The History and the Critical Reception of the Poems of Gerard Manley Hopkins, S.J.

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THE HISTORY AND THE CRITICAL RECEPTION OF THE POEMS
OF GERARD MANLEY HOPKINS, S.J.

by

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INTRODUCTION

Gerard Manley Hopkins, S. J., who is today considered a major poet by such prominent literary critics as I. A. Richards and Herbert Read, died twenty-nine years before an edition of his poems was published. He wrote because, as one critic has said, "his genius was urgent." His friends, Robert Bridges, Coventry Patmore and others remonstrated with him for the "oddnesses," the "obscurities" which - so it seemed to them - ruined his verses. Hopkins listened and continued to write as he wished. He persisted in his manner even though he knew that no editor would print his work. One doubts that he had any hope that posterity would accept him.

Stratford, Essex, was the birthplace of Gerard Hopkins on June 11, 1844. His father, Manley Hopkins, was Consul General of the Hawaiian Islands to Great Britain, author of a history of Hawaii, and a minor poet. His mother, a well-educated woman, had sisters and a brother who were talented musicians and artists. This explains the poetic, musical, and artistic tendencies which Gerard exhibited early in life.

After two years in a day-school in Hampstead, the boy was transferred to Sir Robert Cholmondley's Grammar School at Highgate where he remained until, in 1862, he
won an exhibition for Balliol College, Oxford. Gerard had had some opportunities for travel in the meantime. In 1857 his father took him to Belgium and The Rhineland and again in 1860 to southern Germany.

During his Highgate days, Gerard won a school prize for his poem "The Escorial" in 1859, and for "A Vision of Mermaids" in 1862.

At Oxford, Hopkins felt the influence of men like Jowett, Liddon, Pater, and Pusey; he became friends with Robert Bridges, William Addis, and Digby Dolben. He was likewise impressed by the memories of Newman and the Oxford Movement which still persisted at the university, with the result that in 1866, he was received into the Roman Catholic Church. His biographer, Gerard F. Lahey, S. J., does not give us details and background of this conversion. Hopkins himself wrote no Apologia.

In the spring of 1867, Hopkins took his degree - a double-first in 'Greats' - at Oxford and one year later he made his decision to enter the Jesuit order.

After two years novitiate at Roehampton, and a three-year philosophy course at Stonyhurst, Mr. Hopkins was sent back to Roehampton to teach the classics. In 1874 he went to St. Bueno's College, North Wales, for his theological studies, and in 1877 he was ordained to
the priesthood. During the next four years his chief duties were those of preacher in London, Oxford, and Liverpool. After his third year novitiate at Roehampton in 1881, he taught the classics at Stonyhurst. In 1884, on the recommendation of Jowett, he was given the chair of Greek at the Royal University, Dublin; he remained in Ireland until his death, June 8, 1889.

Many critics have hinted that the monotonous life of a Jesuit must have been extremely incompatible for a man of Hopkins' temperament. However that may be, it was the life he wished to lead. A Jesuit confrère wrote of him:

I think the characteristics in him that most struck and edified all of us who knew him were, first, what I should call his priestly spirit; this showed itself not only in the reverential way he performed his sacred duties, and spoke on sacred subjects, but in his whole conduct and conversation; and secondly, his devotion and loyalty to the Society of Jesus.¹

That the life of a religious priest must have caused him unusual sacrifices is evident. Another Jesuit companion wrote:

I have rarely known anyone who sacrificed so much in undertaking the yoke of religion. If I had known him outside, I should have said

¹ G. Lahey, Life of Gerard Manley Hopkins, p. 145.
that his love of speculation and originality of thought would make it almost impossible for him to submit his intellect to authority. 2

Still another fellow-Jesuit said of Father Hopkins:

The high order of his intellect was at once made evident to all who came into serious contact with him. True it was of a somewhat impractical turn, but the various and often amusing extravagances into which it was from time to time in consequence beguiled, only added another point of attractiveness to his character. The result of all was a man so loveable that we shall not soon look upon his like again. 3

A writer who signs himself "Plures" in the Dublin Review recounts the following incident as illustrative of one of the "amusing extravagances."

Once at table he was seized with minor ecstasy at the conjunction of tartlets and Father Vaughan. He rose calling out: "Tartlets! Tartlets! My Kingdom for a tart. Bernard, I love you," and subsided into fantastic mirth. It was only necessary for the Father Rector to mention that no encore was necessary for the solemnity of the religious meal to proceed. 4

On his entrance into the Jesuit novitiate in 1868, Gerard Hopkins burned the poems he had already written. With the exception of a few "presentation pieces" it

2. Lahey, op. cit., p. 132.
3. Ibid., p. 133.
5.

seems he wrote no poetry until 1876 when he composed "The Wreck of the Deutschland" because he had heard his rector remark that he wished someone would write a poem to commemorate the deaths of the five Franciscan Nuns, exiles from Germany by the Falck laws, who lost their lives when the Deutschland sank, December 7, 1875. From then on until his death in 1889, Father Hopkins wrote in his leisure time and sent his poems to his friends, Robert Bridges and Canon Dixon.
CHAPTER 1

The First Publication of Hopkins' Poems in Anthologies: the Critical Comment That Followed

Although on the authority of Robert Bridges we know that Gerard Manley Hopkins was already known as a poet during his student days at Oxford University, there was no publication of his work even in anthologies until after his death.

Alfred H. Miles in the eighth volume of The Poets and the Poetry of the Century printed eight of Hopkins' poems which are prefaced with biographical and critical comment by Robert Bridges. Mr. Miles stated that this selection of poems found "publicity for the first time" in his volume. The publication date of the first edition of this anthology is not definitely known. It would seem to have been about 1891.

