history; the moderns have the advantage of time, history, and greater information.⁵⁸ Hazlitt's

⁵⁸ William Hazlitt, op. cit., XVI, 61-66.

article affords a convenient summary of the ideas of the romantics on the differences between the classical and romantic poets.

Scott points out that the use of the passion of love distinguishes the modern drama from the ancient, while Robinson adds the words objective and subjective to the discussion, the first having reference to the ancient literature, the other to the modern.⁵⁹ De Quincey's writings on the subject under consideration are extensive and at the same time keen and subtle. In his autobiography which appeared in Tait's Magazine, he writes that while he was at Oxford he read Greek and Elizabethan tragedy "...and, without having read a line of German at that time, or knowing of any such controversy, I began to meditate on the elementary grounds of difference between the Pagan and the Christian forms of poetry." He adds that the dispute be-

⁵⁹ Walter Scott, "An Essay on the Drama First Published in the Supplement to the Encyclopedia Britannica," op. cit., VI, 243; Henry Crabb Robinson as cited in John M. Baker, Henry Crabb Robinson of Bury, Jena, "The Times," and Russell Square (London, 1937), pp. 210-11. In a very interesting letter to John Hamilton Reynolds, dated February 3, 1818, Keats severely condemns the modern tendency toward subjectivity and introspection, The Letters of John Keats, ed. Maurice B. Forman (Oxford University Press, 1935), I, 96: "Poetry should be great and unobtrusive, a thing which enters into one's soul, and does not startle it or amaze it with itself, but with its subject.--How beautiful are the retired flowers! how would they lose their beauty were they to throng into the highway crying out, 'admire me I am a violet!--dote upon me I am a primrose!'" He calls modern poetry the results of the whims of an egotist who broods and peacocks over his speculations.

tween the classical and romantic has been carried on in France and in Germany but without advancing it a step.

He continues:

The shape into which I threw the question it may be well to state; because I am persuaded that out of that one idea, properly pursued, might be evolved the whole separate characteristics of the Christian and the Antique. Why is it, I asked, that the Christian idea of sin is an idea utterly unknown to the pagan mind? The Greeks and Romans had a clear conception of a moral ideal, as we have; but this they estimated by a reference to the will; and they called it virtue, and the antithesis they called vice. The lachesé or relaxed energy of the will, by which it yielded to the seductions of sensual pleasure, that was vice; and the braced-up tone by which it resisted these seductions was virtue. But the idea of holiness, and the antithetic idea of sin, as a violation of this awful and unimaginable sanctity, was so utterly undeveloped in the Pagan mind, that no word exists in classical Greek or classical Latin which approaches either pole of this synthesis; neither the idea of holiness, nor of its correlate, sin, could be so expressed in Latin as at once to satisfy Cicero and a scientific Christian. Again (but this was some years after), I found Schiller and Goethe applauding the better taste of the ancients in symbolizing the idea of death by a beautiful youth, with a torch inverted, etc., as compared with the Christian types of a skeleton and hour-glasses, etc. And much surprised I was to hear Mr. Coleridge approving of this German sentiment. Yet, here again, I felt, the peculiar genius of Christianity was covertly at work moving along a different road, and under opposite ideas, to a just result, in which the harsh and austere expression yet pointed to a dark reality, whilst the beautiful Greek adumbration was, in fact, a veil and a disguise. The corruptions and the other "dishonours" of the grave, and whatsoever composes the sting of death in the Christian view is traced up to sin as its ultimate cause. Hence, besides the expression of Christian humility, in thus nakedly exhibiting the wrecks and ruins made by sin, there is also a latent profession indicated of Christian hope. For the Christian contemplates steadfastly, though with trembling awe, the lowest point of his descent; since, for him, that point, the last of his fall, is also the first

of his re-ascent, and serves, besides, as an exponent of its infinity; the infinite depth becoming, in the rebound, a measure of the infinite re-ascent. Whereas, on the contrary, with the gloomy uncertainties of a Pagan on the question of his final restoration, and also (which must not be overlooked) with his utter perplexity as to the nature of his restoration, if any were by accident in reserve, whether in a condition tending downwards or upwards, it was the natural resource to consult the general feeling of anxiety and distrust, by throwing a thick curtain and a veil of beauty over the whole too painful subject. To place the horrors in high relief could here have answered to no purpose but that of wanton cruelty; whereas, with the Christian hopes, the very saddest memorials of the havocks made by death are antagonist prefigurations of great victories in the rear.

These speculations, at that time, I pursued earnestly; and I then believed myself, as I yet do, to have ascertained the two great and opposite laws under which the Grecian and the English tragedy has each separately developed itself. Whether wrong or right in that belief, sure I am that those in Germany who have treated the case of Classical and Romantic are not entitled to credit for any discovery at all. The Schlegels, who were the hollowest of men, the windiest and wordiest (at least, Frederick was so), pointed to the distinction; barely indicated it; and that was already some service done, because a presumption arose that the antique and modern literatures, having clearly some essential differences, might, perhaps, rest on foundations originally distinct, and obey different laws. And hence it occurred that many disputes, as about the unities, etc., might originate in a confusion of these laws. This checks the presumption of the shallow criticism, and points to deeper investigations. Beyond this, neither the German nor the French disputers on the subject have talked to any profitable purpose.⁶⁰

De Quincey pursued these speculations in considerable detail and he was especially interested in the problem of sin as it affected tragedy. In "A Brief Appraisal of the Greek Literature in its Foremost Pretensions" which appeared

⁶⁰ Thomas De Quincey, op. cit., II, 72-74.

in Tait's for December, 1838, he makes the conventional distinction between the picturesque and statuesque, but adds to this terminology two striking words, life, which is the mark of English drama, and death, which is the mark of classical drama. Dr. Johnson came in for severe criticism in an article on the "Philosophy of Herodotus" which appeared in Blackwood's for January, 1842. Dr. Johnson had said that all the plots of modern literature ultimately derived from Homer; De Quincey argues that in the first place the Greeks insisted that all their literature be based on previously known tales, and in the second place and more significantly, modern literature is based on Christianity as well as on differences, in sentiment, usages, and manners. The essay titled "The Theban Sphinx" which appeared in Hogg's Instructor for 1849 takes up once more the importance of the idea of sin.

The posthumous works of De Quincey are full of passages relating to the classical-romantic, and all insist on the decisive importance of sin in establishing the difference between the two literatures. The essay "Why the Pagans could not Invest their Gods with any Iota of Grandeur" adds another deficiency to the Greek mythology, namely, the absence of any real idea of immortality; the paper on "'What is Truth?' The Jesting Pilate Said--A False Gloss" shows that the reason Christianity made so many converts among the upper class Romans was that it

offered a system of morality based on sin and immortality. These ideas are elaborated on in "Brevia: Short Essays (In Connection with Each Other)" notably numbers one, four, and nine. De Quincey illustrates the danger the classical-romantic debate ran into, for, starting with specific pieces of literature, the discussion became more and more speculative and at the same time the farther removed from the point.

It would be tempting to ascribe more significance to the classical-romantic debate than it actually deserves. For one thing, while it is true that some of the most important figures in the early nineteenth century participated in the debate, it occupies a relatively small part in the bulk of their collected writings, though a possible exception might be made in the case of Coleridge who links the debate to other more significant aspects of his thinking which, however, do not have any bearing on the idea of the Renaissance. A second point to be borne in mind is that aside from the material just considered there is a complete silence on the subject in the writings of Coleridge's, Hazlitt's, and De Quincey's contemporaries. This silence may be the result either of a lack of interest in the discussion or of an active dislike of it. Byron's letter to Murray dated October 17, 1820 would indicate that the latter supposition is more accurate:

P.S.--I perceive that in Germany, as well as in Italy, there is a great struggle about what they call 'Classical'

and 'Romantic',--terms which were not subjects of classification in England, at least when I left it four or five years ago. Some of the English Scribblers, it is true, abused Pope and Swift, but the reason was that they themselves did not know how to write either prose or verse; but nobody thought them worth making a sect of. Perhaps there may be something of the kind sprung up lately, but I have not heard much about it, and it would be such bad taste that I shall be very sorry to believe it.⁶¹

Nevertheless, the classical-romantic debate is of some significance for our purposes for it expanded the concept of modern and paved the way for a more philosophical approach to the Renaissance problem generally. Moreover, it helped in the development of a more fundamental technique for the writing of intellectual history which in turn had salutary repercussions on the history of the idea of the Renaissance.

V. The Renaissance and the Middle Ages

The study of the relationship between the Middle Ages and the Renaissance continued with vigor at this time. Moreover, there is surprisingly little patronizing of the Middle Ages, nor is this surprising in view of the considerable scholarship devoted to the medieval period. Also to be noted is the fact that from the early part of the nineteenth century dates the real understanding of medieval

⁶¹ Lord Byron, op. cit., IV, 343.

art. One of the most enthusiastic admirers of the culture of the Middle Ages was Coleridge. In a letter to Southey, dated July, 1803, he suggested that it was high time a history of the dark ages in Great Britain be written, with attention to the history of metaphysics, theology, medicine, alchemy, canon law, and Roman law. On several occasions Coleridge goes out of his way to state that the notion of a complete darkness during the Middle Ages is a false one. In the fifth lecture of the 1811-12 series, according to the Tomlin report, he said:

There perhaps never was a time in civilized and Christianized Europe which would be called an age of universal and complete darkness. When we spoke of the dark ages, we ought often rather to say ages in which we were in the dark, for there was always a chain along which the bright electric spark was conveyed, from the periods of its pristine brightness even to our own day.⁶²

The same idea is repeated in the lectures of 1813-14. He himself proposed to write, as part of a work called Logosophia, a "philosophical history of philosophy" in which equal emphasis was to be given to the scholastic philosophy as to ancient and post-Baconian philosophy. Also, the syllabus for the 1818 lectures called for an introductory lecture on the manners, morals, literature, philosophy, religion, and state of society in general in Europe from 700 to 1400 with reference to England, France, Italy, and

62 Shakespearean Criticism, op. cit., II, 100.

Germany: "in other words, a portrait of the (so called) Dark Ages of Europe." Actually, however, as is usual with Coleridge, these promises were not realized and what we have on medieval culture consists of scattered references. Coleridge's opinion of medieval art has already been quoted; his attitude toward scholasticism will be considered below. Also, we have seen how he identified the Gothic with the modern and what characteristics he discovered in it. All in all, the corpus of Coleridge material on the Middle Ages is considerable and noteworthy.

