LASCELLES ABERCROMBIE

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1881–1938

BORN at The Manor House, Ashton-upon-Mersey, on 9 January 1881, Lascelles Abercrombie was the fifth son and eighth child of a family of nine. They were, writes one of his brothers, 'a very self-contained clan in the earlier days', and closely united. The mother, born Sarah Ann Heron and of Yorkshire stock, was, we hear, a broad-minded woman of strong character, with a keen sense of humour. The father, William Abercrombie, by profession a stockbroker, had marked artistic tastes. He collected furniture and pictures, admiring especially Morris and the 'Pre-Raphaelites' and also Ruskin. He liked to read Scott, Dickens, Meredith, and Hardy aloud; he was an excellent reader and the poet inherited his gift. Most of the children had some bent for art or letters: for architecture or verse, painting or music. Lascelles Abercrombie's writings show his conversance with music, to which he was deeply sensitive. He was also devoted to books; his intelligence developed early, and 'Nous' was his domestic nickname. A home like this encouraged his natural buoyancy and gaiety. They were qualities that were to serve him well; for his imagination, while delighting in images of happiness and beauty, was essentially grave in cast and was often to be occupied with tragic themes. He was delicate as a boy, but as he grew up became 'a strong walker, capable of great endurance'. It was not until after the War that his health began to demand constant care.

He found teachers who could foster and train his love for literature. He went first to a well-known preparatory school at Locker's Park, Hemel Hempstead, whose headmaster, H. M. Draper, read Scott and Wordsworth and ballads to the boys on Sundays. At Malvern College, where Abercrombie stayed from 1895 to 1900, he was carefully grounded in Greek and Latin. The discipline was invaluable

to the future poet and critic. All his life he was to read the ancient classics and to draw inspiration from them. While at school he also showed ability for science; and after reaching the Lower Sixth he went over to the 'science form'. An illness kept him from completing an examination for a scholarship at Wadham, and for two sessions (1900–2) he studied honours chemistry at the Owens College, Manchester, which was still a constituent college of the federal Victoria University. Long afterwards, in 1935, the University of Manchester was to make him an honorary Doctor of Letters. He had left Malvern with a good record; was popular, and an excellent prefect; and his house-master, Mr. H. H. House, speaks of the impression left by 'his character, his intellectual power, and his most charming personality'.

But literature called, and he did not proceed to a degree at Owens; was ready, indeed, to drop science as a pursuit. Images from chemistry and physics are scattered through his writings, but he came to feel the limitations of the purely scientific outlook. In one of his *Speculative Dialogues* the World denounces Science for calling Metaphysic a 'wanton jade'; and, as will appear, it was metaphysic—a poet's metaphysic—that was intensely to attract him. Meanwhile other causes diverted his career. The South African War bore hard upon the family fortunes, and he had to look for employment. He left the roomy, quasi-Norman-Shaw house at Brooklands, with its big garden, where he had lived since he was six. For a time he stayed in Birkenhead with a brother, who reports that they 'led a most joyous existence', though they were 'all poor', and there was much walking, and 'complete freedom from convention'. For a while Lascelles worked, with Mr. Eric Thornely, as a junior quantity surveyor. But he resolved to cast loose, to support himself by presswork, and to devote himself to poetry. He was much encouraged by seeing his interlude *Blind* published and praised in the *Independent Review*. Literary journalism of the higher kind

was now for some time to be his mainstay. From 1907 to 1909 he was on the regular staff of the *Liverpool Daily Courier*, writing leaders and criticizing books and music. He also contributed to the *Liverpool Daily Post* and other journals. But the task was a strain upon his health and had to be dropped; he came to rely more and more on casual reviewing. None the less, he made time for poetry, and despite all hindrances his talent flowered rapidly. His first volume, *Interludes and Poems*, appeared in 1908, and now began Abercrombie's richest period of poetical production, which lasted until 1914. The War was to mark a change in his career as a writer.

On 23 January 1909 he married Miss Catherine Gwatkin, who had been an art student in the University of Liverpool. After a stay of less than two years in Birkenhead the Abercrombies migrated south; at first to Much Marcle in Herefordshire, and in 1911 to The Gallows, at Ryton near Dymock in Gloucestershire. Here, with some intervals, they remained until the outbreak of war, with their growing family, often indeed in straits, but happy; and the poet was now in the full tide of invention. He was inspired by his home, and also by living in a countryside to whose peculiar beauty one of his deepest instincts responded. It was a rich, orcharded region, deep in the Severn valley; the line of the Malverns could be seen. From the garden in his leafy village ('no dullish red, Glostershire earth new-delved In April'), Abercrombie would walk up to the Hollybush Pass at the southern end of the hills, to see his friends, to drink cider, and to espy the two remote cathedrals, and Tewkesbury Abbey, in the vale below. It was under such influences that he wrote the well-known and beautiful *Ryton Firs*.

Abercrombie mixed easily with his fellows, and on Merseyside had many friends among artists, journalists, actors, and academic persons. By 1909 the 'new poet' was a familiar figure in the University Club of Liverpool, where town and gown intermingle. In company he was a gay

talker, ready enough to discuss but brief and restrained when he was forced to disagree. The inner furnaces of the writer of *Indignation, an Ode*, were evident enough but well under control. He was modest and simple of bearing. This was thirty years ago; but in these respects, in spite of life's anxieties and imperfect health, he never seemed to change. Abercrombie had a gift for friendship; and also, though quick enough with his critical reserves, a generous passion for praising, even to the point of lavishness, any work that he judged to be good. He would talk eagerly about poets and the craft and theory of poetry with any one who might care about such matters. To look at him, he might have been some talented artist. To hear him was to guess that he belonged to one of the speaking professions, as indeed he did. His skill as a reader, already mentioned, was conspicuous. On principle he used the speaking voice and disliked the semi-clerical chant of the usual reciter. His own voice, not markedly musical, was pleasing, his utterance keen and distinct. His delivery in public, when lecturing or broadcasting, was minutely expressive, never missing a shade; the *r*s were slightly rolled. The natural rhythms of spoken English were left upon the ear, subject always to the march and pattern of the metre.

