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WILLIAMS, Bernice Ann Werner, 1935-
THE SELF-EDUCATION OF GEORGE
MEREDITH, PHILOSOPHER AND POET.

The City University of New York, Ph.D., 1969
Language and Literature, general

University Microfilms, Inc., Ann Arbor, Michigan

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THE SELF-EDUCATION OF GEORGE MEREDITH,
PHILOSOPHER AND POET

by
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A dissertation submitted to the
Graduate Faculty in English in partial
fulfillment of the requirements for the
degree of Doctor of Philosophy,
The City University of New York.

1968

This manuscript has been read and accepted for the Graduate Faculty in English in satisfaction of the dissertation requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

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FOREWORD

The writing of this doctoral dissertation was not entirely the long and lonely ordeal I had often envisioned it would be. I feel myself particularly blessed when I consider the people who helped me survive the struggle to research and to compose this paper.

My main obligation is to Professor Phyllis Brooks Bartlett, who, in spite of many personal trials during the period in question, was unfailing in her support and encouragement of my work. I am grateful to her for all her generosity with the contents of her typescript of Meredith's poems and with herself.

I owe a main debt of gratitude, too, to Professor Clarence Lee Cline, Chairman of the Department of English at the University of Texas, for his kind permission to read and to quote from the typescript of his edition of Meredith's letters. It will be obvious to anyone who reads my paper that a huge portion of it would have been impossible without the access that Professor Cline so graciously afforded me to the hitherto unpublished letters.

Because Memphis is sorely lacking in library resources and because the colleges in the area are relatively small and therefore limited in library collections, I had to rely heavily on Burrow Library, Southwestern at Memphis, for extensive use of the Interlibrary Loan system. For all their assistance, sometimes under emergency conditions, in acquiring books from all over the United States, I should like to thank Mr. Albert Johnson, Librarian, and Mrs. Ann Boatner, Research Librarian, of the

Burrow Library. I must also thank Mrs. Helen Collins, secretary to the Librarian at John Brister Library, Memphis State University, for the sometimes extraordinary privileges afforded me by that library in the checking out of books under the Interlibrary Loan system.

There are any number of personal acknowledgments I might make to family and friends, but I shall limit those to recognition of the patience with which my immediate family dealt with me during the period of my labors in bringing forth this paper and of the constant encouragement, particularly during the last six months before completion, extended to me by my friend and colleague at Southwestern, the Reverend Dr. Carl F. Walters, Jr., Associate Professor of Bible and Religion: Dr. Walters almost literally talked me through the final drive toward completion. Finally, I should like to thank the young women who asked for the dubious "privilege" of helping with the typing of the assorted drafts of the paper: Mrs. Judy Smith, Mrs. W. L. Deweese, and Mrs. Robert Pineo.

To all these kind and generous people I offer my gratitude and affection for all that they have done for me.

Bernice Werner Williams

October, 1968

you ask of my readings of the formative kind. They were first the Arabian Nights, then Gibbon, Niebuhr, Walter Scott; then Moliere, then the noble Goethe, the most enduring. All the poets, English, Weimar and Suabia and Austrian.

George Meredith.

"We owe our development to a thousand influences of the great world, from which we appropriate to ourselves what we can, and what is suitable to us. I owe much to the Greeks and French; I am infinitely indebted to Shakespeare, Sterne, and Goldsmith [sic]; but in saying this I do not show the sources of my culture; that would be an endless as well as an unnecessary task. What is important is to have a soul which loves truth, and receives it wherever it finds it."

"in truth all is influence except ourselves."

Goethe, Conversations
with Eckermann.

THE SELF-EDUCATION OF GEORGE MEREDITH,

PHILOSOPHER AND POET

INTRODUCTION

The fact may be granted at once that [Meredith] owed very little to immediate heredity and so-called education for the upspringing of his literary gift. His genius was innate, and able to hew its own way to consummation. He was certainly the most amazing product that ever came out of a provincial shop

S. M. Ellis, George Meredith (1919)²

George Meredith, at a conservative estimate, is the subject of more than thirty volumes of biography and literary criticism, as well as of uncounted articles and pages of reminiscences in the autobiographies of his friends, admirers, and contemporaries. However, the current resurgence among Victorian scholars of interest in Meredith requires more careful study of Meredith than has before been necessary, and such careful study raises the problem of Meredith's considerable learning: where did it all come from? How could a man who had, at the most, a scant seven years of formal schooling have produced poetry and novels that abound in learned allusions and complex philosophical statements, and that reflect an extraordinarily broad knowledge of history, of books, and of life?

The large body of biography and criticism dealing with Meredith does contain some information about the education of its subject. We know, for example, that Meredith attended St. Paul's School, Southsea, Portsmouth, for perhaps five years; that he attended the Moravian School at Neuwied on the Rhine for almost two years. But in all that body of

information, duplicated from biography to biography, there is little to indicate exactly what it was that Meredith did acquire during those seven or fewer years, or exactly what it was that Meredith, with considerable effort and patience, must have taught himself upon the foundation of his formal education. We know what the main formative events of his life were: the death of his mother; the indifference of his father; the disaster of his first marriage; the difficulties of raising a motherless son; the connections with famous and near-famous contemporaries; the second marriage; the death of his second wife; the death of his first-born son; the illnesses and disabilities that afflicted him as he grew older. We know too who the writers were who most influenced Meredith's thinking and writing: Wordsworth, Carlyle, Tennyson, R. H. Horne, Thomas Love Peacock; the German Romantic poets, especially Richter and Goethe; Molière, Menander, and an assortment of comic writers--the list is a long one. And a good deal of the ink expended on Meredith has gone to interpret what Meredith did with each of these influences and how each affected him. But the total effect on the Meredith scholar of all these studies is that the handling of Meredith's education, formal and self-imposed, is piece-meal and is hardly satisfactory or informative.

The most recent book-length studies are perhaps representative of the treatment Meredith usually receives. Professor Lionel Stevenson's The Ordeal of George Meredith (1953) is a relatively straightforward biography that covers Meredith's life in considerable (but not foot-noted) detail.³ Jack Lindsay's George Meredith: His Life and Work (1956), equally lacking in documentation (and rather badly and inaccurately written), approaches Meredith and his work from a rather limited point

of view: Meredith emerges from Lindsay's pen as a Radical political novelist whose main concern is with the raising of the masses to some effective political level from which, united, they will be able to secure their goals.⁴ Norman Kelvin's A Troubled Eden: Nature and Society in the Works of George Meredith (1961) is, despite its comprehensive title, almost as special in its approach to its subject as is Lindsay's work.⁵ It is true that these studies undertake to discuss the influences that worked upon Meredith's thinking and writing, but they do so rather haphazardly, and they fail to tell the reader anything substantial or connected about what Walter Jackson Bate describes, in reference to John Keats, as the subject's "strenuous self-education as a poet."⁶

I propose to approach the subject of Meredith's self-education as poet and philosopher under four major headings. First, I shall outline the course of his life, with particular emphasis on the schools he attended and on their curricula; on the languages he knew and the probable manner in which he learned them; and on a moment in Meredith's life that seems to me to have been more important than previous biographers have thought: his first experience of the Alps. Second, I shall look into the influences that informed Meredith's development as a thinker or philosopher. I hope in this portion of my paper to be able to throw additional light upon the extent to which, in particular, Goethe served as a major influence on Meredith. Third, I shall examine Meredith's idea of his role as poet and philosopher, taking into account the view of the poet and the poetry that prevailed when he chose his vocation. Finally, I shall discuss Meredith's continued interest in prosody as it appears in his fascination with translations of the poetry of other languages

into English, in his own varied verse forms, and in his concern with the prosodical practices of his contemporaries.

I have, while working through my paper, decided, as should be apparent from the preceding paragraph, to omit any consideration-at-length of Meredith's career as a novelist. It became clear to me as I proceeded that a great deal has already been written about Meredith as innovator, as comic writer, and as social commentator in his novels, and I felt most keenly the lack of anything new to add to such considerations. I trust that, limited though my approach may be, there will be enough difference between my examination of Meredith's self-education as poet and philosopher and the earlier treatments of his education to constitute a contribution, however small, to Meredith scholarship.

FOOTNOTES TO EPIGRAPH AND INTRODUCTION

¹Meredith, Letters, p. 578; Goethe, Conversations with Eckermann, pp. 289, 302.

²Ellis (1919), p. 12.

³New York: Scribner's, 1953.

⁴London: The Bodley Head, 1956.

⁵Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1961.

⁶Bate, p. 499.

CHAPTER I

FORMAL EDUCATION AND FORMATIVE INFLUENCES

George Meredith was born on February 12, 1828, in Portsmouth, to Jane Eliza Macnamara and Augustus Urmston Meredith. Augustus was a tailor in Portsmouth, the son of Melchizadek Meredith, whose reputation as "gentleman" the son tried unsuccessfully to sustain in his own life. The young George lived in a peculiarly adult atmosphere and was remembered by a neighbor child, Jem Price, as, in sum, a precocious, sheltered, "dainty" little boy quite removed from the activities of his peers.¹ In July 1833, Jane Meredith died, leaving her husband with the care and education of her son, and leaving her son, according to the terms of the marriage indenture, £35 a year for his "'maintenance and education'. . . ."2

In 1837, Meredith was sent as a day scholar to St. Paul's School in Southsea, Portsmouth. Ellis describes St. Paul's as a "seminary," and most of the biographers who mention the school accept the distinction drawn by Jem Price, a childhood friend and neighbor of Meredith's, between St. Paul's and his own school, Frost's Academy, where most of the tradespeople's children were sent.³ The distinction thus drawn suggests that Frost's was a school like that described by Brian Simon: "Many day schools, usually called Academies, prepared for commercial and industrial occupations at relatively modest fees."⁴ Meredith was, because of his father's wish to be a gentleman, sent to St. Paul's instead.

Because information about St. Paul's is not easily available, I shall give at length the descriptions of the school in my possession. I am deeply indebted to Mr. R. M. Marsh, County Education Officer for Hampshire, for sending me the information that follows.

St. Paul's School was founded on September 26, 1825, under the following circumstances:

Several gentlemen residing in the towns and their vicinity, having met at the old Town Hall in Portsmouth . . . , formed themselves into a society for founding and supporting a school; agreed to purchase for 400*l.* a site near St. Paul's Church, Southsea; appointed a committee to superintend a proper building; and drew up resolutions connected with the subject. After a short time, 2300*l.* were raised, by one hundred shares of 23*l.* each. The chaste and elegant school was erected by contract (from a design of Messrs. Adams and Owen) at a cost of (including the land and furniture) 2250*l.* 17*s.* 8*d.* At the first annual meeting, the Rev. James Inman, D. D. was appointed Chairman; J. Slight, Esq. Treasurer; T. Heather, Esq. Secretary; Rev. William Fosters, B.A. Trinity College, Cambridge, Head Master; Mr. Welch, B.A., Pembroke College, Cambridge, First Assistant; Mr. Allen, Second Assistant; Monsieur Touloux, French Master; Mr. Stockman, for Drawing. One hundred boys were admitted, at an expense of 9*l.* per annum; and in the Treasurer's accounts for 1827 the following items occur: education, 865*l.* 16*s.*; transfers, fines, &c. 13*l.*; books &c. supplied, 94*l.* 18*s.* 2*d.* On the whole, it is an establishment of the highest respectability, and bids fair to be a most useful institution to the youth of the towns and surrounding country.⁵

Mr. Marsh writes in his letter that "Rev. James Inman . . . later became the principal of the Royal Naval College, H. M. Dockyard which trained pupils to become naval officers. His fame today rests on his nautical tables which were first printed in 1821. The Rev. William Foster . . . wrote several books on mathematics and a textbook on the Greek language specifically written for St. Paul's School.

"After the closure of St. Paul's School, he was a principal of a school at Stubbington which specialised in entering boys for commission in the Royal Navy."

On January 15, 1838, a notice concerning a register of available shares in the school corporation was published on page one of the Hampshire Telegraph and Sussex Chronicle over the name of the secretary, Thomas Heather. Included in the notice is a brief description of the staff, the curriculum, and the finances, all of particular interest here because Meredith was a pupil in the school at this time:

The School is under the management of a Committee of Proprietors. The Scholastic Duties are conducted by the Rev. William Foster, A.M. of Trinity College, Cambridge, Headmaster; the Rev. George W. Livesay, A.M. of Clare Hall, Cambridge, First Assistant; Mr. John Allen, Second Assistant; and Mr. Eugene Bruneau, French Master. The Pupils are taught every branch of Classical and Mathematical Education, also Hebrew and French, so as to fit them for the Universities, as well as every other respectable situation in life.

The Annual Subscription to the School, for Shareholders, is 10*l*. Nominees, not the sons of Shareholders, pay 1*l*. per annum in addition. The character of this Establishment may be inferred from the fact that all the Pupils who have gone from it to the Universities have come out with high honours. Drawing is extra, and optional. Mr. Stockman is the Drawing Master.⁶

The fullest description of the school in my possession appears in Hollingsworth's Guide to Southsea, Portsmouth, Anglesey, Hayling, Etc. (1842):

ST. PAUL'S SCHOOL.

A very neat and commodious building, is also situate in St. Paul's Square, in the rear of the church; this school is the property of a company of shareholders; the number of shares is one hundred: every shareholder pays annually 10*l*. on account of each share he may possess, for which his son is taught every branch of classical and mathematical learning, including French, and completely fitted for the Universities. Drawing is also taught, but paid for by the pupils separately.--It is a remarkable feature in this establishment that all the scholars who have gone to the Universities have come out with high honors. The school is conducted by three masters,--the head master always is a graduate of one of the Universities and a Member of the Established Church. The masters are allowed to receive boarders from among the pupils. The affairs of the school are superintended by a committee of fifteen, chosen from among the shareholders. The present masters are Rev. James Robertson, M.A. of Pembroke College, Oxford: Head Master; Rev. G. W. Livesay, M.A. of Clare Hall, Cambridge; First Assistant; and Mr. Allen, Second Assistant. Shareholders not having sons in the school, are allowed to nominate scholars on their shares; these nominee-scholars pay an annual subscription of 1*l*. and also a compensation to the shareholder for the use of his share--generally about two guineas per annum.--When the share is vacant the proprietor pays a subscription of 2*l*. per annum. A list of the vacant shares and of those for sale is kept at the porter's lodge at the school. There is no difficulty in placing a pupil in this school, because if the whole number of shares are full, the committee are allowed to place six supernumerary pupils in the school at 12*l* per annum. The School is endowed with Three Exhibitions of Twenty-Five Pounds per annum for three years to pupils proceeding to any College in either of the English Universities. There is a strict examination of the pupils every six

months, when prizes of medals and books are awarded to those who have made the greatest proficiency in their studies, and a list arranged in the order of merit is sent to every parent.⁷

St. Paul's was evidently a public school, that is, a school "directed by religious societies and other bodies of persons but not conducted for profit . . . ,"⁸ designed as a "prestige school" for sons of upper-class families. The insistence upon preparation for the universities indicates that St. Paul's was a secondary school and no doubt explains the inclusion of both classical and mathematical education. By 1828, when St. Paul's opened, the Classical Tripos had been added to the universities' curriculum, but until 1850 candidates for the B.A. had to pass the Mathematical Tripos before coming up for the Classical. The former examination included "arithmetic, algebra, fluxions, the doctrine of infinitesimals and increments, geometry, trigonometry, optics, astronomy . . . , mechanics and hydrostatics" The Classical Tripos "covered the whole range of the strictly 'classical' authors, Greek and Latin, and included translation and miscellanea connected with the two literatures."⁹ Any school preparing boys for the universities would have to offer most, if not all, of these subjects on some level. Unfortunately, I have not been able to find any more specific description than the foregoing of the typical curriculum at a secondary school like St. Paul's. One cannot help wondering whether English literature, in particular, was included in the boys' studies: I should like to know when Meredith first met Chaucer, Shakespeare, Milton, and Wordsworth, but they were probably not in the curriculum. Writing of the nine great Grammar Schools, Adamson observes, in keeping with the account above, that

the first and by far the first, matter of instruction consisted in the two classical languages; grammar, composition, verse-making, translation, the study of the two literatures and the committing to

memory of masterpieces filled so many hours of preparation and of school that the excuse, 'no time', was commonly alleged in explanation of many omissions from the curriculum. The same reason was put forward to account for the comparatively unimportant place occupied by mathematics and 'modern languages' (a term which usually meant French only). These studies were sometimes grudgingly admitted to the standing of 'business' in consequence of the pressure exerted by the examination of the Civil Service Commission and of the Board of Military Education, supported in the respect of mathematics by the . . . demands of Cambridge and of Oxford.¹⁰

The portrait of Meredith's first years of schooling, skimpy as it is, allows for several conclusions about the gains he made in those years. Meredith attended a "prestige school," most likely (considering the probable financial status of his family at the time) as a "nominee scholar" at a total cost of 131. 2s. per year. He was exposed to the classics (which helps explain his extensive knowledge of Latin and Greek and of the literature of both tongues), to mathematics in its many and mysterious forms, and to French under the tutelage of M. Eugene Bruneau. One must conclude, considering the command over the French language that Meredith exhibited in later years, that he learned French well from the beginning, possibly drawing upon a happy facility for language that would serve him all his life. That English literature was probably not a major part of his formal education at this point is, perhaps, regrettable, but one can assume that the curiosity of a young and active mind, once aroused, might have led the young Meredith to seek out for himself the literature of his country.

In November 1838, Augustus Meredith was declared bankrupt and subsequently moved to London. So far as anyone knows, George remained in Portsmouth and went on with his schooling at St. Paul's. On July 3, 1839, relations between father and son were further strained when Augustus married his housekeeper, Matilda Buckett, in Bridewell. In April 1840, George's maternal aunt, Miss Anna Maria Macnamara, died

and left George half her estate of £66.12.6. However, these new resources were not available to him until a year later. Stevenson sums up: "In a petition to the court [of Chancery], granted on August 6, 1841, Augustus Meredith testified that he was 'desirous of giving the said George Meredith such an education as will fit him for the profession of solicitor,' and that his son's previous income of £35 was inadequate for the purpose. As part of the arrangement, he surrendered 'the curation or guardianship' of his son, and gave his consent to the appointment of Charles Henry Binstead, the Macnamara solicitor, as trustee. This meant that George became a 'ward in Chancery.'"¹¹

At this point, Meredith may have been sent to a boarding-school somewhere near Petersfield, or perhaps at Lowestoft, Hampshire. The evidence for the year at such a school agreed upon by Ellis, Stevenson, and Lindsay is slight: "Viscountess Milner [daughter of Admiral Maxse] kept notes of a conversation [with Meredith] in his old age, wherein he told her positively that he had lived for a while at a farm near Petersfield but that he went to boarding-school in Lowestoft." Stevenson conjectures that he was sent "to [the] rather bleak fishing-town" because there were relatives there. All three biographers conclude that the boarding-school episode in The Adventures of Harry Richmond is based upon Meredith's experience during this year (1841-42).¹²

Stevenson associates the often-quoted passage from Meredith's letter to the Rev. Augustus Jessopp, Dec. 23, 1862, with the boarding-school:

I remember, at that age [Meredith is speaking of his own son, Arthur, now almost ten years old], how all love of the Apostles was belaboured out of me by three Sunday services of prodigious length and drowsiness. 'Corinthians' will forever be associated in my mind with rows of wax candles and a holy drone overhead, combined with the

sensation that those who did not choose the road to Heaven, enjoyed by far the pleasantest way. I cannot hear of Genesis, or of the sins of David, or of Hezekiah, without fidgetting in my chair, as if it turned to the utterly unsympathetic Church-wood of yore. In despair, I used to begin a fresh chapter of the adventures of St. George (a serial story, continued from Sunday to Sunday), and carry it on till the preacher's voice fell. Sometimes he deceived me (I hope, not voluntarily) and his voice bade St. George go back into his box, and then ascended in renewed vigour once more; leaving me vacant of my comforting hero; who was not to be revived, after such treatment.¹³

The next stage in Meredith's formal education began on August 18, 1842, when he became a student at the Moravian School at Neuwied on the Rhine, not far from Cologne. Meredith, it will be remembered, became a ward in Chancery upon his father's petition the year before; the trustee was Charles Henry Binstead. There seems to be some question about how the Moravian School was chosen and about how it happened that a ward in Chancery should have been sent to a school outside England sponsored by a religious group different (one assumes) from that to which his father belonged.

On the first point, the selection of the school, Meredith's biographers differ. Ellis implies that the trustee chose Neuwied, and Priestley agrees; Sassoon follows the story that Meredith "chose his next school for himself." Stevenson does not say who chose the school, and Lindsay gives the decision to George: "George decided to go to the Moravian school Perhaps a friend at the boarding-school had gone on to it, or had talked of it The story that in his determination he bearded the Lord Chancellor may be considered one of the fanciful embroideries he liked to weave in conversation in later years, merely expressive of his agitated wish to reach the Moravian school."¹⁴ Aside from the fact that Lindsay is the only biographer I know of who mentions the story about young Meredith's

"bearding" the Lord Chancellor, it is unlikely that Meredith's own wishes as a ward in Chancery would have carried much weight. The English and Empire Digest describes the prevailing modus operandi this way: "The guardian is a proper judge at what school to place his ward, & the [court] will not indulge the infant in being put to a private tutor, or going to another school, & if he refuses to go will take a proper course to compel him."¹⁵ Therefore, only if Meredith had persuaded Binstead of the merits of the Moravian school could he properly be said to have chosen the school himself.

On the second point, the choice of a school outside the country: according to the Earl of Halsbury, who was Lord High Chancellor of Great Britain from 1885-1886, 1886-1892, and 1895-1905, "The court will not allow one of its wards to be removed out of its jurisdiction . . . , even by the father . . . , unless satisfied that the removal is for the benefit of the ward" Anyone disregarding this ruling is subject to citation for contempt of court.¹⁶ In A Selection of Leading Cases in Equity, A. E. Randall notes that "Leave to take an infant ward of Court out of the jurisdiction will only be granted under exceptional circumstances, as . . . for educational purposes"¹⁷ Furthermore, according to the Earl of Halsbury, "The court will decide in what religion a ward of court ought, in all the circumstances of the case and having regard to the welfare of the ward as the paramount consideration[,] to be brought up" Indeed, it is a "General rule" in Chancery that the child be raised in the religion of the father unless the "pecuniary benefit" of the child is dependent upon the acceptance of a particular religion.¹⁸ The only possible explanation, then, for Meredith's being permitted by the Court to leave the country

and to attend a school of a different religion from his father's is that explanation only implied by Stevenson: that the "£66 a year [that constituted the funds for Meredith's education as a solicitor] could go further [in Germany] than in England"19

Meredith remained at Neuwied until the spring or summer of 1844.²⁰ Most of Meredith's biographers and critics agree that the time in Germany provided Meredith with the only really sound formal education he received. It must be stressed, however, that St. Paul's, obviously a sound and well-managed school, laid the solid foundation that made possible the lasting effects of the Neuwied years.²¹ Furthermore, Meredith scholars (as in the case of St. Paul's) have done little toward establishing exactly what it was that Meredith learned at Neuwied beyond giving brief histories of the school and quoting from Henry Morley's reminiscences about his own experience there some time before Meredith's arrival. For example, Lindsay generalizes from Morley and then gives us one glimpse of Meredith's experience:

The secret of the school lay, [Morley] said, in the way the Brothers lived exemplary lives before the pupils with child-like simplicity of spirit and heart; they seemed incapable of understanding a lie and brought out the best in the children who were left full freedom of imagination; they deprecated all cramming methods and tried to develop their pupils' own faculties. The boys made up stories, especially the English who, stirred by the Rhineland, told of tower-flanked castles in Gower Street, or vast parks at the City's Gates; and the Brothers did not even smile. Morley himself once composed the tale of a mighty hunter; Brother Rouchlin found the copybook and seriously read it out to the others in translation

There was no doctrine of hell preached by the Brothers; all emphasis was laid on the Brotherhood of Man

Of [Meredith's] activities at the school we know only that at a Public Examination on 10 April 1843 he delivered Uhland's Death of William Tell and a violin solo.²²

Of the lessons themselves, Lindsay says only that "Classes lasted an hour and consisted of boys of the same level of development," that there were many holidays festively celebrated, that "Nature-studies were encouraged" and collections begun, and that there were many long treks into the countryside.²³ What the subject matter of the hour-long classes was, no one has yet determined.

Most of the speculation on what Meredith acquired at Neuwied dwell at length upon the subsequent interest in and discussion of things and ideas German in Meredith's works. Again, Lindsay dwells (perhaps influenced by Priestley's strong statements) who goes farthest:

[Meredith's] early knowledge of Germany helped to reinforce the German influences strong in the English culture of the 1840's. He read widely in the poets and romancers, and absorbed the themes of rebel brigands, villainous barons, revenging ghosts, vindicated heirs, and the folk-imagery with its sense of man's kinship with nature, talking birds and lovely undines, gnomes striking unseen bells. He learned the legends of the Rhine: Siegfried killing the Dragon on Drakenfels, elves dancing behind Hammerstein, Satan building bridges and cathedrals. And he was attracted by the chivalric attitude to women. In three works, Farina, Feverel, and Harry Richmond he describes powerfully a storm in Germany which merges with a spiritual crisis, a deep moment of change, in his characters.

What he responded to was the challenging and vigorous element in German romanticism, which extends from Goethe to Hegel, from Richter to Heine. Not the vague and yearning mysticism, the evasive idealism that sought to find recondite reasons for conforming to the State. Above all, he looked to Goethe, ignoring his weaknesses, concentrating on his strength--his effort to realise a high seriousness and sense of responsibility in art, his understanding that all true poetry was poetry of circumstance, his elimination of the wilful and pettily personal. His effort to achieve the integration of self within the historical process in which it played an active and socially-conscious part. And his effort to overcome the religious abstraction by defining the unity of natural process and man's organic place in nature. To show the ultimate unity of art and science, the fundamental principle of becoming, change, progress [punctuation sic].²⁴

That is a great deal for a fourteen-year-old child, however bright, to have learned or formed a basis for in eighteen months or two years. I think that Lindsay overstates the case and that there must be available

to the Meredith scholar a clearer picture than we have so far of what Meredith in fact did and learned at Neuwied.

In his History of Wachovia in North Carolina (1902), John Henry Clewell, a Moravian and eleventh principal of the Moravian Female Academy (later College) at Salem, comments at length upon the peculiar concern among the Moravians in general for the education of the young. (Again, because information about Moravian schools is scarce, I have taken the liberty of quoting at length from the few sources I have.)

More than four hundred years ago, in the old home lands of Moravia and Bohemia, the seed was sown which has borne fruit all through the succeeding generations. The ancient Moravian Church had its well-known schools of higher learning, which numbered among their leaders men like the great pioneer of modern education, the Moravian Bishop John Amos Comenius. It also had schools in every parish in Moravia, Bohemia, and Poland, which in excellence and numbers resembled the modern common school system.

When the church was renewed nearly two centuries ago, after it had passed through the fires of persecution, it felt called upon to undertake any special work which the Lord would assign to it. The members believed that there was some particular task for it to perform. The wonderful preservation of the "hidden seed" and the not less wonderful renewal, in another land, indicated this. In time the special work was pointed out, and consisted, on the one hand, in beginning the great modern movement of foreign missions. On the other hand, the special work was education. These two fields of usefulness may not at first appear to be connected, but they are closely related. On the foreign mission fields the schoolhouse is often erected before the church. An unusual conjunction of circumstances inaugurated our boarding-school system. The care of the children of the missionaries became a serious question. It was decided to organise schools in the home lands, where everything could be planned as nearly as possible after the model of the home, so that, while the parents were in Greenland or Labrador, Ceylon or South Africa, the children would be under the care of consecrated men and women. In other words the Moravian schools, as planned a century and a half ago, in the renewed church, were in reality home schools in an especial and particular sense.

This plan of work soon attracted the attention of others. Parents felt that what was good in the case of missionaries would be equally good for their children. Therefore applications for admission into the Moravian schools were made by many outside friends, and the church found that a second great work was the training of young people in the higher and nobler form of education.

Professor Clewell sums up the aim of these schools: "to train the heart as well as the mind, and to inculcate a true and pure religion."²⁵

Such background information makes Morley's impressions of the school a bit clearer than they might be otherwise. The "home school" atmosphere is especially important: Meredith came from a broken home and undoubtedly responded to the warmth that Morley described as generated by the devotion of the Brothers. It is possible, however, to be even more specific about the tone and quality of Neuwied than Clewell's remarks permit.

In the Records of the Moravians in North Carolina (the volumes available to me cover the years 1752-1847) there appears a translation of an "Account about the protestant Unity of the Brethren, and its inward and outward Constitution" written in 1772 by Bishop August Gottlieb Spangenberg. Here the reader finds not only a general history, but a careful account of the foundation of individual establishments of the Moravian Church; Neuwied, of course, is among them. Neuwied is a "Congregation-Place," which means that the Moravian settlement is in effect a town-within-the-town and is relatively isolated and self-contained. Those who founded the settlement between 1751 and 1756 were, according to Bishop Spangenberg, "a number of French Brethren and Sisters of the Reformed Religion, who emigrated from Herrnberg." Evidently, in 1772, the make-up of the congregation had not much changed: "A most part [sic] of the Congregation members are French and of the Reformed Religion, yet also Germans have moved thither from time to time,--the divine Service is kept in both Languages by turns." The settlement itself consisted of a square around which the Brethren built "their Congregation-and-Meeting House and other necessary Buildings for their

Choirs [separate residences for unmarried Brothers and Sisters] and families"26 It is not likely that the composition of the community changed radically in the seventy years before Meredith's arrival. Therefore, what is of interest in this historical material is the presence of both French and German Brothers in the community. It is no doubt this fact that explains how Meredith acquired his command of both French (begun, it must be recalled at St. Paul's with M. Eugene Bruneau) and German.

The school itself, already accounted for to some extent by the passage quoted above from Clewell, was an integral part of any Moravian Congregation. Bishop Spangenberg again provides a general statement:

It is an object of care in all Congregations that the Children be brought up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, for which reason the parents are not only faithfully reminded of this duty which God Himself has laid upon them, but also proper Opportunity is given thereto when it is necessary.

There is [sic] separate Schools kept for the Children, both boys and girls, under the inspection of the Ministers & Elders of the place, in which by Teachers of their own sex they are instructed in the Elements of human knowledge, in the same manner as in other well regulated Schools [*italics mine*].

But whereas it is the chief Aim of the Brethren's Unity that the Children should already in their tender years receive a right impression of the depravity of human nature and the Salvation that is in Christ Jesus, therefore not only the children exclusive of their Schools, but also the Boys and Girls who are put to some employment, are by the Minister of the place instructed and catechised about the fundamental truths of the Gospel, which are laid before them in such a manner that they are at the same time shown how they may attain to the enjoyment of that grace and store of Salvation which is procured by the bloody Atonement of Jesus.²⁷

(One wonders how non-Moravian children were treated in the matter of religious instruction: Morley says the Brothers emphasized only the brotherhood of man.)

There were special provisions for the various callings for which the children might have been intended:

For the Boys intended for Students there is a Paedagogium erected, where they are instructed in the rudiments of learning & other useful Sciences, and are kept under careful inspection at the same time. From this Paedagogium they are transplanted to the Seminary of the Unity, the chief Aim of which is that such young people who devote themselves entirely to the service of God be made fully acquainted with the oriental languages [evidently Greek and Hebrew, and perhaps Latin; see the following quotation], acquire the needful knowledge of history, philosophy, mathematics and Divinity. At the same time they are always reminded of for what purpose they are come to the Seminary, namely, that they themselves may be thoroughly grounded in the knowledge of Jesus Christ, and whether they are to be used for instructing of Children, for Messengers of the Gospel to the heathen, or for Teachers and Preachers in the Congregations, that they then may be able to declare with gladness what God hath done for their Souls.²⁸

Finally, Bishop Spangenberg describes the role and training of the teachers:

The Office of Teacher in a Congregation is always committed to a Man that is ordained and thoroughly versed in the Holy Scriptures, and he is called Preacher. And although in the Unity of the Brethren also such Brethern are made Teachers who have not studied Divinity in Universities as usual, yet for common [sic] no others receive such appointment as those who understand the Bible in the oriental languages [Hebrew and Greek, no doubt] and have a knowledge of Divinity. Even the unlearned Teachers appointed among the Brethren are so grounded in the word of God that their Discourses bear witness thereof.²⁹

It would seem apparent from all this that Neuwied was considerably more than a nature-study seminar or a classroom full of romantic youngsters telling each other fairy-tales.

I had hoped that the Moravian College at Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, would be able to supply me with information (or leads to sources) about the actual curriculum at Neuwied or at a school similar to it. However, such information was not forthcoming, and I can merely estimate the course of study at Neuwied from Professor Clewell's account of the program at Salem Female Academy at about the same time that Meredith was at Neuwied: "Music in all its forms is studied; art traces symmetrical

lines, and blends beautiful colours; the class room strengthens the mind; the gymnasium develops the body." Among the subjects treated in the classroom were botany, gardening, Latin, French, and "natural sciences" (ca. 1844-46).³⁰

The total impression of Neuwied's school, it seems fair to say, is of a well-rounded curriculum that carried on the beginnings of formal training that Meredith received at St. Paul's in the classics, science, and French. One can assume, it seems to me, that German language and literature were part of the program; that the gymnastics and walking trips appealed to the boy who was to become an almost fanatic walker; that the science program may have stirred in the young Meredith the interest that later informed his "evolutionary" view of life. Beyond this, however, one hesitates to go: Lindsay's review of the Neuwied years, as already indicated, seems unlikely and much too optimistic so far as Meredith's accomplishments in German literature and philosophy are concerned.

That the religious atmosphere at Neuwied was fairly intense, especially for an impressionable teen-ager, is witnessed by that strange (and eternally quoted) letter from the young Meredith to a school-friend:

To R. M. Hill.

Neuwied, July 8 [January 1?], 1844

My dear Hill,--During the time that we've lived together, one feeling, whether in union, or shall I say enmity, no that is too harsh, has agitated our respective bosoms. It is fellowship. O may God grant that all may have the same feelings toward you to make your life happy. But true fellowship is not to be had without Christianity; not the name but the practice of it. I wish you the greatest of all things 'God's blessing,' which comprehends all I would or could otherwise say.--Yours,

George Meredith³¹

Once Meredith left Neuwied early in 1844 (see note 21), he left behind him the ordinary processes of formal education. By this time, he had evidently acquired sufficient knowledge of at least three (and perhaps four) languages other than English--Latin, German, and French (and Greek?)--and of the elementary tools necessary for the acquisition of further knowledge to account, at least to some small extent, for the extraordinary display of erudition and linguistic ability that characterizes his literary work and fills his letters. Only one more period of (what was intended to be) formal education of any kind followed.

On March 15, 1844, Augustus Meredith petitioned the Court of Chancery to release the sum of £400 from Anna Maria Macnamara's estate so that his son might be apprenticed to John Williams, a bookseller and publisher at 44, Paternoster Row, for five years, during which time Williams would have taken young Meredith to Hong Kong. No action, however, was taken on this petition, and it is noteworthy that the idea of the boy's becoming a solicitor had been abandoned.³² George himself seems to have been in Hampshire with his mother's relatives during his father's series of petitions, and there is some speculation by Stevenson upon what happened to the impressionable youth during the eighteen months for which there is no record of his activities.

Stevenson suggests that during those months Meredith, "endowed with the exuberant emotions and romantic imagination of a poet, and embittered by a sense of neglect and frustrated pride," was overwhelmed by "a violent release of sentiment. If, at this acutely impressionable moment, a pretty, unsophisticated girl showed herself to be captivated by the handsome moody lad, there was bound to be a sudden discovery of the raptures and agonies of sexual attraction." Stevenson's evidence

is drawn from the presence in several of Meredith's works of such a young woman--Lucy Desborough, Dahlia Fleming, Mabel Sweetwinter, the girl in "Love in the Valley"--and of an unhappy marriage between "a gifted, idealistic young man who had impulsively 'married beneath him' and had suffered the sequel of ostracism and remorse, while the wife drifted into drunkenness and promiscuity." The result of the Hampshire experience, whatever it was, was obviously unhappy:

he must have been dragged in different directions by his craving for the girl, his common-sense recognition that he was too young and penniless to marry her, and the restless ambition that was already driving him to seek social and intellectual distinction. Whether it was his own decision that drew him away from her, or whether his father or other relatives intervened, the next positive record shows George back in London and making a start at last on the career that had been selected for him. But one can be sure that he not only suffered infernal tortures in the separation but also imagined vividly the misery of the girl left behind, and that he tried lamely to vindicate himself with the argument that she would not have made a suitable wife for the distinguished, witty gentleman that he expected to become.³³

The difficulty in accepting Stevenson's theory lies not so much in the possibility of such an experience with a young girl as in the rather broad assumptions that Stevenson makes around the issue: the whole question of Meredith's frame of mind and hopes for the future, in particular. There is no way of knowing exactly what Meredith thought of himself at the time or of confirming Stevenson's idea that he was already thinking in terms of being a "distinguished, witty gentleman" in London or anywhere else. Jack Lindsay's reaction to Stevenson's theory is not much more factual than the Hampshire lass theory: Lindsay says (in a note) "that the valley-girl is Mary [Meredith's first wife] pastoralised and no doubt merged with country-girls that George had admired in Hampshire and the Rhineland. The same with Lucy."³⁴ I am no happier with this view than with Stevenson's. It seems to me that,

because conjecture is the Meredithian's only recourse at this point, we must select the most reasonable possibility. Meredith no doubt met country girls in Germany and in England who impressed him as lovely and unsophisticated young women always impress sensitive young men. He may also have formed an attachment to such a girl: in Sonnet VIII of the quasi-autobiographical Modern Love, Meredith says that "An early goddess was a country lass."³⁴ But it is not necessary and may be ill-advised to insist that this experience alone provided the source or inspiration for the presence of Lucy, Dahlia, and the rest in Meredith's work. Surely we must allow for the gift of poetic and novelistic imagination that guided Meredith's pen. If we do, then we may say that that gift made good use of whatever Meredith's experiences may have been, but it seems to me that we can say no more than that. To argue as Lindsay does that Meredith "pastoralised" the sophisticated, literary, and older widow and mother, Mary Ellen Peacock Nicolls, into the "valley-girl" (who, in fact, has a mother, as does none of the other girls linked with the Hampshire lass) and Lucy seems to me to be equally unnecessary and ill-advised, especially in view of the fact that Lucy was created somewhere between 1856 and 1859, the period of the collapse of Meredith's marriage to Mary.³⁶

Whatever the events of the months between early 1844 and December 1845, the period of idleness came to an end, as Stevenson puts it, with "a flurry of affidavits" that culminated, in February 1845, in Meredith's being articled to Richard Stephen Charnock, a young lawyer. Stevenson speculates:

There are several ways in which Charnock may have come upon the scene. At this time his address was 44, Paternoster Row, the same as John Williams's, whence it is clear that his chambers were above the

bookshop. He could have met Augustus Meredith and his son at the time when the proposed apprenticeship to Williams was being debated. Moreover, Charnock was devoted to Germany and took walking tours there. This would give him a common interest with the youth who had been at school in the Rhineland. It is conceivable that when the apprenticeship scheme was first conceived Williams commissioned Charnock to visit Neuwied during one of his tours and to obtain George's formal consent to the proposition.³⁷

Again the reader puzzles over Stevenson's insistence on adumbrating possible connections or events rather than simply allowing that Charnock came into Meredith's life through the connection with Williams.

However it was that Charnock arrived upon the scene, Meredith was articulated to the young lawyer with the consent of the Court upon payment of £500 drawn from the estate. (An additional £130 was drawn to cover the expenses of the proceedings.) The term of the articles, registered with the Law Society on February 3, 1846, was to be five years, during which time Charnock was "to supply his pupil with good and sufficient food and lodging, £20 per year, and instruction in the law."³⁸

During the approximately three and one half years that Meredith remained under Charnock's tutelage, the young man presumably learned both law and the way of the world of small literary luminaries and dilettantes. As Stevenson puts it, the group into which Meredith now fitted himself were given to "strenuous banter. Nicknames and scandalous innuendoes were pelted back and forth," and a sort of "debased Byronism" or Don Juanism colored their behavior and thinking. They were critical towards convention and assumed a superior attitude to humanity in general and to humanity's "common illusions" in particular.³⁹ The men whom Meredith now met included Henry Hewes, Hilaire de St. Croix, Peter Austin Daniel, and Edward Gryffydh Peacock. The last name, of

course, is the most important, for it was through Edward Peacock that Meredith met Mary Ellen Peacock Nicolls, the woman who became his first wife.

Stevenson suggests that one immediate effect of Meredith's entry into this literary atmosphere was that he began to write poetry. There were about two years between Meredith's joining Charnock and the appearance of the first issue, early in 1848, of "The Monthly Observer," the manuscript magazine compiled by the group for their own amusement and training (Stevenson calls their efforts "literary exercises"). The earliest extant issue, number eleven, presumably from January 1849, contains a poem by Meredith, "Saint Thérèse," that carries echoes of Tennyson's "Saint Agnes' Eve." The March issue has Meredith's "Brotherhood," which Stevenson describes as a "ponderously didactic piece that harked back to the teachings of Neuwied with its insistence on the Lord's law of Brotherhood and on the miseries caused by religious factionalism; and an equally didactic sonnet, condemning the 'false themes of speculation' that were being propagated by materialistic scientists."⁴⁰ The April issue contains "Chillianwallah," commemorating the battle of that name that took place on January 13, 1849. It was this poem that became Meredith's first published piece, appearing in Chambers's Edinburgh Journal on July 7, 1849.⁴¹ Meredith acted as editor of the June issue (the contributors took turns in that office) and included his own translations of four German lyrics: Heine's "My Heart"; von Eichendorff's "Moonlight Night"; and Goethe's "Song (Joyful)" and "Confession."⁴²

On February 12, 1849, Meredith came of age and "the thousand pounds that had been held in trust for him since his mother's death,

and . . . the small residue--about £450--of his legacy from Miss Macnamara" came into his hands. Stevenson adds that "As he remained with Charnock for only three years, instead of five, and received little of the instruction that had been contracted for, it is . . . possible that some of the fee was refunded to him; but of this there is no proof.

"As soon as he came into his estate he moved away from Charnock's chambers and took lodgings at 7, Upper Ebury Street, Pimlico."

On March 8, 1849, Meredith, writing from this address, approached the poet-critic, Richard Hengist (Henry) Horne, the author of Orion (1843) and A New Spirit of the Age (1844), a move that perhaps demonstrates a further separation between Meredith and Charnock. It is possible that Meredith felt that he had somewhat outgrown the amateurish "Monthly Observer" and that he needed the advice and assurance of an established poet concerning his own efforts and abilities.⁴³

The history of Meredith's association with Horne begins with Charnock, not, as William Maxse Meredith, Meredith's son, suggested, with Sir Alexander and Lady Duff Gordon.⁴⁴ Sassoon says that Horne "was a friend of Charnock's," and Lindsay points out that Charnock knew Horne through his membership in the Arundel Club.⁴⁵ Whatever the beginning of the acquaintance, Meredith's first letter to Horne implies that Meredith had read Horne's poetry and essays and knew that the older man would probably lend him his ear:

You are a Poet and a Critic, and from certain of your writings I understand your sympathies in either phase to be with the young Poet. As this is a fact seldom found even among literary men, I have taken the liberty to address myself thus abruptly to you.

I wish to lay before you certain Poems I have composed that I may obtain your opinion (in which I can trust) as to their merit--or more especially--the power of the Poetic Faculty in me . . . [sic] If

you really can and will assist me with your advice, I shall be exceedingly indebted and obliged to you.⁴⁶

As Stevenson puts it, "Horne was sufficiently impressed" with Meredith's request and manner "to answer encouragingly. He read the poems and made acquaintance with the poet" some time between March and May 1849.⁴⁷

There is a letter from Meredith to Horne, dated May 8, 1849, in which Meredith comments upon his gift to Horne of "Gothe's Minor Poems":

Meredith says that he is "intimate with the German" but does not know if Horne is. The letter refers also to Meredith's poetry and to Horne's reactions to it: "let me take this opportunity of thanking you for the instruction you have already given me in the Art. I believe that I am now steadily improving--I have but flickered heretofore."⁴⁸ Stevenson says that Horne suggested the revision and cutting of "Chilianwallah," which Meredith sent to Chamber's Edinburg Journal on June 4, along with a hint that he would be most happy "to supply you regularly" with poems.⁴⁹

Horne's interest in Meredith extended to speaking to a printer, James Vizetelly, about the young poet, who wrote to Vizetelly on January 15, 1850:

Sir,

Mr. Horne has had the kindness to speak to you about a volume of Poems which I am desirous [sic] of publishing in the style of Tennyson--I should like to see you on the subject myself . . .⁵⁰

John W. Parker and Son published Meredith's first volume, Poems, in May 1851, and Horne had evidently been involved in the preparation of the poems for that volume. Two letters of Meredith's to John W. Parker, Jr., indicate Horne's interest. On December 12, 1850, Meredith wrote to Parker, Jr., describing the poems and referring to Horne: "Mr. Horne

speaks very favourably of those he has seen but he has only seen the classical Poem and a few others and consequently insists on Ballad and modern ingredients which I have endeavoured since then to supply--"⁵¹
 A letter to the same correspondent, dated December 23, 1850, and another to Vizetelly [?February 1851] carry the same implications.⁵²

Meredith's admiration of and gratitude to Horne find expression in the dedicatory verse-letter he sent to Horne with the "classical Poem," "Daphne," mentioned in the December 12 letter to Parker. Further, Lindsay reports that a "copy of the 1851 Poems was inscribed to Horne, 'by whose generous appreciation and trusty criticism those 'Poems' were chiefly fostered'" (This copy of Poems is now at Harvard.) And, finally, the Poems quote Horne's epic, Orion, on the title page.⁵³

It must be remembered that Meredith had other interests, literary and personal, during the years leading up to the publication of his first volume of poetry. Stevenson tells us that "perhaps even before his legal apprenticeship began . . . [Meredith] had tried a venture into daily journalism by sending a leading article on Lord John Manners to The Standard." But despite an interview with Stanley Lees Gifford, the editor, and despite a request for more articles, the piece on Manners was not paid for and "Meredith gave up for the time any thought of becoming a journalist."⁵⁴ However, after the acceptance of "Chillianwallah" in June 1849, and during his fascination with the Hungarian struggle for freedom, Meredith offered to write "a translation of a life of Kossuth, the Hungarian leader," for Chambers's Edinburgh Journal: "I could abridge it for one number even, or give it literally. The accounts of the man now afloat are flimsy and unconnected." It was not, however,

until November that Meredith produced four pages of the article, and by that time the subject was no longer topical.⁵⁵

What had intervened was Meredith's courtship of and marriage to Mrs. Nicolls. The course of their relationship is a tragic one; its beginnings were romantic. Mrs. Nicolls, born in July 1821, was nearly seven years older than Meredith and was a witty, sophisticated woman who must have been (at least at first) rather amused than won by the attachment of so young and untutored a man as Meredith must have been in 1849. Stevenson and Lindsay both refer to the story that Meredith proposed six times before Mary finally accepted him. They were married on August 9, 1849, at St. George's, Hanover Square, and honeymooned, as Stevenson puts it, "on the Continent, particularly in the Rhineland that [Meredith] already knew and loved."⁵⁶

The downhill course of Meredith's first marriage has been described often and fully by most of Meredith's biographers and by critics and analysts of Modern Love. Therefore, it seems to me unnecessary to recount in detail the story of money troubles, incompatibility, infidelity, and bad feelings that runs from 1849 to 1861, when Mary Meredith died, and even into 1864, when Meredith was questioned by his prospective father-in-law, Justin Vulliamy, concerning the history of that unhappy period (see below, pp. 41 ff).⁵⁷ That Meredith learned a great deal from his experience of matrimony should be obvious to anyone who has read not only Modern Love, but any or all of Meredith's works concerning the difficulty of achieving and the necessity to mankind of maintaining a solid and mutually enriching relationship between man and woman.

Having gone through the ordeal (pace Professor Stevenson) of an unsuccessful marriage, Meredith, whom we cannot understand as other than a sensitive, intelligent man, must have begun to see how essential a good marriage is to the individual and to society. In all of his novels, he deals with men and women learning (usually in the hardest way) the truths he himself must have garnered from his first marital experience: such truths as the necessity for openness, honesty, mutual respect and tolerance; for equality between the partners in Meredith's aphoristic "blood, brain, and spirit"; for fairness in reading each other's feelings and thoughts. One recalls the narrator's remark before the final chapter in The Egoist: Willoughby comes out of his ordeal with "the lady with brains! He had [her]: and he was to learn the nature of that possession in the woman who is our wife."^{57a} The last novels Meredith wrote--One of Our Conquerors, Lord Ormont and His Aminta, and The Amazing Marriage--are particularly concerned with the mutual influences of marriage and society.⁵⁸ Numerous poems deal with the same questions, notably "A Preaching from a Spanish Ballad."⁵⁹ And in a sort of grand poetic finale, Meredith made marriage the central, connecting metaphor in his grand and grandiose Odes in Contribution to the Song of French History, wherein the history of France is described in terms of the personified nation's successive attachments to the Revolution, to Napoleon Bonaparte, to Napoleon III and the Bonaparte legend, and--finally and best of all--to Duty.⁶⁰

The period of Meredith's first marriage, of course, was not one of unmitigated gloom. There was the influence on Meredith's development as a writer of his father-in-law, Thomas Love Peacock (see Chapter II). There was the birth, on June 13, 1853, of Arthur Gryffyd Meredith

and the subsequent joys and problems of raising a motherless boy. There were new friends and acquaintances, comprising a rather lengthy and often impressive list: Emilia Macirone (later the model for Meredith's own Emilia-Vittoria), Tom Taylor, Sir Alexander and Lady Duff Gordon and their daughter Janet; Baron August von Haxthausen, the expert on Slavic and Balkan folklore; Maurice FitzGerald; Eyre Crowe; Edward Chapman and, through him, Thackeray, Charles Lever, and John Forster; G. H. Lewes; F. C. Burnand; Frederick Augustus Maxse, who became one of Meredith's closest friends; Carlyle, one of the major influences on Meredith's thinking. There was the publication of Poems (1851); of poetry scattered through several periodicals, including Fraser's Magazine, The Leader, and Household Words; of a review in Fraser's Magazine of "Austrian Poets" (August 1852); of a review in the same periodical of Bell's Songs of the Dramatists (1854); of Meredith's first novel (although the genre is questionable), The Shaving of Shagpat (December 1855); of Farina (August 1857); of The Ordeal of Richard Feverel (June 1859); of Evan Harrington, as a serial in Once a Week beginning in February 1860 (the three-volume edition came out in January 1861). Between April 1857 and January 1858, Meredith also filled in as the writer of the "Belles Lettres and Art" section in four issues of the Westminster Review (April, July, October, January), following George Eliot in the office of reviewer and writing about, among many other volumes of varying importance, his own novel, Farina. In August 1860 Meredith was appointed a reader for Chapman and Hall, a position he was to hold until 1894. There was also, in 1861, the beginning of Meredith's concurrent stints as a writer of lead articles and weekly news commentaries for the conservative Ipswich Journal and as a "gentleman reader"

to Mrs. Benjamin Wood. And, on a much more intimate note, there was Meredith's apparent love for Janet Duff Gordon and the pain of losing her to someone else.⁶¹

The year 1861 was in many ways a particularly full one. Meredith became acquainted with William Charles Bonaparte Wyse, whose interest in Provençal poetry later bore fruit in Meredith's own writings (see below, pp. 57-59). He began and worked on three novels: Emilia Belloni (later entitled Emilia in England and, finally, Sandra Belloni); Rhoda Fleming (under the early titles, A Woman's Battle and The Dyke Farm); and Van Diemen Smith (subsequently The House on the Beach).⁶²

In the summer of 1861, Meredith, for reasons of health, made what was apparently his first trip to Switzerland and had his first experience of Ruskinian "mountain glory." On July 26, 1861, he wrote to Captain Maxse, from Meran, South Tyrol:

The country is wonderful. Mountains holding up cups of snow to the fiery sun, who glares on them in vain. The peasantry are a noble race: pious, and with a strong smell. Priests abound and soap flies before them

Meran is southern in heat and luxury of growth of all kinds of fruits. The cicada goes all day like a factory wheel--poetic simile! The flies sting, and the sun is relentless. I begin to understand why Daphne fled into a laurel from the fiery fellow. Still I like sun, as you do. Anything's better than the meagre days we got last year. This land abounds in falling waters, brooks, torrents, all ice cold. We drank at the wells every ten minutes, sat over the brooks naked legged, dipped our heads desperately. Here are crucifixes at every fifty yards. You go to a well and the pipe through which the water flows is through the body of a Christ. Hear you a droning noise in the wind, it issues from a body of peasants mumbling their rosaries as they march to work. They are invariably courteous. Wyse says, they remind him more of the Spaniards than do any other people, but they have not the same prolonged gravity of deportment. Nothing can be grander than the colossal mountains of porphyry and dolomite shining purple and rosy, snow-capped here and there, with some tumultuous river noising below, and that eternal stillness overhead, save when some great peak gathers the thunders and bellows for a time. Then to see the white sulphurous masks curl and cover round it, and drip moisture on the hanging meadows, would task your powers of description, O my friend . . . !

Meran is a glorious place. We look towards Italy. The country is like a garden. The Adige flows on one hand, the Passer on the other

My first sight of the Alps has raised odd feelings. Here at last seems something more than earth, and visible, if not tangible. They have the whiteness, the silence, the beauty and mystery of thoughts seldom unveiled within us, but which conquer Earth when once they are. In fact they have made my creed tremble.--Only for a time. They have merely dazzled me with a group of symbols. Our great error has been (the error of all religion, as I fancy) to raise a spiritual system in antagonism to Nature. What though yonder Alp does touch the Heavens? Is it a rebuke to us below? In you and in me there may be lofty virgin points, pure from what we call fleshliness.⁶⁴

It seems to me more than likely that, as Professor Bartlett once suggested in a conversation, Meredith--perhaps particularly open to the influences of the beauty of nature after all his sufferings--had a Wordsworthian experience in this first view of the Alps; that this moment was one of those "spots of time" that Wordsworth describes in Book XII of The Prelude (lines 208-225):

There are in our existence spots of time,
That with distinct pre-eminence retain
A renovating virtue, whence, depressed
By false opinion and contentious thought,
Or aught of heavier or more deadly weight,
In trivial occupations, and the round
Of ordinary intercourse, our minds
Are nourished and invisibly repaired;
A virtue, by which pleasure is enhanced,
That penetrates, enables us to mount,
When high, more high, and lifts us up when fallen.
This efficacious spirit chiefly lurks
Among those passages of life that give
Profoundest knowledge to what point, and how,
The mind is lord and master--outward sense
The obedient servant of her will. Such moments
Are scattered everywhere, taking their date
From our first childhood.⁶⁵

Indeed, the last paragraph quoted above from Meredith's letter has some affinities with Wordsworth's own apostrophe to the Alps in Book VI:

The immeasurable height
Of woods decaying, never to be decayed,
The stationary blasts of waterfalls,

And in the narrow rent at every turn
 Winds thwarting winds, bewildered and forlorn,
 The torrents shooting from the clear blue sky,
 The rocks that muttered close upon our ears,
 Black drizzling crags that spake by the way-side
 As if a voice were in them, the sick sight
 And giddy prospect of the raving stream,
 The unfettered clouds and region of the Heavens,
 Tumult and peace, the darkness and the light--
 Were all like workings of one mind, the features
 Of the same face, blossoms upon one tree;
 Characters of the great Apocalypse,
 The types and symbols of Eternity,
 Of first, and last, and midst, and without end.
 [Lines 624-640]⁶⁶

Both poets were impressed (one wonders, of course, if Meredith were first impressed with Wordsworth's lines) by the symbolic quality of the huge, silent mountains and by their close relationship, for all their majesty and distance, with the life of man. In Meredith's case, the Alps became a persistent image for purity, integrity, and Meredithian selfhood at its highest level: the novels contain consistent references to the Alps as the proper setting for or as the native landscape of his most positive and, often, most endearing characters. However, because demonstration of Meredith's continuing symbolic use of the Alps requires considerable space, I have placed it in an appendix to this paper (Appendix II, pp. 371 ff.).

The year of the revelation of the Alps, 1861, continued to be noteworthy in Meredith's life: he became acquainted with James Cotter Morison, William Hardman (who became one of Meredith's closest friends), Rossetti and Swinburne, and Augustus Jessopp, the Norwich schoolmaster who was to be Arthur's teacher for several years and who became, like Hardman, a good friend.⁶⁷ In October 1861 Mary Meredith died, apparently without having seen her husband since her elopement with Henry Wallis, although she had perhaps seen Arthur several times after

her return from Capri in 1859 and had had him close to her in September 1861.⁶⁸ Meredith wrote of the event to Wyse, according to Stevenson, "in four words." To Hardman, Meredith wrote, "to excuse myself for my silence," that when he returned from a week in Suffolk, "I found that one had quitted [the world] who bore my name: and this filled my mind with melancholy recollections which I rarely give way to. My dear boy, fortunately, will not feel the blow, as he might have under different circumstances."⁶⁹

Meredith's biographers and critics, as I have already noted, are agreed that out of the tragic collapse of Meredith's first marriage came that magnificent poem published in May 1862, Modern Love. Because the poem does not parallel, event for event, the course of Meredith's marriage to Mary, it seems most reasonable to make full allowance not only for Meredith's experiences but for his poetic and novelistic insight into the problems of making any marriage work and into the realities of the failure of his own marriage. Reducing the problem of the interaction of experience and art to fairly simple terms, Priestley can say that Mary's death led Meredith into considerable self-examination and introspection (although the letter to Hardman does not quite bear this out) and eventually into the creation of the poem in which "The man himself does not come out of [the] disastrous affair too well, for he showed himself somewhat cold and implacable in the face of suffering and sorrow [on the part of the wife] that reduced his own injuries to mere trifles: his pride would not allow him to speak the forgiving word and make the generous gesture the poet in him could not be made a party to this conspiracy of cold silence, and he traces, with a rare subtlety and sympathy, the course of a tragedy that shows us, not an

erring wife and a wronged husband, but simply two unhappy lovers inevitably drifting apart."⁷⁰ Sassoon simply rearranges the time schedule. Meredith's own "ordeal" came during the writing of Richard Feverel (1858-1859).⁷¹ Meredith's relationship with Janet Duff Gordon, although it ended unhappily for him when she married Henry Ross in 1860, was, according to Sassoon, a period of recovery that culminated in the creation of Evan Harrington, "the happiest of all his books. His wife's death [came] as a relief, causing him no disintegrating emotion. Hence his ability to produce 'Modern Love,' refashioning his own love tragedy with the control of art, intellect, and irony to a human drama from which, in his creative capacity, he could stand aside It was an exercise in self-scrutiny and a rejection of self-pity and sensitiveness."⁷²

One wonders, however, if such considerations as Priestley's and Sassoon's are not too simple. The interest of Modern Love is, one feels, primarily psychological, perhaps with social overtones that carry into the marriage conventions of Meredith's day. On one hand, the comment of Walter M. Wright that the "substance of the poem is psychological introspection" seems accurate and in keeping with Stevenson's observations: "The basic thesis [of the poems] was that neither the husband nor the wife was to blame. Both were helpless in the trap of their personalities. The man was egotistically wrapped up in his own concerns; the woman had never been allowed a chance to learn how to think for herself, and so was controlled by the primitive emotionalism that was the heritage of her sex."⁷³ Such comments strike the student as commensurate with a careful reading of the poem. On the other hand,

Lindsay's insistence on reading section X as strictly biographical seems forced. The lines he refers to are these:

In Love's deep woods,
I dreamt of loyal life:--the offence is there!
Love's jealous woods about the sun are curled;
At least, the sun far brighter there did beam.--
My crime is, that the puppet of a dream,
I plotted to be worthy of the world.
Oh, had I with my darling helped to mince
The facts of life, you still had seen me go
With hindward feather and with forward toe,
Her much-adored delightful Fairy Prince!

Lindsay interprets these lines to mean that "Mary wanted a snug warmth of love, a sly refuge, with the world barred out by an acceptance of its terms." Meredith, according to Lindsay, was absorbed by ideas of social reform, and Mary, in effect, "denied the rebel in him. Despite all his palterings and falterings, he remains stubbornly true to his larger loyalty; in Mary he resists and fights the lie of his society. By fighting her, he grasps with a new fullness what love is, what truth is."⁷⁴ But one senses that Lindsay's interpretation is at least as narrow as Priestley's is simple: there is more to Modern Love than "two unhappy lovers inevitably drifting apart" and than the opposition between a homebody-lovebird of a wife and a fire-breathing reformer of a poet-husband. Mary Meredith was an intelligent and probably also a romantic woman; Meredith was a romantic and intelligent young man. The failure of their marriage stemmed, most likely, from a sort of short-circuit in their connection: the wires that motivated Mary's intellect never quite met with those in Meredith, nor did the romantic tendencies of either connect with those of the other at the right time. This is hardly an unusual situation, but Meredith and his wife were not usual people, and the sparks that flew from the bad connection must have been

considerable. The lessons to be learned by the light of those sparks must have included the awareness that physical attraction alone cannot secure a marriage; that women--even Mary, the daughter of Peacock the advocate of education for women--are generally not educated properly or enough to fit them for the rigors of married life; that, as Stevenson puts it, "unless there can be a fuller development of intelligence and mastery over the senses . . . , society is doomed to endless repetition of this needless tragedy," of the failure of marriages that should be the cornerstone of a healthy, sane society.⁷⁵ And these lessons appear again and again in Meredith's work in every case of a relationship between a man and a woman: whenever sensuality is the sole connection, the relationship fails. Whenever the woman is not the equal of the man in most ways, the marriage does not come about at all or fails when it has been contracted. Finally, in The Amazing Marriage, hatred of nature, mistreatment of women, and the consequent collapse of society are intricately meshed in what seems to me to be a culminating statement of Meredith's conviction, based on experience, that true marriages can exist only between equals in intelligence and education, feeling and spirit, and that "the marriage of true minds" is essential to the survival of society.

The publication of Meredith's anatomy of marriage was greeted by a storm of abuse from the press and from the other and assorted guardians of British morality who had already registered displeasure over Richard Feverel.⁷⁶ Meredith's experiences of public disfavor were formative, it seems to me, only in that they drove him farther and farther from any point at which he would cater to public opinion and closer and closer to that point at which he declared that he wrote only to please himself:

"Who really cares for what I say? The English people know nothing of me. There has always been something antipathetic between them and me. With book after book it was always the same outcry of censure and disapproval. The first time or two I minded it: then I determined to disregard what people said altogether, and since then I have written only to please myself."⁷⁷ Mrs. Henderson describes the result of Meredith's decision: in "addressing his own intelligence," Meredith "overestimated the alertness of other people's minds. Small opportunity was given him for judging what degree of swiftness average intelligences could bear, and, his own mind being abnormally impatient of the obvious, it was of this opportunity that he stood peculiarly in need."⁷⁸ The tendency to pomposity, obscurity, and self-address, Sassoon feels, was aggravated by Meredith's work as a reader of manuscripts for Chapman and Hall (1860-1894): "all this reading of commonplace writing was to some extent answerable for the exaggerated mannerisms of his style. The perennial perusal of mediocre performances must have made him more contemptuous than ever of bourgeois taste, and more than ever determined to be fervid and fantastic and exceptional."⁷⁹ Trevelyan attributes Meredith's eccentricity and obscurity to "The utter neglect in which Meredith was left during the first and formative half of his life as an author Since neither the critics [nor] the public would listen to him, he soliloquized in prose and poetry . . . , and . . . wrote to please himself alone."⁸⁰ Any reader of Meredith's poetry and novels will agree that the style is, at the least, idiosyncratic and difficult. (But equally idiosyncratic were some of Meredith's decisions as reader: it was quite early in that career [in 1861, in fact] that he rejected "emphatically" the phenomenally successful East Lynne by Mrs. Henry Wood.)⁸¹

The attack on Modern Love brought forth a champion for Meredith in the person of Swinburne, who wrote a letter of protest to the editor of the Spectator (June 7, 1862) defending his friend's poem against the charges of prurience, lack of conviction, and flippancy in dealing with a deeply serious topic. A week after the publication of Swinburne's letter came the well-known episode of the reading by Swinburne, Rossetti, and Meredith of The Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam on the Mound near Meredith's home at Copsham and the subsequent composition by Swinburne (in red ink) of the opening stanzas of "Laus Veneris" (June 14, 1862). Meredith's connection with the Swinburne-Rossetti circle resulted shortly after this event in his agreeing, as Stevenson puts it, "to rent a bedroom in Rossetti's 'Queen's House'" at 16, Cheyne Walk, for his convenience during his trips to London on business. The arrangement between the eccentric poets and artists lasted, however (as nearly as one can tell from existing evidence), little more than one year (October 1862-June [?August] 1863) and was enshrouded in myths of various sorts explaining why Meredith withdrew from his agreement--myths growing out of Rossetti's eating habits, Swinburne's exuberance, and Meredith's fastidiousness and pride.⁸²

The years 1862-1863 saw other major events in Meredith's life: he met Lionel Robinson and John Morley, both of whom became good friends. In September 1862, Meredith sent Arthur, now nine years old, to school in Norwich under Augustus Jessopp. Emilia Belloni was under way, probably stimulated by Meredith's contact with the Italophiles Rossetti and Swinburne. Meredith took on a readership with another publishing house, Saunders and Otley, to supplement his income, but of course this task had to be kept secret to prevent charges of conflict of interest

from Chapman and Hall. In the fall of 1863, Meredith met the Vulliamy family, Justin Vulliamy and his three daughters, who were then living at Mickleham, not far from Meredith's residence at Esher. As Stevenson describes the developing relationship, "The two older sisters gained his admiration for their sincere religious belief and their practical work among the poor of their neighborhood, which had won them the enmity of the conventional local rector. The youngest, Marie, who was twenty-four [Meredith was now thirty-five], played the piano exquisitely; and though she talked little, Meredith began to realize that she was 'intensely emotional.'"⁸³

Meredith's courtship of Marie Vulliamy has been described fairly thoroughly by Stevenson, whose account should be filled out by reference to Professor C. L. Cline's excellent and helpful article, "The Betrothal of George Meredith to Marie Vulliamy." Put briefly, Meredith's aspirations for the hand of Marie Vulliamy led him into still another "ordeal" involving the dredging up not only of the facts of his first marriage, Mary Meredith's elopement with Henry Wallis, the child born to her and given Meredith's name after she had left him, and so on, but of Meredith's financial status and his prospects of inheriting money from relatives. The result of Mr. Vulliamy's investigation was generally favorable to Meredith, and once the suitor had agreed "to insure his life in favor of Marie," the father of the bride consented to the marriage. Professor Cline summarizes: "his daughter's suitor was less than the ideal that a father's heart could have desired. But his investigations of Meredith's character and reputation had revealed nothing really discreditable, and though the financial outlook was not bright, it was not, with the £200 per annum that he would settle upon

Marie, altogether dark. And outweighing all objections was the simple fact that his daughter was in love with Meredith. The only possible answer was yes, and he gave it," and Meredith married Marie Vulliamy on September 20, 1864. Augustus Jessopp performed the ceremony in the presence of "Lionel Robinson as best man, and most of the groom's old friends . . . ," including Mrs. Ross.⁸⁴

The marriage lasted for twenty-one years, until Marie's death on September 17, 1885. The portrait of Marie to be gleaned from Meredith's biographers is not a particularly lively or complimentary one. The consensus makes her a rather ordinary woman of considerable sweetness of character and--no doubt--of considerable patience with and tolerance of her husband's eccentricities and changes of temperament. Meredith's own descriptions of her in the letters to friends during the period of courtship allow us to see her as a rather more animated and appealing woman than she is, for example, in Lindsay's version: "She had no strong or vital character, and was not particularly intellectual or beautiful"⁸⁵ In the first fairly lengthy reference he makes to Marie in the published Letters (May 18, 1864), Meredith asks Jessopp why he and his wife "won't think her very handsome Some vitality being wanted; but the lack of it practically compensated by so very much sweetness." On June 6, 1864, Meredith confessed to Jessopp as follows:

It is time that your friend should show you a clean breast.--He loves a woman as he never yet loved, and she for the first time has let her heart escape her She is the sweetest person I have ever known she is of a most affectionate and loving nature. May I be worthy of the love she gives me!