The introductory comment of Bridges here is in the same spirit as the preface he was later to publish in his 1918 edition of Hopkins' poems. He speaks of the "Keatsian

6. "A Vision of the Mermaids"-1861-(selected lines); "The Habit of Perfection"-1866; "The Starlight Night"-1877; "Spring"-1877; "The Candle Indoors"-1879; "Spring and Fall"-1880; "Inversnaid"-1881; "To---"-1889
7. Miles, op. cit., p. v.
8. In an article in The Month, vol. 114, (August, 1909), p. 59, Father Keating states that the date was 1891.
sweetnesses" of Hopkins' early verse which, however, soon developed into "a very different style of his own, so full of experiments in rhythm and diction that, were his poems collected into one volume, they would appear as a unique effort in English literature." He remarks the "natural eccentricity, a love for subtlety and uncommonness" which he says, "hampered their author throughout life."

Dr. Bridges closes this critical notice with an assertion which today seems in the process of being disproved:

Poems as far removed as his come to be from the ordinary simplicity of grammar and meter, had they no other drawback, could never be popular; but they will interest poets; and they may perhaps prove welcome to the critic, for they have this plain fault, that, aiming at an unattainable perfection of language (as if words---each with its twofold value in sense and in sound---could be arranged like so many separate gems to compose a whole expression of thought, in which the force of grammar and the beauty of rhythm absolutely correspond), they not only sacrifice simplicity, but very often, among verses of the rarest beauty, show a neglect of those canons of taste, which seem common to all poetry.

The next anthologist after Miles to include Hopkins in his work was H. C. Beeching. Lyra Sacra: A Book of Religious Verse was published in 1895. Canon Beeching

10. Ibid., pp. 161-162.
11. Ibid., p. 164.
chose to include four poems which had not appeared in the Miles anthology and which were "given by kind leave of the poet's father, Mr. Manley Hopkins." 12 Canon Beeching later in the same year, 1895, edited A Book of Christmas Verse. Hopkins is represented here by "Mary Mother of Divine Grace, Compared to the Air We Breathe." 13 The editor states that this poem had not been printed before.

Canon Beeching, even at this early date, seems to have recognized Father Hopkins' greatness. Had he, instead of Robert Bridges, been entrusted with the poems, we probably would not have waited until 1918 for their publication. "It is to be hoped", wrote the Canon in 1895, "that before long his genius may be recognized in a complete edition." 14

Grandeur," and "Mary Compared to the Air We Breathe."

Besides Robert Bridges' critical comment in Miles' anthology, there were but two important studies of Father Hopkins' poetry before the complete edition of the poems in 1918.

In 1914, Joyce Kilmer wrote an article on Gerard Hopkins for the magazine, Poetry. Mr. Kilmer concentrates his attention on the startlingly original language of Hopkins. He says:

One may search his writings in vain for a figure that is not novel and true. He took from his own experiences those comparisons that are the material of poetry and rejected, it seems, such of them as already bore marks of use. For him, the grandeur of God flames out from the world not like light from stars, but like 'shining from shock foil.' He writes not of soft hands, not of velvety hands, but of 'feel-of-primrose hands.' He writes not that thrush's eggs are blue as the sky, but that they 'look little low heavens.' The starry skies of a winter night are 'the dim woods quick with diamond wells' or 'the gray lawns cold where quaking gold-dew lies.' In Spring, 'the blue is all in a rush with richness' and Summer 'plashes amid the billowy apple-trees his lusty hands.'

Now, it may be that these exquisite figures would not entitle their maker to high praise if they were isolated bits of splendor, if (like the economical versemakers of our own day) he had made each one the excuse for a poem. But they come in bewildering profusion. Gerard Hopkins' poems are successions of lovely images, each a poem in itself.16

Mr. Kilmer also printed three of Hopkins' poems, "The Starlight Night", "The Habit of Perfection", and

"Spring" in his anthology of Catholic poets, *Dreams and Images,* in 1917.

Katherine Brégy published a commentary on the poet and his work called "Gerard Hopkins: An Epitaph and an Appreciation" in *The Catholic World,* January, 1909. 17

Miss Brégy analyzes the man, as he revealed himself through his poetry, and finds him an "illumined soul." She senses that he had "weighed and sounded this world of shadow and symbol and enigma." He discovered "but two realities....steadfast: God, and the struggling soul of man."

This reviewer finds in Father Hopkins' work, "an original vein of poetry; a spiritual motivation, a vigour of word-painting, and a metrical proficiency of very real distinction;" however, she laments his "eccentricity," his "curious and perverse construction." She summarizes her opinion in the following estimation which, though somewhat tinged with the Victorian notion of "the poetical," shows a sympathetic and intelligent understanding of this poet who was known so slightly when she wrote about him in 1909.

Gerard Hopkins' exceedingly delicate and intricate craftsmanship - and not less the singularity of

17. *Catholic World,* vol. 88 (January, 1909), pp. 433-447. (This article was later printed in *The Poets' Chantry* by Katherine Brégy).
his mental processes - must, indeed, produce in many minds an impression of artificiality. Yet nothing could be further from the fact, for in all the poems of his manhood there is a poignant, even a passionate sincerity. It is quite true that his elliptical and involved expression mars (for all but the very few who shared his theories of verse) more than one poem of rare and vital imagining. It is true also, and of the nature of the case, that our poet was to a certain degree self-centered in his dream of life. He was not an egoist; but it must be obvious that from first to last he was an individualist. And in our human reckoning the individualist pays, and then he pays again; and after that, in Wilde’s phrase, he keeps on paying. Yet in the final count his chances of survival are excellent.18

Miss Brégy calls Father Hopkins a minor poet. One feels, however, that she really means the same thing as Herbert Read who, over twenty years later, calls him a major poet. It is the definition of the terms “minor” and “major” which causes the discrepancy. She says:

He was essentially a minor poet; he wrote incredibly little and he interpreted but few phases of human experience. Yet, with the minor poet’s distinctive merit, he worked his narrow field with completeness and intensity. And who can deny that the very quality which seemed, at worst, an eccentric and literate mannerism, proved itself in the finer passages a strikingly creative and authentic inspiration?19

Twentynine years after Father Hopkins' death, Robert Bridges published the first edition of his friend's poetry. The editor's note evinces some reluctance in sending them forth even then. Perhaps Bridges feared that this poetry would be completely misunderstood. Or, it may be that he had little belief in Hopkins' worth as a poet. The spirit of the "editor's notes" supports this latter supposition. Dr. Bridges warns us of the "affectation in metaphor," the "perversion of human feeling," the "exaggerated Marianism," and the "naked encounter of sensualism and asceticism" to be found in Hopkins' verses. He speaks of their "oddity" and "obscurity" and calls these characteristics "faults of style." However, other remarks, such as "this poet is always serious" and "this poet has always something to say," used parenthetically, indicate that Bridges realized a greatness in his young friend's work—a greatness he could feel rather than understand. The 1918 edition of the poems, edited with scholarly exactness, is probably

21. Ibid. Second edition, p. 96. (All future references will be to the second edition.)
22. Ibid., pp. 96-97.
23. Ibid., pp. 96.
the result of this realization.