A friend wrote in *The Times* that while Abercrombie had 'written a few very beautiful lyrics', he 'was not primarily a lyrical poet'. This is quite true—of 'lyric' in the stricter sense. He has left all too little that can be called pure song. But we have, at various dates, *Elizabeth's Song* ('Shining white clouds in the cherry trees tangled'), and *The Stream's Song*, and not least *The Nightingale* ('from the Old English Riddle'). Quotation must here be sparse, but room may be found for these eleven lines:

I through my throat the thronging melodies
Delicately devising in divers moods,
Let my little breath lavishly chime,
Still the bestower of unstinted song.
Of old to all men my evening enchantment

Brings blissful ease; they, when I bind them
With my thrilling sweet troubles, enthralled in their houses
Lean forward, listening. Learn now my name
Who cry so keenly, such quivering glee
Pealing merrily, and pour such musical
Ringing welcome to returning warriors.

Lyric, in the broader sense, is abundant; it is often sprinkled in the narrative or dramatic poems, and in a variety of measures. From the first Abercrombie made noble use of the irregular, or choric, ode, rhymed and unrhymed; and even in blank verse, his favourite metre, the pulse of lyric is never far off.

The *Interludes and Poems* of 1908 can by now be seen in clearer perspective. They are rather early work, the writer was still in his middle twenties; but in the best of them his style is already formed and one of his favourite moulds, the dramatic 'interlude', is highly finished. The book was warmly greeted by the intelligent; and it was clear that a new poet had arisen, distinguished by strength of conception, by an original mint of language, and by a rhythm of his own. He was not afraid of tragical, or even sinister, subjects; and he sometimes allowed the discords that they suggested to get into his music. But he had the essential feeling for beauty, beauty in nature and in human nature; and he could find the words for it. He seemed to owe little to any contemporary poet; his literary inspiration went farther back. There are signs in this volume and its successors that Abercrombie was deeply read in the old dramatists, the darker-minded tragedians, Elizabethan or Jacobean; and some sentences written later throw light upon his own handling of English. In those times, he says,

> Poetry found its prime material, not in a language already broken in by literature, but in a language of people talking, of speech full of the rapid shadows and gleams, the expressive irregularities and careless experiments, of conversation. . . . Milton, having tried every splendour of which English is capable, came in his later work to rely more and more on the words and idiom of speech.

The study of the later, the severer Milton could only discipline the admirer of Webster and Tourneur; and the reward of it can be seen in Abercrombie's finest odes, which are often influenced, as to their manner and movement, by the choruses in *Samson Agonistes*. He was heard to repeat, after an interval of years, his choice of *Samson* as perhaps the greatest single poem in the language.

He was, moreover, a 'metaphysical' poet, and in a sense a philosophical one. This high tradition was still vigorous in the year 1908, and he was to sustain it well. The final volume of *The Dynasts* was now published; and for Thomas Hardy, as will be seen, Abercrombie had a particular reverence. His direct debt may not have been great, unless it can be traced in his interest in simple and rustic people and their passions; and his own creed was to be far removed from Hardy's conception of the blind Immanent Will, which propels but does not guide mankind. Still, Hardy was a great practitioner of the poetry of ideas; and there were others in the field. The veteran Meredith, who was to die in the following year, had long since proclaimed his half-mystical cult, framed on naturalistic lines, of mother Earth. Robert Bridges, indeed, had not yet given to the world *The Testament of Beauty*. But it is of interest to note that he welcomed *Interludes and Poems* for its 'most extraordinary gift of lucidity and exposition' and for the 'genuine nature' of its 'inspiration'. Abercrombie, it may be said, moves, even more freely than do these elders, among abstract conceptions; he is versed in some of the historic issues of speculation. He read much philosophy, not for the sake of any formal system, but as a poet reads it, for whatever might fire his imagination or point to some satisfying creed. He is for ever circling round the ancient problems: the nature of beauty, the place of love in life and in the universal order, the possible union of the individual self with the One, and the attendant mystery of evil. In one poem the body, soon to be parted from the soul by death, recalls their joyous alliance and wonders how the soul will

fare when deprived of the glories, so long apprehended through the senses, of nature and the world. The soul replies that it will now experience the 'fierce' ecstasy of a condition in which 'I am I' no longer. Or, in *The Trance* the mind is released from the reign of mundane Law and finds its perfection in knowing, and in being—nothing; and that is to be 'in the midst' of God. The speakers in these 'interludes' are the voices of the poet's inner questionings. Sometimes, as in *The New God*, the symbolism is difficult, and the final impression is confused. Abercrombie at this period inclines to an exalted and peculiar species of monism, the outline of which comes out more clearly in his prose.

The most vivid and dramatic of the interludes is *Peregrinus*. It is very freely adapted from Lucian's story of the pagan, an historical person, who, 'having famously lived a wicked life, publicly burnt himself in Greece' as a final and magnificent piece of self-advertisement. Lucian mocks, in good Voltairian style, at the martyr-egoist; and the mockery is echoed by Abercrombie's chorus of Corinthian youths; they are sadists, who care only for the cruel fun of the spectacle. Another new personage is the curious Marcon, the Christian who has played Peregrinus false, and who rejoices that he is to be damned. Abercrombie's Peregrinus has repented of the lusts and passions which had degraded his real Self. For his Self, and not Jove or Christ, is 'the sacred thing'; and by the fire it will be wholly cleansed, and he will have borne his witness to the world. As in Lucian's tale, he falters at the last and begs to be let off; but the chorus insist, and then (not as in Lucian) he plucks up heart and cries 'yare with thy fires', content with self-approval since the world will not listen. He perishes amid the laughter of the chorus. It is an original conception; and the blaze of the pyre finds its way into the poetry.

In *Emblems of Love* (1912) there is a nobly written *Marriage Song*; also a charming *Epilogue*, full of memories of Keats and Morris, like a posy of old-fashioned flowers.

Most of the other poems are in dialogue form as before, varied by ode and chorus. The book is studiously planned, and is one long celebration of Eros—passionate, yes, but 'sublimated', spiritualized, and thereby intensified. In *Vashti* and *Judith* the Hebrew stories are handled in a spirit that is wholly, and even amusingly, un-Hebraic. Vashti is now a modern woman (though still a Jewess) who resents the slavery of her sex. Nor is she without guile; she feigns, at first, to agree with the possessive king that her function is to refresh the conqueror after his labours and to rejoice that he should 'devour her beauty'. Ahasuerus is a sort of Tamburlaine, who can boast that 'My name travels A hundred seven and twenty languages'. But Vashti is no Zenocrate. As in the Book of Esther, she refuses to appear before the princes, and she is cast out. The rest is vision and symbol. The Goddess Ishtar shows her Helen of Troy, Sappho, and St. Theresa, who represent successive advances towards the perfect pattern and true 'intent' of love; and this is fulfilled when a 'clean fire' is present in the union of lovers. In *Judith* the heroine, however savage in her triumph, has become a type of 'virginity and perfection', and the old story is altered in one essential. For Judith has submitted to Holofernes before slaying him, and is sick with the memory of her defilement. After showing the head to the Bethulians, she is bent on suicide; but is dissuaded by Ozias, and goes forth alone awaiting the hour when she will join her dead husband Manasses. Her song is not given; instead, the citizens hymn the victory in a lofty ode ('Over and past us go the years . . .'). Abercrombie made his book, long afterwards, on *The Idea of Great Poetry*; and perhaps this chorus comes as near as anything that he wrote to realizing that idea. In *Mary*, 'a legend of the '45', the dialogue, as befits the Scottish lassies who are the speakers, is carefully simplified, though still charged with poetry. *Emblems of Love* had been preceded in 1910 by *Mary and the Bramble*, now long familiar, with its glowing couplets and carolling lyric; and in 1911 by the first act of