In his Life of Torquato Tasso, John Black attributes to the Middle Ages the invention of the compass, paper, printing, gunpowder, windmills, and glass; also, architecture, manners, sentiments, and poetry were refined and improved.⁶³ Dugald Stewart characterizes the Middle Ages as a melancholy blank though to be sure he insists that the continuity of knowledge was never entirely broken. But even this qualification did not satisfy Sir James Mackintosh for Stewart's Dissertation came in for sharp criticism on this point in Mackintosh's review of it in the Edinburgh Review:

The middle age is spoken of with a contempt too undistinguishing. The inactivity of the human mind was very far from being alike in all the portions

63 John Black, Life of Torquato Tasso (Edinburgh, 1810), I, 70. Cf. Henry Kett, op. cit., I, 248-49.

of this long period. During the darkest part of it, which extends from the fall of the Western empire to the beginning of the thirteenth century, the numerals called Arabic were introduced. Paper was fabricated from linen. Gunpowder and the compass were discovered. Before its termination, oil painting, printing and engraving, closed this series of improvements, unequalled in use and brilliancy, since those first inventions which attended the rise of civilization, and which therefore preceded history. These inventions were proofs of mental activity as well as incitements to it; and it may even be doubted, whether the human mind could have rendered a greater service to the science of the succeeding age, than in thus preparing the soil which it was to cultivate, and constructing new instruments for its use. In the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, however, it cannot be doubted that the faculties of men throughout Europe were generally and very signally turned towards various studies. About the same period we find the cultivation of the Roman Law, the rise of the School Philosophy [which is later praised as the educator of the European understanding], and the commencement of Poetry in modern languages, in Sicily, in Tuscany, in Provence, in Catalonia, in Normandy, in England, in Scotland, and in Suabia. These dissimilar studies, appearing to us, at this distance, to arise suddenly in countries remote from each other, and at a period of small intercourse between nations, mark a general revolution in the mind of Europe.⁶⁴

In his View of the State of Europe during the Middle Ages, Hallam considers that it is "...not improper to distinguish the first six of the ten centuries which the present work embraces under the appellation of the dark ages; an epithet which I do not extend to the twelfth and three following."⁶⁵

⁶⁴ Sir James Mackintosh, "Review of Dugald Stewart's Dissertation," Edinburgh Review, XXVII (1818), 198-99. In his own Dissertation on the Progress of Ethical Philosophy, Mackintosh states that the Middle Ages produced discoveries in science, arts, and government.

⁶⁵ Henry Hallam, op. cit., III, 300.

According to him, there was no break in the continuity of learning through the Middle Ages, though at times the lamp burned dimly indeed. But between the twelfth and fifteenth centuries, improvements took place in three main categories: wealth, manners, and learning. The first two of these will be discussed below, but Hallam's account of the slow spread of learning is notable for its sweep and at the same time its excellent use of illustrative detail. The point to be noted about his approach to the Renaissance problem is that he sees the Renaissance not as a break from the Middle Ages but rather as evolving slowly and regularly from them. To him, the Renaissance was the flowering of the seeds which had been planted long before; this is a thesis which he works out fully so far as literature is concerned in his Introduction.

In his essay on "Machiavelli," Macaulay points out that Italy had always had some degree of culture:

During the gloomy and disastrous centuries which followed the downfall of the Roman Empire, Italy had preserved, in a far greater degree than any other part of Western Europe, the traces of ancient civilization. The night which descended upon her was the night of an Attic summer. The dawn began to appear before the last reflection of the preceding sunset had faded from the horizon.⁶⁶

William Whewell characterizes the study of the physical sciences during the Middle Ages as being indistinct in its

⁶⁶ Thomas B. Macaulay, "Machiavelli," Critical, Historical, and Miscellaneous Essays and Poems (New York, 1879?), I, 197.

ideas, as well as disputatious, mystical, and dogmatic, but is forced to admit that we owe to the Middle Ages the use of parchment, paper, printing, engraving, glass, steel, gunpowder, clocks, telescopes, the mariner's compass, the reformed calendar, decimal notation, algebra, trigonometry, chemistry, counterpoint, and a new species of architecture.⁶⁷ The representative attitude toward the Middle Ages at this time is well expressed by Turner:

These, however, were not intervals of torpid inutility, but that embryo state of new formations of the human character, which, as at many former periods, suspended its previous activity, in order to evolve from it greater strength and beauty, and richer produce. While the future giant is forming, the appearance is incoherent, confused and obscure; but from the fall of the Roman empire to the aera of the Reformation, amid the absence of all literary splendor, and of the graces of civilization, a mightier and nobler Mind than human nature had ever known before, was brooding in the seeming confusion, and was secretly moulding and arranging the broken members and dilapidations of former ages, and the subsequent accessions, into figures and powers of an intellectual vigor and grandeur, which have never since diminished; and which are rapidly surpassing in their continued achievements, whatever anterior Time has recorded, or can be believed to have experienced.⁶⁸

Like Hallam, Turner sees the Renaissance as the end product of a long process of gestation and development begun deep in the Middle Ages.

While the only account of the Byzantines of any importance is that contained in the first appendix to Berington's

67 William Whewell, History of the Inductive Sciences (New York, 1858), I, 187-251.

68 Sharon Turner, op. cit., XI, 32-33.

Literary History of the Middle Ages, the services of the Arabs were more fully treated. Writers were fond of pointing out that while Christian Europe was at its lowest stage of learning, the Arabs were cultivating the arts and sciences with great success: "If we contemplate the philosophy and science of this powerful people," writes Nathan Drake, "it will be found that their age of learning continued for near five hundred years, and was coeval with the darkest centuries of Christian Europe."⁶⁹ Berington devotes almost a hundred pages to a study of Arabian learning and declares that had it not been for them, the western world would have been without a strong stimulus to learning as well as without many of the most important classical texts.⁷⁰ A spirited defence of the Arabs is found in James Murphy's History of the Mahometan Empire in Spain:

At the revival of letters, it was the fashion for the literati--Petrarch himself not excepted--to regard them as the corrupters of the sciences, as a ruthless, warlike nation, hostile to polite literature....

While literature, the arts and sciences were most successfully cultivated by them, Europe was enveloped in the grossest darkness, particularly from the seventh to the eleventh century: ecclesiastical studies alone were prosecuted; the Greeks could no longer read Euclid or Ptolemy; and the Latins were ignorant even of their ancient languages. The schools of the Christians re-echoed only with questions relative to

69 Nathan Drake, Literary Hours (Sudbury, 1800), I, 306.

70 Joseph Berington, op. cit., pp. 733-37. Cf. George Ellis, "Preface," Fabliaux or Tales...Translated...by the Late G. L. Way (London, 1815), I, ix-x.

the Gregorian chant, or disputes relative to the paschal cycle for the observance of Easter; while the Arabs in Africa, in Spain, and in the kingdoms of Naples and Sicily, cultivated all the sciences, and preserved the remains of Grecian knowledge. From this state of barbarism, Europe was delivered by the Moors of Africa and Spain.⁷¹

Murphy then tries to prove that the revival of literature, medicine, astronomy, the sciences, mathematics, scholasticism, jurisprudence, Provençal verse, rhyme, musical instruments, paper making, gunpowder, and the mariner's compass were all owing to the Arabs. While in this respect Murphy lets his enthusiasm get the better of him, his account of the course of Arabian culture at its peak from 754 to 833 is detailed and comprehensive: he discusses Arabian theology, philosophy, literature, astronomy, medicine, jurisprudence, mathematics, education, language, eloquence, rhetoric, poetry, tales, history, geography, statistics, metaphysics, natural sciences, useful arts, manufactures, commerce, architecture, fine arts, and music, a long list which indicates considerable familiarity with the Arabian culture of the Middle Ages; in each case Murphy tries to show the effect of these studies on western culture. An interesting thesis is advanced by James Montgomery who suggests that Arabian literature made possible the world of romance by providing a new kind of mythology, "gloomy,

⁷¹ James C. Murphy, The History of the Mahometan Empire in Spain (London, 1816), pp. 308-09.

splendid, gay, and terrible," which excited European literature.⁷²

The rôle played by the monks in keeping learning alive is not extensively treated at this time; this is true of the crusades likewise. So far as the services of the monks are concerned, George Burnett writes:

The connection between the ancient and modern learning, was never entirely dissolved.... The monastic libraries contained all the literature of the times; and a few out of the numbers who were intellectually idle, were prompted either from inherent activity of character, or simply as a remedy for listlessness, to read, and afterwards to write. We are thus indebted to the monkish writers for those few rays of light which gleam through the darkness of that savage period.⁷³

Grudging as this statement is, it is the most enthusiastic which can be found at this time. And with the exception of Henry Kett, not much is to be found concerning the crusades as stimulants to the revival of learning. Henry Kett writes:

Rude and ignorant as the crusades were, they could not travel through and continue in so many interesting countries with indifference; or behold their various customs and institutions, without acquiring information and improvement. Among the Greeks they surveyed the productions of the fine arts, and the precious remains of antiquity, the magnificence of the eastern

72 James Montgomery, Lectures on General Literature, Poetry &c. (New York, 1833), pp. 390-97. Cf. Wilkins Tannhill, op. cit., pp. 225-45.

73 George Burnett, op. cit., I, 308-07. Cf. Nathan Drake, op. cit., II, 434; John Playfair, Dissertation Third; Exhibiting a General View of the Progress of Mathematical and Physical Science, since the Revival of Letters in Europe in Dissertations (Edinburgh, 1835), pp. 434-35; Charles Butler, Reminiscences (New York, 1824), pp. 183-84.

court, and the models of extensive and curious manufactories. In Asia they beheld the traces of knowledge and arts which the patronage of the Caliphs had diffused through their empire. Every object which struck their attention pointed out a far higher state of improvement than their own countries had reached; every object, therefore, while it excited the wonder of them all, could not fail to excite a spirit of imitation among those who were active and ingenious. As these new scenes presented themselves, their eyes were gradually opened to a more extensive prospect of the world, and they acquired new modes of thinking, felt a sense of new wants, and a taste for new gratifications.⁷⁴

On the other hand, Berington states dogmatically: "I believe then, that these expeditions were utterly sterile with respect to the arts, to learning, and to every moral advantage, and that they neither retarded the progress of the invading enemy, nor, for a single day, the fate of the eastern empire."⁷⁵ However, it ought to be pointed out that the crusades were thought to have effected in some part at least the transition between the medieval and the modern modes of commerce.

The most enthusiastic admirer of the institution of chivalry was Scott, of whom Coleridge wrote in a letter to an unknown correspondent dated December, 1811 that Scott was "...habitually conversant with the antiquities of his country, and of all Europe during the ruder periods of society, living as it were, in whatever is found in them imposing either to the Fancy or interesting to the

74 Henry Kett, op. cit., I, 288-89.

75 Joseph Berington, op. cit., p. 288.

Feelings."⁷⁶ In "An Essay on Chivalry. First Published in the Supplement to the Encyclopedia Britannica," Scott wrote his most elaborate analysis and defence of chivalry. Without attempting a summary, Scott's attitude is epitomized in his statement to the effect that "...excepting only the change which flowed from the introduction of the Christian religion, we know no cause which has produced such general and permanent difference betwixt the ancients and moderns, as that which has arisen out of the institution of chivalry."⁷⁷ What chivalry accomplished was the diffusion of the general feeling of respect for women, the rules of decorum in society, the duty of speaking truth and observing courtesy, the concept of responsibility in regard to person and property, and the dignity of individuals; in short, chivalry softened the ferocity of a barbarous age, as Scott put it. In point of fact, Scott did not add much to the late eighteenth century ideas on the part played by chivalry, but these notions when incorporated into his romances did much to bring about a more sympathetic understanding of the Middle Ages outside the academic world. The special position held by the troubadours is noted by Kett:

⁷⁶ Samuel Taylor Coleridge, Unpublished Letters, ed. Earl L. Griggs (London, 1932), II, 66.

⁷⁷ Sir Walter Scott, op. cit., VI, 3.