Surprisingly enough, many critics who reviewed the book understood the author and his craftsmanship better than the literary executor.

An article in the *Times Literary Supplement* was enthusiastic about the new publication. The unnamed reviewer states that Father Hopkins "begins where most poets leave off, not out of affectation, but because he wished to go further." The poet's method is not affectation, he repeats, "but eagerness to find an expression for the depths of the mind, for things hardly yet consciously thought or felt." His final explanation of the strange poetry has the force of an insight. "It is as if he heard everywhere a music too difficult, because too beautiful, for our ears and noted down what he could catch of it; authentic fragments that we trust even when they bewilder us."

Louise Imogen Guiney also recognizes the worth of this "disturbing, debateable, and compelling poet." Although she calls "Spelt from Sybil's Leaves," the first section of "The Wreck of the Deutschland,"

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and a few other poems "the darkest of riddles;" in spite of the fact that she considers "Harry Ploughman" "little beyond terrific expanses of barbed wire," she is charmed by the "winged daring, originality, durable texture and the priceless excellence of fixing itself in the reader's mind" which the work possesses. In this poetry, she says, "nothing is derivative." She notes the "untramelled imagery," the habit of filling "every stanza, Debussy-like, with accent, slur, pause, tie, syncopation." Miss Guiney states that Hopkins' ideal is "declamation to the harp" and she calls him the "most choral of English poets."

Praise which becomes lyrical in its enthusiasm is given to Father Hopkins' poetry by Henry A. Lappin. 26

Mr. Lappin says:

"Fully to enjoy his superb virtuosity is, one suspects, the last reward of consummate metrical scholarship. On some of these pages there are harmonies the rare inner splendors of which only a most carefully tutored ear and spirit may apprehend; one may overhear echoes of such music as that which ravished the senses of the Pamphlian Er hearkening unto the harmony of the celestial sirens who sat upon the nine unfolded spheres. 27"

This reviewer closes his study by stating opinions which today sound like a prophecy. He maintains that Hopkins' poems record and prove "an extraordinarily high

27. Ibid., p. 507.
achievement in the most difficult of the arts." He argues for them "profundity of thought, ardor of emotion and power and charm of expression" and predicts that the poet's fame "will go on and increase."

Two years later in a study of Father Hopkins' poetry, Edward Sapir\(^2\) speaks positively of the lasting fame he felt sure would come to the dead poet.

Hopkins is long in coming into his own; but it is not too much to say that his own will be secure, among the few that know, if not among the crowd, when many a Georgian name that completely overshadows him for the moment shall have become food for the curious.

For Hopkins' poetry is of the most precious. His voice is easily one of the half dozen most individual voices in the whole course of English Nineteenth-century poetry. One may be repelled by his mannerisms, but he cannot be denied that overwhelming authenticity, that almost terrible immediacy of utterance, that distinguishes the genius from the man of talent.\(^3\)

I. A. Richards, a critic whose opinion is respected by scholars even when they do not agree with him, waited eight years after the appearance of the first edition of Hopkins' poems, before publishing an appreciative article on this poet who was still being read and studied by "the few that know." In commenting on Dr. Bridges' apologies for Hopkins' "blemishes" in style, he states: "But too

\(^\text{30.} \) ibid., p. 330.
many other experiments have been made recently, especially in the last eight years, for this lofty tone and confident assumption to be maintained. The more the poems are studied, the clearer it becomes that their oddities are always deliberate. They may be aberrations, they are not blemishes.

After remarks of comment and interpretation on "Peace", "The Windhover," and "Spelt from Sibyl's Leaves," the reviewer gives this laudation of "the marvelous third and fourth lines" of the last mentioned poem: "They seem to me to anticipate the descriptions we hope our younger contemporary poets will soon write. Such synaesthesia has tempted several of them, but this is, I believe, the supreme example." The lines to which he refers are:

Her fond yellow hornlight wound to the west, her wild hollow hoarlight hung to the height
Waste; her earliest stars, earl-stars,
stars principal, overbend us,
Fire-featuring heaven.

Mr. Richards closes his review with one of the most sympathetic comments which have been made on Hopkins' achievement.

Few writers have dealt more directly with their experience or been more candid. Perhaps to do this must invite the charge of oddity, of playfulness, of whimsical eccentricity and wantonness. To some of his slighter pieces these charges do apply. Like other writers he had to practise and perfect his craft.
The little that has been written about him has already said too much about this aspect. His work as a pioneer has not been equally insisted upon.

Mr. Richards is plainly not in sympathy with the general Victorian attitude which demanded that poetry express only the sublime and the pathetic in simple, unaffected language. He believes that one of the essential qualifications of a poet is the need to communicate something of his own, and he is convinced that Hopkins had this qualification in such an unusual degree that his need forced him into a style that offended those who demanded "a continuous literary decorum."

Other reviewers of this first edition, however, took their cue from Dr. Bridges and regarded Father Hopkins' poems as literary curiosities. An unnamed reviewer in The Spectator\(^{32}\) says that the poems, "despite occasional flashes of the illuminating fire, are on the whole disappointing." He regrets that they are "too often needlessly obscure, harsh, and perverse."

A critic who signs himself G. O'N. in Studies\(^{33}\) speaks of Gerard Hopkins' "lack of judgment," his "fantastic misuse of the English language," and his

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\(^{32}\) Spectator, vol. 122 (May 10, 1919), pp. 598-599.  
\(^{33}\) Studies, vol. 8 (June, 1919), pp. 331-5.
"untrustworthy sense of fitness and proportion." Hew rebels at poems where "meaning which we fain would gather is hidden beneath a cloud-mirage of far-fetched phrases and queerly-assorted vocabables, or tangled up in hardknotted and sometimes quite insoluble syntax."