The Sale of St. Thomas. This, in its completed form (1931), was to be the most notable of Abercrombie's longer poems.

He next tried to put his philosophy of life into clearer shape, and resorted to prose. His eight *Speculative Dialogues* (1913) have long been out of print. Their form may well have been suggested by the dialogues of Leopardi. We are reminded of *Nature and The Soul*, or *Fashion and Death*, by titles like *Famine and Pestilence* or *Philosophy and the Angel*. But nothing could be farther in spirit from Leopardi's pessimism. The workmanship is sometimes naïve enough: it is no easy matter to make Time and Eternity colloquial and ironical. Yet there is much close and vehement and often witty dialectic. In one conversation 'the mind of man in sleep' listens to *Lust and Love*, and Lust observes: 'You know I sometimes feel rather hurt at the airs of contempt you assume to me, when man is awake and his parliament sitting; especially as you come to me so pleasantly in the intervals and praise my conversation.' But Love, in the spirit of the *Emblems*, pleads that it is he who can 'make man most perfectly man', for he has 'captured the instinct whereby life increases itself'; which is 'the wonderfullest opportunity life has for intensity of living'. Poetry and music can also furnish this inspiration; and the highest earthly good is conceived, not in ethical terms, but as a rare mood of joy, or ecstasy. 'The tendency of existence is towards exultation.' Other dialogues dwell on the standing contradiction between the One and the Many. In *A Beggar and his Dog* both the speakers are 'on the other side of death'; and the thinker here is the dog, now an equal, who says that his master, while on earth, 'was nothing more than a dog with the acute consciousness of being a dog added'; and that 'Up here we are all one, all the one Main Thing. Simply, we are existence, and existence is one. But we are also ourselves. . . . You do not yet perceive the difference between being nobody, and being everybody yet still yourself.' God, though often referred to, is regarded as a purely subjective conception; he 'exists, because the mind of man

exists': 'I speak here, as always, only of man's reality; what outside of that there may be, which we could call God, I am not concerned to know. . . . I mean by God a state of his [man's] spirit's commerce with that which surrounds it.' The dialogues are variously coloured; by a reading of Schopenhauer and Nietzche, and probably also of Berkeley and of the Pre-Socratics. Abercrombie was afterwards to translate some of the verse of Empedocles. No clear-cut solution is offered, but many of the ruling ideas of this book were to haunt his imagination and to reappear in his poetry and criticism.

In 1914, in alliance with three of his friends, he 'published at Ryton' a collection of poems, *New Numbers*, which may one day be a prize for the connoisseurs of books. It was privately printed, and sold and distributed without a middleman. Each of the poets wrote in each of the four numbers, which appeared at intervals during the year. It includes some of the best verse of Rupert Brooke, by whose death, and by the coming of the War, the series was cut short; and some delicate lyrics and a play by John Drinkwater. There is also poetry and drama by Mr. Wilfrid Wilson Gibson, the survivor of the band, who, as Abercrombie was to write, 'has made not only colliers and fishermen, but shopkeepers and clerks, unquestionable inhabitants of the poetic world'.

In *New Numbers* Gibson, Drinkwater, and Abercrombie present, each in his own style, the fortunes, tragic or tragi-comic, or pathetic of simple and homely people. Two of Abercrombie's contributions are 'dramatic poems', not intended for the stage: a form which he is careful to distinguish from the acted play. It is, as he observes, as old as Theocritus, especially when it is mingled with narrative. In *The Olympians* the influence of Keats is manifest, not only in the high epic style but in the conception. In *Hyperion* (the first version) the poet imagines a series of celestial dynasties, each more beautiful and potent than the last. The result is some very great poetry; but the idea is never

worked out. Abercrombie seems to take it up where Keats had left it, but to develop it in a fashion all his own. The symbolism is lofty but obscure. It is hard, for all their eloquence, to make much of the old crone, the tender of corpses, who has 'eaten the sins of Zeus'; of the decrepit Apollo who brings to her the corpse of Zeus—for there has been a Crucifixion, and now the old gods must die; or of Bacchus-Dionysus, who foretells that nevertheless there is to be a new reign of happiness and beauty upon earth. In contrast, *The Innocents* is clear enough, and is ground as sharp as a spearhead. The mother of one of Herod's victims refuses to be comforted by the news that the Messiah has escaped the slaughter, and exclaims, 'What good to me will be Messiah's kingdom?'

The Staircase and *The End of the World* are plays, and both have more than once been acted. The latter, a short tragi-comedy, is Abercrombie's most effective drama; although, as he tells us, his 'success on the stage' was always of 'a very modest order'. The 'end of the world' seems to threaten a farmer, a wainwright, and others sitting over their beer. A dowser announces the descent of a comet, and the horizon is seen in a blaze of fire. By this menace they are all unstrung, and their bitterest passions are released. The farmer sees the Last Judgement coming down upon his wife and her lover. But the comet drifts away; they have been frightened by nothing worse than a burning rick. The rustics, under the stress, have become wild fantastic poets. Abercrombie had used a similar theme in *Deborah* (1913), an elaborate drama written about 1908. A remote fishing village is stricken with cholera; there is a ghastly scramble for the only doctor, and a scene of brutal violence. Perhaps Abercrombie remembered the picture in Thucydides of the Athenians demoralized by the plague. The figure of the unselfish Deborah shines out from the rest. The seeds of trouble are sown, as it proves, for the next generation, and the finale is gloom unrelieved. As in others of his early plays (*The Adder*, *The Deserter*, *The Staircase*), Abercrombie

is not always merciful to the nerves. He may have been influenced by his reading of the 'domestic tragedies' of the Elizabethans; and his power sometimes defeats itself. But there is no lack of poetry in *Deborah*; the 'shrill' of the wind, the baying of the Gabriel Hounds 'along the wind', form the chorus at the close.