We discover the first dawnings of modern literature in the cultivation of the language of Provence, and the rude productions of the Troubadours. The first of this order, whose names stands recorded, was William Count of Poitou, a nobleman, who distinguished himself by his prowess in the crusades. Many of the men of rank, who embarked in the first expedition to the Holy Land, were of that number. Their romances, composed upon the striking subjects of gallantry, war, satire, and history, first awakened Europe from its ignorance and lethargy, amused the minds of men with grotesque and lively images and descriptions, and first taught them to think, reflect, and judge upon subjects of imagination. The Troubadours occupied the middle place between Gothic ignorance and Italian excellence; and after this period literature is indebted to them for raising the earliest fruits of European genius, and inspiring the moderns with a love of poetry.⁷⁸

It is at this time that scholasticism first receives more than passing mention. In a letter to Robert Southey, dated July 2, 1803, Coleridge writes:

I have received great delight and instruction from Scotus Erigena. He is clearly the modern founder of the school of Pantheism; indeed he expressly defines the divine nature as quae fit et facit, et creat et creatur; and repeatedly declares creation to be manifestation, the epiphany of philosophers. The eloquence with which he writes astonished me, but he had read more Greek than Latin; and was a Platonist rather than an Aristotelian. There is a good deal of omne meus oculus in the notion of the dark ages, etc., taken intensively; in extension it might be true. They had walls: we are flooded ankle-height: and what comes of it but grass rank or rotter.⁷⁹

This is the first straightforward appreciation of a medieval philosopher qua philosopher since the Renaissance; it

78 Henry Kett, op. cit., I, 248. Cf. Allaston Burgh, op. cit., I, 186; Alexander F. Tytler, op. cit., pp. 180-81.

79 Samuel Taylor Coleridge, Letters, ed. Ernest H. Coleridge (London, 1895), I, 424.

is true that Roger Bacon is mentioned but he is singled out precisely because he was thought to have been in opposition to scholasticism. Coleridge's lecture on "Dante" contains a statement of the historical method of scholarship which insists on the need for a knowledge of the schoolmen before Dante can be understood properly:

It is impossible to understand the genius of Dante, and difficult to understand his poem, without some knowledge of the characters, studies, and writings of the schoolmen of the twelfth, thirteenth, and fourteenth centuries. For Dante was the living link between religion and philosophy; he philosophized the religion and Christianized the philosophy of Italy; and, in this poetic union of religion and philosophy, he became the ground of transition into the mixed Platonism and Aristotelianism of the Schools, under which, by numerous minute articles of faith and ceremony, Christianity became a craft of hair-splitting, and was ultimately degraded into a complete fetisch worship, divorced from philosophy, and made up of a faith without thought, and a credulity directed by passion.⁸⁰

De Quincey defends scholasticism by separating it from the Papal divinity which it was intended to support but when the Reformation threw down Catholicism scholastic philosophy was likewise rejected, though not on the grounds of its logic or value.⁸¹

The stages in the slow development of appreciation of medieval architecture are traced by Southey. Referring to the days of Sir Christopher Wren, Southey writes:

⁸⁰ The Miscellaneous Criticism, op. cit., p. 147.

⁸¹ Thomas De Quincey, op. cit., IX, 147, n. 1.

But in his time it was so much the fashion to speak with contempt of whatever was Gothic, and to despise the architecture of their forefathers, that, if the nation could have afforded money enough to have replaced these edifices, there would not now have been one remaining in the kingdom.--Luckily the national wealth was at that time employed in preserving the balance of power and extending commerce, and this evil was avoided. Since that age, however, the English have learnt better than to treat the Gothic with contempt; they have now discovered in it so much elegance and beauty, that they are endeavouring to change the barbarous name, and, with feeling partiality to themselves, claim the invention for their own countrymen: it is therefore become an established article of Antiquarian faith to believe that this Architecture is of native growth, and accordingly it is denominated English architecture in all the publications of the Antiquarian Society.⁸²

Southey is not quite accurate in saying that his contemporaries were the first to appreciate Gothic architecture since the eighteenth century had its enthusiasts too, but the early nineteenth century worked out the aesthetics of that appreciation. Robinson refers to "...sort of reverential awe which Gothic architecture is peculiarly calculated to impress" while in his diary he laments the lack of theoretical writers on Gothic architecture.⁸³ He tells of a dinner conversation about Gothic art in which the Messrs. Porden, Flaxman, Gunn, and Robinson took part; Robinson says that he made Mr. Gunn admit that the Gothic was beautiful because it had a consistency and character of its own. One

⁸² Robert Southey, Letters from England, op. cit., I, 262-64.

⁸³ The quotation is from Baker, op. cit., p. 33; the passage from the diary will be found op. cit., I, 298.

of the most ardent exponents of medieval architecture was the Rev. John Milner who thought that the apex of medieval art was reached in the creations of the Norman architects:

In short, next to the effect of sublimity, what these ingenious and indefatigable architects chiefly aimed at, in their religious structures, was beauty. An equal attention to these two effects did, by degrees, produce a perfectly new style in architecture, properly called, THE POINTED STYLE, being one of the greatest efforts of human genius, that has been witnessed in the course of ages.⁸⁴

The study of the Middle Ages at this time must be considered as a falling off from the standard set during the latter part of the eighteenth century. The reason for this may be attributed in part to the fact that greater attention was devoted to the examination of medieval political and social institutions than to medieval artistic productions. Furthermore, the romantic adulation of the Middle Ages and of the North did not point to such elements in medieval life as could be considered anticipatory of the Renaissance. On the contrary, if the medieval way of life was to be taken as a summum bonum, it is not likely that any factors

⁸⁴ John Milner, op. cit., p. 50. Like Southey, Milner points out the English failure to appreciate medieval architecture: "The restorers of the Grecian orders in Italy, by way of disgracing all the architecture of the preceding centuries, not conformable to them, called it indiscriminately the Gothic. In this they have been followed by modern French architects as likewise by Sir Christopher Wren, Mr. Evelyn and other English writers, whose ignorance or whose prejudice has even led them to believe that the Goths and other barbarians of the fourth and fifth centuries really invented a new style of architecture for that of the Roman monuments which they destroyed." Milner criticizes Evelyn, Wren, Warburton, Warton, Bentham, Dallaway, and Whittington for failure to discriminate properly between the different styles of medieval architecture.

calculated to disparage it would be allowed to enter. And so, though this is the great period of romantic history in which medieval studies reached new heights on the continent, those aspects of medieval culture which are our concern here do not receive treatment.

VI. The Renaissance and the Reformation

One of the strongest elements in the idea of the Renaissance at this time was the investigation of the relationship between the Renaissance and the Reformation. Considerable effort was expended on this aspect of the Renaissance problem and the results seem to justify the labor spent. The first problem connected with the study of the relationship between the Renaissance and the Reformation was the determination of the general effects produced by the Reformation. On this point, Roscoe has some important things to say:

The effects produced by the reformation on the political and moral state of Europe, are of a much more important nature. The destruction of the authority of the Romish see, throughout many flourishing, and many rising nations, whilst it freed the monarch from the imperious interposition of an arrogant pontiff, released the people from that oppressive and undefined obedience to a foreign power, which exhausted their wealth, impeded their enjoyments, and interfered in all their domestic concerns. The abolition of the odious and absurd institutions of monastic life, by which great numbers of persons were restored to the common purposes of society, infused fresh vigour into those states which embraced the opinions of the reformers; and the restoration of the ancient and apostolic usage of the Christian church, in allowing

the priesthood to marry, was a circumstance of the utmost advantage to the morals and manners of the age. To this may be added the destruction of many barbarous, absurd, and superstitious dogmas, by which the people were induced to believe that crimes could be commuted for money, and dispensations purchased even for the premeditated commission of sins.

But perhaps the most important advantage derived from the reformation, is to be found in the great example of freedom of inquiry, which was thus exhibited to the world, and which has produced an incalculable effect on the state and condition of mankind. That liberty of opinion which was first exercised only on religious subjects, was, by a natural and unavoidable progress, soon extended to those of a political nature. Throughout many of the kingdoms of Europe, civil and religious liberty closely accompanied each other; and its inhabitants, in adopting those measures which seemed to them necessary to secure their eternal happiness, have at least obtained those temporal advantages, which, in many instances, have amply repaid them for their sacrifices and their labours.⁸⁵

Allaston Burgh likewise thought that the Reformation led to freedom of the mind while Hazlitt in his very sympathetic Memoirs of Thomas Holcroft points out that the belief in the progress of truth and its power to crush error had steadily gained ground in England since the Reformation.⁸⁶ Another contribution made by the Reforma-

⁸⁵ William Roscoe, op. cit., IV, 58-59. In all fairness to Roscoe's liberalism, it ought to be added that he continues this passage with the statement that the Reformation resulted in conflicts between Catholics and Protestants, and between the Protestant sects. The consequence was the spread of persecution, intolerance, and bigotry: "...the human mind, a slave in all ages, has rather changed its master, than freed itself from its servitude." This is Roscoe's final judgment on the Reformation.

⁸⁶ Allaston Burgh, op. cit., I, 319; William Hazlitt, op. cit., III, 132-33. In his Life of Napoleon, Hazlitt terms the Reformation "...the great event in modern times" because

tion is that it dethroned the scholastic authority and the infallibility of Aristotle; this is the opinion of Thomas Campbell in his Essay on English Poetry. In connection with the Reformation, the part played by Wiclif is pointed out in an anonymous life of him:

John Wickliff, the father of the Reformation, is perhaps more justly entitled to the epithet of a great man, than most others who have had that epithet bestowed on them. In the midst of the deepest intellectual slavery, under which the human mind had groaned for more than a thousand years, he was the first who successfully struggled to be free, and who exerted a noble liberty of thought, when comfort, and station, and life itself, were likely to be sacrificed in the adventure. He was greater in one respect, than his future follower Luther, because the darkness of ignorance which overspread the world in the time of Wickliff, was deeper and more helpless than when the German reformer began his high career, because Luther was cheered and assisted by the light and force of reviving letters, while Wickliff, on the contrary, had to work alone, and surrounded by the profoundest scholastic gloom.⁸⁷

Having subjected scholasticism to a severe semantic analysis by pointing out the error involved in thinking that the term aureity, for example, explained the properties of gold, Coleridge states in his "Hints towards the Formation of a More Comprehensive Theory of Life" that

it brought arbitrary power, both secular and spiritual, to the test of reason and conscience.

⁸⁷ The Life of John Wickliff (Edinburgh, 1826), pp. 3-4. Cf. Robert Southey, "Chalmer's English Poets," Quarterly Review, XII (1814), 65.

...so it continued, even to the time that the Reformation sounded the second trumpet, and the authority of the schools sank with that of the hierarchy, under the intellectual courage and activity which this great revolution had inspired. Power, once awakened, cannot rest in one object. All the sciences partook of the new influences. The world of experimental philosophy was soon mapped out for posterity by the comprehensive and enterprising genius of Bacon, and the laws explained by which experiment could be dignified into experience.⁸⁸

Macaulay expresses substantially the same idea in his essay on "Lord Bacon" for there he writes that "...it is chiefly to the great reformation of religion that we owe the great reformation of philosophy."⁸⁹ In summary, then, the Reformation resulted in the establishment of freedom of inquiry generally and in the rise of science specifically; what relationship these movements had to the Renaissance will now be considered.

While the bulk of opinion held that either the Reforma-

88 Samuel Taylor Coleridge, The Works, op. cit., I, 378-80. The passage just quoted is amplified in an article which appeared in Fraser's titled "Monologues of the Late Samuel Taylor Coleridge, Esq. No. II. The Science and System of Logic," Fraser's, XII (1835), 624 to read after the phrase "so it continued" as follows: "with slight and ineffectual opposition, even after the era considered as the new dawn or restoration of literature, coincident with the final extinction of the Greek empire and the arrival of the learned fugitives in Italy--even to the time" etc., Professor Shedd does not mention this addition. This is but a simple editorial difficulty which a reader of Coleridge must face. Not only are Coleridge's works uncollected and in a state of chaos so far as the ordinary student is concerned, but what there is, is often uncertain and confused.

