

clined to add a quotation from Garcilaso de la Vega, the soldier-poet of Castille, who flourished from 1503 to 1536. His works are very rare on this continent, and it is only by chance that I have procured a copy.

Senora mia, si de vos yo ausente
 En esta vida duro, y no me muero,
 Paréceme que ofendo á lo que os quiero,
 Y al bien de que gozaba en ser presente.
 Tras este luego siento otro accidente,
 Y es ver que si de vida desespero,
 Yo pierdo cuanto bien viendoos espero;
 Y así estoy en mis males diferente.
 En esta diferencia mis sentidos
 Combaten con tan áspera porfia,
 Que no sé que hacerme en mal tamano.
 Nunca entre si los veo sino renidos:
 De tal arte pelean noche y dia,
 Que solo se conciertan en mi dano.

The use or the neglect of the Sonnet among British poets is one of the curiosities of literature. Some of our greatest names have overlooked it entirely, while some have employed it very sparingly, and a few have made it one of their chief claims to immortality. Among the former I may instance, Beaumont and Fletcher, Marlow, Ford, Massinger, Cowley, Dryden, Addison, Prior, Swift, Wycherly, Congreve, Farquhar, Pope, Savage, Thomson, Collins, Goldsmith, Scott, and Campbell. In the case of Addison, Dryden, Pope, and Swift, this silence is the more remarkable that the Sonnet would appear to have been precisely the vehicle for that condensation of thought and terseness of expression which were among the chief traits of these men of genius. Among the second may be mentioned Ben Jonson, Milton, Young, Cowper, Gray, Coleridge, Burns, Byron. Among the latter are Sidney, Spenser, Shakespeare, Wordsworth, Southey, Shelley, Keats, Leigh Hunt, Barry Cornwall, Kirke White, Lamb, Mrs. Hemans, Tennyson, and Longfellow. It is a further literary curiosity that the very best sonnets in the language are the productions of some of our minor poets. Chief among these is Bowles, whose sonnets are all gems. Next to him ranks Aubrey de Vere, a poet alto-

gether too little known in this country. Other names are Drayton, Sir John Davies, Donne, Raleigh, Wither, George Herbert, Walker, Rossetti, and contemporaries too numerous to mention.

However limited the form of the sonnet, its capabilities, as a medium of expression, are infinite. Delightful old Herrick, one of its masters, thus speaks of its varied range:

I sing of books, of blossoms, birds and bowers,
 Of April, May, of June and July flowers;
 I sing of May-poles, hock-carts, wassails,
 wakes,
 Of bridegrooms, brides, and of their bridal
 cakes.
 I write of youth, of love, and have access
 By these, to sing of *cleanly wantonness*;
 I sing of dews, of rains, and, piece by piece,
 Of balm, of oil, of spice, and ambergris.
 I sing of times trans-shifting; and I write
 How roses first came red, and lilies white;
 I write of groves, of twilight, and I sing
 The court of Mab, and of the fairy King.
 I write of Hell; I sing, and ever shall,
 Of Heaven, and hope to have it after all.

The words *cleanly wantonness* I have italicized, because they appear to me to express a characteristic of our literature, on the whole, as distinguished from the French for instance, and also because they show that already in Herrick's time (1591—1662) the word 'wantonness' was drifting from its original to its present signification.

Dante used the sonnet mainly for his mystical plaints; Petrarch, for his morbid love; Sidney, for courtship; Spenser, for allegorical conceits. Shakespeare's sonnets are a *crux*. Those of Milton are patriotic and personal, and all pitched in a minor key. Wordsworth's sonnets would require a study by themselves, but the best of them are devoted to the description of external objects, which was really the salient point of the poet's genius. That this species of verse was a pastime to him in his various moods we learn from the following beautiful lines, which may also be taken as an example of his best manner:

Nuns fret not at their convent's narrow room,
 And hermits are contented with their cells;