. . . My friends, who know of this, think me fortunate, on reflection. They see that I shall now first live; that I shall work as I have never yet done My hope stands like a fixed lamp in my

brain. I know that I can work in an altogether different fashion, and that with a wife and such a wife by my side, I shall taste some of the holiness of this mortal world and be new-risen in it. Already the spur is acting, and health comes, energy comes. I feel that I can do things well, and not haphazard, as heretofore

I cannot play at life. I loved her when we were in Norwich. 'Cathedralising' would not otherwise have been my occupation. I believe that I do her good: I know that she feels it. Me she fills with such deep and reverent emotion that I can hardly think it the action of a human creature merely. I seem to trace a fable thus far developed by blessed angels in the skies. She has been reserved for me, my friend. It was seen that I could love a woman, and one has been given to me to love. Her love for me is certain. I hold her strongly in my hand.

On the same day, Meredith wrote to Maxse:

. . . My friend, I have written of love and never felt it till now.--I have much to pass through in raking up my history with the first woman that held me. But I would pass through fire for my darling, and all that I have to endure seems little for the immense gain I hope to get. When her hand rests in mine, the world seems to hold its breath, and the sun is moveless. I take hold of Eternity. I love her.--She is intensely emotional, but without expression for it, save in music. I call her my dumb poet. But when she is at the piano, she is not dumb. She has a divine touch on the notes Marie . . . has strong common sense, as have all real emotional natures There could not be a fairer, sweeter companion, or one who would more perfectly wed with me. She tries to make me understand her faults. I spell at them like a small boy with his fingers upon words of one syllable. Of course some faults exist. But she has a growing mind and a developing nature. Love is doing wonders with her.

On June 7, Meredith described Marie to his good friend William Hardman and asked him to share his high estimation of her: "Is she not worth anything or all in the world . . . ? I never touched so pure and so conscience-clear a heart. My own is almost abashed to think itself beloved by such a creature. The day when she is to be mine blinds me. Will it come? It flickers like lightning in my brain." That Marie was not a strikingly beautiful woman seems at moments to make Meredith apologetic: to Maxse he wrote (on June 9), "I am told by a lady that [Marie] would not be considered handsome though she is perfectly charming in manner and in face." But Marie evidently had

other and more valuable qualities, witness the letters already quoted and the letter to Maxse on August 29: "I write with my beloved beside me; my thrice darling--of my body, my soul, my song! I have never loved a woman and felt love grow in me. This clear and lovely nature doubles mine. And she has humour, my friend. She is a charming companion, as well as the staunchest heart and fairest mistress."⁸⁶

It seems only reasonable, given the glowing terms in which Meredith refers to his bride-to-be, to assume that a nature as sensitive as his had to be accurate in its response to its chosen mate (although I admit that my sex, and not only the words Meredith uses, makes me feel justified in making this assertion). That the projected effect of the marriage on Meredith's working habits and abilities was not to prove entirely accurate does not really seem relevant: marriage has a way of being less ideal than one hopes. But there is evidence, early and slight, admittedly, that Meredith did respond positively as an artist to the joy of his new state. On October 18, 1864, Meredith wrote to Hardman:

I am working mightily. Last night I awoke, and at 3 o'clock struck a light and wrote a poem on Cleopatra for the 'Cornhill,' to suit Sandys's illustration. Also an 'Ode' to the Napiers (part of it) and part of 'The Ex-champion's Lament.' I say, Young Copperfield! I never had such a fit on me since the age of 21; and my good love, waking too, joyfully assisted by lending notepaper and soothing me for having disturbed her slumber.

Six days later, he added to the portrait of his new self for Hardman:

"Know that Marie is the wife of a Pantagruel; she is sublime in laughter. We sit on a humourous Olympus, and rule over the follies of mortals"⁸⁷ One is reminded of Clara Middleton and Vernon Whitford among the Alps, attended by the sisterly Comic Muse, and one feels that perhaps Meredith saw himself (at least at the time) as

ideally mated at last. The course of the marriage was evidently reasonably smooth, given Meredith's athletic inclinations and the demands of his profession as journalist-reader-novelist-poet, and Marie's sweetness and wifely virtues.

That Marie was to Meredith the wife he required--and no other criterion for judging her is valid--may perhaps be confirmed by his description of her in the beautiful and affirmative poem, "A Faith on Trial," written during Marie's last illness:

The crowned Shadow poisoning dart
Hung over her: she, my own,
My good companion, mate,
Pulse of me: she who had shown
Fortitude quiet as Earth's
At the shedding of leaves.⁸⁸

Surely Marie's Earth-like qualities weigh heavily in her favor as "the wife of a Pantagruel" whose mother was Earth.

Of course, during the process of securing Marie as his wife, Meredith did not abandon his work. Emilia Belloni was in the works and was published (as Emilia in England) in three volumes by Chapman and Hall in April 1864.⁸⁹ By May 18, 1864, he was able to write to Jessopp that he was working on "Emilia in Italy," the sequel to Emilia in England, and that this novel would be "All story . . . : no philosopher present: action, excitement, holding of your breath, chilling horror, classic sensation." It was to be completed by the fall, even though, as Meredith adds in his next sentence, he is already at work on "An Autobiography. 'The Adventures of Richmond Roy, and his friend Contrivance Jack: Being the History of Two Rising Men':--and to be a spanking bid for popularity on the part of this writer."⁹⁰ During the summer of 1864, Meredith wrote the first and last chapters for The

Career of the Alabama, "No. 290." From July 29, 1862, to June 19, 1864, by Warren Adams, who was, as Stevenson puts it, Meredith's "energetic new employer" at Saunders and Otley, and who "rushed over to Cherbourg, interviewed Captain Semmes of the Confederate raider Alabama on the very eve of its fight with the Kearsarge, and obtained the log and the captain's journal" upon which he based the book.⁹¹ On or about September 14, 1864, Meredith mentioned to Jessopp that he had "engaged to do a 1 vol. story within a certain term," a reference to Rhoda Fleming, eventually published in three volumes in October 1865 by Tinsley Brothers.⁹² Emilia in Italy (later Vittoria) was momentarily set aside and finally published as a serial in the Fortnightly Review from January 15 through December 1, 1866, and as a three-volume novel on December 20, 1866, by Chapman and Hall.⁹³ And there was the writing of poetry, already alluded to briefly in the quotations from Meredith's letters.

Meredith's second son, William Maxse Meredith, was born on July 26, 1865. The recording of this event reminds us of Meredith's first-born, Arthur, who had been at school in Norwich, under Augustus Jessopp, for almost three years by the time his half-brother arrived. The effect on the older child of his father's marriage to Marie Vulliamy is not definitely known. Meredith had hopes that Arthur would respond to his step-mother as he himself had, and in the letter of June 6, 1864, to Jessopp, Meredith wrote that Marie "is very fond of [Arthur], and will be his friend. He will find a home where I have found one." To Maxse, also on June 6, Meredith wrote that Marie "is very fond of the boy. Not at all in a gushing way, but fond of him as a good little fellow, whom she trusts to make her friend." Arthur was

evidently present at the wedding, coming up from Norwich with Jessopp. In November 1864, Meredith again implied that he had hopes for the relationship between Arthur and Marie: "my little man," he wrote to Jessopp, "will now have a mother." Then there follows a silence on the subject of Arthur for a considerable time, until, on March 2, 1867, Meredith wrote to Swinburne: "I have waited [before writing to Swinburne] to read the Ode ["on the Insurrection in Candia"] and also to ship off my Arthur for Switzerland," to a school at Hofwyl, near Berne, operated on the Pestalozzi system. Despite Meredith's use of the possessive "my," the verb, "ship off," strikes the ear rather coldly, and the reason for the change of schools--money--makes the situation all the more painful.⁹⁴

It seems fairly obvious that Arthur, for so long the center of his father's love, had been displaced by Meredith's second marriage. Sassoon describes Arthur as "proud and rather unresponsive by nature," questions the strength of the boy's attachment to his father, and finally conjectures "that [Arthur] now withdrew into an obdurate hostility to his stepmother, blamed his father for letting him down, and felt that to be treated like that was more than he could bear." Between 1868 and 1873, Arthur evidently remained on the continent, going from the school at Hofwyl to a Gymnasium in Stuttgart, from there to a position at Havre, and thence to another position at Lille. Meredith spent some time with Arthur in August 1871 and in the fall of 1872, and letters passed between father and son, but there is little overt expression of feeling and much rather pompous advice on the Franco-Prussian War in Meredith's letters. According to Sassoon, the six extant letters from Arthur, written between January 1870 and July

1873, contain "nothing . . . to indicate misunderstandings or resentments. [Arthur] provides meticulous details of his expenditure, describes his holidays, and discusses his studies, his health, and such ideas as he has formed of his future career. They are dutiful, self-centred, and dull. One imagines Meredith reading them with a sigh." Sassoon reports too that Arthur returned to Flint Cottage in 1873 before going to work at Havre. Between 1873 and 1881 there was evidently little or no communication between Meredith and Arthur, but when, in 1881, Arthur developed lung trouble, Meredith, as Priestley puts it, "wrote at once offering help and suggesting that [Arthur] should come home for a time." The offer was not accepted and Arthur went to Switzerland and thence to Italy to recuperate. There is a possibility that the two met on the continent in 1881 and 1882: in his letters to Arthur on June 23 and August 5, 1881, Meredith mentions the first of these meetings. Stevenson says that "Arthur begged his father to come and see him" and that the pressure of work described in Meredith's refusal did, in fact, prevent the meeting that year, but Stevenson also records a meeting in August 1882 that was, in effect, a reconciliation. Arthur came to England several times after this and again in October 1885 to visit his father after Marie's death. In the fall of 1886 Arthur was hospitalized in London following what Stevenson calls "a serious collapse in health," and "Meredith visited him there as often as possible" In 1889 Arthur went to Australia to try to restore his seriously impaired health, but he returned to England in the spring of 1890 in worse health than when he left. He stayed with his half-sister, Mrs. Edith Clarke (Mary Meredith's

daughter by her first husband), at Woking, where he died, no doubt mercifully, on September 3, 1890.⁹⁵

One cannot but note the tragic contrast between Meredith's ideals concerning education and child-raising as they appear scattered throughout the novels and his own failure as a father in his relationship with Arthur. Stevenson, it seems to me, is correct in pointing out the irony here and in drawing attention to the parallel between Meredith's own history and the course of his older son's life: the father, "like Arthur, lost his mother about the age of five, was petted and adored by his father, lived in isolation from other children, and was outraged when he was eleven by his father's remarriage. In both instances the father forfeited the son's respect by being unable to afford a projected education, and in both generations the boy was packed off at the beginning of his teens to a cheap foreign school." Stevenson recalls, too, the tragic histories of Richard Feverel and his father, of Harry Richmond and his fantasy-ridden father, and of Purcell Barrett (in Sandra Belloni), whose relationship with his parents was equally strained and, in effect, unjust.⁹⁶ That Meredith had not learned well from his own experiences as a child and young man is disappointing to the subjective reviewer of his life: surely a man so perspicacious in so many matters should have seen the damage he was doing to his son. It seems tragic that a promising second marriage should have completed the failure of the father-son relationship that had been so important to Meredith after Mary's desertion of him and of the child.

But to return to the chronology of Meredith's own life: in June 1866, Meredith left England for Italy as "a special correspondent

. . . for The Morning Post" to cover the simmering situation between Italy and Austria. He arrived in Bologna on June 21 and went to Ferrara, from which city his first dispatch was sent. His itinerary included Milan, Cremona, Bozzolo, Torre Malimberti, Piadena, Gonzaga, Lusia, Motta, Noale, Padau, and Dolo; his dispatches are more interesting for their picture of his trials-by-travel through the mountains, mud, and heat and for their portrait of the people of Italy than they are for their description of the progress of what war there was to cover.⁹⁷ The last dispatch datelined "Marseilles, July 24," describes the feelings of Prussians and Belgians toward the Italians and recounts a barbaric anecdote concerning the methods of brigands seeking ransoms for captured Italian soldiers.⁹⁸

The mention of Meredith's role as an English war correspondent in Italy during her conflict with Austria raises another question about Meredith's command of languages other than English: did Meredith read and speak Italian? I included, in the discussion of Meredith's formal education, mention of his exposure during those few years to--at least--Latin, Greek, French, and German. The novels and poems are sprinkled with phrases and sentences from all four of these languages and with allusions to the history, literature, and music of the corresponding peoples. The Catalogue of a Portion of the Library of the late Mr. George Meredith lists some 246 French books and twenty-two German books.⁹⁹ Among the volumes of Latin and Greek in the Catalogue are the following:

Terentius. *Comoediae sex*, with Commentary by the Rev. E. St. John Parry, 1857
 Hermann, G. *Elementa Doctrinae Metricae*. Leipzig 1816
 Willauer, A. *Lexikon Aeschyleum*, 2 vols. in one, Lipsiae, 1830-31.

The dictionaries listed in the Catalogue indicate Meredith's continuing interest in the languages he had learned (I include the English dictionaries as a matter of general interest):

Andrews, E. A.: Copious and Critical Latin English Dictionary, 1865
 Bosworth, Dr. J. Dictionary of the Anglo-Saxon Language, 1838
 Buttmann, Dr. Philip. Intermediate or Larger Greek Grammar, translated
 by Ch. Supf, 1841.
 Rowland, Thomas. Grammar of the Welsh Language, 1876
 Skeat, W. W. Concise Etymological Dictionary of the English Language,
 1884
 Spurrell, Wm. English and Welsh Pronouncing Dictionary. Caerfyrddin,
 1872
 Brockhaus. Conversations-Lexikon. Leipzig, 1875-79

Obviously, because of the dates, most of the volumes just listed came into Meredith's hands after the brief period of formal education, but one cannot help wondering if the Greek grammar by Buttmann was not the text Meredith used at Neuwied: as an English student, he might have been given a translation of a German text. One speculates, too, whether the metrical study by Hermann was not a survivor of the years at Neuwied: in 1849 Meredith proposed "to write a biographical sketch" of Hermann for Chambers's Journal, and Neuwied seems the most likely candidate for the beginnings of Meredith's acquaintance with Hermann's book.¹⁰⁰

It may be helpful to review at some length Meredith's knowledge of languages other than English. It should be conceded that Meredith had a solid command of French: Marie Vulliamy Meredith, after all, was half French, and her husband probably spoke French when he went to France with her to visit her family there.¹⁰¹ Anyone who reads through Meredith's novels cannot help noticing that many of his characters speak French (although Meredith generally records French conversation in English): Dahlia Fleming learns French during her stay on the continent with Edward Blancove, who, for his part, goes to hear Molière. Harry Richmond learns French, speaks it here and there in the course of his adventures, and can, with some help, distinguish French French from Belgian French. Nevil Beauchamp addresses his challenge to the French in impeccable grammar, with which Rosamond Culling helps him as an expert. Diana Warwick sings in French and Nesta Radnor has a French

companion, Mlle de Seilles, reads French, is able to judge Dudley Sowerby's French, and sings French ballads. French phrases and words are scattered briefly throughout Lord Ormont and His Aminta and The Amazing Marriage, and even Annette Smith, in The House on the Beach, speaks French.¹⁰²

In January 1867, a review by Meredith of La Maison forestière by Erckmann-Chatrian appeared in the Fortnightly Review.¹⁰³ On February 1, 1877, Meredith delivered the famous Essay on the Idea of Comedy and of the Uses of the Comic Spirit at the London Institution: scattered throughout are generous references to Molière, Rabelais, Littré, Sainte-Beuve, Joubert, Saint-Simon, Voltaire, Rousseau, and assorted lesser French literary lights.¹⁰⁴ And in his own references to the tortuous process of writing the Odes in Contribution to the Song of French History (1898), especially the "Napoléon," Meredith lists a considerable number of memoirs and histories of France and of Napoleon and his generals, many of which he must have read in French. The Odes were also influenced to some extent by Hugo's Les Châtiments, La Légende des siècles, and Napoléon le petit.¹⁰⁵

Meredith's acquaintance with the German language, it seems from the evidence, must have been almost as extensive as his knowledge of French and must have been expanded by Meredith on his own initiative: surely two years of instruction at the age of fourteen would not have provided Meredith once and for all with such great skill in speaking and reading the complex German language. Among Meredith's contributions to the little manuscript magazine, "The Monthly Observer," during his years with Charnock were translations of Heine's "My Heart," von Eichendorff's "Moonlight Night," Goethe's "Song (Joyful)" and "Confession," and Uhland's "The Landlady's Daughter." Among the unpublished poems in

the Yale notebooks are translations of Uhland's "The Boy's Death" and "The Good Comrade," and Schiller's "Evening, after a Picture." In 1849 Meredith sent R. H. Horne a volume of Goethe's "Minor Poems," with the comment that Meredith was "intimate with the German." In his first volume, Poems (1851), Meredith included "Beauty Rohtraut," a translation of Eduard Mörike's "Schön-Rohtraut" that first appeared in The Leader (September 14, 1850) as "The Ballad of Beauty Rohtraut."¹⁰⁶ (All these poems, except "The Boy's Death," are considered below, pp. 244 ff., in connection with Meredith's prosody.)

In 1852, an impressive display of Meredith's talents in reading and understanding German appeared in a review article entitled "Austrian Poets" in Fraser's Magazine. According to David Bonnell Green, who identified the unsigned review as Meredith's, the young man's translations from the poets he reviewed "are not of so inferior a quality that he needed to consign them to oblivion," as Green concludes Meredith must have done from his not having continued to translate German poetry. He is most successful in his translations from Lenau and turns 'Die Drei Zigeuner' and 'Der Postillon' into viable poems in English, despite occasional inaccuracies and weaknesses because of difficulties with the metre and language. His translation from Grillparzer's 'Szene aus einem unvollendeten Trauerspiele' (Hannibal und Scipio)--the only translation in English of any part of this piece--is also good. He is now and then inaccurate, or takes liberties in reproducing the metre, but he captures much of the spirit of the original, and some of the lines move the English reader in much the same way as the original does the German reader. The other translations are less distinguished, but from his successes it seems fair to conclude that Meredith had at least the ability to become an effective translator of German poetry.¹⁰⁷

In Meredith's letters are words for Schubert's "Addio" and a translation of a "Lied von Rastrelli" (emended to "Castelli" by Professor Bartlett) written for Janet Duff Gordon.¹⁰⁸ Phrases in German and references to German literature abound in Meredith's novels and letters, particularly, of course, in Farina and in The Adventures of Harry

Richmond, a good portion of the latter work taking place in Germany. And one of the major influences on Meredith's thinking was the greatest German poet of all, Goethe, to whom Meredith made many references throughout his works and letters.¹⁰⁹ (Support for this last assertion appears in Chapter II, p. 176 ff.)

The evidences for Meredith's command of Latin and Greek are of much the same sort as those for his knowledge of French and German. He was taught the fundamentals, no doubt, of each language in his years in school, and phrases and words and allusions to the literatures are scattered throughout the letters and novels. Many of Meredith's characters learn Latin and Greek and comment on their difficulties: Harry Richmond is again the most active in the field. Dr. Middleton, in The Egoist, is a walking, talking compendium of quotations from the Latin, sometimes in the original, sometimes in translation. Meredith's reviews, some of which are collected in the Miscellaneous Prose volume of the Memorial Edition, are sprinkled with quotations and phrases. One review alone should persuade the most skeptical reader that Meredith did know his Homeric Greek, for his comments on Charles Merivale's Homer's Iliad in English Rhymed Verse in the Fortnightly Review, May 1869, are astute and reveal close acquaintance with Homer's language. (Whether or not he could read the Greek of the dramatists, philosophers, or orators is uncertain. The "Essay on Comedy" refers to Greek comedy and to Aristotle's Poetics, but it is not at all clear that Meredith read these in Greek.) Meredith tried his own hand, somewhat inconsistently with his remarks on Merivale, at translating the Iliad into respectable English hexameters, but the seven resulting "Fragments" are certainly not the most readable English poetry, despite the fact

that Meredith selected familiar and striking passages for his experiment in the late 1880's: "The Invective of Achilles," "Marshalling of the Achaians," "Agamemnon in the Fight," "Paris and Diomedes," "Hypnos on Ida," "Clash in Arms of the Achaians and Trojans," and "The Horses of Achilles" (the history of these translations appears below, p. 251 ff.).¹¹⁰

There are, of course, numerous poems about or using figures from Greek mythology and history among Meredith's original poems, beginning with "The Rape of Aurora" in the 1851 volume and culminating in the use of Artemis and Aphrodite as recondite Meredithian symbols in the late "The Vital Choice," "With the Huntress," "With the Persuader," and "The Test of Manhood" in the Reading of Life volume (1901). And that Meredith's interest in Greek did not fail as he grew older is borne out by the story, recorded by Stevenson, that Meredith "became so keenly interested in studying Greek that until the very end of his life a visitor, if ushered into his room unexpectedly, was likely to see a Greek grammar in his hand."¹¹¹

There remain the questions surrounding Meredith's knowledge of Italian, Provençal, and Welsh. The case for Meredith's being conversant in Italian is fairly strong, beginning with the fact that Peacock knew Italian well and may, during their close association over a period of some seven or eight years, have imparted to his son-in-law some of his knowledge of Italian language and literature. Then there is the scattering of phrases, songs, comments on pronunciation and Italian literature in Sandra Belloni and Vittoria, especially, and also in Harry Richmond and One of Our Conquerors.¹¹² The strongest evidence lies, however, in the dispatches from Italy in 1866, particularly those

dated "Gonzaga, July 12, 1866," "Noale, near Treviso, July 17, 1866," and "Dolo, near Venice, July 20, 1866." In the report for July 12, Meredith records a conversation with a "young lieutenant of the thirtieth infantry regiment of the Pisa brigade" that one must assume, it seems to me, was conducted in Italian, simply because it seems unlikely that an Italian lieutenant would speak enough English to convey his ideas so clearly and thoroughly. Next, on the Dosalo ferry, Meredith writes, he fell into conversation with some peasants, who were "talking about the war and the Austrians, and swearing they would, if possible, annihilate some of the latter," and about "the priests, and were all agreed, to put it in the mildest way, in thinking extremely little of them, and only differed as to what punishment they should like them to suffer." Again: it is most unlikely that Italian peasants should speak English well enough to allow Meredith to understand all they said. One can only conclude that Meredith both understood and spoke Italian sufficiently to enable him to understand the peasants and to explain to them the use of a glass and the mechanics of a revolver. And in the dispatch from Dolo, dated July 20, Meredith describes his traveling with "an officer of Cialdini's staff" and their arrival at Dolo, where they "made [their] way to the parsonage of the village . . . to ascend the steeple of the church to get a view of the surrounding country and a better hearing of the guns if possible." They spoke to the sexton, "a staunch Italian, as he told us he was": surely sextons in small Italian towns do not speak English, and again one must conclude that Meredith was conversant in Italian. (It ought to be added, incidentally, that no mention of an interpreter appears in the dispatches.)¹¹³

The Italian must have been self-taught, perhaps upon a foundation laid by Peacock. One recalls that Meredith made his first trip to the Alps in 1861 (see above); that journey took him into northern Italy, and one might assume that he began at this point to learn Italian in earnest. In a letter to his friend, Bonaparte Wyse, during that trip, Meredith wrote (August 17, 1861), "Why don't you meet me and save my looking foolish, when you know I can't Italian [sic] and can only just stumble in French" ¹¹⁴ We can discount the judgment of the French, and we can assume, it seems to me, that his inability to speak Italian well probably drove him to acquiring a grasp of Italian that would prevent his "looking foolish" ever again. We do not know, unfortunately, if Meredith used an Italian grammar or a phrase book, but it seems impossible to deny that, by 1866, Meredith had acquired sufficient command of Italian to qualify him as a war correspondent in Italy and to enable him to function well in that capacity.

The mention of Bonaparte Wyse provides a convenient starting-point for consideration of Meredith's knowledge of Provençal. Wyse was a grand-nephew of Napoleon; his parents had separated and the two children had lived in France with their mother. Stevenson writes, "While living in Avignon, Bonaparte Wyse became enthusiastic about the revival of Provençal language and poetry under the inspiration of Frédéric Mistral. He studied the dialect, composed poems in it, and was admitted to the Society of *Félibres*, who claimed to be the successors of the medieval troubadours." In describing Wyse to Janet Ross, Meredith wrote, "He is intimate with the members of the new school of Provençal poets . . . , and wishes me to know them. Mistral I have

read. He is really a fine poet." Professor Bartlett, in her article on Meredith and Mistral, quotes from a letter of Meredith's to Wyse, "probably [written] in the same month" (of the summer of 1861) as the letter to Mrs. Ross:

When you see M. Mistral, pray tell him that it is my earnest wish to be introduced to him. Mirèio, the more I look at it, strikes me as a consummate work in an age of very small singing. It has in some parts the pastoral richness of Theocritus and the rough vigour of Homer. I read your translation of the portion describing the mares of Camargue to Maxse, who was delighted.

On June 16, 1861, Meredith wrote again to Wyse:

Tell M. Mistral that Lady Gordon, an excellent critic, and one whose opinion I value more highly than that of most men, is astonished and delighted at the vigour and freshness of his poem. She has taught herself to read it in Provençale [sic], and has now a fair appreciation of the beauty of the instrument M. Mistral touches so wonderfully. When known in England, Mirèio is certain to be highly appreciated.

On March 27, 1869, Meredith's "Mistral's 'Mirèio'" appeared in the Pall Mall Gazette and included Meredith's own translation of the "Mares" passage mentioned above in the letter to Wyse.¹¹⁵

Seven years later, Meredith was still reading Provençal verse, as is evidenced by two letters to Wyse in 1876. On May 20, Meredith wrote to express his regrets at not having been able to accept an invitation from Wyse to drink "Châteauneuf du Pape . . . to the health of Mistral"; he then notes, "By the way, I am going to write a full review of him." On October 6, Meredith wrote, "The 'Cabaladuro d'Or' [by Wyse] is good rich thick stuff, with body and with fire, like Châteauneuf du Pape. As to the Song, my wife worked Trojanly and I, as it were a drum accompaniment, thumped out the Felibre lingo."¹¹⁶ The "full review" evidently did not follow. In 1901, while putting together the poems for A Reading of Life, Meredith included "The Mares of the Camargue," "simply [crossing] out all of [his article on Mistral]

except the five stanzas he had translated and [sending] it to the printer with the instruction: 'Print, under heading--THE MARES OF THE CAMARGUE, from the Mireio of Mistral.' The passage is the last poem in" the 1901 volume.¹¹⁷ Like his Italian, Meredith's Provençal was probably self-taught, although he might have had some assistance from Wyse. He certainly would have found it helpful, as I have, to read Provençal with a French translation beside it.

Meredith's knowledge of Welsh is a subject to be handled with caution. In his study of Meredith and Peacock, Augustus Henry Able III suggests that only Peacock could have introduced Meredith to the Celtic influences that permeate his work: "that [Peacock] was literally the guide to Meredith's discovery of his racial kin is scarcely to be doubted": Peacock had travelled in Wales, married a Welsh girl, and probably spoke Welsh, which he might have taught himself with his wife's help. Able indicates Meredith's interest in Wales and in her literature, especially in The Amazing Marriage, and continues:

from his mention of the technical terms of Welsh verse he would seem to know the poetry in its original forms. Accordingly, two possible assumptions present themselves: either Meredith under the inspiration of Peacock's leadership undertook the study of the Welsh tongue, which, although it is notoriously difficult, his new-born racial pride would make him eager to know; or, what seems far more likely, he learned of the Welsh literature solely from what Peacock gave him in his novels and in his conversation; and from the various translations which Peacock's library most probably contained, the fruit of his own amateur interest.¹¹⁸

The evidence for Meredith's interest in things Welsh is considerable: many of his favorite or most positive characters are of Welsh origin or descent: Merthyr Powys and his sister (in Sandra Belloni and Vittoria) and Owain Wythan (in The Amazing Marriage) are major examples of Meredith's interest. However, the evidence for Meredith's ability to

speak or even to read Welsh is slight. Ernest Baker, in his discussion of Meredith's novels, suggests, probably rightly, that Meredith's first work of prose fiction, The Shaving of Shagpat, must have been derived in part (under the influence of Peacock) from the Mabinogion, the collection of Welsh tales translated between 1838 and 1849 by Lady Charlotte Guest, and particularly from the tale entitled "Culhwch and Olwen," in which the hero must shave the heroine's father as the culminating task in a lengthy series imposed before Culhwch may marry Olwen.¹¹⁹ There are also two poems, "The Head of Bran the Blest" and "Aneurin's Harp," that draw upon Welsh lore for their subject matter, but a note to "Bran" when it appeared in Once a Week on February 4, 1860, gave Meredith's source as Lady Guest's Mabinogion.¹²⁰ This need not mean that Meredith could not or did not read the original Welsh: he may merely have been pointing out a source for the non-Welsh-reading public. But the source or analogue for "Aneurin's Harp" indicated by Professor Bartlett was also a translation from the Welsh: Y Gododin, A Poem on the Battle of Caelraeth, translated by the Rev. John William ab Ithel in 1852.¹²¹ The appearance of a single Welsh word, rhaiadr (waterfall or cataract), in The Tale of Chloe hardly proves anything like a comprehensive knowledge of the language: Meredith could easily have picked up a single word from Peacock or almost anywhere--and most particularly from Peacock's Headlong Hall.¹²²

Meredith's unfinished novel, Celt and Saxon, is filled with comparisons of the temperaments and tendencies of both "races" and also contains some allusions to the Welsh tales, but of particular interest in this work is the description of Lawyer Camminy's liking for things Welsh: "I respect the remains of their literature, I study their

language, I attend their gatherings and subscribe the expenses; I consume Welsh mutton with relish; I enjoy the Triads, and can come down on them with a quotation from Catwg the Wise"123 (The Triads are gnostic statements or descriptions, primarily of Welsh history and heroes, arranged in groups of three parallel sentences.) One recalls that as late as 1908 Meredith was responding to news of research into "the period of the Roman occupation of Britain" and having to decline an invitation to join a "meeting of Welshmen in celebration of the memory of St. David," whom he calls "one of the great bonds holding Welshmen together"124 Meredith evidently shared publicly enough in Mr. Camminy's enthusiasm to receive such notifications and invitations. In 1907, according to an unpublished letter in Professor Cline's typescript, he was asked to write "a preface to a Welsh book . . . ," indicating, perhaps, that he was known as something of an authority on things Welsh, even if the language was not one of those things.¹²⁵

To sum up: It can be conceded, I think, that Meredith knew French and German well; had a better-than-adequate command of Greek and Latin and retained his interest in the former tongue to the end of his life; was at least able to read and converse with some ease in Italian; learned enough Provençal to translate Mistral and to read Wyse's poetry; probably did not learn to speak or read Welsh beyond a bare minimum, relying instead upon translations of that strange and difficult language for his knowledge of Welsh history and literature.

An outline of Meredith's life between 1866 and 1909 reveals few events, beyond those already touched upon in discussing Meredith's second marriage, his relationship with Arthur, and his command of

language, that can properly be labelled formative: after all, in 1866, when he went off to the war in Italy, Meredith was already thirty-eight years old and was more than likely well set in his ideas and opinions about art, politics, life, and anything else one might name.

Meredith's last dispatch as a war correspondent was dated July 24, 1866, from Marseilles. As Stevenson puts it, "He was unwilling [at this point] to hurry home . . . and lingered in the hope that further assignments might be forthcoming." He went to Austria and met Leslie Stephen in Vienna; he went to Venice in September, where he witnessed the "triumphal entry of the King of Italy" and saw Janet Ross, with whom he spent some time. His hopes of a permanent assignment on the continent from The Times did not materialize and, evidently in October, Meredith returned to England.¹²⁶

On December 1, 1866, Vittoria completed its serialization in the Fortnightly Review; on December 20, it was published in three volumes by Chapman and Hall.¹²⁷ During the three months or so following the publication of this novel, Meredith sent Arthur off to school in Switzerland. In the spring of 1867, Meredith attended a dinner given by John Morley at the Garrick Club: other guests included Browning, Trollope, Lewes, Forster, Frederick Greenwood, Alexander Macmillan, FitzJames Stephen, and the Positivist philosopher Edward Beesly. In the summer, the death of Marie's infant niece at the Merediths' residence at Kingston Lodge upset the couple greatly and intensified their determination to move to more congenial surroundings, with the result that by January 1868 they had decided upon the move to Flint Cottage, Box Hill, which was to be Meredith's home until the end of his life. Between November 1867 and January 1868, Meredith was also acting editor

of the Fortnightly Review during John Morley's trip to the United States; it was during this period that the friendship between Meredith and Swinburne broke down over the fee for the publication of two poems of Swinburne's.¹²⁸

Among the events in Meredith's life worth noting in 1868 were the meeting with Alice Brandreth (subsequently Mrs. James Gordon and, later, Lady Butcher) and, even more important, Meredith's participation in Admiral Maxse's campaign for a seat in Parliament on the Radical ticket. Meredith went to Southampton to help in the campaign, upon which experiences he drew while writing Beauchamp's Career (published seven years later, in 1875). In January 1869, Meredith made the acquaintance, at the offices of Chapman and Hall, of Thomas Hardy, with whom he maintained a friendship until the end of his life. In the summer of 1869, Meredith made a trip to the Alps with his friend Lionel Robinson and with Arthur, who then went on to study at a Gymnasium in Stuttgart. Work was progressing on the novel that eventually became The Adventures of Harry Richmond, and Meredith's ten years' labors as a journalist for the Ipswich Journal came to an end.¹²⁹

The year 1870 saw work proceeding on Harry Richmond, the death of Marie's father, and a visit by Meredith to his father and stepmother at Southsea. Harry Richmond began its serial run in the Cornhill Magazine (September 1870–November 1871), an event that Stevenson describes as "a good augury for [Meredith's] long-deferred success as a novelist" because the Cornhill "was the most widely read monthly, to which nearly all the leading authors contributed."¹³⁰ It was also during 1870, of course, that the Franco-Prussian War broke out, creating grave concern in Meredith's mind over the affairs of his

wife's family in France and of his son at school in Germany. Meredith's letters over this period are full of observations about the cause of the war, the placing of one's sympathies, and the probable outcome of the conflict. One direct result of Meredith's concern was the poem, "France, December 1870" (originally published in the Fortnightly on January 1, 1871), which he described to John Morley as follows: "I have a Grand Ode to France--called simple [sic] 'France 1870': from my point of view of sympathy and philosophy; which I think is ours I believe I am within the shadow of the Truth"131

In March 1871, there was evidently a break in the friendship between Meredith and Morley, but the gap was filled, according to Stevenson, by "two other energetic members of the coterie" of Positivists: Frederic Harrison and Leslie Stephen.¹³² More pleasant events than this marked the year 1871, however: on June 10, Meredith's daughter, Marie Eveleen, was born. In August, Meredith left for the Continent for a six weeks' tour, during which he saw Arthur. On October 26, Harry Richmond was published in three volumes by Smith, Elder and Company; the novel went into its second edition on December 11, 1871.¹³³

The next few years are relatively quiet ones: in the fall of 1872, Meredith again visited Arthur, and between December 21 and January 28, Meredith's topical dialogues, "Up to Midnight," appeared in the Graphic. In March 1873 an article by Arthur on "a street-rioting episode in Stuttgart" was published in the Morning Post. Meredith himself was at work on Beauchamp's Career, which evidently created many problems for its author as he proceeded. Those problems, however, led eventually to a reconciliation in May 1874, partly through the efforts of Frederick Greenwood and Admiral Maxse, between Meredith and Morley.

Publication of the novel in serial form began in the August 1874 issue of the Fortnightly; it was published in three volumes by Chapman and Hall in November 1875. Although the novel was not noticeably a success, it did receive favorable reviews from critics younger than Meredith, among whom were H. D. Traill, J. Comyns Carr, and the poet who became a sort of protégé of Meredith's, James Thomson.¹³⁴

Poetry had not been entirely neglected during these busy novel-writing years; I have included in the footnotes a list of Meredith's poetic output between 1867 and 1875.¹³⁵ The years 1876-1877 encompassed the completion of "The House on the Beach" (begun as "Van Diemen Smith" in 1861), published in the New Quarterly Magazine in January 1877, and the composition of the "Essay on the Idea of Comedy and the Uses of the Comic Spirit," presented first as a lecture at the London Institution on February 1, 1877, and subsequently published in the New Quarterly in April of that year. In July 1877, "The Case of General Ople and Lady Camper" was published in the New Quarterly. Meredith was also helping Marie with her translation of Charles de Mazade's Vie de Cavour, which was published late in the year. Also in the works, one assumes, was the revision of "Love in the Valley," which appeared in Macmillan's Magazine in October 1878. It was in 1877, too, in the midst of all this mixed activity, that the chalet was built on the hill behind Flint Cottage and that The Egoist began to take shape.¹³⁶

One of the highlights of 1878 was Meredith's meeting Robert Louis Stevenson, who thereafter became "a true-blue Meredith man"; Meredith, in turn, became an advisor and admirer of the younger writer, who appears in The Amazing Marriage in the guise of the young post-philosopher, Gower Woodseer.¹³⁷ Work on The Egoist continued until it

was completed in February 1879, but by this time Meredith was in exceedingly bad health from the pressures of composition. Nevertheless, he set to work upon The Amazing Marriage and, according to Stevenson, completed "one quarter of the new story" before "illness put an end to all writing for many weeks." In July, the "Tale of Chloe" appeared in the New Quarterly Magazine, but it seems likely that, as Stevenson suggests, this piece was written before Meredith's increasingly bad health began.¹³⁸

1878 was also the year of the republication of Richard Feverel, which brought forth another "enthusiastic article," as Stevenson puts it, by James Thomson. In spite of his bad health, Meredith agreed to a walking-trip in the Lake Country with Morley, which did little to improve his condition. The tradition of significant rejections was continued when Meredith turned down George Bernard Shaw's Immaturity (followed a couple of years later by his rejection of Cashel Byron's Profession). In August, Meredith went to France for seven weeks, only to return in a dismal fog that outweighed the benefits of the vacation. Finally, in October, The Egoist was published in three volumes by C. Kegan Paul and Company after having been in the publisher's hands some eight months. Worse still, without Meredith's knowledge, the right to publish the novel serially had been given to the Glasgow Weekly Herald, which carried the story as Sir Willoughby Patterne The Egoist between June 21, 1879, and January 10, 1880.¹³⁹

The reception of The Egoist was, contrary to Meredith's expectations, favorable, and W. E. Henley, as Stevenson puts it, "asserted thunderously" that Meredith was the equal of Balzac, Richardson, Fielding, and Cervantes. The "turning-point" in Meredith's career had

arrived--but Meredith's earlier disappointments and his persistent ill health evidently acted together to make him, in Stevenson's words, "so pathologically antagonistic to reviewers that even their praise irritated him." The years of abuse and silence, of disregard, had already made Meredith the man who wrote to please himself, the man whom reviewers could not treat rightly no matter what they said.¹⁴⁰

The winter of 1879-1880 was hard on Meredith. In March he wrote to Maxse, "I am very unwell. During the frost I was able to work in the morning and evening. When the soft winds came I broke down, the stomach lost all power, and since then I have worked badly and waked continually." In a letter to James Thomson in April, he wrote, in explanation of his not having written before concerning The City of Dreadful Night, "I am not yet in a condition to do justice either to the critic [referring to Thomson's articles on Meredith] or the poet, for owing to the attack I suffered under last year, I have been pensioned off all work of any worth of late" Meredith met Thomson in person for the first time during the summer of 1880 (June 29) after two years of correspondence.¹⁴¹

Poetry, again, was not abandoned. The death of Tom Taylor, who had been Meredith's friend for more than thirty years, evoked the lovely sonnet, "To a Friend Lost." "Phoebus with Admetus," published in December 1880 in Macmillan's Magazine, was probably written while he was also working away at The Tragic Comedians, Meredith's retelling or fictionalizing of the story of Helene von Dönniges and Ferdinand Lassalle (published in the Fortnightly, October 1880-February 1881, and in two volumes by Chapman and Hall on December 15, 1880).¹⁴² By January 1881 Meredith was again reporting bad health, this time "bradypepsy, influenced by the nervous excitement of composition continued too long,"

but in February and March of the new year he was again at work on his poetry, this time including the magnificent "Lark Ascending," first published in the Fortnightly on May 7, 1881. In June, however, came the news of Arthur's illness, and a new source of concern for the ailing author.¹⁴³

On September 13, 1881, Meredith received another visit from James Thomson, only to be saddened deeply by the younger poet's death eight months later. He was also making the acquaintance of Grant Allen and André Raffalovich. In December, he made a visit to Brighton. Shortly afterwards, he experienced new symptoms in his struggle with ill health: his nerves were affected and walking had become painful, but by March 1882 he was well enough to go to London with Marie for a round of theater-going. In May, Robert Louis Stevenson visited Meredith again; in August, Meredith went to Switzerland, during which trip he probably saw Arthur. And all this while, he was working away at two novels, one of which was probably Diana of the Crossways. His health had begun to improve, but the novel on which he was working went begging while Meredith worked on a volume of poems that became Poems and Lyrics of the Joy of Earth, published in June 1883 by Macmillan. Some of the poems had already appeared in various periodicals, but several were new and were to become central to an appreciation and understanding of Meredith's thought and concept of nature, particularly "The Woods of Westermain," that difficult and almost breathtaking performance.¹⁴⁴

The flowering of poetry, however, came when Meredith's hearing had begun to fade and when his health had begun a decline from a "fair" state to a point, in October 1883, when he was almost crippled with an ailment that his doctor, Burney Yeo, said was localized in the spinal

cord and that was finally identified as ataxia.¹⁴⁵ Diana was in the works still, and in June 1884, publication in "mutilated" serial form began in the Fortnightly. About the same time, Marie underwent her first operation for cancer; the second took place in January 1885. In February, Diana was published in three volumes by Chapman and Hall and went into its third edition within the year. In March, Marie was still helpless and speechless; in June she was brought home, and in September, on the seventeenth, she died only forty minutes before Meredith returned home from London, and Meredith, at the age of fifty-eight, was once again alone. Marie's death brought Arthur to England in October to visit his father.¹⁴⁶

The remaining twenty-two years of Meredith's life are characterized by continued work, by an expanded acquaintance with famous contemporaries, by increasing lionizing of the aging writer on the part of his admirers, and by increasingly bad health. As Meredith gradually overcame his grief over Marie's death, he began to circulate and to greet visitors again: among the latter was James M. Barrie. In May 1886 he attended a performance of Shelley's The Cenci in the company of James Russell Lowell and Henry James, and in August Robert Louis Stevenson and his wife visited him at Box Hill. About the same time, a young woman, Hilda de Longueuil, was introduced to Meredith through her cousins, the Grant Allens. Meredith's interest in the young lady of twenty-four was met by a like interest on her part. He tried, in his letters to her, to help her overcome her sorrow over an unhappy and broken romance. One device he used was the poem, "Hilda's Morning and Evening Dose of Rhyme," in which he urged her to believe that she would one day find another and better lover than the one who had hurt her so

deeply. He suggested that he write to her about his artistic theories and problems and that she reply; the correspondence might subsequently be made into a book. The scheme did not materialize, unfortunately for the student of Meredith's practice as a writer of fiction.¹⁴⁷

Meredith returned, too, as his grief subsided, to the writing of poetry. Among those poems belonging to 1886 is "The Appeasement of Demeter," in which he again uses Greek mythology to explain or dramatize his own philosophy.¹⁴⁸ But trouble did not stay away because Meredith worked: in the fall of 1886 word came that Arthur was again seriously ill and had been hospitalized in London.¹⁴⁹ In May 1887 came the publication of Ballads and Poems of Tragic Life by Macmillan: the title seems appropriate to the period of trial that Meredith was undergoing between Marie's death and Arthur's (in 1890) and his own continuing ill health. In August, Meredith made a trip to Cornwall, but he was plagued at home by household troubles and by his disordered stomach and had, finally, to give up writing even to Miss de Longueuil.¹⁵⁰ In January 1888 he was still sick, and in February he was saddened by the death of James Cotter Morison, but he was still studying Greek and reading French books by the score; he spent the summer in Wales; and he had another volume of poetry published by Macmillan on December 20, 1888: A Reading of Earth.¹⁵¹

In spite of sadness and trouble, Meredith had four novels under way or in the planning stage: The Amazing Marriage, the (eventually) unfinished Celt and Saxon, The Journalist (also unfinished), and One of Our Conquerors. In February 1889 his work was broken by a meeting with Arthur, who was by this time very ill. In October, "Jump-to-Glory Jane" appeared in the Universal Review. Another dull note was struck by

Browning's funeral on December 31, 1889, and the gloom probably remained settled around Meredith's spirit into 1890: on September 3, Arthur died, and on September 10, Meredith's old and dear friend, William Hardman, also died. Increasing lameness and deafness cannot have helped his frame of mind, but the work went on, and before the end of the year he had written an important poem, "The Sage Enamoured and the Honest Lady," in which he discourses at some length on the relationship he would like to see between the sexes. Stevenson observes that the poem is "intensely sincere, originating largely in Meredith's temporary captivation with Hilda de Longueuil." Finally, in October 1890, the serial publication of One of Our Conquerors began in the Fortnightly (running through May 1891).¹⁵²

In 1891, Meredith made the acquaintance of Frank Harris, to whom he subsequently wrote at considerable length about his own and Harris's work.¹⁵³ In this year, too, Meredith revised The Tragic Comedians (announced in September), and in December he was at last deprived of his anonymity as Chapman and Hall's reader when, in the course of a libel suit brought by one James Pinnock against Colonel Alfred Burden Ellis (a stepcousin to Meredith) in connection with a collection entitled West African Stories, Meredith was called to testify on behalf of the firm.¹⁵⁴

1892 opened with a reprint of Modern Love to which Meredith added "The Sage Enamoured and the Honest Lady" (January 26, 1892).¹⁵⁵ Shortly before this event, Meredith made mention in a letter dated January 20 to a Scottish friend, George Stevenson, of the offer of an honorary degree from St. Andrews University. On February 5, 1892, Meredith wrote again to Stevenson to say that he would accept the degree.

On February 25, 1892, Meredith wrote to Professor W. S. M'Cormick acknowledging "the official notification of the honour designed for me by the Senate." He asked, apparently after having questioned Stevenson about it, if the acceptance would necessitate his traveling to Scotland, a trip he felt his health would not allow. The condition of attendance was waived and the degree was conferred in absentia.¹⁵⁶

In the spring of 1892, Meredith was again ill; in June he saw Dr. George Buckston Browne and subsequently underwent an operation for gall-stones. In October 1892, Meredith's new volume of poetry was published by Macmillan under the title, Poems: The Empty Purse with Odes on the Comic Spirit, Youth in Memory, and Verses. Later in the same month he attended the marriage of his son, William Maxse, to Margaret Elliot and, at the opposite end of the scale of human events, the funeral of Tennyson, on which latter occasion, Stevenson observes, "He cannot have avoided thinking about his own forty years of neglected poetry, the earnestness of his sense of poetic mission; he must have compared himself mentally with the leading poets of the day and wondered sardonically which of them would inherit the laureateship."¹⁵⁷

Between 1890 and 1892, Meredith, despite recurrences of ill health, was still at work on The Amazing Marriage, which he had begun in 1879. The novel, one of the more peculiar of Meredith's fifteen, was the subject of a long exchange between Meredith and the New York publisher, Charles Scribner's Sons, between 1890 and 1892. By April of 1893 (the date is probable: Stevenson's account does not include the year of the exchange of telegrams between Scribner's and Edward Burlingame, their official in London; Lindsay gives the date as 1893¹⁵⁸) negotiations had been completed and The Amazing Marriage was published

serially in Scribner's Magazine, January to December 1895. It was published in England in two volumes by Constable on November 15, 1895, and went into a second edition on January 8, 1896.¹⁵⁹

In 1892, also, Meredith was elected to succeed Tennyson as president of the Society of Authors. He completed Lord Ormont and His Aminta, which was published by Chapman and Hall on June 18, 1894. In July of the same year, Meredith's daughter was married to Henry Parkman Sturgis, and in November Meredith became a grandfather when Margaret Meredith gave birth to a son who was named George. And within the same year, too, Meredith finally terminated his long tenure of the readership for Chapman and Hall and his connection with the firm as one of its authors. Part of the reason was the loss of secrecy about his position during the libel suit three years earlier; part of the reason was Meredith's dissatisfaction with his salary and with the handling of the copyrights to his own works.¹⁶⁰ Lord Ormont and His Aminta was thus the last volume of Meredith's published by Chapman and Hall; on November 15, 1895, Constable, for whom William Meredith was working by this time, in addition to acting as his father's agent, brought out The Amazing Marriage.¹⁶¹

Visitors and new friends during the years 1894-1895 included Paul Valéry, Marcel Schwob, Léon and Alphonse Daudet, Henry James, Maxse, Edward Clodd, and many others, perhaps most notably Alice Meynell, who had published favorable comments on his work ten years earlier and who now became another of Meredith's admiring and admired lady friends.¹⁶² In August 1895 Meredith's second grandchild, Marie's daughter, was born. During this period (1895-1896), too, he was entertained generously by assorted new friends, among them Mr. and Mrs. Walter Palmer (she was

another of the ladies to whom Meredith professed chivalric devotion), Mr. and Mrs. Seymour Trower, Dr. and Mrs. H. G. Plimmer, and Viscount and Lady Battersea.¹⁶³

Meredith, having had so great a struggle in finishing The Amazing Marriage, now abandoned the writing of prose, but he did not give up poetry, and in 1896 he began the three Odes to France that were subsequently published in March, April and May 1898 in Cosmopolis, and in book form on October 21, 1898, along with the earlier "France, December 1870," under the title, Odes in Contribution to the Song of French History. The writing of these complex, dazzling poems was interrupted and made painfully difficult by continuing illness and increasing lameness and deafness all through 1897 and into the summer of 1898. Nevertheless, "The French Revolution" was completed by September 1896; "Napoléon," by June 1897, and "Alsace-Lorraine," perhaps the most obscure of the three, by December 1897. Meredith was also occupied at this time with revising his novels for the collected edition, published by Constable between 1897-1899.¹⁶⁴

Meredith's physical condition was not good, and when George Gissing visited him on November 13, 1898, he found him not at all well, although he was working on the dramatization of The Egoist that had been suggested to him earlier in 1898 by Alfred Sutro. He had also undertaken a reworking of his play, The Sentimentalists, which was destined to remain unfinished. And Meredith added a new admirer in the person of the Marchioness of Granby, who in turn introduced Meredith to Lady Ulrica Duncombe, an aristocratic and well-educated coterie of lovely young women to whom Meredith paid court, so to speak, in a most knightly fashion.¹⁶⁵ The letters to Lady Ulrica printed by William

Maxse Meredith are, according to Professor Cline, considerably edited; in some cases letters are run together without any indication of there being two letters involved, and in the letter dated by William Meredith "Autumn 1902" (redated [June 10, 1902] by Professor Cline), the "terms of affection [used by Meredith are] edited out." At any rate, the letters run from 1900 to 1903 and are indeed full of advice: Meredith called them, in the letter of August 30, 1902, "my lectures on Life." Some of the advice, particularly that relating to the reading of Goethe, is of considerable interest to the pursuer of the formative influences upon Meredith's thinking.¹⁶⁶

In March 1899 Meredith had his second gall-bladder operation and was finally cured of this particular source of illness. The offer of an honorary degree from Oxford had to be declined because he could not attend the ceremony. On July 1, 1900, Meredith suffered the severe blow of the death of his old and good friend, Frederick Maxse. A more cheerful event of summer was the meeting of the Whitefrairs Club at the Burford Bridge Inn, which included a sort of pilgrimage to Flint Cottage to call upon Meredith, an honorary member. Stevenson's description is amusing: "There was a faint air of a royal levee as the 'Friars' and their ladies filed past Meredith in his chair, to shake hands and hear a few words of greeting" In the summer of 1902 the occasion was repeated, with the addition of "an address of homage" to Meredith.¹⁶⁷

In May 1901, Meredith's last volume of poetry, A Reading of Life, was published by Constable. In March 1902, the offer of an honorary degree from the University of Wales had to be declined, partly because of bad health, partly because of what Stevenson calls Meredith's

"inherent dislike of ceremonies," as well as of interviews and those who conduct them. An exception came in February 1903 when Meredith granted an interview to Harold Owen of the Manchester Guardian. By the end of 1903 Meredith's illness grew more severe than ever and evidently continued to the end of his life with more or less intensity. In July 1904 Meredith received a visit from Janet Ross; in April 1905 Hardy called upon him. In August 1905, Meredith went to Aldeburgh, Suffolk, to visit Edward Clodd, but his activities were curtailed once again in October when he fell and broke his right ankle. As a climax to an otherwise unfortunate year came the conferral of the Order of Merit at Box Hill, a special honor in deference to Meredith's incapacity.¹⁶⁸

In the summer of 1906 Meredith returned to Aldeburgh for the benefit of fresh air and rest. Life became relatively placid, despite constant visitors and requests for advice and assistance from young writers. By the fall of 1907, Meredith was again seriously ill, but by the time his eightieth birthday arrived, on February 12, 1908, he had regained enough strength to endure the deluge of ceremonies and mail and inquiries that accompanied what Stevenson calls the "journalistic orgy" that the event became. And poetry still came from Meredith's pen, including "The Call," published in the Midsummer number of the Oxford and Cambridge Review; "On Como," Scribner's Magazine, December 1908; "Milton," The Times, December 9, 1908; "Ireland," Scribner's, July 1909, and so on.¹⁶⁹ Meredith's eighty-first birthday passed quietly, but the spring brought a heavy blow in Swinburne's death in April, a blow despite the fact that Meredith's long association with the fiery poet had sometimes been rather choppy. On Friday, May 14, 1909,

Meredith became thoroughly chilled during his daily drive; his condition became worse when he insisted upon going out again the next day, and he remained in a condition of considerable pain and increasing weakness, although conscious, until Monday evening, the seventeenth. Early the next morning, on May 18, 1909, Meredith died. His own words provided his epitaph:

Our life is but a little holding, lent
To do a mighty labour: we are one
With heaven and the stars when it is spent
To serve God's aim: else die we with the sun.¹⁷⁰

Meredith's had indeed been a life of "mighty labour" spent in the service of what he saw as "God's aim," which was for himself what Nesta Radnor Fenellan calls "the good living of a shapely life," and which was for others the singing and telling of the truths he had learned in the course of life:

Behold the life at ease; it drifts.
The sharpened life commands its course.
[Earth] winnows, winnows roughly; sifts,
To dip her chosen in her source:
Contention is the vital force,
Whence pluck they brain, her prize of gifts,
Sky of the senses! on which height,
Not disconnected, yet released,
They see how spirit comes to light,
Through conquest of the inner beast,
Which Measure tames to movement sane,
In harmony with what is fair.

"Hard Weather"¹⁷¹

FOOTNOTES TO CHAPTER I

¹Cf. Ellis (1919), pp. 29-31; Ellis (1920), pp. 36-39; Priestley, pp. 7-8; Stevenson, pp. 4-7; Lindsay, pp. 15-16; 19-21.

²Stevenson, p. 6.

³Ellis (1919), p. 35f.; Ellis (1920), p. 44f.; Priestley, p. 9 (the school is here described as "a local high school"); Sassoon, p. 3; Stevenson, pp. 6-7 (but no date is given); Lindsay, p. 20.

⁴Simon, p. 111.

⁵J. Slight, Chronicles of Portsmouth (1828), pp. 19-20. The extract quoted was sent to me by Mr. R. M. Marsh, M.A., County Education Officer, Hampshire, to whom I am most grateful.

⁶Hampshire Telegraph and Sussex Chronicle, January 15, 1838, p. 1. This extract was sent to me by Mr. Marsh (see footnote 5).

⁷Hollingsworth's Guide to Southsea, Portsmouth, Anglesey, Hayling, Etc. (1842), pp. 14-15. This extract was sent to me by Mr. Marsh (see footnote 5).

⁸Adamson, p. 203.

⁹*Ibid.*, p. 76.

¹⁰*Ibid.*, pp. 230, 297.

¹¹Stevenson, pp. 9-10.

¹²Ibid., p. 11. Cf. also Ellis (1919), p. 39; Sassoon, p. 3; Lindsay, p. 21.

¹³Meredith, Letters, pp. 93-94; Stevenson, p. 11; Lindsay, p. 22. Ellis (1919), pp. 36-37, does not associate the episode with a school, calling it instead a "vivid picture of the Sunday devotions of his childhood"

¹⁴Ellis (1919), p. 45; Ellis (1920), p. 49 (it should be noted that Ellis implies that Meredith became a Ward in Chancery after his sojourn at Neuwied); Priestley, p. 9; Sassoon, p. 3; Stevenson, p. 12; Lindsay, pp. 23-24.

¹⁵The English and Empire Digest, 28, 650, item 1429.

¹⁶The Earl of Halsbury, 21, 218, item 418. See also Bispham, pp. 726-727; Adams, p. 28; The English and Empire Digest, 28, 709, item 2175.

¹⁷Randall, p. 86.

¹⁸The Earl of Halsbury, 21, 219, item 482; The English and Empire Digest, 28, 644, item 1369; 648, item 1412.

The only case even remotely analogous to Meredith's to find its way into The English Reports (58, 790) is Lethem v. Hall, August 9, 1834, in which the ward, Lethem, was allowed to go to the University of Dublin to study because his invalid father and his sisters lived in that city.

The condition made by the Court was the standard one: that the Halls (Lethem's guardians) bring their ward back into the jurisdiction of the court whenever required to do so. Cf. also The English and Empire Digest, 28, 650, item 1430.

¹⁹Stevenson, p. 12.

²⁰There is some confusion on the terminal date for Meredith's stay at Neuwied. The one letter extant from the period is dated "July 8, 1844" in William Meredith's edition of the letters (pp. 3-4), but, Professor Cline has told me by letter, "In one of his personal copies of Letters (now in the Bodleian) W[illiam] M[axse] M[eredith] has altered the date from July 8 to Jan. 1, in keeping with his statement (I.4) that GM left [Neuwied] on Jan. 7, 1844. Stevenson has redated the letter, as have I, on the basis of this evidence." However, adds Professor Cline, "I'm still not sure: WMM is not to be trusted. It could have been Hill [the boy addressed by Meredith] who was leaving. I can find no evidence upon which WMM based his statement." One can only conclude, it seems to me, that Meredith left Neuwied sometime in 1844, probably by midsummer.

²¹Jerrold, pp. 4-5; Hammerton, pp. 4-5; Ellis (1919), pp. 40-44; Ellis (1920), pp. 49-50; Priestley, pp. 9-10; Sassoon, pp. 3-4; Petter, "Preface" by Ernest Baker, p. vii; pp. 152-154; Stevenson, pp. 14ff.; Lindsay, pp. 25-29.

²²Lindsay, pp. 26-27. Lindsay does not give the source for his anecdote concerning Uhland and the violin solo, an anecdote that only he reports.

²³*Ibid.*, pp. 25-26.

²⁴*Ibid.*, pp. 27-28.

²⁵Clewell, pp. 191-193; p. 197.

²⁶Records, III, 980, 983, 1006.

²⁷*Ibid.*, 1005-1006.

²⁸*Ibid.*, 1006.

²⁹*Ibid.*, 1008.

³⁰Clewell, pp. 231, 318, 320.

³¹Meredith, Letters, pp. 3-4. See also footnote 21, concerning the date of the letter.

³²Stevenson, p. 15.

³³*Ibid.*, pp. 16-18.

³⁴Lindsay, p. 384.

³⁵Meredith, Poems I (Memorial Edition XXIV), 198. Hereafter, the Memorial Edition will be abbreviated to "ME."

³⁶Stevenson, p. 60.

³⁷*Ibid.*, p. 19.

³⁸*Ibid.*, p. 20.

³⁹*Ibid.*, pp. 21-22. Cf. also Ellis (1919), pp. 45-46.

⁴⁰Ibid., pp. 22-24. The quotation appears on p. 24.

⁴¹Meredith, Poems I (ME XXIV), [1].

⁴²Stevenson, p. 25; note from Professor Bartlett giving me the titles.

⁴³Stevenson, p. 27.

⁴⁴Meredith, Letters, p. 5.

⁴⁵Sassoon, p. 10; Lindsay, p. 30.

⁴⁶Quoted in Stevenson, p. 27. The elision marks appear in Stevenson's transcription.

⁴⁷Ibid., p. 28.

⁴⁸Cline, typescript. Cf. also Stevenson, p. 28. The original letter is in the Berg Collection at the New York Public Library.

Inasmuch as page references to Professor Cline's and Professor Bartlett's typescripts are meaningless in view of the changes both typescripts have undoubtedly undergone since I read them, I have elected to omit such pagination as I recorded. Page references to Professor Cline's edition of Meredith's letters will be added later in 1968, when the work is published; and to Professor Bartlett's edition of the poems sometime in 1969.

⁴⁹Stevenson, p. 28; Cline, typescript.

⁵⁰Cline, typescript. Professor Cline writes, in a note, that "Professor Geoffrey Tillotson has suggested to me that 'style' refers

here to the manner of publication rather than of composition, and after examining original editions of Tennyson's early publications, I am inclined to agree with him."

⁵¹Meredith, Letters, pp. 7-8, corrected from Cline, typescript.

⁵²Cline, typescript; Bartlett, typescript. See also Forman, pp. 7-8, for quotations from Meredith's correspondence concerning Poems (1851).

⁵³Meredith, Letters, pp. 5-6; Lindsay, p. 43; Stevenson, p. 37; Forman, p. 10, from which I have corrected Lindsay's transcription.

⁵⁴Stevenson, p. 28; Kelvin, p. 12.

⁵⁵Stevenson, pp. 28, 30; Lindsay, p. 41.

⁵⁶Lindsay, pp. 39-41; Stevenson, pp. 26, 30.

⁵⁷Hammerton, pp. 7, 19; Ellis (1919), pp. 46, 49-50, 52-53, 83, 85-88; Ellis (1920), pp. 55, 59-64, 76-78, 90-93, 179; Priestley, pp. 17-18; Petter, pp. 179-180; Sassoon, pp. 8, 21-22, 49; Stevenson, pp. 23, 25-26, 28-35, 42-47, 53-54, 57-59, 67, 81, 95-96, 98, 103-104, 147, 228; Lindsay, pp. 34-35, 39-42, 53, 57, 78, 82-87, 91-92, 123, 152, 379, 382-384, 405; Cline, "The Betrothal of George Meredith to Marie Vulliamy."

^{57a}Meredith, The Egoist, II (ME XIV), 327.

⁵⁸Kelvin, pp. 165-198, discusses these novels at some length and in these terms. Bailey groups them together with Diana of the Crossways as novels dealing "with the complexities rising out of an unsuitable

marriage"; he observes further "that Meredith found in certain phases of the marriage relation some of the gravest problems furnished by modern society" and "that to his mind, society must needs enter into a careful study of the troubles resulting from strained marriage relations" (pp. 149-150, 151).

⁵⁹Meredith, Poems II (ME XXV), 139-143.

⁶⁰See my Master's thesis on the Odes.

⁶¹This brief outline of the more noteworthy people and events in Meredith's life, 1849-1861, is drawn from Stevenson, pp. 29-87. See also Green, "George Meredith's 'Austrian Poets': A Newly Identified Review-Essay with Translations" and Meredith's article in Fraser's Magazine. See also Haight, "George Meredith and the 'Westminster Review'" for a list of the books Meredith reviewed for that periodical.

⁶²Stevenson, pp. 87-90. It should be noted that Professor Cline questions the equating of A Woman's Battle with Rhoda Fleming in a note to a letter to Mrs. Janet Ross, May 17, 1861. See Meredith, Letters, p. 25.

⁶³Stevenson, p. 92.

⁶⁴Meredith, Letters, pp. 31-33, passim., corrected from Cline, typescript.

⁶⁵Wordsworth, p. 577.

⁶⁶Ibid., p. 536.

⁶⁷Stevenson, pp. 96-100.

⁶⁸Ibid., pp. 96, 98; Lindsay, pp. 82-83, 122-123.

⁶⁹Stevenson, p. 98; Meredith, Letters, p. 42. I have not seen the letter to Wyse.

⁷⁰Priestley, p. 17.

⁷¹Cf. Stevenson, p. 60: "On inadequate evidence, it has usually been assumed that Meredith had started the novel at Seaford as early as 1856; but there is no reason to doubt his own statement that it was written at Hobury Street and took one year. It is so thoroughly interpenetrated with his own problem and his own grievance that it could not have been conceived before the break with his wife" in the summer and fall of 1857 (p. 58).

⁷²Sassoon, p. 49.

⁷³Wright, p. 167; Stevenson, p. 104.

⁷⁴Lindsay, pp. 86-87. I have taken the lines from Modern Love X from Poems, I (ME XXIV), 190.

⁷⁵Stevenson, p. 105.

⁷⁶Cf. Hammerton, pp. 201-205 (for Feverel) and p. 19 (for Modern Love); Stevenson, pp. 71-74 and 110-112; Lindsay, pp. 93-95, 123-124.

⁷⁷Quoted by Cunliffe, p. 17.

⁷⁸Henderson, p. 7.

⁷⁹Sassoon, p. 67.

⁸⁰Trevelyan, Selected Poetical Works of George Meredith, p. viii.

⁸¹Stevenson, p. 101; Lindsay, p. 159.

⁸²Hammerton, pp. 19, 98-104; Ellis (1919), p. 135; Stevenson, pp. 110-115, 118-120, 121-125; Lindsay, pp. 132-133.

⁸³Stevenson, pp. 115-117, 131, 127, 135-136. Stevenson's main source is probably Meredith's letter to Maxse, June 6, 1864 (Letters, pp. 147-150).

⁸⁴Stevenson, pp. 135-142; Cline, "The Betrothal of George Meredith to Marie Vulliamy," passim. and 242-243. Cf. also Lindsay, pp. 135-137.

⁸⁵Lindsay, p. 136.

⁸⁶Meredith, Letters, pp. 143, 146-147; 148-149; 150-151; 151 (the date of June 9 is supplied by Cline, typescript); 154.

⁸⁷Ibid., pp. 158, 159.

⁸⁸Meredith, "A Faith on Trial," Poems, II (ME XXV), 241.

⁸⁹Forman, pp. 33-34.

⁹⁰Meredith, Letters, p. 143 (punctuation corrected from Cline, typescript).

⁹¹Stevenson, p. 141. For the correct title of Adams's book, cf. Cline, typescript. W. M. Meredith (Letters, p. 153) calls the volume The Cruise of the Alabama and the Sumter.