89 Thomas B. Macaulay, op. cit., II, 220. Cf. Isaac Disraeli's essay on "Bacon," op. cit., II, 285-86.

tion had aided the revival of learning or the revival of learning the Reformation, there were some writers who saw a reciprocal advantage to each. For instance, Henry Kett writes that "...it is very remarkable that the reformation of religion, and the revival of classical learning, were reciprocally advantageous; they reflected mutual lights and afforded mutual assistance."⁹⁰ Burnett asserts that the Reformation and the revival of letters had an identical aim, to shake and enliven the wits of men and the result was the rise of science. A few writers pointed out that often the reformers were humanists as well. "Who were the first English reformers," asks Thomas Morell:

but the individuals who contributed more than any other to the revival of letters in their day? What were the causes which co-operated to produce the reformation of religion, but those which also concurred to revive literature and extend science?⁹¹

While most writers argued that the revival of learning was indebted to the Reformation, a considerable number asserted that it was the revival of learning which produced the conditions which ultimately made the Reformation possible. Thus Roscoe writes in reference to Dante, Petrarch, and Boccaccio:

In the fourteenth century, when the human mind began to be emancipated from its long thralldom, one of the first indications of liberty appeared in the bold and

⁹⁰ Henry Kett, op. cit., I, 253.

⁹¹ Thomas Morrell, op. cit., I, 452.

presumptuous manner, in which the fathers and promoters of literature penetrated into the recesses, and arraigned the conduct of the Roman pontiffs and chief dignitaries of the church.⁹²

In another place, Roscoe states that one of the reasons for Luther's success is the fact that he was a man of considerable learning who had the foresight to link his cause with that of the advancement of learning and in that way secured the assistance of the most eminent scholars of his time. Stewart holds that Erasmus did more to advance the progress of the Reformation among men of education and taste than did Luther while the Reformation as a whole "...was one of the natural consequences of the revival of letters."⁹³ Thomas McCrie is more specific:

Ancient literature was now cultivated with the greatest enthusiasm; it spread with amazing rapidity through Italy, and, surmounting the Alps, reached, within a short period, the northern extremities of Europe. The human mind was roused from the slumber by which it had been oppressed for ages; its faculties were sharpened by the study of languages; the stores of ancient knowledge were laid open; the barbarism of the schools was exploded; and opinions and practices which had long been held sacred, and which a little before it would have been deemed impious to suspect, were now openly called in question, opposed, and repudiated. The rise of the papal monarchy, and the corruption of Christianity, may be traced in a great measure to the ignorance and the barbarism which fell on western Europe, and increased during the middle ages. The revival of letters, by banishing the darkness, broke the spell on which the empire of superstition rested, and opened the eyes

⁹² William Roscoe, op. cit., III, 139-40.

⁹³ Dugald Stewart, The Collected Works, op. cit., I, 27, n. 2; 28.

of mankind on the chains with which their credulity had suffered their spiritual leaders to load them.⁹⁴

Finally, Turner's estimate of Erasmus' position serves to show that Erasmus was still considered to be a key figure both in the revival of literature and the Reformation:

While the mind was thus every where ripening for some great religious revolution, which could not be averted, tho it might be delayed, an obscure man of literature imperceptibly grew into an intellectual activity and influence, which made him an unexpected precursor and promoter of the advancing change, without having any direct or distinct intention, or foresight, of producing it. This individual, who, while Luther was a contented monk and academical preceptor, began to open the public eye to the perception of the errors and absurdities in its vast venerated order...was...Erasmus.⁹⁵

However, most writers were agreed that the Reformation was a necessary condition for the revival of learning. Roscoe puts the nature of the relationship this way:

As the progress of literature had concurred with other great causes in giving rise to the reformation; so that great event produced in its turn a striking effect on the studies and taste of Europe.... The ancient authors began not only to be studied for the charms of their composition, but were called in as auxiliaries by the contending parties, who by affecting an intimate acquaintance with the writers of antiquity, supposed that they gave additional credit to their own cause; and the period which immediately succeeded the reformation, was that in which Europe saw the luminary of classical learning at a higher

94 Thomas McCrie, History of the Progress and Suppression of the Reformation in Italy in the Sixteenth Century (Philadelphia, 1842), pp. 15-16. Cf. Edward Nares, op. cit., I, 25 where the revival of learning is called "...an extraordinary stimulus given to the minds of men, to awaken them effectually from the deep sleep, the superstitious apathy, into which they had fallen."

95 Sharon Turner, op. cit., XI, 106.

meridian than at any time either before or since.⁹⁶

In the lectures for 1813-14, Coleridge writes:

The Reformation sounded through Europe like a trumpet; from the king to the peasant there was an enthusiasm for knowledge; the discovery of a MS. was the subject of an embassy. Erasmus read by moonlight, because he could not afford a torch, and begged for a penny, not for the love of charity, but for the love of learning.⁹⁷

A very interesting analysis of the effects of the Reformation on the literature of the Renaissance is made by Charles W. Dilke in the introduction to his edition of Old English Plays:

In the chivalrous ages, that preceded that eventful period [the Reformation] literary honours, and, indeed, literature itself, seem to have been held, as by prescriptive right, by the high classes of society and the members of the religious houses; but at that great revolution of opinion the barriers were broken down, and all classes of society burst into the arena to contend without distinction. The translation of the Bible only, independently of the advantages derived by religion and pure morality, was of great and essential advantage; it opened to all the purest springs of knowledge, and wisdom, and poetry; and the dramatic writers of that age availed themselves of the advantages it held out:... The Reformation therefore ploughed and cleared up the surface of an almost uncultivated soil, spreading the seeds of instruction, that in the reign of Elizabeth and James burst forth into a rich and luxuriant harvest.⁹⁸

96 William Roscoe, op. cit., IV, 52-53.

97 Shakespearean Criticism, op. cit., II, 261. In the third lecture of the 1811-12 series, Coleridge states that Shakespeare "...lived in an age in which from the religious controversies, carried on in a way of which we have no conception, there was a general energy of thinking, a pleasure in hard thinking"; the same idea is repeated in the sixth lecture of the same series.

98 Charles W. Dilke, ed., Old English Plays (London, 1814),

Keats' criticism of Milton is worth citing in this connection since it shows a side of Keats' mind often forgotten:

From the Paradise Lost and the other Works of Milton, I hope it not too presuming, even between ourselves to say, that his Philosophy, human and divine, may be tolerably understood by one not much advanced in years. In his time englishmen were just emancipated from a great superstition--and Men had got hold of certain points and resting places in reasoning which were too newly born to be doubted, and too much opposed by the Mass of Europe not to be thought etherial and authentically divine--who could gainsay his ideas on virtue, vice, and chastity in Comus, just at the time of the dismissal of Cod-pieces and a hundred other disgraces? who would not rest satisfied with his hintings at good and evil in the Paradise Lost, when just free from the inquisition and burning in Smithfield. The Reformation produced such immediate and great benefits, that Protestantism was considered under the immediate eye of heaven, and its own remaining Dogmas and superstitions, the, as it were, regenerated, constituted those resting places and seeming sure points of Reasoning--from that I have mentioned, Milton, whatever he may have thought in the sequel, appears to have been content with these by his writings--He did not think into the human heart, as Wordsworth has done--Yet Milton as a Philosopher, had sure as great powers as Wordsworth--What is then to be inferr'd? O many things--It proves that there is really a grand march of intellect--, It proves that a mighty providence subdues the mightiest Minds to the service of the time being, whether it be in human Knowledge or Religion.⁹⁹

I, xi-xii. Cf. George Ellis, Specimens of the Early English Poets (London, 1811), I, 158 where literature of the Elizabethan era is characterized as follows: "The literary splendour of this reign may be justly attributed to the effects of the Reformation." However, Berington, op. cit., pp. 516-17, argues that while the cause of literature was benefited by the Reformation, it would have progressed without it and without strife.

⁹⁹ John Keats, Letter 64, to John Hamilton Reynolds, May 3, 1818, op. cit., I, 144-45.

In one of his earliest essays, "Criticisms of the Principal Italian Writers. No. I. Dante," Macaulay lays down an important rule in the investigation of the relationship between literature and society:

The finest works of imagination have always been produced in times of political convulsion, as the richest vineyards and the sweetest flowers always grow on the soil which has been fertilized by the fiery deluge of a volcano. To look no further than the literary history of our own country, can we doubt that Shakespeare was in a great measure produced by the Reformation, and Wordsworth by the French Revolution? Poets often avoid political transactions; they often affect to despise them. But, whether they perceive it or not, they must be influenced by them. As long as their minds have any contact with those of their fellow-men, the electric impulse, at whatever distance it may originate, will be circuitously communicated to them.¹⁰⁰

The introductory lecture of the Lectures Chiefly on the Dramatic Literature of the Age of Elizabeth by Hazlitt contains a considered statement of the relationship between the Reformation and Renaissance literature:

The first cause I shall mention, as contributing to this general effect, was the Reformation, which had just taken place. This event gave a mighty impulse and increased activity to thought and inquiry, and agitated the inert mass of accumulated prejudices throughout Europe. The effect of the concussion was general; but the shock was greatest in this country. It toppled down the full-grown, intolerable abuses of centuries at a blow; heaved the ground from under the feet of bigotted faith and slavish obedience; and the roar and dashing of opinions, loosened from their accustomed hold, might be heard like the noise of an angry sea, and has never yet subsided. Germany first broke the spell of misbegotten fear, and gave the watch-word; but

¹⁰⁰ Thomas B. Macaulay, op. cit., I, 52.

England joined the shout, and echoed it back with her island-voice, from her thousand cliffs and craggy shores, in a longer and louder strain. With that cry, the genius of Great Britain rose, and threw down the gauntlet to the nations. There was a mighty fermentation; the waters were out; public opinion was in a state of projection. Liberty was held out to all to think and speak the truth. Men's brains were busy; their spirits stirring; their hearts full; and their hands not idle. Their eyes were opened to expect the greatest things, and their ears burned with curiosity and zeal to know the truth, that the truth might make them free. The death-blow which had been struck at scarlet vice and bloated hypocrisy, loosened their tongues, and made the talismans and love-tokens of Popish superstition, with which she had beguiled her followers and committed abominations with the people, fall harmless from their necks.

The translation of the Bible was the chief engine in the great work. It threw open, by a secret spring, the rich treasures of religion and morality, which had been there locked up as in a shrine. It revealed the visions of prophets, and conveyed the lessons of inspired teachers (such they were thought) to the meanest of the people. It gave them a common interest in the common cause. Their hearts burnt within them as they read. It gave a mind to the people, by giving them common subjects of thought and feeling. It cemented their union of character and sentiment: it created endless diversity and collision of opinion. They found objects to employ their faculties, and a motive in the magnitude of the consequences attached to them, to exert the utmost eagerness in the pursuit of truth, and the most daring intrepidity in maintaining it. Religious controversy sharpens the understanding by the subtlety and remoteness of the topics it discusses, and braces the will by their infinite importance. We perceive in the history of this period a nervous masculine intellect. No levity, no feebleness, no indifference; or if there were, it is a relaxation from the intense activity which gives a tone to its general character. But there is a gravity approaching to piety; a seriousness of impression, a conscientious severity of argument, an habitual fervour and enthusiasm in their mode of handling almost every subject.¹⁰¹

¹⁰¹ William Hazlitt, op. cit., VI, 181-83.