A fellow student of Hopkins, who speaks of "having had the joy of his friendship," in reminiscing about Father Hopkins says:

That he had the soul of a poet is obvious; but his poems themselves, with some happy exceptions, are like leaves from the sketch-book of a Michael Angelo, full of tremendous power, yet rough and often rudely grotesque, mere suggestions of perfect thoughts and striking turns of expression, which should have been worked up and finished off at leisure in the studio.

But somehow or other the grotesque had an overbearing attraction for this Michael Angelo of verse - and such he ought to have been, had he but condescended to write plain English. As it was, he wilfully set all tradition at defiance, and so the more he laboured at his subject the more obscure it became.34

This reviewer closes his remarks with a charming anecdote which adds to our knowledge of Hopkins' versatile mind:

I once wrote to my friend from Demerara, describing the Feast of Lanterns, as celebrated there by the resident Chinese. His

reply was a learned disquisition on Chinese music, God save the mark! discussing its peculiar tonality, and claiming for it merits which had certainly escaped my observation. Everything bizarre had a charm for this whimsical genius. 35

Although John Middleton Murry considers the poems of Gerard Manley Hopkins seriously and finds in them "many of the strange beauties won by men who push on to the borderlands of their science", he also speaks about "the failure of his whole achievement." 36

Mr. Murry is convinced that musical elaboration alone was Hopkins' concern. He bases his belief on the following remark of the poet:

But as air, melody, is what strikes me most of all in music and design in painting, so design, pattern, or what I am in the habit of calling inscape is what I above all aim at in poetry. 37

When the critic comments on "The Golden Echo," he quotes Hopkins' remark that he never did anything more musical than this poem, and concludes "By his own verdict and his own standards it is therefore the finest thing that Hopkins did." This conclusion does not seem valid. One hesitates to believe that Hopkins thought this poem greater than "Carrion Comfort" or the "terrible" sonnets.

35. The Month, op. cit., p. 159.
37. Laheny, op. cit., p. 87.
Mr. Murry does not consider that Father Hopkins was much concerned with the communication of thought. This conviction distorts his study of the poet. Father Hopkins had great thoughts to communicate; the critic, however, proves that he was unable to understand them. In closing his study of the poet, he says that readers "will speculate whether the failure of his whole achievement was due to the starvation of experience which his vocation imposed upon him, or to a fundamental vice in his poetical endeavour." Murry states that he himself believes the former was the cause. His poetical ideal, he says, "whirling dizzily in a spiritual vacuum, met with no salutary resistance to modify, inform, and strengthen it." 38

A quotation from J. G. Lockhart, 39 aptly accounts for Murry's statements: "What we cannot understand, it is very common, and indeed a very natural thing, for us to under-value."

The first edition of Gerard Manley Hopkins' poems was soon out of print. It had achieved no spectacular notice for the author, but among "the few that know" it was cherished. An interest in Hopkins persisted among poets everywhere; booksellers were unable to secure copies of the 1918 edition for insistent admirers; finally, a new edition was announced and was published in November, 1930.

The editor of the second edition, Charles Williams, added an appendix of sixteen short poems that had not appeared in Dr. Bridges' volume. Mr. Williams states that the second edition includes all Father Hopkins' poems of which the existence was known to Dr. Bridges and the text available.

Mr. Williams also wrote a critical introduction to the new edition which indicates his knowledge of and sympathy with Gerard Manley Hopkins' achievement. Although he courteously refers to Dr. Bridges, who died shortly before the second edition appeared, as one to whom readers of Father Hopkins' poems owe a great devotion, he has swung far from the poet laureate's estimation of Hopkins.
permeated with a love of literary decorum, could not forgive Hopkins' defiance of all tradition. When he wrote his "Editor's Notes" in 1918, it obviously was not so easy to overlook the complete disregard Hopkins seemed to have for conventionalities in literature. By the time Williams wrote in 1930, however, standards in verse writing had changed. There was no need to apologize for "oddities" in a poet's style.

Mr. Williams analyzes Hopkins' alliteration and states that the admirable thing about his employment of this figure of speech is not its presence but its use. It illustrates, he says, the unity of the poet's passion. In commenting on the line "Thou hast bound bones . . . . fastened me flesh," he says: "It is as if the imagination, seeking for expression, had found both verb and substantive at one rush, had begun almost to say them at once, and had separated them only because the intellect had reduced the original unity into divided but related sounds." 40

In proving that Hopkins' diction, unlike Swinburne's, is forged by the thought he is expressing, the editor states:

Alliteration, repetition, interior rhyme, all do the same work: first, they persuade us of the existence of a vital and surprising poetic energy; second, they suspend our attention from any rest until the whole thing,

whatever it may be, is said. Just as phrases which in other poets would be comfortably fashioned clauses are in him complex and compressed words, so poems which in others would have their rising and falling, their moments of importance and unimportance, are in him allowed no chance of having anything of the sort. They proceed, they ascend, they lift us (breathlessly and dazedly clinging) with them, and when at last they rest and we lose hold and totter away we are sometimes too concerned with our own bruises to understand exactly what the experience has been.

It is arguable that this is not the greatest kind of poetry; but it is also arguable that the greatest kind of poetry might easily arise out of this. Robert Bridges has said that he was, at the end, abandoning his theories. But his theories were only ways of explaining to himself his own poetic energy, and if he were abandoning them it was because that energy needed to spend no more time on explanation, because, that is, it was becoming perfectly adequate to its business, "without superfluousness, without defect."