He felt the lure of the theatre, and for a time acted as reader of plays for the Liverpool Playhouse. He gave good advice; he recommended (though in vain) the acceptance of Stanley Houghton's *Hindle Wakes*, afterwards so popular. He helped to produce a puppet play for the Sandon Studios, a lively haunt of artists and young people. But he felt that such doings were a distraction from his proper work. In 1914 he produced his small book on *The Epic*. But the War came, and between 1914 and 1922 he published no volume. Too delicate for active service, in May 1915 he found a curious berth in Liverpool as a munition worker, assisting in the job of examining and passing shells. This provided some resources, which were increased by a handsome bequest of Rupert Brooke. Abercrombie received a share of the annual royalties from the sale of Brooke's poems. But for the time the Muse was banished, though his friends and admirers called out for more verse. It was not until August 1918 that he could say: 'I have been writing poetry! I should scarce have believed it, but such is the fact. . . . It is the first stuff of any scale I've done since war broke out.'

When peace came he had again to look out for employment. There was a short but critical interval; and then came the good news that some of his friends in the Liverpool district had collected funds for a university lectureship in poetry which would assure an income for several years. No one could be more welcome, and the honours school of English Literature was especially in luck. Abercrombie had long been engrossed with the theory and history of poetic, a subject that had always been upon the programme. The students listened eagerly to the poet who was talking of his own art; he was friendly with them and set them at their

ease. On those who had fallen he wrote a quatrain ('Dark underground their golden youth is lying') for the university Roll of Honour; and another for the first anniversary of the Armistice. His public lectures drew full houses; they were composed with care, and were set off, as usual, by his reading. Thus Abercrombie entered on the academic career which he was never to quit. It was not what he would have chosen; he desired a literary life in the country, where

> at my feet
> The turf is flow'r'd and makes sweet the breath
> Of cattle.

But he buckled to his labours with a will, and easily, and came to enjoy them.

In 1922 he was called to the Chair of English Literature in Leeds and plunged into full professorial work. He was sorry to leave Liverpool, 'for sentimental and personal rather than practical reasons'. The new post was on a long tenure, with a pension in prospect. Also it was hoped that he could be spared some of the racket of committees and the turmoil of discussion. But he was eager and active, and took his part in affairs, and proved a popular and successful professor. Sir Michael Sadler, formerly Vice-Chancellor in Leeds, has written of 'the wide and winning influence which he exerted during his tenure of the chair'. But the climate was ungracious and did not suit his health; once he had to go off on sick leave. A chronic malady was diagnosed, though he was able to keep it at bay by treatment. Still, these seven years in Yorkshire cover Abercrombie's second period of steady production, during which he wrote much prose and a little of his best verse; and this period was prolonged when in 1929 he migrated to London. He was appointed to the Hildred Carlile chair of English Literature at Bedford College for Women in the University of London. Here he was to stay till 1935. The surroundings and the work were most congenial; and the air in London is milder than in the north. In 1930 came an honour, when

his collected *Poems* were published by the Oxford University Press in the 'Oxford Poets'. His immediate predecessors in the long line had been Robert Bridges, Austin Dobson, and Matthew Arnold. The rest of his writings, from 1922 onwards, may now be noticed; and first of all his prose.

He turned more and more to prose; above all to criticism, and to the study of aesthetic and poetic. During the years 1922–6 he published five volumes, none of them lengthy, on these topics; and with these may be grouped some shorter papers and addresses of various dates, and *Principles of Literary Criticism* (1931). Few English poets of mark have set forth their critical creed so fully and methodically. Abercrombie remembers his own experience as an inventor; his ardour never flags, and his taste becomes more and more catholic. The essay on *The Epic* (1914), which he came to regard as an 'early indiscretion', already shows his width of reading. Elsewhere he had defended 'the function of poetry in the drama' and had deprecated the rage for plays in prose, pleading that poetry has a vital and 'Dionysiac' quality of its own. The books written at Leeds show a natural advance in style. The prose is now sharper cut and more telling and is stripped of many superlatives. The teacher has learned, in his favourite phrase, to 'communicate' with his audience. 'Communication', indeed, is a keyword of the *Essay Towards a Theory of Art* (1922), in which he criticizes Croce's view of 'intuition'. In a paper read to the British Psychological Society he pays Croce due honour for sweeping away much lumber and explaining the 'logic of expression' ('Benedetto is indeed the right name for its author'); but here too he reproaches him, as others have done, for stopping short with 'expression'. Croce neglects 'communication' as unessential, a mere epiphenomenon. Why, Aristotle and Dante had, simply and rightly, taken for granted the presence of a hearer, or a spectator, or a reader. No, the artist must 'publish his experience' and 'make it available for others to experience.' Elsewhere Abercrombie sums up his own theory in the sentence, 'All

art consists of *expressive communication* by means of a *symbolical technique*'; and much of his teaching is an exposition of the four words emphasized. Many other matters are discussed in the essay: the relation of ordinary to artistic experience; the nature of Plato's 'universals'; and the conception of a 'universal subject' which (or who) can experience absolute beauty. The meaning of 'symbolism' and 'technique' is further developed in *The Theory of Poetry* (1924).

Samuel Alexander quickly recognized this second essay as the work of a poet and critic. In his *Art and the Material* (1925) he controverts Abercrombie's particular view of the artist's experience, but commends his insistence on the unity of the artistic product. For Abercrombie, this is much more than the Aristotelian unity of structure; it is a harmony in the artist's imaginative experience, a harmony that is repeated in our own. The poet's excitement and delight are in a measure passed on to *us*. The medium is his technique, with all its resources. The real world only gives a point of departure; it is selected, idealized, symbolized. Reasonings and ethical lessons may be present in a poem but are not of its essence. We prize them in Dante or Milton, not as such, but 'precisely as we value moments of imagery and emotion: as parts, namely, of an immense whole of self-sufficient experience, including in its scope every faculty by which spirit can put forth its vigour'. The poetic world being 'a world without prejudice', we enjoy the sight of evil and wickedness (even when it seems to triumph) upon the tragic stage. 'It is precisely as a villain that we enjoy him [Iago]; we can even detest him, so long as we enjoy our detestation.' To judge him or to ask why he exists is to 'come clean out of the world of poetry'. This, no doubt, is to state rather than to solve the problem, but at least it shows the attitude of a poet who is keenly alive to the reality of evil and depicts it powerfully, and who yet almost implies that in the actual scheme of things evil is somehow harmonized. His monism, if such it may be called, is anything but optimism; for he seems to say that

in life, as in tragic art, evil must always be *there*, within the harmony. In this short treatise there is much matter for study and debate. We may feel, with C. H. Herford, that it 'sometimes leaves us suspecting that some unsolved questions about the ugly in art remain'. Beauty, it is argued, is not the primary aim of the artist, but the sign that he has realized his purpose. There is an instructive distinction between 'intellectual' and 'instrumental' form; and a close analysis, with much fortunate quotation, of diction, verbal sound, and rhythm.