True Christianity, as operating through Protestantism, contributed to Elizabethan literature the feelings of awe, admiration, sympathy, originality, tenderness, benevolence, humanity, and compassion; it provided romantic interest, a touching simplicity in the mode of narration, and, in the character of Christ, a figure of sublime humanity who taught love of the good for the sake of good; "the literature of this age then, I would say, was strongly influenced," concludes Hazlitt, "first by the spirit of Christianity, and secondly by the spirit of Protestantism." Hazlitt has just as enthusiastic but less high-flown praise of the services rendered literature by Protestantism in his essay "Old English Writers and Speakers" which appeared in The Plain Speaker: Opinions on Books, Men, and Things for 1826. He characterizes the learning of the Reformation as ascetic and profound, weighted with thought, sincerity, integrity, and sanctity of purpose. "The seriousness, indeed, amounts to an air of devotion; and it has to me something fine, manly, and old English about it." He describes the eagerness with which the reformers studied the classics:

They ransacked libraries, they exhausted authorities. They acquired languages, consulted books, and deciphered manuscripts. They devoured learning, and swallowed antiquity whole, and (what is more) digested it. They read incessantly, and remembered what they read, from the zealous interest they took in it.... It is curious to observe the slow progress of the human mind in loosening and getting rid of its trammels, link by link, and how it crept on its hands and feet, and with its eyes bent on the ground, out of the cave of Bigotry, making its way through one dark

passage after another; those who gave up one half of an absurdity contending as strenuously for the remaining half, the lazy current of tradition stemming the tide of innovation, and making an endless struggle between the two. But in the dullest minds of this period there was a deference to the opinions of their leaders; an imposing sense of the importance of the subject, of the necessity of bringing all the faculties to bear upon it; a weight either of armour or of internal strength, a zeal for or against; a head, a heart, and a hand, a holding out to the death for conscience sake, a strong spirit of proselytism--no flippancy, no indifference, no compromising, no pert shallow scepticism, but truth was supposed indissolubly knit to good, knowledge to usefulness, and the temporal and eternal warfare of mankind to hang in the balance.¹⁰²

Hazlitt is a notable instance of a writer who goes to a past age to look for those qualities which he finds lacking in his; he is using the Reformation in an hortatory sense.

Edward Nares points out that the revival of learning might have dissipated its energies had it not been called into the service of the Reformation:

...yet when called to the aid of a reformation which struck at the very root of the evil, which threatened the very foundations of a tyranny too hard to bear, and which made an appeal to the noblest faculties and highest principles of the human mind, the restoration of letters was calculated to give a surprising force and strength to the reformed party throughout Europe, by enabling it not only to hold up its head against its opponents, but to loosen, dissolve, and scatter in the air, those visionary chains by which it had hitherto been held captive, the forgeries of the canonists, the servile tenets of the civilians, and, above all, the insidious (because ingenious and plausible) subtleties and sophistry of the schoolmen, especially their casuistical morality. If, as has been well argued, the restoration of letters, beginning amongst the Romanists, brought light, it was

¹⁰² William Hazlitt, op. cit., XII, 314-16.

Luther's Reformation that brought liberty.¹⁰³

There exists a considerable body of opinion at this time, then, which held that the Reformation, by stimulating the mind to argue about subjects of serious importance, created a state of mind which proved favorable to the creation of literature of outstanding merit.

Despite the existence of such a sympathetic attitude towards the Reformation, there were a few writers who dared to dissent from the generally received opinion. This group held that the Reformation was prejudicial to the creation of art and literature. For example, Roscoe writes:

For some time the important discussions which took place, in both political and ecclesiastical concerns, afforded ample topics for the exercise of that eloquence and facility of composition, which were then so generally extended; but as the contests of the pen gave way to those of the sword, and subjects of great and general interest were neglected as useless, or prohibited as dangerous, a new stile of writing arose, like a weak scyon from the root of a tree felled by the axe, which ill compensates by elegance of form and luxuriance of foliage, for the loss of the more majestic trunk....

Nor was the reformation of religion favourable in its consequence to the progress of the fine arts, which extending themselves to Italy, had now begun to be cultivated with great attention in other parts of Europe. The effect of this struggle was to call off the public attention from these studies as useless and insignificant, and to fix it on those more important discussions which were supposed so nearly

¹⁰³ Edward Nares, op. cit., I, 30. Cf. Sir Walter Scott, The History of Scotland (London, 1830), II, 259; Alexander Bower, The Life of Luther (Philadelphia, 1824), p. 44; Robert Thomson, op. cit., pp. 104-06; J. H. Hippisley, Chapters on Early English Literature (London, 1837), pp. 240-43.

to affect both the temporal and eternal happiness of mankind. But the injurious consequences of the reformation on the arts, were yet more direct. Before this event the Roman religion had not only relinquished its hostility to the productions of the chisel or the pencil, but had become the foster mother of these pursuits, and supplied the noblest and most interesting subjects for the exercise of their powers.¹⁰⁴

Roscoe goes on to say that the tendency of the Reformation was to deprive the artist of the benefits of association with religion, rewards on a lavish scale, a sympathetic audience, and a safe repository for his works. Burnett makes a distinction between the effects produced by the Reformation on learning on the one hand and belles lettres on the other:

This great event, so beneficial to the interests of humanity, served only to clog the progress of elegant literature, and to postpone the reign of taste. The objects of study were now entirely changed.... All were absorbed in religious speculations.... The reformers, not content with cleansing Christianity from catholic corruptions, carried their absurd refinements so far as to assert the inutility of all human learning; and this reformation degenerated into fanaticism....

Yet, notwithstanding these untoward circumstances, the reformation was an event perhaps more auspicious to human improvement than any which adorns the annals of time. It produced, beyond all other causes that can be imagined, intellectual activity, the harbinger of free inquiry--the only sure cause of the progress of society....

This general state of intellectual excitement, however unfavourable, in the first instance, to that department of literature commonly stiled the Belles Lettres, was eventually conducive to the advancement of every kind of learning. The minds of men were awake and active; and required only to be favoured

¹⁰⁴ William Roscoe, op. cit., IV, 53-55.

by their political condition to exert some of the highest efforts of intellect.¹⁰⁵

In another place Burnett mentions the bad effects of the dissolution of the monasteries; Southey makes the same point in his review of Disraeli's Calamities of Authors which appeared in the Quarterly for 1812. Leigh Hunt accuses the Reformation of having caused the English people to be less musical than they were before it while Allan Cunningham laments the destruction of the masterpieces of Italian art by the ignorant zeal of the reformers.¹⁰⁶ In his rather sketchy Historic Survey of German Poetry, the Platonist William Taylor of Norwich argues that while the benefits of tolerance and of the liberty of the press, without which the creation of literature would be impossible, arose at the same time the Reformation did, they are independent of Protestantism and in fact the sceptical temper lay outside the stream of development of the Reformation. Taylor even goes so far as to say that had it not been for the German Reformation, as he calls it, Italy would have developed into a free country.¹⁰⁷

105 George Burnett, op. cit., II, 3-6.

106 Leigh Hunt, "Notes," Bacchus in Tuscany, a Dithyrambic Poem, from the Italian of Francesco Redi, with Notes Original and Select (London, 1825), p. 161; Allan Cunningham, The Lives of the Most Eminent British Painters, Sculptors, and Architects (London, 1829), I, 19-20.

107 William Taylor, Historic Survey of German Poetry (London, 1830), I, 161-63. On the other hand, Thomas McCrie,

While the study of the relationship between the Renaissance and the Reformation at this time adds nothing basically new to the ideas on the subject as developed in the latter part of the eighteenth century, it deepened and broadened the discussion and at the same time raised it to a higher literary level, thus pointing the way to the great histories of the latter part of the nineteenth century. Again, there is to be noted the tendency to merge the results of both the Renaissance and the Reformation, while both are held to be accountable for each other, thus resulting in an ideological confusion.

VII. The Rise of Commerce and the Renaissance

Begun, as we have seen in the latter part of the eighteenth century, the investigation of the relationship between the rise of commerce and the Renaissance gained momentum in this period. The introduction of the economic factor as a pre-condition for literature and the arts before the turn of the century now assumed larger proportions as more writers became attracted to varying kinds of sociological approaches to history. Generalizations gave way to more detailed researches into the exact nature of the

op. cit., p. 18, states that the revival of learning resulted in the spread of scepticism to which the Reformation fortunately put a stop.

relationship, while more than one suggestion of Marxist methodology was put forward. Moreover, this field of investigation had the sanction of some of the most respectable and outstanding scholars; the onus which the economic interpretation, to use the crude designation for the sake of brevity, had later to bear was not yet on it.

William Playfair's Inquiry into the Permanent Causes of the Decline and Fall of Powerful and Wealthy Nations makes the point that even during the Middle Ages Alexandria, Venice, Genoa, and Constantinople were the channels through which the people of Europe procured the luxuries and along which followed arts and learning. "All the arts," writes Allaston Burgh:

have been the companions, if not the offspring of successful commerce; and they will in general be found to have pursued the same course, which an admirable modern historian has so finely delineated: that is, like commerce, they will be found upon inquiry to have appeared first in Italy, then in the Hanseatic Towns, next in the Netherlands; and, by transplantation during the sixteenth century, when commerce became general, to have grown, flourished, matured, and diffused their influence, through every part of Europe.¹⁰⁸

In 1815, Charles Butler delivered "The Inaugural Motion at Laying the First Stone of the London Institution" during the course of which he defended the thesis that "... the commercial successes of a nation tend directly to promote literature, the sciences, and the arts, admits of no

¹⁰⁸ Allaston Burgh, op. cit., I, 342.

doubt." One of the examples he used was the following:

The architecture, painting, and sculpture, which adorn the cities between the Alps and Middle Italy, equally owe their existence to the burghers of Lombardy. Had it not been for her commerce, Venice would never have had the school of painting, for which she is so illustrious. Had not the family of the Medici...been successful merchants, half, perhaps of the precious remains of antiquity which we now possess, would not have reached us.¹⁰⁹

Among the circumstances which accelerated the progress of knowledge, asserts Stewart in his Dissertation:

...another has co-operated very extensively and powerfully; the rise of the lower orders in the different countries of Europe,--in consequence partly of the enlargement of commerce, and partly of the efforts of the Sovereigns to reduce the overgrown power of the feudal aristocracy.¹¹⁰

Stewart's phrase 'lower orders' does not of course mean our notion of proletariat; it has reference to the middle class.

Hallam devotes considerable attention to the improvements in wealth in Europe from the twelfth to the fifteenth centuries. As a result of the spread of commerce, manufacturing establishments sprang up and banking houses came to the fore. Once the merchants and bankers had established themselves as an indispensable part of the social order, they felt themselves free to patronize the arts; at the same time, increases in the luxuries of life, especially in houses and their ornaments, were a visible sign of permanence and power. Byron neatly sums this up in his Childe

¹⁰⁹ Charles Butler, Reminiscences (New York, 1824), pp. 301-02.

¹¹⁰ Dugald Stewart, op. cit., I, 32.