Mr. Williams reiterates and emphasizes his belief that Hopkins' thought, his "passionate intellect", was accountable for his devices, his explorations in verse technique. "Other poets have sung about their intellectual exaltations," he says; "in none has the intellect itself been more the song than in Gerard Hopkins. In this he was unique among the Victorians, but not because he was different from them in kind as they indeed were not different in kind from us or from their prede-

41. Poems, op. cit., Introduction, pp. xii, xiii.
cessors - only because his purely poetic energy was so much greater." 42

In anticipation of the new edition, literary magazines began printing studies of Father Hopkins' poetry early in 1930. A surprisingly small minority of the critics retained the conservative attitude of Bridges and his followers; most of them were sincerely enthusiastic about this poet who, although he had been dead since 1889, was strangely modern.

Isidor Schneider published an appreciation of Hopkins in the Nation which was significantly titled "A Great Poet." 43 Mr. Schneider enumerates as the "elements of Hopkins' originality" his boldness "with words and with forms of speech," and his innovations in prosody. It is not his innovations, however, that are his real contribution to English literature, he maintains, but the major poetry heightened by those so-called "oddnesses." "Beyond question Hopkins belongs among the great poets of English literature," states Schneider. "The experiments may be taken as evidence of the subtlety and diversity of one of the greatest minds to express itself in poetry in his generation." 44

42. Poems, op. cit., pp. xv, xvi.
44. Nation, op. cit., p. 458.
25.

H. L. Binsse feels that Hopkins was the first writer since Milton consciously to make sound and sense perfectly coincide. In Gray's "Elegy," in Keats' "Odes," and in a few other instances, the reviewer maintains that sound and sense were in harmony more through chance than by deliberate planning.

In an article entitled "Gerard Manley Hopkins: Poetry as Experiment and Unity," Dr. M. D. Zabel remarks that Father Hopkins undertook three modes of experiment: symbolic, prosodic, and verbal. All three were of value, he adds, because they have endured. The critic's contention is this:

The value of a symbology, as of a meter, lies in its durability as a poetic index long after the special experiences of its inventors, and the detailed exegesis they provide, are defunct. For unless a new generation of readers and poets feels a symbol as reality, or a rhythm as emotion, or a recreated word as indispensable and unparaphrasable meaning, that symbol, rhythm, and word will be discarded. This might be called the test of actuality in poetry.

The critic who writes under the name "Dilly Tante" in the Wilson Bulletin believes, as does Isidor Schneider,

45. *Saturday Review of Literature*, vol. 7 (August 9, 1930), pp. 33, 34.
47. Ibid., p. 156.
that Hopkins' "new rhythm" is inimitable. "It fits Hopkins like a skin," he says; "it is the shape of his own thought. With another poet it assumes another character." The critic cites "The Proof" by Yvor Winters, who professes to write in Hopkins' metrics and does--technically, as evidence of this statement.

Any defects he may have found in Father Hopkins' poetry, the reviewer in the *Times Literary Supplement* ignores. He calls Father Hopkins "a major poet," "poet of true genius," and "the most original of the poets of the second half of the nineteenth century." This critic believes, as do practically all serious students of Hopkins' poetry, that this extraordinary young Jesuit revivified English poetry by deliberately and violently breaking away from the rhythmic forms generally accepted in his day.

English poetry in the nineteenth century lacked real vigour, true manliness. F. R. Leavis has called it a poetry of withdrawal, a withdrawal from the life of the period. This critic also states that much of the nineteenth century poetry "was characteristically preoccupied with the creation of a dream-world."

It may seem that this charge cannot be made against Browning. Mr. Leavis answers such an objection in rather forceful terms:

He (Browning) did indeed bring his living interests into his poetry, but it is too plain that they are not the interests of an adult sensitive mind .......... It is possible to consider him as a philosophical or psychological poet only by confusing intelligence with delight in the exercise of certain grosser cerebral muscles. When he is a poet he is concerned merely with simple emotions and sentiments: the characteristic corrugation of his surface is merely superficial, and not the expression of a complex sensibility.51

Hopkins' poetry is also charged with his living interests--interests which he expresses in rhythms that defy all the conventional metrics that had dominated English poetry for almost two centuries; and they are the interests of a man who possesses "rare adequacy of mind."52

Morris U. Schappes53 believes that "the weighty adjective 'great' cannot....be any longer denied" to Hopkins. "Since originality is always difficult," says Mr. Schappes, "Hopkins has been an 'ill-broker'd talent'."

This reviewer states that if Hopkins' concreteness is grasped, his poetry will be understood. "He had a naively literal mind," he says, "and the most common objects often evoked from him an intensity of observation that resulted

51. Leavis, op. cit., p. 20.  
52. Ibid., p. 18.  
almost in a transformation of the object into something alien. So precise was his vision that it is only by an effort on our part to strain our own focus that we can discern the inevitability of his expression." 54

The "troublesome rhythmical devices" of Hopkins are, says Schappes, "a means for expressing as compactly as possible his exact thought. There is seldom any flabbiness of diction or rhythm caused by the need to adhere to cramping rules. The cement of connectives, relatives and transitional words is consciously excised from his structures; the parts, instead of being soldered, are welded together." 55

Mr. Schappes' comment on Hopkins' diction interprets the poet's manner perfectly.

In diction he is equally impressive; desiring accuracy above all he batters it into his own shape. He combines words, breaks them, transposes the parts of speech, forges them anew so that the meaning if it is to be understood at all, will be understood his way. His vocabulary is earthy, full of words used in accepted but uncommon senses that demand the aid of an unabridged dictionary, but the perception of the meaning and the perception of the rightness of the word are usually simultaneous. 56

Hildegarde Flanner 57 presupposes that Hopkins is

54. Symposium, op. cit., p. 133.
55. Ibid., p. 133.
generally recognized as a great poet and speaks of his having "come into his own." She regrets that "among the poet-theorists who came after him, there was a repeated mention of the precedent of the choruses to Samson Agonistes' and very little said about a Jesuit who claimed to write Sprung Rhythm better than Milton had."58

Miss Flanner is convinced that Father Hopkins' poetry "is fundamentally and deeply important because it is the expression of an inventive mind having something to add to the sum and method of creative writing." Her description of his method is interesting and informative.