The more formal study, *Principles of English Prosody* ('part i, the elements') was intended as an instalment only. In the last months of his life Abercrombie was planning a sequel, a 'systematic conspectus of versification' with perhaps a section on prose. He approved of Mr. Norton Tempest's excellent book on *English Prose Rhythm*, but he was disposed to find the true basis in the modern forms of the *cursus*, and to abandon foot-scansion. For metre, too, he rejects this, save as a 'formality'. His own notation is simple, a series of dashes for the syllables, with the stresses marked. Except for certain limited purposes he will have no dealings with the musical systems of prosody, and he has no use for the machines that can measure the duration of a syllable but never the modulations of the pattern in the poet's mind. Abercrombie builds on the scheme of prosody which Robert Bridges had applied to Milton, and adds many refinements concerning the 'norm', and 'equivalence', and the various bases, 'rising' and 'falling'. The principle is 'rhythmic constancy persisting through rhythmic variations'. The variations are prompted by the speech-rhythm which is heard through the verse-rhythm and harmonized with it. Some of those in his own blank verse, it must be said, are not harmonious, and it is an effort to remember the base; but they are always deliberate, never careless, and they are there to express some discord in the mood or feeling represented. Many a later poet has gone farther and has let the 'speech-rhythm' run away with him altogether.

The *Idea of Great Poetry* (1924) has the kind of freedom and gusto that we enjoy in Hazlitt. Once more we hear that poetry is the perfect expression of delighted experience, nay, 'a single composite ardour of ideal experience', reflecting the poet's 'instinctive conviction of harmony in the whole of things'. 'Greatness' is an elusive word and calls for many distinctions. The stars differ in glory; the smallest poem, and the least definable, may indeed be perfect, without being great. And, adds Abercrombie, there are grades of greatness, the highest of which is found in mighty *organized* poems like Homer's or Shakespeare's, with the vaster vision of life which they present, and which is focused on the great central *character*, Achilles or Macbeth. Goethe's Faust and Marlowe's, Milton's two Satans, and *The Prelude*, are all cited in the argument; and there are some magnificent pages on *The Wisdom of Solomon. Romanticism* (1926), which is more discursive, breaks some fresh ground. Not classicism, we hear, but realism, is the true opposite to romanticism; a word that suggests 'life promising itself indefinite betterment in this actual world, and the vision of man's earthly perfection; or, life withdrawing itself from the actual, and the vision of an experience beyond the power of earthly abilities'.

Unexpectedly, one of the poets who lead him to this conclusion is Empedocles. He translates long fragments of the *Purifications* into his best blank verse, with additions by himself. He reads, it is true, a good deal into his originals; and, as so often, an ancient writer or story sets his imagination off upon a course of its own. History, scripture, myth, and legend, all are drawn upon; and some aspirant to the doctor's cap will hereafter study Abercrombie's 'sources'. His other critical writings are scattered, and call to be collected. The long essay on *Principles of Literary Criticism* contains, besides a statement of his own view of the craft, an historical sketch, excellent as far as it is carried, of critical theory. There is much on Aristotle (though perhaps too slight a reference to Plato), and on Horace,

'Longinus', and Dante; and the story, much foreshortened, comes down to Lessing and Manzoni. The Academy will remember the gallant *Plea for the Liberty of Interpreting*, the Shakespeare Lecture for 1930. The Leslie Stephen Lecture given at Cambridge is on *Progress in Literature*, an idea that is guardedly defined. The tractate on *Poetry: its Music and Meaning* (1932) is meant for the less professional student and is perhaps for that reason the simplest and clearest summary of Abercrombie's mature opinions.

He has not left many *causeries* on individual authors, though his concise articles on Tennyson, Browning, Sir Henry Taylor, and T. E. Brown are full of interest. They are all clear-cut, as if in black and white, praising warmly and blaming sharply. Abercrombie was young enough to be detached from the 'Victorians', and near enough to them to do them justice. But on one of them he speaks at length. He returns again and again to Thomas Hardy, his book upon whom (1912) has often been reprinted. It is early work, and often overcharged in style; but it is, none the less, a strict and careful review, with many reserves, of the whole series of the novels. Of Hardy's verse, to which his own may owe something, his admiration never failed, and he thought *The Dynasts* one of the grandest of English poems. It was the subject in 1937 of his last printed lecture, and in his article on Hardy in the *D.N.B.* he remarks that it 'presents history as epic with a success which no previous attempt at any such thing (Lucan's or Ercilla's for instance) had ever come near'. Yet, with his saving gift of pulling up short in the midst of his enthusiasm, he had found that it is not of the same order of greatness as *Paradise Lost* or the *Iliad*. Most people would say the same; but the reason given is characteristic. It is not so much that the style is at times unpoetical; but the 'very nature of its idea' prevents its exerting such an effect as Homer and Milton exert. *The Dynasts* shows, indeed, 'a rigorous mastery of an idea over the whole unruly fact of life. But it is a mastery which, whatever its authority, can never

possess men's minds like the presence of a Satan or an Achilles.'

In the new verse that Abercrombie published during these years (1923–31) there is a greater economy and power of concentration, and some of it is his very best. Written in many moods, it is now harsh and realistic, now beautiful and uplifted; and often, in the same poem, it is both. There are two plays of older date, *The Deserter* and *The Adder*; and a new one, *Phoenix, a Tragicomedy* (1923). Of the poems some had appeared in journals or anthologies; and these are gathered up, along with reprinted work, in *Twelve Idyls and Other Poems* (1928). Almost all the verse Abercrombie had published[1] is to be found in the Oxford *Poems* of 1930; and nothing new, with one great exception. This is *The Sale of St. Thomas*, now complete in six acts (1931).