⁹²Meredith, Letters, p. 154; Cline, typescript, for corrected date and for the identification of the novel. Cf. also Stevenson, pp. 141ff., and Forman, pp. 37, 39, concerning Rhoda Fleming.

⁹³Stevenson, pp. 142, 150; Forman, pp. 41-43.

⁹⁴Meredith, Letters, pp. 146, 148, 154 (corrected date, Cline, typescript), 161 (corrected date, Cline, typescript), 188; Stevenson, p. 162. For descriptions of Hofwyl, cf. Adamson, pp. 117-119, and Simon, pp. 134-135.

⁹⁵This piecing together of the course of Arthur's life and of Meredith's relationship with his first-born son is drawn from the following sources: Sassoon, pp. 93-94, 97, 98, 178-179; Priestley, pp. 35-36; Stevenson, pp. 162-164, 188, 192, 243, 248, 265, 270-271, 287-288; Lindsay, pp. 136, 149; Meredith, Letters, pp. 207-208, 212-215, 216-218, 226-227, 233-234, 236-238, 314-320, 321-325.

⁹⁶Stevenson, p. 163.

⁹⁷Meredith, "Correspondence from the Seat of War in Italy," Miscellaneous Prose (ME XXIII), [161]-213; Stevenson, pp. 154-157; Lindsay, p. 164.

⁹⁸Meredith, "Correspondence," 211-213.

⁹⁹Catalogue, pp. 11-20; the books listed separately in the following paragraphs appear on pp. 9 and 20; 3, 4, 9, 20.

¹⁰⁰Stevenson, p. 30.

¹⁰¹*Ibid.*, pp. 135-136, 192, 224, 248.

¹⁰²Meredith, Rhoda Fleming (ME V), 99, 277; Harry Richmond I (ME IX), 37-57-59, 221, 273; Beauchamp's Career I (ME XI), 9-14, 47-50; II (ME XII), 143; Diana of the Crossways (ME XVI), 168; One of Our Conquerors (ME XVII), 111, 153, 156, 288; Lord Ormont and His Aminta (ME XVIII), 41, 124, 151, 192; The Amazing Marriage (ME XIX), 106, 233, 235; The House on the Beach (ME XXII), 28.

¹⁰³Meredith, Miscellaneous Prose (ME XXIII), 81-86.

¹⁰⁴*Ibid.*, 3-55. Cf. Lane Cooper's edition for identification and correction of references and quotations.

¹⁰⁵Mackay, pp. 200-201; Meredith, Letters, pp. 441, 501; Stevenson, p. 280; Lindsay, p. 188. See also my unpublished Master's thesis, pp. 2, 13, [64]-65 for summaries of Meredith's reading in French.

¹⁰⁶Cline, typescript; Stevenson, p. 28; Forman, p. 6. See also Sencourt and below, pp. 244 ff.

¹⁰⁷Meredith, "Austrian Poets"; Green, 335.

¹⁰⁸The poems for Janet Duff Gordon are quoted in Stevenson, p. 87, and in Meredith, Letters, pp. 19-20, respectively.

¹⁰⁹Meredith, Farina, (ME XXI), 10, 51; Feverel (Modern Library edition), p. 122, for the Goethean-Carlylean phrase, "Spiritual Seed-time." Cf. Vittoria I (ME VII), 151, 293, 300, 320; II (ME VIII), 19, 31; Harry Richmond I (ME X), 168, 173, 175, 188, 211, 216, 257; II

(ME XI), 132; The Egoist (Riverside edition), p. 251; One of Our Conquerors (ME XVIII), 86, 91, 92; The Amazing Marriage (ME XIX), 49, 235. The review of La Maison forestiere contains several German phrases and words: Miscellaneous Prose (ME XXIII), 81, 108. Cline, typescript.

References to Goethe: Meredith, Miscellaneous Prose (ME XXIII), 105, 108; Cline, typescript; Letters, pp. 157, 168-169; 274-275; 516, 524-525, 578, 580. See also Catalogue, pp. 5, 20.

¹¹⁰References to Latin: Cline, typescript; Meredith, Harry Richmond I (ME X), 37, 72, 113, 117, 123, 127, 134, 154, 156, 160ff.; II (ME XI), 72; The Egoist (Riverside edition), pp. 23, 40, 61, 145, 154, 156, 165, 181, 188-189, 192, 244, 337, 360, 361; Miscellaneous Prose (ME XXIII), 60, 105, 108, 128, 130, etc.

References to Greek: Harry Richmond I (ME X), 154, 160ff., 176; The Egoist (Riverside edition), pp. 155, 196; Miscellaneous Prose (ME XXIII), 77ff. (review of Merivale); 5, 10, 11-12, 20, 33, 35-38, 44, 47, 49 ("Essay on Comedy . . ."); "Fragments of the Iliad in English Hexameter Verse": "The Invective of Achilles" and "Marshalling of the Achaians" were published in The Illustrated London News, April 11, 1891, p. 463; the remaining five on April 18, p. 507. They were included in the volume, A Reading of Life (1901), pp. 109-125 (cf. Forman, pp. 138-139, 203-204). See Poems, III (ME XXVI), 221-233.

¹¹¹The list of poems on or about classical topics follows.
Page numbers in square brackets refer to the original volume.

Poems (1851): cf. Poems, I (ME XXIV); Forman, pp. 5-6.

"The Rape of Aurora," 40 [p. 35]

"Daphne," 52 [p. 51]

"Antigone," 90 [p. 113]

"The Shipwreck of Idomeneus," 100 [p. 127]

Modern Love (1862): cf. Poems, I (ME XXIV); Forman, p. 27.

"Cassandra," 236 [p. 121]

Poems and Lyrics of the Joys of Earth (1883): cf. Poems, II (ME XXV); Forman, pp. 69-70.

"The Garden of Epicurus," 18 [p. 171]

"An Orson of the Muse," 19 [p. 173]

"The Day of the Daughter of Hades," 49 [p. 30]

"Phoebus with Admetus," 71 [p. 71]

"Melampus," 75 [p. 79]

Ballads and Poems of Tragic Life (1887): cf. Poems, II (ME XXV); Forman, pp. 80-81.

"The Two Masks," 115 [p. 1]

"Periander," 190 [p. 133]

"Solon," 95 [p. 143]

"Bellerophon," 197 [p. 148]

"Phaethon," 200 [p. 152].

A Reading of Earth (1888): cf. Poems, II (ME XXV); Forman, pp. 83, 85, 201.

"The Appeasement of Demeter," 226 [p. 35]

A Reading of Life (1901): cf. Poems, III (ME XXVI); Forman, p. 138.

"The Cageing of Ares," 170 [p. 45]

"A Garden Idyl," 179 [p. 81]

"The Vital Choice," "With the Huntress," "With the Persuader," "The Test of Manhood," 185-207 [pp. 1-44]

The story about Meredith's interest in Greek grammar appears in Stevenson, pp. 279-280.

¹¹²For Peacock's acquaintance with Italian, see Van Doren, pp. 18-20, 22, and the mention of Italian language and literature in all the novels. For Meredith's acquaintance with Italian, see the following: Sandra Belloni, II (ME IV), 21, 30, 106-107, 152-153, 176, 223, 226, 282, 311; Vittoria, I (ME VII), 127, 128, 140, 217, 291; II (ME VIII), 23, 33, 49, 53, 80, 120, 193; Harry Richmond, I (ME IX), 168, 183; One of Our Conquerors (ME XVII), 47, 53, 301. Cf. also Feverel (Modern Library edition), pp. 494-495; Rhoda Fleming (ME V), 99; Beauchamp's Career, I (ME XII), 56-57, 162; Diana (ME XVI), 168; The Amazing Marriage (ME XIX), 398, 448; Celt and Saxon (ME XX), 30, 133-134, 218.

¹¹³Meredith, "Correspondence from the Seat of War in Italy," Miscellaneous Prose (ME XXIII), 197-198, 199-200, 207-208.

¹¹⁴Ellis (1919), p. 157. But the phrase, non e possibile, occurs in an earlier letter to Maxse quoted by Ellis on the same page.

¹¹⁵Stevenson, p. 89; Ellis (1919), p. 152, for the letter of June 16, 1861; Meredith, Letters, p. 26 (corrected from Cline, typescript); Bartlett, "George Meredith on Mistral's Mireio," 67 (cf. Ellis (1919), p. 151).

¹¹⁶Cline, typescript.

¹¹⁷Bartlett, "George Meredith on Mistral's Mireio," 67. Cf. Meredith, Poems, III (ME XXVI), 234.

¹¹⁸Able, pp. 119-123, *passim*.

¹¹⁹Baker, VIII, 280, 318. For the tale, "Culhwch and Olwen,"
cf. The Mabinogion, pp. 95-136.

¹²⁰Meredith, "Bran," Poems I (ME XXIV), 141-144; "Aneurin's
Harp," Poems II (ME XXV), 180-185. See Forman, p. 31, for the note
to "Bran."

¹²¹Bartlett, typescript.

¹²²Meredith, "The Tale of Chloe" (ME XXI), 254; Peacock,
Headlong Hall, p. 50.

¹²³Meredith, Celt and Saxon (ME XX), 81, 40.

¹²⁴Meredith, Letters, p. 613.

¹²⁵Cline, typescript.

¹²⁶Stevenson, pp. 156-158; Lindsay, pp. 164-165; Meredith,
"Correspondence," Miscellaneous Prose (ME XXIII), 209-213.

¹²⁷Stevenson, p. 158; Forman, pp. 41-43.

¹²⁸Stevenson, pp. 162-167.

¹²⁹*Ibid.*, pp. 168-177. Cf. Meredith, Letters, pp. 193-194.

¹³⁰*Ibid.*, pp. 179-180.

¹³¹Meredith, Letters, pp. 207-224; 232 for the quotation from
the letter to Morley; Fortnightly Review, XV (January 1, 1871); Meredith,

Poems III (ME XXVI), 140-149; Forman, p. 81; cf. also my unpublished Master's thesis (see footnote 60), pp. 7-15; Stevenson, p. 179.

¹³²Stevenson, p. 187.

¹³³*Ibid.*, pp. 188-[190]; Forman, pp. 45, 46, 48.

¹³⁴Stevenson, pp. 192-195, 207; Forman, pp. 49-51.

¹³⁵The list of poems for the years 1867-1875 follows.

1867: Sonnet, "To J. M. " (Fortnightly Review, June 1);

"Phaëthon" (Fortnightly Review, September 1); "Lines to a Friend Visiting America" (Fortnightly Review, December 1). See Meredith, Poems II (ME XXV), 1, 200-206, 2-10; Stevenson, pp. 164-165; Forman, pp. 70, 81, 191, 192.

1868: "The Orchard and the Heath" (Macmillan's, February);

"Aneurin's Harp" (Fortnightly Review, September 1). See Meredith, Poems II, 90-91, 180-185; Forman, pp. 69, 81, 192, 193.

1870: "Sonnet: 'A Mark in Time'" ("Time and Sentiment")

(Fortnightly Review, April 1); "In the Woods" (Fortnightly Review, August 1). See Meredith, Poems II, 11; stanza vi of "In the Woods," titled "Whimper of Sympathy," 158; stanza vii of "In the Woods," titled "Woodland Peace," 235; Stanza ix of "In the Woods," titled "Dirge in Woods," 240; Stevenson, p. 178; Forman, pp. 70, 81, 85, 193-194.

1871: "France, December 1870" (Fortnightly Review, January 1).

See footnote 170.

- 1872: "The Song of Theodolinda" (Cornhill Magazine, September).
See Meredith, Poems II, 133-138; Stevenson, p. 192;
Forman, pp. 80, 195.
- 1874: "The Nuptials of Attila" written (published New Quarterly Magazine, January 1879). See Meredith, Poems II, 162-179; Stevenson, p. 196; Forman, pp. 81, 196-197.
- 1875: "A Ballad of Past Meridian" written (published Fortnightly Review, June 1, 1876); "A Ballad of Fair Ladies in Revolt" written (published Fortnightly Review, August 1, 1876). See Meredith, Poems II, 48, 100-112; Stevenson, pp. 207-208; Forman, pp. 69, 195-196.
- ¹³⁶Stevenson, pp. 209-216.
- ¹³⁷Stevenson, pp. 217-218; cf. also Meredith's letters to Robert Louis Stevenson, Sept. 26, 1885, November 13, 1885, August [30], 1887, October 2, 1893, January 25, 1894 (respectively, Cline, typescript, Altschul Catalogue, pp. 57-58; Cline, typescript). Cf. also Meredith, Letters, pp. 289-291, 297, 298, 303-304, 309-311, 355-356. Stevenson, p. 221, indicates the identity of Woodseer; cf. also Priestley, p. 45; Sassoon, pp. 143, 235; Lindsay, p. 226.
- ¹³⁸Stevenson, p. 221.
- ¹³⁹Ibid., pp. 223-224; cf. also Meredith, Letters, p. 304.
- ¹⁴⁰Stevenson, pp. 232-233; Lindsay, pp. 238-244.
- ¹⁴¹Meredith, Letters, pp. 306, 307; Stevenson, p. 237.

¹⁴²Stevenson, pp. 237-238; Meredith, Poems III (ME XXVI), 265, for the sonnet; Poems II (ME XXV), 71-74, for "Phoebus." Cf. also Forman, pp. 70, 69, 197. For the dates of The Tragic Comedians, cf. Forman, pp. 61-63.

¹⁴³Stevenson, p. 242; Forman, pp. 69, 197-198.

¹⁴⁴Stevenson, pp. 243-249; Forman, pp. 66-72.

¹⁴⁵The description of Meredith's crippling illness has been set forth by Arthur Nethaway Collins, who traces the biographers' terminology: Ellis (1920, p. 267) connected the spinal problem with Meredith's bradypepsy. Sencourt called Meredith's illness "locomotor ataxia" (p. 221) but denied that this disease was connected with syphilis. Ezra Parmalee Prentice correctly argued, in Worth Considering, that locomotor ataxia had no other cause than syphilis and that therefore Meredith must have been morally lax and a hypocrite. Stevenson, following Sencourt and Meredith's surgeon, George Buckston Browne, also called the disease locomotor ataxia, but when Collins questioned him, Stevenson replied that he was wrong in using the adjective locomotor. Collins concludes: "Lacking further evidence, we must describe Meredith's ailment as 'ataxia,' of uncertain origin"; the symptoms Meredith showed were mixed: deafness and "digestive disturbances" fit the diagnosis of locomotor ataxia, but Meredith showed no signs of mental collapse or mottled complexion, and he lived with his ataxia for twenty-eight years, a span that would not have been likely had he been a victim of locomotor ataxia.

¹⁴⁶Stevenson, pp. 250-265. Cf. Forman, pp. 73-75, concerning

Diana of the Crossways.

¹⁴⁷Stevenson, pp. 266-270.

¹⁴⁸Ibid., p. 270.

¹⁴⁹Ibid., pp. 270-271.

¹⁵⁰Ibid., pp. 274, 276.

¹⁵¹Ibid., pp. 277, 279-280, 282-283; Forman, pp. 136-138.

¹⁵²Stevenson, pp. 283-290.

¹⁵³Ibid., pp. 295-296; cf. also Cline, typescript.

¹⁵⁴Stevenson, pp. [299], 297-298.

¹⁵⁵Forman, p. 102.

¹⁵⁶Cline, typescript, for the information about Meredith's letter of January 20; Meredith, Letters, pp. 447, 449; Stevenson, p. [299].

¹⁵⁷Stevenson, pp. [299]-304.

¹⁵⁸Ibid., pp. 304-307; Lindsay, p. 319.

¹⁵⁹Forman, pp. 114-116.

¹⁶⁰Stevenson, pp. 304, 306-307.

¹⁶¹Ibid., pp. 312-316, 326.

¹⁶²Ibid., pp. 316-319; [323]-326. Cf. also Meredith,
Letters . . . to Alice Meynell.

¹⁶³Ibid., pp. 326-327.

¹⁶⁴Ibid., pp. 326, 328-329, 331, 333-334, Cf. also Meredith,
Letters . . . to Alice Meynell, pp. 39, 45, 53; Meredith, Letters,
pp. 486, 487, 488, 489; Forman, pp. 126-127.

¹⁶⁵Stevenson, pp. 336-337.

¹⁶⁶Meredith, Letters, pp. 516-519, 521-522, 524-526, 529-533,
541-543, 549, 581-582; Cline, typescript. The phrase, "my lectures on
Life," appears in the typescript.

¹⁶⁷Stevenson, pp. 336, 338-339.

¹⁶⁸Ibid., pp. 337-338, 339; 341, 342, 343-345.

¹⁶⁹Ibid., pp. 345, 350-351ff.; Forman, pp. 149-150; Meredith,
Poems III (ME XXVI), 247, 250, 251, 253.

¹⁷⁰Stevenson, pp. 353-354. The lines of verse are from
Meredith, Vittoria I (ME VII), 252: they are part of the libretto of
the opera in which Vittoria makes her debut. I have used the ME version,
the punctuation and spacing of which are slightly different from
Stevenson's.

¹⁷¹Meredith, One of Our Conquerors (ME XVII), 513; "Hard
Weather," Poems II (ME XXV), 213.

CHAPTER II

THE SOURCES OF MEREDITH'S PHILOSOPHY OF MAN, NATURE, AND HISTORY

A. THE PHILOSOPHY

George Meredith was, in J. B. Priestley's words, "the poet of Evolution; not of a mere mechanical progress of change but, at least when we come to Man, of conscious striving."¹ The evolutionary idea or spirit that underlies Meredith's view of man is not Darwinian but Lamarckian or, perhaps more pertinently to my view of Meredith's sources of self-education, Goethean: it insists upon man's achievement in developing a moral sense and the power of reason, and upon man's ability, through the study of nature, of history, and of himself, to aid his race's progress toward a state in which he will be the partner of Nature in the government and control of the world in which they both live; a state in which, in effect, the ultimate unity of all life will be recognized, as science was already, in the nineteenth century, coming to understand. Obviously, such a view of the development of man places a tremendous burden on the individual. Each must acquire not only knowledge of the past but knowledge of self and, perhaps hardest of all, the desire and will to discipline himself now in order to benefit all mankind sometime in the future.²

It would not, then, be a simple matter to become a Meredithian man or woman. Although man can, by close observation of Nature (or Earth), acquire insight into the natural laws that govern Earth's life

and his own, he must still strive to overcome his self-centeredness or selfishness and to develop consonant moral laws for the governance of human society. In "Earth and Man," a poem that G.M. Trevelyan calls the "fullest expression of Meredith's doctrine of Earth our Mother and her relation to us,"³ Meredith describes at length what it is that man does to and for Earth and what she in return does for him. Earth, in this poem, is man's only aid:

XXX

Not elsewhere can he tend.
Those are her rules which bid him wash foul sins;
Those her revulsions from the skull that grins
To ape his end.

XXXI

And her desires are those
For happiness, for lastingness, for light.
'Tis she who kindles⁴ in his haunting night
The hoped dawn-rose.

And the primary obstacle to man's achieving his goal of union with Earth--that is, of bringing his life into consonance with that of Nature--is "his distempered devil of Self," the serpent Egoism of "The Woods of Westermains,"⁵ described by Norman Kelvin as man's "greedy, libidinous, and usually destructive drive for self-aggrandizement at the expense of others." To control that drive and to overcome that obstacle, man must cultivate what Kelvin expresses as the "lack of self-awareness, lack of desire for individuality, that is the mark of all creatures of nature except man."⁶ Meredith, in "The Lark Ascending," makes the point this way:

Was never voice of ours could say
Our inmost in the sweetest way,
Like yonder voice aloft, and link
All hearers in the song they drink.

Our wisdom speaks from failing blood,
 Our passion is too full in flood,
 We want the key of his wild note
 Of truthful in the tuneful throat,
 The song seraphically free
 Of taint of personality,
 So pure that it salutes the suns,
 The voice of one for millions,
 In whom the millions rejoice
 For giving their one spirit voice.⁷

In addition to ridding himself of egoism, man must strive to maintain the balance and harmony of the three ingredients of which he is composed: "Blood and brain and spirit," indicating respectively man's physical, intellectual, and spiritual natures. In "The Woods of Westminster," Meredith expresses the necessity for harmony and interdependence of the three elements in man in terms of their unity in the nature of Earth:

Each of each in sequent birth,
 Blood and brain and spirit, three
 (Say the deepest gnomes of Earth)
 Join for true felicity.
 Are they parted, then expect
 Some one sailing will be wrecked:
 Separate hunting are they sped,
 Scan the morsel coveted.
 Earth that Triad is: she hides
 Joy from him who that divides;
 Showers it when the three are one
 Glassing her in union.⁸

It is significant, of course, that Meredith describes the "Triad" as arising "Each of each in sequent birth": the phrase carries the full weight of Meredith's evolutionary view of man and of his progressive view of history. Man was first a creature of "blood," an animal: in "Seed-Time," Meredith writes that man grew from "Animal-infant" to his present state of advanced development by observing Earth:

Steadily eyeing, before that wail,
 Animal-infant, thy mind began,
 Momently nearer me
 (Stanza V)⁹

In "Hard Weather," Meredith portrays Earth as actively shaping the development of man:

She winnows, winnows roughly; sifts,
To dip her chosen in her source:
Contention is the vital force,
Whence pluck they brain, her prize of gifts,
Sky of the senses! on which height,
Not disconnected, yet released,
They see how spirit comes to light,
Through conquest of the inner beast,
Which Measure tames to movement sane,
In harmony with what is fair.¹⁰

This is precisely the "sequent birth" described in "Earth and Man": through struggle with his environment, man develops brain, which leads him on to the taming of "blood" and to discovery of "spirit," which should probably be defined not only as a harmony of blood and brain but as that within man that leads him to aspire beyond his animal-rational state and to create, from his experiences of life and Earth, the art that helps to adorn and give form not only to nature but to man's own life (see below, page 102, for further discussion of this point). Brain is the guide for the whole process: in a letter to his son Arthur, Meredith wrote that his own "aim . . . is never to take counsel of my sensations, but of my intelligence. I let the former have free play but deny them the right to bring me to a decision."¹¹

The overcoming of egoism and the development and bringing into balance of the three elements of which he is composed leave man free to work at tasks beyond his own discipline and advancement--presumably, to work at aiding his fellow men and Earth in their growth and development. Norman Kelvin suggests that in Meredith's view, "life is . . . a gift that Earth gives [man] in order that he man have the privilege of serving as her instrument" both for his own sake and hers.¹² Once man has mastered all that he is able to of knowledge of Earth and of self, he is

free to accept what he cannot understand as the mystery belonging to Earth and to go on, as Meredith puts it in "The Woods of Westermain," to "pay [his] debt" to Earth for the gift of life.¹³ But what is it that man is to work at? Kelvin argues, and I think rightly, "that human work has as its mission a transformation of Earth desired by herself Man does not less than impose significant form upon Earth."¹⁴ Once again, it is the poem "Earth and Man" that supplies the support for this reading of Meredith's ideas. Meredith speaks of what Earth receives from man:

XXIV

Him she owes
For half her loveliness a love well won
By work that lights the shapeless and the dun,
Their common foes.

XXV

He builds the soaring spires,
That sing his soul in stone: of her he draws,
Though blind to her, by spelling at her laws,
Her purest fires.

XXVI

Through him hath she exchanged,
For the gold harvest-robcs, the mural crown,
Her haggard quarry-features and thick frown
Where monsters ranged.

XXVII

And order, high discourse,
And decency, than which is life less dear,
She has of him: the lyre of language clear,
Love's tongue and source.¹⁵

In return for clues to the meaning of life and to the way to advance himself, man provides Earth with form, beauty, color, order. His abilities with agriculture, architecture, language, and the development of moral laws are the tools man uses to pay his debt to the one who has

given him life. And Meredith indicates that even in paying his debt man is rewarded by the Earth he serves. In "Seed-Time," the speaker complains of the withering effect of autumn upon his growth; Earth replies that man's continuing labors will provide him with the warmth he needs to overcome the physical chill of the changing season:

Earth admonishes: Hast thou ploughed,
Sown, reaped, harvested grain for the mills,
Thou has the light over shadow of cloud.
(stanza V)¹⁶

Translated into terms of man's intellectual and spiritual growth, the passage indicates that man's service to Earth is continually rewarded by the presence of "light," of intellect that will aid him in dealing with life in all its manifestations.

Thus far it has been possible to speak in terms of generic man: all human beings are faced with the same task of studying Nature and themselves in order to discover the means to advancement of the race and of working for that end and for the transformation of Earth. But the perpetuation of the race imposes the biological necessity of two sexes, one of which has traditionally been subject to the other, and Meredith had, in considering how the race might advance, to deal with woman's place in society and with her role in man's evolutionary efforts. Society dictates that man and woman must marry in order to mate, so Meredith had also to undertake to establish a norm for marriage. J. W. Cunliffe sums up Meredith's attitude in a single sentence: "Fundamentally marriage must be based upon Nature's Law, but it must also take into account the higher faculties of men, and be a real mating of the spirit."¹⁷ This seems simple enough: ideally, Meredithian man must marry a woman who is his equal in blood, brain, and spirit; who has achieved harmony equal to his own among the three elements; who is sufficiently educated to

enable her to share in his intellectual activities and development; who is healthy enough to produce children who will be better developed than the preceding generation; and who will be faithful to him and to her children.

The reality of present social conventions, however, had to be changed before the Meredithian ideal might have a chance for success. The position of women was, of course, a matter of growing concern to the nineteenth century: Meredith was not alone in pondering the plight of womanhood in a society that kept her tied, in effect, to the old German triad of Küche, Kirche, und Kinder. Meredith's reaction, for example, to John Stuart Mill's On the Subjection of Women, is instructive (the passage comes from Viscount Morley's Recollections):

On one great question--perhaps the future may prove it the greatest of his time, and the mainspring of the most striking part of his creative art--[Meredith] was in accord with Mill. From his earliest days of reflection he said: "I have been oppressed by the injustice done to women, the constraint put upon their natural aptitude and their faculties, generally much to the degradation of the race." He had not studied women more closely than men, "but with more affection, a deeper interest in their development, being assured that women of the independent mind are needed for any sensible degree of progress." One morning in 1869 I put into his hand Mill's new little volume, less than two hundred pages long, on the Subjection of Women. Meredith eagerly seized the book, fell to devouring it in settled silence, and could not be torn from it all day. He had more experience than Mill of some types of women and the particular arts, "feline chiefly," to which some have recourse to make their way in the world. It was a memorable day when he found the case set out, with a breadth, strength, and grasp, that raised the question brought up in France by Condorcet at the end of the eighteenth century, to a new and active position in English-speaking countries in the nineteenth. [Italics mine]18

Meredith, then, agreed with Mill that the inferior position of the female sex socially and legally had to be corrected; for Meredith, the pressing need for reform of this social evil was tied directly to the advancement of the human race.

Meredith did not, so far as I know, deal specifically with the legal aspect of the problem, but he was much concerned about the social aspect. In "A Preaching from a Spanish Ballad," for example, he deals directly with the problems of a neglected wife who takes a lover, is discovered, shamed, and driven to commit suicide by a code of honor that tolerates the double standard.¹⁹ Meredith does not condone her adultery; he uses the incident to underline the inequity and falsity of a system that allows a husband complete liberty and then condemns the wife if she claims the same privilege. And, as Lafcadio Hearn points out in his discussion of this poem, Meredith also suggests that the failure of the woman to remain chaste despite the injustice of her position has a direct effect upon the moral development of mankind. Woman is the guardian of morality; if she fails, then eventually society may fail because woman has not upheld the moral code man learns from Earth's laws; because she has not taught her sons "grace in fealty" (stanza xviii); because she has not taken advantage of her one recourse: the education of her children in the direction of equality of the sexes.²⁰

Indeed, not only morality but civilization itself depends, according to Meredith, upon the independence or freedom of woman. In the "Essay on the Idea of Comedy and the Uses of the Comic Spirit," Meredith makes the point that "Where the veil is over women's faces [as it is in the Orient], you cannot have society, without which the senses are barbarous and the Comic spirit is driven to the gutters of grossness to slake its thirst . . . there never will be civilization where Comedy is not possible; and that comes of some degree of social equality of the sexes." The acceptance by woman of her role as a soft,

sentimental adjunct to man's life is self-defeating: woman must "recognize that the Comic Muse is one of [her] best friends" because it exposes unmercifully the follies and foibles of sentimental, ego-centric man and the incongruity between the dictates of common sense and the non-sensical behavior of man benighted by his self-centered, hazy, emotional view of life and woman.²¹

The same insistence upon the liberation of woman as crucial to the advancement of the race appears, but on the broader basis than the definition and uses of comedy, in "A Ballad of Fair Ladies in Revolt," a dialogue between a man and a group of women who are seeking to eliminate the inequities that make women subject to men.²² The man appeals to love and to the romantic, traditional notions of woman as "man's ideal" and as a weak creature who is nevertheless a source of strength (stanza xix); as a being who should be content to "have dominion o'er the springs / Domestic and man's heart" (stanza xxxv) and to be deified and placed upon a pedestal, a passive reflection of nature:

to be divine,
'Tis nature bids you be to nature true,
Flowing with beauty, lending earth your grace,
Reflecting heaven in clearness you.
[stanza xxxix]

The ladies argue that they want to be part of the world but that the traditional role of woman as trimmer of "the home-lamp" (stanza xxv) does not allow her to advance with man as his equal:

Ah! sir, our worshipped posture we perchance
Shall not abandon, though we see not how,
Being to that lamp-post fixed, we may advance
Beside our lords in any real degree
Unless we move: and to advance is now
A sovereign need, think more than we.
[stanza xxvi]

They point out that men should be able to tell, from their own experience of the tyranny of "grim brute force," how women feel in

attempting to pull out from under "that old half-tamed wild beast's paw" (stanza xxviii). The ladies' chief argument lies in their comparison of their emergent state with the development of man. The man has accused them of playing with "delusions" (stanza xxix), and they answer,

O sir, delusion mounting like a sun
On a mind blank as the white wife of Lot,
Giving it warmth and movement! if this be
Delusion, think of what thereby was won
For men, and dream of what win we.
[stanza xxx]

The point is that woman is just now emerging into a period of full development of all her powers, just as man evolved from simple forms to his present complex state. In response to the recommendation in stanza xxxix, the ladies claim equal place in the growth of humanity and point to the results that follow upon woman's continued subjection as a passive beauty:

To flow with beauty, breeding fools and worse,
Cowards and worse: at such fair life she chafes
Who is not wholly of the nursery,
Nor of your [men's] schools: we share the primal curse;
Together shake it off, say we!
[stanza xl]

It is a temptation to suggest that the "primal curse" is man's and woman's exclusion from the "fair garden" of equality between the sexes and of mutual respect and development that Meredith refers to in sonnet xlviii of Modern Love, another poem dealing with the crucial connection between the condition of women, the failure of a marriage, and the result, for society, of that failure. In the sonnet in question, Meredith generalizes from the wife's flawed education as a human being and as a woman to a plea on behalf of all women and of society:

Their sense is with their senses all mixed in,
Destroyed by subtleties these women are!
More brain, O Lord, more brain! or we shall mar
Utterly this fair garden we might win.²³

That Meredith did, in fact, look forward to a time when the sexes would meet as true equals is supported by a passage from "The Sage Enamoured and the Honest Lady."²⁴ In this long, complex, and heavily didactic poem, a young woman confesses, first in a highly emotional and artificial fashion and then factually and honestly, to adultery. The Sage does not condone the adultery, but he does commend the lady's courage and honesty in speaking openly of her behavior. He then urges her to develop her intellect "on her foundations in earth's bed," from which beginning

rooted knowledge to high sense
Of heavenly can mount, and feel the spur
For fruitfulest advancement, eye a mark
Beyond the path with grain on either hand,
Help to the steering of our social Ark
Over the barbarous waters unto land.

Not until man and woman are able to "plight a troth / Of equal hands" will the battle of the sexes end. But when that war is over, man and woman will have arrived at true union:

they, mate and mate,
Fair feminine and masculine shall join
Upon an upper plane, still common mould,
Where stamped religion and reflective pace
A statelier measure, and the hoop of gold
Rounds to horizon for their soul's embrace.
Then shall those noblest of the earth and sun
Inmix unlike to waves on savage sea.
But not until Nature's laws and man's are one,
Can marriage of the man and woman be.

The steps toward true marriage and thence to the advancement of the race that Meredith suggests are these: man must accept woman's Earth-given equality with him and eradicate the inequities of law and social order that keep her in subjection. He must work to make all his laws, not just those concerning the role of woman, consonant with Nature. Woman, for her part, must not only work with man and Earth for the sake of the whole race; she must accept willingly the responsibilities that come with freedom and equality (as Meredith implies she is already

willing to do in "The Ballad of Fair Ladies in Revolt"). Only under these conditions will man be truly man, woman truly woman, and marriage a vital experience for both and a central means toward the advancement of the race.

Although it seems, from Meredith's treatment of man and Nature, that Meredith thinks that man is to all intents and purposes alone in his confrontation with Nature in his struggle to advance his race and bring it into union (or re-union) with his mother, Earth, it is true that Meredith conceives of at least two aids upon which man may draw. One of them, present in his works from The Shaving of Shagpat on, is laughter, the recognition, through the application of man's intelligence and common sense, of the false, the pretentious, the inane and even insane, the unnatural qualities and quantities in human life. Trevelyan called Meredith "the poet of common sense, the inspired prophet of sanity," who observes the world unwaveringly and clear-sightedly and who expresses his criticism humorously rather than ironically, satirically, or cynically.²⁵ The attitude that enables man to wield the weapon of common sense and to laugh at and thereafter to correct his own absurdities and errors Meredith eventually conceptualized as the Comic Spirit, the description of whom is perhaps one of the most famous passages in the Meredith canon:

If you believe that our civilization is founded in common-sense (and it is the first condition of sanity to believe it), you will, when contemplating men, discern a Spirit overhead, not more heavenly than the light flashed upward from glassy surfaces, but luminous and watchful; never shooting beyond them nor lagging in the rear; so closely attached to them that it may be taken for a slavish reflex, until its features are studied. It has the sage's brows, and the sunny malice of a faun lurks at the corners of the half-closed lips drawn in an idle wariness of half tension. That slim feasting smile, shaped like the long-bow, was once a big round satyr's laugh, that flung up the brows like a fortress lifted by gunpowder. The laugh will come again, but it will be of the order of a smile, finely tempered, showing sunlight of the mind, mental richness rather than noisy enormity. Its

common aspect is one of unsolicitous observation, as if surveying a full field and having leisure to dart on its chosen morsels, without any fluttering eagerness. Men's future upon earth does not attract it; their honesty and shapeliness in the present does; and whenever they wax out of proportion, overblown, affected, pretentious, bombastical, hypocritical, pedantic, fantastically delicate; whenever it sees them self-deceived or hoodwinked, given to run riot in idolatries, drifting into vanities, congregating in absurdities, planning shortsightedly, plotting dementedly; whenever they are at variance with their professions, and violate the unwritten but perceptible laws binding them in consideration one to another; whenever they offend sound reason, fair justice; are false in humility or mined with conceit, individually, or in the bulk--the Spirit overhead will look humanely malign and cast an oblique light on them, followed by valleys of silvery laughter. That is the Comic Spirit.²⁶

One cannot help feeling, as one reads Meredith's novels with their dissections of human beings who evidence all the ills catalogued in the passages just quoted, that Meredith might well have seen himself-as-novelist in the role of the Spirit he has described so delightfully, in the role of one whose task it was to pierce the bubble of human self-deception and to point mankind's way to a saner view of itself.

The other aid upon which Meredith conceived that man might draw for help in learning how and where to direct his energies and intellect is history. By contemplating what man has done and whence he has come thus far, man can determine what yet remains to be done and what directions remain to be taken before his task will be complete. The difficulty in coming at Meredith's idea of history lies in the generally indirect references he makes to the subject in his writings.

There is a body of Meredith's poetry that deals with specific figures and moments in history, some in the past, some in the present. From these, it should be possible to cull some sort of statement about how Meredith saw history, and the place to begin seems to be the sonnet written in 1896, "Outside the Crowd," in which Meredith calls upon England either to stand ready to fight or to remain genuinely aloof

from imperialistic squabbles. The poem opens with what can only be understood as a general statement about the use and value of history:

To sit on History in an easy chair,
Still rivalling the wild hordes by whom 'twas writ!
Sure, this beseems a race of laggard wit,
Unwarned by those plain letters scrawled on air.²⁷

The same message--that man should learn from history the sort of behavior that best serves his own advancement--appears in "The Warning," wherein Meredith points out that nations that indulge their "insatiable greed / For Continents" as England is doing at the moment of Meredith's writing explode like balloons:

So do ripe nations into squalor pass,
When, driven as herds by their old private thirst,
They scorn the brain's wild search for virtuous light.²⁸

In other words, Meredith upholds the view that man can and must learn from history and apply those lessons to his position in the present.

The following lines from "Solon" (1887) carry the same import:

shall the Present tyrannize us? earned
It was in some way, justly says the sage.
.....
still may they who sowed behind the plough
True seed fix in the mind an unborn Now
To make the plagues afflicting us things past.²⁹

Man's present difficulties grow out of the past, but he can also derive from the men of the past the means or precepts through which he can build a future that will be better than the present or the past. Indeed, according to Jack Lindsay, Meredith used past events to predicate the outcome of present conditions in "The Nuptials of Attila." Here, according to Lindsay, Meredith "expresses his gathering fears of imperial power (German or English)" in terms of "the anarchic dissolution of [Attila's] empire" upon that ruler's sudden death.³⁰

It seems reasonable to suggest that Meredith would no doubt have subscribed to the view of history set forth by his Positivist friend, Frederic Harrison:

history is . . . necessary as a guide to consistent and rational action. We need to know not merely what the essential qualities of civilisation and of our social nature really are; but we require to know the general course in which they are tending. The more closely we look at it, the more distinctly we see that progress moves in a clear and definite path; the development of man is not casual or arbitrary motion: it moves in a regular and consistent plan.

The true object of history is to show us the life of the human race in its fulness, and to follow up the tale of its continuous and difficult evolution. The conception of the progress of civilisation in intelligible sequence, is the greatest achievement of modern thought. History is the biography of civilised man.³¹

A study of Meredith's Odes in Contribution to the Song of French History supports the conclusion that Meredith's thinking about history was colored to some extent by the Positivist approach, although nowhere have I found any suggestion that Meredith saw history as divided into the three distinct stages defined by Auguste Comte: "the Theological, or fictitious; the Metaphysical, or abstract; and the Scientific, or positive." But from the Odes the reader gathers that Meredith did agree with the Positivist notion that the French Revolution was a definite step forward (from the Theological to the Metaphysical state, in the Positivist terms) that was negated by France's acceptance of the Terror and the retrogressive Napoleon I, by the restoration of the monarchy after Napoleon's defeat at Waterloo, and by the lapse into Bonapartism that brought Napoleon III to power.³² Meredith expresses this sequence of events in a series of metaphorical betrayals: France, in the Revolution, had the opportunity to mate with True Liberty (identified variously as the "Angelical," the "heavenly lover," or "the bridegroom of the miracle day"). However, France deserts this bridegroom first for the blood-lust of the Terror, then for Napoleon I, the "cannon." Then, when Napoleon is defeated, France gives herself to the monarchy and to Napoleon III, thus betraying her original betrothal four times. Finally, in the years following her defeat at the hands of Germany in

the Franco-Prussian War (1870-1871), France learns her proper role and is wed to "duty": she assumes her task as Earth's co-worker and gets on with the business of raising her children in keeping with Earth's laws and of serving as an example for mankind in general.³³

There is a distinctly Comtean ring to the marriage that Meredith describes between France and duty. In his study of Comte's philosophy, John Stuart Mill describes Comte's concept of duty and of the being to whom it is owed:

M. Comte believes in what is meant by the infinite nature of duty, but he refers the obligations of duty, as well as all sentiments of devotion, to a concrete object, at once ideal and real; the Human Race, conceived as a continuous whole, including the past, the present, and the future. This great collective existence, this 'Grand Etre,' as he terms it, though the feelings it can excite are necessarily very different from those which direct themselves towards an ideally perfect Being, has, as he forcibly urges, this advantage in respect to us, that it really needs our services, which Omnipotence cannot, in any genuine sense of the term, be supposed to do: and M. Comte says, that assuming the existence of a Supreme Providence (which he is as far from denying as from affirming) the best, and even the only, way in which we can rightly worship or serve Him, is by doing our utmost to love and serve that other Great Being, whose inferior Providence has bestowed on us all the benefits that we owe to the labors and virtues of former generations.³⁴

Given Meredith's concern with man's role in the development of his race, it seems possible to suggest that he did, like Comte (perhaps through Mill's filter, so to speak), conceive of duty as service to mankind and as a necessary service, at that. History would then become, for Meredith, a record of the services and disservices performed for humanity by men and would indeed be the "biography of civilised man" that Harrison takes it to be (see above, p. 112).

Mention of Meredith's view of history, it seems to me, imposes the necessity of dealing also with the vexed question of Meredith's politics. Early commentators on Meredith apparently accepted without question the idea that, as Lady Butler puts it, "Mr. Meredith was a Radical in politics"³⁵ Ellis describes Meredith as "a lifelong

Radical of advanced views" and a "Champion of Liberty" ³⁶ G. M. Trevelyan moderates Meredith's position to that of "an advanced Liberal," and Lionel Stevenson reverses Meredith's stand entirely with the statement that Meredith "considered himself to be a Conservative" ³⁷ Jack Lindsay presents Meredith throughout his biography as "a left-wing Radical" who "held a deep optimism which believed that despite all hell's men--the masses--would master the threat and achieve a happy and harmonious life on earth"; who was a supporter of democracy insofar as it was, for him, "almost synonymous with Change"; and who was essentially a republican. ³⁸

The difficulty in establishing Meredith's political stand seems to rest primarily upon the eight years (1860-1868) Meredith spent writing articles for two Conservative newspapers, The Ipswich Journal and The Morning Post. Meredith's connection with these periodicals was evidently not general knowledge until 1893 when, according to J. A. Hammerton, an article entitled "George Meredith as a Journalist" by Frederick Dolman appeared in the New Review. The revelation that Meredith had, as editorial writer for the Ipswich newspaper, abandoned his role as (in Hammerton's words) "the apostle of enlightened liberty" for "the role of journalistic champion of the South during the American Civil War" evidently made for considerable puzzlement. Hammerton solves the problem as follows:

[Meredith's] editorial enthusiasm for the South was no doubt palatable to the readers of the Ipswich Journal--and he gave them good value for their money--but it must have cost the writer some qualms of conscience. Mr. Dolman considers that it may have been genuine enthusiasm in a wrong cause, but I am inclined to class it with the Tory sentiments which the Journal demanded of him if he had to eat its bread. For, having by fell circumstance been forced to the work, Meredith was at least no shirker, and he wrote for his paper just the best 'leaders' and the brightest 'notes' that a brilliant journalist could have written. ³⁹

Siegfried Sassoon finds Meredith's writing for a Conservative paper "disconcerting" and "unfortunate" and attempts to mitigate the inconsistency by noting that John Morley, a most obvious Radical, probably wrote some of the articles attributed to Meredith.⁴⁰ Stevenson, as I have already mentioned, simply makes Meredith a life-long Conservative, thus eliminating any inconsistency in Meredith's accepting the position with the Journal. When he comes to that period of Meredith's life (beginning about 1868) when he was most directly associated with the Liberals and Radicals gathered about Maxse, John Morley, Leslie Stephen, and Frederic Harrison, Stevenson notes that "Meredith was strongly drawn to their doctrines of tolerance and humanitarianism" and was equally drawn to the cause of democracy and republicanism in the Italian struggle for freedom. Stevenson concludes, however, that Meredith's interests in such matters "did not help him to formulate a very coherent doctrine of his own," implying that Meredith had no distinct politics at this point--not entirely an unlikely notion.⁴¹

When Lindsay comes to mention the Journal, he does so virtually in passing and without so much as commenting on the incongruity of his leftist Radical's writing for a Tory paper. But when he deals with Meredith's reaction to the Alabama incident in 1864, in which the Confederate cruiser Alabama was sunk by the U. S. S. Kearsarge off Cherbourg, Lindsay explains the difficulty away in terms of Meredith's "confusedly working out his own inner conflict, his sense of the 'shadowfight' between Liberal and Tory, in the Ipswich contributions." By the time of "Lines to a Friend Visiting America" (addressed to John Morley; 1867) and Beauchamp's Career (1874-1875), according to Lindsay, Meredith had resolved the conflict within himself and had come out

decidedly on the side of Radicalism.⁴² In the poem addressed to Morley, Lindsay finds evidence that Meredith blamed British sympathy for the Southern cause in the American Civil War primarily on the British aristocracy and capitalists--"mighty Mammon's pipers," in the poem's language--and that Meredith felt that the true qualities of Britain survived only in the working classes, an interpretation that lends support to Lindsay's view of Meredith as one of the Radical left.⁴³ In dealing with Beauchamp's Career, Lindsay apparently proceeds on the assumption that, to a large extent, Meredith accepted the Radical thinking of his protagonist (and of Maxse, upon whom the character is based). Lindsay manages to smooth away complaints about the end of the novel--the death of Beauchamp while rescuing "a worker's child"--by pointing out that Meredith, left-wing Radical that he is, is really pointing to the solution to Britain's problems that Beauchamp himself had missed: "the saved child is the future for which he has striven; the child is the working-class with whom the next word lies."⁴⁴

The opposite view of Meredith is supported by Norman Kelvin, for whom the view of Meredith as "a lifelong, uncomplicated, nineteenth-century Liberal and Radical" is no more than a "myth."⁴⁵ Early in his study of Meredith, Kelvin solves (for himself, at least) the whole problem of the Ipswich Journal, Radicalism, Liberalism, and Conservatism:

. . . there is really nothing puzzling about the episode. Meredith was always inclined toward the conservatives and the aristocracy. His leaning in their direction was more marked during the late '50's and in the '60's than it was in subsequent years, but it never actually ceased. Partially it was caused by a contempt he felt for a long time for the commercial classes and their values, a contempt he shared with other men of letters, notably Tennyson. Partially it was the result of the difficult life situation which was shaping Meredith the man. Son of a tailor; handsome, sensitive, and of an aristocratic bearing; financially straitened; deserted by his wife; responsible for the upbringing of his son, he learned in the late '50's to rely for his share of life mainly

on his talent as an artist. It was easy enough for him to feel a kinship between the artist, born with talent, and the aristocrat, born to high position.⁴⁶

But although Kelvin can say quite justly that Lindsay's interpretation of Meredith "as a kind of intuitive Marxist who hailed the 'class-struggle' and championed the proletariat" is "a thesis that violates many facts," he cannot really claim that Meredith took the opposite view and supported the aristocracy: Lindsay points out Meredith's disagreement with the Carlylean theory of the aristocracy as the source of the best leadership as it appears in "Lines to a Friend Visiting America":

What medicine for disease had he?
Whom summoned for a show of force?
Our titular aristocracy!⁴⁷

Kelvin says that Meredith's attitude toward "the commercial classes" changed by the end of his career, presumably referring to the positive side of such characters as Thomas Redworth in Diana of the Crossways and Victor Radnor in One of Our Conquerors, characters whose positiveness contrasts strongly with the corruption of the aristocracy as Meredith presents it in the person of Lord Fleetwood in The Amazing Marriage.⁴⁸

Oddly enough, it is also Kelvin who, despite the apparent turnabouts he performs, offers the most reasonable solution to the whole question. We must, finally, understand Meredith's politics as essentially eclectic and not connected for any considerable amount of time to any particular party or group.⁴⁹ The character of the total picture of Meredith's politics is liberal, it seems to me, despite the occasional admixture of both conservative and radical elements. He was liberal in a literal sense when it was a question of human dignity and advancement; radical when it was a question of obvious violation

of human rights; conservative when it was a question of preserving what had proved useful and right for mankind in its efforts to survive in and to improve his world. It was, then, possible for him to cheer on the Italian effort of freedom, to support the groundswell of opinion in favor of the emancipation of women, and to give place to the amenities of social behavior that make social intercourse profitable and pleasant.

B. SOURCES OF THE PHILOSOPHY

It would be a relatively safe but too simple generalization to say that many of the elements that go into the making of Meredith's philosophy were "in the air" when he reached the point in his development as a man and as an artist where he was ready for or in need of some frame upon which to build his poetry and fiction. The English Romantics, like the German Romantics before them, were much concerned with the relationship between man and nature; the subsequent "school" of Spasmodic poets gave over many lines to consideration of man's place in nature and to social problems. Philip James Bailey's *Festus* cries out to Earth in symptomatic terms:

I ask for nought
Before or after death but this,--to lie,
And look, and live, and bask, and bless myself
Upon thy broad bright bosom. From thee I
Sprang, and to thee I turn, heart, arm and brain.
Yes, I am all thine own. Thou art the sole
Parent. To rock and river, plain and wood
I cry, ye are my kin. While I, O Earth!
Am but an atom of thee, and a breath,
Passing unseen and unrecorded like
The tiny throb here in my temple's pulse.⁵⁰

Moreover, the nineteenth century was, in Loren Eiseley's phrase, "Darwin's century," the period when the search for an explanation of the origins

of life reached one of its climaxes in Charles Darwin's formulation of the theory of natural selection, of the evolution of present life forms from earlier and less successful forms.⁵¹ Meredith was obviously not alone among the English poets in reflecting in his work the streams of scientific and social thought that grew out of the developing sciences of life: the works of such diverse writers as Peacock, Tennyson, Swinburne, and Spencer are also colored by the opening of new scientific frontiers during the nineteenth century. But facility of explanation is the scholar's bane.

We know, from the course of Meredith's formal education (see Chapter I, pp. 10, 14-15), that he was probably not introduced formally to the literature of his own country while at St. Paul's School in Southsea and that he probably was introduced to the German Romantic writers during his two years at Neuwied. It seems reasonable to assume (but unnecessary to take the assumption as far as Jack Lindsay does; see above, Chapter I, pp. 14-15) that the essentially Romantic foundation of Meredith's philosophy of man and nature was laid during his stay in Germany. Priestley's statement of the case is perhaps the best as far as it goes.

The Germany he saw was the Germany of the year immediately preceding '48, when an enthusiastic and romantic liberalism and nationalism were fermenting the educated classes, when social service was becoming the ideal of romantic young men, when liberalism had penetrated into theology, and free thought was in the air. The very fact of going abroad at all to be educated meant that Meredith had an opportunity to escape that provincialism which Arnold was later to denounce as one of the most glaring faults of the age; and the fact that he went to Germany, and to a centre of liberalism, nationalism, and religious tolerance, partly explains the bent of his mind and the curious way in which he seems to escape his age. Meredith owed Germany a great deal more than the inspiration for Farina or the German scenes in Harry Richmond; it shaped his mind and determined the course of his thought and gave him a certain romanticism that coloured all his work, no matter how purely intellectual, how much in the spirit of pure comedy, the underlying

conception of that work might be. It is difficult to decide where this influence ends. Even that wilfulness, love of the fantastic, particularly in matters of construction and style, indifference to form, all of which mark his work both in poetry and fiction, may have their root in German influences.⁵²

But Priestley's summary, although it rightly points up the probable impact upon the young Meredith of the liberalism and romanticism of the German literary scene of the day, does not take in what seems to me to be one of the chief concepts not only of German but of English Romanticism: the idea, pointed out by Oskar Walzel in his study of the German movement, of organicism, of the oneness or unity of human life, nature, and art. Life was to be lived in harmony with other human beings and with nature, and a life that achieved "the assurance of [being] a process of nature" was for the Romantics, according to Walzel, "the ultimate goal in the art of living." The apparently inconsistent facts of dualism and contradiction were merely indicative to the Romantics of the "many-sidedness" of life, and were apparent only because "of genuine love of truth." Nature itself is, in the view of the German Romantics, possessed of consciousness and is moreover not cut off from man: "nature is pervaded by a feeling which is essentially kin to human feeling"⁵³ Roger Tymms, in discussing the content of the poetry of Joseph Baron von Eichendorff, observes that this writer saw nature "as a hieroglyphic revelation of the immanent Deity" but that this conception of nature was hardly new with the later Romantic poets: Goethe and Schelling, in particular, made use of the same notion, which derives ultimately (according to Tymms) from Spinoza. Indeed, Schelling saw "nature [as functioning in] a partnership with the self, or human mind, as an analogous, even an inherently identical, entity which interacts upon the mind."⁵⁴

It is necessary, too, to comment upon the German Romantic attitude toward woman, which ranged from recommendations of free love in the broadest sense to more reasonable requests for what Walzel describes as "the liberation of woman" and for correction of "the existing status of marriage. But [Romanticism] did not seek the exaltation of woman in sexual licentiousness and it contended for the genuine and true marriage as opposed to the false and conventional one." Further, it argued for the education of women and for the recognition of the identity of woman's fate or progress toward perfection with man's--the latter idea stemming, according to Walzel, from an ancient lineage that includes Socrates, Plato, and the Stoics.⁵⁵ Indeed, an example of typical German Romantic thinking about the condition of woman appears in Jean Paul Friedrich Richter's novel, Titan (1800-1803), a work that Meredith might have read during his years at Neuwied, although from the content of the novel it seems more probable that it was not included in reading for boys than that Moravian brothers would permit their charges to read it, even at the age of fourteen. But to the point: one of the capricious Richter's digressions is entitled "a short comico-tragic Extraleaf upon The Green-Market of Daughters," wherein Richter says, in brief, that daughters are regarded by the nobility and by 'the mercantile order' as marketable commodities: "I ask you [parents] . . . about your right to prescribe for morally free beings their inclinations, or even the show of inclination, and by one act of despotism to stretch the poisonous leaden sceptre over a whole free life." Richter goes on, at times rather melodramatically, to paint a portrait of the results of parental self-interest in marrying off a young girl with "a black, old, withered, greedy fist," and of the

deaths of many young married women, victims of forced marriages, because of longing, "confused and conflicting emotions," the disinclination to eat properly, and so on.⁵⁶ One cannot help remembering Meredith's portraits of inappropriate marriages in the histories of Diana Warwick and Aminta Farrell and his constant insistence upon marriage as, ideally, a free coming together of equally endowed men and women.

We know, from the existing translations from the German and from scattered references in the novels and letters, that Meredith read the poetry of such German Romantic writers as Goethe, Schiller, von Eichendorff, Uhland, Morike, Heine, and the large group of Austrian poets who appear in his 1852 article on the subject. Surely he absorbed something of their attitude toward human life and nature and the inter-relationship not only of life and nature but of the sexes. Indeed, given Meredith's philosophy and its reliance on the working together of man, woman, and Nature for the creation of a world that is better than the one with which they began, it seems that one can draw no other conclusion than that Meredith was in fact influenced by the German and Austrian poets to whom he was introduced, most probably, during his two years at Neuwied. That he became acquainted with their liberal and republican views, with their curious mixture of mysticism and science, and with their habit of expressing their views with what Tymms calls "unbounded and uninhibited imagination" combined with "intellectual and didactic traits" seems to me to be beyond question.⁵⁷ These are, after all, the elements and qualities of Meredith's own literary productions, from the whimsical and fantastic-allegorical antics of Shibli Bagarag and Farina to the tormented struggles of Lord Fleetwood and

Carinthia Jane Kirby. However many qualifications or limits one may wish to place upon Jack Lindsay's estimate of the contributions made by Neuwied to Meredith's development as a thinker and artist (see above, Chapter 1, pp. 14-15), one must agree that Meredith did at least become aware of all those elements of Romanticism already mentioned as well as of the reliance upon chivalry, mysteriousness, medievalism, and the supernatural that characterizes the German Romantic movement.⁵⁸

The English Romantic tradition was, like the German, concerned with the unity of all things, with love of nature, with optimism about the fate of man, with escapism and the fascination of faraway places and times, with subjective reactions to experience, and with the problem of imagination versus reason.⁵⁹ Lane Cooper, in his introduction to his edition of Meredith's essay on comedy, summarizes neatly the general influence of the great English Romantic poets on Meredith:

[Meredith's] notions of the oneness of all life and being, of "the soul that breathes through the universe" . . . , echo the thought of certain English poets of the age preceding his; for his expressions frequently remind us of Wordsworth and the doctrine of the divine immanence found in Wordsworth's earlier poetry; and [Meredith's] freely-devised mythology, his invention of spirits (as the "Comic Spirit") and essences of one sort and another, and of the imps in The Egoist, has a parallel in the demonology, clearly of Neoplatonic origin, which Coleridge employs and half-believes, and in the spirits, splendors, and other fictitious personages which Shelley produces, in his profuse, tenuous, and haphazard mythological machinery.⁶⁰

It is impossible, of course, to determine exactly when Meredith first read the poetry of the great Romantics, but we do know that he read among their works before 1851: in the Poems of that year appeared a series of four-line poems dealing with "The Poetry of" Chaucer, Spenser, Shakespeare, Milton, Southey, Coleridge, Shelley, Wordsworth, and Keats.⁶¹ Each of the verses singles out what Meredith at the time must evidently have taken to be the major theme or quality of each poet.

In Southey's grandiloquent and lengthy "epics," Meredith found "the humanest truth"; in Coleridge's portraits of nature in sunlight and moonlight, a "gurgling melody ever renewed"--presumably the grand and universal song of Nature. For Meredith, Shelley's skylark has a mission: "Wisdom and beauty and love are the treasures it brings down at eve." Wordsworth's poetry contains

The voice of great Nature; sublime with her lofty conceptions,
Yet earnest and simple as any sweet child of the green lowly vale.

And in Keats's verse Meredith discovered, in the "song of a nightingale sent thro' a slumbrous valley," "the yearning of passion / That wins immortality even while panting delirious with death."

That the influence of the English Romantics was pervasive in Meredith's poetry is obvious from the recurrent echoes of imagery and idea that one hears while reading Meredith's poetry. It should be noted, however, that the ideas are usually qualified by Meredith's own social, scientific, and political ideas: one example of such a transformation involving an apparently Wordsworthian experience has already been indicated above in connection with Meredith's use of his first view of the Alps and its likeness to and difference from Wordsworth's use of the same moment in his own life (Chapter I, pp. 32 ff.). There are innumerable traces of Wordsworth's influence throughout Meredith's poetry. The early and incomplete "Wandering Willie" (in the Yale notebooks; 1849-1850), according to Professor Bartlett, was inspired by Wordsworth's Excursion: "Willie replaces The Wanderer and The Author" in Meredith's tale of an itinerant worker-poet and his family and of their meanderings and meetings across the English countryside.⁶² Professor Bartlett also notes echoes of Wordsworth in poems written

during the last twenty years of Meredith's life: in "The Southwester" (1888), for example, she finds a passage that, "Combining an understanding of pantheism and a belief in the value of recollection, . . . is probably the most Wordsworthian sentence in [Meredith's] nature poetry":

We could believe
A life in orb and brook and tree
And cloud: and still holds Memory
A morning in the eyes of eve.⁶³

Further, says Professor Bartlett, the birds in Meredith's "Night of Frost in May" (1892) "sob" like the "owlets" in Wordsworth's "The Idiot Boy," line 290. And Meredith's tribute to Milton (1908), especially in its treatment of the great poet as one whom England needs in her present struggle with Belial, Mammon, and Moloch, is similar to Wordsworth's summoning up of Milton's presence in "London, 1802."⁶⁴ Such echoes, of course, merely indicate that the two poets shared recognition of the quality of the sounds of nature and of the value of Milton as a moral force.

But despite recurrent recollections in Meredith's poetry of perceptions experienced by Wordsworth, the consensus of Meredith's biographer-critics is that Meredith went beyond Wordsworth's reading of man and nature. G. M. Trevelyan provides us with a summary statement:

Each [Meredith and Wordsworth] had a poetical philosophy claiming to interpret the face of nature, and each was certainly inspired to success in literature by perpetual and loving contact with Earth in all her moods. But Wordsworth was constrained by his beliefs to despise the breast upon which he fed his soul. In the Ode on the Intimations of Immortality, he gave the finest expression to the old orthodox view that we are children, not of Earth, but of Heaven. To Wordsworth, sojourn in this life here was an exile (. . . we come / From God, who is our home). Earth was not the mother, but only the foster-nurse.

Not so Mr. Meredith. To him Earth is the Mother; the mighty pronoun "she" perpetually recurs in his poems Man's spirit

and brain, no less than his body, . . . are earth-born What is spiritual comes out of Earth, as well as what is fleshly He uses Earth as the sanction for all his moral precepts The ethical laws which he himself approves, the temperament of common sense fired by enthusiasm and controlled by humour, he poetically speaks of as "the reading of Earth."

. . . he says that the true heroes of the human race [are] those who conquer self and serve their fellows Earth contains Heaven:-- it is that part of Heaven which is our home.

In sum, Trevelyan says, man's observation of Earth, of his fellow creatures, and of all creation, is man's key to the good--indeed, the best--life.⁶⁵

Beginning with the poem "Melampus" (1883), Siegfried Sassoon arrives at much the same conclusion about the difference between Meredith and Wordsworth as do Trevelyan and Jack Lindsay (see the following paragraph): that although Meredith's poem is "Wordsworthian in feeling," it demonstrates Meredith's "divergence from Wordsworth's impassioned contemplation of nature to an acceptance of the view of nature offered by modern science--an eternal activity that overflows with individual life."⁶⁶ That is to say that Wordsworth saw Nature as an object to be studied by man, whereas Meredith saw Nature as man's partner in life, as an active, productive force working along with man in a constant process of creativity.

Along the same lines, Lindsay, in discussing Meredith's "South-West Wind in the Woodland" (1851), observes that Meredith's language in this poem "may not seem to show much advance on that of Wordsworth or Shelley in their efforts to define a living relationship between men and nature." Lindsay's reference is to the concluding lines of the poem:

The voice of nature is abroad
This night; she fills the air with balm;
Her mystery is o'er the land;
And who that hears her now and yields
His being to her yearning tones,
And seats his soul upon her wings,

And broadens o'er the wind-swept world
 With her, will gather in the flight
 More knowledge of her secret, more
 Delight in her beneficence,
 Than hours of musing, or the lore
 That lives with men could ever give!
 Nor will it pass away when morn
 Shall look upon the lulling leaves,
 And woodland sunshine, Eden-sweet,
 Dreams o'er the paths of peaceful shade;--
 For every elemental power
 Is kindred to our hearts, and once
 Acknowledged, wedded, once embraced,
 Once taken to the unfettered sense,
 Once claspt into the naked life,
 The union is eternal.

Lindsay says that Meredith's "idiom . . . is much less precise than . . . the finest passages of The Prelude and The Ode to the West Wind"; yet Meredith's portrait of nature subsumes, according to Lindsay, not "the ecstatic wish for union with the elements" that was characteristic of the great Romantics but a definite "advance" to "a secure sense of man's definite place in nature." In Meredith's view, again according to Lindsay, "Nature [appears] as something more than a healing source to which man returns, a great force with which he aspires to identify himself in moments of exalted outpouring." And Lindsay observes that Meredith's later poetry is built on the assumption in the last line of this early poem: that the "union" between man and nature is "eternal."⁶⁷ Indeed, it is vital, as I have attempted to indicate in my summary of Meredith's philosophy at the beginning of this chapter (see above, p. 98 ff).

Norman Kelvin deals briefly with the similarities and contrasts between Wordsworth and Meredith, including the point made by Trevelyan about the relative importance of Earth in the thinking of the two poets (see pp. 125-6).⁶⁸ Kelvin also finds "echoes . . . of Wordsworth" in the scene in Richard Feverel where Richard, hearing of the birth of his child, walks through a forest in the Rhineland and, in Kelvin's words,

"there, amid the quiverings, noise, and flashing of a thunder and lightning storm, . . . experiences the spiritual rebirth he had been vainly seeking for months." Presumably Kelvin intends his readers to understand that Richard's experience is a deeper one than the sort of experience Wordsworth describes in moments of communion between man's feelings and nature's state; that Richard's experience reflects what Lindsay insists upon (see preceding paragraph) as differentiating Meredith from Wordsworth: that "secure sense of man's definite place in nature." Richard is ministered to by Nature, but not fortuitously: because he is a part of nature, Nature must aid him in recovering from the spiritual malaise that has kept Richard from understanding and properly valuing Lucy.⁶⁹

In discussing Meredith's "belief . . . that society is a battleground," Kelvin observes that "Meredith [in Sandra Belloni] made it clear that war is . . . a natural conception in the sense that nature sanctions the just war." In the 1864 novel, Meredith has his positive Welsh character, Merthyr Powys, declare his support of Italy's struggle for liberation in terms of "'the re-establishment of the provisions of nature.' A war fought in the name of nationalism is 'moral' because 'natural.'" In this argument Kelvin finds "a strong echo . . . of the Wordsworth who began to write patriotic political sonnets in 1802 and who maintained (in the Tract on the Convention of Cintra) that the moral basis of nationalism is in accord with nature--essentially the doctrine of Mazzini many years later." And Mazzini, of course, turns up in Meredith's Vittoria (1867) as the Chief who directs the Italian revolt against Austria. Kelvin feels justified--and probably rightly so--in concluding that "Meredith may have been quite aware of his debt to the

tradition linking Wordsworth and Mazzini, and [that] it is more than likely that Merthyr's words are Meredith's idea of what Mazzini himself might say."⁷⁰

One cannot help speculating that Meredith's interest in the republican movements of the nineteenth century might have been spurred originally by the republicanism of both the German and English Romantic poets: Meredith's treatment of revolutionary and Napoleonic France carries many echoes not only of Wordsworth's handling of the French Revolution in Book IX of The Prelude and of both the Revolution and Napoleon in some of the sonnets, but of Coleridge's, Byron's, and Shelley's treatments of the French Revolution and of Bonaparte in their poetry.⁷¹ With specific reference to Wordsworth, Trevelyan makes the point that Meredith's "The Patriot Engineer" (1861), "England before the Storm" (1891), "Aneurin's Harp" (1868), "France 1870" (1871), and "At the Close" (1899) constitute "a group of political poems that can be compared, both for likeness and difference, with those of Wordsworth."⁷² Meredith's poems deal, respectively, with the defeat of nationalism in Hungary and the contrasting freedom to be found in England; the sloth of England before the threat of war; the qualities present-day England inherited from the Celts, the Saxons, and the Normans, and England's need in the present to make use of all those qualities in the development of "brains" and the ability to handle power properly; concern for a France defeated by the Prussians and in danger of losing the gains she made in the Revolution a century before; and the brutality and naturalness of man's warring upon his fellowmen.⁷³ Evidently what Trevelyan saw of Wordsworth in these poems was a certain amount of republicanism, a concern for national liberty, pride in England as a free nation, concern for the

welfare of France (although Wordsworth, of course, witnessed the smothering of republican-revolutionary promise under the cloak of Napoleon I, and Meredith the decline of French republicanism and revolutionary ardor under the Bonapartism of the 1850's and later), and exhortations to England, like that in "Lines on the Expected Invasion, 1803," to be on guard against her foes and the foes of national independence.⁷⁴

The sense that the great Romantics seem somehow to loom above Meredith's poetry does not persist when one comes to consider the possible influence of Coleridge on Meredith, despite Lane Cooper's connecting Meredith's "demonology" with that "which Coleridge employs and half-believes" (see above, p.123). The case changes again, however, when one comes to examine the role of Shelley and Keats in Meredith's development: constant echoes of the younger Romantics resound throughout Meredith's poetry. I have already made reference to Jack Lindsay's remark that Meredith's early poem, "South-West Wind in the Woodland" (1851), did not go beyond Wordsworth's and Shelley's "efforts to define a living relationship between men and nature" (see above, p. 126). Echoes of Shelley occur throughout Meredith's poetry from the 1851 volume, where the influence of earlier poets is most apparent, to "The Night Walk" (1899). For example, Walter Wright connects Meredith's lovely girl in "Love in the Valley" with Shelley's lyre and with the "maiden in 'The Sensitive Plant,'" the point being that Meredith's girl is as much the product and instrument of nature as Shelley's creations (see especially "Alastor," lines 37-49, and "Ode to the West Wind," lines 57-61, for Shelley's lyre; "The Sensitive Plant," Part Two, for the maiden).⁷⁵ Professor Bartlett connects Meredith's "Swathed round in mist," also in the 1851 volume, with Shelley's "Mont Blanc," and indeed

the similarity between Meredith's conception of a mountain and Shelley's of Mont Blanc is striking. Meredith writes,

O Mountain! hid from peak to base,
And image of the awful power
With which the secret of all things,
That stoops from heaven to garment earth,
Can speak to any human soul,
When once the earthly limits lose
Their pointed heights and sharpened lines,
And measureless immensity
Is palpable to sense and sight.⁷⁶

Shelley, considering the awesome majesty and size of Mont Blanc, concludes that

The wilderness has a mysterious tongue
Which teaches awful doubt, or faith so mild,
So solemn, so serene, that man may be,
But for such faith, with nature reconciled;
Thou hast a voice, great Mountain, to repeal
Large codes of fraud and woe; not understood
By all, but which the wise, and great, and good
Interpret, or make felt, or deeply feel.
[lines 77-83]

The "awful power" in the command of "the secret of all things" in Meredith's poem seems to be connected directly with Shelley's final description of Mont Blanc:

The secret Strength of things
Which governs thought, and to the infinite dome
Of heaven is as a law, inhabits thee!
And what were thou, and earth, and stars, and sea,
If to the human mind's imaginings
Silence and solitude were vacancy?
[lines 139-144]⁷⁷

Both poets are looking for a lesson for man in Nature, and they seem to find the same lesson: that to the receptive human mind the mysteries of nature, as embodied in the mountain, make themselves plain. (It seems necessary to point once again to Meredith's first experience of the Alps, discussed above in Chapter I, and to the probable coloring that moment received from Meredith's recollection of Wordsworth's The Prelude; see pp. 33ff.).