We heard much some years ago of the rhythms of common speech and of music and their superior merit for verse, but even in polyphonic prose, which made a definite attempt to be contrapuntal, there has been no modern poetry attaining to the amazing effect of lines in Hopkins. His mind discarded ordinary word sequences and grammatical arrangement, creating for itself an original order which has its own habits of ingenious displacement and irregularity, making sometimes grace and sometimes grandeur. He can halt a sentence, a verse, retard it with a broken preposition, then set it spinning with a participle to gather momentum until it collects its own climax. Verbal indulgences, so easily faults of diffuse-ness, are here less faults than a curious, pur- poseful colliding and jamming, an overlapping and telescoping of images and words in an effort toward sustained music and sense. Extravagance of a kind is the inevitable result, but extrava-

gance so integrated, so disciplined to intention, that the accomplishment never sinks to mere lavishness. The will is never relaxed.

The early reviewers of Hopkins' poems were concerned primarily with his innovations in meter and rhythm. Few considered the thought which generated his technical experiments; some, with J. Middleton Murry, denied there was intellectual vigour in the poetry. Most of the reviewers of the second edition, however, were apparently influenced by Charles Williams' statements in the critical introduction, and seldom failed to remark the originality, the urgency, and the power of the thought that had fashioned this compelling poetry.

Geoffrey Grigson maintains that Father Hopkins' verse is distinguished by passion. He calls the Jesuit "a poet of intellectual inquiry into man and matter, of religious ecstasy and spiritual suffering, who was always forced willingly into song, a reader feels, under terrific and irresistible pressure, yet was always self-controlled by exacting aims and difficult metrical schemes of his own devising."

Herbert Read corroborates Grigson's opinion in a

(This article was later reprinted in Form in Modern Poetry by Herbert Read, pp. 45-55.)
lengthy essay which attempts (1) to prove that Hopkins practiced his "oddnesses" deliberately; (2) to explain his rhythmical devices; and (3) to justify the poet's style. In Father Hopkins' poetry, he says, "there is passionate apprehension, passionate expression and equally that passion for form without which these other passions are spendthrift. But the form is inherent in the passion." The critic admits that the thought is almost hidden under the surface beauty but he insists that it "is very real there, and as the idiom becomes more accepted, will emerge in its variety and strength."

Perhaps no greater praise has been given to Father Hopkins' genius than in these words of Mr. Read: "... when the history of the last decade of English poetry comes to be written by a dispassionate critic, no influence will rank in importance with that of Gerard Manley Hopkins."  

A critic who signs himself "A. L." in Studies accounts for Hopkins' "neologisms, his contorted grammar, his startling and baffling metric," by stating that the poet "required new instruments to express new discoveries, reactions of the mind to which no predecessor

amongst men had ever adverted." In describing the mental experiences of the poet, the writer says:

Gerard Hopkins did indeed try to relate all things to One, and has left us the record in his poems of those mole-like burrowings after God with which his thoughts tunnelled the universe. And it was the very intensity of his desire to find that made him concentrate so raptly upon the slightest external detail of his subject; for he gathered tidings of his quest from all things. The zeal that the scholastics applied to the exact analysis of the subtlest concepts, was only equal to that with which he endeavored to appreciate in its finest shades his emotional experiences, and to specify it to others in his expression. 64

To illustrate what he has been saying, the reviewer quotes a stanza from "The Wreck of the Deutschland" and then transposes the last four lines of it into prose.

This verse, the critic explains, portrays the poet, reflecting in repose on the wreck, his recoiling mind curbed by the thoughts of faith to accept the tragedy.

I am soft sift
In an hourglass - at the wall
Fast, but mined with a motion, a drift,
And it crowds and it combs to the fall;
I steady as a water in a well, to a poise, to a pane,
But roped with, always, all the way down from the tall
Fells or flanks of the voel, a vein
Of the gospel proffer, a pressure, a principle, Christ's gift.

The writer then "makes prose" of the last four lines:

64. Ibid., p. 166.
I steady to a poise as water in a well steadies to a pane, but yet I proffer a principle, Christ's gift, always swayed (roped), as I am by the gospel that presses upon me like a stream (vein); as water all the way down from the steep sides of the hill (may flow into the depths of the well without shattering its outward stillness).  

The critic admits that his own version is "clearer than the poetry and keeps some of the charm, but in removing the grammatical disorder of the expression," he says, "it must be evident that I have removed the vehement, staccato movement, the sense of thoughts and feelings crowding too fast for coherent utterance. In short I keep the words but lose the passion; I clarify the thought, but spill the poetry."  

Margaret C. Meagher is also interested in the "intellectual substance" of Father Hopkins' poetry. "The ethos of this poetry," she says, "is spiritual passion and aspiration. Beauty is a by-product in his lyric quest for Divine love and peace." Malcolm Cowley speaks of the four "terrible" sonnets as recording "a spiritual crisis" and describes the effect achieved in them as "that of a man stuttering from the intensity of his feeling." Justin

O'Brien remarks that Hopkins' "devices" keep "an air of inevitability about them, as if demanded by the thought he is expressing."

Among the critics who are not persuaded that Gerard Manley Hopkins was a great poet, Robert Bridges himself, J. Middleton Murry, and T. Sturge Moore are the most notable. A few other reviews, flippant in tone and betraying a lack of comprehension of the poet's aims, appeared, but their contentions and conclusions are too lightly expressed to give them any value.

In an article called "Style or Beauty in Literature," T. Sturge Moore, who is a follower of the classic tradition, states that a law of literary style is that "the content should precisely fill the container, the honey, the jar. If half is empty," he adds, "it requires undue shelf-room in Memory's store. If there is some over and the outside drip or be sticky, we look for a more capacious vase, that this may be discarded."