In the 'tragi-comedy' the dark story told in the Ninth Iliad by the old Phoenix to Achilles is transformed. Up to a point it is the same. Long ago, says Homer, Phoenix had quitted his home for the halls of Peleus. For the queen his mother had prevailed on him to visit the concubine of his father Amyntor, in order to make her 'hate the old man'. In Homer Phoenix knew, it seems, what he was doing; in the play, however, he is unaware and innocent, and on this fact the drama turns. The curse that Amyntor, upon learning the facts, had laid upon him, is translated: 'Never believe You will catch son of yours on to your knees.' The plot unfolds the three terrible discoveries made by Phoenix; of his filial impiety, of his mother's treachery in keeping him in the dark, and of the character of his mistress. She, Rhodope, the *parakoitis*, the light woman who turns from king to prince, and from prince to common soldier, becomes the central figure, she is a creation; is humorous, promiscuous, and bored; and (save when, unluckily, she becomes poetical) she is perfectly natural. She talks like some one in a French farce, while prince and king are raging with love or with disenchantment. These

[1] For some particulars see List, pp. 418 ff.

discords, and the whole moral atmosphere, seem to have been too much for a theatrical audience. But there is poetry too, and the rapidly moving action is developed with great skill.

Something in Abercrombie insisted that he should portray, now and then, just the things that he detested, ugliness and cruelty. He does it with a will, and powerfully; we feel the indignation and disgust that lies behind his 'realism'. Moreover, he seasons this with no little grotesque humour; and the result is, at least, never dull, as such writing is apt to be. *Ham and Eggs* is a case in point; and so is *Witchcraft, New Style*, with its grim exhibition of sorcery, or hypnotism, in the pothouse. Some of the imagery reminds us of Browning's *Christmas Eve* and of the man in the chapel with the 'horrible wen inside' his handkerchief. *Asmodeus in Egypt* brings us back to poetry. Based on the Book of Tobit, it is one of Abercrombie's strangest and most original inventions. The banished demon relates how he had slain the insolent young men who menaced Sara, and how, when the entrails of the beast were burned, he had been driven out of her by the anguish of the burning smoke. He now prays his master Beelzebub that he may regain the state of 'spirit serene above sense and feeling' which he had enjoyed before coming upon earth. For here below he had been granted the enjoyment of one sense only, and he had chosen the sense of *smell*. But he had not only suffered anguish thereby. The poet seizes his chance of celebrating the fragrance of living water and that of summer 'when burnet-roses sweeten sea-breezes'. The poem is also notable for its alliterative metre. As in *The Nightingale*, it is handled (though now in its looser, Middle English form) with a skill that persuades us of its vitality.

In *The Death of a Friar* beauty is permitted to reign undisturbed. The slow, musical couplets, neither too rigid nor too lax, are in keeping with the mood. The Queen of Heaven and her angels, waiting by the bed, administer their 'electuaries', and the friar feels a glow of delight in

all his senses. He is aware of the scent of flowers, of the 'gust' of fruit and honey, of the colours of the clouds, and of the water 'ringing in glassy little syllables'. He seems to be one with beauty, and presently will pass into a state in which he will 'Be, not know'. *Zagreus* is also rhymed, and the octosyllables, which are even happier than the heroic couplets, contain Abercrombie's richest passage of natural description of some length. Zagreus ('he who seizes'), who is Zagreus Dionysus, now in hell, will hereafter, as in the past, 'note the whispering shiver made In spinneys of willows silver-grey', and hear the birds, and experience 'a pure immortal ecstasy'; enjoying the 'music of intelligence', and creating his own 'image of beautiful life'. It is clear how these visions accord with the poet's own human ideals and his mystical creed or hope. All this finds yet ampler expression in the completed six acts of *The Sale of St. Thomas* (1931).

Here the framework is furnished by the legend which tells how Christ came in a vision to the apostle and prevailed on him to go to the Indian king Gundaphorus and build him a palace; and how Thomas went, and founded the Church, and was martyred. According to one version, which Abercrombie adopts, he was not martyred. In the poem a 'noble stranger' shames Thomas out of his besetting fault of 'prudence', and sells him to a sea-captain. In time he comes to see that the palace he is to build is a 'palace of souls'. The king desires a splendid material edifice and gives Thomas a free hand and much treasure; but Thomas spends it all on the famished people, whose 'gospelling' can wait. His fate is in the balance; he expects to die for his faith; but he converts the king, and declares his real gospel. He finds that 'the more he gives, The lovelier grows the world his life receives'; he seems to behold supreme beauty, and to listen to great music which resolves all things evil into concord. But Thomas has been through purgatory first. On the ship and in the slave-shed he has suffered from cruel sights, which are described without flinching, and

from yet more grievous dreams. But all these are left behind, and the law of beauty prevails. It extends even to the rats upon the ship, with their 'small round eyes' like 'glinting little jewels': they are prettier rats than Southey or Browning had thought of. The 'merriment' of these 'small chirping friends' is recalled by Thomas at the close, when he takes his farewell of the sea-captain. His discourse to the king embodies the poet's final confession of belief in a 'spirit which lives Divining everywhere perceiving spirit'; and also divining the glory of God, manifest in nature and in all mankind.

The Sale of St. Thomas received little notice in the press. It demands close reading; the style, like that of Donne or Browning, is wholly individual; the poetic idiom, so fiery, condensed, and rapid, has to be learned. There is a streak of stern humour which is not for every taste. New schools, moreover, and new poets had arisen and had earned attention. Abercrombie spoke handsomely of them, but he was undoubtedly discouraged by what seemed a growing neglect; and in any case, he published no more verse. There were some who thought that his poetry was already going out of date. As this memoir will show, the present writer believes that it is very much alive. Abercrombie's whole body of work, in verse and prose, calls for study in detail, and for the judgement of time. But one characteristic seems clear: a rare union of poetical gift with critical and speculative power. And his writings, though so wide in their range, have a certain coherence, or unity of direction. They seem indeed to be pervaded by an instinct for unity, unity in the midst of variety and presiding over change. It is in this spirit that Abercrombie reads the nature of poetic rhythm; the artist's imaginative treatment of his experience; the relationship of those who love; and the central affection of the saint, for all mankind. It is the dream of the thinker who imagines that in spite of everything there must be some kind of harmony governing the world.