Siegfried Sassoon finds "a Shelleyan essence" in Meredith's "The South-Wester," a poem in which Professor Bartlett finds the most Wordsworthian of Meredith's lines (see above, p. 125). The poem itself is--as nearly as one can tell, even after several careful readings--a description of the passage of a single day in terms of the changing cloud formations viewed by the speaker, and insofar as the poem describes clouds and takes the global view of Earth, it resembles Shelley's "The Cloud" to some degree, although the point of view in the earlier poet's lines is that of the cloud itself. The other half of Sassoon's description of the poem is perhaps more apt than the comparison with Shelley: Sassoon says that "The South-Wester" has "a Turner-esque vision," a feeling for the blending together of color, form, and movement that does indeed recall some of Turner's paintings of clouds.⁷⁸

That Meredith was fairly well acquainted with Shelley's poetry is demonstrated by several references to Shelley in Meredith's letters. During the 1861 trip to the Continent, Meredith went to Venice, part of which excursion he described to Captain Maxse in a letter dated August 16, 1861, from Milan:

I have followed Byron's and Shelley's footsteps there (in Venice) on the Lido. Do you remember in 'Julian and Maddalo,' where the two, looking towards the Euganean hills, see the great bell of the Insane Asylum swing in the sunset? I found the exact spot. I have seldom felt melancholy so strongly as when standing there. You know I despise melancholy, but the feeling came; I love both those poets; and with my heart given to them I felt as if I stood in a dead and useless time. So are we played with sometimes!⁷⁹

In a letter to Mrs. Ross written after his return to England, Meredith described the same moment in these terms: "On the Lido one thinks sadly of Byron and Shelley. I found the spot Shelley speaks of in 'Julian and Maddalo,' where he saw the Vicenza hills in the sunset through the bell-tower where the lunatics abide, on an island."⁸⁰ Finally, writing

to Captain Maxse about April 1, 1862, Meredith advised his friend, "In Venice read 'Julian and Maddalo.' It is one of Shelley's best: admirable for simplicity of style, ease, beauty of description and local truth. The philosophy, of course, you may pass."⁸¹

It is, of course, the final comment that intrigues one. Evidently Meredith felt either that Maxse might ignore whatever "philosophy" there is in Shelley's poem or that the philosophy itself was dismissable. If, as Kenneth Cameron asserts, Mrs. Shelley's estimate of the "core of Shelley's poetry" is a valid one, then we ought to find in "Julian and Maddalo" some of those "characteristics" described by Mrs. Shelley in her Preface to the 1839 edition of Shelley's poems: "To defecate life of its misery and its evil was the ruling passion of his soul; he dedicated to it every power of his mind, every pulsation of his heart. He looked on political freedom as the direct agent to effect the happiness of mankind" Cameron rephrases Mrs. Shelley's analysis and calls Shelley's "philosophy" one of "social revolution."⁸²

In "Julian and Maddalo," the conversation between the fictionalized Shelley and Byron begins when Julian comments as follows upon the information that the maniacs are released, "each one from his cell, / To vespers" (lines 110-111):

'As much skill as need to pray
In thanks or hope for their dark lot have they
To their stern maker . . . '

[lines 111-113]

Maddalo responds that Julian is "ever still / Among Christ's flock a perilous infidel" and that mankind in general is no better off than the maniacs in the asylum. The conversation resumes the next day, and Julian asserts his belief that man is not "The passive thing" Maddalo has described (line 161). Quite the contrary, Julian goes on: man is

bound to "permitted ill" by his own failure to use his will power to break away from evil and sorrow (lines 170-176). Maddalo dismisses Julian's opinions as "Utopia" (line 179), but Julian insists that it is possible that he is right:

'. . . those who try may find
How strong the chains are which our spirit bind;
Brittle perchance as straw We are assured
Much may be conquered, much may be endured,
Of what degrades and crushes us. We know
That we have power over ourselves to do
And suffer--what, we know not till we try;
But something nobler than to live and die . . .'
[lines 180-187]⁸³

These lines seem to me an expression of a point in Shelley's philosophy that Kenneth Cameron has traced to the poet's acquaintance with William Godwin's "social and political thought": the Godwinian "assumption" "that mankind is 'perfectible'" Cameron explains the "perfectibility" theory of Godwin and Shelley as meaning "only that man has a capacity for progress and not--as is frequently assumed--that man can become 'perfect.' He has this capacity because his mind is not a set entity but is molded by the environment and, hence, capable of change (progressively as the environment progresses), and his actions are determined basically not by emotional fluctuations but by reason" ⁸⁴

The Godwinian-Shelleyan idea of human "perfectibility" reminds me strongly of Meredith's idea that man is capable of improving himself and the world he lives in through his own efforts (see above, pp. 98ff.). I am not aware of anything in Meredith's writing that supports the imputation to him of anything like Shelley's republican-revolutionary ardor or like Shelley's conviction that revolt and a republican form of government are necessary to achieve an improved state of being for mankind. I do, however, think that it is obvious, from the Odes in

Contribution to the Song of French History (1898) and from Vittoria (1866), as well as from assorted lesser works, that Meredith was keenly interested in the struggles of France and Italy to establish themselves as free and republican nations. It is not necessary, of course, to impute that interest solely to Meredith's acquaintance with Shelley's poetry and philosophy; indeed, it is generally acknowledged that Meredith's enthusiasm for the Italian battle for independence, in particular, was stimulated directly by his acquaintance with two groups: with Dante Gabriel Rossetti and Algernon Charles Swinburne, and with Frederick Maxse, John Morley, Leslie Stephen, and Frederic Harrison (see above, p. 40). It does seem possible, however, to place Shelley among the stronger influences upon Meredith's thinking about the nature of man and about the way in which man might best govern himself.

A point of rather obvious correspondence between Meredith and Shelley occurs in the two poems that use the lark as a symbol: Meredith's "The Lark Ascending" and Shelley's "To a Skylark."⁸⁵ There is some variation of opinion among Meredith's later critics about the meaning of Meredith's lark. Lindsay sees it as "the emblem of earth." The often-quoted lines describing the lark as "seraphically free / Of taint of personality" Lindsay interprets as follows: "Meredith does not mean that the poet loses warm touch with common human life or ceases to be himself. He refers to the new dynamic unity of poet and people, of art and life, which transcends all the old egoisms"⁸⁶ This reading strikes me as being somewhat overdone: there does not seem to me to be anything in Meredith's poem that warrants making a definite equation between the bird and a poet--indeed, the impact of the final lines of the poem leads me to believe that Meredith might have intended

the bird to symbolize a category of men, not necessarily poets, who perform for mankind in their own way the same office filled by the lark in its singing and in its upward flight that still speaks of "love of earth" to all who listen. (line 66):

Yet men have we, whom we revere,
 Now names, and men still housing here,
 Whose lives, by many a battle-dint
 Defaced, and grinding wheels of flint,
 Yield substance, though they sing not, sweet
 For song our highest heaven to greet:
 Whom heavenly singing gives us new,
 Ensphered them brilliant in our blue,
 From firmest base to farthest leap,
 Because their love of Earth is deep
[lines 99-108]

Their "self-forgetfulness divine" is that which makes them most like the lark. Norman Kelvin's reading of the poem makes "the lark's song [the] symbol of the lack of egoism, lack of self-awareness, lack of desire for individuality, that is the mark of all creatures of nature except man." The lark is a part of nature and, so to speak, leads its life and goes its way as such, without any consideration for itself.⁸⁷ Presumably, man ought to lead his life in the same way, thus making himself truly the partner and instrument of Nature or Earth that he ought to be--in Meredith's view of man's role.

In Shelley's "To a Skylark," the lark seems to be anything but a bird. But a close reading of the poem, it seems to me, supports Harold Bloom's suggestion that "Shelley is not comparing the lark to [the poet, maiden, glow-worm, and rose] or even them to a lark, but, rather he is comparing a series of visionary tableaux to the showering forth, the flowing over, of the lark's song."⁸⁸ In other words, the real subject of the poem is the song of the bird, not the bird itself, which has, by the third stanza, disappeared into the sky and become

"an unbodied joy" whose sound is like "the arrows" of light that are all we can see of a star in dawn's growing light. But despite the comparisons of the song with the poems of the Poet, the maiden's music, the glow-worm's light, and the rose's scent, the speaker in Shelley's poem cannot arrive at any explanation for the unbounded joy in the lark's song or for the effect that the song has upon the hearer. The hearer then asks the bird to reveal "the fountains / Of thy happy strain," to share its secret with man in his effort to overcome the sadness of his life. But the poem closes with the speaker's admission that even if human life could be rid of "hate and pride, and fear," and even if men "were things born / Not to shed a tear," man could not "come near" the extraordinary joy expressed in the lark's song; the poet could not, even if he possessed "half the gladness" that the lark possesses, produce anything like the lark's song. Shelley's poem, Bloom suggests, "ends in sadness because it has not accounted for the joy that gives life to the skylark's song."⁸⁹

It is possible, then, that Jack Lindsay is correct in concluding about Meredith's poem that it "consciously [rejects] the Shelleian Skylark," but not quite in the terms that Lindsay uses: "Shelley wants to speak to men through the bird, with the bird's voice; but Meredith feels that it is no longer valid to express the wish, the poet must bring it true. He speaks through the bird, he humanises Nature and fuses Nature with man in a new way, because he sees the wedding song of Sun and rain as one with the labour of man that fertilises and transforms the earth."⁹⁰ It seems to me that Lindsay has misread both poems: Shelley concludes by wishing for the knowledge possessed by his skylark so that he might sing as meaningfully as the bird does. Meredith states

quite clearly, in the last twenty-four lines of the poem, that the poet--if there is one in the poem at all⁹¹--is inspired to sing his own songs both by the lark's song and by the few men in human history whose lives resemble the selfless life and singing of the lark. And the lark and the men share one secret that is known to Meredith, whereas Shelley finds himself still in the dark: Meredith knows that "love of Earth" is the secret behind the lark's song and behind the selfless lives of a few great men. In this sense it is possible to say that Meredith has gone beyond, but has not necessarily rejected, Shelley's use of the symbolic lark's song. The connection between the poets in this instance seems to consist of a symbol that is a common starting-point; the philosophical interpretation of the symbol changes from the rather negative futility of Shelley's poet's contemplation of the lark's song and source of joy to the positive assertion of Meredith's view, grounded as it is on his belief that "love of Earth" is the source of truly selfless life.

Of the two remaining major Romantic poets, Byron and Keats, the latter was perhaps more an indirect influence on Meredith's idea of what a poet should be than an influence on Meredith's view of life. And not a great deal need be said about Byron's influence on Meredith's philosophy except in a rather negative sense. Most of Meredith's references to Byron are somewhat derogatory, indicating, in sum, that Meredith did not approve of what Walter Wright describes as Byron's continual "histrionic exhibitionism and unpsychological glamorizing of heroes."⁹² One of the earliest references to Byron in Meredith's letters is, on the whole, commendatory, but in a left-handed fashion. In a letter to Augustus Jessopp, redated [?December 2, 1864] by Professor Cline, Meredith asked his friend, "Have you heard that the Countess Guiccioli

has two continuation cantos of Don Juan, and means to publish them? Likewise more of Byron!--He's abused, so I take to him; and I'm a little sick of Tennysonian green Tea. I don't think Byron wholesome--exactly, but a drop or so--Eh? And he doesn't give limp, lackadaisical fishermen, and pander to the depraved sentimentalism of our drawing-rooms."⁹³ Meredith preferred Byron, with all his faults, to Tennyson as he appeared in Enoch Arden.

The disapproval of Byron's unwholesomeness came out with some force and bitterness in Meredith's "Manfred" (1887), which Professor Bartlett describes as Meredith's "blast against Byron's 'projection'"⁹⁴

I

Projected from the bilious Childe,
This clatterjaw his foot could set
On Alps, without a breast beguiled
To glow in shedding rascal sweat.
Somewhere about his grinder teeth,
He mouthed of thoughts that grilled beneath,
And summoned Nature to her feud
With bile and buskin Attitude.

II

Considerably was the world
Of spinsterdom and clergy racked
While he his hinted horrors hurled,
And she pictorially attacked.
A duel hugeous. Tragic? Ho!
The cities, not the mountains, blow
Such bladders; in their shapes confessed
An after-dinner's indigest.

G. M. Trevelyan notes that "Byron's play Manfred is here mocked for a piece of egoistic melancholy posed before the footlights" and that Byron's concern was to secure the "shocked attention" of "the world / Of spinsterdom and clergy" for himself. Further, says Trevelyan,

Meredith is suggesting "that if Manfred had really climbed the Alps, 'shedding rascal sweat,' he would have felt better for the exercise when he reached the top."⁹⁵

It seems clear that Meredith had no use for Byronic heroes with autobiographical-Faustian overtones whose crimes are merely "hinted horrors," and Meredith's antipathy to such posturing figures is made obvious in a passage from Beauchamp's Career (1875) in which Meredith explains the nature of his protagonist:

Beauchampism . . . may be said to stand for nearly everything which is the obverse of Byronism, and rarely woos your sympathy, shuns the statuesque pathetic, or any kind of posturing. For Beauchamp will not even look at happiness to mourn its absence; melodious lamentations, demoniacal scorn, are quite alien to him. His faith is in working and fighting. With every inducement to offer himself for a romantic figure, he despises the pomades and curling-irons of modern romance, its shears and its labels: in fine, every one of those positive things by whose aid, and by some adroit flourishing of them, the nimbus known as a mysterious halo is produced about a gentleman's head.⁹⁶

Manfred's inactivity contrasts strongly with Beauchamp's "faith . . . in working and fighting," and Manfred's mysterious past is quite the opposite of Beauchamp's public career. Indeed, Meredith might have had this developing view of Byron in mind when he told Captain Maxse to disregard the philosophy in Shelley's "Julian and Maddalo," for Shelley allows Maddalo-Byron to express the opinion that any activity on man's part is futile (see above, pp. 133ff.).

In One of Our Conquerors (1891), Meredith implies his opinion of Byron and the Byronic view of life through the device of making Byron--unnamed, of course--the favorite poet of the unfortunate and somewhat questionable Mrs. Judith Marsett:

Mrs. Marsett liked love, blood, and adventure. She had, moreover, a favourite noble poet, and she begged Nesta's pardon for naming him, and she would not name him, and told her she must not read him until she was a married woman, because he did mischief to girls. Thereupon

she fell into one of her silences, emerging with a cry of hate of herself for having ever read him. She did not blame the bard. And, ah, poor bard! he fought his battle: he shall not be named for the brand on the name. He has lit a sulphur match for the lover of nature through many a generation; and to be forgiven by sad frail souls who could accuse him of pipeing devil's agent to them at the perilous instant--poor girls too!--is chastisement enough. This it is to be the author of unholy sweets: a Posterity sitting in judgement will grant, that they were part of his honest battle with the hypocrite English Philistine, without being dupe of the plea or at all the thirsty swallower of his sugary brandy. Mrs. Marsett expressed aloud her gladness of escape in never having met a man like him; followed by her regret that 'Ned' [her husband] was so utterly unlike; except 'perhaps'--and she hummed; she was off on the fraternity in wickedness.⁹⁷

Obviously Meredith, because of his concern over the development of an open, equal, and honest relationship between the sexes, could not stomach the "unholy sweets" hinted at and described clearly by Byron any more than he could tolerate, in his persona of the "Sage Enamoured," the sugar-coated version of the "Honest Lady's" adultery in the poem discussed above (p. 108). Even while giving Byron credit for opposing "the hypocrite English Philistine," Meredith had to make objection to the "forbidden fruit" quality of Byron's heroes' adventures: this apparent promulgating of free love (for want of a better term), Meredith seems to have felt, had the highly undesirable side effect of persuading the gullible that such behavior was permissible because a poet included it in his works. And gullible young women were the chief victims of the appeals of "unholy sweets" and the moody, brooding, strong, and silent--and above all mysterious--Byronic hero: witness Judith Marsett and all the Meredithian women who live useless lives, who (in Walter Wright's terms) "live an ornamental existence, unable to find adventure in work and tempted to use their beauty and brains in an egocentric contest which becomes more and more trivial unless tragedy intervenes."⁹⁸ They are as useless and pointless as the sweat-less Manfred and have no contribution to make to the work that man and woman must do in order to fulfill their proper roles in relation to Earth, their mother.

Although it is impossible to pinpoint the time of Meredith's introduction to the poetry of the great English Romantics, it is possible to define the period during which he was most likely exposed to the influence of two men who flourished during and shortly after the peak of the Romantic period. Between 1846 and 1849, Meredith was apprentice to a young lawyer, Richard Stephen Charnock, who was a member of a small literary circle devoted, according to Professor Stevenson, to a sort of "debased Byronism" (see above, pp. 24-25). Out of his participation in the literary activities of the small group came Meredith's acquaintance with the woman who became his first wife, Mary Ellen Peacock Nicolls; through his wife, during the period between 1849 and 1852, Meredith met Peacock, R. H. Horne, Tom Taylor, and the Duff-Gordons. Of these new acquaintances, Peacock and Horne were obviously the most important as influences on Meredith's developing opinions on the relationship of man to nature, the meaning and proper conduct of life, on faults in society, on the relationship between the sexes, and on the education of women.

It hardly seems necessary to reproduce at any length the suggestions made by Augustus Henry Able III in his study of the influence of Peacock on Meredith. Anyone who is aware that Meredith and Peacock at one point--in 1853⁹⁹-- shared the same house and who has read both Meredith and Peacock can only agree that during their relationship, "a rather heavy traffic in" ideas was probable and that Meredith, with his slight formal schooling and with, no doubt, some awareness of his need for further education, probably took advantage of the availability of Peacock's considerable library. Able makes the point as follows, beginning with a glance at the contents of Peacock's bookshelves:

classics, Italian romances, Welsh bardic poetry; and, not least of all, Peacock's own novels. This influence that came to Meredith from Peacock's books can not be lightly dismissed. It is second in value only to the impression which Peacock, the man himself, made upon Meredith by the exposition of his ideas and theories. That Meredith knew Peacock's novels intimately the whole range of his own work reveals. But beyond this, [Meredith's] literary references in many quarters show a remarkable coincidence with those of Peacock. That Meredith should have so many references in common with his father-in-law, and conversely, so few apart from him, can logically be explained in only one way--the reliance of them both on the same books, that is, Peacock's collection of books an integral part of Peacock's influence on Meredith.¹⁰⁰

Able catalogues quite thoroughly those ideas of Meredith's that bear a resemblance to Peacock's ideas: Peacock's view of nature as "no mere physical force, but that process of reality, at once physical and psychical, with which the individual must be one," for example, Able finds consonant with "Meredithian" thinking.¹⁰¹ The two men saw "the use of intelligence as the instrument and prime aid in man's redemption from error," and Meredith was influenced by Peacock's "philosophical belief . . . that only by intelligence can man be emancipated from cramping social tyrannies and all the vain illusions that spring up from them The difference between the two is purely in the degree of their insistence upon the teaching": Able suggests that Meredith was the "more severely intellectual" of the two when it is a question of the role of man's intellect in his own advancement.¹⁰²

The idea that laughter constitutes, for Meredith, a key to sanity, humanity, and self-criticism may have had its source in Peacock's views, which Able summarizes and comments upon as follows: "throughout all Peacock . . . the laughing man is shown to be the superior. The resemblance here to Meredith's conception of laughter as a renovating agent in a psychological process is clear. Meredith and Peacock both identify laughter with the power of self-examination, which is the

center of sanity, and with joy, which is the outward token or sign of sanity." In fact, Able presents a possible original for Meredith's Comic Spirit (see above, p. 109) in a being in a fragmentary novel of Peacock's, "Lord of the Hills": a spirit names Numbarnip inhabits a mountain pass and laughs mockingly at the grand, delusive thoughts of anyone who sits on a certain rock in the pass.¹⁰³

The role of woman in Meredith's view of life was, according to Able, also influenced by Meredith's contact with Peacock: "In no other department of thought do Meredith and Peacock show a closer agreement than in regard to woman and the necessity of her intellectual and emotional emancipation," Able writes, pointing out that Peacock was "one of the first, and certainly one of the most vigorous of the champions of free womanhood." Able's cataloguing of the similarities in attitude toward woman and her education and emancipation is impressive. Woman should not be oppressed by "mercenary terms" upon which marriage was so often and so readily contracted. She should be educated to "scholarly, social, and even athletic accomplishments" and, even more important, to thought. Her education should consist of languages (particularly Greek, Latin, and Italian), history, philosophy, science (limited to botany), music, and some sports. She should be mated, once she has reached the condition envisioned for her, with an educated and thoughtful man with whom she can establish a "mutuality of interest" and a "compatibility of temperament" that constitute, for both Peacock and Meredith, "the foundation of true marriage"¹⁰⁴ So far as I can tell, Peacock saw such a marriage as an end in itself for his women characters, but Meredith looked beyond the satisfaction of the individual woman's needs to the requirements of mankind and considered such "true marriage"

as serving, in turn, as the foundation for an improved human race (see above, pp. 103ff.).

Although, through Able, it is an easy matter to pick out the points on which Peacock might have influenced Meredith, it is not quite so easy a matter to determine where the influence upon Meredith's thinking or philosophy of Richard Hengist Horne begins and ends. I have already indicated Horne's involvement with Meredith over the writing of the poems that were finally published in the 1851 volume (see above, pp. 26ff.), and it might seem possible to leave Horne aside in discussing the sources of Meredith's philosophy, except for the fact that both Lionel Stevenson and Jack Lindsay open the door on the matter without going through it.

In his first letter to Horne, on March 8, 1849, Meredith addressed the older man as follows: "You are a Poet and a Critic, and from certain of your writings I understand your sympathies in either phase to be with the young Poet. As this is a fact seldom found even among literary men, I have taken the liberty to address myself thus abruptly to you."¹⁰⁵ Horne's poetry is presumably Orion (1843), and the critical work, A New Spirit of the Age (1844) both of which, it seems safe to assume, Meredith had read before approaching Horne. It is possible, however, that Meredith had also been exposed, in the literary circle of which he was a part at the time, to an earlier publication of Horne's, the Exhibition of the False Medium and Barriers excluding Men of Genius from the Public (1833). This book, according to Eric Partridge in his introduction to a 1928 reprint of Orion, was "a vigorous protest against the indifference of the public (he included publishers) to literary merit, with an eloquent array of examples and

arguments. If the book were much read--there seems to have been no second edition--it must have caused a stir, and it is known that it made Horne many enemies." Horne's concern over the non-recognition of literary talent, it seems obvious, lasted long enough to color some of the essays in A New Spirit of the Age eleven years later (see below). In 1834, another side of Horne's public-mindedness was revealed in what Partridge describes as "another combative work, the Spirit of Peers and People A National Tragi-Comedy [sic]," which bitterly attacks "incompetent government, but [is] pervaded with a deep sympathy for the poor and the needy."¹⁰⁶ It is conceivable that Meredith was acquainted with the Spirit of Peers volume, too, or at least with its import.

However, Orion and A New Spirit of the Age were the volumes that were no doubt in Meredith's mind when he wrote to Horne. Orion, written in blank verse that occasionally impresses the reader with its movement and descriptive power, tells the story of the mythical giant, "The Worker he, / The builder-up of things, and of himself . . ." and his struggles with such significant opponents as Encolyon, "the dull retarder" with "change-hating eyes," and Akinetos, "The Great Unmoved."¹⁰⁷ Orion falls in love with and is taught by Artemis:

He the intricate web
Of nature, gradually of himself began
To unwind, and see that gods and men were one--
Born of one element, imperfect both,
Yet aspirant, and with perfection's germ
Somewhere within.

[p. 21]

But when Orion attempts to embrace Artemis as she sleeps, she awakes and, in effect, turns him to ice with her glance (pp. 23-25). Now Artemis puts the giant to work at "Husbandry of fields" and at learning "to reason" (pp. 26-27), but Orion broods over her and finally dreams

of the beautiful Merope and hears a voice tell him that Artemis does not love him (pp 38, 35). The relation with Merope teaches Orion to "see through feeling" (p. 44) and he accepts an overwhelming task: clearing Chios of beasts within six days (p. 46). There follows a considerable amount of activity related to rounding up the animals and to taking the throne of Chios away from Merope's father, OEnopion, resulting in the deaths of three of Orion's fellow-giants--Harpax, Encolyon, and Autarces (pp. 52-53). Artemis, trying to prevent the completion of the task and the marriage, enchants the remaining giants, except Orion, who begins to think that Akinetos is "wise . . . not to move" (pp. 54-55). When the task is completed, OEnopion reneges and locks Merope away from Orion, who then decides to take her away by main force (pp. 58-70). The lovers live in the forest in a daze of sensualism: "Passion is there-- a spell is on the place . . ." (p. 74). But when Orion goes down to the sea to commune with his father Ocean, he falls asleep and Merope is carried off by her father's forces. As Orion sleeps, some of the king's men pour poison on his eyelids, blinding Orion (pp. 76-78). He turns to Eos, the "source of light," regains his sight (pp. 87-91) and finds "serene delights / Of contemplation" in Eos' palace, although he still recognizes Earth as his home (pp. 96-97). Meanwhile, affairs on the island of Chios deteriorate into a senseless and chaotic war of vengeance (pp. 90, 99ff.):

'Twas thus,
The Builder absent, and at that time blind,
Force and the Breaker-down [Rhexergon and Biastor]
their course fulfilled.

[p. 102]

But Orion's life with Eos does not bring an end to his struggles: Artemis sees them embrace and shoots a "fatal dart" after them (p. 103).

In his new life, Orion develops three schemes that are to benefit mankind: he hopes to unite Eos and Artemis; to imprison Mars; and to create mountain-platforms that will enable man to come closer to Eos (pp. 105ff.). The first scheme fails when the moon does not rise (pp. 107-108), and Artemis kills Orion as he sleeps (p. 108).

Meanwhile, Time accosts Akinetos and accuses him of wastefulness, calling him "Apathy" (pp. 110-111). Akinetos then soliloquizes on Orion's life: all the giant's activity led only to misery and death, including his own, indicating to Akinetos that Death is the only positive value. For his inaction, however, Akinetos is appropriately punished, for Chronos makes him part of the rock beside which he sits, and Orion's descendants busily cut through the rock (pp. 112-113).

After Orion is buried in the Ocean amid a tremendous storm, Eos chastizes Artemis for her vengefulness against the man she had cast off, and they both go to beg Zeus to intervene and to salvage something from Orion's death. Zeus tells them that "He shall be restored; / But not returned to earth," and as Eos and Artemis watch,

they saw slow rising from the sea
The luminous Giant clad in blazing stars,
New-born and trembling from their Maker's breath,--
Divine, refulgent effluence of Love.

[p. 118]

The poem seems to me to be suffused with what can only be called the Carlylean-Victorian doctrine of work, a doctrine that Meredith, in my opinion, adopted into his own philosophy and made over into the return that man makes to Earth for the gift of life (see above, p. 102). The following lines from Orion speak both to the value of work and to the theme of the progress of man to a higher level and to union with Nature through his own efforts:

True happiness no idle course endures,
 But by activity renews its strength,
 Which else would fail, and happiness revolve
 Within itself, still dwindling to the point
 Where pain first stings.

[p. 104]

'The human spirit is a mounting thing,
 But ere it reach the constellated thrones,
 It may attain, and on mankind bestow,
 Substance, precision, mastery of hand,
 Beauty intense, and power that shapes new life.
 So shall each honest heart become a champion,
 Each high-wrought soul a builder beyond Time

 But not in vain the earth-born shall pursue,
 E'en though with wayward, often stumbling feet,
 That substance-bearing Shadow, if with a soul
 That to an absolute unadulterate truth
 Aspires, and would make active through the world,
 He hath resolved to plant for future years.
 And thus, in the end, each soul may to itself,
 With truth before it as its polar guide,
 Become both Time and Nature, whose fixt paths
 Are spiral, and when lost will find new stars,
 And in the Universal Movement join.'

[pp. 120-121]

And if the poem's lines do not impress upon the reader the meaning of Orion's activity, Horne's statement in the Commentary written for the ninth edition in 1872, which Partridge quotes, should make the poem's emphasis on the value of work and dedication to mankind perfectly clear: "Orion, the central figure, 'is meant to present a type of the struggle of man with himself, i.e., the contest between the intellect and the senses, when powerful energies are equally balanced. Orion is man standing naked before Heaven and Destiny, resolved to work as a really free agent to the utmost pitch of his powers for the good of his race He is the type of a Worker and a Builder for his fellow-men.'"108 He is, in effect, a sort of ideal Meredithian man.

In discussing Meredith's The Shaving of Shagpat, Jack Lindsay pairs the influence of Horne with that of Carlyle so far as Meredith's insistence upon the value and necessity of work is concerned:

Like Orion, Shibli [in Meredith's novel] is both worker and poet, revolutionary and creator, whose struggle changes life at the root [a statement that seems to me to go somewhat beyond the actuality of Horne's poem]. But whereas Horne attempted a direct mythical statement of human development in its various stages of struggle and resolution, Shagpat uses a method of entwined grotesqueness and lyricism; and here Meredith draws on Sartor But Meredith makes concrete and realistic what is paradoxical and mystical in Carlyle. The Barber [i.e., Shibli], who clears away human excrescences and bares the truth, is in fact the anti-Sartor, he is plainly worker and poet, without any overtones of pathetic irony or burlesque contrasts between man-the-spirit and man-the-social-animal.¹⁰⁹

It strikes me as odd that Lindsay should at this point have overlooked what seems to me to be an apparent connection between Carlyle's Sartor and Meredith's thinking in general, and that is the emphasis Carlyle places on work.

At the close of "The Everlasting Yea"--that amazing, exclamatory, climactic, affirmative chapter in Sartor--Carlyle proclaims the idea or revelation that the whole aim of man, in the person of Diogenes Teufelsdröckh, is to employ all his capacities and faculties in work: "Produce! Produce! Were it but the pitifullest infinitesimal fraction of a Product, produce it, in God's name! 'Tis the utmost thou hast in thee: out with it, then. Up, up! Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy whole might. Work while it is called Today; for the Night cometh, wherein no man can work."¹¹⁰ The enormous productivity of many of the great figures of the nineteenth century would suggest that the Victorians took Carlyle's exhortation to heart and worked away at social and political reform, literature, science, and religion as if there were indeed no tomorrow in which to continue their efforts. If, then, as it seems possible to assume, Meredith had been exposed

both to Carlyle's feverish proclamation of the doctrine of work and to Horne's poetical-mythical statement of the same concept, it seems equally possible to assume that from at least these two writers Meredith drew his conviction of the necessity to man's development of working hard at his role as Nature's pupil and helper.

The juxtaposition of Horne and Carlyle in reference to Meredith's adoption and re-application of the doctrine of work suggests a consideration of the influence of Carlyle on Meredith, for which a convenient starting-point might be Horne's essay on Carlyle in A New Spirit of the Age, an essay that might conceivably have colored Meredith's view of the great Victorian prophet.

Horne approaches Carlyle's contribution to the advancement of knowledge through the figure of "the individual mind . . . compared to a prisoner . . . in a room which would be dark but for the windows of the same, meaning the senses" Moving from the individual to the "public mind," Horne observes that "what the senses are to the individual mind, men of genius are to the general mind. Scantily assigned by Providence for necessary ends, one original thinker strikes a window out here, and another there; wielding the mallet sharply, and leaving it to others to fashion grooves and frames, and complete advantage into conveniences.

"That Mr. Carlyle is one of the men of genius thus referred to, and that he has knocked out his window from the blind wall of his century, we may add without any fear of contradiction." And Horne retains this forceful image of Carlyle when he notes that Carlyle "throws his truth with so much vehemence, that the print of the palm of his hand is left on it."¹¹¹ However, Horne's admiration of Carlyle is

qualified: Carlyle, in terms of the original metaphor, did not really knock out a new window: he re-opened "an old window, long bricked up or encrusted over,--and probably this man of a strong mallet, and sufficient right hand, thought the recovery of the old window a better and more glorious achievement than the making of many new windows."¹¹²

One cannot help, in reading Horne's comments, remembering Meredith's own scattered observations about Carlyle, beginning with one of the later references, a comment made in a letter (May 23, 1882) to André Raffalovich: "He was the greatest of the Britons of his time--and after the British fashion of not coming near perfection; Titanic, not Olympian: a heaver of rocks, not a shaper. But if he did no perfect work, he had lightning's power to strike out marvellous pictures and reach to the inmost of men with a phrase."¹¹³ Carlyle was one, in Horne's image, who knocked the hole in the wall and left the shaping of the window to others; in Meredith's image, one who threw rocks at the follies and absurdities of his time but who did not stay to create new structures out of the material he dealt with.

Of Meredith's biographers and critics, it is Jack Lindsay who devotes most attention to the influence of Carlyle upon Meredith. I have already made reference to Lindsay's view of a connection between Carlyle's Sartor Resartus and Meredith's The Shaving of Shagpat (p. 150), a connection that Lindsay at that point limits to style. A bit farther on, Lindsay draws a rather faint line between "Carlyle's grotesquerie" and Meredith's notion of the value of laughter in ridding man of his delusions, a line that moves from what is essentially a stylistic device in Carlyle to a philosophical point of view in Meredith.

Lindsay observes that Carlyle placed value upon "the liberating laugh" in the struggle to rid men of the "cant and humbug" and the stupidity and egoism that they assume as a "veil" for the mechanization of modern life wrought by the "cash-nexus" that capitalism substitutes for human relationships. It is this point in Carlyle's view of society--the idea that money has been substituted for genuine, human feelings in the dealings between man and man--that Lindsay takes as the main idea Meredith drew from Carlyle, along with the belief that "Stupidity, humbug, egoism were the forms under which the evil forces [of mechanizing capitalism] extended their kingdom over men's souls."¹¹⁴ When he comes to discuss The Ordeal of Richard Feverel, Lindsay builds upon this summary statement of Carlyle's thinking and arrives at the following analysis of Meredith's conception of egoism:

Sir Austin [Feverel] is a study in Egoism, in the complex sense that we have seen attached to the term by Carlyle. Because throughout his work Meredith keeps intact in his mind this understanding of Egoism as the supreme expression of the dominant class-values of his world, he remains always a political writer in the deepest significance of that phrase Egoism is for Meredith the process of inner division, of self-alienation, that is the spiritual reflection of class-cleavages; and everyone who fights against Egoism reveals the inner discord and split which find cultural expression in a whole complex of abstractions, in the denial of Earth and the separation of body and mind. In self-alienation man is cut off from nature and his fellows, and therefore from his own essence, which he can realise only by union with his fellows and nature in constructive socially-significant work.

In a note explaining that "self-alienation" is his own word "and not Meredith's," Lindsay adds that Meredith "is a political writer because he holds fast to the early Carlyle's concept of Egoism as central in bourgeois ideology"¹¹⁵

The trouble with Lindsay's handling of Carlyle's role in the development of Meredith's view of egoism, it seems to me, begins with Lindsay's not helping the reader to a clear comprehension of Carlyle's

definition of egoism and with his not telling the reader where in Carlyle that concept is to be found. True, Lindsay does quote from Past and Present a passage that he implies gave rise to his interpretation of Carlyle's "egoism" as "the alienating process":

All this dire misery . . . ; all this of our poor Workhouse Workmen, of our Chartisms, Trades-strikes, Corn-Laws, Toryisms, and the general downbreak of Laissez-faire in these days,--may we not regard it as a voice from the dumb bosom of Nature, saying to us: 'Behold! Supply-and-demand is not the one Law of Nature; Cash-payment is not the sole nexus of man with man,--how far from it! Deep, far deeper than Supply-and-demand, are Laws, Obligations sacred to Man's Life itself: these also, if you will continue to do work, you shall now learn and obey. He that will learn them, behold Nature is on his side, he shall yet work and prosper with noble rewards. He that will not learn them, Nature is against him, he shall not be able to do work in Nature's empire,--not in hers. Perpetual mutiny, contention, hatred, isolation, execration shall wait on his footsteps, till all men discern that the thing which he attains, however golden it look or be, is not success, but the want of success.¹¹⁶

This, according to Lindsay, is Carlyle's denunciation of the cash-nexus as the progenitor of egoism and is to be taken in conjunction with the following quotation from the same volume, which I give at greater length than does Lindsay:

He [Carlyle's "the present Editor"] thinks that 'enlightened Egoism', never so luminous, is not the rule by which man's life can be led. That 'Laissez-faire', 'Supply-and-demand,' 'Cash-payment for the sole nexus,' and so forth, were not, are not, and will never be, a practicable Law of Union for a Society of Men. That Poor and Rich, that Governed and Governing, cannot long live together on any such Law of Union. Alas, he thinks that man has a soul in him, different from the stomach in any sense of this word; that if said soul be asphyxied, and lie quietly forgotten, the man and his affairs are in a bad way. He thinks that said soul will have to be resuscitated from its asphyxia; that if it prove irresuscitable, the man is not long for this world. In brief, that Midas-eared Mammonism, double-barrelled Dilettantism, and their thousand adjuncts and corollaries, are not the Law by which God Almighty has appointed this his Universe to go. That, once for all, these are not the Law; and then farther that we shall have to return to what is Law,--not by smooth flowery paths, it is like, and with 'tremendous cheers' in our throats but over steep untrodden places, through stormclad chasms, waste oceans, and the bosom of tornadoes; thank Heaven, if not through very Chaos and the Abyss! The resuscitating of a soul that has gone to asphyxia is no momentary or pleasant process, but a long and terrible one.¹¹⁷

But this still does not really explain Carlyle's use of the word "egoism"--and the adjective "enlightened" merely confuses matters, it seems to me, when taken in connection with Lindsay's definition of egoism as "self-alienation."

Further confusion confounds the reader when he comes to Lindsay's analysis of Meredith's supreme egoist, Sir Willoughby Patterne. Here Lindsay associates Sir Willoughby's "self-alienating" "thought-processes" with "what we now call the existentialist concept of being, the maddened dialectic of the self and its divisions abstracted from concrete resolution in act, in history, in social movement." The passage in The Egoist that elicits this tortuous statement is the following, quoted out of context by Lindsay: "to produce division of himself from himself, a concentration of his thoughts upon another object, still himself, but in another breast, which had to be looked at and into for the discovery of him. By the gaping jaw-chasm of his greed we may gather comprehension of his insatiate force of jealousy."¹¹⁸ This may well be impressive as a description of self-alienation, but in the novel it occurs in a passage that describes not Sir Willoughby's "thought-processes" in general but his reaction to his growing jealousy of Clara over Horace De Craye. And in his next paragraph, Lindsay quotes a sentence from The Egoist's "Book of Egoism": "Possession without obligation to the object possessed approaches felicity." "This," Lindsay writes, "is the egoist dream of love. But it is also the capitalist relation to production"--a conclusion that really has nothing to do with Meredith's masterly portrait of egoism in the person of Sir Willoughby, but that fits in with Lindsay's insistence upon making Meredith a thoroughly political novelist whose every word

and thought must serve his opposition to the evils of capitalism, and that brings us full circle back to Carlyle's statement that egoism is a resulting evil of capitalism.¹¹⁹

It seems to me unnecessary to impute Meredith's view of egoism to Carlyle in particular; so far as I know, Lindsay is the only biographer-critic of Meredith to do so--and I hardly feel that he does so convincingly. It seems significant, for example, that Norman Kelvin, in his study of Meredith, has an entry in the index for "Egoism: . . . , universality of . . . ," and that his discussion of Meredith's idea of egoism makes no effort to pin egoism down to a specific source.¹²⁰ Indeed, Kelvin's substitution of the phrase "self-interest" for egoism apparently makes it possible for the reader to label the concern over egoism as one of those nebulous and pervasive concerns of the Victorian age as a whole. Kelvin has been discussing egoism in Beauchamp's Career: "Dr. Shrapnel's fear that the people, once they are in power, might fail to end the history of egoism was anticipated by Felix Holt A debate over 'selfish' vs. 'altruistic' self-interest, which stemmed from the problems raised by the Utilitarians, went on in all quarters during the Victorian period," and Kelvin goes on to mention articles in the Fortnightly Review by Mark Pattison and George C. Broderick, as well as comments by Matthew Arnold and John Stuart Mill that speak to the question of the meaning and role of the self in the public business of the world.¹²¹

If, as seems likely to me, the influence of Carlyle on Meredith is negligible so far as the idea of egoism is concerned, the dour Scot's influence on Meredith so far as a view of history is concerned is palpable, and most clearly so in Meredith's handling of French history

in the long and complex Odes of 1898. Of his purpose in approaching such unpoetic matter as the trials and tribulations of France from the time of the Revolution to the present (1896), Meredith wrote to Mrs. Seymour Trower on December 2, 1896, that "It is History--my view; and I make History sing while interpreting her." The phrase about History singing under Meredith's pen occurs again in a letter of March 6, 1897, to W. S. M'Cormick: "I hope to have made History sing, and under sanction of philosophy."¹²² It is entirely conceivable that hovering somewhere in the back of Meredith's mind as he made these assertions about his purposes in the Odes was Carlyle's observation to Emerson: "It is part of my creed that the only Poetry is History, could we tell it right."¹²³ Indeed, when critics undertook to evaluate the Odes, more than one made a connection between Meredith's tortuous poetry and Carlyle's style in his study of The French Revolution.¹²⁴

Other indications of Carlylean influence on Meredith's thinking about history are evident in the Odes, one such indication stemming from Carlyle's dictum, in On Heroes, Hero-Worship and the Heroic in History, that "Universal History, the history of what man has accomplished in this world, is at bottom the History of the Great Men who have worked here." In "On History," Carlyle observed that "History is the essence of innumerable Biographies."¹²⁵ It does not seem odd, then, that Meredith's song about France should portray the nation as a Meredithian heroine and should treat her history as her biography between 1789 and 1896 or so, a biography that includes an account of Napoleon as well--a Napoleon who is in fact a Carlylean hero whose credo is "'I only; I who can!'" This is patently Carlyle's definition of "Kingship," and Meredith has Napoleon, in effect, proclaim himself "Able-man" and the

man "to whose will [France's will is] to be subordinated": the man who will command, teach, and order France.¹²⁶

Beyond these points of influence--on Meredith's idea of work and of egoism and his view of history--of Carlyle on Meredith it seems unwise to proceed. Meredith's references to Carlyle in his letters indicate that the great prophet's later thinking did not at all appeal to him and that, in fact, he often found himself in direct opposition to Carlyle's later views. As early as 1865, Meredith wrote to Maxse the following words of warning:

In reading Carlyle, bear in mind that he is a humourist. The insolence offensive to you, is part of his humour. He means what he says, but only as far as a humourist can mean what he says. See the difference between him and Emerson, who is on the contrary a philosopher. The humourist, notwithstanding, has much truth to back him. Swim on his pages, take his poetry and fine grisly laughter, his manliness, together with some splendid teaching. It is a good set-off to the doctrines of what is called the 'Empirical school.' I don't agree with Carlyle a bit, but I do enjoy him.¹²⁷

Meredith had already begun to moderate his response to Carlyle. On December 27, 1869, he wrote to Maxse about Ruskin and Carlyle, commenting upon the former's debts to Carlyle and upon his references to Tennyson and Mill. Of Mill Meredith observes, "he really does not touch the soul and springs of the Universe as Carlyle does. Only, when the latter attempts practical dealings he is irritable as a woman, impetuous as a tyrant. He seeks the short road to his ends; and the short road is, we know, a bloody one. He is not wise; Mill is; but Carlyle has most light when he burns calmly."¹²⁸ A week later, Meredith was still exchanging views about Carlyle with Maxse, agreeing with Ruskin's view of the man:

I hold that [Carlyle] is the nearest to being an inspired writer of any man in our times; he does proclaim inviolable law: he speaks from the deep springs of life. All this. But when he descends to our common

pavement, when he would apply his eminent spiritual wisdom to the course of legislation, he is no more sagacious nor temperate than a flash of lightning in a grocer's shop. 'I purify the atmosphere,' says this agent. 'You knock me down, spoil my goods and frighten my family,' says the grocer.--Philosophy, while rendering his dues to a man like Carlyle and acknowledging itself inferior in activity, despises his hideous blustering impatience in the presence of progressive facts.

Read the 'French Revolution' and you listen to a seer: the recent pamphlets [perhaps a reference to Carlyle's comments upon Governor Eyre, the 1867 Reform Bill, and the impending Franco-Prussian war], and he is a drunken country squire of superordinary ability.

Carlyle preaches work for all to all. Good. But his method of applying his sermon to his 'nigger' is intolerable.--Spiritual light he has to illuminate a nation. Of practical little or none, and he beats his own brains out with emphasis.¹²⁹

Meredith, however, did give Carlyle's light due recognition, as in the passages just quoted and in a sonnet written for the occasion of Carlyle's eightieth birthday:

This eightieth year of thine sits crowned in light
To lift our England from her fleshly mire:
Two generations view thee as a fire
Whence they have drawn what burns in them most bright:
For thou hast bared the roots of life with sight
Piercing; in language stronger than the lyre;
And thou hast shown the way must man aspire,
Is through the old sweat and anguish Adamite,
As at the first. Unsweet might seem his fate.
Sole with a spade between the stars of earth!--
Giving much labour for his little mirth,
And soldier-service till he fail to strike:
But such thine was, and thine to contemplate
Shall quicken your ambition for the like.¹³⁰

Nevertheless, Meredith's critical sense pierced through Carlyle's faults, and although Meredith praised The French Revolution and the prophetic powers Carlyle displayed therein, he also saw its flaws. Writing to Morley (August 15, 1876) to comment on his essay on Robespierre, Meredith adds that "It sent me to Carlyle. He bears the re-reading. Still that kind of thing will not do. It is our only History of the French Revolution, and is in as much disorder as the Paris of Danton"--a judgment to which the modern reader of Carlyle's

history will readily assent.¹³¹ What might be taken as Meredith's final evaluation of Carlyle occurs in the letter of May 23, 1882, to André Raffalovich (see above, p. 152), an evaluation that deserves, it seems to me, to be given at greater length than it usually is.

Your article on Th. Carlyle's 'Reminiscences' was prompted, I think, rather by enthusiasm for the lady who stands close and in contrast with him [i.e., Jane Welsh Carlyle] than by an accurate knowledge of his works, nature and teaching. Our people ever here have been equally unjust, with less excuse. You speak of vanity, as a charge against him. He has little, though he certainly does not err on the side of modesty: --he knew his powers. The harsh judgment he passed on the greater number of his contemporaries came from a very accurate perception of them, as they were perused by the intense light of the man's personal sincerity. He was one who stood constantly in the presence of those 'Eternal verities' of which he speaks. For the shallow men of mere literary aptitude he had perforce contempt. The spirit of the prophet was in him To him, bearing that fire of sincerity, as I have said, society was unendurable. All coming near him, except those who could bear the trial, were scorched, and he was as much hurt as they by the action rousing the flames in him. Moreover, like all truthful souls, he was an artist in his work. The efforts after verification of matters of fact, and to present things distinctly in language, were incessant; they cost him his health, swallowed up his leisure He was the greatest of the Britons of his time--and after the British fashion of not coming near perfection; Titanic, not Olympian: a heaver of rocks, not a shaper. But if he did no perfect work, he had lightning's power to strike out marvellous pictures and reach to the inmost of men with a phrase.¹³²

It seems reasonably safe to assume that Meredith made his acquaintance with the works of Carlyle, Horne, and Peacock during the period of his apprenticeship to Charnock between 1846 and 1850. During the same span of years, he was probably also exposed to the poetry of the leading "school" of the time (Lindsay stretches its period of sway from 1825 to 1855), the group of so-called New (later Spasmodic) poets, who

set out to advance beyond the points defined by Byron, Shelley and Keats. Byron, with his Cain, Don Juan and Manfred, dominated the epoch still to a considerable extent and determined the lines of movement, the terms in which the struggle was formulated; but there were efforts at the same time to incorporate Shelley's revolt and his pantheist sense of unity with the elements, as well as the Keatsian image of

beauty, in which was felt to be distilled the demand for the fullness of life on earth, the right to that fullness and the entry into its realm of enjoyment. The New Poets sought one way or another to bring these poetic elements together in a new synthesis which clarified the place and destiny of man on earth, of poetry in society--specifically in the society of expanding capitalist industrialism.¹³³

The poetic product of the movement thus described by Lindsay is, to put it as briefly as possible, feverish, even chaotic; apparently dominated by the legend of Faust filtered through Byron and his Manfred; a curious and unbalanced blend of extravagant nature poetry and idealistic soliloquizing about the ills of society. It is of some concern at this point to assess the influence of the group upon Meredith's thinking.

Chief among the Spasmodics were Philip James Bailey, Alexander Smith, and Sidney Dobell, whose chief poems were, respectively, Festus (1839), A Life-Drama (1853), and Balder (1853). (Horne's Orion (1843) is included in the group by Lindsay; see above, pp. 146ff.) Each of these long and tortuous poems deals with a poet who dreams of serving mankind, of helping mankind on to progress and a fuller life by means of his poetry. To a modern reader, the lengthy soliloquies and the lack of any but mental or imaginative action leave an impression of heat and no fire. Festus, perhaps with Paradise Lost hovering in the back of its author's mind, opens in Heaven as Lucifer asks God for control of a young man. God consents but withholds from Lucifer control over the young man's soul. Needless to say, the young man is Festus, who, upon his first appearance in the poem, observes that "I can enjoy / Naught which has not the honied sting of sin . . . ," and that life is mean and pointless except for the possibilities one has "to do men good."¹³⁵ Lucifer, of course, appears at the same moment, and from that point on Bailey's tale is one of Faustian searching after

all knowledge, and so on, to the extent of some four hundred pages of uneven and often turgid verse. The poem is liberally sprinkled with observations about Necessity, beginning with the "Dedication," where Bailey writes, "Nature means Necessity" (p. 5), and going on to longer passages such as the following, in which necessity and the unity of all of God's creation are emphasized:

Necessity, like electricity,
Is in ourselves and all things, and no more
Without us than within us; and we live,
We of this mortal mixture, in the same law
As the pure colourless intelligence
Which dwells in Heaven, and the dead Hadean shades.
We will and act and talk of liberty;
And all our wills and all our doings both
Are limited within this little life.
[p. 13]

What Lindsay points to as Shelley's "pantheist sense of unity with the elements" appears again and again in Festus:

There seems a sameness among things; for mind
And matter speak, in causes, of one God.
The inward and the outward worlds are like;
The pure and gross but differ in degree.
[p. 40]

Hail beauteous Earth! Gazing o'er thee, I all
Forget the bounds of being; and I long
To fill thee, as a lover pines to blend
Soul, passion, yea existence, with the fair
Creature he calls his own. I ask for nought
Before or after death but this,--to lie,
And look, and live, and bask, and bless myself
Upon thy broad bright bosom. From thee I
Sprang, and to thee I turn, heart, arm and brain.
Yes, I am all thine own. Thou art the sole
Parent. To rock and river, plain and wood
I cry, ye are my kin. While I, O Earth!
Am but an atom of thee, and a breath,
Passing unseen and unrecorded like
The tiny throb here in my temple's pulse.
[pp. 52-53]

Nature herself--the whole effect of God.
Mind, matter, motion, heat, time, love, and life,
And death and immortality; those chief

And first-born giants all are there; all parts,
All limbs of her their mother; she is all.

Clara. And what does she?

Festus. Produce: it is her life.

[p. 70]

the sole

Oneness which is in all, of nature's great
Triadic principle, in all things seen;
In man thus, as composed for thrice three forms
Intrinsic; first, corporeally, blood,
Body, and bones; next, intellectually,
Imagination, judgement, memory;
And thirdly, spiritually, mind and soul,
And spirit, which unites with God the whole
Being, and comes from and returns to Him

[pp. 135-136]

The original

Of all things is one thing. Creation is
One whole. The differences a mortal sees
Are diverse only to the finite mind.

[p. 145]

Particularly striking among the ideas about unity and the make-up of Nature in these passages is the treatment in the lines from pages 135-136 of the "Triadic principle" and its working-out in man as body, brain, and spirit, a close parallel to Meredith's well-known triad of blood, brain and spirit, (see above, pp. 100 ff.). Meredith's exposure to these ideas in the poetry of the Spasmodics as well as in the works of Goethe (see below) must have led him to the formulation, in his own terms, of similar ideas that then became central to his view of life.

The other side of the Spasmodic school was, as Lindsay points out, concern for the condition of England, for the flaws and failures in society that--however ineffectually--the heroes of the major poems set out to correct. In Festus, for example, we find Lucifer holding forth as follows upon the ills of society:

It is time that something should be done for the poor.
The sole equality on earth is death;
Now, rich and poor are both dissatisfied.

I am for judgment: that will settle both.
 Nothing is to be done without destruction.
 Death is the universal salt of states;
 Blood is the base of all things--law and war,
 I could tame this lion age to follow me.
 I should like to macadamize the world;
 The road to Hell wants mending.

[pp. 100-101]

This, of course, is not Bailey's view: his opinion is probably that
 of his hero:

There's much that hath no merit but its truth,
 And no excuse but nature. Nature does
 Never wrong: 'tis society which sins.

[p. 120]

I can conceive a time when the world shall be
 Much better visibly, and when, as far
 As social life and its relations tend,
 Men, morals, manners shall be lifted up
 To a pure height we know not of nor dream;--
 When all men's rights and duties shall be clear,
 And charitably exercised and borne;
 When education, conscience, and good deeds
 Shall have just equal sway, and civil claims . . .

. . . .

Truth shall reign,
 Nature shall be rethroned, and man sublimed.

[pp. 123-124]

Bailey's concern for the future suggests the like concern in Meredith,
 although Bailey does not come to grips with the means by which this
 Paradise is to be brought into being upon earth: Meredith, at least,
 envisions improvement through the hard work of all men. Bailey has
 Festus exclaim that all man has to do is live naturally:

Let us work out our natures; we can do
 No wrong in them, they are divine, eterne:
 I follow my attraction, and obey
 Nature, as earth does, circling round her source
 Of life and light, and keeping true in Heaven,
 Though not perfect in round, which nothing is.

[p. 279]

Still another Meredithian echo arises from a reading of Festus.

During one of his soliloquies, the hero observes that

Morality's the right rule for the world,
 Nor could society cohere without
 Virtue

[p. 130]

This sounds a good deal like Meredith's implied statement that the virtue of woman is, to borrow from Bailey's language, the cement that holds society together, preserves the vitality of the family as the basic social building block, and enables man to move forward despite huge obstacles (see above, p. 105). This is not to say, however, that Meredith's idea came to him solely from this poem of Bailey's: there was at least one other, and possibly more likely, source, Goethe (see below, pp. 186 ff.

Alexander Smith was another of the New or Spasmodic poets with whom Meredith might well have been acquainted through reading. Meredith wrote a sonnet about Smith that responds to the Scot's sonnet to "Fame," a fact that suggests that Meredith read Smith's poetry as it appeared in various periodicals. Smith's first volume appeared in 1853 but Meredith's sonnet was published in The Leader on December 20, 1851.¹³⁶ The poem in point--the "Life-Drama" of 1853--is, like Festus, about a poet who is seeking knowledge and something to do. The story opens as Walter soliloquizes about his failure thus far as a poet:

O, that my heart was quiet as a grave
 Asleep in moonlight!
 For, as a torrid sunset boils with gold
 Up to the zenith, fierce within my soul
 A passion burns from basement to the cope.
 Poesy! Poesy! I'd give to thee,
 As passionately, my rich-laden years,
 My bubble pleasures, and my awful joys,
 As Hero gave her trembling sighs to find
 Delicious death on wet Leander's lip.

 I love thee, Poesy! Thou art a rock;
 I, a weak wave, would break on thee and die!¹³⁷

Given such a beginning, it is not strange that Smith's "Life-Drama" should discover itself as having very little to do with real life. Walter loves and loses a lady and finds her again; he abandons her, in fact, for mere pleasure and becomes an inhabitant of the "Devil-world," during which period he writes a poem that is "a hit."

Finally Walter admits to Violet that he has learned that pleasure is pain and that happiness need not be tumultuous but is finest when "deep" and "serene as death." As the poem closes, Walter tells Violet that he feels he has been called to go among mankind with his "great songs" and that he has abandoned the pursuit of fame for the doing of "God's work."¹³⁸ Unfortunately, the task Walter is going to undertake is as undefined as is the means by which, in Festus' vision, man is going to improve his lot.

Dobell's Balder is, to my thinking, the oddest of the three Spasmodic epics under consideration. In the "Prefatory Note to the Second Edition" (1854), Dobell wrote, "I intend as the principal subject . . . the Progress of a Human Being from Doubt to Faith, from Chaos to Order . . . of a doubtful mind to a faithful mind."¹³⁹ Balder wants to possess the secrets of nature, which he conceives of as having "a heart" and mystery and passions and voices (p. 10). He has experienced everything but death (p. 16) and has finally come to feel that his time is near (p. 19). The poem alternates between Balder's soliloquies and conversations with Dr. Paul and the songs sung by Balder's wife Amy to her child. When the baby dies, Balder evidently has his encounter with death, for at this point he says, "My life is free before me; I am strong; / I shall survive, subdue, surmount, attain!" (p. 79). When

Amy recovers from her post-natal illness, Balder declares the inception of his "reign": he is ready now because he has "seen / The seething core of nature . . ." (pp. 150-151). Amy, who is apparently only a weak and weeping shadow of a female, says that Balder is the

Master-Prophet! Man
Of men, at whose strong girdle hang the keys
Of all things!

[p. 169]

When Dr. Paul, talking with Balder on the top of the dilapidated tower in which Balder and Amy live, tells the poet that Amy cannot be saved, Balder almost pushes the doctor over the wall (pp. 217-220). Balder reflects at length upon the injustices of the world of men and upon all that he has done, which boils down to a Faustian exploration of everything: philosophy, science, truth--but "In vain, / In vain, in vain, in vain!" (p. 230).

Amy is dying of an incurable cancer or of a madness that Balder describes in terms of a dark growth within her--the reader is at loss to choose which (p. 258). Balder now dreams two dreams that frighten him into what Jerome Buckley has called "the most striking example of what we may call the 'clinical' style":¹⁴⁰

Ah! ah! ah!
Ah! ah! ah! ah! ah! ah! ah! ah! ah!
[p. 260]

Amy grows more and more insane and finally accuses Balder of murdering her by driving her insane (my own feeling at this point was that Amy was considerably more a woman of flesh and blood than the dreamy child of nature Balder would have her be!), at which point, blaming himself for her illness, he does kill her (pp. 290-291).

It should be obvious, from this brief summary of Balder's story, that aside from the idea of Nature as a sovereign being who should be sought out as guide and companion (pp. 17-18) there is not much in Dobell's poem that need be taken as an influence on Meredith's developing philosophy. However, its importance in its own time was such, at least at first, that it had to be taken into account at this point.

In the letter dated April 5, 1906, to Dr. H. Anders, author of Shakespeares Belesenheit, the letter quoted in the epigraph for this paper, Meredith apparently responds to a request made by Dr. Anders about his own reading: "you ask of my readings of the formative kind. They were first the Arabian Nights, then Gibbon, Niebuhr, Walter Scott; then Moliere, then the noble Goethe, the most enduring. All the poets, English, Weimar and Suabia and Austrian."¹⁴¹ It seems reasonable to me to set aside the Arabian Nights and Scott without question as bearing primarily upon Meredith as novelist and to take up, having already dealt with "the poets," the influence upon Meredith's thinking of Gibbon, Niebuhr, Moliere, and Goethe.

The references to Edward Gibbon among Meredith's letters are, to say the least, sparse (see Appendix I, p. 332). Meredith's library, or at least that part of it that is included in the Catalogue, did not contain a copy of the Decline and Fall, which is mentioned in the letters only in connection with the "Vindication" that Gibbon wrote in reply to the attack on Chapters XV and XVI in 1778.¹⁴² In commenting on the "Vindication," Meredith takes note primarily of the style: the

work, he says, "flagellates with respectable temper and according to their degrees the notable clerical trio. The style of the History in this performance is curious to read. Even the birch will he wield in his best attire." And in a letter to Lady Ulrica Duncombe, Meredith observes, in a disquisition upon style in general, that "Gibbon could take a long stride with the leg of a dancing-master; he could not take a short one."¹⁴³ The evidence of Meredith's acquaintance with the History is apparently limited to the identification of Chapters XXXIV and XXXV as the source for Meredith's "The Nuptials of Attila" (1879).¹⁴⁴ So far as I know, no critic of Meredith's has yet made any attempt to match Meredith's style to Gibbon's and to draw conclusions (I suspect that Gibbon would come out the clearer of the two), nor has anyone made any connection between Meredith's view of history and Gibbon's.

If I am correct in asserting (see above, pp. 110ff.) that Meredith saw history as one of the means man must use in order to improve and advance his present state, then it might be possible to trace that point of view of Gibbon. Consider this statement by one of Gibbon's biographers, Michael Joyce:

In a passage that has become almost proverbial [Gibbon] declares that history is 'little more than the register of the crimes, follies, and misfortunes of mankind.' At the end of a long survey of the Byzantine dynasties he strikes a similar note, but justifies the historian for undertaking what might be thought an ungrateful task: 'A being of the nature of man, endowed with the same faculties, but with a longer measure of existence, would cast down a smile of pity and contempt on the crimes and follies of human ambition, so eager, in a narrow span, to grasp at a precarious and short-lived enjoyment. It is thus that the experience of history exalts and enlarges the horizon of our intellectual view. In a composition of some days, in a perusal of some hours, six hundred years have rolled away, and the duration of a life or reign is contracted to a fleeting moment; the grave is ever beside the throne; the success of a criminal is almost instantly followed by the loss of his prize; and our immortal reason survives and disdains the sixty phantoms of kings who have passed before our eyes, and faintly dwell in our remembrance.'¹⁴⁵

That long-lived "being of the nature of man," it seems to me, has some affinity with Meredith's Comic Spirit and suggests as well the attitude that man, struggling to improve his race, ought to take toward the behavior and machinations of his predecessors. Anyone reading even the smallest segment of the History can recognize behind it the Gibbon who sees himself, in Joyce's words, as "one of those detached and well-informed observers who possess 'a clear and comprehensive view of the revolutions of society; and who are capable of discovering the nice and secret springs of action, which impel, in the same uniform direction, the blind and capricious passions of a multitude of individuals.'"146 If history is to be viewed in this "Olympian" fashion, according to Gibbon, then perhaps it is possible to suggest that Meredith acquired the same fashion from Gibbon, whose attitude would comport well with that of the creator of the Comic Spirit.

Mentioned next after Gibbon in Meredith's reply to Dr. Anders about "formative" influences is Niebuhr, about whose identity there can be no certainty, inasmuch as this reference to Niebuhr in 1906 is the only one I know of. Meredith could have meant Barthold Georg Niebuhr (1776-1831), the German historian whose Römische Geschichte, according to the Encyclopedia Britannica, established Niebuhr's "claim to be considered the first who dealt with the ancient history of Rome in a scientific spirit . . . ," and who introduced, although without elaboration, "the theory of the myth" into historical studies.¹⁴⁷ It is also possible that Meredith meant the father of the Niebuhr just mentioned: Karsten Niebuhr (1733-1815), the author of Beschreibung von Arabien (1772), Reisebeschreibung von Arabien und anderen umliegenden Ländern

(1774-1778), and a fourth volume published in 1837.¹⁴⁸ I can only guess that Meredith is speaking of stylistic influence: the Britannica credits Niebuhr files with unintentionally influencing "history by popularizing that conception of it which lays stress on institutions, tendencies and social traits to neglect of individuals"--a sort of counter-approach to that of Gibbon and Carlyle, who tended to emphasize biography over all other considerations, and one that might have modified Meredith's own historical attitude, adding to it the idea that man must consider not only his ancestors as individuals, but their institutions and customs as well.¹⁴⁹ As for Niebuhr pere, I can only conjecture that Meredith's early fascination with the Arabian Nights might have made this Niebuhr's studies interesting to him and that what the Britannica points out as Karsten Niebuhr's main qualities--"accurate and careful" observation, "the instincts of the scholar. . . , a high moral purpose," conscientiousness, and truthfulness--might have been qualities that Meredith tried to emulate.¹⁵⁰ But this is only conjecture and must be set aside until, if ever, further information becomes available indicative of which Niebuhr Meredith intended and what influence he had in mind.

Another historian whose approach to his subject might have a bearing on Meredith's view of history, especially sub specie Carlyle and his emphasis on biography, is Plutarch, upon whose account of Solon Meredith drew for his 1887 poem by that name.¹⁵¹ What Meredith derived in general terms from his reading of Plutarch may well be the attitude that is summed up in a passage quoted by R. Y. Tyrell from "Paulus Aemilius" in Sir Thomas North's translation:

'When I first began to write these "Lives" my intent was to profit others; but since continuing and going on I have much profited myself by looking into these histories as if I looked into a glass to

frame and fashion my life to the mould and pattern of these virtuous noblemen. For, running over their manners in this sort and seeking also to describe their lives, methinks I am still conversant and familiar with them, and do, as it were, lodge them with me, one after another. I do teach and prepare myself to shake off and banish from me all lewd and dishonest conditions, if by chance the company and conversation of them whose company I keep,--and must of necessity haunt,--do acquaint me with some unhappy or ungracious touch.'¹⁵²

It might well have been Plutarch's truthful painting of human nature under many circumstances and in many masks that appealed to Meredith and helped him to conceive of history-cum-biography as a useful tool in man's struggle to improve himself and his race. Again, however, I feel the pressure of the caveat against conjecture: there is no proof that Meredith's reading of Plutarch did so influence him.