Harold when he describes Florence:

Along the banks where smiling Arno sweeps
Was modern Luxury of Commerce born,
And buried Learning rose, redeemed to a new morn.¹¹¹

Liberty and commerce are linked together by Macaulay to result ultimately in the flourishing of learning:

Thus liberty, partially indeed and transiently, revisited Italy; and with liberty came commerce and empire, science and taste, all the comforts and all the ornaments of life. The Crusades, from which the inhabitants of other countries gained nothing but relics and wounds, brought to the rising commonwealths of the Adriatic and Tyrrhene seas a large increase of wealth, dominion, and knowledge. The moral and geographical position of those commonwealths enabled them to profit alike by the barbarism of the West and by the civilization of the East....

The progress of elegant literature and of the fine arts was proportioned to that of the public prosperity.... The study of the Latin writers had never been wholly neglected in Italy. But Petrarch introduced a more profound, liberal, and elegant scholarship, and communicated to his countrymen that enthusiasm for the literature, the history, and the antiquities of Rome, which divided his own heart with a frigid mistress and a more frigid Muse. Boccaccio turned their attention to the more sublime and graceful models of Greece....

Knowledge and public prosperity continued to advance together. Both attained their meridian in the age of Lorenzo the Magnificent.¹¹²

In his *Sir Thomas More*, Southey has More voice a protest against the rise of commerce in his day for while it produced improvements in some spheres, it dislocated the peasantry by giving them an economic freedom they could not use. Thomas Keightley traces the steps by which the

¹¹¹ Lord Byron, op. cit., II, 365.

¹¹² Thomas B. Macaulay, op. cit., I, 199-201. Cf. ibid., II, 147.

middle class came into prominence: monarchs protected the people from the tyranny of the nobles, and in the mean time the people acquired wealth, established towns, and secured their liberties by obtaining charters and immunities or even set up their own defence organizations. In this atmosphere of independence and eagerness, learning, science, religion, and art flourished.¹¹³

It is Leigh Hunt's opinion that "...a nation may be commercial, and yet have a true taste. The Florentines had it, when they were at once the leaders of trade and of the fine arts, in the times of Lorenzo de Medici."¹¹⁴ De Quincey contributed an article to Tait's called "A Tory's Account of Toryism, Whiggism, and Radicalism in a Letter to a Friend in Bengal" in which he describes the rise of the middle class in England:

Now, what great change was silently going on in this country throughout the Tudor reigns? What civil forces were then gradually evolving? These in particular: a new distribution of landed wealth, and a gentry. Upon the basis of two great changes--1st, the breaking down of the feudal aristocracy by Henry VII, 2d, the breaking down of the church aristocracy by his son--that mighty revolution was effected for England in particular which Harrington has propounded in his "Oceana" as universally the determining ground of power. Civil power and its equilibrium, says Harrington, is determined solely

113 Thomas Keightley, Outlines of History (London, 1830), pp. 314-15.

114 Leigh Hunt, "English and French Females Their Costumes and Bearing," Essays by Leigh Hunt, ed. H. Bennett (London, 1907).

by the distribution of the landed balance; where that is placed, there is placed the power. Gradually, therefore, the power, because gradually the land, had been slipping down from the hands of the high nobility and the church, where originally it was concentrated, into those of a new order, having new political relations,--viz. a gentry. This class was chiefly a growth of the Tudor days; indeed, for three parts in four, of Queen Elizabeth's days.... Such was the abject condition of the Common's House through the long reign of the last Tudor. The gentry were then in the process of growth; but, as yet, their strength was neither matured nor consciously made known. Now, leap over the entire reign of her successor, the first Stuart, during which things were in a struggle; and pass, by a rapid transition, to the Parliaments convoked about the middle of the first Charles' reign. The effect is like that of a pantomime. From a House of Commons as homely and as humble as a Storthing of Norway, composed of farmers, village leaders of vestries, and illiterate attorneys, or procurators for the narrowest local interests, time and political growth have brought us to a brilliant and enlightened assembly, renewing the image of a Roman Senate, and claiming a jurisdiction co-extensive with the affairs of Christendom. What was it that had worked the change? The growth of a new order. A gentry had gradually been reared. Taking advantage of the opportunities which had first arisen in the jealousy directed to the great baronial landholders of Henry VII, which had since been favoured by the spirit of the law courts, and by the legal fictions in the subversion of entails, and which had subsequently been greatly promoted by the distribution of the church lands--a new class had silently developed itself in the course of about one century; and the great political value of that revolution lay in this, that the new class was essentially a middle class, having relations downwards as well as upwards, and common interests connecting them with the order below them as well as that above them. Hitherto the only phantom of a middle class had been confined to towns; and it was a class most imperfectly adapted to the functions of a middle order, being in violent repulsion to the landed interest, and narrow in its powers. But this new order of landed gentry was diffused over the face of the country, and, for the first time, effected a real cohesion between all the forces of the state,

by filling up the gulf which had divided hitherto the aristocracy from the commonalty, and the interests of real from those of moveable property.¹¹⁵

Finally, some notion of the refinements which the new theory of the relationship between the rise of commerce and the Renaissance had reached may be seen in George Miller's Lectures on the Philosophy of Modern History:

But it is a very curious fact, that all this commercial prosperity failed to generate a literary spirit among the Venetians. The Florentines were literary amidst manufacturing industry and the occupations because every intellectual faculty was excited to activity by the restlessness of a popular and unsettled government; but the Venetians, under the tranquil administration of a jealous aristocracy, were dull amidst all their industry and opulence, contented to seek a trading profit by publishing the works of others, but never contributing to increase the stores of literature.¹¹⁶

While the observations just considered do not bulk large in comparison with the other aspects of the Renaissance studied at this time, they represent an advance on the ideas suggested in the latter half of the eighteenth century. The technique for the investigation of the relationship between the economic base and the cultural superstructure still required considerable refining before it could become a useful instrument in the hands of scholars, but it is to be observed that as soon as historical materialism was at last fully explained, it became

¹¹⁵ Thomas De Quincey, op. cit., IX, 320-24.

¹¹⁶ George Miller, Lectures on the Philosophy of Modern History (Dublin, 1820), IV, 373-74.

identified with other considerations and often rejected for reasons not at all connected with its own validity. At this time, however, the prestige of Stewart, Hallam, Macaulay, and De Quincey saved the economic approach from the condemnation it was later to receive. The expanding vigor of a flourishing capitalist imperialism did not see anything degrading in the connection between commerce and the arts; it was only later when the nouveau riche had become established and wished to forget the sordid foundations of its position that it became vulgar to mention art and economics in the same breath and so any approach which considered that relationship as fundamental would be bound to be neglected as well as feared for its threatening political connections.

VIII. The Renaissance and the Rise of Science

The writing of the history of science emerged from the decline into which it had fallen in the latter half of the eighteenth century. Coincidental with the turn science was now taking toward the more theoretical approaches came a revival of interest in the history of science. As science becomes more philosophical the ideological foundations of science are more and more called into question and the history of science is investigated in an attempt to determine the origin and nature of scientific methodology

and to see whether the problems now being raised may be explained in terms of any peculiar developments taken in the course of the history of methods. In addition, the triumph of science demanded that its history be written and this need was supplied in great part by the work of Whewell.

The rôle of inventions in effecting a transition between the old world and the new was investigated at this time. The mariner's compass, improvements in the art of navigation, gunpowder, the telescope, the air pump, the discovery of the circulation of the blood, and Torcell's experiment are singled out by Kett as incontrovertible evidence of modern superiority. According to William Playfair, the Middle Ages fell before the onslaught of three inventions; the first, the invention of the mariner's compass, gave a mortal blow to the Mediterranean nations; the second, the discovery of gunpowder, changed the mode of warfare; the third, the invention of printing, diffused culture. Playfair continues:

It was then that northern nations began to cultivate arts and sciences, as those of the south under a mild heaven, and on a fertile soil, had done three thousand years before. But ingenuity and invention took a different direction in the north from what they had done in the southern climates; instead of sovereigns and slaves, men were more in mutual want of each other, and therefore a more equal division of the fruits of industry was required.¹¹⁷

¹¹⁷ William Playfair, op. cit., p. 73.

Scott was another who thought that the invention of gunpowder brought about a change in the art of war which ultimately resulted in the breakdown of medieval civilization. "In the histories of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries," writes George Miller:

various occurrences and usages may be distinguished, which operating generally upon society, rather than influencing the transactions of any particular state, may be more conveniently contemplated in one collective view, however dissimilar they may be when compared upon themselves. Though however these were of very different characters, they admit of an arrangement in respect of those parts of the general concerns of nations, which they immediately affected, and may accordingly be classed in relation of the political, the moral, and the intellectual character of European society. They are the invention and use of gunpowder and modern artillery, the great plague of the fourteenth century, the appearance of the Gipsies, the practice of card-playing, the introduction of the venereal disease, the restoration of the fine arts, and the invention of printing: 118

Miller explains this rather surprising list as follows: gunpowder effected the transfer from feudalism to nationalism, the plague upset the feudal structure, the gipsies led to the necessity for police, card playing brought about a greater intimacy and at the same time a greater freedom between the sexes, the venereal diseases resulted in a more restrained morality, the fine arts brought about a diffusion of refinement, and printing helped effect the Reformation. Southey makes a very ingenious point in his

118 George Miller, op. cit., IV, 464.

dialogue Sir Thomas More when he points out that toward the end of the Middle Ages the art of war was on the decline but was revived, not by the invention of gunpowder, but because the rising nationalisms were compelled to defend themselves from each other; gunpowder merely accelerated the process. The general opinion was well summed up by James Montgomery:

The discovery of the mariner's compass, the invention of printing, the revival of classic learning, the Reformation, with all the great moral, commercial, political, and intellectual consequences of these new means, materials, and motives for action and thought, produced corresponding effects upon literature and science.¹¹⁹

Science is seen as part of a greater process of change in which a number of other movements participated as well.

As we have seen before in previous years, the invention of printing is usually singled out for special attention and this period is no exception. According to Kett, not only did printing bring about rational improvement in all fields, but it was the safeguard of liberty and the ally of religion; it provided amusement as well as instruction.¹²⁰ T. Holt White and Hazlitt believe that without the art of printing progress would have been impossible.

¹¹⁹ James Montgomery, op. cit., p. 298.

¹²⁰ Henry Kett, op. cit., I, 254-55; William Barron, op. cit., II, 16; Dugald Stewart, op. cit., I, 30-32; Thomas Morrell, op. cit., I, 329-30; Sir John F. W. Herschel, Preliminary Discourse on the Study of Natural Philosophy (London, 1830), p. 348.

White states:

But this superlative art brought Books within the reach of almost all the classes in Society, and excited a spirit of ardent inquiry among them. The extended Circulation of Knowledge communicated a new and vigorous impulse to the public mind. It now felt powers which had hitherto lain dormant; in exercising them, it gradually shook off the load of rubbish which had overwhelmed it during the co-existing domination of Monarchy and Feudality. From this epocha, the tide in improvement in human affairs set in with a steady and accelerated course. So steady as to have now nearly worn away the most formidable obstructions; and latterly so accelerated as to induce some who perceive distinctly the capacity for many and great improvements in social Man to aspire after Perfectibility; the hope of a visionary but praiseworthy enthusiasm.¹²¹

The liberal's attitude toward the invention of printing is expressed by Hazlitt in his Life of Napoleon:

The French Revolution might be described as a remote but inevitable result of the invention of the art of printing. The gift of speech, or the communication of thought by words, is that which distinguished man from other animals. But this faculty is limited and imperfect without the intervention of books, which render the knowledge possessed by every one in the community accessible to all. There is no doubt, then, that the press (as it has existed in modern times) is the great organ of intellectual improvement and civilisation. It was impossible in this point of view, that those institutions, which were founded in a state of society and manners long anterior to this second breathing of understanding into the life of man, should remain on the same proud footing after it, with all their disproportions and defects....