The rest of the story is all too brief. Abercrombie enjoyed

life in London, although in vacation he would fly to the country. He lived with his family in a flat, high up in Notting Hill, surrounded by an ever-growing library. It included English literature old and new, Greek and Latin classics, French and Italian and Spanish books, works on philosophy, and several rarities. In his college and in the University of London he gathered new friends. He was in request and busy, lecturing at Cambridge, Manchester, and Belfast, and to the British Academy, and continuing to contribute learned notices for the English Association to its *Year's Work on English Studies*. He published a selection of *New English Verse*, never before printed, by some contemporary poets. He even wrote for the *Cornhill* a very short story, *The Marriage of True Minds*, which is not unlike some of Karel Čapek's *Tales from Two Pockets*, and is no less biting. He gave summer courses at Malvern. He took his full share of academic business, and bore with its routine. All would have been well but for his health. In the autumn of 1933 it compelled him to take a trip to the Canaries; but he recovered rapidly, and after 'a fierce voyage home' he wrote in high spirits:

> Calderón might have been describing the Peak, which certainly is here Rey de los campos. The sublimest thing I've ever seen. . . . I (*a*) climbed the Peak of Tenerife, 12,152 feet, which is more than John Milton or John Donne ever did: I feel this gives me a certain distinction among professors of literature, and mean to make the most of it. (*b*) I made a raid into Spanish literature, and discovered Luis de León, who must surely be one of the greatest of lyrical poets. (*c*) More particularly, since I am writing to you, I have read *Pan Tadeusz* in the version[1] you gave me, and for *that* experience I cannot be grateful enough to you. That book is a wonder, as rich as the richest plumpudding, and as flavorous as plumpudding with rum sauce. It is the authentic epic stuff, and yet absolutely *sui generis*. I have seldom had so much relish from a translation.

In the session 1931–2 he had lectured on Wordsworth,

[1] i.e. the prose translation of Mickiewicz's great poem by Professor G. R. Noyes of Berkeley.

very successfully, at Belfast University; and the course was now repeated, with no less acceptance, at the Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, in April 1935. In the same year he accepted a call to Oxford, to be Goldsmiths' Reader and Fellow of Merton. It was to be the fourth university in which he did regular service. He had never taken an academic degree, but he received several[1] of the honorary kind. He now migrated for the last time:

> It was a wrench, making up my mind to leave Bedford, but the balance seemed to go down on the Oxford side. I am not sure whether I am fitted for college life—but at any rate, to be Goldsmiths' Reader and Fellow of Merton is an honor indeed. At present, we shall not attempt to move house; I shall hope to live at Merton during term. What I have seen of the Common Room there delights me.

Merton had taken pains to secure him, and in the good company, which included English scholars and men of letters, he found himself at home. He kept terms for a time in college; but the poet still longed for the country, and in November 1936 he moved with his family to The Barn House, North Moreton, within reach of Oxford. His election to the Academy in 1937 was, he wrote, 'a great honor—and I must say a great surprise; I never thought of the F.B.A. coming my way'. He was all the more pleased, though he was never able to take part in our business meetings. In May 1938 he was in the Acland Home, where he whiled away the time by reading translations from Pushkin. He came out, worn but alert, and jested about his illness. But in October there was a relapse, and on the 27th he died in London in the Hospital of St. John and St. Elizabeth.

Some passages and expressions in this memoir are repeated from a notice in the *Oxford Magazine* (10 Nov. 1938) by kind permission of the Editor. Thanks are also offered to Mr. Martin Secker, and to Messrs. Secker & Warburg, for

[1] Litt.D., Cambridge, 1930; and Manchester, 1935. D.Lit., Belfast, 1933.

information, and for leave to quote some prose extracts and the text of *The Nightingale*. Also, for this last, to the Oxford University Press.

The List that follows has been made with the help of Mr. Ralph Abercrombie and Dr. Percy Withers. It does not include unsigned articles or reviews. A few of the shorter poems may have been first printed in magazines which have escaped notice. OLIVER ELTON

LIST OF WORKS

1908. *Interludes and Poems* (John Lane). Dedication: 'To Catherine.' *Blind* was reprinted from *The Independent Review*, 1907 (later *The Albany Review*); *The Trance*, *Hope*, and *Despair*, from *The Nation*.

The volume was reprinted in 1928 (Lane) with some slight revision of *Ceremonial Ode* and of *Fear*.

1910. *Mary and the Bramble*. 'Published by the author, Much Marcle, Herefordshire', and there reissued in the same year. Dedication: 'To my Mother.'

1911. *The Sale of St. Thomas* (i.e. Act I only). 'Published by the author, Ryton, Dymock, Gloucestershire.' Included in *Georgian Poetry, 1911–12* (1912). See too *Poems*, 1930; and, for the whole six Acts, 1931. Dedication: 'To Arthur Ransome, my Friend.'

1912. *Emblems of Love, Designed in Several Discourses* (Lane). Dedication: 'To my Wife.' *Hymn to Love* is reprinted from *The Vineyard*.

Thomas Hardy, a Critical Study (Martin Secker). New edition, reset, 1919, 1924; fifth printing, 1935.

The Function of Poetry in the Drama. In *The Poetry Review*, March. Reprinted in *English Critical Essays, Twentieth Century* (1933, O.U.P., 'World's Classics', no. 405), pp. 252–72.

Deborah (Lane). Dedication: 'To Patrick Abercrombie.' Reprinted 1923. Never acted. Probably finished end of 1909 or early in 1910.

1913. *Speculative Dialogues* (Secker). Prose. Never reprinted.

1914. *Poetry and Contemporary Speech*. Pamphlet no. 27 (Feb.) of the English Association.

New Numbers, vol. i. 'Published at Ryton, Dymock, Gloucestershire', in four numbers; no more were issued. The writers were Rupert Brooke, John Drinkwater, and Wilfred Wilson Gibson; besides L. A., who contributed:

Feb. *The Olympians*, see 1928.

April. *The End of the World.* Reissued 1915 in *Georgian Poetry.* Produced by Miss Muriel Platt at Bristol in 1914; by John Drinkwater at Birmingham Repertory Theatre in 1915; and by Jackson Wilcox at the Playhouse, Liverpool, in 1920 with *The Staircase.*

Aug. *The Innocents*, see 1928.

Dec. *The Staircase.* Produced, see April above.

[1914]. *The Epic* (Secker), not dated. Reissued, reset, in 1922.

1914–15. *War and the Drama.* In *The Bristol Playgoer*, 14 Dec. 1914, pp. 5–8, and Jan. 1915, pp. 11–14.

1922. *An Essay Towards a Theory of Art* (Secker).