The weapon other than history available to man in his struggle to advance his kind is laughter, the result of the ability to see man as the Comic Spirit sees him and the human activity that will help effect the changes necessary in the present structure of human life. To the reader of Meredith's "Essay on the Idea of Comedy and of the Uses of the Comic Spirit," it becomes immediately apparent that the chief influence in the formation of Meredith's theory of comedy as a civilizing force is Molière, whose name appears on almost half the pages of the text of the essay. Indeed, Meredith went so far at one point as to say, in a letter to Havelock Ellis (December 21, 1886) quoted by Forman in his Bibliography, that "Molière is the sole writer of pure Comedy, so rare is it."¹⁵³ It is, of course, true that Meredith pairs Molière with Menander as the two writers who "have given the principal types to Comedy hitherto" and that he allows Aristophanes room as "an unapproachable," qualified though he is as a purely Comic writer by the presence in his works of "the grotesque," irony, and satire.¹⁵⁴

What Meredith learned about comedy from Molière covers many qualities of the difficult art, beginning perhaps with the notion that comedy is an effective means of correcting social ills:

The French bourgeoisie of Paris were sufficiently quick-witted and enlightened by education to welcome great works like *Le Tartuffe*, *Les Femmes Savantes*, and *Le Misanthrope*, works that were perilous ventures on the popular intelligence, big vessels to launch on streams running to shallows

The *Femmes Savantes* is a capital instance of the uses of comedy in teaching the world to understand what ails it. The farce of the *Precieuses* ridiculed and put a stop to the monstrous romantic jargon made popular by certain famous novels. The comedy of the *Femmes Savantes* exposed the later and less apparent but more finely comic absurdity of an excessive purism in grammar and diction, and the tendency to be idiotic in precision. The French had felt the burden of this new nonsense; but they had to see the comedy several times before they were consoled in their suffering by seeing the cause of it exposed. [pp. 12-13]

It is surely possible to read from this appreciation of Molière's intention to Meredith's similar intentions in *The Egoist*, in the *Pole Sisters* of *Sandra Belloni* and *Vittoria*, and in the reactions of the unenlightened bystanders to such unconventional people as Diana Warwick, Beauchamp, Victor and Nataly Radnor, Matey Weyburn and his Aminta, and Carinthia Kirby among Meredith's characters. The comedy in Meredith's novels, following his own prescription derived from Molière, is aimed at exposing the sentimentalists, egoists, and (perhaps hypocritical) prudes for what they really are, with the further intent of persuading the readers (no doubt unfortunately limited to people who already agreed with Meredith) to effect some correction in the values and standards of contemporary society.

Meredith's appreciation of and insistence upon the civilizing power both of Comedy and of women possessed of common sense may also have grown out of his understanding of Molière's comedy:

Comedy is the fountain of sound sense, not the less perfectly sound on account of the sparkle: and Comedy lifts women to a station offering them free play for their wit, as they usually show it, when they have it,

on the side of sound sense. The higher the Comedy, the more prominent the part they enjoy in it. Dorine in the *Tartuffe* is common-sense incarnate, though palpably a waiting-maid. *Célimène* is undisputed mistress of the same attribute in the *Misanthrope*; wiser as a woman than *Alceste* as man. [p. 14]

Comedy is an exhibition of [women's] battle with men, and that of men with them: and as the two, however divergent, both look on one object, namely, Life, the gradual similarity of their impressions must bring them to some resemblance. The Comic poet dares to show us men and women coming to this mutual likeness; he is for saying that when they draw together in social life their minds grow liker; just as the philosopher discerns the similarity of boy and girl, until the girl is marched away to the nursery. [p. 15]

The connection between comedy and "sound sense" is expanded by Meredith's connecting both with wit and reason, out of which Molière's comic perception of society springs:

The source of [Molière's] wit is clear reason: it is a fountain of that soil; and it springs to vindicate reason, common-sense, rightness and justice; for no vain purpose ever. The wit is of such pervading spirit that it inspires a pun with meaning and interest. His moral does not hang like a tail, or preach from one character incessantly cocking an eye at the audience, . . . but is in the heart of his work, throbbing with every pulsation of an organic structure. If Life is likened to the comedy of Molière, there is no scandal in the comparison. [p. 17]

Indeed, knowledge of "the real world" and of men and women to the extent of knowing them "well enough not to expect too much of them" is one of the essential means for discerning the comic and for understanding the work and intention of the great comic writers (p. 23). The other means is "the intellect," which alone can perceive the "purely comic," the "contrast . . . between [the characters in the comedy] and the wiser world about them . . ." (p. 42). The reader, Meredith implies, must apply both in order to appreciate Molière's comedy; by extension, one concludes that Meredith intends the reader to apply knowledge of reality and intellect to Meredith's comedies, too. And anyone who has read any of Meredith's comic novels can appreciate that Meredith's perception of the comic in the social world he describes demands, sometimes rather

rudely, the constant exercise of the reader's intellectual abilities in order not to lose the point or the thread of the revelation of human folly and absurdity that Meredith is presenting.

All of this attitude toward comedy, derived primarily from his appreciation of Molière, Meredith includes in those segments of his philosophy that deal with the necessity for the cultivation of intellect and common sense ("brain") and for the alteration of the accepted, debased position of women, whose liberation will immeasurably aid in the advancement of the race (see above, pp. 103ff.). The improving effect of laughter, the "thoughtful laughter" or the "volleys of silvery laughter" evoked by partnership with the Comic Spirit (pp. 46, 47), is such that it brings the laughing individual into a "high fellowship." Indeed, says Meredith, the "perception of the comic spirit" introduces one into a "selecter world, the highest we know of in connection with our old world, which is not supermundane" (p. 48). Meredith expresses all this again in his "Ode to the Comic Spirit," wherein he describes his subject as the "Sword of Common Sense" and reveals the effect of the expulsion of that Spirit (in the mythical person of Momus) from Olympus. Without the clean-cutting perception of the "Sword,"

mankind

We see cloud-capped, an army of the dark,
 Because of thy straight leadership declines
 At heels of this or that delusive spark:
 Now when the multitudinous races press
 Elbow to elbow hourly more,
 A thickened host; when now we hear aloud
 Life for the very life implore
 A signal of visioned mark;
 Light of the mind, the mind's discourse,
 The rational in graciousness,
 Thee by acknowledgement enthroned,
 To tame and lead that blind-eyed force
 In harmony of harness with the crowd,
 For payment of their dues; as yet disowned,

Save where some dutiful lone creature, vowed
 To holy work, deems it the heart's intent;
 Or where a silken circle views it cowed,
 The seeming figure of concordance, bent
 On satiating tyrant lust
 Or barren fits of sentiment.

(I wonder, in passing, if Meredith did not see himself, at least at times, as that "dutiful lone creature" picking away religiously at the follies of his fellows.) Even those who are only "half-illumed" by the Spirit grasp the meaning of the "cry that is our common voice; the note / Of fellowship upon a loftier plane . . . ," and follow him into his battle against the evils, vanities, follies, and foibles that beset man in his "civil Fort."¹⁵⁵ Only by learning to laugh at such enemies can man move ahead and enter a world that is better, saner, and more reasonably suited to him than the present world.

According to Meredith's own estimate, the "most enduring" influence of a "formative kind" upon him was "the noble Goethe."¹⁵⁶ And once one has fixed that comment in his mind, he discovers that the "noble" German poet appears with considerable frequency in the pages of Meredith's correspondence and behind the view of man and of life that Meredith expresses in all his writings. A glance at the listing of works under Goethe's name in the Appendix to this paper (see p. 333 reveals that Meredith was acquainted with a broad expanse of Goethe's works, from the lyrical poems through the complexities (one feels it is possible to assume) of the second part of Faust.

It seems advisable, before embarking upon an investigation of Meredith's knowledge and employment of Goethe's ideas and works to make some sort of introductory statement about the elements of Goethe's philosophy, difficult though such an undertaking will be. Not

surprisingly, given Meredith's statement about Goethe's, a summary of one is remarkably like a summary of the other, as I shall endeavor to demonstrate.

Perhaps the best statement of Goethe's developing view of Nature appears in an early "Fragment" that Goethe later named "Die Natur: Aphoristisch." Scholarly opinion has it that the "ode in prose," as Agnes Arber describes it, was actually written by Georg Xoph Tobler on the basis of his conversations with Goethe in 1782. The manuscript was recovered in 1828 and the poem appeared in the collected works of Goethe published in 1833.¹⁵⁷ The following extracts, it seems to me, indicate fairly the main burden and attitude of the ode (it seemed best to give the passages in Miss Arber's translation).

Nature! We are enriched and enclasped by her--powerless to depart from her, and powerless to find our way more deeply into her being. Without invitation and without warning she involves us in the orbit of her dance, and drives us onward until we are exhausted and fall from her arm.

.

She lives in her children alone, and the mother, where is she?-- She is the sole artist; from the simplest material she passes to the extremest diversity; with no hint of strain she strives at the fullest consummation--at the exactest precision, always veiled in a certain obscurity. Each thing she makes has its own being, each of her manifestations is an isolated idea, and yet they are all one.

.

In her there is eternal life, eternal coming-to-be, and eternal movement, and yet she travels no further. She transmutes herself for ever, and for no moment does she come to rest. To abide unchanged is not in her scheme of things, and she has set her curse upon stagnation. Her pace is measured, she seldom endures exceptions, and her laws are immutable.

Pondering and meditation are perpetual in her; but it is not as humanity, but as Nature, that she muses. She reserves for herself an all-embracing mode of thought which none can penetrate.

.

. . . Continually she produces new sentient beings who can enjoy her; inexhaustibly she communicates herself.

.

. . . He who follows her trustingly him she gathers to her heart like a babe.

.

She shrouds man in misty dark, and goads him incessantly towards the light; she makes him earthbound, inert, and ponderous, and ever again she startles him out of sleep.

. . . .

She allows every child to work its will upon her, every fool to sit in judgment upon her, and she permits thousands to pass over her in blind apathy; but she rejoices in them all, and from all she reaps her harvest.

We obey her laws even in resisting them; we work with her, even when our desire is to work against her.

. . . .

She has no speech nor language, but she creates tongues and hearts, through which she feels and utters.

. . . .

She is the Whole. To herself she metes out reward and punishment, delight and torment. She is austere and tender; charming and horrible; impotent and omnipotent. All things are evermore in her. Past and future are present to her. The present is her eternity. Gracious is she. I laud her with all her works. She is wisdom and tranquillity. No answer to life's riddle can be wrested from her which she does not offer of her own free will. She is full of finesse, but her goal is good [*Italics mine.*]¹⁵⁸

The most notable quality about the passage is its insistence upon Nature as the source and sustenance of all being and of all law and upon the necessity for man to follow her implicitly. However, the ode is an early piece: Karl Viëtor observes of it that although it points to what Goethe himself described as "'an unfathomable, unconditioned essence' . . . as the basis of all the phenomena of the world," it does not have any "realistic insight into the way in which the mind in Nature creates; not yet formulated is the doctrine of polarity and progress through intensification" (*Steigerung*), the 'two great driving-wheels of Nature.'¹⁵⁹ What Viëtor is getting at is the lack, in the "Fragment," of any recognition and reconciliation of the two sides of man, the moral and the physical, or the rational and the sensual. According to Viëtor, Goethe rejected such a dual view of man and came to conceive of man's nature as constituted of "a twoness which is rooted in an inner oneness We are 'twin-natures single grown' The highest inner culture to which man can develop

himself lies in this, that we keep the faith with the earth and the kingdom of the spirit at one and the same time." The "polarity" between the two natures demands that they be brought together and be recognized as two-in-one; in bringing the two sides of his nature into harmony, man advances out of the "misty dark" and "sleep" of the "Fragment" into "the light" toward which Nature "incessantly" drives him.¹⁶⁰

The process by which Nature develops multiplicity out of simplicity of forms Goethe came to call Steigerung, which Viëtor explains as follows:

Everywhere in Nature Goethe finds a force at work which gives to the process of mutation an upward direction toward an organic refinement and perfectionment [sic]. In all living things this spiritual potency of an "ever-striving ascent" is at work. So the structural plan of the realm of Nature reveals itself as a sequence which obtains its coherence and its standard from this immanent urge "upward." Nature has ascended "as on a ladder" by way of the higher mammals to man. In man "the animal properties are perfected for higher purposes." But with this Nature is not at an end. She will never be at an end; for in her "inspirations" she is as inexhaustibly rich as the genius of the artist. In a conversation Goethe is said to have remarked, "Who knows whether all of mankind is not just another throw toward a higher goal?" What Goethe means by "upward intensification" (Steigerung) has nothing to do with mechanical efficiency, with selection and adaptation, with utility in the sense of fitness for life. For him it is a question of an original tendency, immanent in Nature, which cannot be derived from other forces or connections, cannot be causally explained.¹⁶¹

It seems obvious that the addition of the concept of Steigerung to the generalizations of the "Fragment" makes for a sophisticated but un-Darwinian view of the fact of change in Nature. It also seems obvious that Goethe's conception of Nature as the source of all life, of the necessity for eliminating the polarity of man's nature, and of the constant but essentially inexplicable upward development of natural forms comes closest, of all the suggested sources for Meredith's ideas, to Meredith's thinking on the same points. I disagree with George Roppen's statement that Meredith "parts company" with Goethe in his

view of nature on the grounds that Goethe's view is mechanistic and Meredith's is not.¹⁶² Surely the description of Goethe's thinking just offered is far from being that of a mechanistic view of Nature and change.

It may even be possible to trace Meredith's view of history to Goethe's thinking on that subject. Viëtor observes, "That there can be no standstill in history is for Goethe a matter of course As Nature cannot stop in her productivity, neither can history in its progress," but there is no law that governs the progress of history. Further, Goethe considered that Steigerung, with its implicit concept of a drive toward perfection, did not operate in human history, but only in the historical development of the arts and sciences: Goethe, says Viëtor, "has no faith in humanity en masse." In effect, Goethe supports the cyclical view of history, denying for the most part the optimistic view of history as the record of man's continuing and undeviating improvement. He would agree that there has been some evidence of Steigerung in man's history, but his realistic view of life negated whatever there was of optimistic in this concession.¹⁶³ I do not know that it is possible to say that Goethe thought of history as a lesson-book for man in his search for knowledge of himself and his world, although a brief passage in Part II of Faust would suggest that Goethe regretted man's apparent inability to profit from the examples of the past:

All that ever happens
Now in the Present
Mocks like a mournful echo
The grander days of the Fathers ¹⁶⁴

The mention of Faust brings us handily to the central concern of Goethe's work, to, as Viëtor puts it, Goethe's effort "to give a worthy picture of the nature of man and his place in the great Order."

For Goethe, "the true hero everywhere is man, and man's existence is the real theme" of everything he wrote, and (I might add) most especially and emphatically of Faust.¹⁶⁵ Man is, like all the rest of Nature's forms, the product of Steigerung, but a product that is both "historically" and "qualitatively" Nature's last. The human hand and the human mind carry man far beyond the level of his animal co-creatures: man has, in Goethe's words, "the highest mobility and freedom" of all the animals as well as the ability to control and develop his own organs and limbs in addition to learning from or being guided by them. The stages of development that brought man to his present stature Goethe does not examine, except to include man in Nature's process of Steigerung.¹⁶⁶

The inner composition of man Goethe saw in his early years as the simple organization expressed in "Das Göttliche," a poem that Meredith knew and admired (see below, pp. 231 ff.), in which man possesses qualities that Nature herself does not have and is therefore a creature distinct from all the rest of creation. Gradually, Goethe's view of man became more complex, and man appeared as a being who is naturally predisposed to morality and who has a sense of his own dignity and purpose. Viëtor expresses Goethe's view this way: "In regarding himself as 'the best' that 'God and Nature' have produced, man feels himself impelled to do those works which are assigned to him as the highest creation of Nature: the works of civilization."¹⁶⁷ The statement sets forth, in a somewhat oversimplified fashion, the progress of various of Goethe's characters, from Wilhelm Meister through Charlotte, Edward, and Ottilie in Die Wahlverwandtschaften to the Faust of the completed drama. Faust embodies the whole of Goethe's view of

man: Faust is what man is; what man is capable of; and what man can become when once he recognizes that he is personally responsible for the process of civilization and for those activities that give his existence genuine and pervasive value.¹⁶⁸ In Faust, the point is made when the aged protagonist accepts the presence in his stronghold of Care, who condemns him to Hell and to the blindness characteristic of the human nature that Faust has tried to transcend. But Care's curse and Faust's physical blindness have the paradoxical effect of confirming the protagonist in his efforts to complete his last endeavor and of endowing his spirit with the light that has hitherto escaped him:

The Night seems deeper now to press around me,
But in my inmost spirit all is light;
I rest not till the finished work hath crowned me:
The master's Word alone bestows the might

By allowing Care to remain with him, Faust finally achieves the totality of human experience that he has been seeking to achieve without accepting the burden of care, of responsibility for the race of men as a whole. And it is his acceptance and consequent conquest of Care that assures Faust of redemption: as the Angels carry "the immortal part of Faust" upward, they make explicit the means by which he was saved from Mephistopheles' grasp:

The noble Spirit now is free,
And saved from evil scheming:
Whoe'er aspires unweariedly
Is not beyond redeeming.

The scene here, Atkins explains, is "the symbolic expression of Faust's conviction that . . . 'Ever to strive toward life's most perfect forms,' is the best possible general formulation of the moral imperative which consciousness of man's divine dignity must predicate."¹⁶⁹ Faust learns what work it is that man, aware of his dignity and state in the order

of things, is "impelled" (see above, p. 178f) to do among other men.

The temptation to escape responsibility and to achieve total experience by "magic" is, in the defeat of Mephistopheles, patently impracticable and wrong because it eliminates the very experience that completes man.

It seems fairly obvious to me that Goethe's view of man, thus briefly summarized, is essentially the view that Meredith adopted or adapted as his own. The methods by which Meredith set forth his idea of man and of man's role are, perhaps, less dramatic and (with reference to Faust) less complex than Goethe's, but the conceptions behind the expressions seem to me to be almost peculiarly Goethean, virtually unadulterated by the intervening figures of the later German Romantics or of the English Romantics or by their versions of the organic view of man and Nature that Goethe and Meredith share.

The chief of Meredith's references to Goethe occur in Meredith's letters. In 1862, in a letter to Augustus Jessopp, Meredith wrote a brief discussion of the difference between realism and idealism that includes Goethe among the writers whom Meredith acknowledges as masters:

Between realism and idealism there is no natural conflict. This completes that. Realism is the basis of good composition: it implies study, observation, artistic power, and (in those who can do more) humility A great genius must necessarily employ ideal means, for a vast conception cannot be placed bodily before the eye, and remains to be suggested. Idealism is as an atmosphere whose effects of grandeur are wrought out through a series of illustrations, that are illusions to the sense within us only when divorced from the groundwork of the real. Need there be exclusion, the one of the other? The artist is incomplete who does this. Men to whom I bow my head (Shakespeare, Goethe; and in their way, Molière, Cervantes) are Realists au fond. But they have the broad arms of Idealism at command. They give us Earth; but it is earth with an atmosphere

Does not all science (the mammoth balloon, to wit) tell us that when we forsake earth, we reach up to a frosty, inimical Inane? For my part I love and cling to earth, as the one piece of God's handiwork which we possess. I admit we can refashion; but of earth must be the material. ¹⁷⁰

It seems reasonable to assume that Meredith's acquaintance with Goethe, whom he here places firmly in the background upon which he draws for his own inspiration in matters of content and method, began at Neuwied, at which point Meredith was probably exposed mainly to the lyric poems and to their loving portrait of earth, an exposure that resulted in Meredith's translation of several of Goethe's lyrics and, perhaps, in the close connection between Meredith's "Dirge in Woods" and Goethe's "Wandrer's Nachtlied":

A wind sways the pines,
 And below
 Not a breath of wild air;
 Still as the mosses that glow
 On the flooring and over the lines
 Of the roots here and there.
 The pine-tree drops its dead;
 They are quiet, as under the sea.
 Overhead, overhead
 Rushes life in a race,
 As the clouds the clouds chase;
 And we go,
 And we drop like the fruits of the tree,
 Even we,
 Even so.

Über allen Gipfeln
 Ist Ruh',
 In allen Wipfeln
 Spürest du
 Kaum einen Hauch;
 Die Vögelein schweigen im Walde.
 Warte nur, balde
 Ruhest du auch.¹⁷¹

The juxtaposition of the two poems suggests at once the probability that Meredith drew upon Goethe, as well as upon the German and English Romantic poets, for the basic tenet of his philosophy: the essential unity of all life in Nature--man's as well as those of the non-human creation. If, as I have already suggested, Faust serves as an index to Goethe's view of life, then it should be possible to make the assertion of Goethe's belief in the unity of life on the basis of the play.

Atkins makes the statement this way: Among the "original premises of Faust [is] the inseparability of art and life, of good and evil, of the human and the divine, of the physical and the spiritual." According to Karl Viëtor, Goethe, in both his scientific studies and in his poetry, strove always to discover and set forth "the 'mysterious kinship' of living creatures," to take hold of the internal and external qualities of creation and to present them "as one whole," as, in Eckermann's words, "the Great Whole" ¹⁷²

Indeed, it may very well have been from Goethe that Meredith derived the thinking that led to his triad of "blood, brain, and spirit" as a description of the nature of man. Goethe held that "'a general harmonious culture of the faculties is really required for the adequate observation of nature,'" a statement that suggests Meredith's belief that man must be a whole and balanced being in order to derive the utmost benefit from his study of Nature in pursuit of her laws. ¹⁷³ Viëtor insists that one of Goethe's earliest convictions was that man could arrive at a genuine understanding of his world only through "cognition," a contemplative process that requires the working together of "feeling, intimation, and intellect": "he was wont to say that we must look simultaneously with eyes of the body and the mind only the union of all our cognitive powers, both rational and irrational, can cope with life, which is everywhere a living union of matter and mind, phenomenon and essence." ¹⁷⁴ Surely one can only conclude that the beginnings of Meredith's view of creation as a unity and of man's existence as requiring a similar unity among the parts of his being lie in Goethe, the "seed-bed" for so many ideas that dominated the century

that followed him. (For further elaboration of the nature of man and of the demands placed upon him by nature and society, see the comments below on renunciation, pp. 187-188.)

It is impossible to ascertain exactly when Meredith read any given work of Goethe's. From a letter to Lady Ulrica Duncombe dated Jaunaury 19, 1902, we know that Carlyle had urged Meredith to "the study of Goethe . . . constantly," and that Meredith was acquainted with Carlyle's articles on Goethe. Inasmuch as Meredith made Carlyle's acquaintance in 1859 or 1860, shortly after the publication of Richard Feverel, it seems likely that this event stimulated Meredith's interest in Goethe, but I cannot quite agree with Stevenson's conclusion that Meredith pleased Carlyle by demonstrating a sudden "devotion to Goethe": he had probably been developing his affection for Goethe on his own since his stay at Neuwied.¹⁷⁵ We know that by 1865, perhaps as a result of Carlyle's prompting, Meredith had read Goethe's Die Wahlverwandtschaften (Elective Affinities), because he recommends Goethe's novel to Captain Maxse as a work that "would delight" him and as one that had "nourished Hawthorne," whose excellences Meredith outlines in the letter.¹⁷⁶ In the letter to Lady Ulrica just mentioned, Meredith again alludes to Die Wahlverwandtschaften, observing that his lovely young correspondent brings the novel "home to" him.¹⁷⁷

Goethe's fictional investigation of marriage may very well have been one of the chief inspirations for Meredith's insistence upon the maintaining of high moral standards within the institution of marriage as the key to a moral and advancing society. Consider this passage from Goethe's novel (the speaker is Herr Mittler, a friend of the couple whose marriage is central to the book): "'Whoever strikes at

marriage . . . whoever, either by word or act, undermines this, the foundation of all moral society, that man has to settle with me Marriage is the beginning and the end of all culture. It makes the savage mild; and the most cultivated has no better opportunity for displaying his gentleness.'" In his introduction to the novel, Frederick Ungar describes Goethe's concept of marriage as one that places it in the position of "the great educator, lifting man to the level of humanity and forming the basis of social culture."¹⁷⁸ The novel describes the course of a marriage that is beset and endangered by the uncontrolled desires of the husband, Edward, who abandons his wife for the young and beautiful Ottilie. The girl is, as Ungar points out, "a true child of nature" and therefore responds at first to Edward's importunities.¹⁷⁹ At the moment when Ottilie sees Edward's child dead, she recovers her will and is able to renounce her passion in favor of the moral order represented by Edward's wife, Charlotte. Charlotte, too, is tempted to betray her marriage, but she resists and thus sets the standard for the view that might well be summed up by the single word, renunciation. In order to make their marriage function, the partners must renounce selfish desires and drives and concern themselves with each other's welfare and happiness. Marriages thus contracted and maintained form, in Goethe's view, the foundation of a moral and well-functioning society. Any tampering with the basic structure endangers the whole.

It seems to be more than mere coincidence that Meredith should repeatedly consider almost exactly the same question in his novels: from the ill-educated Richard Feverel (whose marital history might indicate that Meredith knew Die Wahlverwandtschaften well before the

meeting with Carlyle and the 1865 letter to Maxse) through the self-centered Sir Willoughby Patterne to Victor and Nataly Radnor, Lord Ormont and Aminta Farrell, and Lord Fleetwood and Carinthia Jane Kirby, Meredith's characters and their relationships reflect his idea that the state of marriage mirrors and influences the state of society. In each case the undisciplined passions of the principals destroy either the marriage or the dignity of an individual; the implication is always there that a society that permits or fosters such behavior is itself at fault and in need of correction. The positive characters are those who are able to renounce themselves for the sake of others or who at least learn the value of renunciation in the course of their struggles. Carl Ketcham, writing about "The Tale of Chloe," makes the following observation about some of Meredith's characters. Chloe is close kin to Meredith's

other heroines who follow the guidance of their natural selves, their blood, rather than convention or sentiment. They are not at the outset his wisest women. Often enough their choices are rash and, in a conventional, sentimental world, lead to personal disaster. Then the strength of the heart reveals itself: it becomes the stoical strength of disciplined renunciation [*italics mine*] and altruism. We see varieties of the pattern in Sandra Belloni, Dahlia Fleming, Juliana Bonner, and (perhaps in its fullest development as a type) Carinthia Jane Kirby.¹⁸⁰

In Goethe's view, according to Vietor, "man is the being that is expected to renounce." Die Wahlverwandtschaften is the "glorification" of the principle of renunciation, of the individual's effort, here portrayed in Ottilie's struggle with herself, to turn "the bestial and destructive traits in" himself "into civilizing forces": "Renunciation means for [Goethe] voluntary restriction," "the foundation of all discipline," the first step the individual must take toward bringing "himself into agreement with the moral order of the world, while belonging of necessity

to Nature and the social order."¹⁸¹ It is no mere coincidence that the subtitle of one of Goethe's last works, Wilhelm Meisters Wanderjahre (1821-1829), is Die Entsagenden—"The Renunciants." Needless to say, the primary concept behind all this is that which is also characteristic of Meredith: the concept that man is a part of Nature, that he is subject to her laws and must make his life and laws commensurate with hers.

Another significant reference to Goethe occurs in a letter dated April 5, 1877, to John Morley:

I have read Das Göttliche this morning, and with a feeling of new strength, which is like conception in the brain. This is the very spirit of Goethe. I have many times come in contact with it and been ennobled. Fault of mine, if not more! This high discernment, this noblest of unconsidered utterance, this is the Hymn for men. This is to be really prophet-like. All other prophecy is insolence.

. . . after midnight I sat and thought of Göthe: and of the sage in him, and the youth. And, somewhat in his manner, the enclosed came of it It was written off before I went to bed, and has only the merit of exactly hitting its mark. I feel it this morning a poor return to make to you for Das Göttliche.¹⁸²

Because I do not recall that any of Meredith's biographers or critics have done so, I shall include both Goethe's poem and the "enclosed" at this point.

Edel sei der Mensch,
Hilfreich und gut!
Denn Das allein
Unterscheidet ihn
Von allen Wesen,
Die wir Kennen.

Heil den unbekannten
Höheren Wesen,
Die wir ahnen!
Ihnen gleiche der Mensch;
Sein Beispiel lehr' uns
Jene glauben.

Denn unführend
Ist die Natur;
Es leuchtet die Sonne
Ueber Bö's und Gute,
Und dem Verbrecher

Glänzen, wie dem Besten,
Der Mond und die Sterne.

Wind und Ströme,
Donner und Hagel
Rauschen ihren Weg
Und ergreifen
Vorüber eilend
Einen um den Andern.

Auch so das Glück
Tappt unter die Menge,
Fasst bald des Knaben
Löckige Unschuld,
Bald auch den kahlen
Schuldigen Scheitel.

Nach ewigen, ehrnen,
Grossen Gesetzen
Müssen wir alle
Unseres Daseins
Kreise vollenden.

Nur allein der Mensch
Vermag das Unmögliche:
Er unterscheidet,
Wählet und richtet;
Er kann dem Augenblick
Dauer verleihen.

Er allein darf
Dem Guten lohnen,
Den Bosen strafen,
Heilen und retten,
Alles Irrende, Schweifende
Nützlich verbinden.

Und wir verehren
Die Unsterblichen,
Als wären sie Menschen,
Thäten im Grossen,
Was der Beste im Kleinen
Thut oder möchte.

Der edle Mensch
Sei hilfreich und gut!
Unermüdet schaff' er
Das Nützliche, Rechte,
Sei uns ein Vorbild
Jener geahneten Wesen!¹⁸³

It seems clear enough that, for Goethe, it is man who provides the image of the godly that he worships; that man must provide the feeling,

the justice, the distinctions, the salvation that Nature does not provide along with the "Grossen Gesetzen" that govern all things and beings (see above, p. 190). Man must work at being a living being, Goethe seems to say, instead of waiting for the necessities of life, both personal and social, to be provided for him by a relatively indifferent Nature. That such an idea should appeal so strongly to Meredith is hardly surprising, partly because of the total picture he had of human life as a constant task set before man and partly because, as he tells Dr. Anders in 1906, he was long under the strong influence of Goethe.

The response that Meredith made to his reading of "Das Göttliche" in 1877 follows:

MENTOR AND PUPILS

Mentor

Be warned of steps retrieved in pain.

Pupils

We have strength, we have blood, we are young[.]

Mentor

Youth sows the links, man wears the chain.

Pupils

Shall a sweet lyric cease to be sung?

Mentor

The song is short, the travail long.

Pupils

Shall the morning brood over her grave?

Mentor

Forge weapons now to meet the throng.

Pupils

There's a bird flying white o'er the wave.

Mentor

The torrent of the blood control.

Pupils

'Tis a steed bounding whither we will.

Mentor

In more than name discern the soul.

Pupils

There is Love like a light on the hill.

Mentor

That light of Love is fleeting fire.

Pupils

In the deep sea of Love let us dive.

Mentor

The test of Love is in the lyre.

Pupils

Give us Love, and the lyre is alive.

Mentor

The chords are snapped by passion's touch.

Pupils

She is there, by the tall laurel-rose.

Mentor

You sway the staff--you grasp the crutch.

Pupils

She is beckoning: who shall oppose?

Mentor

Behold a giant in his prime.

Pupils

On her breasts are the beams of the day.

Mentor

A cripple he, surprised by Time!

Pupils

She has loosened her girdle: give way!¹⁸⁴

It seems fairly obvious that Meredith's point is the contrast between the Mentor's experienced view of life as requiring effort and work and the pupils' youthful enthusiasm for life and their inability or unwillingness to take into account the Mentor's warning, which evidently grows out of Goethe's portrait of man's role in "Das Göttliche."

Another well from which Meredith drew for his knowledge and appreciation of Goethe is the biographical volume usually referred to as Conversations with Eckermann, which Meredith described in a letter to Miss Louisa Lawrence in 1883 as "always interesting and instructive to me." Professor Cline's note to the letter points out that Meredith read the Conversations "in both German and English" and that it "was one of [Meredith's] favorite books."¹⁸⁵ Perhaps it was recommended to him by Carlyle, for in another letter of 1883 to Miss Lawrence, Meredith wrote, "I read the papers again and again, and acknowledge, as Carlyle said to me, that Göthe is the pattern for all who would have a directing hold of themselves."¹⁸⁶ And in 1900, during his correspondence with Lady Ulrica Duncombe, Meredith refers to the Conversations twice, recommending the volume to his young friend. It seems clear that the Conversations were frequently in Meredith's hands, perhaps from as early as 1859 or 1860, and definitely between 1883 and 1900.

Reading through the Conversations is often, to one well versed in Meredith, like listening to Meredith himself. Consider the following brief and limited extracts on subjects about which Meredith also expresses himself, beginning with Molière and Menander, the poets whom Meredith places at the head of the list in the "Essay on the Idea of Comedy":

"Molière . . . is so great, that one is astonished anew every time one reads him I read some pieces of Molière's every year For we little men are not able to retain the greatness of such things within ourselves; we must therefore return to them from time to time, and renew our impressions."

[Molière is] "a genuine man; that is the proper term. There is nothing distorted about him. He ruled the manners of his day Molière chastised men by drawing them just as they were."

"I have known and loved Molière . . . from my youth, and have learned from him during my whole life. I never fail to read some of his plays every year, that I may keep up a constant intercourse with what is excellent. It is not merely the perfectly artistic treatment which delights me; but particularly the amiable nature, the highly formed mind, of the poet. There is in him a grace and a feeling for the decorous, and a tone of good society, which his innate beautiful nature could only attain by daily intercourse with the most eminent men of his age."¹⁸⁷

"I know no one after Sophocles . . . , whom I love so well [as Menander]. He is thoroughly pure, great, and cheerful, and his grace is unattainable. It is certainly to be lamented that we possess so little of him, but that little is invaluable, and highly instructive to gifted men."

"I look upon this great Greek [Menander] as the only man who could be compared to Molière."¹⁸⁸

One is tempted to suggest that Meredith might well have imbibed his admiration for and opinion of both Molière and Menander at least in part from Goethe, for Meredith's comments on both poets are close in tone and content to Goethe's: however, I shall not repeat the quotations from the "Essay" that refer to Molière (see above, p. 172 ff).

Goethe and Meredith also share opinions about the reception of their works by their respective audiences. Goethe makes the following observation to Eckermann:

"People were never thoroughly contented with me, but always wished me otherwise than it has pleased God to make me. They were also seldom contented with my productions. When I had long exerted my whole soul to favor the world with a new work, it still desired that I should thank it into the bargain for considering the work enduring. If any one praised me, I was not allowed, in self-congratulation, to receive it as a well-merited tribute; but people expected from me some modest expression, humbly setting forth the total unworthiness of my person and my work. However, my nature opposed this; and I should have been a miserable hypocrite, if I had so tried to lie and dissemble. Since I was strong enough to show myself in my whole truth, just as I felt, I was deemed proud, and am considered so to the present day"

"My works cannot be popular. He who thinks and strives to make them so is in error [the reference is to Carlyle's essays on and translations of Goethe]. They are not written for the multitude, but only for individuals who desire something congenial, and whose aims are like my own."¹⁸⁹

Is it possible that Meredith had Goethe's statements in mind when he made some of his own about his relationship with the public?

"Who really cares for what I say? The English people know nothing of me. There has always been something antipathetic between them and me. With book after book it was always the same outcry of censure and disapproval. The first time or two I minded it; then I determined to disregard what people said altogether, and since then I have written only to please myself."

[To André Raffalovich, March 16, 1883:] You are kind enough to think well of what I do in that way [i. e., in prose], but our public here thinks not at all, and as I am just as indifferent to its tastes and opinions, I shall be some time before I provoke it to half-lift an eyelid.

[To Anna C. Steele, October 4, 1895:] I write still, but read more, and hope my relations with the public are at an end. They were never pleasant to me.

[To Mrs. Ross, July 24, 1898, in response to a request for an introduction to her translation of General Della Roca's autobiography:] You are in error if you think my name carries weight. It is always "Meredithian" to the English--that is, obscure, eccentric, and the like. So I never see my name in print without displeasure.¹⁹⁰

There is not necessarily, of course, any connection between the great German's view of life with the public and Meredith's conception of his own problems. But it seems possible to allow that Goethe's words echo in Meredith's, perhaps because Meredith so thoroughly venerated Goethe that he felt it permissible to emulate him in other matters than

philosophy, and because he was reading in the Conversations constantly during the period in which he made these comments about the reading public.

There are Meredithian comments upon Goethe's Iphigenie auf Tauris, Tasso, and Werther--comments questioning the value of Goethe's classicism in the first, the use of the dramatic form in the second, and the source of the last: "Can you read Werther with pride in the author? I should detest the work if I did not so much despise it. Werther sprang from no conception, only from the impulsion of the youthful Dämonisch in Göthe; and that, firing the blood of the world, went the round of it."¹⁹¹ (In the light of this last remark, one can only conclude that the comment made by Adam Brendel and quoted by Guy B. Petter would have irritated Meredith considerably: "'Just as Goethe went through a subjective Werther period, rich with inner experience, and then gradually threw it off, so must there have been in Meredith's early life Promethean spells of wilfulness and suffering On every page [of Meredith] we may see how the author handles these spiritual contests with the loving sympathy of one who has fought the battle out in himself.'")¹⁹²

But the traces of definite connections between specific works and words of Goethe and Meredith's appreciation of and derivations from them peter out and the detective on the trail of that "most enduring" influence in Meredith's works must turn to more a speculative approach than he has thus far needed to use. In the 1925 article by Maria Krusemeyer summarized by Guy B. Petter, for which Miss Krusemeyer gathered up "all the principal references to Goethe which are to be found in Meredith's novels and in his letters," are to be seen connections

between Goethe's Wilhelm Meister and Meredith's Richard Feverel (and, one ought to add, his Evan Harrington and Harry Richmond: all three are examples of the influence of Goethe's Bildungsroman upon the development of the novel); between the "Man of Fifty" in Wilhelm Meisters Wanderjahre and Meredith's incomplete story, "The Gentleman of Fifty and the Damsel of Nineteen"; between the pedagogical community in the Wanderjahre and Matey Weyburn's school in Switzerland at the close of Lord Ormont and His Aminta (although the school may owe more to Neuwied than to Goethe). Miss Krusemeyer, in Petter's redaction, makes comprehensive observations akin to some that I have made with, one hopes, less liberality: "Meredith's view of nature is like Goethe's, a feeling of the oneness of all life and movement in the world and in the heavens"; Goethe's comment in Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre, "'Be active,. . . activity is the first purpose of mankind,'" echoes throughout Meredith's work (and also through Carlyle's, another follower of the German's).¹⁹³

Other references to Goethean elements in Meredith's work include such items as Augustus Henry Able's finding echoes of Faust in the conversation between Harry Richmond and Temple as they travel through a forest in Germany and Walter F. Wright's asserting that Nataly Radnor's confession of love for Dartrey Fenellen is reminiscent of Charlotte's admission of affection for the Captain in Goethe's Die Wahlverwandtschaften.¹⁹⁴ This sort of link-finding might no doubt go on indefinitely, finding Goethean traces in the name of the Princess Ottilie, in Harry Richmond--the source being, perhaps, Goethe's heroine, Ottilie, in Die Wahlverwandtschaften. But this procedure is not relevant to a quest for the sources of Meredith's philosophy, a quest that has been carried out by James Stone, for example, in his article, "Meredith and Goethe," which

draws primarily upon the Conversations with Eckermann and upon Meredith's poetry, and which establishes links between Goethe's view of man and life and Meredith's, links that are substantially those I have already suggested. There is no need to recapitulate Stone's tracing to Goethe Meredith's ideas about the unity of all creation, the necessity of conforming to nature's law and of acceptance of the fact of change, the uselessness of asking questions that cannot and probably will not be answered, and the "ethical evolution" that results "primarily [from] man's willingness to work without demanding personal immortality as a reward for his toil." Stone, it seems to me, rightly makes the connections that can be made between Goethe's views and Meredith's, including the point "that Goethe . . . was the inspirer of Meredith's unscientific [read unDarwinian?] concept of evolution."¹⁹⁵

On the basis of this survey of Goethe and his probable influence on Meredith, it seems reasonable to assert that Meredith was not misleading Dr. Anders or misstating the case when he described the great German poet as the "most enduring" influence upon him. Perhaps the only reservation that need be expressed is one that a friend of mine voiced when we discussed this section of my paper: Goethe was, in a way, himself the "seed-bed" that Carlyle borrows from Goethe as the epigraph to Sartor Resartus and was a permeating influence on the nineteenth century as a whole. Meredith's thinking is that of his own time, colored as it was on the whole by the Romantic idea and by scientific progress, but it is also individual thought that, as someone has remarked, stretches back into the eighteenth century for its insistence upon reason and common sense and moves forward into the twentieth century for its

concern with psychological analysis and comprehension of human motives and behavior. I do not claim for Meredith the title of philosopher or of originator of a unique Weltanschauung, but I do believe that Meredith held to an eclectic philosophy of life that was distinctively his--a philosophy that idiosyncratically and optimistically looked to man's self-directed evolution, in partnership with Nature, as the means by which mankind would move forward and upward to a better world than the one Meredith knew.

FOOTNOTES, CHAPTER II

¹Priestley, p. 70.

²This summary statement is drawn from the following sources (in addition, of course, to my acquaintance with the content and main thrust of Meredith's work): Kelvin, pp. 73-75, 78, 100, 114-118, 128, 147-163; Curle, pp. 23-24, 43, 58-59, 64-65; Henderson, pp. 57, 193-194, 215-216; Cunliffe, pp. 21-23, 26; Hearn, pp. 362-363; Beach, pp. 191-193; Evans, pp. 170-172; Petter, pp. 31-33, 90, 120-122, 146-147, 290-294; Photiades, pp. 198, 202-203, 212-213, 220; Priestley, pp. 61-74, 77-78, 81-82; Trevelyan, The Poetry and Philosophy of George Meredith, pp. 104-106, 108-109, 114-116, 118-119, 177-178, 200; Colvin, Memories and Notes, p. 186.

³Trevelyan, Selected Poetical Works of George Meredith, p. 183, note 1.

⁴Meredith, "Earth and Man," Poems, II (ME XXV), 97.

⁵Ibid., and "The Woods of Westermains," Poems, II (ME XXV), 39ff.

⁶Kelvin, pp. 116, 118. See also pp. 112, 120, 121, 126, 162-163, 175.

⁷Meredith, "The Lark Ascending," Poems, II (ME XXV), 69.

⁸Ibid., "The Woods of Westermains," Poems, II (ME XXV), 43.

- ⁹Ibid., "Seed-Time," Poems, II (ME XXV), 210.
- ¹⁰Ibid., "Hard Weather," Poems, II (ME XXV), 213.
- ¹¹Ibid., Letters, p. 218.
- ¹²Kelvin, p. 121.
- ¹³Meredith, "The Woods of Westermain," Poems, II (ME XXV), 43.
- ¹⁴Kelvin, p. 123.
- ¹⁵Meredith, "Earth and Man," Poems, II (ME XXV), 96.
- ¹⁶Ibid., "Seed-Time," Poems, II (ME XXV), 210.
- ¹⁷Cunliffe, p. 32.
- ¹⁸Morley, Recollections, I, 43. For other references to Meredith's support of woman's freedom, see Priestley, pp. 31, 133-134; Wright, pp. 21, 25-27; Butcher, p. 150; Petter, pp. 298-304.
- ¹⁹Meredith, "A Preaching from a Spanish Ballad," Poems, II (ME XXV), 139-143.
- ²⁰Hearn, pp. 331-333; see also Basil de Sélincourt (in Henderson), p. 272.
- ²¹Meredith, "Essay on the Idea of Comedy and the Uses of the Comic Spirit," Miscellaneous Prose (ME XXIII), 30-31.

²²Ibid., "A Ballad of Fair Ladies in Revolt," Poems, II (ME XXV), 110-112.

²³Ibid., Modern Love, Sonnet xlviii, Poems, I (ME XXIV), 228.

²⁴Ibid., "The Sage Enamoured and the Honest Lady," Poems, III (ME XXVI), 15-29. The quotations that follow appear on pages 26-27.

²⁵Trevelyan, The Poetry and Philosophy of George Meredith, pp. 64, 118-192. See also Armstrong, 359-361; Priestley, pp. 112-118; Beach, pp. 11-12, 14, 19-24; Stevenson, p. 213; Kelvin, pp. 102-103.

²⁶Meredith, "Essay on the Idea of Comedy . . .," Miscellaneous Prose (ME XXIII), 46-47.

²⁷Meredith, "Outside the Crowd," Poems, III (ME XXVI), 99. Cf. Forman, p. 149.

²⁸Meredith, "The Warning," Poems, III (ME XXVI), 99.

²⁹Ibid., "Solon," Poems, II (ME XXV), 196.

³⁰Lindsay, pp. 236-237. Cf. Meredith, "The Nuptials of Attila," Poems, II (ME XXV), 162-179.

³¹Harrison, "The Use of History," p. 15; "Some Great Books of History," pp. 79-80.

³²Martineau, pp. 25, 408, 413, 441, 459-460, 638, 740, 742-748.

³³Meredith, Odes in Contribution to the Song of French History, Poems, III (ME XXVI), 105-169. For the specific figures, see 106, 109-110, 114, 116, 156-162, 163.

³⁴Mill, p. 121.

³⁵Butcher, p. 117. See also Hammerton, p. 11.

³⁶Ellis (1919), p. 234.

³⁷Trevelyan, Selected Poetical Works of George Meredith, p. xii; Stevenson, p. [85].

³⁸Lindsay, pp. 115, 7, 179 (quoting from Meredith's letter to Maxse, April 25, 1866, Letters, p. 178), 195-196 (with reference to "Up to Midnight," Meredith's dialogues in The Graphic, December 1872, January 1873, in a chapter Lindsay entitles "The Radical Revolutionary").

³⁹Hammerton, pp. 11, 13, 14. See also Kelvin, p. 13.

⁴⁰Sassoon, p. 66.

⁴¹Stevenson, pp. [85], 171.

⁴²Lindsay, pp. 101, 219 (note).

⁴³*Ibid.*, pp. 116-118.

⁴⁴*Ibid.*, p. 220.

⁴⁵Kelvin, p. 215.

⁴⁶*Ibid.*, pp. 13-14.

⁴⁷ Ibid., pp. 219, 220 (note 16 to Chapter I); Lindsay, p. 117.

See Meredith, "Lines to a Friend Visiting America," Poems, II (ME XXV), 9.

⁴⁸ Kelvin, p. 220 (note 17 to Chapter I).

⁴⁹ Ibid., pp. 3-4.

⁵⁰ Philip Bailey, pp. 52-53.

⁵¹ Eiseley, Chapters I-VII, pp. 1-204.

⁵² Priestley, pp. 10-11.

⁵³ Walzel, pp. 21-22, 239-240, 241.

⁵⁴ Tymms, pp. 27, 16.

⁵⁵ Walzel, pp. 78-79-80, 82.

⁵⁶ Richter, Titan, I, 362-368, *passim*. The evidence for Meredith's acquaintance with Richter is relatively slight. Edward V. Brewer (q.v.) asserts, on the basis of similarities in their theories of comedy, that Meredith knew at least Chapters VI-IX of Richter's Vorschule der Aesthetik. Meredith mentions the "hero" of Richter's Flower, Fruit, and Thorn Pieces . . . in the "Essay on the Idea of Comedy" (Miscellaneous Prose (ME XXIII), 29). Stevenson and Lindsay accept Richter's stylistic influence on Meredith's novels without going into much detail on the subject (pp. 61 and 98-99. respectively).

⁵⁷ Tymms, pp. 8, 24.

⁵⁸ Ibid., pp. 2-3; Lindsay, pp. 27-28.

⁵⁹ This brief description of English Romanticism is drawn from notes taken in a graduate course in Romantic Poetry given by Professor Wendell Stacy Johnson at the City University of New York, Spring Semester, 1965.

⁶⁰ Cooper, p. 12.

⁶¹ Meredith, "The Poetry of Chaucer," etc., Poems, I (ME XXIV), 27-31; cf. Forman, p. 6, for reference to Poems, 1851.

⁶² Bartlett, typescript.

⁶³ Ibid. Cf. Meredith, Poems, II (ME XXV), 219, for the lines from "The Southwester."

⁶⁴ Bartlett, typescript. Cf. Meredith, "Night of Frost in May," Poems, III (ME XXVI), 77, and "Milton," 251-252; Wordsworth, pp. 102, 244. For the echoes of Wordsworth in Meredith's "Milton," see also Lindsay, p. 336.

⁶⁵ Trevelyan, The Poetry and Philosophy of George Meredith, pp. 113-116, passim. See also Kelvin, pp. 149-150.

⁶⁶ Sassoon, p. 166.

⁶⁷ Lindsay, pp. 50-51; Meredith, "South-West Wind in the Woodland," Poems, I (ME XXIV), 44-45.

⁶⁸ Kelvin, pp. 149-150.

⁶⁹ Ibid., p. 10.

⁷⁰ Ibid., p. 68.

⁷¹See my unpublished Master's thesis, "George Meredith's Odes in Contribution to the Song of French History," pp. 26 and note 60, pp. 188-189; 32-33 and note 67, p. 189; 52-53 and note 17, p. 192; 56-58 and note 20, p. 192; 80 and note 24, pp. 194-195; 85-93 and notes 30, 31, and 33, pp. 196-197; 115 and note 53, p. 199.

⁷²Trevelyan, The Poetry and Philosophy of George Meredith, p. 52.

⁷³Meredith, "The Patriot Engineer," Poems, I (ME XXIV), 231; "England before the Storm," Poems, III (ME XXVI), 140; "At the Close," Poems, III (ME XXVI), 178.

⁷⁴A convenient summary of Wordsworth's political opinions exists in The Statemanship of Wordsworth by A. B. Dicey (London: Oxford University Press, 1917), to which I had recourse before summarizing Wordsworth's main concerns. For Wordsworth's "Lines on the Expected Invasion, 1803," see Wordsworth, p. 246. Meredith's concern for France under bondage to Bonapartism appears most strongly in "France, December 1870" and in "Alsace-Lorraine" (1898).

⁷⁵Wright, p. 83; Meredith, "Love in the Valley," 1851 version, Various Readings and Bibliography (ME XXVII), 280-283; 1878 version, Poems, II (ME XXV), 80ff; Shelley, pp. 16, 579, 591-593, respectively.

⁷⁶Bartlett, typescript; Meredith, "Swathed round in mist," Poems, I (ME XXIV), 92. Professor Bartlett connects "the winged seed" in lines 122 and 177 of Meredith's "Ode to the Spirit of Earth in Autumn" Poems, I (ME XXIV), 257, 259, with "the winged seeds" in Shelley's "Ode to the West Wind," line 7, p. 577. Miss Bartlett also traces (typescript) Meredith's

image of Day as Night's "mantled sister" ("The Night-Walk," Poems, III (ME XXVI), 175) to Shelley's similar picture in "To Night," where the speaker suggests that Night should "Wrap [his] form in a mantle gray" (line 8, p. 636, in Shelley).

⁷⁷Shelley, pp. 533, 535, respectively.

⁷⁸Sassoon, p. 203; Meredith, "The South-Wester," Poems, II (ME XXV), 214-219; Shelley, pp. 600-602.

⁷⁹Meredith, Letters, p. 34. In unpublished letters in Professor Cline's typescript, Meredith refers to Shelley's Prometheus Unbound and to a performance of The Cenci by the Shelley Society on May 7, 1886, during which Meredith sat with James Russell Lowell and left with Lowell and Henry James.

⁸⁰Meredith, Letters, p. 49.

⁸¹*Ibid.*, p. 68. The probable date is fixed by Professor Cline, typescript.

⁸²Cameron, p. 37; Shelley, p. ix, for the quotation from Mrs. Shelley's 1839 Preface.

⁸³Shelley, pp. 192-194, *passim*.

⁸⁴Cameron, p. 63.

⁸⁵Meredith, "The Lark Ascending," Poems, II (ME XXV), 67-70; Shelley, pp. 602-603.

⁸⁶Lindsay, pp. 257-258.

⁸⁷Kelvin, p. 118. Kelvin makes the bird feminine, although the poem clearly begins with "He."

⁸⁸Bloom, p. 319.

⁸⁹Ibid., p. 321.

⁹⁰Lindsay, p. 258.

⁹¹In his paraphrase of "The Lark Ascending," Constantin Photiadēs makes no mention of a poet (pp. 167-168). Mrs. Henderson, dealing with lines 113-122, writes that the men in lines 99-110 "are the true singers, the true soarers; and it is only because here and there he sees such an one among us, that a poet, worthy the name, can sing at all" (p. 203). The pronouns in the closing lines of the poem that seem to support Mrs. Henderson's "poet" are "me, or mine," in line 113: Meredith is perhaps referring in this way to poets in general. However, it seems to me that Meredith is not necessarily limiting the inspiration of great men and the lark's song to poets; he could be speaking of men in general.

⁹²Wright, p. 112.

⁹³Meredith, Letters, p. 165. For the corrected date, see Cline, typescript.

⁹⁴Meredith, "Manfred," Poems, II (ME XXV), 160; Bartlett, typescript.

⁹⁵Trevelyan, Selected Poetical Works of George Meredith, note to "Manfred," p. 184.

⁹⁶Meredith, Beauchamp's Career, I (ME XI), 38-39. The passage in Beauchamp came to my attention through Wright's discussion of the novel, pp. 104-105.

⁹⁷Meredith, One of Our Conquerors (ME XVII), 338-339; Wright, p. 131.

⁹⁸Wright, p. 133.

⁹⁹Stevenson, pp. 44-45; Lindsay, p. 58.

¹⁰⁰Able, pp. 16-17. See also pp. 11-13 for summarizing comments concerning Peacock's influence on Meredith. For other views on the connection between Meredith and Peacock, see Ellis (1919), p. 323; (1920, p. 78; Butcher, p. 92; Sassoon, pp. 12, 148-149; Priestley, pp. 15-16; Stevenson, pp. 44-45; Lindsay, pp. 54-56.

¹⁰¹Able, p. 52.

¹⁰²*Ibid.*, pp. 53-54.

¹⁰³*Ibid.*, pp. 37-38; 42-45, *passim*.

¹⁰⁴*Ibid.*, pp. 88, 89-91, 97.

¹⁰⁵Quoted in Stevenson, p. 27.

¹⁰⁶Horne, Orion, "Introduction" by Eric Partridge, p. xx.

¹⁰⁷*Ibid.*, pp. 14, 15, 50. Page references to Orion will hereafter be given in the body of the paper.

¹⁰⁸Horne, Orion, "Commentary" to 1872 edition quoted by Partridge, "Introduction," p. xxvii.

¹⁰⁹Lindsay, pp. 66-67.

¹¹⁰Carlyle, Sartor Resartus, p. 197.

¹¹¹Horne, A New Spirit of the Age, pp. 433-434, 435.

¹¹²Ibid., p. 439.

¹¹³Meredith, Letters, p. 333.

¹¹⁴Lindsay, pp. 72-73.

¹¹⁵Ibid., pp. 89-90 and note.

¹¹⁶Carlyle, Past and Present, p. 192; quoted in part by Lindsay, p. 98.

¹¹⁷Ibid., p. 34; quoted in part by Lindsay, p. 98.

¹¹⁸Meredith, The Egoist, I (ME XIII), 275; Lindsay, p. 240.

¹¹⁹Ibid., 156; Lindsay, p. 240.

¹²⁰Kelvin, pp. 246, 97-99.

¹²¹Ibid., p. 99.

¹²²Meredith, Letters, pp. 486, 487, 488.

¹²³Carlyle, The Correspondence of Thomas Carlyle and Ralph Waldo Emerson, I, 25.

¹²⁴See, for example, The Times (London), November 12, 1898, p. 10.

¹²⁵Carlyle, On Heroes, p. 1; "On History," Critical and Miscellaneous Essays, II, 86.

¹²⁶Carlyle, On Heroes, p. 189; Meredith, "The Revolution," Poems III (ME XXVI), 115. I have not thought it germane to include at length parallel passages in Carlyle's The French Revolution, which Meredith read (Letters, p. 200), and Meredith's "The Revolution"; for such parallels, see my unpublished Master's thesis on the Odes, pp. 40, 42-43, 56-59, 71, 72, 134.

¹²⁷Meredith, Letters, pp. 173-174.

¹²⁸*Ibid.*, pp. 198-199.

¹²⁹*Ibid.*, p. 200.

¹³⁰*Ibid.*, p. 260.

¹³¹*Ibid.*, p. 265.

¹³²*Ibid.*, pp. 332-333.

¹³³Lindsay, pp. 31, 44.

¹³⁴*Ibid.*, pp. 43-44.

¹³⁵Philip Bailey, pp. 20, 30-31. Henceforth the references to Festus will be given by page number in the text.

¹³⁶Meredith, "To Alex. Smith, the 'Glasgow Poet,' on His Sonnet to 'Fame,'" Poems, I (ME XXIV), 164; Smith, "Sonnet to 'Fame'," Poems, p. 181.

¹³⁷Smith, "A Life-Drama," Poems, p. 6.

¹³⁸Ibid., pp. 99ff., 133ff., 143, 148, 156, 159.

¹³⁹Dobell, II, 3. Subsequent references to Balder will be given by page number in the text.

¹⁴⁰Buckley, The Victorian Temper, p. 57.

¹⁴¹Meredith, Letters, p. 578. In the "Essay on the Idea of Comedy," Gibbon appears as an example of irony, "the humour of satire," of the variety that is "sedate . . . with a malicious" object ("Essay," Miscellaneous Prose (ME XXIII), 43).

¹⁴²Meredith, Letters, p. 507; Joyce, pp. 84-85.

¹⁴³Meredith, Letters, p. 542.

¹⁴⁴Meredith, Poems, II (ME XXV), 162-179; Forman, p. 81; Bartlett, typescript.

¹⁴⁵Joyce, pp. 121-122; Gibbon, V, 242-243; Black, pp. 158-159.

¹⁴⁶Joyce, p. 122. There is some temptation to speculate upon a connection between Gibbon's observation (I, 8) that the Roman emperors "preserved peace by a constant preparation for war; and while justice regulated their conduct, they announced to the nations on their confines that they were as little disposed to endure as to offer an injury," and Meredith's conviction that England should inaugurate various programs amounting to "a constant preparation for war." In his poetry--"On the Danger of War" (1883), "To Colonel Charles" (1883), "England before the Storm" (1891), "Outside the Crowd" (1896), and others--and in his novels,

particularly in Beauchamp's Career and One of Our Conquerors, Meredith insists upon the necessity of preparedness for war as a means of ensuring peace. Meredith's letters also contain comments on the matter: in 1870 he wrote to Maxse about "The idea of England with an army at her disposal somewhat less than that of Wurtemberg, not half so well drilled to the tasks of modern warfare, besotted on drugged beer, incapable of marching, badly officered, brainless from the drummer to the Chief--Lord in Heaven! What an idea!" (Cline, typescript). Sidney Colvin (Memories and Notes, pp. 178-179) recalls that "A very frequent subject of talk between us was on the duty and necessity for England of the obligation to national service. [Meredith] conceived military training to be a thing desirable in every state," arguing "that a more sternly trained race like the Germans would surely win against us and deserve to win." But the connection between Gibbon's observation on and implied approval of the deterrent of preparedness and Meredith's feelings is a thin one, at best.

¹⁴⁷"Barthold Georg Niebuhr," Encyclopedia Britannica, XIX, 668.

¹⁴⁸"Karsten Niebuhr," Encyclopedia Britannica, XIX, 669.

¹⁴⁹"Barthold Georg Niebuhr."

¹⁵⁰"Karsten Niebuhr."

¹⁵¹Bartlett, typescript; Plutarch, pp. 97-117.

¹⁵²Tyrell, p. 180.

¹⁵³Forman, p. 122.

¹⁵⁴Meredith, "Essay on the Idea of Comedy . . . ," Miscellaneous Prose (ME XXIII), 27, 37, 38-39. Hereafter, references to the "Essay" will be made by page number in the text.

¹⁵⁵Meredith, "Ode to the Comic Spirit," Poems, III (ME XXVI), 56-67. Passages and phrases quoted appear on 56, 62-63, 64, 65.

Molière was not, of course, the sole source of Meredith's "Essay" considered as a theory of comedy or an explanation of why comedy is comic. As Edward V. Brewer has demonstrated in his study of "The Influence of Jean Paul Richter on George Meredith's Conception of the Comic," Meredith was evidently acquainted with at least Chapters VI-IX of Richter's Vorschule der Aesthetik, in which Richter explains how the observer arrives at his appreciation of a given situation as comic. But my concern here is with the role of Meredith's idea of comedy as part of his philosophy of life and man as distinct from its existence as a theory of use to registrars of the comic.

¹⁵⁶Meredith, Letters, p. 578. Stone, in his article on "Meredith and Goethe," 159-160, imputes Meredith's conclusions about the real and the ideal directly to Goethe: "Goethe's faith in the unity of the real and the ideal, Goethe's belief that the ideal must be based upon the real, was the foundation of [Meredith's] whole philosophy of Earth" It seems to me that Stone's statement is, in view of my summary statement about Goethe, both too simple and too broad.

¹⁵⁷Arber, 119; Viëtor, p. 81.

¹⁵⁸Arber, 123-124.

¹⁵⁹Viëtor, p. 81.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid., pp. 155-156.

¹⁶¹ Ibid., p. 35.

¹⁶² Roppen, pp. 219-220.

¹⁶³ Viëtor, pp. 128-131, 134, passim.

¹⁶⁴ Goethe, Faust, p. 343.

¹⁶⁵ Viëtor, p. 135.

¹⁶⁶ Quoted, *ibid.*, pp. 136-137.

¹⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 142.

¹⁶⁸ Atkins, p. 251.

¹⁶⁹ Goethe, Faust, pp. 407, 421; Atkins, p. 267.

¹⁷⁰ Meredith, Letters, pp. 156-157. The date 1864 in the published Letters is revised to 1862 by Professor Cline, typescript.

¹⁷¹ Meredith, "Dirge in Woods," Poems, II (ME XXV), 240; Goethe, "Wandrers Nachtlied," Poetische Meisterwerke, p. 26. The probable connection between the two poems is pointed out by Professor Bartlett. Cf. Petter, p. 130.

¹⁷² Atkins, p. 273; Viëtor, pp. 28, 51; Goethe, Conversations with Eckermann, p. 112.

¹⁷³ Goethe, Conversations with Eckermann, p. 117.

¹⁷⁴ Viëtor, pp. 11, 56-57. See also Petter, pp. 182-183.

¹⁷⁵Meredith, Letters, p. 525; Stevenson, p. 74; Lindsay, p. 97.

¹⁷⁶Meredith, Letters, pp. 168-169.

¹⁷⁷Ibid., p. 525.

¹⁷⁸Goethe, Elective Affinities, pp. 71, v.

¹⁷⁹Ibid., p. viii.

¹⁸⁰Ketcham, 238.

¹⁸¹Viëtor, pp. 148-149, passim.

¹⁸²Meredith, Letters, pp. 274-275.

¹⁸³Goethe, "Das Göttliche," Poetische Meisterwerke, pp. 126-127.

The following is my own prose translation of Goethe's poem:

Let man be noble, benevolent, and good! For that alone distinguishes him from all beings whom we know.

Long live the unknown higher beings whom we surmise! Mankind resembles them; his example teaches us to believe in those.

For nature is unfeeling; the sun shines on the bad and the good, and the moon and the stars shine upon the criminal as upon the best man.

Wind and rivers, thunder and hail roar on their way and move hastily ever, one after the other.

Just so, fate gropes among the crowd, seizes now the curly innocence of the boy, now the guilty bald crown.

According to eternal, immutable great laws, we must all complete the circle of our existence.

Only mankind is capable of the impossible: he makes distinctions, chooses and directs; he can bestow duration upon the moment.

He alone may reward the good, chastise, cure and save the wicked, unite usefully all the erring, straying ones.

And we worship the immortals as if they were men, as if they did in great things what the best man does or would like to do in small things.

Let noble man be benevolent and good! Unweariedly he does the useful, the right; be to us a preview of those surmised beings.

¹⁸⁴Meredith, Letters, pp. 275-277.

¹⁸⁵Cline, typescript.

¹⁸⁶Ibid.

¹⁸⁷Goethe, Conversations with Eckermann, pp. 125-126, 137, 182-183.

¹⁸⁸Ibid., pp. 125, 183.

¹⁸⁹Ibid., pp. 50-51, 274-275.

¹⁹⁰Cunliff, p. 17; Cline, typescript.

¹⁹¹Cline, typescript; Meredith, Letters, p. 516. See also Meredith's review, "Mr. Robert Lytton's Poems," Miscellaneous Prose (ME XXIII), 105, 108, 111, for other references to Goethe.

¹⁹²Petter, p. 177.

¹⁹³Ibid., pp. 127-130, *passim*.

¹⁹⁴Able, pp. 17-18 (cf. Meredith, Harry Richmond I (ME IX), 176); Wright, p. 119.

¹⁹⁵Stone, particularly 159-160, 161-163, 163 (for the quotation). For comments on Goethe's avoidance of "vain questioning," see Viëtor, pp. 37, 103, and Meredith, "The Question Whither," Poems, II (ME XXV), 236. Cf. Roppen, pp. 219-220, for the view that Meredith was (apparently) a unique evolutionist who owed nothing to Goethe, Lamarck, or Darwin.

CHAPTER III

THE SHAPING OF A POET

For a poet who declared to his friend John Morley that "it's my nature to sing," Meredith made relatively few statements about his idea of the role of the poet--at least, in terms that indicate clearly that he was talking about an abstract view of the poet as a type or category of man.¹ But it is possible, from various pronouncements Meredith made throughout his life, to cull hints that reveal how he saw his vocation as poet, what should be the inspiration and content of poetry, and what should be the attitude of the poet as he writes.

What seems to me to be the earliest source for such hints is the unsigned 1852 article in Fraser's Magazine on "Austrian Poets," an article identified as Meredith's by David Bonnell Green (see above, p. 53 and note). Here the young, just-published poet undertakes to survey the poetry of several famous and near-famous Austrian writers. Meredith was only twenty-four and had only begun his career as poet, facts that may perhaps excuse the somewhat pompous and pedantic tone that colors the article. A number of statements indicate that Meredith had thought about what the poet should use and how he should use it in composing his lines. First of all comes what Meredith calls "Suggestive power," which he describes as follows:

Suggestive power is a great and rare faculty. Among the greatest poets it exists in the greatest degree; for this it is which casts over the whole face of nature the 'consecration and the dream.' Shakspeare [sic] is full of it. So is Goethe. So are the epics of Coleridge. So are Wordsworth's great odes, some of his sonnets, many of his minor poems.

So is the poetry of Mr. Tennyson. And for this reason all great poets are invariably popular. They know the limits of human thought, and how, when that is reached, to turn the mind in upon itself. They know by their own experience the tenderest chords of the heart, and that, as with a harp, a delicate touch will make them vibrate longer and more melodiously than the rude, gusty, sweep of unskilled fingers, which certainly wakes up every emotion, but only to jar them altogether, and agitate them painfully. Moreover, without suggestive power, it is impossible to produce romantic feeling.²

It is easy to determine who Meredith's heroes are: Shakespeare, Goethe, Coleridge, Wordsworth, and Tennyson. And it is also easy to gather why Meredith's first volume of poems should have been full of delicate lyrics.