The feudal system was in full vigour almost up to the period of the discovery of printing. Much had been done since that time: but it was the object of the French Revolution to get rid at one

¹²¹ T. Holt White, "Cursory Observations, by the Present Editor, on the Invention of the Art of Printing," Areopagitica (London, 1819), p. xcii.

blow of the framework and of the last relics of that system. Before the diffusion of knowledge and inquiry, governments were for the most part the growth of brute force or of barbarous superstition. Power was in the hands of a few, who used it only to gratify their own pride, cruelty, or avarice, and who took every means to cement it by fear and favour. The lords of the earth, disdaining to rule by the choice or for the benefit of the mass of the community, whom they regarded and treated as no better than a herd of cattle, derived their title from the skies, pretending to be accountable for the exercise or abuse of their authority to God only--the throne rested on the altar, and every species of atrocity or wanton insult having power on its side, received the sanction of religion, which it was thenceforth impiety and rebellion against the will of Heaven to impugn. This state of things continued and grew worse and worse, while knowledge and power were confined within mere local and personal limits. Each petty sovereign shut himself up in his castle or fortress, and scattered havoc and dismay over the unresisting country around him. In an age of ignorance and barbarism, when force and interest decided every thing, and reason had no means of making itself heard, what was to prevent this, or act as a check upon it?....

From the moment that the press opens the eyes of the community beyond the actual sphere in which each moves, there is from that time inevitably formed the germ of a body of opinion directly at variance with the selfish and servile code that before reigned paramount and approximating more and more to the manly and disinterested standard of truth and justice. Hitherto force, fraud, and fear decided every question of individual right or general reasoning; the possessor of rank and influence, in answer to any censure or objection to his conduct, appealed to God and to his sword:--now a new principle is brought into play which had never been so much as dreamt of, and before which he must make good his pretensions, or it will shatter his strongholds of pride and prejudice to atoms, as the pent-up air shatters whatever resists its expansive force. This power is public opinion, exercised on men, things, and general principles, and to which mere physical power must conform, or it will crumble to powder. Books alone teach us to judge of truth and good in the abstract: without a knowledge of things at a distance from us, we judge like savages or animals from our senses and appetites only; but by the aid of books and of an intercourse with the

world of ideas, we are purified, raised, ennobled from savages into intellectual and rational beings.¹²²

"If I were asked to describe Bacon as briefly as I could," said Hunt in his Table-Talk, "I should say that he was the liberator of the hands of knowledge."¹²³ Hunt's contemporaries agreed with him and expressed their views in many an enthusiastic passage. Thus George Burnett writes:

The two great events, the revival of letters and the reformation, had shaken and enlivened the wits of men; and many had struck out into new paths of successful research. But these were travellers on journeys of discovery. The map of the intellectual regions had not yet been sketched. A few positions only were ascertained; the others were desert and unknown. But Bacon came, and with the light of his effulgent genius, illumined the whole hemisphere of things; the various objects of enquiry now became distinctly marked, with their relative positions and bearing; the several tracts towards them were likewise indicated, and even made plain; and men had nothing more to do than to proceed patiently and perseveringly to reach with certainty the expected end of their labours. From the time of Bacon therefore the progress of knowledge of all kinds has been rapid and continual. That his writings constituted the sole cause of this general progression, I by no means intend to assert; but that they taught solely and established the only true method of acquiring knowledge, will not be disputed. The minds of men thus enlightened, their views of things became clear and settled. All future change, relative to the method of proceeding, is now out of the ques-

¹²² William Hazlitt, op. cit., XIII, 38-40. On the other hand, William Taylor, op. cit., I, 166-67, argues that the invention of printing took place too soon because it disseminated the very same outworn mystical and scholastic literature among the untutored and unprepared people which the more enlightened Italians had already cast aside. The result was an ascetic morality, an irrational dogmatism, and an intolerant bigotry.

¹²³ Leigh Hunt, Table-Talk (London, 1851), p. 88.

tion; and we may go on without any risk that our labour shall be in vain, to accumulate knowledge, to spread illumination and happiness. The writings of Bacon, therefore, form one of the most important aeras, not merely in the history of English literature, but in the annals of mankind.¹²⁴

Bacon's part in the anti-Aristotelian movement is indicated by Herschel:

By the discoveries of Copernicus, Kepler, and Galileo, the errors of the Aristotelian philosophy were effectually overturned on a plain appeal to the facts of nature; but it remained to show on broad and general principles, how and why Aristotle was in the wrong; to set in evidence the peculiar weakness of his method of philosophizing, and to substitute in its place a stronger and better. This important task was executed by Francis Bacon, Lord Verulam, who will, therefore justly be looked upon in all future ages as the great reformer of philosophy,...

An immense impulse was now given to science, and it seemed as if the genius of mankind, long pent up, had at length rushed eagerly upon Nature, and commenced with one accord, the great work of turning up her hitherto unbroken soil, and exposing the treasures so long concealed. A general sense now prevailed of the poverty and insufficiency of knowledge in matters of fact; and, as information flowed fast in, an era of excitement and wonder commenced, to which the annals of mankind had furnished nothing similar.¹²⁵

The high point in the appreciation of Bacon at this time is of course Lord Macaulay's essay "Lord Bacon." Without attempting to summarize so well known an essay, Macaulay's

¹²⁴ George Burnett, op. cit., II, 352-54. Cf. John Bigland, op. cit., p. 132; Alexander F. Tytler, op. cit., p. 227; Sir John F. W. Herschel, op. cit., p. 105.

¹²⁵ Sir John F. W. Herschel, loc. cit., pp. 113-15. Cf. Leigh Hunt, London Journal, op. cit., p. iii; Isaac Disraeli, op. cit., II, 284; Hazlitt, op. cit., II, 113-16.

attitude towards Bacon's position in the development of philosophy seems to be most clearly summed up in the following passage:

At this time Bacon appeared. It is altogether incorrect to say, as has been often said, that he was the first man who rose up against the Aristotelian philosophy when in the height of its power. The authority of that philosophy had, as we have shown, received a fatal blow long before he was born.... The part which Bacon played in this great change was the part, not of Robespierre, but of Bonaparte. The ancient order of things had been subverted, some bigots still cherished with devoted loyalty the remembrance of the fallen monarchy, and exerted themselves to effect a restoration. But the majority had no such feeling. Freed, not yet knowing how to use their freedom, they pursued no determinate course, and had found no leader capable of conducting them.

That leader at length arose. The philosophy which he taught was essentially new. It differed from that of the celebrated ancient teachers, not merely in method, but also in object. Its object was the good of mankind, in the sense in which the mass of mankind always have understood and always will understand the word good.¹²⁶

Macaulay then states that Bacon's philosophy rested on a triple foundation of utility, progress, and fruit, that is, the good.

The importance of the revival of Platonism in the Renaissance is given consideration at this time. Robert Blakey writes in his History of Moral Science:

The philosophy of Aristotle still maintained its supremacy up to the middle of the fifteenth century, when circumstances arose which favoured to a considerable extent the re-establishment of the doctrines of Plato. The downfall of the Grecian states by

¹²⁶ Thomas B. Macaulay, op. cit., II, 221.

the invasion and conquests of the Mahometans, compelled the Greek literati to flee for protection to Italy; where they fortunately met with every degree of assistance and encouragement from the noble and munificent patrons of learning, the house of Medici, Alphonsus VI. king of Naples, and the other Neapolitan princes of the house of Arragon. The attention paid to these Greek philosophers naturally paved the way for the general dissemination of their peculiar tenets, and in the course of a very limited period, they made great inroads upon the quibbling and subtile philosophy of the Peripatetics.¹²⁷

Macaulay has something of the same idea in the essay on Bacon:

Many causes predisposed the public mind to a change. The study of a great variety of writers, though it did not give a right direction to philosophical research, did much towards destroying that blind reverence for authority which had prevailed when Aristotle ruled alone. The rise of the Florentine sect of Platonists, a sect to which belonged some of the finest minds of the fifteenth century, was not an unimportant event. The mere substitution of the Academic for the Peripatetic philosophy would indeed have done little good. But anything was better than the old habit of unreasoning servility. It was something to have a choice of tyrants....¹²⁸

The early nineteenth century attitude towards the place held by science in the Renaissance is most fittingly expressed by Turner:

This brief review of the universal motivity of the human mind during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, and of the simultaneous changes or improvements which arose in every subject of human attention, may lead us to the inference, that altho in the ori-

¹²⁷ Robert Blakey, History of Moral Science (London, 1833), I, 40.

¹²⁸ Thomas B. Macaulay, op. cit., II, 219-20. Incidentally, Coleridge thought Bacon a Platonist, as he did Shakespeare, Milton, Dante, Angelo, and Raphael.

ental division of our well-peopled globe, the intellect of man was assuming a stationary fixity which stopped all progression, and has never since varied, yet that in Europe it had ceased to be limited or quiescent in any of its paths of inquiry or pursuit. When Asia had been a scene of fertile and vigorous mind, our western quarter of the earth was dark, desolate and savage. The prospect was now reversed. The East revolved into a slumbering night; and Europe began to glow with all the beauty and ardor of a bright morning sun, which has advanced with increasing lustre to a splendid meridian. As if roused and guided by some invisible agency, which every where operated, Mankind emerged to a superior condition, and felt that they were actuated by a superior impulse, and could not and did not continue what they had been. The intellectual sovereignty of Aristotle, which the new Greek books and schools had for a while confirmed with new force, began every where to shake, from the rebellion of the studious mind, and from the decisive counteraction of the accumulating knowledge. Compilations of natural facts were made by those who preferred the enriching study of nature to the barren theses of metaphysical logic; nor did the inevitable and multiplying innovations depend on the rise or talent of any particular individuals. The whole intellectual world was either moved or moving, in its waves and tides, in every quarter of the great ocean of life....129

In some measure, then, the early nineteenth century has returned to the enthusiasm for science which marked the seventeenth century. Where the difference comes in is that in the seventeenth century science is used actively, as an instrument of debate and conviction, in a struggle of momentous consequences to the establishment of the modern mind; at this time, on the other hand, science has become divided, one part the concern of the practicing

scientist with little or no regard for its past, the other part the study of historians who make it a subject of inquiry and not a burning issue.

IX. Conclusion

With the exception of the new defense of the Elizabethans, the early nineteenth century did not contribute anything original to the history of the idea of the Renaissance. This does not mean, however, that it is not an important part of the story. On the contrary, it was a period of assimilation and preparation. For one thing, it added to the study of the Renaissance a wealth of detail which it has been impossible to show here. The emphasis on fact forced theoreticians to modify their enthusiasm for one-sided theories and at the same time compelled scholars with their attention riveted on minutiae to realize, by the very wealth of information, the vastness of the movements of which the facts were countless parts. The more the facts accumulated, the greater the necessity became for working out theories both comprehensive enough and accurate enough to account for them. Hence the path was laid for the large scale histories of the latter half of the nineteenth century. The publication of Hallam's Introduction marks the beginning of a new era in the study of the Renaissance in England for

it is the first full length study of the culture of the Renaissance, English and continental both, to appear in England.