Four Short Plays (Secker). Dedication: 'To Edward Marsh.' Includes:

The Adder. Produced in 1913 by Basil Dean at the Liverpool Repertory Theatre, and by John Drinkwater at the Birmingham Repertory Theatre. Reprinted from *Poetry and Drama.*

The Staircase. See 1914 (and also for production).

The Deserter. Produced at the Leeds Arts Theatre (192–?).

The End of the World. See 1914 (and also for production).

1923. *Communication* versus *Expression in Art.* In *British Journal of Psychology* (general section), vol. xiv, part i (July), pp. 68–77. Read to Aesthetics section of British Psychological Society, 29 Jan. 1923.

Principles of English Prosody; part i: the Elements (Secker). No more parts appeared, but a sequel was projected (see above, p. 409).

Phoenix: Tragicomedy in Three Acts (Secker). Dedication: 'To John Drinkwater.' Produced at St. Martin's Theatre, (1923?).

Stratford-on-Avon: Report on Future Development. By Patrick and Lascelles Abercrombie (Liverpool U.P.; Hodder & Stoughton).

1924. *The Theory of Poetry* (Secker).

The Year's Work in English Studies for 1923 (O.U.P., for the English Association), vol. iv, pp. 1–19 (i.e. the section on 'Literary History and General Works').

The Idea of Great Poetry (Secker). The Clark Lectures, given at Cambridge, 1923, reduced and revised; also given (recast) as the Ballard Matthews Lectures, 1924, at The University College of North Wales, Bangor.

1926. *Romanticism* (Secker). Revised and expanded from three lectures given during 1926 at the Birkbeck College, University of London. The first embodies the substance of an article on 'Views and Fairies' published in *The Times Literary Supplement*,

17 Aug. 1917. In the second occur passages of blank verse translated from the Καθαρμοί of Empedocles, interspersed with others by L. A. himself: 186 lines in all, none of which are reprinted either in the *Twelve Idyls* of 1928 or in the collected *Poems* of 1930.

1927. *The Year's Work . . . for 1925–6* (1927), [as above], vol. v, pp. 1–25.

1928. *Twelve Idyls and Other Poems* (Secker). Dedication: 'To Elizabeth and Robert Trevelyan.' For *The Innocents* and *The Olympians* (both now largely rewritten) see 1914. *Witchcraft, New Style*, had appeared in *Georgian Poetry*, 1919; *Ryton Firs* in the same, 1922 (lyrics are now added; inscribed 'To David, Michael, Ralph'); *In the Dunes*, in *Georgian Poetry*, 1922, and in *A Miscellany of Poetry*, ed. W. Kean Seymour, 1922; *Ham and Eggs*, in *The Chapbook*, 1923.

Drowsie Frighted Steeds (Leeds: Chorley & Pickersgill). *Proceedings* of Leeds Philosophical Society, vol. ii, part i, pp. 1–5. Argues that the above, and not 'drowsie-flighted', is the true reading in *Comus*, line 553.

Preface, pp. v–viii, to *The Iliad of Homer* ('the first twelve staves') translated by Maurice Hewlett.

1929. Introduction, pp. vii–xiv, to *Poems by Nicholas Nekrassov*, translated by Juliet M. Soskice (O.U.P., 'World's Classics', no. 340).

Progress in Literature (C.U.P.). The Leslie Stephen Lecture, delivered at Cambridge, 10 May 1929.

1930. *T. E. Brown*. In *XIXth Century and After*, May; vol. cvii, pp. 716–28.

The Poems of Lascelles Abercrombie (O.U.P., in 'The Oxford Poets'). Contains the poems and dramas previously published, except the verses in *Romanticism*, 1926, q.v.

A Plea for the Liberty of Interpreting (Milford, for the British Academy). Shakespeare Lecture, read to the Academy 7 May 1930. Printed also in its *Proceedings* for 1930; and in *Aspects of Shakespeare* (O.U.P., 1933), lectures to the Academy by various hands.

1931. *The Sale of St. Thomas* (Secker); i.e. the six acts completed. See 1911, 1912, 1930. Dedication as before.

Colloquial Language in Literature (Clarendon Press). In tract no. xxxvi of Society for Pure English (series vii, pp. 517–23).

Principles of Literary Criticism. In *An Outline of Modern Knowledge* (Gollancz), pp. 859–907. 1932, reissued separately (Gollancz).

New English Poems: a Miscellany of Contemporary Verse never before Published. 'The Collection made by Lascelles Abercrombie' (Gollancz). L. A. contributes the preface, pp. 5–9.

Tennyson. In *Revaluations* (O.U.P.), pp. 60–76. Read at the City Literary Institute during Lent Term, 1931.

1932. *The Year's Work . . . for 1930 . . . Literary History* . . . [as in 1924 and 1926 *supra*], vol. xi, pp. 7–26.

Poetry, its Music and Meaning (O.U.P.).

Sir Henry Taylor. In *The Eighteen-Sixties*; 'essays by Fellows of the Royal Society of Literature', ed. J. Drinkwater (O.U.P.). pp. 1–19.

[1932]. *Robert Browning.* In *The Great Victorians* (Ivor Nicholson & Watson), pp. 83–93.

1934. *Marriage of True Minds.* Tale. In *Cornhill Magazine*, Feb., pp. 207–12.

Preface, pp. vii–x, to *Lady Precious Stream, an old Chinese Play*: done in English . . . by S. I. Hsiung (Methuen).

1935. *Herford and International Literature* (Manchester U.P.). Reprinted from *Bulletin* of the John Rylands Library, Jan. 1935, vol. xix, no. 1, pp. 216–29 (M.U.P.). The Herford Memorial Lecture, given for Manchester Dante Society, 3 Oct. 1934, in the University.

1937. *John Drinkwater.* In *English*, vol. i, no. 5, pp. 384–9. Also in *Coll. Poems of J. D.*, vol. iii, pp. v–xiii (Sidgwick & Jackson). 'An address given at the Memorial Service at the Church of St. Martin-in-the-Fields on 2 April 1937.'

Thomas Hardy's 'The Dynasts'. Lecture given to The Royal Institution of Great Britain, 15 Jan. 1937. Reprinted in *Transactions* of the R.I. for 1937.

Thomas Hardy. In *Supplement, 1922–1930* (1937), to *D.N.B.* (O.U.P.), pp. 392–7.

The following autograph MSS. are in the Bodleian, presented by the author's friend Mr. Percy Withers:

The Sale of St. Thomas, act I.

The Staircase.

The Olympians. Draft, much corrected, of the poem of 1914.

Deborah, much scored.

The first act of a play, incomplete and unpublished, and without title.