Meredith the young critic comments unfavorably upon the "melancholy manner" that mars Lenau's lyrics, "making reflections which destroy that repose of his pictures which, as an artist, he knew so well how to give" He praises Vogl for description that is "Pure spirited writing, free from mist and haze," that avoids the British lyrists' tendency, as Meredith sees it, to "Sentimentalize, philosophize,--do anything, in brief, but paint [his subjects, in this case gipsies] in their true colours." Indeed, observes the young critic, disagreeing somewhat with his mentor, R. H. Horne, on the merits of Festus,

English lyric poets have latterly taken to chant metaphysics. They soar up far beyond the common earth-singing lark, with its perpetual 'tirra-lirra.' They are anywhere, everywhere, and nowhere, as the author of Festus is accustomed to transport his reader, treating of everything, anything, and nothing, with excessive loquacity, and equal clearness. It seems that the death of Corydon and Thyrsis can no longer be concealed; and as the intellect as well as the necessity of the time has grown impatient of mere pastoral existences, our poets can scarcely be reproached in abandoning them, and having recourse to creations less mortal and more in spirit with the public taste, which, like Aladdin, loves its old lamp the better for feeding its temporal appetites than for the simple services it performed before endued with magic and the command of genii.³

What the new poet is looking for in verse is clarity of description akin to that of "the Dutch painters"; "musical feeling" hand in hand with "priestly dignity," "impassioned fervour," "subtle suggestiveness" (see

the first quotation from this article above), and the palpable feeling of the poem that it was "conceived completely, as true works of art must be, however minutely they are put together." Furthermore, he values the poet's ability to convey (albeit with moderation) to the reader that he takes it as "a privilege and a pleasure to walk God's earth, and delight in the fresh breath of nature as honestly and exultingly as though every draught of air that met [him] were from a wine-press." Indeed, the poet's inability to imbibe from his own surroundings the stuff from which to create poetry of this character should reveal to him that he "had better throw up the pen": pursuit of inspiration elsewhere is futile, "For . . . Pegasus, although a good animal for a steady canter down the high road of actualities, is, in default of such ground, gifted with wings, which he too often forgets to use or loses command over, when put in motion uninterruptedly as a hack; so that his ride, at howsoever good a pace he shall be going, and though he see much and say much, is deprived of the power to soar above the objects that surround him, surveys little and instructs less."⁴

This strikes me as an exalted view and a demanding definition of the art of poetry and the practices of the poet. Meredith seems to set quality above quantity, close observation and description of nature above "metaphysics," melody, genuine feeling, and unity of conception above philosophical content, closeness to nature above intellectual speculation. But the two ideals or goals touched upon in this early article that seem to have remained with Meredith to the end of his life are those he insisted upon to Sidney Colvin: "defining his own aims and ideals in verse," Colvin tells us, Meredith "repeated several times with insistence, 'Concentration and suggestion, Colvin, concentration and

suggestion, those are the things I care for and am always trying for in poetry."⁵ That he achieved them to a degree that almost makes his poetry unreadable will be demonstrated later in this paper.

The comment that the prolix and facile poet "instructs less" than little suggests that Meredith did have some notion that the poet was effectively a teacher, although the article under examination offers but few suggestions on that score: there is one segment in which Meredith scrutinizes Grillparzer's "Address to Field Marshal Radetsky" and concludes that the poet is one "of great genius" because he manages in this poem "to give [the Austrians] a rallying cry of union" against the nationalistic forces at work to separate them and thereby to conquer them.⁶ One might guess from this that Meredith would have conceded that the poet should address himself to issues of importance and to influencing his readers in one way or another.

Meredith evidently continued to write poetry between 1851 and the publication of Poems and 1855 and the publication of The Shaving of Shagpat. Lionel Stevenson offers in evidence a "notebook" of Meredith's presently in the Berg Collection at the New York Public Library. This "notebook" is in fact an interleaved copy of Poems of 1851: Meredith used the inserted pages to write out poems and ideas for poems. Although Professor Stevenson's description of the volume is a bit misleading, his description of the contents is helpful, beginning with the mention of "several" poems

that appeared anonymously in Household Words, and . . . others [that] were possibly contributed to obscurer periodicals where they have never been traced. The general level of the verse is mediocre. Some lyrics are charming enough, in a stereotyped style; but the more ambitious poems are deplorable. There are trite patriotic exhortations on the Crimean War, long narratives on classical and Oriental themes, half a dozen Arthurian pieces redolent of Tennyson, and even an "Ode on the Funeral

of Arthur, Duke of Wellington." [Professor Bartlett noted in her copy of Stevenson's biography that Meredith listed such a poem in the "Contents" but that the poem was apparently never written.] . . . When compared with the vastly fresher and more thoughtful work in his already published volume, these verses of Meredith's offer a pathetic insight into the predicament of the young author, doggedly grinding out the sort of product that he thought editors would be willing to pay a few shillings for. All promise of creative power seemed hopelessly obliterated in this hack work.⁷

Stevenson's statement comes in the midst of his discussion of the troubles surrounding Meredith's first marriage, to Mary Ellen Peacock Nicolls, between 1851 and 1855. During this period they were in financial difficulties and were forced to move in with and then into a house rented by Thomas Love Peacock. Meredith's publications in verse and prose during this time were few and were published anonymously in Household Words and in Fraser's; in 1855 the suggested volume of English Songs, presumably largely of a "patriotic and popular note," aroused no enthusiasm in John Parker, who had published the 1851 volume.⁸ Evidently Meredith was in the position of the poets he decried in his 1852 article: he was compelled, for want of money, to write much and say little--and therefore to write badly. That he was struggling with his poetic talent and inspiration becomes apparent through a letter written to Parker on September 20, 1854:

What say you, this month, to an Ode to H. I. M. Napoleon 3rd which, being here [in Dover] in view of Calais Cliffs and Boulogne Lights, I am beginning to revolve seriously. Thus:

Imperial by the People's will,
And swaying with such sovereign skill
Power that is a gorgeous pyre
 To Sceptre's slaves of Ire--
Thou etc. etc.

does the first note strike you? Say the word and you shall have it. Old "effusions" are rotting for want of Print. My Muse is somewhat pining. I have led her lately through many rough realities to freshen her up. If I find her over delicate, I have done with her. This is the turning point. Castalia is good tippie, but in Britain the Muse must be robust enough to sing on small beer.⁹

It would seem that Meredith was learning that the kind of poetry he felt was his kind of poetry would not sell and that he would have to retrain his "Muse" to deal with reality, with matters of public interest or concern before he could earn money--desperately needed now, with a son to support--by his art.

An overview, however, of Meredith's poetic output and of his later comments on his art in the letters and in assorted reviews reveals that Meredith never did really bring himself to pander to the public taste or to abandon the few known criteria he had established as part of what a modern management expert would call his job description. As I have indicated above (p. 221), two considerations were "concentration and suggestion"--considerations that, by Meredith's own account, were primary. From scattered comments in the letters, it is possible to arrive at a compilation of further considerations that Meredith applies to his métier.

In August 1861, Meredith wrote to Maxse from Milan and included his comments on a poem that Maxse had evidently sent to his friend, along with some comments in praise of the poem, which William Maxse Meredith identifies as Tannhäuser, or the Battle of the Bards, by Neville Temple and Edward Trevor (Julian Henry Charles Fane and Edward Robert Bulwer Lytton, Earl of Lytton--Owen Meredith). Meredith takes the poem to task for weakness, "silliness," and what amounts to misapplication of "the theme" to support a "sort of cherubim chastity popular just now, and which is not the real thing" It is, in effect, to Meredith an eminently forgettable poem that has a few good scenes and reveals "Power of narrative" and "Mimetic power of a wonderful kind, and flow of verse, also extraordinary." But the main charge against it is what can

only be construed as a failure in the poets themselves: "I do not find any comprehension of human nature, or observation, or sympathy with it. I perceive none of the subtleties, deep but unobtrusive, that show that a mind has travelled. Great windy phrases, and what I must term (for so they hit my sense) encaustic imageries do not satisfy me any longer, though I remember a period when they did."¹⁰

Within three months, Meredith was defending a poem of his own against charges of obscurity--charges that were to haunt him throughout his poetic career. The poem was "By the Rosanna," written for Maxse and published in Once a Week on October 19, 1861.¹¹ As I have already indicated, the poem as a whole is a fanciful consideration of the effects of a "marriage" between an Alpine nymph and "a short-neck'd, many-caped London cabman," Meredith's symbol for "Fact" (see Appendix II, pp. 371 ff). That it was a puzzle to Meredith's readers is evident from a letter to Samuel Lucas, editor of Once a Week, explaining the origin of the poem and apologizing for its obscurity and for the general difficulty of his verse: "I know that you are really kind with regard to my poor work. I do my best always, and let it take its chance. I never publish anything that hasn't a meaning distinct to me, and not indistinct to fellows here and there. You will find by and by that when taken altogether I am clear. This 'Rosanna' was written to a friend, and was play, with scenery, and a background of design. I am sorry for your sake that it confuses people."¹²

To Augustus Jessopp Meredith wrote, apparently in response to specific questioning about the poem, "Apropos of the 'Rosanna,' it was written from the Tyrol, to a friend, and was simply a piece of friendly play. Which should not have been published, you add? Perhaps not, but

it pleased my friend, and the short passage of description was a literal transcript of the scene. Moreover, though the style is open to blame, there is an idea running through the verses, which, while I was rallying my friend, I conceived to have some point for a larger audience."¹³

Clearly Meredith was meeting his own requirements of close observation, accurate description, and instructive content even in this poem that started out, apparently, as a sort of game to be played only with Maxse. That "concentration and suggestiveness" are its primary qualities cannot be denied by anyone who reads the lengthy piece and becomes piqued enough by its obscurity to penetrate the concentration and the suggestiveness to get at the core of the work.

The letter to Jessopp, which is the first of those Meredith addressed to the Norwich clergyman who educated Arthur Meredith, also contains general observations on the art of poetry and the role of Meredith-as-poet--observations that it seems germane to quote at length here:

It is true that I have fallen from what I once hoped to do. The fault is hardly mine. Do you know Vexation, the slayer? There is very little poetry to be done when one is severely and incessantly harassed. My nerves have given way under it, and it is only by great care and attention to the directions of my doctor, that I can work at all.--I have now more leisure and somewhat better health, and the result is, that I have gone back partially to my old mistress.

As to my love for the Muse, I really think that is earnest enough. I have all my life done battle in her behalf, and should, at one time, have felt no blessing to be equal to the liberty to serve her. Praise sings strangely in my ears. I have been virtually propelled into a practical turn, by the lack of encouragement for any other save practical work. I have no doubt that it has done me good, though the pleasure your letter gives me, and let me say also the impetus, is a proof that I should have flourished better under a less rigorous system.

If you do me the favour to look at 'Once a Week' during the next two months, you will see some poems of mine that are of another cast [from "By the Rosanna," evidently]. The 'Cassandra,' you will see, is as severe in rhythm as you could wish. But one result of my hard education since the publication of my boy's book in '51 (those poems were written before I was twenty) has been that I rarely write verse.

Thus my Jugglers, Beggars, etc., I have met on the road, and have idealized but slightly. I desire to strike the poetic spark out of absolute human clay. And in doing so I have the fancy that I do solid work--better than a carol in mid air. Note the 'Old Chartist,' and the 'Patriot Engineer,' that will also appear in 'Once a Week.' They may not please you, but I think you will admit that they have a truth condensed in them. They are flints perhaps, and not flowers. Well, I think of publishing a volume of Poems in the beginning of '62, and I will bring as many flowers to it as I can. Song. Of course I do not think of binding down the Muse to the study of facts. That is but a part of her work. The worst is, that, having taken to prose delineations of character and life, one's affections are divided. I have now a prose damsel crying out to me to have her history completed; and the creatures of a novel are bubbling up; and in truth, being a servant of the public, I must wait till my master commands before I take seriously to singing.¹⁴

There are obvious echoes here of the letter of 1854 to John Parker--the concern for the Muse, the suggestion that "part of her work" is "the study of facts," which are no doubt akin to the "rough realities" of the letter to Parker (see above, p.223). There are echoes, too, of Meredith's life between 1851 and 1855 or so--his struggle with "Vexation the slayer," his having to turn to "practical work," the debilitating effects of those difficult years. There are recollections of the article on the "Austrian Poets" in the concern for taking reality, actual observation, as the starting-point for a poem. And there is a forecast of the sentence from an 1870 letter to Morley in which Meredith describes "singing" as his natural mode of expression. His posture as "a servant of the public" is probably largely ironic, simply because he admitted over and over again that he took to writing to please himself because the public did not respond to him.

In 1868 Meredith published reviews of poems by F. H. Myers and by Robert Lytton in which the clues-seeker might find some indications of Meredith's poetic criteria. In dealing with Myer's Saint Paul: A Poem for the Fortnightly Review, January 1868, Meredith praises the work

for its "lyrical energy" and for "a singular stately melody of verse"; he charges the poem with occasional "dramatic unfitness" and with some flaws in prosody. On the whole, his opinion is that this is indeed "poetry" and that the author ought to be thanked for having produced it. Typically Meredithian, I think, are the comments about melody and about the suitability of the poetry to the character of Paul, whose "meditations" the poem records (see below, pp. 288-9).¹⁵

In his review of Robert Lytton's Chronicles and Characters for the June 1868 issue of the Fortnightly, Meredith pauses to comment upon the requirements of poetry, beginning with a disquisition upon lyrical poetry:

[Prose] does not of necessity call up fictitious sentiments to inflate a conception run to languor. I allude especially to the habit of producing numberless minor poems on purely sentimental subjects. A large and noble theme has a framework that yields as much support as it demands. Lyrics yield none: and, when they are not spontaneous, they rob us of a great deal of our strength and sincerity. If they are true things coming of a man's soul, they are so much taken from him: if the reverse, they hurry him rapidly to waste. There should not be such a thing as a habit of lyrical composition. This effusion of song is not natural to us. The greatest of lyrist's have the power but rarely, and if they published songs, and odes, and snatches only, their works would be remarkably contracted. In a stimulating season, when prompted by the passions of youth or of a generous sympathy, they give abundance; but that abundance does not make volumes--at least, not publishable volumes. A great lyrist (and we have one among us [Swinburne]), inflamed by the woes of an unhappy people throbbing for fulness of life and freedom [Italy], sings perforce; but he has a great subject, and we do not see that it is his will which distinctly predominates in his verses.

Meredith then comments briefly on Shelley, Burns, Campbell, Hood, Heine, Goethe, Giusti, and Alfred de Musset, concluding with this admonition:

"it is from observation or meditation that poetry gets sinew and substance, and the practice of observing or meditating soon tames in poets the disposition to pour out verse profusely."¹⁶ Indeed, the whole passage is admonitory in that it warns against the uninhibited, unchecked effusion of poetry that some take to be the only means by which poetry can come

into being. In fact, this statement of Meredith's seems to confirm the general impression one derives from his poetry that he was convinced that poets are in as much need of a positive response to the prayer in Modern Love as are the women for whom it is offered in that poem: "More brain, O Lord, more brain!" What Meredith is challenging here is, in effect, brainless poetry, image-making, metaphor-molding without a single idea to serve as cement or a fixative agent. That his own poetry suffers from a surfeit of "brain" is perhaps the result in extremis of this conviction.

In reviewing Lytton's volume, Meredith makes entries on both sides of the ledger: Lytton's positive assets are "a vivid sense of beauty [and] warm colours to paint it in," a sensitivity to "simplicity," narrative power, a "broad and firm . . . hand" for "Historical scene-painting" On the debit side, Lytton suffers from too much lyricism an occasional "false note," a failure to capture the true "breath of primitive mediaevalism" in the poems that deal with that period of human history, and a number of less vital flaws.¹⁷ These qualities are not particularly revealing so far as they illuminate Meredith's primary concerns in poetry, but they do serve to indicate the scope of Meredith's poetic considerations.

Meredith's comments to Maxse about Tannhäuser, it will be recalled (see above, p. 224), implied that "comprehension of human nature, or observation, or sympathy with it" should be part and parcel of the poet's material and concern. When, in 1869, he wrote to Maxse about Tennyson's recently published "The Holy Grail," Meredith included in his attack upon the poem the lack of such "comprehension" on Tennyson's part:

The 'Holy Grail' is wonderful, isn't it? The lines are satin lengths, the figures Sevres china. I have not the courage to offer to review it, I should say such things. To think!--it's in these days that the foremost poet of the country goes fluting of creatures that have not a breath of vital humanity in them, and doles us out his regular five-feet with the old trick of the vowel endings--The Euphuist's tongue, the Exquisite's leg, the Curate's moral sentiments, the British matron and her daughter's purity of tone:--so he talks, so he walks, so he snuffles, so he appears divine Why, this stuff is not the Muse, it's Musery. The man has got hold of the Muses' clothes-line and hung it with jewelry.

But the 'Lucretius' is grand. I can't say how much I admire it and hate the Sir Pandarus public which has corrupted this fine (natural) singer. In his degraded state I really believe he is useful, for he reflects as much as our Society chooses to show of itself. The English notion of passion, virtue, valour, is in his pages: and the air and the dress we assume are seen there Do you care to find the Holy Grail, Fred? Twenty years behind his time . . . isn't there a scent of damned hypocrisy in all this lisping and vowelled purity of the Idylls? . . . It's fashionable; it pleases the rose-pink ladies, it sells.¹⁸

Meredith obviously felt that Tennyson had been spoiled by too much catering to the public taste, despite the "usefulness" of his revealing what "our Society chooses to show of itself." In another letter to Maxse, written eight days later, Meredith accuses Tennyson of another and probably more serious failing: "Tennyson has many spiritual indications, but no philosophy, and philosophy is the palace of thought."¹⁹ This would suggest that Meredith found little substantial thinking and no framework at all in Tennyson's poetry, despite his early admiration and emulation of the poet laureate. In a letter to Morley a week later again, Meredith notes that Tennyson, although "a real singer," has embarked upon too long a song in the "Arthurian Cycles." "Yet," he continues, "there was stuff here for a poet of genius to animate the figures and make them reflect us, and on us. I read the successive mannered lines with pain--yards of linen--drapery for the delight of ladies who would be in the fashion.--The praises of the book shut me away from my fellows. To be sure, there's the magnificent 'Lucretius.'"²⁰

It seems inevitable that Meredith should value "Lucretius," with its concern for what Meredith would no doubt describe as the genuine stuff of life and for the pain and agony of an individual who, in Meredithian terms, had failed to keep the three parts of his nature, "blood, brain, and spirit," in proper balance. It is also inevitable that the apparent distance between nineteenth-century political and social reality and Tennyson's knights and ladies of the Table Round should have driven Meredith to despair of his former hero, but it seems odd that Meredith did not penetrate to what Tennyson's meaning in the reworking of the matter of Arthur apparently was: to demonstrate the decay in contemporary society through a portrait of another society that had the mythological merit of being rather single-minded in its aims and considerably simpler in its methods and motives than modern society was proving to be.

Perhaps some idea of what Meredith meant by the best kind of poetry can be gleaned from his reaction to reading Goethe's "Das Göttliche," an event to which I gave considerable space above (see pp. 189ff.). However, at this point I must emphasize Meredith's evaluation of the poem and not the relevance of the poem's philosophy to the influence of Goethe on Meredith-as-philosopher. What Meredith exclaims to Morley, who had sent him the poem, is the following: "This high discernment, this noblest of unconsidered utterance, this is the Hymn for men. This is to be really prophet-like. All other prophecy is insolence."²¹ The poem itself (see pp. 189ff.) is simple, both in diction and in form, suggesting that its "unconsidered utterance" is the utmost refinement of Goethe's "simplicity," a quality that Meredith praised in Robert Lytton (see above, pp. 229ff.). That Meredith sees the poem as a "Hymn" suggests its singing quality: Meredith often calls poetry song and the poet a singer.

Read aloud, in German, it has a rather understated movement and seems almost rhythmless to the ear not used to the cadences of German verse. As for the "prophet-like" nature of the poem, I should guess that Meredith means that it contains an expression of Goethe's philosophy and that it seems to him to be directed toward urging men toward a recognition of the godlike in man--toward a recognition of the true nature of life, which is a generalization, perhaps, of the traditional role of the prophet.

Meredith's insistence upon simplicity extends to diction, too, as is evident from a passage in a letter to Arthur Meredith in 1883: it is, Meredith writes, "the general rule of English verse . . . , in dealing with Nature, to lean on the simple natural words most imagerially expressive." But the rule, Meredith implies, came into being only because of the pressures exercised by the English vocabulary, made up as it is of Anglo-Saxon, Latin, and Norman French. Meredith suggests that "Our Latin and Norman French are rejected in the tongue of emotion--except by those who know not how to use it; and these are sure to be frigid or preposterous."²² In order to avoid such negative qualities in writing, Meredith implies, Arthur should choose the simplest and most direct descriptive words he can.

That simplicity of style and diction might lead to difficulty for the reader Meredith was willing to admit, as he does in a letter to George Pierce Baker, the influential professor of English at Harvard University. The letter, dated July 22, 1887, is primarily about Meredith's novels, but some of the writer's observations may be pertinent to his work and efforts as a poet. Most noteworthy, in my estimation, is the following sentence, which might stand as an exact description of the extraordinary poem, "The Empty Purse": "I think that all right use of life, and the

one secret of life, is to pave ways for the firmer footing of those who succeed us; as to my works, I know them faulty, think them of worth only when they point and aid to that end. Close knowledge of our fellows, discernment of the laws of existence, these lead to great civilization."²³ True, Meredith is writing about his practice as a novelist, but surely his impetus in writing poetry is essentially the same as this description. A brief survey of Meredith's poems reveals that many of them are given over to exactly the purpose outlined here: the defining of "ways for the firmer footing of those who succeed us" In fact, a letter of 1900 from Meredith to G. M. Trevelyan responds with gratitude to what must have been Trevelyan's laudatory comments upon Meredith's effect upon him: "When I hear that I have been of some use to young men in aiding them to see the real life and guide their steps in it, I am content to think that I have lived."²⁴ Such poems as "A Preaching from a Spanish Ballad," "Foresight and Patience," "The Sage Enamoured and the Honest Lady," and "The Empty Purse"; the volume, A Reading of Earth (1888), which Meredith described as containing "a great deal of my philosophy of life";²⁵ and particularly four poems in The Reading of Life--"The Vital Choice," "With the Huntress," "With the Persuader," and "The Test of Manhood"--come immediately to mind as works in which Meredith sought to pass on to those who followed him his view of the best "ways" that man can follow. And this practice is, of course, in keeping with the idea of the poet as philosopher-teacher that was in the air when Meredith began to write poetry.

The molding of a "great civilization" was not Meredith's sole aim: he had in view, too, the molding of the individual spirit. In a letter to Mrs. J. B. Gilman (March 16, 1888), who had evidently inquired after

some volumes of his poetry in order to compose a selected volume for Roberts, the Boston publisher, Meredith wrote briefly of his intentions as a poet: "I have written always with the perception that there is no life but of the spirit; that the concrete is really shadowy; yet that the way to spiritual life lies in the complete unfolding of the creature, not in the nipping of his passions. An outrage to Nature helps to extinguish his light. To the flourishing of the spirit, then, through the healthy exercise of the senses."²⁶ This statement is, of course, nothing more or less than Meredith's persistent concern with the proper balance of the triad of "blood, brain, and spirit": man cannot develop his spiritual and permanent nature without the development of his senses and of his intellect. A one-sided development creates a one-sided individual who is useless to the advancement of the race. And this statement is a fair one as a summary of the intent of a good deal of Meredith's poetry: the poems just mentioned are as illustrative of this point as of the point made in the letter to Professor Baker. It should be pointed out, however, that Meredith was at least occasionally aware of the dangers of poetry written for a largely philosophical or didactic purpose: in 1893 he wrote to Sidney Lysaght concerning Lysaght's verses, suggesting that he "tie [himself] to some special theme for the present, and turn to generalizing and adjurations by and by. Preach not yet,--I am ashamed to find myself doing it."²⁷ Meredith apparently knew that his poetry often became mere "preaching" and moved away from being genuinely poetic statements (insofar as a poem can be a statement, by anyone's definition) of the point he wanted to make.

Simplicity, advice, philosophy, descriptions of how to live life--these are all elements that Meredith valued in poetry. Behind them all

lies Meredith's equally strong insistence upon realism, upon a grasp of the actualities of human existence upon this earth. This emphasis appears in Meredith's letters as early as 1862, in a letter to Jessopp in the course of which Meredith insists upon "Realism [as] the basis of good composition: it implies study, observation, artistic power, and (in those who can do more) humility." Only this approach to the art of composition, of creative writing, can produce "solid work" from the writers who are not great geniuses. The great writers can make use of "idealism," can rely upon suggestiveness to make their points, to teach their lessons, but they must build upon a realistic basis.²⁸ From this conviction of Meredith's stem his laudatory comments about poets who do begin from realism: Robert Lytton, for example (see above, pp. 224f.), and W. E. Henley, of whose "In Hospital" Meredith wrote as follows:

The rude realism of your verses 'In Hospital' has braced me. And with this breath of the darkness of life you give a note--

'Out of the night that covers me'--

which has a manful ring to clear and lift us, whatever the oppression that may have been caused. No realism frightens me. At its worst, I take it as a correction of the flimsy, to which our literature has a constant tendency to recur. Even the lowest appears to me more instructive than Byronics.--But when, out of hospital, you cry out in ecstasy of the 'smell of the mud in the nostrils,' you strike profoundly--beyond the critical senses.

I thank you for the volume. It has the tone of a voice in the ear--as near to life as that.²⁹

Realism, simplicity, immersion in one's topic, and naturalness of expression are the elements urged by Meredith upon Miss M. A. Powell in a letter of July 14, 1900: the subject is a prose article written by Miss Powell.

Your openness to criticism shows me that you are likely to gain the art of expression--one and the chief way to which is, the never writing until you are full of your subject. Then the right words come of nature Be sure, if you launch away from reality, that you can trust to imagination; and in the reverse case that you have your grasp of the facts.³⁰

Naturalness and the avoidance of the tendency to fixity in one's "turns of expression" are also the keynotes of Meredith's comments upon a poem written by a thirteen-year-old girl and sent to Meredith by Lady Butler (1901).³¹

In the process of determining Meredith's conception of the role of the poet and of the means by which he should carry out that role, I have come to consider one group of long poems (along with some shorter works in the same general area) as standing apart from the lyrical and philosophical poems: the Odes in Contribution to the Song of French History (1898) and the short poems that deal with historical or political matters. In discussing Meredith's philosophy, I suggested that Meredith's view of history was colored by the Positivist-evolutionary conception of man's development and by the Carlylean idea that history is primarily to be found in the biographies of great men (see above, pp. 111ff.). In exploring Meredith's historical-political poetry, I have come to feel that his approach might have been influenced by the remark of Carlyle to Emerson: "It is part of my creed that the only Poetry is History, could we tell it right."³²

Meredith's stated purpose in the composition of the earliest of the four Odes, "France, December 1870," appears in a letter (wrongly dated December 7, 1871, in the published Letters) to John Morley, "a Grand Ode to France--called simply 'France 1870': from my point of view of sympathy and philosophy; which I think is ours I believe I am within the shadow of the Truth, and as it's my nature to sing I may now do well." Morley evidently agreed not only with Meredith's views on France but with the merits of the poem, for it was published in the Fortnightly on January 1, 1871.³³ In the poem Meredith chastises,

comforts, and admonishes France, urging her to remember that she is the "Mother of Reason" and must maintain the lead she took in 1789 in the forward movement of the nations.³⁴

The three later Odes--"The Revolution," "Napoléon," and "Alsace-Lorraine"--had a somewhat different aim, or at least an aim more grandly and broadly stated. In 1908, during an interview, Meredith told Constantin Photiadès, "'I burn to serve France, I assure you!'"³⁵ The implication was that the Odes were his effort to "serve" the nation across the Channel by presenting her to the world through the medium of his own sympathetic but clear-sighted vision. The effort of 1870 had not been adequate, apparently, and so, in 1896, when, as Lionel Stevenson puts it, Meredith had begun to write less prose but had not yet given up poetry, he "embarked upon his most ambitious undertaking, a series of odes on French history, expressing his exalted admiration for the spirit of France."³⁶

Comments on the progress of composition of the Odes are scattered throughout Meredith's letters between September 1896, when Meredith informed Mrs. Alice Meynell of having completed "The Revolution" and of having begun the "Napoléon," and January 3, 1898, when Meredith commented upon the length and complexity of the poems to Frederick Greenwood.³⁷ The key statements among the references reveal Meredith's concern with the connection between poetry and history, between "song" and factual events. To Mrs. Seymour Trower, Meredith wrote on December 2, 1896, that the poems present "History--my view; and I make History sing! Clio in Calliope." Almost four weeks later, Meredith told Frederick Greenwood that he was able to "make History sing while interpreting her." Illness intervened, but the hope of making "History sing" about France remained

with Meredith, and on March 6, 1897, he wrote to W. S. M'Cormick that he hoped "to have made History sing, and under sanction of philosophy." But there were evidently difficulties to be overcome. On June 13, 1897, Meredith wrote to Mrs. Meynell: "Remember that it is an Ode of History, which presents us with gross matter, and I must deal it out, to be true to the subject. I have been tempted by the rhetorical--History's pitfall for the Muse. I have avoided this as much as I could even in the Portrait [sections IX-X of "Napoléon"], where antithesis invited strongly and was not always to be shunned." On December 6, 1897, he wrote again to Mrs. Meynell: "These historic themes insist on an amount of rhetoric unless one vaporizes and symbolizes"--Meredith's way of explaining the obscurity of "Alsace-Lorraine." And on January 3, 1898, Meredith defended the length of the Odes as a group to Frederick Greenwood: "they do not dawdle, for the tussle between the soul of France and the Napoleonic grip has to be shown."³⁸

Meredith clearly struggled to bring together--to bring into harmony, I might say, considering Meredith's insistence upon singing--the factual world of history and the elusive world of poetry. The result of his labors is impressive but extraordinarily difficult, partly because of Meredith's inability to withstand the temptations of "the rhetorical," partly because of the Meredithian "concentration and suggestion" that turn historical reality into metaphors that do not always succeed. Furthermore, Meredith's own criteria of simplicity and of naturalness of diction seem to have gone glimmering during the composition of the Odes: they are full of ponderous language bordering on obsolescence and of language that can only be understood as neologisms. But the whole performance is permeated with the feeling that the poet must be a

philosopher and something of a prophet in the sense of exhorting his audience--in this case, France--to recognition of the right way she ought to go. In a way, the Odes and the equally difficult and obscure poems in A Reading of Life (1901) form a fitting coping stone to the career of a man who was, perhaps before all else, a poet of the style that made its strongest appearance with the beginning of the nineteenth century: a poet who spoke on human issues in human (although sometimes admittedly obscure) terms and with a feeling for the race of men that cannot be missed.

FOOTNOTES, CHAPTER III

¹Meredith, Letters, p. 232.

²Meredith, "Austrian Poets," 213.

³Ibid., 215-216. Cf. Horne, A New Spirit of the Age, pp. 457ff.

⁴Ibid., 216, 220, 222, 223, 224, 225.

⁵Colvin, p. 182.

⁶Meredith, "Austrian Poets," 220-222.

⁷Stevenson, p. 43.

⁸Ibid., pp. 43-45, passim.

⁹Cline, typescript.

¹⁰Meredith, Letters, p. 30, for William Maxse Meredith's note; pp. 36-37 for Meredith's comments on the poem. See also Cline, typescript, about the authors of the poem under discussion.

¹¹Meredith, Poems, I (ME XXIV), 151; Various Readings and Bibliography (ME XXVII), 260-266; Letters, pp. 31, 44; Forman, p. 29.

¹²Cline, typescript.

¹³Meredith, Letters, p. 44.

¹⁴Ibid., pp. 44-45.

¹⁵ Meredith, "Saint Paul: A Poem," Miscellaneous Prose (ME XXIII),
92-95, passim.

¹⁶ Ibid., "Mr. Robert Lytton's Poems," Miscellaneous Prose (ME XXIII),
107-108.

¹⁷ Ibid., 109-126, passim.

¹⁸ Meredith, Letters, pp. 197-198.

¹⁹ Ibid., p. 198.

²⁰ Ibid., p. 201-202.

²¹ Ibid., p. 274.

²² Ibid., p. 341.

²³ Ibid., pp. 398-399.

²⁴ Ibid., p. 509.

²⁵ Ibid., p. 419.

²⁶ Ibid., p. 409.

²⁷ Ibid., p. 458.

²⁸ Ibid., pp. 156-157.

²⁹ Ibid., p. 412.

³⁰ Ibid., p. 511.

³¹ Ibid., pp. 520-521.

³²Carlyle, The Correspondence of Thomas Carlyle with Ralph Waldo Emerson, I, 25. See above, p. 157.

³³Meredith, Letters, p. 232; Cline, typescript, for the corrected date.

³⁴Meredith, "France, December 1870," Poems, III (ME XXVI), 140-149; the phrase, "Mother of Reason," appears on pp. 142, 145.

³⁵Photiades, pp. 18-19.

³⁶Stevenson, pp. 328-329.

³⁷Meredith, Letters to Alice Meynell, p. 39; Letters, p. 492.

³⁸Meredith, Letters, pp. 486, 487, 488, 492; Letters to Alice Meynell, pp. 45-53; Stevenson, p. 331, for an account of Meredith's bout with bladder trouble and the operation he underwent on December 30, 1896.

CHAPTER IV

THE SOURCES OF MEREDITH'S PROSODIC THEORY AND PRACTICE¹

Meredith was not concerned solely with the idea of what a poet is or should be nor solely with the idea of what poetry is or should be. He was also concerned with the special techniques of his art, with the intricacies of prosody or metrics. Although the majority of Meredith's critics and biographers charge that obscurity is his major defect, and although--for one example--the critics of the Odes in Contribution to the Song of French History accused him of "arbitrary caprice," of the "wanton" flinging away of the rules of poetics, and of an "arrogantly false" "scheme of poetics," Meredith was, in fact, a strict prosodist throughout most of his poetic career.²

An early indication of Meredith's interest in metrics occurs in the exchange recorded by both Lionel Stevenson and Jack Lindsay between the just-married Meredith and Chambers's Journal in 1849. Meredith offered to write what Professor Stevenson describes as "a biographical sketch" of the German philologist and classical scholar, Johann Gottfried Jakob Hermann (1722-1848), the author of an 816-page Latin text entitled Elementa Doctrinae Metricae (1816) that appears in the Catalogue of Meredith's library and that Meredith might well have acquired during his stay at Neuwied. Meredith's offer of the article was apparently prompted by the fact that, as Professor Stevenson quotes the letter, "'there is as yet no English account.' The next day he wrote again urgently: 'Let me know about the article on Hermann as early as you

can as the sooner that is printed the better.'" The article, however, was apparently either written but not published or never written at all, perhaps for want of encouragement from Chambers's.³

Another early note that points to Meredith's concern for prosody appears in the 1852 article, "Austrian Poets," in which Meredith criticizes as "a besetting sin" the "rhythmless writing" of the poets he is reviewing: "They require to be chastised by an Alexander Pope before they will mend, we fear. Count Platen has undertaken the task, and so far as great classic elegance may serve for an example, and some power of wit and satire produce an effect, has done service." "Count Platen" is August, Graf von Platen-Hallermund (1796-1835), the young poet admired by Goethe for his poems on Oriental subjects and for what the Encyclopedia Britannica describes as "the purity and elegance of [the] form and diction" of his verse in the midst of the Romantic partiality for formlessness and exotic diction. Platen was attacked by Heine, in particular, for his anti-Romantic attitudes and was driven by public opposition to his idea of poetry into a feeling of "indignation and disgust" toward the poetic theory of the day. What Meredith is saying here is that he feels that the German and Austrian poets need discipline in the form of their work and that the needed corrective had been demonstrated to them by Platen, whom Meredith evidently admired but whom he mentions, so far as I know, only in this article.⁴

In the same article appears another signal of Meredith's interest in prosody: his translation of several poems by the authors he is reviewing, and particularly of a passage from "a dramatic fragment" by Grillparzer, Scipio and Hannibal. In discussing Meredith's knowledge of languages other than English, I made reference to these translations and

to David Bonnell Green's comments upon them and upon Meredith's apparent decision to give up translating German poetry as a possible vocation (see above, p. 53), and it seems unnecessary to repeat these observations in praise of Meredith's abilities as a translator. A close examination of some of Meredith's efforts should serve to complete the picture. I have not been able to locate the Grillparzer fragment, but I was able to find the two poems by Lenau, which I include here in the original German and in Meredith's translation.⁵

The Three Gipsies.

Die Drei Zigeuner

Once as my carriage wearily dragg'd
Over heath and sandy mound,
I saw three gipsies lying alone,
On a slope of pasture ground.

The first in his hands a fiddle clasp'd
All to himself he play'd;
Play'd to himself a fiery tune,
In the glow that the sunset made.

The second held his pipe in his mouth,
Follow'd the smoke with his eyes;
Happy as tho' from the whole round earth
His wants naught more did prize!

Pleasantly lay the third asleep,
His cymbal hung on a bough;
Over it softly the breezes ran,
A dream went over his brow.

Tatters and patches, many-hued,
Bore on their clothes all three;
But they snapt their fingers at fortune
and fate,
And laugh'd at misery!

Threefold unto me they proved,
When life its scourge applies,
How we fiddle it, smoke it, and sleep it,
And it thrice despise.

Drei Zigeuner fand ich einmal
Liegen an einer Weide,
Als mein Fuhrwerk mit müder Qual
Schlich durch sandige Heide.

Hielt der eine für sich allein
In den Händen die Fiedel,
Spielte, umglüht vom Abendschein,
Sich ein feuriges Liedel.

Hielt der zweite die Pfeif im Mund,
Blickte nach seinem Rauche,
Froh, als ob er vom Erdenrund
Nichts zum Glück mehr brauche.

Und der dritte behaglich schlief
Und sein Zimbal am Baum hing,
Über die Saiten der Windhauch lief,
Über sein Herz ein Traum ging.

An den Kleidern trugen die drei
Löcher und bunte Flicker,
Aber sie boten trotzig frei
Spott den Erdengeschicken.

Dreifach haben sie mir gezeigt
Wenn das Leben uns nachtete,
Wie man's verbracht, verschläft,
vergeigt
Und es dreimal verachtet.

Against the mountain's misty gloom,
 The pallid walls were leaning;
 Christ's crucifix rose up in dumb
 Pathetic anguish sheening.

Silent my companion rode,
 Sadder, and more slowly;
 Check'd the swift steed he bestrode,
 Gazed at the picture holy.

'Here must I halt, wheel and horse,
 Have no cause to fear me;
 Yonder lies my old comrade's corse,
 In the cool earth so near me.

'O such a jolly fellow!--Sir,
 'Tis an eternal pity!
 None blew the horn with such a stir,
 Or rang so clear a ditty.

'Here do I rest each time I pass,
 His favourite tune repeating,
 Who sleeps so calm beneath the grass,
 And give him trusty greeting.'

And to the white churchyard he sent
 Song of the merry wayfaring,
 That in the peace of the grave they went,
 To his old friend repairing.

And the far echo's thin, clear tone
 Came from the mountains ringing,
 As though the dead Postillion
 With his loved songs were singing.

Full gallop, then, we sped away,
 By fields and leaping fountains;
 Long within my ears still lay,
 That echo from the mountain.

Hingelehnt an Bergesrand
 War die bleiche Mauer,
 Und das Kreuzbild Gottes stand
 Hoch, in stummer Trauer.

Schwager ritt auf seiner Bahn
 Stiller jetzt und trüber;
 Und die Rosse hielt er an,
 Sah zum Kreuz hinüber:

"Halten muss hier Ross and Rad!
 Mag's euch nicht gefährden;
 Drüben liegt mein Kamerad
 In der kühlen Erden!"

Ein gar herzlieber Gesell!
 Herr, 's ist ewig schade!
 Keiner blies das Horn so hell,
 Wie mein Kamerade!

Hier ich immer halten muss,
 Dem dort unterm Rasen
 Zum getreuen Brudergruss
 Sein Lieblied zu blasen!"

Und dem Kirchhof sandt er zu
 Frohe Wandersänge,
 Dass es in die Grabesruh
 Seinem Bruder dränge.

Und der Hornes heller Ton
 Klang vom Berge wieder,
 Ob der tote Postillon
 Stimmt in seine Lieder.--

Weiter ging's durch Feld und Hag
 Mit verhängtem Zügel;
 Lang mir noch im Ohre lag
 Jener Klang vom Hügel.

Meredith clearly manages, quite handily, to retain the form of the ballads by Lenau: his lines have the 4-3-4-3 pattern common to ballads, and in the case of "The Three Gipsies," he uses the typical abcb rhyme scheme in place of Lenau's abab system. In the case of "The Postillion," Meredith retains both the meter and the rhyme scheme of the original. A close look at the translation reveals the truth of Green's observation

that Meredith's faithfulness as a translator sometimes bows to the exigencies of the meter and the structure of English sentences, which force him (or, more charitably, allow him) to add a word or translate less than faithfully in order to fill out his line. On the whole, however, it seems that Meredith did an admirable job--perhaps more than admirable, considering that he was a mere twenty-four and had had, at best, only eighteen months or so of exposure to the German language and had evidently acquired all his knowledge of prosody from self-imposed study in the subject. That he had been working at translating German verse into English verse for some time before the appearance of the 1852 article is clear from the extant translations, some of which were included in the manuscript magazine, "The Monthly Observer," and which comprise translations of poems by Heine, von Eichendorff, Goethe, and Uhland. However, rather than include these efforts at this juncture, I have relegated them, as matters more of curiosity than of immediate interest to my concern with Meredith as prosodist, to Appendix III (p.391ff.).

A more important member, perhaps, of the group of Meredith's translations is that version he made of Eduard Mörike's "Schön-Rohtraut" under the title, "Beauty Rohtraut."⁶ A close examination of the two poems (see the two pages following) reveals that, as usual in his translations, Meredith managed an approximation of Mörike's rhyme-scheme: Meredith's is abccddde and Mörike's abccdeef. The scansion is similar, running to four stresses in the longer lines, and three in the second and eighth lines of the stanza. And to a large extent Meredith manages to translate the content of the German poem faithfully into English: the exceptions come in the refrain, primarily and most strikingly, and in the implications, for example, in the manner in which the youth

Schön-Rohtraut

Wie heisst König Ringangs Töchterlein?
 Rohtraut, Schön-Rohtraut.
 Was tut sie denn den ganzen Tag,
 Da sie wohl nicht spinnen und nähen mag?
 Tut fischen und jagen.
 O dass ich doch ihr Jäger wär!
 Fischen und Jagen freute mich sehr.
 --Schweig stille, mein Herze!

Und über eine kleine Weil,
 Rohtraut, Schön-Rohtraut,
 So dient der Knab auf Ringangs Schloss
 In Jägertracht und hat ein Ross,
 Mit Rohtraut zu jagen.
 O dass ich doch ein Königssohn war!
 Rohtraut, Schön-Rohtraut lieb ich so sehr.
 --Schweig stille, mein Herze!

Einmal sie rühten am Eichenbaum,
 Da lacht Schön-Rohtraut:
 Was siehst mich an so wunniglich?
 Wenn du das Herz hast, küsse mich!
 Ach, erschrak der Knabe!
 Doch denket er: Mir ist's vergunnt,
 Und kisset Schön-Rohtraut auf den Mund.
 --Schweig stille, mein Herze!

Darauf sie ritten schweigend heim,
 Rohtraut, Schön-Rohtraut;
 Es jauchzt der Knab in seinem Sinn:
 Und würdest du heute Kaiserin,
 Mich sollt's nicht kränken:
 Ihr tausend Blätter in Walde wisst,
 Ich hab Schön-Rohtrauts Mund geküsst!
 --Schweig stille, mein Herze!

Beauty Rohtraut

What is the name of King Ringang's daughter?

Rohtraut, Beauty Rohtraut!

And what does she do the livelong day,

Since she dare not knit and spin alway?

O hunting and fishing is ever her play!

And heigh! that her huntsman I might be!

I'd hunt and fish right merrily!

Be silent, heart!

And it chanced that, after this some time,--

Rohtraut, Beauty Rohtraut,--

The boy in the Castle has gained access,

And a horse he has got and a huntsman's dress,

To hunt and to fish with the merry Princess;

And, O! that a king's son I might be!

Beauty Rohtraut I love so tenderly.

Hush! hush! my heart.

Under a grey old oak they sat,

Beauty, Beauty Rohtraut!

She laughs: 'Why look you so slyly at me?

If you have heart enough, come, kiss me.'

Cried the breathless boy, 'kiss thee?'

But he thinks, kind fortune has favoured my youth;

And thrice he has kissed Beauty Rohtraut's mouth.

Down! down! mad heart.

Then slowly and silently they rode home,--

Rohtraut, Beauty Rohtraut!

The boy was lost in his delight:

'And, wert thou Empress this very night,

I would not heed or feel the blight;

Ye thousand leaves of the wild wood wist

How Beauty Rohtraut's mouth I kiss'd.

Hush! hush! wild heart.'

arrives in the castle: Mörike says simply that he served in Ringang's castle "In Jägertracht"--in huntsman's garb; Meredith changes the force of the original somewhat in putting "has gained access" for "dient." Mörike does not mention "kind fortune" or the idea of favor in "vergunnt," nor does he allow the boy to kiss the princess three times. Nor is Mörike's princess "merry," as Meredith describes her in the second stanza. On the whole, however, one must admit that Meredith has done a reasonably good job of translating the poem into English, particularly insofar as he has captured the ballad-like spirit of the original as well as its movement.

So far as I know, the "Lied von [Castelli,]" in a letter dating from 1860, is the last of Meredith's translations from the German.⁷ This does not mean, of course, that Meredith's interest in translation died out in 1859-1860, but that his interest simply took a new turn in the nine or ten years following. Between 1860 and 1869, Meredith travelled on the Continent, made many new friends, married Marie Vulliamy, learned (apparently) Provençal and Italian, and continued to write and study poetry, English, German, and French (see below). One particular concern made its appearance in 1869, when, in May, Meredith's review of Charles Merivale's Homer's Iliad in English Rhymed Verse appeared in the Fortnightly Review. Meredith thus entered the discussion of the art of translating Homer that had already brought forth lectures from Matthew Arnold (1861) and attempts at translating Homer from Tennyson (1863). Arnold had suggested that the hexameter was the correct meter for Englishing Homer; Tennyson, in publishing "a specimen" of his own theory, maintained that blank verse was the correct form: "Some, and among these one at least of our best and greatest, have endeavored to give us the

'Iliad' in English hexameters, and by what appears to me their failures have gone far to prove the impossibility of the task. I have long held by our blank verse in this matter, and now after having spoken so disrespectfully of these hexameters, I venture, or rather feel bound, to subjoin a specimen, however brief and with whatever demerits, of a blank verse translation." Tennyson's "disrespectful" comments on the hexameters are presumably those in the lines entitled "In Quantity: On Translations of Homer: Hexameters and Pentameters":

These lame hexameters the strong-wing'd music of Homer!
 No--but a most burlesque barbarous experiment.
 When was a harsher sound ever heard, ye Muses, in England?
 When did a frog coarser croak upon our Helicon?
 Hexameters no worse than daring Germany gave us,
 Barbarous experiment, barbarous hexameters.

It must be admitted that Tennyson's lines are sufficiently "barbarous" to make his point.

The blank verse specimen is a mere twenty-two lines long and is a translation of lines 542-561 of Book VIII of the Iliad, a passage that Arnold dealt with in his first lecture on translations of Homer, comparing a prose translation of the concluding lines with Pope's heroic couplets and finding the latter unsatisfactory because they do not convey "the plainest and most straightforward style" that (according to Arnold) Homer uses to describe the Trojan campfires:

"So many in number, between the ships and the streams of Xanthus, shone forth in front of Troy the fires kindled by the Trojans. There were kindled a thousand fires in the plain; and by each one there sat fifty men in the light of the blazing fire. And the horses, munching white barley and rye, and standing by the chariots, waiting for the bright-throned morning."

In Pope's translation, this plain story becomes the following:

So many flames before proud Ilion blaze,
 And brighten glimmering Xanthus with their rays;
 The long reflections of the distant fires
 Gleam on the walls, and tremble on the spires,

A thousand piles the dusky horrors gild,
 And shoot a shady lustre o'er the field.
 Full fifty guards each flaming pile attend,
 Whose umbered arms, by fits, thick flashes send;
 Loud neigh the coursers o'er their heaps of corn,
 And ardent warriors wait the rising morn.

The fault in Pope's translation, says Arnold, is that "Homer invariably composes 'with his eye on the object,'" whereas "Pope composes with his eye on his style," therefore destroying the feeling and movement of

Homer's idea and line.⁹ Tennyson's rendition of the same lines follows:

So many a fire between the ships and stream
 Of Xanthus blazed before the towers of Troy,
 A thousand on the plain; and close by each
 Sat fifty in the blaze of burning fire:
 And eating hoary grain and pulse the steeds¹⁰
 Fixt by their cars, waited the golden dawn.

Arnold would probably say that Tennyson comes close to the original but that some of the language--"hoary grain and pulse," for example--and the loss of the adjective "bright-throned" for the dawn spoil the laureate's accomplishment.

So far as I know, there is no evidence that Meredith read Arnold's lectures, but that he was acquainted with Tennyson's specimen is apparent from his quoting from it in his review of Merivale's translation.¹¹ That Meredith was interested in translations of Homer over a long period is evident from the presence, in the Catalogue of part of his library, of five volumes:

Homer's Iliad, done into English Prose of Lang, Leaf, and Meyers, First Edition, 8 v., cloth. 1883.

Contains a number of translations on slips of paper in the handwriting of George Meredith

Homerus, by the Rev. John Williams, Part I. (Iliad), 1862.

_____, Iliad in English Hexameter Verse, by J. H. Dart, Part I (Books 1-12), 1862.

_____, Iliad, Translation of Book I--also Passages from Virgil, by M. P. W. Boulton, 1875

Lang, Andrew. The Homeric Hymns, Translation and Essays, 1899.¹²

The dates of the Williams and Dart translations place them in the period immediately preceding the review of Merivale in 1869; in fact, Meredith mentions Dart's hexameters in the review and takes a stand opposite to Arnold's:

By this time it has been seen that nothing of the [Homeric "swell and rush, and the emphatic pause here and there"] is to be obtained from a sustained number of English hexameters pretending to dignity.

The hexameter sets our Muse on the slack-rope with a pole of very imperfect balance; she has neither the running nor the stamping foot for it. Mr. Dart's carefully done first twelve books, though they are not an example of what can be accomplished in hexametrical English, show sufficiently that it is an insuperable task to keep clear of a prosy monotony in this form of verse [p. 77].

However, as will be shown shortly, Meredith did not retain his low opinion of the suitability of hexameters for rendering Homer into English: he himself used them in his fragmentary translations in 1889-1890 (see below, pp. 253).

Meredith's primary criterion in the review of Merivale's translation of the Iliad is "whether it will bear declamation," a criterion that Meredith derives from his belief that "Homer was a singer, and his poem was meant for recital" (p. 77). He thereupon rules out translators who use blank verse because they "are stiff; they do not carry on the roll from line to line, or rarely with any force" (p. 77). At this point, Meredith quotes from Tennyson's "exquisite Specimen," which he describes as "artfully chosen, if we are to accept it as a plea for the superior ability and charms of blank verse" Then he quotes the six lines immediately preceding the lines I quoted above (p. 253):

'As when in heaven the stars about the moon
Look beautiful, when all the winds are laid,
And every height comes out, and jutting peak
And valley, and the immeasurable heavens
Break open to their highest, and all the stars
Shine, and the shepherd gladdens in his heart.'

[p. 78]

With Tennyson's lines, Meredith compares Chapman's:

'As when about the silver moon when air is free from wind,
And stars shine clear, to whose sweet beams, high prospects, and
the brows
Of all steep hills and pinnacles, thrust themselves up for shows;
And even the lowly valleys joy to glitter in their sight,
When the unmeasured firmament bursts to disclose her light,
And all the signs in heaven are seen that glad the shepherd's heart.'
[p. 78]

For Meredith, "Both are fine," but Tennyson's lines cannot maintain the requisite pace for those passages where "javelins and arrows fly, and the heroes roar" Meredith speculates that not even Milton could have used his "epical" blank verse effectively: if even Milton had undertaken to English Homer, "it would [have been] at the entire sacrifice of the narrative homeliness." Arnold had required that an English Homer retain, as the most important quality of all, the "eminently noble" level of the original; Meredith maintains in his review that "no very high flight is wanted, but a vigorous one, and the power of mounting high when the old poet calls" (p. 78).¹³

Merivale's translation takes up the challenge to the prosodist that Meredith describes in his opening paragraph: "It was the recommendation of one of our poets that the measure of Marmion should be taken for an English version of the Iliad. He seems to have thought it more suitable than Chapman's line for getting at the swell and rush, and the emphatic pause here and there--the seventh wave, as one may say" (p. 77). The "measure of Marmion" is, as Meredith describes it, the "rhymed four-feet couplet, or triplet" (p. 79), and it is, along with the measure of the Ballad of Chevy Chase, the metre of Merivale's translation (p. 79).

(I assume that, in referring to "the Chevy Chase ballad measure," Meredith intends the reader to understand the meter of the second version printed by Francis James Child, which clearly displays the standard ballad form:

lines one and three, iambic tetrameter; lines two and four, iambic trimeter; rhyme scheme, abcb.)¹⁴

When held up against Meredith's criterion of the suitability for declamation, Merivale's translation reveals, by comparison with Chapman, "delightful animation and a splendid ring" (p. 79). Merivale's use of archaisms is under control and his varying the meters of Marmion and Chevy Chase with, for example, a "line for line" translation of a catalogue of nymphs "in no particular measure," results in a passage that Meredith describes as revealing Merivale's "extremely delicate taste" and as "not unpleasant" (p. 80). Meredith's parting praise for the translation returns to his primary criterion: "this translation of Homer appears to me to bear the test of recital, and I know of no other that will. The battles are never wanting in fire and motion, nor the dialogues in spirit. Mr. Merivale . . . has made the nation indebted to him for an Iliad, pleasant and ennobling to read, possible to declaim" (p. 80).

Meredith's interest in translating Homer did not fade with the review of Merivale's attempt. Two years later, Meredith wrote to Morley (January 27, 1870) about his recent activities, indicating that he had already begun to modify his stand on the proper meter for Homer: "The French Alexandrine [iambic hexameter with a regular caesura after the third foot], which I have been studying of late, is (though far off) nearer to ancient poetical music than anything we have out of Milton."¹⁵ Nineteen years after this, Meredith was still engaged in finding a way to English Homer acceptably--at least, according to Meredith's own standards. Sidney Colvin reports that in December of 1889, Meredith wrote to him inviting him to Box Hill: "I will read you some hexameters--

a version of the passages of the Iliad best known--sounding to me somewhat of the sea, a poor shell, but suggesting Homer" And Colvin adds that he "can remember as though it were yesterday his reading, with his strong, masculine, authoritative voice and rotund precise enunciation. . . ."¹⁶ On March 26, 1890, Meredith wrote to Sir Frederick Pollock: "I wish to see you, to read you a few fragments from the Iliad in English hexameters--which I think are successful, as far as our tongue admits. In my opinion the whole Iliad is open to a rendering in fluent hexameter lines. And I am sure that all other measures are inefficient to give a single tone of the Homeric." Almost two weeks later, on April 7, Meredith wrote again to Sir Frederick, including the fragment called "Clash in Arms of the Achaians and the Trojans" and saying, "Remember, that Homer's terminations are not always good spondees. Our English supplies few. Latin is richer than either. Still I think that such lines as we can get render the Iliad far better than iambic ten-syllable lines or the like."¹⁷

There is no indication, so far as I know, of a specific cause for the change in Meredith's thinking about the value of the hexameter in rendering Homer into English. I think it best to assume simply that after some trial-and-error experiments--recalling, for example, the translations tucked away in the Lang, Leaf, and Meyers translation (see above, p. 253)--Meredith concluded, perhaps from reading his attempts aloud, that the English hexameter comes closest after all to the movement and feel of the Homeric line. He does not so much as hint that he has come to agree with Arnold, who had recommended the hexameter in his lectures on translations of Homer, but there is the possibility that Arnold's opinion might have acted upon Meredith subliminally. Indeed,

Meredith's comment to Sir Frederick about the use of spondees recalls Arnold's observation that "The lumbering effect of most English hexameters is caused by their being much too dactylic; the translator must learn to use spondees freely."¹⁸

Presumably Meredith had full command of the Homeric line and of the poetry he proposed to translate into English hexameters, although I believe it is impossible to say whether he acquired it from Arnold, from his own study of Homer, or simply from a feeling for Homer's verse aided by his facility with language in general--from "a good ear," in fine. It would have been ideal, of course, had Meredith translated the passage from the Iliad already quoted in translations by Chapman, Pope, and Tennyson, for then Meredith's translation might have been held up against the earlier attempts he rejected in 1889-1890. But Meredith did translate one passage from Book I of the Iliad, a passage that he entitled "The Invective of Achilles" and that he excerpted in his review of Merivale, along with Chapman's version and with commentary on both.

[Chapman's] lines are loose, his rhymes too often unsatisfactory to the ear; the breaks in his lines are numerous and commonly ineffective. Take the example of Achilles upon Agamemnon:--

'Thou ever steep'd in wine!
Dog's face! with heart but of a hart! that nor in th' open eye
Of fight dar'st thrust into a press; nor with our noblest lie
In secret ambush. These works seem too full of death for thee:
'Tis safer far in the open host to dare an injury
To any crosser of thy lust. Thou subject-eating king!

Mr. Merivale gets his lines out without these stoppages for breath, in imitation of his model:--

'Ha! wine-besotten, hound-eyed, hind-hearted, thou that durst
Ne'er in the ranks thy courage try, and stand among the first!
Nor ever with our leaders the dexterous ambush set,
For in the open and the close are death and danger met!
Ha! better snatch the guerdon and lawful share of these,
Through the broad battle of the Greeks that dare thy pride oppose!
A king that sacks his people!'

The meter of each of the verse translations is, of course, different. Chapman's fourteener, when Meredith's own criterion of declamation is applied, leaves the reader breathless despite the frequent pauses. Merivale's alleged adaptation of the Marmion line seems to me to have, in most of the lines in the sample, more than four beats, no matter how artificially one reads them. Meredith's own observation that the rhyme distorts the impact of the sense of the original seems to me a just one, not only in the fourth line, but in the sixth as well. And if Homer's line is really to roll and swell, then Pope has done his original a great disservice in cramping his verse into the narrow compass of the heroic couplet.

Meredith's lines, readable as they are by comparison with Chapman's and the others' versions, suffer from the heavy dactylic throb that Arnold warned against, although Meredith does manage to introduce spondees here and there, even at the ends of lines. However, a close scansion of the 125 lines of the "Fragments" reveals that Meredith relies heavily on dactyls and achieves not so much the roll or surge that is possible in Greek where the dactyl can be what Professor Seymour describes as $2/4$ time, but a gallop or, at best, a throb that recalls the musical beat of $3/8$ time.²³ It is apparently the difference between Greek and English that creates the difficulty of rendering the Greek dactyl adequately in English: Greek is a much lighter language than English; our tongue relies upon stress for meter, whereas classical Greek verse relied upon the lengths of vowels. Whatever the cause of the difficulty in conveying Greek dactyls in English, Meredith forged ahead, using the trochee as his chief substitute foot, particularly at the ends of the lines: of the 125 lines, only some thirty-one have spondees in

the sixth position, and of the thirty-one, many are probably questionable, depending on whether the reader is willing to give two stresses to such line-endings as these:

'they unto me have in nowise a harm done'

'thee too, thou dog-eyed!'

'I some small blessed thing bore'

'thou mayst gather here plunder and wealth-store.'

'having heart of a deer, thou!'

'to thee that thing would have looked as a death-stroke.'

'now were this outrage on me thy last one.'

'the blaze of it radiates round far'

So those numerous tribes from their ships and their
shelterings poured forth ²⁴

In the second letter about the translations of the Iliad to Sir Frederick Pollock (see above, p. 257), Meredith included the lines entitled "Clash in Arms of the Achaians and the Trojans" with the comments on the unsuitability of the "ten-syllable line." These are Meredith's lines:

Not the sea-wave so bellows abroad when it bursts upon shingle,
Whipped from the sea's deeps up by the terrible blast of the
Northwind;
Nay, nor is ever the roar of the fierce fire's rush so arousing,
Down along mountain-glades, when it surges to kindle a woodland;
Nay, nor so tonant thunders the stress of the gale in the oaktrees'
Foliage-tresses high, when it rages to raveing its utmost
As rose then stupendous the Trojan's cry and Achaians'.²⁵
Dread upshouting as one when together they clashed in the conflict.

Pope's heroic couplets yield the following result:

Not half so loud the bellowing deeps resound,
When stormy winds disclose the dark profound:
Less loud the winds that from the Aeolian hall
Roar through the woods, and make whole forests fall;
Less loud the woods, when flames in torrents pour,
Catch the dry mountain, and its shades devour;
With such a rage the meeting hosts are driven,²⁶
And such a clamor shakes the sounding heaven.

I include the Lang, and Myers prose translation as a norm: "Not so loudly bellows the wave of the sea against the land, stirred up from the deep by the harsh breath of the north wind, nor so loud is the roar of burning fire in the glades of a mountain, when it springs to burn up the forest, nor calls the wind so loudly in the high leafy tresses of the trees, when it rages and roars its loudest, as then was the cry of the Trojans and the Achaians, shouting dreadfully as they rushed upon each other."²⁷

Even taking into consideration the oddity of "Whipped from the sea's deeps up," of "tonant" as an adverb modifying "thunder," and of "Dread upshouting," Meredith's lines have much more fluidity and movement than do Pope's with their rhymed stops and relatively regular, rather prosy, iambic feet. Indeed, recalling that Meredith left fragmentary translations tucked into his copy of the translation by Lang, Leaf, and Myers, I wondered if there might not be some similarity between Meredith's hexameters and that prose translation. A close comparison, however, shows that, as in the case of the passage just quoted, the correspondence is relatively slight and is limited to individual words: the word-order is almost always altered by Meredith to fit the movement of his dactylic hexameters and is therefore often distorted by the exigencies of his verse form. Such alteration and distortion are unfortunate, it seems to me, because Meredith's lines do have a swing and flow that neither Pope nor the prose translators have quite managed to capture--but that swing and flow are hampered by the awkwardness of the sentence structure and syntax. A good example appears in the passage Meredith entitled "The Horses of Achilles":

Read aloud according to this scheme, the lines are halting because of the number of pauses and because of the rather awkward spondees. It seems to me that there is no conclusion to draw but that Meredith, for all his own satisfaction with his attempts at turning Homer into English hexameters, did not quite measure up to his own standards.

Meredith's interest in translation was not limited, however, to the problems of rendering Homer in English verse of whatever measure. During the same period in which Meredith reviewed assorted poetry and Merivale's translation of the Iliad for the Fortnightly Review (1868-1869), he was also engaged in a study of Frederic Mistral, the Provençal poet whose Mirèio appeared in 1859. In dealing with Meredith's knowledge of languages other than English, I have excerpted the correspondence that refers to Mistral and to Meredith's admiration of him as a poet, and I made reference to Meredith's review of a translation of Mirèio by H. Crichton in the Pall Mall Gazette on March 27, 1869 (pp. 57-59). From the review it becomes apparent at once that Meredith had studied his Provençal and his Mistral thoroughly enough to criticize the translator's method, first in terms of the problem of conveying Mistral's vivid coloring and imagery to the reader and later in terms of choosing a verse form that will do justice to Mistral's own form, which Meredith describes at length:

Mistral's stanza is an invention of his own, and is admirably adapted to the language he resuscitates. It consists of seven lines, the first two of four feet in rhymed dissyllables, the third what we call an Alexandrine; the three following renew the four-feet measure in rhymed dissyllables, and a closing Alexandrine rhymes with its predecessor. In his hands, it is exceedingly flexible. By a dispersal of the pause at intervals, now upon the short lines, and now along the chord of his Alexandrines, the sonorous monotony of his song is varied with exquisite skill. Or he will run over the length of the Alexandrine to a break at the end of the fourth or the fifth line, while carrying out an image or preparing

the ear for one. In this manner he conducts a majestic narrative, and gives a plain³⁰ dialogue and a simple piece of description, with equal art and ease.

Crichton's translation is made in six-line stanzas, rhymed ababcc and consisting primarily of iambic pentameter, which Meredith erroneously identifies with the form of Sir William D'Avenant's Gondibert.³¹

Meredith offers as examples for his discussion of Crichton's and (or versus) Mistral's prosody the following passages, after which he presents his own rendition of the same stanza:

Noro se taiso: res mutavo.
 Talamen bèn Noro cantavo,
 Que lis autro, enterin, d'un clinamen de front
 L'acoumpagnavon, amistouso:
 Coume li mato de moutouso
 Que, penjouletto e voulountouso,
 Se laissen ana'nsemble au courrènt d'uno font.--Cant. 3

Mr. Crichton's translation runs:--

The strain was o'er, and lulled was every tongue
 So rare the minstrel, and the song so sweet;
 Each listener bending o'er the enchantment hung:
 Thus flocks of margin rushes stoop to meet
 The wizard wooings of the stream below
 And supple bend accordant to its flow.

"The enchantment" and "the wizard wooings" are the translator's superfluties.

We will endeavor to render it without ornamentation and upon the model of the original:--

Noro thus ended: spake no tongue.
 She so finely well had sung,
 That the others meanwhile bent towards her in a ring,
 Let on their lips the song prevail:
 Even as tufts of galingale
 That, drooping heads and yielding frail,
 Do give themselves as one to currents of a spring.³²

Even to one who must merely guess, even with aid of a French version, at the literal meaning of the stanza in Provençal, it should be apparent that Meredith's version is the more satisfactory of the two translations. Meredith was, however, aware of the difficulty of trying to render the

whole of Mirêio, a poem of book length, in the form of the original. His statement to this effect indicates the closeness with which Meredith studies Mistral's versification and seems to be of a piece with the close attention to prosody revealed in his comments, for example on F. H. Myers's Saint Paul (see below, pp. 288-89):

An exact imitation of Mistral's verse is impossible, owing to our poor supply of dissyllable rhymes, which are a source of energy in the Provençal, and bring the poet spiritedly to the trochaic stress on the first syllable of the four-feet lines, and offer a hurry of short syllables up to the iambic accent of the variation long six-feet line. These are things we cannot aim at, but it is quite within the scope of our English to build a structure of verse suitable to the genius of the language which shall in form and expression convey an adequate image of the Provençal, and be without monotony of an objectionable sort, if competently worked out. Octo-syllable stanzas of eight lines might dispense with the Alexandrines, though, in our opinion, a long closing line adds to the force rather than acts as an impediment to the flow of the verse.³³

Given Meredith's opinion of Crichton's translation, his description of the versification of the original Provençal poem, and his opinion of the possibility of rendering Mistral in English in a close imitation of the original form, it should be possible to judge Meredith's skill as a prosodist simply by contrasting his effort with the original and with Crichton's version.³⁴ (For the sake of convenience, I have placed the three versions side by side on the fold-out page following, p. 267).