At the same time, it must be noticed that the idea of the Renaissance is more and more becoming the exclusive property of the scholar. Enthusiasm for the idea of the Renaissance arises not from its hortatory possibilities nor from its part in the creation of the modern temper but from the small and isolated excitement which debate over theories of scholarship occasions. The discussion over the idea of the Renaissance tells us more about the mind of the scholar than about the mind of man in his more vigorous activities. No disparagement is intended either of the scholar or of the idea of the Renaissance but these are the facts and as such must be recorded. The early nineteenth century points to an extremely exciting period of historical investigation to come, one in which philosophy is written in histories and in which the idea of the Renaissance plays an important part. Ingenious and complex theories of the Renaissance are suggested, indeed none more worthy of investigation than those of the latter part of the nineteenth century in England, but when all is said and done they ultimately lack the compelling force, the sense of aliveness and urgency, which characterized the treatment of the idea

of the Renaissance from the Renaissance itself, and there especially so, to about the end of the eighteenth century. The idea of the Renaissance grows up, but it also grows less vital.

CONCLUSION

It has been my purpose in this dissertation merely to accumulate and arrange the opinions of writers from Petrarch to Hallam on the subject of the idea of the Renaissance. I use the word 'merely' advisably because nowhere have I knowingly expressed my personal preferences for one writer's ideas as against another's nor have I selected any particular theory of the Renaissance to serve as a basis of judging other theories. Of course, it would be absurd to deny that value words have crept in but the ordinary exigencies of composition alone would account for such intrusion. However, where such phrases as "more comprehensive," "less thorough," "more complete," and the like occur, they are not intended as my criticisms of the ideas they are applied to, but are simply comparisons based on the work of the writers previous to those being treated at the moment. Thus, when I say that the studies of eighteenth century writers on the relationship between the Renaissance and the Middle Ages are comprehensive in scope, I mean that compared with the seventeenth century studies on the same subject, they deal with more facets of the same topic and in greater numbers. In other words, such phrases are strictly quantitative; they are in no sense qualitative.

I do not deny that it is quite possible to brush aside these assertions as to my objectivity in the collec-

tion of evidence with the statement that the very attempt to record the history of the idea of the Renaissance is in itself a way of looking at the Renaissance problem. I mean that it is a characteristic contemporary procedure in many disciplines to study the history of a problem in an effort to determine whether errors in method are not the result of the defects in the early approaches to the same problem; that is to say, the methodological assumptions of the first investigators may have so permeated the approaches to a problem that subsequent investigators have unconsciously taken over these assumptions with the consequence that the problem cannot be solved along traditional lines. Though to answer this charge is to get into that happy realm of theoretical discussion where one figuratively plays, as Gilbert puts it:

On a cloth untrue,
with a twisted cue,
and elliptical billiard balls.

nevertheless, I think it necessary to point out that the history of ideas which I have used throughout the dissertation by the nature of its technique comes closer to recording what the writers of the past have had to say on the subject of the idea of the Renaissance than any other method which could have been employed.

By breaking down the theories of the Renaissance considered here into a number of constantly recurring and well-defined idea units, the history of ideas is able to

exhibit the origin and development of the idea of the Renaissance in an orderly, detailed, and objective fashion. It was seen that the idea of the Renaissance was, if one may use the word, the invention of the Renaissance itself and that the main elements of the concept of the Renaissance were worked out in considerable detail at that time. Furthermore, one gets the impression that the writers of the Renaissance on the idea of the Renaissance were describing contemporary phenomena; these writers describe and are at the same time the source material for subsequent treatment of the idea of the Renaissance. For this reason, the history of the idea of the Renaissance after the Renaissance shows a double strain: while writers on the subject recognized the necessity of dealing with facts, they realized that these facts were simultaneously objective and subjective, and hence they felt themselves free to theorize about the idea of the Renaissance almost at will. This is the reason, I think, why the history of the idea of the Renaissance shows a fairly constant use of the same major ideas yet combined to form essentially different pictures of the idea of the Renaissance. While the writers of different periods have felt the necessity of adhering to the major components of the idea of the Renaissance, they have also felt themselves at liberty to recombine them and to select particular ones for special emphasis, and this they have usually done under the influ-

ence of the methodological preconceptions peculiar to their own ages.

However, so far as this thesis is concerned, bias in favor of any particular theory of the Renaissance was obviated by the demands of the method used which necessitated the gathering of the greatest number and variety of ideas on the subject before it was possible to make any generalizations. The method employed has been inductive, almost statistical: starting with primary materials ranging over as wide an area as possible, it has been seen that in these materials a number of ideas have appeared and re-appeared, and these, when sifted out of other but irrelevant ideas and arranged in sequence, constitute the history of the idea of the Renaissance. The history of ideas did not in any way affect the nature of the ideas which were uncovered since these were embodied in the texts studied and could not have been known beforehand; the method merely enabled the researcher to assume that such idea units would exist and to be on the alert for them. I should like to point out that while the history of ideas does have its own assumptions, it is possible by the application of the same method to analyze these assumptions and consequently to take them into account if necessary, a procedure which is the fundamental test of the pretensions of any method which is thought to be scientific. The history of ideas is linked up with the development of the

concept of the sociology of knowledge, and the latter ultimately stems from Marxism. While Marx and Engels were not the first to perceive the inter-relatedness of the disciplines and of their relation as a whole to the society of which they were a part, they were the first to expound this idea systematically, to discover the laws of its motion, and to apply it on a large scale. According to Marx, upon the economic basis of society there is erected an ideological superstructure which is conditioned by the economic base and in turn conditions the base itself. In other words, ideas are important not so much for their validity as for their social function, i.e., the use to which they are put by men in their efforts to justify their needs, aspirations, and actions. Moreover, ideas are hardly ever found in isolation, but exist in combination, in the form of ideologies, or self-contained systems of ideas which systematically deal with the nature of the universe, man's relation to it, his character and motivations, his institutional structures and his relation to them, his past and his future, and his ability to know the world outside of himself. Now, while the ability of the Marxian theory of ideology actually to demonstrate the one-to-one relationship of ideological superstructure to economic base has been strongly questioned, nevertheless the theory has become one of the most fructifying suggestions in the history of history writing, and there can be no doubt that the thinking of such non-Marxist and

even anti-Marxist scholars as Arnold, Mannheim, Pareto, Robinson, and Veblen is in its basic assumptions directly related to the Marxian theory of ideology. The history of ideas is a more recent development of this theory and is particularly concerned with the discrimination and tracing of the component elements in the ideologies of the past. Since the history of ideas deals with the unit ideas which go to make up systems and not with the validity of the systems themselves, it has the merit of being descriptive yet it is without assumed and unconscious judgments.

In a sense, it is difficult to set down the conclusions which this study has arrived at since they are implicit in the narrative itself. To do more than has been done in the conclusions to the individual chapters would be to superimpose on the idea of the Renaissance a continuity and unity which it does not in fact possess. By this I mean that while the thesis has sequence by virtue of its necessary condensation of materials, this is in many respects an artificial creation. I do not intend to suggest, however, that there is no continuity to the idea of the Renaissance since this would be a contradiction in terms, but it is a much more casual and loose conlocation of more or less connected opinions on the subject than the thesis would indicate. In point of fact, there is no tradition of study of the Renaissance problem; what we have is a very considerable number of opinions ranging over a long stretch

of time on a subject which many writers found in varying degrees interesting to them. The study of the idea of the Renaissance before Hallam is not a specialized field of research in which a group of scholars operates with more or less awareness of the nature of the problem and of the work of their predecessors and contemporaries. This aspect of the history of the Renaissance problem does not enter into the consideration of the subject treated here until the study of history becomes an end in itself and attracts to itself specialists willing to devote themselves to particular areas of investigation.

Nevertheless, one or two aspects of the study of the Renaissance problem from Petrarch to Hallam deserve discussion. For one thing, the awareness of the Renaissance in the Renaissance itself is a matter of considerable significance. The main features of the idea of the Renaissance as they are subsequently developed are already delineated in the Renaissance itself. The range and depth of the Renaissance awareness of itself are surprisingly great, but they should also be a strong sign of suspicion, for if it was the Renaissance which laid down the lines which subsequent investigation of the era was to follow, it is possible to think of the whole notion of the Renaissance as the invention of a group of writers who wished to use the notion of a difference between themselves and previous ages for perhaps religious or political or other reasons. After all,

the assertion of difference is not necessarily the guarantee of that difference, especially when the motives for that assertion are under suspicion. Or again, it is possible to take such self-consciousness as a mark of the modern. Finally, one may consider the bare fact of expressed awareness of difference, whether real or not, as in itself a criterion of difference.

Another interesting aspect of the history of the idea of the Renaissance is the way in which subsequent periods single out particular facets for special consideration. Thus, the writers of the seventeenth century emphasized the relationship of the Renaissance to the rise of science to the almost total exclusion of other ideas. It is easy to see why they should have done this because the study of science was at that time at a peak of enthusiasm but the fact in itself is in the nature of a warning. The Renaissance writings on itself have the freshness and directness of contemporary observation, but once we move beyond the event and as it becomes more and more deeply embedded in the past so that we have to rely not on observation but on reconstruction through others' observations which in this case may be looked on with some degree of suspicion, the danger of creating a past period in the image of the present increases disturbingly. In the materials studied here, the danger is only latent; it exists to be sure, but it can be ascertained and taken into account.

But when philosophy and history merge, as they did in the nineteenth century, then we are faced with very serious problems, especially since the more complex the methodology becomes the greater the danger of the intrusion of preconceptions. However, it is just when this begins to happen, and for that very reason, that the dissertation stops. Nevertheless, adequately to treat the history of the idea of the Renaissance, the work of the last hundred years on the subject requires minute and concentrated study.

It is the practice of the contemporary historian to disclaim any suggestion that history teaches lessons, to use the old phraseology. This is possibly true, though an examination of the notion of historical impartiality might very well show that it is an historically conditioned attitude developed to cope with a specific and not necessarily universal situation. Nevertheless, if the thesis is to have a justification beyond the ordinary reasons, I should like it to be thought of as the beginnings of an essay in historical semantics. What the thesis shows, and this would be especially true of the study as a whole when completed, is that there is no graver threat to clear thinking than the tendency to accept concepts as real things. By this I mean that when we deal with large generalizations we tend to forget that they are but constructs devised by ourselves as temporary hypotheses based on imperfect and incomplete inductions. If the purpose of science,

and I include history in this category, is directed at arriving at ever more accurate descriptions or correspondences in language of the world outside of ourselves as observers, then the danger of confusing our preconceptions with the real world we are trying to approximate is ever present yet very easy to forget. Now, what I have tried to do here on a small scale of course and perhaps in a not very important area of study is to show that concept and reality are not the same thing and that for every concept used there must be a referent in the real world. Obvious and simple though this idea may be, the failure to apply it as a criterion in thinking beyond the realm of scholarship is seen on all sides today and with what results it would be too painful to enumerate. I should be the first to deny that the thesis is intended as propaganda for clear thinking, though I should see nothing wrong in that, nor that historical semantics is a universal panacea. Nevertheless, at a time when scientific method is under attack, when rational thinking is decried, and when the arrogance of ignorance seems to lord it over the humility and uncertainty of the democratic method of reason, I should like my thesis to stand as an example of simple discourse and clear communication, small virtues perhaps, but essential ones.

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