As an example of a poetic style that does not follow this law, he cites Hopkins' "The Leaden Echo and the Golden Echo." Then, to illustrate his suggested amendment of this poem, he rewrites it. It will be of interest to

see Father Hopkins' poem and Moore's revision of it side by side.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hopkins</th>
<th>Moore</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Leaden Echo</td>
<td>The Leaden Echo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How to keep - is there any</td>
<td>'How keep beauty? is there</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>any, is there none such,</td>
<td>any way?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nowhere known some, bow</td>
<td>Is there nowhere any means</td>
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<tr>
<td>or brooch or braid or</td>
<td>to have it stay?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>brace, lace, latch or key to</td>
<td>Will no bow or brooch or</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>keep</td>
<td>braid,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Back beauty, keep it,</td>
<td>Brace or lace</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>beauty, beauty, beauty,...</td>
<td>Latch or catch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>from vanishing away?</td>
<td>Or key to lock the door</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>O is there no frowning of</td>
<td>lend aid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>these wrinkles, rankèd</td>
<td>Before beauty vanishes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>wrinkles deep,</td>
<td>away?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Down? no waving off of these</td>
<td>No, no, there's none,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>most mournful messengers,</td>
<td>Nor can you long be fair;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>still messengers, sad and</td>
<td>Soon your best is done,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>stealing messengers of grey?</td>
<td>Wisdom must be early to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No there's none, there's</td>
<td>despair:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>none, 0 no there's none,</td>
<td>Look now for age, hoar hair,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nor can you long be, what you</td>
<td>Winding sheet and tumbling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>now are, called fair,</td>
<td>to decay;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do what you may do, what,</td>
<td>Even now to-day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>do what you may,</td>
<td>Be beginning to despair,</td>
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<tr>
<td>And wisdom is early to</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>despair:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Be beginning; since, no</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>nothing can be done</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>To keep at bay</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Age and age's evils, hoar</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hair,</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ruck and wrinkle, drooping</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>dying, death's worst,</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>winding sheets, tombs and</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>worms and tumbling to decay;</td>
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<tr>
<td>So be beginning, be beginning</td>
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<tr>
<td>to despair.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0 there's none; no no no</td>
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<tr>
<td>there's none:</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Be beginning to despair, to despair, despair, despair.

The Golden Echo

Spare!
There is one, yes I have one (Hush there!); Only not within seeing of the sun, Not within the singeing of the strong sun, Tall sun's tingeing, or treacherous the tainting of the earth's air, Somewhere elsewhere there is ah well where! one, One. Yes I can tell such a key, I do know such a place, Where whatever's prized and passes of us, everything that's fresh and fast flying of us, seems to us sweet of us and swiftly away with, done away with, undone, Undone, done with, soon done with, and yet dearly and dangerously sweet Of us, the wimpled-water-dimpled, not-by-morning-matched face, The flower of beauty, fleece of beauty, too too apt to, ah! to fleet, Never fleets more, fastened with the tenderest truth To its own best being and its loveliness of youth: it is an everlastingness of, 0 it is an all youth!

The Golden Echo

Spare!
There's one

Though not within the seeing of the sun,

One way to hold sweet looks, girl grace,
Come then, your ways and airs and looks, locks maiden gear, gallantry and gaiety and grace, Winning ways, airs innocent, maiden manners, sweet looks, loose locks, long locks, lovelocks, gay gear, going gallant, girl grace - Resign them, sign them, seal them, send them, motion them with breath, And with sighs soaring, soaring sighs deliver Them; beauty-in-the-ghost, deliver it, early now, long before death Give beauty back, beauty, beauty, back to God, beauty's self and beauty's giver. See; not a hair is, not an eyelash, not the least lash lost; every hair Is, hair of the head, numbered. Nay, what we had light-handed left in surly the mere mould Will have waked and have waxed and have walked with the wind what while we while we slept, This side, that side hurling a heavyheaded hundredfold What while we, while we slumbered.

O then, weary then why should we tread? O why are we so haggard at the heart, so care-coiled, care-killed, so fagged, so fashed, so cogged, so cumbered, When the thing we freely forfeit is kept with fonder a care,
38.

With fonder a care

E'en though we surly slept,

With care far fonder!

A care kept. - Where kept?

'Is kept where?

So high as that?' 'Yes, yonder!

Follow! There!

There! There!

The value of Moore's criticism depends, of course, on our estimation of what constitutes the content of "The Leaden Echo and the Golden Echo." If we compress it to the skeleton of Hopkins' idea, even Moore's container is too large. If, however, we include in "content" the idea plus the passion with which it was conceived, Father Hopkins' vase seems none too capacious. That the Jesuit used his words, not through fascination, but through deliberation, we have the evidence of his own comments. He wrote to Robert Bridges about the word "back" in "The Leaden Echo and the Golden Echo," saying: "Back is not pretty, but it gives that feeling of physical constraint which I want." 71

Moore's comment on his own revision indicates that he could not sympathize with Hopkins' intentions.

Though as you may decide, his lavish outlay in words attained more music, my spare rescension has retained most of his felicities, discarded his most ludicrous

redundances, and achieved an inherent music which reads itself without the aid of marks and so asks for less indulgence: yet 547 words have become 204.

Opulence and abundance are divine virtues in poetry, but they should never seem facile or more on the surface than profoundly ingrain. The Muse is frugal as well as dainty, reserved though most gracious.72

A reviewer in the *London Mercury*, Alan Pryce-Jones,73 although he seems to understand the man Hopkins but slightly, and his religion, not at all, states that Hopkins had genius. His accounting for this opinion is rather novel. Hopkins' genius is due, he says, to "the true speed" that is found in his poems. In explaining what he means by "true speed" he asserts that it is "not only the verbal speed, brought out in rhythm, not only the internal changes of speed which link one thought to the next, but an utter comprehension of all the motions which affect the transference of a poem from one mind to another's. The coordination necessary to this is really genius," he continues, "a power held in their various ways by Pope, Shelly, Praed (I take at random), and, in his small but dignified way, by Hopkins."

However, this reviewer does not seem to agree with Mr. Williams' contention that Hopkins' alliteration

72. Criterion, op. cit., p. 600.
heightens his poetry. Mr. Pryce-Jones remarks the "Shameless alliteration" which, he says, is "so half-significantly used." He speaks of his "torture of words, torture of meaning and rhythm, wilfulness, sometimes childishness." Plainly, this critic is not prepared to let his realization of the value of Hopkins' whole achievement take precedence over his discovery of his so-called defects.