It is fairly clear, even to the reader whose closest contact with Provençal is modern French, that Meredith is more faithful to the sense of Mistral's ideas and images than is Crichton: the most striking absurdity in Crichton's lines is, obviously, the use of "salacious" for "saline" in the last line of the second stanza--which fault is not an error of translation but an error of English diction that may have been the result of the need for enough syllables to fill out the pentameter line. The second stanza also demonstrates the distance between Crichton

[Crichton]

A hundred milk-white steeds that fanned the air
With wealth of mane, like water-torch in form--
A floating banner, steel ne'er bent a hair;
And when with life aburst and frolic warm,
Apart, and free, they scud--it streams behind
Like scarf of fairy quivering in the wind.

Shame to thy kind, O man! that thou couldst ne'er
The mares of Camargue to thy lordship press!
What though their flank with tyrant spur thou tear,
Or handle them with counterfeit caress.
Yet some I've seen by treachery o'ercome,
For exile quit their loved salacious home.

Till their proud lords to confidence beguiled,
Rued stretch'd on earth the conquest ill-begun;
Then twice ten leagues of marsh land free and wild
Their hoofs devour, till Vacarés' rewon;
Their native life the ten years' slaves inhale,
And strain their nostrils to the briny gale.

Wild Ocean's children well they claim to be,
Whilome self-franchised from old Neptune's car,
Still fleck'd with foam their sides--when threateningly
Augurs the ruffled sea, ships near and far
Their cables burst, 'tis then the palmy day
Of Camargue's stallions, neighing to the spray.

His flossy tail the flashing whip will mock;
He grinds the soil beneath his angry heel,
As though great Neptune, from his throne of rock,
Had pierced him with the sacred trident's steel,
While flood and tempest on th'affrighted shores,
Commingling sea and sky, his fury pours.

and Mistral and the effort Meredith makes to retain his original's meaning: Meredith's "Expatriate" is clearly closer to Mistral's "despatria" than is Crichton's "exile." But the question is not so much one of diction and meaning as of form. Meredith was aware of the failure of his translation to match precisely the 4-4-6-4-4-4-6 line arrangement used by Mistral:

The first of the translated stanzas here [i.e., in Meredith's own translation, q.v.] permits disorderly rhyming, and retains the concluding Alexandrine; the second has five-foot lines instead of six in the third and seventh place; the next two have five feet in the third and six in the seventh place; the last is Mistral's verse with the pair of Alexandrines, though without the dissyllable rhymes; some liberty, too, has been taken with the opening accents.³⁵

(Presumably Meredith's last remark, about "opening accents," refers to his practice of opening a line with a stressed syllable; see below, concerning "Cassandra," pp. 286 ff).

But despite the differences between the original and Meredith's translation, the reader can feel that Meredith comes closer to Mistral than does Crichton. Assuming that Provençal has something of the cadence of modern French, crossed with the cadence and sound of modern Italian, one can stumble through the Provençal lines and get the rhythm for oneself. Meredith's lines read aloud have something of the same cadence and seem to move at about the same speed as the original, with the exception of the dissyllabic rhymes, which Meredith cannot reproduce, as he says, because English is relatively poor in such rhymes. It seems reasonable to suggest, upon the basis of the relative success of Meredith's translation, that Meredith was indeed an accomplished prosodist who could use the techniques of his art to good effect.

There is still further evidence to consider, however. There is extant a letter of Meredith's to Marmaduke J. Teesdale, whom Professor

Cline has identified in his note to the letter as the author of "a translation of Goethe's epic-idyll Hermann and Dorothea" that appeared in a second edition in 1875. The letter is a commentary upon Teesdale's translation of this poem and, apparently, of at least one other effort of Teesdale's at translating Goethe's poetry, a shorter piece entitled "Alexis and Dora," written by Goethe in unrhymed lines alternating hexameters having monosyllabic endings. Hermann and Dorothea is written in unrhymed hexameters with dissyllabic endings.³⁶ Meredith's comments reveal a close reading of both Teesdale's translation and the original German.

I wish you had tried pentameters [apparently for "Alexis and Dora"], or else rhymed seven feet lines of equal length in the run of couplets. It would have given you space for many subtleties and beauties that you have had to overlook. It is a good maxim that in translations you should get the longest line possible to the temper of the poetry and avoid difficult rhyming. In your stanza here, you manage well with the first line. The second however is a dissyllable: in which words we are shockingly weak for purposes of rhyme, and the recurrence of the participle ending in "ing" which makes the greater number of our rhyming dissyllables becomes vulgar. Then midway you are so impoverished that you have to break off and go to monosyllable terminations, and this is unpleasant in a form of regular verse in which the ear has been accustomed to the finale in two notes. Nor do I much like the dancing measure in such a poem, dactylic or anapaestic. Here and there it has insisted on a word to suit the meter, and the word is not quite the thing. "Amphora" comes in finely: but the girl never carried an amphora. Then the mother "decorously pacing" is not Goethe's mother, who walked "proudly beside"--feierlich neben. [The references are to "Alexis und Dora," in which the girl carries a "Körbchen"--a little basket.] A mother must not be said to be pacing. "Flaunt in" and "wanting" are rhymes that echo one another horridly. I have ventured to mark in pencil a suggestion here and there, but pray take it merely as a hint on the spur of the reading; and if you think it an impertinence pardon it in the good intention. As to publication, I would not advise it until you have worked over and over it, crooned and polished, perhaps have recast it. You have a strong feeling for Goethe and for melody, but it takes time to render this Great One, and in my opinion it is right to give the whole of your author, and wrong to evade portions, as you have done in "Alexis and Dora." Believe me I am sympathetic with your work when I say it.--I liked the "Hermann and Dorothea" very much. The lines were occasionally very weak from your making them quite unnecessarily start upon prepositions against a cardinal maxim to be found in your Latin Grammar: for as the rule is that the preposition gives no ictus, the line does not

sail or roll at all when "of," "by," "from," etc. leads it, but shambles in prose and you reverse the fit arsis and thesis. But I like the honest translation and cordially thank you for the book.³⁷

The concern for translations that retain the feeling and movement of the original is as apparent in this letter as it is in the reviews of Merivale's Homer and of Crichton's Mistral. The concern for good prosodical practice and for consistency in writing verse is also apparent here, along with some clues about how to examine Meredith's prosody for consistent practices, clues to which I shall have recourse later on in this discussion.

The foregoing description of Meredith's activities and interest in the translation into English of the poetry of other languages should persuade the reader that Meredith's interest in prosody was not a passing or even intermittent interest. Indeed, from a letter written to Samuel Lucas in 1859, it is apparent that Meredith took the technical part of his vocation as poet seriously from the beginning. The passage is in defense of the metrical qualities of "Juggling Jerry," but it points to broader concerns: "I beg to say that my ear is not naturally defective; but that I defer to your classical superiority. I claim rather to be something of a metricist, as you would see if you came across a boyish volume of poems of mine [Poems, 1851] I want to turn a phrase or two in 'Juggling Jerry,' which piece, remember, must not be too rigidly criticized in its rhythm, being the supposed speech of a vagabond freethinker."³⁸

What is of particular interest here, of course, is the claim on Meredith's part to being "something of a metricist" and to have produced some prosodically interesting poetry in that early volume. I feel it necessary to repeat, here, that Meredith in 1849 offered to write an

article on the German philologist, Johann Gottfried Jakob Hermann, whose text on meter Meredith owned (see above, p. 243). It may be possible that Meredith's interest in prosody took root during his stay in Germany where he acquired an introduction to Hermann and to the whole, and special, world of the "metricist." It was a world in which Meredith apparently felt he had established himself: in 1870, he wrote to Morley that he hoped, "When I have leisure . . . to write some papers on poetry and versification." Such "papers" were presumably never written, but Meredith no doubt had a reputation as a prosodist: in April 1876 he wrote to Mrs. E. L. Brandreth that a friend, Professor James Joseph Sylvester, the mathematician, intended to request that the Governors of Johns Hopkins University invite Meredith "in the shape of a lecturer on Poetry and Rhetoric."³⁹ This distinction was yet to come, of course, to the author of the 1851 Poems, but a glance at the poems contained in that early volume should persuade almost any reader that the young Meredith was in command (with varying degrees of success) of a broad variety of verse forms.

No doubt the most striking and most commented-upon of the poems in Meredith's first volume is "Love in the Valley," the poem that Tennyson told Meredith he wished he had written himself.⁴⁰ The form of this lovely poem is an eight-line stanza employing what Professor Stevenson calls "a singing duple-triple beat that was almost unprecedented in English poetry."⁴¹ The meter is adapted, according to Siegfried Sassoon and Jack Lindsay, from what Sassoon describes as "George Darley's almost mawkish 'Serenade of a Loyal Martyr' . . . ," from which Sassoon quotes these lines:

Sweet in her green cell the Flower of Beauty slumbers,
 Lulled by the fair breezes singing thro' her hair;
 Sleeps she, and hears not the melancholy numbers
 Breathed to my sad lute amid the lonely air.⁴²

Meredith's opening lines run as follows:

Under yonder beech-tree standing on the green sward,
 Couch'd with her arms behind her little head,
 Her knees folded up, and her tresses on her bosom,
 Lies my young love sleeping in the shade.
 Had I the heart to slide one arm beneath her!
 Press her dreaming lips as her waist I folded slow,
 Waking on the instant she could not but embrace me--
 Ah! would she hold me, and never let me go?⁴³

I do not know exactly what Professor Stevenson has in mind in the designation, "duple-triple beat": it seems to me that the most acceptable scansion for these lines and for the poem as a whole is a loose four-beat cadence, sometimes yielding a better reading with five beats to the line, that carries the reader along smoothly and easily through the eleven stanzas of the poem. (Of course, scansion is an exercise that can yield widely different results from one practitioner to the next, and my reading of any of Meredith's poems is obviously open to question on the ground of emphasis, or of more thorough knowledge of what Meredith had in mind than I may possess.) The 1878 version, which expands the poem to twenty-six stanzas, retains the same cadences and has the same feeling as the earlier text. The later text contains lines that provide a perfect example of the intricacies of scansion. The question is, obviously, where the stresses should fall:

Lovely are the curves of the white owl sweeping
 Wavy in the dusk lit by one large star.⁴⁴

Both the feeling and the sense of the lines seem to demand more than four stresses to each line.

But I have moved beyond the prosodic achievements and distinctions of Meredith's first volume of poems. In the 1851 volume Meredith includes numerous "Songs" and other loose forms made up of mixed meters that defy labelling.⁴⁵ There are sonnets, including "John Lackland," a somewhat altered Shakespearean sonnet, and "Pictures of the Rhine," six sonnets that seem to be more Shakespearean than Italian and that, except for the first, have hexameters in the fourteenth line. "The Doe: A Fragment" is written in irregularly rhymed iambic tetrameter; "South-West Wind in the Woodland" is unrhymed iambic tetrameter (although in both cases there is considerable reliance upon substitution). In fact, the last-named poem was the subject of a letter from Meredith to Edmund Ollier, the son of the publisher of Shelley and Keats, who had criticized the poem for its lack of rhyme:

What you say of my blank octo-syllabic may be true, and is quite just; but the "S. W. Wind in the Woodland"--in which I used it--is a subject which, in my opinion, would have been marred by rhyme--Nor could I find any other (better) mode of giving my impression of the reckless rushing rapidity, and sweeping sound of the great wind among the foliage which I felt impelled to do in such manner that the ear should only be conscious of swiftness, and no sweetness; and that there should be no direct pause throughout. This (in my mind) the hurrying measure of the four feet gives. The blank "stanzas" are more open to objection I admit. Believe me, I venerate English Poetry too much to wish to make any innovation on the old majestic metre of Epic, Pastoral, and Drama; I used it for a purpose; for such a purpose I would use it again, but only for such a purpose and under such a plea--⁴⁶

It is difficult to choose lines from the poem that exactly meet Meredith's own description of what he is trying to do without quoting the entire work. However, part of the long sentence that constitutes lines 56-97 may suffice to illustrate what Meredith intends:

Long waited there, for aspens frail
That tinkle with a silver bell,
To warn the Zephyr of their love,
When danger is at hand, and wake
The neighboring boughs, surrendering all
Their prophet harmony of leaves,

Had caught his earliest windward thought,
 And told it trembling; naked birk,
 Down showering her dishevelled hair,
 And like a beauty yielding up
 Her fate to all the elements,
 Had swayed in answer; hazels close,
 Thick brambles and dark brushwood tufts,
 And briared brakes that line the dells
 With shaggy beetling brows, had sung
 Shrill music, while the tattered flaws
 Tore over them, and now the whole
 Tumultuous concords, seized at one
 With savage inspiration

And here follows a catalogue of trees and their various sounds, culminating in "A symphony of distant seas." The rush that Meredith was striving for is there, and the lack of "sweetness" almost without pause. It seems to me that Meredith was justified in claiming that the ends here justify the means.

Several poems, including "The Olive Branch" and "Daphne," are written in ballad form--four-line stanzas rhymed. respectively, abab and abcb. Some of the songs and a number of the titled poems are written in stanzaic forms that Meredith evidently invented for himself: "The Flower of the Ruins," for example, consists of eleven eight-line stanzas rhymed abbcacaa and measuring, in terms of syllables, 5-7-6-5-5-7-5-3 (there are some few variations in the syllable-count). "Requiem," to take another example, consists of four six-line stanzas of dactylic tetrameter, rhymed abcbdb, with frequent use of what I have come to call an "upbeat" at the beginning of several lines:

Whěre|fács āre|húelěss, whěre|éyelids āre|dėwless,
 Whěre|pássion is|silěnt ānd|hěarts nēvēr|crāve;
 Whěre|thóught hāth nŏ|thěme, ānd whěre|slėep hāth nŏ|drėam,
 In|pātiěnce ānd|pėace thŏu ārt|gŏne--tŏ thŷ|grāve!
 Gŏne whěre nŏ|wārning cān|wāke thěe tŏ|mŏrning.
 Dėad thŏ' ā|thŏusānd hānds|střetch'd ŏut|tŏ sáve.

The feeling of the lines is such, it seems to me, that when read aloud the unstressed opening syllable in the first four lines acts rather as an "upbeat," as I have suggested, than as a carry-over from the last foot of the preceding line. What Meredith's authority for this practice is I hesitate to say, but perhaps, when I come to the explanation for some of Meredith's odder prosodical practices, I may be able to offer a suggestion (see below, p. 301).

Perhaps most striking, from the prosodic point of view, are the seven poems entitled "Pastorals":

- I. eight six-line stanzas, rhymed; lines one through five are basically iambic tetrameter; line five has, except in stanzas six and seven, a feminine ending; line six has, except in stanza seven, five syllables.
- II. ten six-line stanzas, unrhymed; lines one through five are iambic tetrameter; line six is pentameter, often with some substitutions.
- III. two eleven-line stanzas, unrhymed; lines four and eleven are iambic trimeter; line seven is, although with some distortion, trochaic trimeter; the remaining lines in each stanza are basically iambic tetrameter, lines two and six having feminine endings.
- IV. four five-line stanzas, unrhymed; lines one through four are basically iambic tetrameter; line five is regularly hexameter and primarily iambic.
- V. four four-line stanzas, unrhymed; the line-lengths seem to vary somewhat from a basic pattern of 5-5-6-5 (in terms of feet) with many substitutions for the predominant iambic foot.

intended to be classic hexameters, and [Meredith] revised it more thoroughly than any other poem when revising the text of this first volume for inclusion in the Edition de Luxe [1896 and following]."⁴⁷ Therefore, taking the versatility of the prosody in the 1851 volume and the reaction to criticism of the prosody together, it seems reasonable to conclude that Meredith was from the beginning of his career as a poet much concerned with the technicalities of meter.

A fairly close examination of the 1851 volume also allows for some general comments on Meredith's prosodic practice. For example, he often allows a stress to fall on a preposition in order to compose a "perfect" line in a given measure. He consistently uses such uncertain words as "hour," "flower," "tower," and "toward" as monosyllables. Lines occasionally begin with an extra unstressed syllable that I have described for myself as an "upbeat." Meredith often uses a "trochaic" line containing an odd number of syllables--most often seven syllables--as a closed line scanning / x / x / x / .

Given the prosodic diversity--one is tempted to call it virtuosity--of the 1851 volume, it is not surprising to discover, as one reads through Meredith's poetic works, that he continued to write poetry in a great variety of forms and meters.⁴⁸ Even the most superficial survey reveals ballad forms, non-standard stanzaic forms, considerable use of tetrameter, rhymed and unrhymed; some iambic pentameter, both rhymed and unrhymed; a considerable number of sonnets; trimeter; triplet; heptameter; hexameter; and any number of "Songs" and poems in mixed meters and forms, perhaps most notably the Odes in Contribution to the Song of French History (1898), a brief description of which might serve to portray the whole of Meredith's prosodic acrobatics.⁴⁹

First of all, one must bear in mind that Meredith insisted at length upon the "song" idea while he composed the three difficult poems that, in addition to the earlier "France, December 1870," constitute the 1898 volume (see above, p. 236 ff). One must, therefore, apply to Meredith's Odes the same test that Meredith applied to English translations of Homer: one must read them aloud, submit them to the test of declamation (see above, p. 254 ff). This done, it suddenly becomes clear that Meredith, on the whole, masters the difficult trick of making verse and thought or content move together: Meredith, in brief, sings, although his song is more "a choral chant severe" than a soft, melodious air.⁵⁰ An air, of course, could hardly carry the weight of the one hundred years' worth of French history that Meredith crams into the four poems or of descriptions of battles and movements of armies in which the poems abound. The meter of the Odes varies constantly, as the following survey of two of the poems will testify: "The Revolution" opens with persistently regular iambs in irregularly alternating pentameter and tetrameter, but even this tremulous pattern breaks down with the third section.⁵¹ By section X, the original movement has been abandoned for galloping anapestic hexameters, admirably suited to the description of a clash between the soldiers of the Republic and her enemies. Indeed, the passage is so constructed that, read aloud, one is carried along with the galloping meter to two short lines in which the troops "Burst upon rocks"; the hoofbeats of the anapests come thick and fast. The sturdiness of those who "had stood for the stroke" of the attack is emphasized by the alliteration; the speed with which the tables were turned during the combat is pointed up by the quick, short syllables of the line that describes it: "Quick as the

trick of the wrist with the rapier" The meter, in brief, serves admirably the confusion of the images and of the event.

Of the four Odes, the most spectacular is "Alsace-Lorraine," the last, which opens with smoothly flowing tetrameters, largely iambic, whose sibilance and soft vowels reflect the smoothness with which the Hours have "gone on flow with the day that winked."⁵² In section II, this gentle movement gives way to heavily anapestic hexameters that seem peculiarly suited to the imaginative description of man's upward-striving efforts because of the irresistible climbing, accelerating movement of the lines. Indeed, the reader, without hesitation, rushes upward with the "Jets of the songful ascending silvery-bright water-tree," almost literally "Spouts" forth with it in the following line, out of breath, and slows down to get out the difficult "unbaffled resurgent" and to emphasize, willy-nilly, the "clipped" moments in man's forward-upward movement in the next line. The rush of these lines contrasts strongly with the stately, almost heavy, measure of the closing lines of the section. In section VII, Meredith undertakes to describe the ghost of Napoleon watching the Battle at Sedan and uses, for this purpose, some thirty lines of hexameters and then octameters that take the reader's breath away altogether. Working with the meter are the diction and the telling use of caesuras, creating a final effect of the ebb and flow of the battle that is really remarkable.⁵³

Mention of the Odes brings to mind another characteristic of some of Meredith's poetry that is at least tangentially connected with his practice in metrics, and that is the fairly obvious connection between the content of some of Meredith's verse and the form in which those poems are cast. In general, Meredith's verse falls into three

major categories, the first of which might be labelled "strictly traditional" forms. Here are poems in blank verse, classical hexameters, ballad stanzas (or close approximations of the standard ballad measure), and sonnets, of which Meredith wrote almost one hundred (including the sixteen-line variant in Modern Love).

Meredith's use of blank verse was rather scant, perhaps because of his opinion of Tennyson's use of the form (see below, pp. 289-90): it appears only in such pieces as "The Shipwreck of Idomeneus," and "The Cageing of Ares," where the epical qualities of the stories Meredith tells may have suggested the form; and in "Milton," whose own inimitable use of the form no doubt suggested imitation on Meredith's part.⁵⁴ The classical hexameters appear, as I have already indicated, in "Pastorals VII" in the 1851 volume, and, of course, in Meredith's efforts at translating Homer (see above, p. 255ff). Other poems in hexameters are "Grandfather Bridgeman," "Phoebus with Admetus," and the brief "The Main Regret."⁵⁵ It may be that the tragic nature of the content of the last-named poems suggested the hexameters, but there is no clear connection between form and content here. Ballad (or ballad-like) stanzas recur throughout Meredith's poetry, from the early "Daphne" and "London by Lamplight" to "Archduches Anne" and "A Preaching from a Spanish Ballad."⁵⁶ It would seem that Meredith used the ballad form for telling tales, quite in keeping with the form's origin, although in the case of the "Preaching," Meredith makes a philosophical point, a practice that is not characteristic of the traditional ballad.

The sonnet was a favorite with Meredith, and he used it for all sorts of purposes, from commemorating Shakespeare to describing the "State of Age," the "World's Advance," and Dante Gabriel Rossetti (in

"A Later Alexandrian"). He evidently was an early practitioner of the form, for Maurice Buxton Forman records correspondence between Meredith and Leitch Ritchie of Chambers's Journal in 1849 concerning presumably a group of sonnets, including the sonnet entitled "John Lackland" (later republished in the 1851 volume): "On November 30, 1849, Meredith wrote to Ritchie:--'I accompany this [i.e., the letter] with some Sonnets on Two Kings of England,--'I find I have forgotten to enclose the Sonnets mentioned in my letter of yesterday's date . . . [sic] I think they will do very well if taken in a series and I have a great many already finished.'" ⁵⁷ The "great many" sonnets about kings of England have apparently not survived.

"John Lackland" is a somewhat altered Shakespearean sonnet rhyming ababddceffegg, but the sonnets entitled "Pictures of the Rhine," also published in the 1851 volume, seem to be a cross between the two types, Shakespearean and Italian. In all but the first of these six sonnets, the fourteenth line has six feet, and in all the sonnets the rhyme scheme is, to put it mildly, scrambled. Indeed, a survey of Meredith's sonnets, excluding those of Modern Love for the moment, reveals that Meredith leaned toward the Italian form: true Shakespearean sonnets occur only three times: in "The Spirit of Shakespeare" and its sequel, and in "Hawarden."⁵⁸ In the case of the sonnets on Shakespeare, Meredith admitted to Norman MacColl that, although "Generally I prefer the Italian form, . . . the subject dictated the home model" for the lines on the "home" poet.⁵⁹

Meredith's preference for the Italian sonnet may perhaps be explained by a comment Meredith made in a letter of November 13, 1901, to Mrs. Ada Bartrick Baker, a poet who had sent Meredith a volume of her work.

Your book shows a marked advance on what I have seen of your work. You have drunk deep of the Shakespearean Sonnet, a good well: and there are many hints of the tone. As to the form, the final couplet requires a concentration in the foregoing lines to satisfy the mind and ear. At its best it may be too summary. Read the Sonnets of Wordsworth, the greatest master in this branch of verse. You will see how the close, while fully rounding the idea, lends to imagination.

Professor Bartlett, quoting the last two sentences, observes that Meredith "thereby named his own master in the art of the sonnet."⁶⁰ Anyone glancing through the considerable body of Wordsworth's sonnets will notice, of course, that they are Italian in form and that they make good use of the eight-six grouping of the lines to present the situation and its resolution or the event and its meaning--a practice that Meredith follows fairly closely, as is revealed in the most often cited of his sonnets, "Lucifer in Starlight."

Modern Love, however, poses something of a puzzle. To Maxse, in January 1862, Meredith described the poems simply as sonnets. In the thirtieth poem, the speaker concludes with the words, "Lady this is my sonnet to your eyes," and both statements seem to settle the matter. But in a letter to William Sharp, replying to a request to include one of the sections in a volume of "collected Sonnets of this Century," Meredith wrote as follows (November 12, 1885):

You are at liberty to make your use of the Sonnet you have named. The Italians allow of 16 lines, under the title of "Sonnets with a tail."

But the lines of "Modern Love" were not designed for that form.⁶¹ The statement is ambiguous: does Meredith mean that the poems in Modern Love were not, despite his own early designation, intended to be sonnets? Or does he mean that they were not intended as Italian sonnets-with-a-tail? The best procedure in categorizing the poems, it seems to me, is to continue to call them sonnets in keeping with Meredith's own earliest practice.

The second major category of Meredith's poetry-as-form seems to me to be a group containing poems written in stanzas apparently of Meredith's own invention or adaptation from someone else's stanzas, or in meters that, although recognizable as made up of standard feet and line lengths, are not "strictly traditional." Here one finds such forms as the "blank octo-syllabic" Meredith defends in the letter to Ollier (see above, p. 273) and loose forms made up varying line lengths, non-standard stanzas, complex rhyme schemes (or no rhyme scheme at all), and designated, quite often, as "songs." Meredith used such forms for a diversity of purposes, ranging from lyrical nature descriptions like those in "Love in the Valley" and in such slight little poems as "Violets," "Twilight Music," and "Will O'the Wisp," to the mixture of lyric description and profound philosophical implication in "The Lark Ascending," "The Woods of Westermains," "Hard Weather," "Dirge in Woods," "A Faith on Trial," and many others. Obviously, in many of these poems, the mixture of lyric and didactic is overwhelmingly confusing, and Meredith often seems to defeat his own purpose by trying to communicate complex philosophical points of view through melodic, descriptive verse.⁶²

The third major category contains the rambling, apparently random, verbose and pompous poems that Meredith created in such instances as "The Empty Purse," "The Sage Enamoured and the Honest Lady," "Foresight and Patience," the Odes in Contribution to the Song of French History (which, despite its pretensions to "song," really does not qualify even as a Meredithian "Song"), and, perhaps, the group of advisory poems including "The Vital Choice," "With the Huntress," "With the Persuader," and "The Test of Manhood." Meredith himself regretfully categorizes such poems as "verse" in a letter of 1906 to Mrs. M. Sturge Henderson:

"I regret that I have written didactic verse, such as The Empty Purse, which is not poetry. The muse shuns that paedagogue. But I had to convey certain ideas that could not find place in the novels."⁶³ In passing on this observation to me, Professor Bartlett observes that she has often wondered why Meredith did not make use of the prose essay to "convey" the complex ideas about materialism, history, and life in general that struggle so desperately to make themselves clear through the tortured medium of Meredith's conception of "didactic verse." There is apparently no answer to the question, however, and the reader is left to make his way through the tangled imagery and ideas of these poems as best he can.

That the difficulty of such poems was not mere carelessness is, perhaps, borne out by the existence of no fewer than ten drafts, according to Professor Bartlett, for the apparently diffuse, careless, and loosely constructed "Empty Purse," which runs in the Memorial Edition text to 692 lines. If one opens to the poem at random, as I have just done, one is likely to find himself confronted by such lines as these:

In his glory of banquet strip him bare,
 And what is the creature we view?
 Our pursy Apollo Apollyon blest:
 A small one, still of the crew
 By the serpent Apollyon blest:
 His plea in apology, blindfold Fool.
 A fool surcharged, propelled, unwarned;
 Not viler, you hear him protest:
 Of a popular countenance not incorrect.
 But deeds are the picture in essence, deeds
 Paint him the hooved and horned,
 Despite the poor mother he pleads,
 And his look of a nation's elect.
 We have him, our quarry confessed!
 And scan him: the features inspect
 Of that bestial multiform: cry,
 Corroborate I, O Samian Sage!
 The book of thy wisdom, proved
 On me, its last hieroglyph page,
 Alive in the horned and hooved?
 Thou! will he make reply.⁶⁴

The poem is subtitled "A Sermon to Our Later Prodigal Son" and is a critique, delivered in terms of Jesus' parable of the Prodigal Son, of the materialism that Meredith felt had overcome his country. Meredith conceives of a typical young man brought up to see money and expenditure as the only mode of life and then reveals him, in part in the lines quoted above, for what he is: a creature of the devil. The young man is not permitted by the speaker to claim that he was ignorant of the nature of his course or of his origins. His deeds, as Meredith insists in the lines above, reveal the truth, despite the fact that he seems to be the epitome of British young manhood. That reading through this sermon-poem is an ordeal Meredith admits at the close:

Enough, poor prodigal boy!
 Thou has listened with patience; another had howled.
 Repentance is proved, forgiveness is earned.
 And 'tis bony: denied thee by thy succulent half
 Of the parable's blessing, to swineherd returned:
 A Sermon thy slice of the Scriptural calf!⁶⁵

Why Meredith chose to deliver his castigation of materialism in this form is beyond guessing: perhaps the poet in him insisted that this point be made in this fashion, just as it insisted that he deliver himself of the story of France in verse--and the confession of the "Lady" and the discussion between "Foresight and Patience" and the advice to the young in the four poems beginning with "The Vital Choice." Perhaps a degree of perversity, encouraged by public reaction against his increasing obscurity, drove Meredith into making his point obliquely and through the clouded glass of his metaphorical habit of vision.

The diversity of Meredith's metrics outlined in the foregoing brief survey does not, of course, prove conclusively that he was in fact

the careful metricist he claims to be in the 1859 letter to Samuel Lucas quoted above (p. 270). There are other indications of Meredith's concern with prosody that are less open to the charge of mere caprice tht might be levied against the poetry as it stands than are the poems themselves. For example, in Meredith's first letter to Augustus Jessopp (1861; see above, pp.226ff.), notable for its statement about Meredith's aims in poetry in general, Meredith reacts to what must have been a comment of Jessopp's upon the rhythm of earlier poems by pointing to the forthcoming "Cassandra" as being "as severe in rhythm as you could wish."⁶⁶ A glance at the poem suggests that Meredith was indeed "severe" in composing it: the poem consists of nineteen five-line stanzas, rhyming abbab. Of the ninety-five lines, only fourteen begin with a syllable that may possibly be unstressed. Indeed, the trochaic opening of each line is so relentless that the ear tires of it quickly. Of all the lines, only six end on what might be read as an unstressed syllable, the rhyme in stanzas III and IX being identical: "shriek-tower-flower-Greek-hour." But the practice in Poems (1851) was almost consistently to make "flower," "tower," and "hour" monosyllabic, and I can only assume that Meredith intended the same reading here, with the result that every line in the poem is indefatigably end-stressed.

Stanzas III and IV may serve as indicative of the movement of the poem as a whole:

Once to many a pealing shriek,	
Lo, from Ilion's topmost tower,	[?]
Ilion's fierce prophetic flower	[?]
Cried the coming of the Greek!	[?]
Black in Hades sits the hour.	[?]

Eyeing phantoms of the Past, [?]
 Folded like a prophet's scroll, [?]
 In the deep's long shoreward roll [?]
 Here she sees the anchor cast:
 Backward moves her sunward soul.

The question-marks indicate lines the scansion of which is open to change, depending upon how one reads prepositions and adjectives such as "like." However, in view both of Meredith's comments to Teesdale on the subject of prepositions in initial position (pp. 268, 269 above) and of his contrary practice in many of the poems preceding "Cassandra," I can only conclude that Meredith did not always practice what he preached.

The first four lines of the sample are apparently fairly regular in their mixture of standard feet, trochees and iambs for the most part. But the fifth line offers difficulties: there is either a syllable lacking or a syllable too many. How, then, can Meredith describe the prosody here as "severe"? The answer to the question may lie in an examination of a metrics textbook that Meredith possessed: Johann Gottfried Jakob Hermann's Elementa Doctrinae Metrica (see Appendix I). Inasmuch as Meredith proposed, in 1849, to write a memoir of Hermann for Chambers's Journal (p.243 above), and as he still owned a copy of the 1816 Latin text when he died, it seems reasonable to assume that Meredith was to some extent influenced by the classifications of meters Hermann offers his reader in that erudite and difficult study. However, I prefer to delay again any conclusion on the supposition of the influence of Herman until I have included all the information I have accumulated supporting Meredith's abiding interest in prosody.

The reviews of 1868 for the Fortnightly Review have already been looked into for clues about Meredith's idea of the role of the poet (pp. 227 ff above), but they also offer some hints of Meredith's concern with prosody. Of particular interest in connection with the versification of "Cassandra" are comments Meredith offers on Frederick H. Myers's Saint Paul:⁶⁷

[The poem] breathes throughout the spirit of St. Paul, and with a singular stately melody of verse. The lines are rhymed fours, alternating eleven and ten syllables: what we call the accent is on the first syllable of each line invariably. The structure of the verse is German, but we have adopted it for the last twenty years. The paucity of dissyllable rhymes in our tongue, and the iteration of participle terminations, rendered vulgar by long service, to which we are reduced, make it objectionable, unless when a peculiar effect of music is required to suit a grave subject. German, on the other hand, is redundant in dissyllables, and rich in rhymes for them. German verse falls naturally into hendecasyllable lines, whether rhymed or not; but when they recur closely, as in German dramatic verse, they are sleepy to my ear. The five-feet iambic line nods, and the alternating rhymed lines should have, I think, a wakeful regular emphasis on the opening syllable, commencing either with a trochee or the dactyl foot, which Mr. Myers has used with remarkable skill, and a dignity unwavering to the end.

Meredith offers four stanzas in illustration, of which I shall reproduce only two, with the scansion:

'Shé ás one wíld, whóm vĕry stripes ĕnhárdĕn	[a]
léapt mǎny tĭmes fróm tórture ōf á drĕam	[b]
shránk bý thĕ loathly ōlives ōf thĕ gárdĕn,	[a]
gróves ōf á téachĕr, and Ílyssus' strĕam;	[b]
'then tŏ thĕir témplĕ Damarís wóuld clámber,	[a]
hĭgh whĕre ǎn ídol tĭll thĕ dáwn wás dŏne	[b]
bright in á lĭght and éminent in ámber	[a]
caught thĕ sérĕne sŭrprĭses ōf thĕ sŭn.'	[b]

In brief, Myers's practice of beginning every line with a stressed syllable is exactly the practice Meredith follows in "Cassandra," and

meets the terms suggested in the letter to Teesdale (p. 269 above).

The accuracy with which Meredith describes the lines he quotes is indicative of his care in reading the verse and in reading the lines with which he compares it--German and English both.

Meredith's comments on the prosody of contemporary poets did not spare even Tennyson, whom he admired. When Tennyson's Holy Grail volume was published late in 1869, Meredith commented upon its poetic and prosodic qualities in rather acerbic terms:

[To William Hardman, December 19, 1869]⁶⁸

Alack, the Holy Grail. Did you ever read such lines? The Poet rolls them out like half yards of satin. They look and taste cud-chew. The figures are Dresden China. If he has hit the mind of his age as it seems, the age too has hit him and knocked spontaneity out of him. But both are worthier than they show. Gold, the go-between, the abominable Sir Pandarus, has corrupted them.

Apparently enamored of his turns of phrase and metaphors, Meredith wrote on the same day the letter to Captain Maxse quoted above (p. 230).⁶⁹

Still pursuing the unfortunate Grail volume, Meredith wrote to Augustus Jessopp on January 7, [1870], that the "composition . . . is to poetry what Vestments are to Religion" and that, again, the Arthurian poems do not hold up when compared to "the grand 'Lucretius'!"⁷⁰ On January 20, 1870, Meredith observed to Morley that he was pleased to see that "the 'Quarterly' deals rather firmly with the 'Holy Grail'--something in these days. It is hard on the 'Lucretius'--compares the flow of the English lines with the Latin Hexameters of the poet. No one but Milton has the roll of the English line"--implying, it would seem, that Meredith, for all his praise of Tennyson's "Lucretius," did not really find it commensurate with the achievement of Milton in its use of blank verse.⁷¹ Finally, in an interview with Edwin Clodd printed in the

Fortnightly Review in 1909 and excerpted by S. M. Ellis, Meredith dismissed the Idylls, "except the Morte d'Arthur," as "'a part of the "poetical baggage" of which every writer of a large body of verse must be unloaded. Tennyson's rich diction and marvelous singing power cannot be overrated,'" but Meredith had little to say about the matter that Tennyson's manner, good though it was, conveyed to the reader.⁷²

In addition to the comments made by Meredith upon Tennyson's prosodic practices, there are letters from the self-proclaimed metricist to little-known or unknown poets that contain critical appraisals of their work and that are, like the letter to Teesdale (p. 269 above), partial clues to Meredith's thinking and techniques as a poet. A good example occurs in a letter of March 5, 1884, to André Raffalovich, a young Frenchman who had written a volume of English poetry:

My astonishment has been great at your singular, and melodious, mastery of our versification; and also, let me add critically, at the amazing, though rare, lapses here and there, where from your earlier habit of counting by syllables instead of by the accent, you drop half a foot, or throw a stress on a particle unable to sustain it. I wonder, you see, because of your general and evidently easy triumph:--as though a gala coat should present an astounding patch.

How do you scan:--

'Love whispered, and I who heard not knew not' when the rhyme is the last single syllable? Your verse insists on shortening 'who heard not.' Even for that, you should have put 'Love whisperèd.'

But the instances are rare. The 'Story of a Love,' with its adept recurrent stroke on the initial syllable, is as good as anything of our best lyrists.

'All in one the hunted host
Was I, and the Hunter's beast,'
etc. etc.

A perfect stanza, and one of many.--The Terza rima of 'A Child's Vision' is finely wrought to convey a beautiful poetic idea.

Perhaps on the whole I like best your sonnets. You have deeply studied Shakespeare's. You have drunk of Milton. The first two lines of 'Health and Romance' have his full-mouthed clarion tone. 'In Paradise' charms me--save for the skip in the 12th line. 'Love's Secresy' is pure Shakespearian in style and turn of thought. XXXII. is perfectly rendered.--I do not stop for lack of numbers to name in praise.⁷³

A certain amount of teasing permeates the letters to Herbert Trench on September 25 and 27, 1907, wherein Meredith comments upon the versification of at least one of Trench's poems, that identified by William Maxse Meredith as "Apollo and the Fisherman."

Be wary of your 'Egypt' line, unless it contains a mystic meaning. Apollo into Egypt went, and thence he brought a mummy; with hope that it would keep silent: a reputable dummy. The years embalmed, that lay behind, from light were closely shuttered. But it would speak its dusty mind: nor even the God of Song could find the rhyme for what it uttered.

The poem is deep in thought and takes arms against a compact multitude. So prepare for opposition. As to the verse it is open to criticism. Your iambic step sometimes in the next line is trochaic, and probably stress is intended. The reader has to take it aloud. I can make nothing of the line where there is the name Egypt. Still the metre does not much hamper the deep significance. Such a poem could not have the richness of 'Deirdre.' It is in its way an advance.

The good ship Immortality methinks has served her time. On the dread rock Finality, She splits, a wreck sublime. And when (according to the log) the crew took her in hand, They'd but six shabby goes of grog per day ere hope of land. Now on the seventh rose up three, and all were of one mind; the good ship Immortality beneath the waves to find. The bo'sun said: No go of grog to prime us, Still must we, Toil on, good Lord. But here the Log is blanker than the sea.

You compel terrific imitation. Accept the flattery.

Professor Cline identifies two volumes of Trench's poems: New Poems, 1907, and Deirdre Wed and Other Poems, 1908.⁷⁴

Finally, there is a letter of April 12, 1908, from the grand old poet Meredith to T. Herbert Warren, identified by Professor Cline as the author of The Death of Virgil (1908), a letter that reveals again Meredith's grasp of the versification of the classical poets and his consistent habit of reading and studying closely the prosody of volumes of poetry sent to him: "Deep love and study of the suave Virgilian line have informed your hand to give us this poem, truly a not unworthy issue, and coming out of a furnace" ⁷⁵

Even in the face of all these snatches of evidence of Meredith's interest in metrics, the most intriguing glimpse into Meredith's devotion

to the subject brings me back to the exchange in 1849 between the young poet and Chambers's Journal--to the mention of a biographical study of Johann Gottfried Jakob Hermann, the German philologist (see above, p.243). In view of the interest Meredith displayed in such an esoteric figure so early in his career, I think it is possible to assume that Meredith made his acquaintance with Hermann's work during his year and a half as a student at Neuwied: it seems unlikely that a Latin text on metrics by a German philologist, written in 1816, should be a work used in a relatively obscure British public school like St. Paul's in Southsea. The copy of Hermann's Elementa Doctrinae Metricae in the Catalogue of part of Meredith's library is dated 1816, suggesting early acquisition by Meredith--again, probably in Germany. Between the date of the suggested study of Hermann in 1849 and the date of the posthumous Catalogue (1911), Hermann is named twice in Meredith's work and letters; Hermann's unidentified influence on Meredith is still a matter of speculation.

There are, however, some clues. In 1867, Meredith published a poem entitled "Phaëthôn: Attempted in the Galliambic Measure" in the Fortnightly Review. When the poem was reprinted in the 1887 volume, Ballads and Poems of Tragic Life, Meredith added a note giving Hermann as the authority for the measure:

Hermann (Elementa Doctrinae Metricae), after citing lines from the Tragic poet Phrynichus and from the Comic, observes:

Dixi supra, Phrynichorum versus videri puros Ionicos esse. Id si verum est, Galliambi non alia re ab his differunt, quam quod analcasin, contractionesque et solutiones recipiunt. Itaque versus Galliambicus ex duobus versibus Anacreonteis constat, quorum secundus catalecticus est, hac forma:

$$\begin{array}{cccc|cccc} \overline{\cup\cup} & \text{—} & \text{—} & \cup\cup & \text{—} & \text{—} & \cup\cup & \text{—} & \text{—} \\ \overline{\cup\cup} & \text{—} & \overline{\cup} & \overline{\cup\cup} & \cup & \text{—} & \text{—} & \cup & \text{—} \end{array}$$

The wonderful Attis of Catullus is the one classic example. A few lines have been gathered elsewhere. Lord Tennyson's Boadicea rides over many difficulties and is a noble poem. Catullus makes general use of the variant second of the above metrical forms:

Mihi januae frequentes, mihi limina tepida:

With stress on the emotion:

Jam, jam dolet quod egi, jam jamque poenitet.

A perfect conquest of the measure is not possible in our tongue. For the sake of an occasional success in the velocity, sweep, volume of the line, it seems worth an effort; and, if to some degree serviceable for narrative verse, it is one of the exercises of a writer which readers may be invited to share.⁷⁶

The mysterious-looking scansion that Meredith transcribes from Hermann's text requires some explanation. The accent marks indicate the ictus, which Hermann identifies as "a mark or indication of an absolute cause," that is, the syllable in a series of syllables that indicates the point at which the prosodist should begin to count and group syllables in order to determine the sort of foot the poet has used. The macrons, of course, indicate long syllables, which usually constitute the arsis, and the breves indicate the thesis, or the short syllables that do not usually take the ictus.⁷⁷ Where the arsis and thesis are both indicated, as in the last syllable of line one in the scansion, Hermann expects the reader to understand that the poet may use either a long or a short syllable. Where the arsis appears above two breves, the reader is to understand that the arsis may be "resolved" into two short syllables. (I feel that I ought to add that Hermann does not explain this system--at least, not in the epitome--in so many words: I discovered the method of reading his scansion simply by staring at it and at the discussion that follows it in each example that he gives throughout the text.) Given this interpretation, then, it ought to be clear that what Hermann lists under Galliambics amounts to four possible variants on the basis

of the first line, and sixty-four possible variants on the basis of the second line of verse indicated by the scansion. There are, then, sixty-eight versions of the Galliambic line, some of which, at least, ought to be feasible in English.

An examination of Meredith's experiment in Galliambics reveals, it seems to me, a valiant attempt at reproducing a difficult and curious meter of interest only to specialists in prosody. Consider lines fourteen through twenty-nine, in which Phaëthôn tells his father, Phoebus, the wish that Phoebus has promised to fulfill:

Then, || re-joiced, || the stripling answered: || 'Rule of day give me; give it me,
'Give me place that men may see me how I blaze, || and transcendently
'I, || divine, || proclaim my birthright.' || Darkened Helios, || and his utterance
Choked prophetic: || 'O half mortal!' || he exclaimed in an agony,
'O lost son of mine! || lost son! || No! || put a prayer for another thing;
'Not for this: || insane to wish it, || and to crave the gift impious!
'Cannot other gifts my godhead shed upon thee? || miraculous
'Mighty gifts to prove a blessing, || that to earth thou shalt be a joy?
'Gifts of healing, || wherewith men walk as the Gods beneficently;
'As a God to sway to concord hearts of men, || reconciling them;
'Gifts of verse, || the lyre, || the laurel, || therewithal that thine origin
'Shall be known even as when I strike on the string'd shell with melody,
'And the golden notes, || like medicine, || darting straight to the cavities,
'Fill them up, || till hearts of men bound as the billows, || the ships thereon.'
Thus intently urged the Sun-God; || but the force of his eloquence
Was the pressing on of sea-waves scattered broad from the rocks away. 78

(Again I add the caveat that one reader's scansion may not match another's.) Obviously, only some of Meredith's lines match the possibilities suggested by Hermann's scansion, and certainly the attempt to produce Galliambics results in some rough poetry and in some unfortunate turns of phrase, from the transposition of subject and verb in "Darkened Helios" to the peculiar structure of "till hearts of men bound as the billows, the ships thereon," and "the pressing on of sea-waves broad from the rocks away." Similar distortions occur later in the poem: "flame-outsnoiting horses" and "Pitifully for mastery striving in ascension," for example. But some lines in Meredith's experiment in Galliambics stand up well when read aloud, for then the rushing, surging motion of such lines makes itself felt and the reader is carried aloft--at least, if he is imaginative--with Phaëth^{on} and, in effect, falls with the boy into the "vexed sea of Adria" Indeed, the closing lines of the poem do slow down and drift off into a quiet lament for the wilful youth catapulted from his path across the sky, by Zeus, whose "bolt flew unerringly" toward the chariot and brought it down. At this point the feeling of the verse changes:

Like the flower on the river's surface when expanding it vanishes,
 Gave his limbs to right and left, quenched: and so fell he precipitate,
 Seen of men as a glad rain-fall, sending coolness yet ere it comes:
 So he showered above them, shadowed o'er the blue archipelagoes,
 O'er the silken-shining pastures of the continents and the isles;
 So descending brought revival to the greenery of our earth.

Hither, noisy in the breezes now his sisters shivering weep,
 By the river flowing smooth out to the vexed sea of Adria,
 Where he fell, and where they suffered sudden change to the tremulous
 Ever-wailful trees bemoaning him, a bruised purple cyclamen.⁷⁹

That Meredith did not merely dash these off and forget them is apparent from a letter to Augustus Jessopp October 23, 1868: "did you perchance see the poem of Phaëth^{on} done in Galliambics in the Fortnightly Review

of last September a year back? To my mind they are nearer the mark, but as the public is not near it I might as well have missed. Two or three lines want a correcting touch."⁸⁰ It seems significant that it is to Jessopp that Meredith comments on the correctness of his experiment: it was to Jessopp, too, that Meredith wrote about "Cassandra" (see above, pp. 226, 268).

However, the point at issue is not Meredith's success with an esoteric form of verse but the possibility that Hermann acted as a continuous influence upon Meredith's prosodical practice--or, at least, that Hermann's description of verse forms in the Elementa Doctrinae Metricae might help explain some of Meredith's more unusual metrical habits. On pages 286ff. , I introduced Meredith's comments upon the "severity" of the verse form of "Cassandra" and indicated that the poem consists almost entirely of seven-syllable lines that do not always fall neatly into the conventional feet recognized in English poetry. While I was reading through the epitome of Hermann's text, I came across a chapter in Book II entitled "Of Tetrameter Catalectic Trochaics" that suggested a possible explanation of the form of the lines in "Cassandra."⁸¹ Hermann, it must be noted first, states that, according to his observations, "Trochaic . . . numbers consist for the most part of double periodic orders, i.e., of dipodiae." Translated into symbols, what Hermann means is that perfectly regular trochaic tetrameter, the meter in point, would look like this:

— — — — | — — — — | — — — — | — — — —

"Catalectic verses," according to Hermann, "are those which want one syllable, as the trimeter

— — — — | — — — — | — — — — ."

Therefore, trochaic catalectic tetrameter for Hermann would appear as follows:

— u — u | — u — u | — u — u | — u —

Needless to say, this has no resemblance to Meredith's seven-syllable lines in "Cassandra." But if one translates Hermann's dipodal trochaic numbers into the normal form in modern English verse, trochaic catalectic tetrameter looks like this:

/ u / u / u /

And that is precisely the scansion of the majority of the lines in "Cassandra." I submit that there is a possibility that Meredith's claim to severity in the composition of "Cassandra" may have been justified in Meredith's view by Hermann's terminology and by the transposition of that terminology into English prosodical practice.

The same conclusion might be drawn if "The Woods of Westermain" were the poem in question.⁸² Here Meredith composed 298 lines of verse that varies from three-syllable to five-syllable to seven-syllable lines, for the most part, with a few lines that measure somewhere in between. Almost every line begins on a stressed syllable, and most of the seven-syllable lines have precisely the /u/u/u/ rhythm that characterizes "Cassandra." Surely, to repeat the point made in connection with the latter poem, this is not accidental or slipshod workmanship: it seems reasonable to conclude that Meredith, self-proclaimed as a "metricist," did have in mind some strict form that would justify the apparent incomplete measure he used--a strict form authorized, so to speak, by Hermann's description of trochaic catalectic tetrameter converted into typical English feet.

The influence of Hermann may be the explanation for other phenomena and references in Meredith's poetry and in his comments on his art. Meredith's interest in Englishing Homer, discussed at length earlier in this chapter, may have resulted in the decision to use classical hexameters under the sway of Hermann's discussion of "Heroic Verse" in Chapter XXV of Book II, which in the epitomized version runs to nearly six pages of close examination of the varieties of acceptable lines.⁸³ The justification to Edmund Ollier of the "blank octo-syllabic" and to Samuel Lucas of the apparently loose prosody of "Juggling Jerry" (see above, pp. 273, 270) may have been suggested by Hermann's comments in Chapter XII of Book III, "Of the Composition of Numbers," wherein Hermann establishes two major processes to be pursued in composing verse: "The whole method of constructing verses is comprised in election, which discovers the kind of numbers [i.e., meters] adapted to each subject, and management, which is employed in a suitable formation and conjunction of those kinds."⁸⁴ Indeed, if these words of Hermann's, and the following analysis he gives of the points to consider under each heading, constitute part of Meredith's approach to writing poetry, it is easy to understand the diversity of verse forms that Meredith employed. It might, upon close examination, be possible to argue that Meredith makes considerable effort to match the form to the content, a procedure that, it seems to me, he follows carefully in such a huge undertaking as the Odes in Contribution to the Song of French History, some of the qualities of which I have touched upon earlier in this chapter (pp. 277 ff). Surely the experiment in Galliambics (pp. 294 ff) succeeds in large measure in describing the disastrous voyage of Phaëthôn in rhythms that reflect that rise and fall and the subsequent and quiet lamentation of Phaëthôn's sisters.

Even relatively minor comments by Meredith on his prosody may find an explanation or at least a source in Hermann's text. Professor Laura Robinson, Professor of Classics at Southwestern at Memphis, who has kindly helped me through the examination of classical hexameters, assures me that old Latin grammars do contain rules about the proper placing of the ictus and about "the fit arsis and thesis" in a line of verse--terminology that Meredith employs in the letter to Marmaduke J. Teesdale quoted above (pp. 268-269). But the terminology is also, and very importantly, a part of Hermann's descriptive analysis of classical poetry, and Meredith's casual use of it might well have been the result of his acquaintance with Hermann's book. The rather strange matter of Meredith's insistence upon the scansion of the noun "immortal" may also belong to the influence of Hermann. In a letter to G. W. Foote, the editor of The Secularist, Meredith defends his treatment of the word as follows: "the stress opposing it [i.e., the word "immortal"] to 'mortal,' properly 'im,' is long, the sense should make it so; in this instance the sense demands it. The word is an anti-Bacchic foot--immortal. On that I take my stand." Professor Cline suggests in a note that the usage in question appears in "The South-Wester"; there are other occurrences of the same phenomenon in "The Teaching of the Nude" and in "The Revolution" (here the noun is plural).⁸⁵

. . . Where immortal with mortal weds.

. . . Hourly the immortal prevailing more

. . . As immortals may be in the mortal sphere.

A glance at Hermann's catalogue of the twenty-eight "most common feet"--which are largely, to the modern reader, most uncommon--brings to light

a foot that Hermann calls the "Palimbacchius" and that consists of two long and one short syllables: — — ∪ . ("Palim-" is synonymous with "anti-.")⁸⁶ It is conceivable that, challenged concerning the unconventional accentuation of "immortal," Meredith simply drew upon his old friend Hermann for the name of a foot that would justify the strange reading and that he simply used the more familiar of the two prefixes in describing it.

Meredith might also have found justification in Hermann for his switching from one meter to another in such long poems as the four that constitute the Odes in Contribution to the Song of French History: in Chapter XVIII of Book II, Hermann describes the "Roman" habit of mixing meters and asserts that it is excusable on the simple ground that the "numbers . . . are not changed arbitrarily . . . but for some good reason," whereupon Hermann lists some seven instances, including changing from one speaker to another, for example, where a shift in meter might be justified.⁸⁷ As I have indicated briefly above (pp. 277 ff), Meredith does change his measure when he changes subject matter or intent in the long Odes, apparently in an effort to match sound and sense (a phrase suggesting that Alexander Pope might well be lurking in the background). And the variety of forms in Meredith's verse taken as a whole might also reflect the Hermannian hint that the poet select the meter best suited to his purpose in a given piece of verse--a suggestion, it occurs to me, that explains the care with which Hermann describes the peculiar effect of each of the varieties of verse he describes so carefully and technically.

Even the most minor oddity of all, perhaps, the question of the apparent use of an "upbeat" syllable at the beginning of a line

(see above, pp. 274-75), may find a measure of justification in Hermann's text. Hermann very carefully explains that in addition to the syllables referred to as arsis and thesis, indicating respectively the syllables that begin a series of "times" and the "times" that follow from the initial syllable, there are a "time or times which precede the arsis [and which] are evidently parts of a series infinite from its beginning. Those times we call anacrusis; because they are, as it were, a kind of introduction or prelude to the numbers which the ictus afterwards begins the anacrusis has the nature of a thesis, i.e., a time produced not from an absolute cause [i.e., the ictus-arsis syllable], but from other preceding times."⁸⁸ It seems to me to be at least a possibility that Meredith might have been drawing upon this peculiarity of classical verse for the form of such lines as those from "Requiem" cited above (p. 274).

It seems fairly clear to me, in sum, that Johann Gottfried Jakob Hermann played a more important role in Meredith's career as a poet than has been recognized. Perhaps, with time, further evidence might be adduced that will make my supposition more of a certainty than it is at this moment. It also seems clear, even from this brief survey, that Meredith's claim to be "something of a metricist" is more than justified and that the extraordinary variety of his verse is not caprice or wilful distortion of poetic practice but the development of a most pliant technique for the creation of extraordinarily varied poetic forms.

In the pages of this paper, I have endeavored to present a study of George Meredith that clarifies the processes of self-education that made him both the philosopher and the poet that he became. That the

brevity of his formal schooling proved not to be a handicap should be evident; that his ~~own~~ endeavors gave him the knowledge and the skills he required for his career as philosopher-poet should be apparent: the tremendous breadth and depth of his command of language, history, literature, and the workings of the art he practiced, the people he examined, and the world he lived in should bear witness to Meredith's persistent and obviously successful efforts at self-education.

FOOTNOTES, CHAPTER IV

¹This study of Meredith's interest in, knowledge of, and practices in prosody is by no means intended as a thorough investigation. Therefore, I have not examined all the relatively obscure poetry upon which Meredith commented with reference to the prosody, nor have I included close studies of all of Meredith's translations from German Romantic lyrics or of all the complex and interesting forms in which Meredith cast his own poems. It is conceivable that I shall, once I have completed the degree, undertake a closer study than the present one of the great variety of Meredith's poetic forms.

²For examples of the charge of "obscurity," see the following: Trevelyan, The Poetry and Philosophy of George Meredith, pp. 4-5, 74-77, 95; Trevelyan, Selected Poetical Works of George Meredith, p. viii; Priestley, pp. 99-100 (all of Chapter IV, pp. 86-111, is a sustained attack on Meredith as poet); Photiadès, pp. 176-177; Curle, pp. 52-53; Armstrong, 356-357; Evans, p. 170.

³Stevenson, pp. 30-31; Cline, typescript, for the letter to Leitch Ritchie of Chambers's; Lindsay, p. 41; Catalogue, p. 20. For the dates connected with Hermann, see "Hermann," Encyclopedia Britannica (11th edition), XIII, 367.

⁴Meredith, "Austrian Poets," 216; "Platen-Hallermund," Encyclopedia Britannica (11th edition) XXI, 804-805.

⁵Meredith, "Austrian Poets," 215, 223, respectively; Lenau, in Die Deutscher Romantiker, I, 978, 975-976, respectively.

⁶Mörke, in Die Deutscher Romantiker, I, 1059-1060; Meredith, Poems I (ME XXIV), 9-10. Meredith's translation was first published as "The Ballad of Beauty Rohtraut" in The Leader, September 14, 1850, p. 597 (Forman, p. 6).

⁷Meredith, Letters, pp. 19-20; Bartlett, typescript; see also Meredith, "Austrian Poets," 226, for the name "Castelli" as support for Professor Bartlett's emendation of W. M. Meredith's "Lied von Rastrelli."

⁸Tennyson, Poetic and Dramatic Works (Cambridge edition), p. 268; Poetical Works (Oxford edition), p. 226; see Arnold, pp. 148-153.

⁹Arnold, pp. 110-111.

¹⁰Tennyson, Poetical Works (Oxford edition), p. 227.

¹¹Meredith, "'Homer's Iliad in English Rhymed Verse,' By Charles Merivale," Miscellaneous Prose (ME XXIII), 77-78. Hereafter, references to this review will be given by page number in the text.

¹²Catalogue, pp. 2, 5, 6.

¹³Arnold, pp. 102-103. Arnold charges Chapman with failing to capture Homer's "plainness and directness of ideas"; Meredith (78-79) accuses Chapman of "loose" lines, "unsatisfactory" rhymes, and "ineffective" use of the caesura. Arnold denies the value of both the heroic couplet and blank verse as adequate media for Homer (pp. 142-148) and asserts (pp. 148-153) that the English line most suited to Homer is the hexameter.

In Pope's translation (p. 201), the same lines read as follows:

As when the moon, refulgent lamp of night
 O'er heaven's pure azure spreads her sacred light,
 When not a breath disturbs the deep serene,
 And not a cloud o'ercasts the solemn scene,
 Around her throne the vivid planets roll,
 And stars unnumber'd gild the glowing pole,
 O'er the dark trees a yellower verdure shed,
 And tip with silver every mountain's head:
 Then shine the vales, the rocks in prospect rise,
 A flood of glory bursts from all the skies:
 The conscious swains, rejoicing in the sight,
 Eye the blue vault, and bless the useful light.

One wishes that one had Arnold's comments on these lines: Tennyson's and Chapman's six lines are now twelve; the sharpness and clarity of the simile are buried under the elaboration of the role of the moon.

¹⁴Child, III, 311-314. The A version, which is the older and is printed in dialect, presumably has the same scansion, but the dialect makes me hesitant to say without qualification that it too has the standard ballad form.

Arnold (pp. 125-132) specifically rules out English "ballad-meter" for translations of Homer, primarily on the grounds (p. 128) that this form cannot come up to "the grand style" that is characteristic of Arnold's Homer (see also pp. 142-142).

¹⁵Meredith, Letters, pp. 204-205.

¹⁶Colvin, p. 183.

¹⁷Cline, typescript.

¹⁸Arnold, p. 151.

¹⁹Meredith, "'Homer's Iliad in English Rhymed Verse.'" By Charles Merivale, "Miscellaneous Prose (ME XXIII), 78-79.

²⁰Pope, p. 57.

²¹Homer, Complete Works, The Iliad, p. 7.

²²Meredith, "Fragments of the Iliad in English Hexameter Verse," Poems III (ME XXVI), 223. The "Fragments" appeared first in Illustrated London News, April 11 and 18, 1891, pp. 483 and 507, respectively. They were reprinted in A Reading of Life, 1901 (Forman, pp. 136-139).

²³Seymour, p. lxxv.

²⁴Meredith, "Fragments . . . ," Poems III (ME XXVI), 221-223, passim.

²⁵Ibid., 321.

²⁶Pope, pp. 307-308.

²⁷Homer, Iliad, p. 261.

²⁸Meredith, Poems III (ME XXVI), 232.

²⁹Homer, Iliad, p. 327.

³⁰Bartlett, "George Meredith on Mistral's Mirèio," 70, 71.

³¹Ibid., 68 and note 2.

³²Ibid., 71.

³³Ibid., 72.

³⁴Ibid., 69-70, 72-73, respectively.

³⁵Ibid., 73.

³⁶Goethe, Poetische Meisterwerke, pp. 87-90; pp. 153-202, respectively.

³⁷Cline, typescript.

³⁸Ibid.

³⁹Meredith, Letters, pp. 204-205, 264.

⁴⁰Stevenson, p. 39.

⁴¹Ibid., p. 34.

⁴²Sassoon, p. 174; Lindsay, p. 49; Bartlett, typescript.

⁴³Meredith, "Love in the Valley," 1851 version, Various Readings and Bibliography (ME XXVII), 280. It seems to me advisable to repeat at this point that I am by no means intent upon full coverage of the diversity and complexity of Meredith's selection of poetic forms. This discussion is directed primarily toward an introductory investigation of the subject, with an eye toward fuller development in the future.

⁴⁴Ibid., 1878 version, Poems II (ME XXV), 81.

⁴⁵Meredith, Poems I (ME XXIV). The page references for the poems mentioned by title in the following discussion are as follows: "Songs," 16, 21, 49, 50, 51, 85, 89, 93, 99, 115; "John Lackland," 21; "Pictures of the Rhine," 120-123; "The Doe," 3-8; "South-West Wind in the Woodland," 42-45; "The Olive Branch," 11-15; "Daphne," 52-67; "The Flower of the Ruins," 37-39; "Requiem," 36; "Pastorals," 74-84.

⁴⁶Cline, typescript. See also Stevenson, p. 38. The lines from "South-West Wind in the Woodland" appear in Meredith, Poems I (ME XXIV), 43-44.

⁴⁷Bartlett, typescript; Meredith, Poems I (ME XXIV), 281.

⁴⁸After some deliberation, I decided not to include the tedious listing of poems by form and/or meter; such an exercise would strike me, if I were judging this paper, as a mere make-work, make-words display of the ability to count.

⁴⁹Meredith, "Odes in Contribution to the Song of French History," Poems III (ME XXVI), 105-169. For a more thorough analysis than I give here, see my unpublished Master's thesis, "George Meredith's Odes in Contribution to the Song of French History," Chapter V.

⁵⁰Ibid., "Napoléon," II, line 16, 117.

⁵¹Ibid., "The Revolution," 105-115. Section X appears on 111-112.

⁵²Ibid., "Alsace-Lorraine," 150 ff.

⁵³Ibid., 159-161.

⁵⁴Ibid., "The Shipwreck of Idomeneus," Poems I (ME XXIV), 100ff.; "The Cageing of Ares," "Milton," Poems III (ME XXVI), 170ff. and 251f., respectively.

⁵⁵Ibid., "Grandfather Bridgeman," Poems I (ME XXIV), 165ff.; "Phoebus with Admetus," Poems II (ME XXV), 71ff.; "The Main Regret," Poems III (ME XXVI), 211.

⁵⁶Ibid., "Daphne" and "London by Lamplight," Poems I (ME XXIV), 52ff. and 68ff.; "Archduchess Anne" and "A Preaching from a Spanish Ballad," Poems II (ME XXV), 116ff. and 139ff.

⁵⁷Forman, p. 7. For the "State of Age," "The World's Advance," and "A Later Alexandrian," see Meredith, Poems II (ME XXV), 16-18.

⁵⁸Meredith, "John Lackland," "Pictures of the Rhine," "The Spirit of Shakespeare," "Continued," Poems I (ME XXIV), 21, 120-123, respectively; "Hawarden," Poems III (ME XXVI), 269. "The Teaching of the Nude," Poems III (ME XXVI), 79-80, may be altered Shakespearean sonnets standing as stanzas: the rhyme scheme is abbacddceffegg in both stanzas.

⁵⁹Cline, typescript.

⁶⁰Ibid.; Bartlett, typescript.

⁶¹Meredith, Letters, p. 60; the 1885 letter is quoted in Sharp, pp. 113-114.

⁶²Meredith, "Song," Poems I (ME XXIV), 16, 21, 49, 50, 73, 85, 88, 89, 93, 98, 99, 115, 163; "Love in the Valley," 1851 version, Various Readings and Bibliography (ME XXVII), 280-283; 1878 version, Poems II (ME XXV), 80ff.; "Violets," Twilight Music, "Will O'the Wisp," Poems I (ME XXIV), 31, 34, 46; "The Lark Ascending," "The Woods of Westermain," "Hard Weather," "Dirge in Woods," "A Faith on Trial," Poems II (ME XXV), 67ff., 33ff., 211ff., 240, 241ff., respectively.

⁶³Meredith, "The Empty Purse," "The Sage Enamoured and the Honest Lady," "Foresight and Patience," Odes, "The Vital Choice,"

"With the Huntress," "With the Persuader," "The Test of Manhood," Poems III (ME XXVI), 34ff., 15ff., 89ff., 105ff., 185, 186ff., 189ff., 200ff., respectively. The quotation from the letter to Mrs. Henderson was reported to me in a letter from Professor Bartlett, September 25, 1967.

⁶⁴Ibid., "The Empty Purse," Poems III (ME XXVI), 39.

⁶⁵Ibid., 53.

⁶⁶Meredith, Letters, p. 45; "Cassandra," Poems I (ME XXIV), 236-239.

⁶⁷Ibid., "'Saint Paul:'" A Poem," Miscellaneous Prose (ME XXIII), 92-93.

⁶⁸Cline, typescript.

⁶⁹Meredith, Letters, pp. 197-198.

⁷⁰Cline, typescript.

⁷¹Meredith, Letters, p. 204.

⁷²Ellis (1920), pp. 70-71.

⁷³Meredith, Letters, pp. 354-355. See above, footnote 1, Chapter IV.

⁷⁴Ibid., pp. 604-605; Cline, typescript.

⁷⁵Ibid., p. 615; Cline, typescript.

⁷⁶Ibid., "Phaëthôn," Poems II (ME XXV), 200-206; note on the Galliambic measure, [272]; Forman, pp. 79, 81, for dates.

⁷⁷Hermann, pp. 4-5. It was with Professor Bartlett's concurrence that I used the English translation of Hermann's epitome of the 1816 Latin text. My Latin is of the "cram-course-to-meet-the-degree-requirement" variety and is not at all adequate to making my way through 816 pages of Latin text amply sprinkled with quotations from Greek and Latin poetry. It seemed reasonable to try to grasp Hermann's points from the epitome rather than wade through the Latin and come out with only a vague idea of the contents.

I ought to add, too, that the terminology for the diacritical marks was provided me by my eleven-year-old son, David, whose fifth-grade knowledge of phonetics and spelling is apparently better developed than my own!

⁷⁸Meredith, "Phaëthôn," Poems II (ME XXV), 200-201.

⁷⁹Ibid., 206.

⁸⁰Cline, typescript.

⁸¹Hermann, p. 25, for the definition of trochaic numbers; p. 11 for the definition of catalexis; pp. 27-28 for Chapter VII, Book II, "Of Tetrameter Catalectic Trochaics."

⁸²Meredith, "The Woods of Westermain," Poems II (ME XXV), 33-47.

⁸³Hermann, pp. 70-75.

⁸⁴Ibid., p. 128.

⁸⁵Meredith, Letters, p. 422; "The South-Wester," Poems II (ME XXV), 218; "The Teaching of the Nude," "The Revolution," Poems III (ME XXVI), 79, 108, respectively.

⁸⁶Hermann, p. 8. See the Shorter Oxford English Dictionary for the etymology and definitions of "palim-" and "anti-".

⁸⁷Ibid., p. 42.

⁸⁸Ibid., p. 5.

APPENDIX I

MEREDITH'S READING

The following is as complete a list as I can compile at the present time of books that Meredith is known to have read and/or owned. In indicating the sources for the entries, I have taken Meredith's letters as the primary source. That is, if there is a reference to a book in the letters, that reference is given (at least, in most instances) without indication of subsequent mention of the work in biographies or critical studies of Meredith. I have for the most part omitted Meredith's notes discussing books read in his capacity as reader for Chapman and Hall, with the obvious exceptions of such special cases as Mrs. Linton's East Lynne and Samuel Butler's Erewhon. I have also omitted most of the myriad literary allusions scattered throughout Meredith's novels, excepting only some works that seems of particular interest, such as Lemprière's Classical Dictionary, mentioned in Richard Feverel.

This accumulation of titles is not offered as final, nor is it included here for any reason other than the display it offers of the astounding breadth and diversity of Meredith's reading habits. The list stands as no more than an illustrative adjunct to the body of my paper.

The following code should be used with reference to the bibliography at the end of this paper.

Alt. = Altschul Catalogue.

B. = Bartlett, typescript.

B, MM. = Bartlett, "George Meredith on Mistral's Mireïo."

Brewer = Brewer, "The Influence of . . . Richter on George Meredith"

Bu. = Butcher.

Burr = Burr.

BW. = Williams.

C. = Catalogue.

Chloe. = Meredith, "The Tale of Chloe" (ME XXI).

CLC. = Cline, typescript.

Co. = Cooper, ed., An Essay on Comedy

Col. = Colvin.

EB. = Ernest Baker.

El. = Ellis.

Ess. = Meredith, "An Essay on Comedy," (ME XXIII).

GMT. = Trevelyan, Poetry and Philosophy of George Meredith.

GMT, PW. = Meredith, Poetical Works (ed. Trevelyan).

Kel. = Kelvin.

Ket. = Ketcham.

L. = Meredith, Letters, edited by William Maxse Meredith.

Li. = Lindsay.

Mac. = Mackay.

Mor. = Morley.

MP. = Meredith, Miscellaneous Prose (ME XXIII).

ORF. = Meredith, The Ordeal of Richard Feverel, Modern Library edition.

P I, II, or III. = Meredith, Poems I, II, III (ME XXIV-XXVI).

Pet. = Petter.

Phot. = Photiades.

Pr. = Priestley.

RevCM. = Meredith, review of Merivale's Iliad, Miscellaneous Prose

(ME XXIII).

Sas. = Sassoon.

SB. = Meredith, Sandra Belloni, I, II (ME III, IV).

Sharp. = Sharp.

St. = Stevenson.

Wr. = Wright.

About, Edmond. Les Mariages de Paris. 1870. C.

_____. Roman d'un brave homme. CLC.

The Academy. CLC.

Adam of Usk. Chronicle, 1377-1421. 2nd edition. Edited, with translation & Notes, by Sir Edward M. Thompson. 1904. C.

Adams, C. Warren. The Career of the Alabama, "No. 290." From July 29, 1862, to June 19, 1864. CLC; L 152-3.

Addison, Joseph. [No titles mentioned.] L 542; Co 181.

Aelian. Variae Historiae. Co 187.

Aide, Hamilton. The Snares of the World. 1901. CLC.

All the Year Round. CLC.

Allen Grant. In Memoriam. George Paul Macdonell. 1895. C.

Allingham, William. The Ballad Book: Selection of the Choicest British Ballads. 1872. C.

Anders, H. R. D. Shakespeare's Books. Berlin: Deutsche Shakespeare-Gesellschaft, 1904. C; L 577-8.

Andigné, Général D'. Mémoires, 1765-1857. 2 vols. 1900-1901. C.

Andrews, E. A. Copious and Critical Latin English Dictionary. 1865. C.

Anquetil. Histoire de France. Nouvelle Edition. 4 vols. 1838-39. C.

Anthologia Oxoniensis (Nova): Translations into Greek & Latin Verse.

Ed. R. Ellis & A. D. Godley. 1899. C.

The Anti-Jacobin. L 440.

The Arabian Nights. L 578.

Argyll, 9th Duke of. Canadian Pictures, drawn with Pen & Pencil. 1885.

C.

Ariosto. Orlando Furioso. L 8; Pet 101-112.

Aristophanes. The Archanians. Ess 36.

_____. The Birds. Ess 25.

_____. The Clouds. Ess 25.

_____. The Frogs. Translated by Rogers. L 537; CLC; Co 181.

_____. Knights. Ess 37; Co 254.

_____. Lysistrata. Ess 37; Co 254.

_____. Peace. Ess 37; Co. 254.

_____. Wasps. Ess 37; Co 253.

Aristotle. Poetics. Pet 37; Wr 33; Co 179.

Arnold, Sir Edwin. Indian Poetry. 1881. C.

Arnold, Matthew. Culture and Anarchy. CLC.

_____. Empedocles on Etna. B.

_____. On the Study of Celtic Literature. CLC.

[?] Artom. L'Opera Politica del Senatore I. Artom. 1906. L 585;

CLC.

Atlantic Monthly. L 595.

Augier, Emile. L'Aventurière. Ess 54; Co 289.

_____. Les Effrontés. 1883. C.

- _____. Le Mariage d'Olympe. Ess 54; Co 290.
- Augier, Emile. Philiberte. 1875. C.
- _____. Théâtre Complét. Vol. IV. 1889. C.
- Aumale, Duc d'. Lettre sur l'histoire de France. 1861. L 27; CLC.
- Aunet, Léonie. Un Mariage en Province. 1858. C.
- Aus Deutschen Bergen. n.d. C.
- Austen, Jane. [No titles mentioned.] Bu 95.
- _____. Emma. Ess 40.
- Austin, Alfred. An Artist's Proof. St. 153.
- _____. "Flodden Field." CLC.
- _____. "Jubilee Ode." 1897. CLC.
- _____. Prince Lucifer. 1887. C.
- _____. "Victoria the Wise." CLC.
- _____. "Winkelmann." 1897. CLC.
- _____. Won by a Head. Chapman & Hall, 1866. CLC.
- Ayscough, John. [?] Dromina. 1909. CLC.
- _____. Marotz. 1908. CLC.
- Bacchylide de Céos. Poèmes. Traduits du grecque par A.M. Desrousseaux.
1898. C.
- Baddely, St. Clair. Charles III. of Naples and Urban VI. Also Cecco
d'Ascoli. With Illustrations. 1894. C.
- _____. Queen Joanna I. of Naples. With Illustrations. 1893. C.
- Bagnes (?), H. Way of the Buddha. 1906. CLC.
- Baigne, Mme de. Memoirs of the Comtesse de Baigne. ed. Charles
Nicoullaud. Vol. I. 1907. CLC.
- Balzac, Honoré de. Illusions perdues. Bu 99.

- _____. Le Lys dans la vallée. 1891. C.
- _____. Modeste Mignon. 1870. C.
- _____. Une Ténébreuse affaire. 1892. C.
- Barbier. Chronique de la Régence et du règne de Louis XV, première série (1718-26). 1857. C.
- Barine, A. Bernardin de St.-Pierre. 1891. C.
- Barrès, Maurice. L'Ennemi des lois. 1893. C.
- Barrie, James M. The Little Minister. L 443.
- _____. Peter Pan. CLC.
- _____. When a Man's Single. 1888. CLC.
- Bates, Arlo. Book o' Nine Tales. Boston, 1891. C.
- Baudelaire. [No titles mentioned.] L 189-190.
- Bealty - Kingston, W. A Journalist's Jottings. 2 vols. 1890. C.
- Beaumont, Francis, and John Fletcher. The Scornful Lady. Ess 9; Co 193.
- Bell, Robert. Songs of the Dramatists. 24 vols. 1854-57. CLC.
- Bendit, Gladys [John Presland]. Joan of Arc. 1909. L 634; CLC.
- Bennett, W. C. Queen Eleanor's Vengeance and Other Poems. 1857. L 11.
- Beowulf. CLC.
- Bérard, Victor. Les Phéniciens et L'Odyssée. L 593.
- Bergeret. [on Dreyfus.] Phot. 15.
- Bernard, Charles de. Les Ailes d'Icare. 1871. C.
- _____. L'Écueil. 1870. C.
- _____. La Peau du Lion. 1868. C.
- Bernard, Henry. In Pursuit of Dulcinea. W. Illustrations by H. C.
- Brewer. 1904. C.
- _____. The Shade of the Balkans: Collection of Bulgarian Folksongs & Proverbs. 1904. C.

- Bernard, Tristan. Un mari pacifique. 1901. C.
- _____. Théâtre. Vol. I. n.d. C.
- Berquin. L'Ami des enfants, avec une notice de Bouilly. 1850. C.
- Bertheroy, Jean. La Danseuse de Pompei. 1899. C.
- Besant, Annie, & Charles Bradlaugh. Fruits of Philosophy; A Companion for Young Married Couples. L 273; CLC.
- The Bible. CLC.
- Billon, F.-F. Souvenirs d'un vétéral de la garde sous Napoléon. 1905. C.
- Björnson, _____. Tales. L 536.
- Blake, William. Songs of Innocence. Bu 96.
- Blane, Louis. Histoire de la Révolution française. 12 vols. Bruxelles, 1847-63. C.
- Block, L. J. The New World, with Other Verse. 1895. C.
- Blind, Karl. "Results of French Designs upon Germany," Fortnightly Review (Jan. 1871). L 222; CLC.
- Blunt, Wilfrid Scawen. Atrocities of Justice under British Rule in Egypt. 1906. L 585; CLC.
- _____. Book of Esther. CLC.
- _____. Esther, Love Lyrics, and Natalia's Resurrection. 1892. C.
- Boccaccio. [No titles mentioned.] L 198.
- Boigobey, Fortune du. La Loge sanglante. Plon, n.d. C.
- _____. La Pélisse du pendu. Plon, n.d. C.
- Boissier, Gaston. "Conspiracy of Catiline" [series of articles], Revue des deux mondes (1905). L 566.
- _____. Nouvelles promenades archéologiques: Horace et Virgil. 1886. C.

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- Boswell, James. The Life of Johnson. Co 188.
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- Bourgogne, August. Mémoires (1812-13). 1898. C.
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- Bouville, Th. de. Petit Traité de poésie française. [1872]. C.
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- Bréhat, A. de. Bras d'acier. 1859. C.
- Brentano, Funck. L'Affaire de Collier. CLC.
- Bridges, Robert [American]. "Arcady Chapters." L 473.
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- Brooks, C. W. Shirley. The Silver Cord. London: Bradbury & Evans, 1861. L 43.
- Brougham, John. The Duke's Motto. 1862. L 100; CLC.
- Browning, Elizabeth Barrett. Aurora Leigh. L 10; B.

_____. "A Vision of Poets." B.

_____. "Lady Geraldine's Courtship." CLC.

Browning, Robert. "Hervé Riel," The Cornhill Magazine (March 1871).

CLC.

Browning, Robert. The Ring and the Book. CLC.

Browning, Robert, and Elizabeth Barrett Browning. The Browning Letters.

CLC.

Bruce, Henry. Life of General Oglethorpe. New York, 1890. C.

Buchanan, Robert. The Book of Orm. L 209, 211.

Burton, Sir Richard. [No titles mentioned.] CLC.

Bury. Lower [?Later] Roman Empire. L 518, 553-554; CLC.

Burcher, S. H. Harvard Lectures on Greek Subjects. 1904. C.

Butler, Samuel. Hudibras. Ess 38; Co 261.

Butler, Samuel. Erewhon. St 190-191.

Buttmann, Dr. Philip. Intermediate or Larger Greek Grammar. Trans. Ch.

Supf. 1841. C.

Byron, George Gordon, Lord. The Bride of Abydos. CLC.

_____. The Corsair. CLC.

_____. Don Juan. L 165; CLC.

_____. Lara. CLC.

_____. Manfred. B; P II 160.

_____. Selections from His Works. Ed. A. C. Swinburne.

1866. C.

Cabral, Read. Em Pleno Atlantico. Ponta-Delgada, 1879. C; CLC.

Cadol, E. La Belle affaire. 1869. C.

Cailhol, J. [Carvin?]. Le Marché de Marseille, vo lei Doues coumaires.

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CLC.

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- Carlyle, Thomas. [No titles mentioned.] L 173-174, 198-199, 239.
- _____. The French Revolution. L 200, 265.
- _____. On Heroes, Hero-Worship, and the Heroic in History.
- BW 63; P III, 115.
- _____. Past and Present. Ess 43; Co 274.
- _____. Sartor Resartus. B.
- Carpenter, Edward. Sex-love. 1894. L 462; CLC.
- Carré, Michel. L'Enfant prodigue. CLC; BU 79.
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- Castellone, Maréchal de. Journal, 1804-1862. 5 vols. 1895-97. C.
- [C]astelli. "Lied." L 19; B.
- Catull's Buch der Lieder in deutscher Nachbildung von Th. Heyse. Berlin, 1855. C.
- Catullus. Attis. Translated into English Verse, with Dissertations by Grant Allen. [Presentation Copy.] 1892. C.
- _____. Attys. Col 183.
- _____. Carmina. L 450; CLC; Egoist Ch. XLI.
- _____. Veronensis Liber. CLC.
- Cawein, Madison. Intimations of the Beautiful and Poems. New York: 1894. C.
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- Cervantes. Don Quixote. Translated with Introductions and Notes by John Ormsley. 1885. C; L 156-157; CLC.

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- Chatterton, Thomas. "An Excelente Balade of Charitee." CLC.
- Chaucer, Geoffrey. [No titles mentioned.] PI 27; CLC; Co 14.
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- _____. Comte Chislain. CLC.
- Chévigné, Comte de. Les Contes Remois. 1868. C.
- Child. The Praise of Paris. New York: Harper, 1893. CLC.
- Chivers, Thomas Holley. "Lilly Adair." CLC.
- Church, Dean R. W. Saint Anselm. 1877. C.
- Cicero. Letters. Translated by Schuckburgh. CLC.
- Clayden, P. W. "The Ecclesiastical Organization of English Dissent," Fortnightly Review (May, 1868). CLC.
- Clemenceau, Georges. [on Dreyfus.] CLC.
- _____. Le Grand Pan. 1896. C.
- _____. La Mêlée sociale. 1895. C.
- Clodd, Edward. Life of Jesus of Nazareth. CLC.
- _____. [Memoir of Grant Allen.] L 514.
- _____. [Monograph on T. H. Huxley.] L 514.

- Clough, Arthur Hugh. Poems, with a Memoir. 1880. C.
- Cobbett, William. Register. CLC; L 91.
- Coleridge, Samuel Taylor. Christabel, with Notes by E. H. Coleridge, and
with facsimile of the MS. and a portrait. 1907. C.
- _____. [?] "Destruction of the Bastille." BW 40-41.
- _____. [?] "Epigram: A Hint to Premiers and First
Consuls." BW 197.
- _____. [?] "La Fayette," "Sonnets on Eminent Characters,"
IV. BW 195.
- _____. [?] "Napoleon," (among "Adaptations"). BW 196.
- _____. "To a Young Ass." B.
- _____. Zapolya. B.
- Colin, J. Annibal en Gaule. 1904. C.
- Colles, W. M. Literature and the Pension List. 1889. C.
- Colvin, Sidney. Landor. 1881. [English Men of Letters series.] C.
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de France 1814 et 1815. 1896. C; Mac 200.
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- Comte, Auguste. [No titles mentioned.] CLC; Pet 120-122, 146-147;
Kel 135-136; BW 22-23.
- Congreve, William. [No titles mentioned.] L 542; Wr 77.
- _____. The Double Dealer. Ess 8; Co 191.
- _____. Love for Love. Ess 8; Co 191.
- _____. The Old Bachelor. Ess 8; Co 191.
- _____. The Way of the World. Ess 8; Co 191.
- Conscience, H. Les Drames flamands. 1880. C.
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_____. Pour la couronne. 1895. C.

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Corneille, Pierre. Le Menteur. Ess 29.

[Cory, W.] Ionica. 1891. C.

Couat, Auguste. La Poésie Alexandrine, sous les trois premiers Ptolomées
(324-222 av. J.-C.) 1882. C.

Courtaut. Letters. CLC.

Courtney, W. L. Studies at Leisure. 1892. C.

Cowper, William. "The Castaway." Co 281.

_____. "The Diverting History of John Gilpin." Co 281.

_____. "Lines Written during a Period of Insanity." Co 281.

Coyart, Ch. de. Une Sorcière au 18e siècle: Marie-Anne de la Ville
(1680-1725). 1902. C.

Crabbe, George. [No titles mentioned.] L 572.

Crawfurd, Oswald J. F. (?) "Lirolar The Changelings": Two Masques.
CLC.

_____. Portugal, Old and New. With maps and
illustrations. 1880. C.

Crébillon Fils. Le Sopha. Conte moral d'après les copies de l'édition
de Londres, 1779. Bruxelles, 1884. C.

Creighton, Mandel. Historical Essays and Reviews. ed. Louise Creighton.
1902. L 545.

Cresson, E. Cent jours du siège à la Préfecture du Police (1870-71).
1901. C.

Croiset, Alfred. La Poésie de Pindare. 3rd. ed. 1895. C.

Crow, Mrs. Martha Foote. [No titles mentioned for "Poems and Articles."]
CLC; L 469.

- Cunningham, Peter. Handbook of Lond. [sic] Past and Present. New edition. 1850. C.
- Curle, R. H. P. Meredith. CLC.
- Dabney, V. The Story of Don Miff. 1887. C.
- Damas et le Liban. Extraits d'un Journal d'un voyage en Syrie. 1861. C.
- Dante. [No titles mentioned.] CLC; SBII 223.
- Dark: Tale of the Down Country [sic]. 2nd edition. 2 vols. 1893. C.
- Daudet, Alphonse. Contes Choisis. L 331.
- _____. L'Immortel: Moeurs parisiennes. 1888. C.
- _____. Numa Roumestan. L 330,-331; CLC.
- _____. Les Rois en exil. 1879. C.
- Daudet, Leon A. Les Idées en marche. 1894. C.
- Davidson, John. Ballads and Songs. 1894. CLC.
- _____. Fleet Street Eclogues. 1893. C; L 577 note.
- _____. Plays sewed. (First collected edition). Greenock, 1889. C; CLC.
- Davis, Richard H. The Princess Aline. Illustrations by C. D. Gibson. New York, 1895. C.
- Delacroix, F. Deux Séductions au 18e siècle. 1894. C.
- Denis, Jacques. La Comédie Grécque. 2 vols. 1886. C.
- Dennis, John. Some Remarkable Passages of the Life of Mr. Wycherley, A New Collection of Miscellanies. Co 190.
- Deschamps, G. Marivaux. 1877. C.
- Deutscher Novellenschatz. Heyse and Kurz, eds. 15 vols. Munchen, 1871-73. C.
- Dickens, Charles. [No titles mentioned.] CLC; Pr 175-176.

- _____. [?] Bleak House. E1 (1919) 138.
- _____. [?] David Copperfield. E1 (1919) 97; Pr 178.
- _____. [?] Our Mutual Friend. E1 (1919) 97.
- _____. Martin Chuzzlewit. L 206.
- _____. Nicholas Nickleby. L 113, 153; CLC.
- _____. Pickwick Papers. E1 (1919) 81, 138.
- Diderot. Les Bijoux indiscrets. 1885. C.
- Diehl, Ch. Etudes byzantines. 1905. L 623; CLC.
- _____. Figures byzantines. 2nd series. 1908. C; L 623; CLC.
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- Dowden, Ernest. Life of Shelley. CLC.
- Doyle, C. W. Taming of the Jungle. 1899. C.
- Dozon, Auguste. Contes populaires albanais. 1881. C.
- Dreyfus, Alfred. Lettres d'un innocent. CLC.
- Droz, Gustave. Autour d'une source. 1885. C.
- _____. Babolain [?Batolain] 1872. C; CLC.
- _____. Entre nous. Hetzel, n.d. C.
- Dryden, John. [parody of refrain to] "Alexander's Feast." L 410.
- [?] _____. The Mall, or the Modish Lovers. Co 189.
- Du Barail, Général. Mes souvenirs, 1820-79. 3 vols. 1894-96. C.
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- Dumas, Alex. Amoury. 1863. C.
- _____. Le Bâtard de Mauléon. 3 vols. 1860. C.
- _____. Causeries, Première Série. 1860. C.
- _____. La Comtesse de Charny. 6 vols. 1868. C.
- _____. Contes et nouvelles. Bruxelles, 1838. C.

- _____. La Dame de volupté. 2 vols. 1865. C.
- _____. La Femme au collier de velours. 1866. C.
- _____. Fernande. 2 vols. Bruxelles, 1844. C.
- _____. Jacques Ortis. Bruxelles, 1839. C.
- _____. Louis XV et sa cour. 2 vols. 1866. C.
- _____. Les Milles et un fantôme. 3 vols. Bruxelles, 1849. C.
- _____. Les Trois Mousquetaires. 2 vols. 1862. C.
- _____. Le Vicomte de Bragelonne. 6 vols. 1869. C.
- Dumas Fils. Affaire Clémenceau. 1869. C.
- _____. Denise. 1885. C.
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APPENDIX II

MEREDITH'S USE OF THE ALPS

The immediate result of Meredith's experience of the Alps in the summer of 1861 was the impressionistic poem, "By the Rosanna," dedicated to Maxse and headed "Stanzer Thal, Tyrol." The poem connects the Alps with the world of humanity, quite in keeping with Meredith's discovery that the Alps are not at all, despite their appearance of aloofness and purity, "a rebuke" to the "fleshliness" of mankind (see above, p. 33).

to me, in this high-walled solitude
Of river and rock and forest rude,
The roaring voice through the long white chain,
Is the voice of the world of bubble and brain.¹

Among the sounds mingled in the roar of the river are "wild laughter mix'd with shrieks; / And a wretched creature's stifled moan" ² Meredith goes on to challenge those who create poetry solely from solitary contemplation of unpopulated nature, those "who raise the Nymph / Wherever Nature sits alone . . . ," to undertake the effecting of "a thorough alliance" between the Nymph (also identified as "Sentiment" three stanzas later) and "a short-neck'd, many-caped London cabman," apparently Meredith's symbol for "Fact," for the realities of life in a highly commercial, industrial world. The result of such a "marriage" would be universal joy; the Nymph would make the cabman over into a feeling "Man"; the cabman would have provided the Nymph with "use" and "purpose." Meredith sums up his purpose in describing the setting and in making his startling suggestion:

Here have I placed
 The delicate spirit with which you adore
 Dame Nature in lone haunts embraced.
 Have I frightened it, frail thing, aghast?
 I have shown it the way to live and last!

The poem closes with the observation that Meredith's recollection in the future of the "long links of foam" of the Rosanna will take the form of a repeated exchange of meaning:

I give them my meaning here, and they
 Will give me theirs when far away.³

Meredith had used the Alps in The Ordeal of Richard Feverel (1859) as the spot to which Richard plans so ecstatically to take Lucy after their marriage: "We shall travel first," he cries to his lieutenant, Ripton Thompson. "I want to see the Alps. One doesn't know what the Earth is till one has seen the Alps. What a delight it will be to her!"⁴ The passage would seem to suggest that Meredith had seen the Alps before 1861, but the vagueness of the description from one who is usually so meticulously accurate in his nature pictures tends to make one discount a visit to or more than a distant view of the Alps prior to the 1861 experience.

In almost all the novels that follow 1861, the Alps appear with some regularity, as Professor Bartlett expressed it to me, as the place to which or from which all of Meredith's "good characters" go or come. Lindsay does comment on the Alps in Meredith's works, but in rather lofty fashion: he writes that for Meredith the Alps were "emblems of efforts, ascent; the rarefied heights are the moments of intense spiritual concentration that are essential in the full dialectics of change, rebirth. They are not cut off from earth any more than the moment of sharp withdrawal-into-self, if it is to be fruitful, is cut off from the social movement out of which it comes and into which it returns."⁵ However, my

own feeling is that Meredith made a somewhat different use of the Alps from the one Lindsay indicates: the mountains are associated primarily with positive values in Meredith's scheme of the world and with the positive characters who typify or embrace Meredith's values.

It is to Switzerland and thence to Italy that Edward Blancove takes Dahlia Fleming in Rhoda Fleming (1865):

Letters from Dahlia came regularly [to Rhoda]; The first, from Lausanne, favoured Rhoda's conception of her as of a happy spirit resting at celestial stages of her ascent upward through spheres of ecstasy. Dahlia could see the snow-mountains in a flying glimpse; and again, peacefully seated, she could see the snow-mountains reflected in clear blue waters from her window, which, Rhoda thought, must be like heaven Then Dahlia made excursions upon glaciers with her beloved, her helpmate, and had slippings and tumblings--little earthly casualties which gave a charming sense of reality to her otherwise miraculous flight. The Alps were crossed: Italy was beheld. A profusion of 'Oh's!' described Dahlia's impressions of Italy; and 'Oh! the heat!' showed her to be mortal, notwithstanding the sublime exclamations.⁶

Dahlia is the weak but good young woman in the novel bearing her sister's name, and the description of her adventures in Switzerland merely emphasizes Rhoda's view of her sister's goodness. That there has been no marriage for Dahlia with Edward makes the contrast between woman and event ironic.

Vittoria (1867) opens on Monte Mottorone, overlooking Lago Maggiore, in the mountains of northern Italy. Chapter II, "On the Heights," sets in motion the plans of "the Chief"--i.e., Mazzini--and his leaders, "who had sworn to set a nation free,--free from the foreigner, to begin with."⁷ In Chapter III, still on the mountain-top, the republicans and Vittoria meet for the first time. In Chapter VI, the English party, made up of people Vittoria had known in England (see Sandra Belloni) also makes its appearance in the mountains, before the action of the

novel and of the revolt moves to Milan (Chapters VII-XXIII). As Chapter XXIV opens, Vittoria and Angelo Guidascarpì flee from Milan to the mountains and, finally, to Meran, following the climactic moment at the opera and the singing of the signal-phrase, "Italia, Italia shall be free!"⁸ Then, when Angelo's hiding-place in Meran is discovered, Vittoria arranges as best she can for his escape and is conveniently aided by a sudden and furious mountain storm that covers Angelo's actual departure from his hiding-place.⁹ It seems reasonable to say that although Meredith claims early on in the novel that he "is not a partisan,"¹⁰ there is a meaningful connection between the positive characters in the novel--the Italian republicans--and their successful use of the mountains as escape routes, hide-outs, and rendezvous points, and Meredith's consistent use of the Alps as the home, however temporary, of those positive characters. That the scenery in Vittoria was part of Meredith's own experience is borne out by a letter, dated June 10, 1902, by Professor Cline, to Lady Ulrica Duncombe: "How I could pray to show you the scenes of Vittoria's wanderings with Angelo Guidascarpì over the sub-Alpine heights from Brescia to Bormio, and away to Meran in the Adige valley. I was there when, though liking the Austrians, I burned for Italy."¹¹

Four years after Vittoria's Alpine adventures, Meredith published The Adventures of Harry Richmond, in which the protagonist, worn down by those "adventures," by reverses, and by the burden of his father, finds himself "drifting" through the world (Chapter LIII). Then, one day, he receives a conciliatory letter from Janet Ilchester: "On the day of its date, a Viennese newspaper lying on the Salzburg Hotel table chronicled Ottilia's marriage with Prince Hermann." The dream of Ottilia is over, hope of Janet's hand seems exceedingly dim, and Harry is distraught.

His solution is typically Meredithian: a large dose of the Alps:

Carry your fever to the Alps, you of minds diseased: not to sit down in sight of them ruminating, for bodily ease and comfort will trick the soul and set you measuring our lean humanity against yonder sublime and infinite; but mount, rack the limbs, wrestle it out among the peaks; taste danger, sweat, earn rest: learn to discover ungrudgingly that haggard fatigue is the fair vision you have run to earth, and that rest is your uttermost reward. Would you know what it is to hope again, and have all your hopes at hand?--hang upon the crags at a gradient that makes your next step a debate between the thing you are and the thing you may become. There the merry little hopes grow for the climber like flowers and food, immediate, prompt to prove their uses, sufficient if just within the grasp, as mortal hopes should be. How the old lax life closes in about you there! You are the man of your faculties, nothing more. Why should a man pretend to more? We ask it wonderingly when we are healthy. Poetic rhapsodists in the vales below may tell you of the joy and grandeur of the upper regions, they cannot pluck you the medicinal herb. He gets that for himself who wanders the marshy ledge at nightfall to behold the distant Sennhüttchen twinkle, who leaps the green-eyed crevasses, and in the solitude of an emerald alp stretches a salt hand to the mountain kine.¹²

The medicinal virtues of Alpine air and exercise had sent Meredith to the Alps in 1861 and again and again--at least seven times, not counting Meredith's stint as a war correspondent in 1866--as the years passed. In Harry Richmond, he sends his character thither to work off his agony and to restore his soul.

In Beauchamp's Career (1875), the Alps appear first as the setting for the scene on the Adriatic in which Nevil tries to persuade Renée to accept his hand and to abandon the life planned for her (Chapter IX:

"Morning at Sea under the Alps"). Nevil wakens at dawn:

starting up [he] beheld the many pinnacles of grey and red rocks and shadowy high white regions at the head of the gulf waiting for the sun; and the sun struck them. One by one they came out in crimson flame, till the vivid host appeared to have stepped forward. The shadows on the snow-fields deepened to purple below an irradiation of rose and pink and dazzling silver. There of all the world you might imagine Gods to sit. A crowd of mountains endless in range, erect, or flowing, shattered and arid, or leaning in smooth lustre, hangs above the gulf. The mountains are sovereign Alps, and the sea is beneath them. The whole gigantic body keeps the sea, as with a hand, to right and left.

So overwhelmed by the view is Renée that she would have consented at that moment to run away with Nevil: he need only ask.¹³

The setting for the crucial moment is undeniably beautiful and vividly presented; the connection between the extraordinary view and the extraordinary situation of Nevil and Renée is equally undeniable. As Roland, Renée's brother, tries to change Nevil's decision to make for Trieste, Nevil answers, "I am determined to stop a catastrophe. I see it as plainly as those Alps. There is only one way, and that's the one I have chosen."¹⁴ But the clear vision of the Alps and of the solution vanishes, the party returns to Venice, and the moment for Nevil and Renée has passed. Much later, when Nevil has already become a candidate for political office, Renée comes to him for help in escaping her intolerable marriage. As Nevil contemplates her rescue, "Radiant Alps rose in his eyes, and the morning born in the night: suns that from mountain and valley, over sea and desert, called on all earth to witness their death. The magnificence of the contempt of humanity posed before him superbly satanesque, grand as thunder among the crags"¹⁵ Whereas in the scene on the Adriatic the Alps are, in effect, a sympathetic background for the lovers, in the later scene the mountains (despite the adjective "satanesque") recall the words in Meredith's letter to Maxse (see p. 33): "They have the whiteness, the silence, the beauty and mystery of thoughts seldom unveiled within us, but which conquer Earth when once they are." Nevil, the reader must understand, has seen what he thinks is a revelation of a magnificent role for him as Renée's rescuer. That no such role comes to be his in reality should be obvious to the Meredithian, for he knows that Meredith's final vision of the Alps in the letter cited is one of the intimate connection between man and mountain: there are no secrets

or virtues in the Alps that are not also possible in man. There can be no conquest of earth, no magnificent "contempt of humanity" for Nevil: he has misread the Alps in his imagination.

The Alps also appear in Beauchamp's Career in a more positive connection than that with Renee. Jenny Denham, a "good character" in Meredith's frame of reference, the girl whom Beauchamp eventually marries, goes off to Switzerland. Like Richard Feverel imagining Lucy's first view of the Alps, Nevil anticipates Jenny's reaction: "She had never seen a snow-mountain, and it was pleasant to him to observe in her eyes, which he had known weighing and balancing intellectual questions more than he quite liked, a childlike effort to conjure in imagination the glories of the Alps He envied her the sight of the Alps, he said, and tried to give her an idea of them" ¹⁶ The practiced Meredithian now begins to see the light: Jenny is the girl for Nevil, despite Renée and Cecilia Halkett.

The use of the Alps in The Egoist (1879) provides exactly the same sort of clues for the reader following the developing relationship between Clara Middleton and Vernon Whitford. In a small way, the significance of the Alps in this novel is established in the "Prelude," where Meredith introduces the Comic Spirit who watches the action of the characters: the story is to be "pointed with example and types under the broad Alpine survey of the spirit born of our united social intelligence, which is the Comic Spirit" ¹⁷ Almost as soon as Clara begins to see that she cannot tolerate Sir Willoughby, she contemplates a trip to Switzerland or the Tyrol to fill the "last days of freedom" between her visit to Patterne Hall and the marriage itself. But Dr. Middleton vetoes her plan and Clara cannot escape for a respite to the heights and solitudes

of the mountains.¹⁸ That Vernon Whitford appears in the same passage becomes significant when the reader remembers that he is a "lean long-walker" planning an Alpine tour.¹⁹

When, in one of the most famous scenes in the novel, Clara discovers Vernon asleep under the "double-blossom wild-cherry," the whiteness of the "load of virginal blossom" is compared to the "higher Alpine snows in noon-sunlight, a flush of white." Clara's insight into Vernon's nature and the reader's growing awareness that these two are mates in the most complex Meredithian sense make the scene a crucial one, although it is some time before the crisis moves to its appointed end.²⁰

The immediate outcome of the cherry-tree incident is the conversation between Vernon and Clara in which the two exchange meaningful remarks disguised in a discussion of mountain-climbing and walking (an admirable piece of insight on Meredith's part into how "beginning" lovers communicate nascent feelings). Clara moves off with Vernon at his own rapid pace:

'You won't tire me,' said she, in answer to his look.
 'You remind me of the little Piedmontese Bersaglieri on the march.'
 'I have seen them trotting into Como from Milan.'
 'They cover a quantity of ground in a day, if the ground's flat.
 You want another sort of step for the mountains.'
 'I should not attempt to dance up.'
 'They soon tame romantic notions of them.'
 'The mountains tame luxurious dreams, you mean. I see how they
 are conquered. I can plod. Anything to be high up!'
 'Well, there you have the secret of good work: to plod on and
 still keep the passion flesh.'
 'Yes, when we have an aim in view.'
 'We always have one.'
 'Captives have?'
 'More than the rest of us.'
 Ignorant man! What of wives miserably wedded? What aim in view
 have these most woeful captives? Horror shrouds it, and shame reddens
 through the folds to tell of innermost horror.
 'Take me back to the mountains, if you please, Mr. Whitford,'
 Miss Middleton said, fallen out of sympathy with him. 'Captives have
 death in view, but that is not an aim.'

'Why may not captives expect a release?'

'Hardly from a tyrant.'

'If you are thinking of tyrants, it may be so. Say the tyrant dies?'

'The prison-gates are unlocked and out comes a skeleton. But why will you talk of skeletons! The very name of mountain seems life in comparison with any other subject.'

The reader immediately recalls Clara's wish to go to Switzerland before her marriage. Vernon, however, apparently does not read Clara's underlying meaning and continues his contemplation of Clara as a natural inhabitant of the Alps, from which the conversation moves into imaginary ascents of peaks in the South Tyrol. Then there follows a brief interchange about the national characteristics Vernon sees in Clara (her best qualities are French). Even without a label, Vernon admits, Clara is suited not only to be "an Alpine comrade" but to be "the best of comrades anywhere."²¹ Clara then remembers Sir Willoughby and the tone of their intercourse changes. By the time the conversation ends, Vernon has left Clara "awe-stricken" by referring to the outcome of Willoughby's having been jilted by Constantia Durham as a relatively happy one: "no hearts were broken, and here we have four happy instead of two miserable." Clara repeats: "Four," and "From that moment until young Crossjay fell into the green-rutted lane from a tree, . . . she might have been walking in the desert, and alone, for the pleasure she had in society."²² From the heights of genuine, albeit incipient, companionship across which she strode with Vernon, she has descended into the desert of her impending marriage to the egoist Willoughby.

As Clara's difficulty deepens, as she comes under the influence of the charming Horace De Craye as well as that of Vernon Whitford, Clara becomes confused. In the midst of her "Meditations" (Chapter XXI), she gazes from her window at the lightening sky, contemplating a life of

captivity at Patterne Hall. Finally she determines to go to Switzerland, still her "visioned loophole of escape."²³ Again the Alps appear as a place where Clara will be free, at home, herself, a place where the artificial life of Willoughby and of his circle would have no hold over her, a place where, as in her conversation with Vernon, she would be in fact "the best of comrades" for (the reader knowingly suspects) none other than Vernon, whose Alpinist activities on at least one occasion make him the object of Colonel De Craye's noisy, extravagant humor.²⁴

As the novel approaches its climax, the Alps become more and more the home of Clara and Vernon. Indeed, once Sir Willoughby, trapped by his tergiversation concerning Clara and Laetitia Dale, has magnanimously offered to give up Clara on condition that she marry Vernon, the Alps appear in conversations of all sorts with increasing frequency. In assuring Willoughby that Clara will listen to Vernon, Mrs. Mountstuart Jenkinson includes the encomium that Vernon is "a very sincere friend, clever, a scholar, and a good mountaineer"²⁵ In discussing with Laetitia her own relationship with Vernon, Clara recalls that in her conversation with Vernon they spoke of "Switzerland, Tyrol, the Iliad, Antigone."²⁶ Finally, after Vernon has spoken to Dr. Middleton about Clara, the reader learns with Clara that Vernon will meet the Middletons in Bregenz in June and that they will travel together, should Clara consent, through the Tyrol and southward into the Italian Alps. Clara of course consents. The language they use in the ensuing dialogue is again, as in the conversation after the cherry-tree episode, drawn from their mountain experiences:

'Do you consider what you are saying?' [Vernon asks.]

'Mr. Whitford, I shut my eyes and say Yes.'

'Beware. I give you one warning. If you shut your eyes . . . '

'Of course,' she flew from him, 'big mountains must be satisfied with my admiration at their feet.'

'That will do for a beginning.'
 'They speak encouragingly.'
 'One of them.' Vernon's breast heaved high.
 'To be at your feet makes a mountain of you?' said she.
 'With the heart of a mouse if that satisfies me!'
 'You tower too high; you are inaccessible.'
 'I give you a second warning. You may be seized and lifted.'
 'Some one would stoop, then.'
 'To plant you like the flag on the conquered peak!'

Their being in Willoughby's house prevents any outward display of their mutual feelings at this point, and the narrator observes, "She revived the same shrinking in him from a breath of their great word yet: not here; somewhere in the shadow of the mountains."²⁷ And the novel closes with a description of Clara and Vernon together among the Alps: "two lovers met between the Swiss and Tyrol Alps over the Lake of Constance. Sitting beside them the Comic Muse is grave and sisterly. But taking a glance at the others of her late company of actors, she compresses her lips."²⁸ Clara and Vernon, disciples, so to speak, of common sense, realists, true mates, earn the approbation of the Comic Spirit who cannot suppress the smile aroused by the antics of the egoist Willoughby. That the Muse and the positive lovers dwell upon the mountain heights seems only suitable.

The geographical setting for a large part of Meredith's retelling of the story of Helene von Dönniges and Ferdinand Lassalle, The Tragic Comedians, (1881), is Switzerland. The choice of scenery, so to speak, is peculiarly apt for the acting out of the relationship between Alvan (Lassalle) and Clotilde (Helene) because Alvan, as his friend the baroness describes him, is beyond human comprehension: "We must, as I have ever said, be morally on alpine elevations to comprehend Alvan; he is Mont Blanc above his fellows." And, in effect, Mont Blanc hovers on the horizon above the activities of the characters.²⁹

Alvan, "outwearied with excess of work," has retired to the Alps for a rest. Clotilde, attracted strongly by the forbidden Alvan and betrothed by her parents to Prince Marko, is "sentenced to the Alps" by her doctor and, having "breathed Alpine air," begins to recover. "There came a letter from the professor [a friend of Alvan's] mentioning that Alvan was on one of the kingly Alpine heights in view, and the new blood running through her veins became a torrent."³⁰ She seeks him out and, with a party of tourists, they move higher up the mountains, "to the top-most of the mountain stages" Walking together, they talk of love and of the future; Alvan waxes eloquent:

'This higher and higher mountain air, with you beside me, sweeps me like a harp.'

'Oh! talk on, talk on! do not cease talking to me!' exclaimed Clotilde.

'You feel the mountain spirit?'

'I feel that you reveal it.'³¹

Moments later, Alvan asks, "And when does Dr. Alvan date the first year of his Republic?" He wants Clotilde to go away with him the next day: "You with me. No more partings. The first year, the first day shall be dated from to-morrow [sic]. You and I proclaim our Republic on these heights." The reader catches an echo of the opening of Vittoria, of the meeting of the republican leaders with their Chief on the heights above Lago Maggiore. But for Alvan and Clotilde there will be no republic: rain the next morning becomes a bad sign. The mountains appear to Clotilde, as the tragedy descends upon her, to be "dusty" and without glory or help for her. The Titan Alvan has not really found a match in Clotilde and eventually he is toppled from his heights by a bullet from Prince Marko's gun.³² The promise of things remarkable between the Alpine lovers is not fulfilled: the human qualities of the

man and woman who ought to have been equally mated, equally Titanic, have undone them. The setting, so significant for Clara and Vernon, is, to the Meredithian, in fact ironic for Alvan and Clotilde.

Ironic, too, is the placing of the awakening of Diana Warwick among the Alps in the presence of Percy Dacier. The reader of Diana of the Crossways (1885) has already been able, by Chapter XV, to guess that the true mate of the magnificent Diana is the frank, quiet, busy, positive Mr. Redworth. The tour Diana takes is to restore her after the difficulties surrounding the disaster of her first marriage, but at first no change is to be seen in the young woman. Then, by the time the party reaches Bellagio, she has begun to see with different eyes: "The Summer in South Tyrol passed like a royal procession before young eyes for Diana [one recalls that Jenny Denham's eyes regained something of the childlike as Nevil Beauchamp told her of the Alps], and at the close if it, descending the Stelvio, idling through the Valtelline, Como Lake was reached, Diana full of her work, living the double life of the author." Then Dacier appears: "She remembered subsequently a disappointment she felt in not beholding Mr. Redworth either with him or displacing him." But she comes to know Dacier better and better, and she comes to like him for his ability to listen. Finally, she reaches Lugano, where, through the Meredithian-medical wonders of solitude and nature, Diana revives: "A linnet sang in her breast, an eagle lifted her feet To be a girl again was magical. She could fancy her having risen from the dead. And to be a girl, with a woman's broader vision and receptiveness of soul, with knowledge of evil, and winging to ethereal happiness, this was a revelation of our human powers."³³

In the following chapter, XVI, which "Treats of a Midnight Bell, and of a Scene of Early Morning," Dacier meets Diana by a mountain pool among the heights above Lake Como and the little town of Rovio. The conversation that follows is the opening gambit in their developing relationship and is, apparently appropriately, set among Meredith's beloved mountains. But by the end of the novel, the reader has discovered that Dacier of the Alps is not the true mate of Diana, and if the reader has been aware of the connection between true mating and the Alps that has appeared in the earlier novels, he is struck by the irony of the setting of the first substantial meeting between Dacier and Diana.

In One of Our Conquerors (1891), the Alps are once again a place of refuge from distress. Victor Radnor, immersed in the building of Lakelands and in his striving to marry his daughter, Nesta, well, suddenly asks himself, "why was he stewing in London? . . . Why was not Nataly relieved of her dreary round of the purchases of furniture! They ought all now to be in Switzerland or Tyrol." And there follows a panoramic view, purely Meredithian, of the Alps that is suited to Radnor's own personality and ambitions: "a dazzling pinnacle rising over green pasture-Alps, the head of it shooting aloft as the blown billow, high off a broken ridge, and wide-armed in its pure white shroud beneath; tranced, but all motion in immobility to the heart in the eye; a splendid image of striving, up to crowned victory."³⁴ Then, when Dudley Sowerby does propose (on September 15) to Nesta, as Victor hoped, "it was not known to the damsel's parents before the twenty-third; as they were away on an excursion in South Tyrol:--away, flown, with just a word of the hurried departure to their . . . girl" The effect of the news of the engagement on Nataly is immediate: "Her short beat of wings was over.

She had joined herself with Victor's leap for a change, thirsting for the scenery of the white peaks in heaven, to enjoy through his enjoyment, if her own capacity was dead: and she had found it revive, up to some recovery of her old songful readiness for invocations of pleasure. Escape and beauty beckoned ahead; behind were the chains." Nataly's effort at restoration of her failing strength is cut short and she must return to England and to the enormous difficulties of her situation as the unwedded wife of a man of huge and public ambitions.³⁵

At the end of the saga of the conqueror, the Alps once again play their restorative role, this time for poor Nesta, who retreats to the home of a friend in Dauphiné: "When her imagination could perch on ["the snow-heights"] with love and pride, she began to recover the throb for a part in human action." While she is visiting Signora Sanfredini at Como, Dudley's second and most generous proposal (in view of the revelation of Nesta's family history) reaches her, but she is now, as she signs her "grateful reply," "Nesta Victoria Fenellan," the wife of the man best suited to her as a Meredithian heroine.³⁶

The Alps appear in Lord Ormont and His Aminta (1894) as the refuge for Matey Weyburn and Aminta when they take flight from Aminta's unfortunate marriage. It is in Switzerland that Matey establishes his school for boys to which Lord Ormont, seven years after the elopement, brings his grandnephew Bobby Benlew, who has been rejected by or ejected from several English schools. It is a school that evokes from one of its products the ecstatic statement that Matey and Aminta "are loved. They will be loved all over Europe. He works for Europe and America--all civilized people--to be one country."³⁷ One gets the impression from the choice of Switzerland that no other country would have served as

the ideal spot for the ideal Meredithian school run by the ideal Meredithian couple.

The novel over which the Alps brood most continuously is the last of Meredith's completed novels: The Amazing Marriage (1895). Here Meredith goes farther than he did in the case of Vernon Whitford and Clara Middleton in making the Alps a significant geographical location for the meetings of minds and of lovers. The parents of two of the main characters were staying in the Alps when Countess Fanny's husband died and left them free to marry. Chillon Switzer John and Carinthia Jane Kirby were born and raised among the mountains. Gower Woodseer first meets Carinthia and writes of her in glowing terms in his pocket diary among those same peaks, and there Lord Fleetwood meets Gower and learns of Carinthia, with whose description he falls in love: "Here was one bitten by the serpent of love, and athirst for an image of the sex to serve for the cooling herb" ³⁸ One might almost say that the troubled stream of the relationship between Carinthia and Lord Fleetwood springs from their different attitudes toward nature, particularly in its Alpine form. Carinthia loves the Alps as her home and as the abiding-place of all that is dear to her. She is, in many respects, rather like an Alp herself in her purity and strength and in her untouchable yet human nature. It seems to me significant that the first question Carinthia asks about Lord Fleetwood is, "Lord Fleetwood loves our mountains, Chillon?" Chillon does not answer directly but merely comments on the vagaries of Lord Fleetwood's ideas. ³⁹ Much later, after the facts of the "amazing marriage" and Lord Fleetwood's abandonment of Carinthia, there is a conversation between Gower and the nobleman during which Lord Fleetwood "ejaculates," "Such animals these women are! Good Lord! . . . I marry

one, and I'm to take to reading medical books!" Gower scolds him for his attitude and reveals that, as the reader suspects, the husband's attitudes toward women and nature are connected:

'You speak that of woman and pretend to love Nature,' said Gower. 'You hate Nature unless you have it served on a dish by your own cook. That's the way to the madhouse or the monastery. There we expiate the sin of sins. A man finds the woman of all women fitted to stick him in the soil, and trim and point him to grow, and she's an animal for her pains! The secret of your malady is, you've not yet, though you're on a healthy leap for the practices of Nature, hopped to the primary conception of what Nature means. Women are in and of Nature'⁴⁰

Still later, Meredith pauses to let "Mr. Philosopher" (who is, of course, Meredith himself) declaim "that the abusing of women proves the hating of Nature; names it 'the commonest insanity, and the deadliest,' and men are 'planted in the bog of their unclean animal condition until they do proper homage to the animal Nature makes the woman be Men hating Nature are insane. Women and Nature are close. If it is rather general to hate Nature and maltreat women, we begin to see why the world is a mad world.'"⁴¹ Lord Fleetwood's miserable treatment of Carinthia becomes a negative example of the centrality of solid relationships between the sexes to the survival of a sane, rational society. That Lord Fleetwood does not, as the reader becomes able to answer Carinthia's question, love the Alps is concomitant with his not loving her--at least, not until it is much too late for him to secure her to him for the mutual benefit of themselves and of society. At last Carinthia abandons her efforts at securing the husbandship of Lord Fleetwood and goes to Spain with Chillon; Lord Fleetwood retires to a monastery in the mountains of Wales, where he dies, "of his austerities, or his heart . . . ," some three and one-half years after Carinthia's return to England. The Alpine woman marries the Welshman, Owain Wythan, and the products of two of Meredith's favorite locales can do no otherwise than live happily forever after.⁴²—

FOOTNOTES, APPENDIX II

¹Meredith, Poems I (ME XXIV), 151.

²Meredith, "By the Rosanna," lines omitted from the version cited in footnote 1; preserved in Various Readings and Bibliography (ME XXVII), 260-266. The two lines here appear on 261.

³Ibid., 262-266, passim.

⁴Meredith, The Ordeal of Richard Feverel (1859 edition, Modern Library, ed. Lionel Stevenson), p. 319; 1875 version (ME II), 265.

⁵Lindsay, p. 121.

⁶Meredith, Rhoda Fleming (ME V), 78.

⁷Ibid., Vittoria I (ME VII), 12. Cf. Lindsay, note, p. 396, where he offers a quotation from Mazzini that matches Meredith's own spirit.

⁸Ibid., 254 ff.

⁹Ibid., II (ME VIII), 41.

¹⁰Ibid., I, 12.

¹¹Ibid., Letters, pp. 541-542; Cline, typescript, for correction of William Meredith's date of "Autumn 1902." The allusion to Meredith's presence in the Italian Alps refers to his journey as a war correspondent for the Morning Post, June-July 1866.

¹²Ibid., Harry Richmond II (ME X), 307-308.

¹³Ibid., Beauchamp's Career I (ME XI), 80-81.

¹⁴Ibid., 84.

¹⁵Ibid., II (ME XII), 142.

¹⁶Ibid., 18.

¹⁷Ibid., The Egoist, I (ME XIII), 3.

¹⁸Ibid., 62.

¹⁹Ibid., 11, 84.

²⁰Ibid., 134-135.

²¹Ibid., 137-140, *passim*.

²²Ibid., 142.

²³Ibid., 243.

²⁴Ibid., II (ME XIV), 55.

²⁵Ibid., 276, 278.

²⁶Ibid., 309.

²⁷Ibid., 314-315.

²⁸Ibid., 332.

²⁹Ibid., The Tragic Comedians (ME XV), 148. See 159, 168 for the presence of the mountain in the background.

³⁰Ibid., 57.

³¹Ibid., 61-62.

³²Ibid., 63, 66-67, 127, 194ff. References to Alvan as a Titan --
and as mountain-like appear on pages 60, 148-149, 183, 196.

³³Ibid., Diana of the Crossways (ME XVI), 168-172, passim.

³⁴Ibid., One of Our Conquerors (ME XVII), 213-214.

³⁵Ibid., 297-299.

³⁶Ibid., 511-512.

³⁷Ibid., Lord Ormont and His Aminta (ME XVIII), 347.

³⁸Ibid., The Amazing Marriage (ME XIX), 28, 29, 56-57, 72ff.

³⁹Ibid., 62.

⁴⁰Ibid., 325-326.

⁴¹Ibid., 363.

⁴²Ibid., 508-510, passim.

APPENDIX III

MEREDITH'S TRANSLATIONS OF GERMAN ROMANTIC POETRY

Rather than burden the reader with all of Meredith's translations of poems from the body of German Romantic poetry, I decided to include the remainder of those not discussed in the text in an appendix for the interest of those who find the matter as intriguing as I do. The collection is not complete, however, because I still lack Meredith's version of Uhland's "The Boy's Death," the German text of the elusive "Lied von Castelli," and the German text of the fragment from Grillparzer's Hannibal and Scipio.

Heine, "Die Heimkehr," # 8¹

Du schönes Fischermädchen,
Triebe den Kahn ans Land:
Komm zu mir und setze dich nieder,
Wir kosen Hand in Hand.

Leg' an mein Herz dein Köpschen,
Und fürchte dich nicht zu sehr;
Vertraust du dich doch sorglos
Täglich dem wilden Meer.

Mein Herz gleicht ganz dem Meere,
Hat Sturm und Ebb' und Flut,
Und manche schone Perle
In seiner Tiefe ruht.

Eichendorff, "Mondnacht"³

Es war, als hätte der Himmel
Die Erde still geküsst,
Dass sie im Blütenschimmer
Von ihm nun träumen müsst.

Meredith, Heine's "My Heart"²

Thou lovely fisher maiden
Steer in thy boat to land
Come to me and sit thee down
We'll whisper, hand in hand.

On my heart thy little head
Lay down and fear not me,
Thou who daily trustest
The wild, wild sea.

Even as the sea, my heart
Has storms, and ebb and flow,
And many a beauteous pearl
Lies calm in its deep below.

Meredith, Eichendorff's "Moonlight"⁴

It was as if the heaven
Had kissed earth with its beam
That she in blooming glimmer
Must sweetly of it dream.

Die Luft ging durch die Felder,
Die Ähren wogten sacht,
Es rauschten leis die Wälder,
So sternklar war die Nacht.

Und meine Seele spannte
Weit ihre Flügel aus,
Flog durch die stillen Lande,
Als flöge sie nach Haus.

The breeze went over the fields,
The ears were waving light,
The woods were gently rustling
So starry was the night.

And my whole soul outspreading
Her wings abroad to roam
Flew through the sleeping land
As if toward its home.

Goethe, Klärchen's Song, Egmont,
Act III⁵

Freudvoll
Und leidvoll,
Gedankenvoll sein,
Langen
Und bangen
In schwebender Pein,
Himmelhoch jauchzend,
Zum Tode betrübt;
Glücklich allein
Ist die Seele, die liebt.

Meredith, Goethe's "Song (Joyful)"⁶

Joyful
And woful
And thankful remain;
Swaying and praying
In hovering pain,
Heavenward exulting
Death hurled from above,
Happy alone
Are the souls that love.

Goethe, "Geständnis"⁷

Was ist schwer zu verbergen? Das
Feuer!
Denn bei Tage verrät's der Rauch,
Bei Nacht die Flamme, das Ungeheuer.
Ferner ist schwer zu verbergen auch
Die Liebe; noch so stille gehegt,
Sie doch gar leicht aus den Augen
schlägt.
Am schwersten zu bergen ist ein
Gedicht;
Man stellt es untern Scheffel nicht.
Hat es der Dichter frisch gesungen,
So ist er ganz davon durch drungen;
Hat er es zierlich nett geschrieben,
Will er, die ganze Welt soll's lieben.
Er liest es jedem froh und laut,
Ob es uns quält, ob es erbaut!

Meredith, Goethe's "Confession"⁸

What is hard to hide? The fire,
For by day the smoke betrays it
And the flame by night, the monster.
Again 'tis hard our love to hide,
For howsoever you enclose it,
Out of the eyelids it softly smites you.
But hardest 'tis to hide a poem,
Under no bushel you'll conceal it;
Has but the poet freshly sung it,
Thereby is he quite overcome;
Has he just smartly dashed it off,
He writes that the whole world shall
love it;
To all he reads it, glad and loud,
Whether it fret us or instruct.

Uhland, "Der Gute Kamerad"⁹

Ich hatt' einen Kameraden,
Einen bessern findst du nit.
Die Trommel schlug zum Streite,
Er ging an meiner Seite
In gleichem Schritt und Tritt.

Eine Kugel kam geflogen;
Gilt's mir oder gilt es dir?
Ihn hat es gegerissen,
Er liegt zu meinen Füßen,
Als wär's ein Stück von mir.

Will mir die Hand noch reichen,
Derweil ich eben lad':
Kann dir die Hand nicht geben;
"Bleib du im ew'gen Leben
Mein guter Kamerad!"

Meredith, Uhland's "The Good Comrade"¹⁰

Once I had a Comrade
A better ne'er has been
The battle drums were beating
In equal measures treading
Beside me he was een.

There came a bullet flying--
Is it for me or Thee?
Him it strikes and dying
Before my feet he's lying,
Even as a part of me.

Will the hand reach to me
That I so lately knew!
My hand I cannot give Thee
To Eternal Life I leave Thee
My Comrade good and true.

Uhland, "Der Wirtin Töchterlein"¹¹

Es zogen drei Bursche wohl über den Rhein,
Bei einer Frau Wirtin da kehrten sie ein;
"Frau Wirtin! hat sie gut Bier und Wein?
Wo hat sie Ihr schönes Töchterlein?"
"Mein Bier und Wein ist frisch und klar,
Mein Töchterlein liegt auf der Totenbahr'."
Und als sie traten zur Kammer hinein,
Da lag sie in einem schwarzen Schrein.
Der Erste, der schlug den Schleier zurück
Und schaute sie an mit traurigem Blick:
"Ach, lebstest du noch, du schone Maid,
Ich wurde dich lieben von dieser Zeit."
Der Zweite deckte den Schleier zu,
Und kehrte sich ab und weinte dazu:
"Ach, dass du liegst auf der Totenbahr'!
Ich hab' dich geliebet so manches Jahr."
Der Dritte hub ihn wieder sogleich,
Und kusste sie an den Mund so bleich:
"Dich liebt' ich immer, dich lieb' ich noch heut
Und werde dich lieben in Ewigkeit."

Meredith, Uhland's "The Landlady's Daughter"¹²

Three students went over the Rhine one day
And to a good landlady made their way.
"Now, landlady, have you good wine and beer,
And how is your little daughter dear?"
[Two lines lacking in Sencourt's transcription.]

And as they into the chamber stept
 In a black coffin they saw she slept.
 The first from her face the white veil took
 And looked at her long with a sorrowful look.
 "Ah! wer't thou alive, thou maiden flower,
 Thee should I love from this very hour."
 The second he put the white veil to
 And turned him away, and wept anew.
 "Ah, that thou liest on thy death bier,
 Thee have I loved for many a year,"
 The third again put by the veil
 And kissed her on the lips so pale.
 "Thee loved I ever, and still I love thee,
 And thee shall I love through eternity."

Schiller, "Der Abend. Nach einem Gemälde."¹³

Senke, strahlender Gott--die Fluren d"ürsten
 Nach erquickendem Tau, der Mensch verschmachtet,
 Matter ziehen die Rosse--
 Senke den Wagen hinab!

Siehe, wer aus des Meers kristallner Woge
 Lieblich lächelnd dir winkt! Erkennt dein Herz sie?
 Rascher fliegen die Rosse,
 Tethys, die göttliche, winkt.

Schnell vom Wagen herab in ihre Arme
 Springt der Führer, den Zum ergreift Cupido,
 Stille halten die Rosse,
 Trinken die kühlende Flut.

An dem Himmel herauf mit leisen Schritten
 Kommt die dustende Nacht; ihr folgt die süsse
 Liebe. Ruhet und liebet!
 Phöbus, der liebende, ruht.

Meredith, Schiller's "Evening, after a Picture"¹⁴

Descend O radiant God!--the plains are thirsting
 To drink the cooling dews--and man is tired--
 More faintly pull the Steeds--
 Sink in thy chariot down.

Behold who from the Ocean's crystal wave
 Smiles lovingly and beckons! Knows her thy heart?
 More swiftly fly the Steeds
 Thetis the Divine One beckons--

Quick from the chariot into her arms
 Springs the God Driver--Love usurps the reins
 Still halt the panting steeds
 And drink the cooling flood!

With gentle steps into the heavenly arch
 Rises the dewy night--her follows sweetly
 Love--Rest all and love
 Phoebus the Beloved one rests!

Seidl, "Hans Euler"¹⁵

Horch, Marthe, draussen pocht es; geh, lass den Mann herein,
 Es wird ein armer Pilger, der sich verirrt, sein!--
 „Grüss Gott, du schmucker Krieger! nimm Platz an unserm Tisch;
 Das Brod ist weiss und locker, der Trank ist hell und frisch!"

„Es ist nicht Trank, nicht Speise, wonach es not mir thut,
 Doch, so Ihr seid Hans Euler, so will ich Euer Blut!
 Wisst Ihr, vor Monden hab' ich Euch noch als Feind bedroht:
 Dort hatt' ich einen Bruder, den Bruder schlugt Ihr tot.

Und als er rang am Boden, da schwur ich es ihm gleich,
 Dass ich ihn rächen wollte, früh oder spät, an Euch!"
 „Und hab' ich ihn erschlagen, so war's im rechten Streit,
 Und kommt Ihr, ihn zu rächen--wohlan! ich bin bereit!

Doch nicht im Hause kämpf' ich, nicht zwischen Thür' und Wand;
 Im Angesichte dessen, wofür ich stritt und stand.
 Den Säbel--Marthe, weisst du--womit ich ihn erschlug!
 Und soll ich nimmer kommen--Tyrol ist gross genug!"

Sie gehen mit einander den nâhen Fels hinan;
 Sein gülden Thor hat eben der Morgen aufgethan;--
 Der Hans voran, der Fremde recht rüstig hinterdrein,
 Und höher steht mit beiden der liebe Sonnenschein.

Nun stehn sie an der Spitze,--da liegt die Alpenwelt,
 Die wunderbare, grosse, vor ihnen aufgehellet:
 Gesunkne Nebel zeigen der Thäler reiche Lust,
 Mit Hütten in den Armen, mit Herden an der Brust.

Dazwischen Riesenbache, darunter Kluft an Kluft,
 Daneben Wälderkrone, darüber freie Luft;
 Und sichtbar nicht, doch fühlbar, von Gottes Ruh' umkreist,
 In Hütten und in Herzen der alten Treue Geist.

Das sehn die beiden droben, dem Fremden sinkt die Hand;
 Hans aber zeigt hinunter aufs liebe Vaterland:
 „Für das hab' ich gesochten, dein Bruder hat's bedroht;
 Für das hab' ich gestritten, für das schlug ich ihn tot."

Vogl, "Das Erkennen"¹⁷

Ein Wanderbursch, mit dem Stab in der Hand,
 Kommt wieder heim aus dem fremden Land.
 Sein Haar ist bestäubt, sein Antlitz verbrannt;
 Von wem wird der Bursch wohl zuerst erkannt?
 So tritt er ins Städtchen, durchs alte Thor,
 Am Schlagbaum lehnt just der Zöllner davor.
 Der Zöllner, der war ihm ein lieber Freund,
 Oft hatte der Becher die beiden vereint.
 Doch sieh--Freund Zollmann erkennt ihn nicht,
 Zu sehr hat die Sonn' ihm verbrannt das Gesicht.
 Und weiter wandert nach kurzem Gruss
 Der Bursche und schüttelt den Staub vom Fuss.
 Da schaut aus dem Fenster sein Schätzel fromm,
 "Du blühende Jungfrau, viel schönen Willkom'."
 Doch sieh--auch das Mägdlein erkennt ihn nicht,
 Die Sonn' hat zu sehr ihm verbrannt das Gesicht.
 Und weiter geht er die Strass' entlang,
 Ein Thränlein hängt ihm an der braunen Wang'.
 Da wankt von dem Kirchsteig sein Mütterchen her,
 "Gott grüss' Euch!"--so spricht er und sonst nichts mehr.
 Doch sieh--das Mütterchen schluchzet voll Lust:
 "Mein Sohn!"--und sinkt an des Burschen Brust.
 Wie sehr auch die Sonne sein Antlitz verbrannt,
 Das Mutteraug' hat ihn doch gleich erkannt.

Meredith, Vogl's "The Recognition"¹⁸

A roving boy comes, staff in hand,
 Home again from a foreign land.

His face it is burnt, and there's dust in his hair,
 Who will remember the boy so fair?

Thro' the ancient gate of the town steps he,
 At the bar leans the toll-keeper lazily.

The toll-keeper was his friend beloved,
 Often had they clash'd cups, well proved.

But, behold! his friend forgets all trace,
 So fiercely the sun has burnt his face!

After short greeting, the boy goes on,
 Shaking the dust from his feet anon.

When from a window his treasure he spies,
 'Hail, blooming maiden! to those bright eyes.'

But, behold! the girl has forgotten all trace,
So fiercely the sun has burnt his face!

Further his way thro' the streets he seeks,
A stealthy tear on his sunburnt cheeks.

His mother comes tottering from the church door,
'God greet thee!' he says, and nothing more.

But, behold! his mother sobs for joy,
'My son!' and falls on the breast of her boy.

Tho' fiercely the sun has burnt his face,
The mother's eye lights up each trace.

FOOTNOTES, APPENDIX III

¹Heine, II, 100.

²Sencourt, 68.

³Die Deutsche Romantiker, I, 834.

⁴Sencourt, 68.

⁵Goethe, Werke, IV, 410.

⁶Sencourt, 68.

⁷Goethe, Werke, II, 11.

⁸Sencourt, 68.

⁹Die Deutsche Romantiker, I, 795.

¹⁰Bartlett, typescript.

¹¹Balladen und Romanzen, p. 137.

¹²Sencourt, 68.

¹³Schiller, Werke, I, 87-88.

¹⁴Bartlett, typescript.

¹⁵Balladen und Romanzen, pp. 205-206.

¹⁶ Meredith, "Austrian Poets," 226.

¹⁷ Balladen und Romanzen, p. 188.

¹⁸ Meredith, "Austrian Poets," 225.

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AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL STATEMENT

I was born, raised, and educated--from grade school through graduate school--in New York City. Despite early inclinations towards mathematics, German, and French, I undertook to major in English literature as an undergraduate at Queens College, now of the City University of New York. I was married to Robert H. Williams during my senior year at Queens and, in due course of time, became the mother of a son, David Robert, who is now twelve years old. In September 1962, under the impetus of advice from faculty members at Queens College, I entered the graduate program in English at that school and earned a Master's Degree in June 1964. From thence I entered the doctoral program in English at the City University.

Except for a summer in Paris in 1954 on a scholarship from the French Veterans of Foreign Wars in New York, I lived nowhere but in that city until my husband's company moved to Memphis, Tennessee, where we are still located. I am at present an Instructor in English at Southwestern at Memphis, a small (1000 students) liberal arts and sciences college supported by the Presbyterian Church, U. S.