As illustration of the flippant type of review to which I referred, a comment from William Rose Benét will suffice:

He (Hopkins) was a fine eccentric poet for the few, but there is certainly a lack of proportion in canonizing him. However, his name is at present the Open Sesame to poetic converse with the intelligentsia, if you wish to meet the "right people." To me Hopkins' style almost constantly offends against every principle I have painfully learned of a sound English style. His occasional felicities and gorgeous sparklings do not recompense for his churning method and his squirming mannerisms. It is all very quaint and delightful that a Roman Catholic priest should have written so; and those who join the church for artistic and esthetic reasons may bask in the cult; but I cannot help thinking that Hopkins' mind was one of the most confused that ever persuaded men to call it great.

Writing of this kind can hardly be dignified by the adjective critical; it is rather a peevish complaint.

generated, one feels, by a lack of ability or an unwillingness to understand.

G. W. Stonier, in an article for The New Statesman and Nation, attempts to give a brief summary of the critical comment that had been made on Hopkins between the years 1918 and 1932. His thesis is that Father Hopkins' reputation as a poet has been injured by the fact that his critics substituted their own taste in poetry for the genius of the poet. He says:

Between 1918 and 1932 these criticisms were made of Hopkins: (1) that he was the most difficult English poet, in whom religion stifled art (I. A. Richards); (2) that he was difficult and at times incomprehensible, and that wilfulness and a "naked encounter between sensualism and asceticism" spoilt much of his best work (Robert Bridges); (3) that he was a pseudo-Shelley whose "central point of departure" was the "Ode to the Skylark" (J. Middleton Murry); (4) that Hopkins was on the one hand fundamentally Miltonic, and on the other fundamentally Shakespearean (various writers; two groups); and (5) that he was a post-war poet, the leader of a new school of poets. The last view is popular with anthologists.

Mr. Stonier calls this a "jumble of nonsense." One feels, however that he too has been guilty of "grave critical insufficiency." He has not given a comprehensive summary of the estimations of the critics he quoted.

77. New Statesman and Nation, op. cit., p. 836.
In the case of I. A. Richards, his remarks are particularly faulty. The tone of Mr. Richards' article on Hopkins is sympathetic, complimentary, but from Mr. Stonier's remark, one would suppose that the opposite were true. Furthermore, this critic has missed a number of important reviews. For instance, he complains that no one has recognized that Hopkins was a Catholic priest who wrote poetry to the glory of God. A number of critics, notably Joyce Kilmer in 1914 and Herbert Read in 1931, have remarked this fact.

There are two important points which Stonier makes, however, that have not been stressed by other reviewers: (1) that Hopkins used his knowledge of music and painting as "an integral part of his poetic genius;" and (2) "that he saw the world as 'dappled, parti-coloured'."

Mr. Stonier illustrates the first point by giving examples from Hopkins' prose descriptions, and by quoting "Spring" which he calls "a bit of pure landscape painting, an oil in the gallery of poet's water colours." As evidence of Hopkins' music "at its most magnificent and intricate," the critic cites "Spelt from Sibyl's Leaves."

The second characteristic which this writer points out - Hopkins' view of the world as "dappled" - is

foreshadowed, as Mr. Stonier remarks, in a comment Hopkins made when he was but twelve years old. In an entry in his diary he described a school friend as "a kaleidoscopic, parti-coloured, harlequinesque, thaumatrope being." Later on, we meet the idea in detail in "Glory be to God for Dappled Things," and by implication, at least, in many of his later poems.

This survey of the studies and reviews that immediately preceded and followed the publication of the 1930 edition of Father Hopkins' poems, reveals that among serious critics, there was a negligible amount of censure of the poet's work. In fact, after I. A. Richards' article in the Dial in 1926, most critics did not hesitate to call Father Hopkins a great poet, great not only in the estimation of a few, but in the opinions of many; great not only in relation to the poets of his own age but as compared to writers of any age. Morris U. Schappes, in a review from which I have already quoted, states that he considers one of Hopkins' sonnets, "Carrion Comfort," "unsurpassed in the nineteenth century, unsurpassed until we return to Milton's 'On the Late Massacre in Piemont'." No longer, then, does Herbert Read's assertion seem exaggerated; indeed, it is conservative:

"... when the history of the last decade of English poetry comes to be written by a dispassionate critic, no influence will rank in importance with that of Gerard Manley Hopkins."
CHAPTER IV

Literary Reputation of Hopkins as Found in Critical Works and Modern Anthologies

Few books have been written about Father Hopkins; not many critical works have given space to his achievement. But, practically all that has been published concerning the Jesuit poet is serious, sincere, careful criticism.

His first biographer, Gerard F. Lahey, S. J., shows an appreciative understanding of what his confrère tried to do. Father Lahey charitably states that Bridges did not publish Hopkins' poems sooner because it was necessary to educate future readers gradually with selections given to anthologies. But, he does not concur with the editor's opinion about the obscurity in the poems. In almost direct answer to Bridges' accusations, Father Lahey says:

Every poetic distinctiveness has at first a certain obscurity, and any appreciation commensurate with poetic values will always postulate many 'second readings', much intellectual meditation - the 'salt of poetry.' Hopkins' oddness lies mainly in his verbal and rhythmic obscurity. But even this may please. His peculiar interest comes from the perennial source of surprises which meet any reader however well-informed; his peculiar greatness lies in the amazing union of intellectual profundity with great emotional intensity and

83. Lahey, op. cit., p. 16.
imaginative power, under the control of a highly developed faculty of expression and structural perfection. 84

In another passage, the biographer gives reasons and justification for the obscurity in Hopkins' poetry:

The obscurity, which primarily besets his artistry, springs from two causes; the one from the difficulty in attaining the almost unattainable ideal of his craftsmanship, the other, as in Donne, from the nature of his thought . . . . But however obscure the intellectual intuition of his appeal, yet it does not leave his work mere skeletal thought loosely covered with laboured prettinesses and rhythmical arabesques, but rather an intimate fusion wrung from imperishable blows, an interior and subtle rhythm which, in the final analysis, makes his lines inevitably ring true. 85


Leavis makes his attitude clear at the outset when he says that Gerard Manley Hopkins "was one of the most remarkable technical inventors who ever wrote, and he was a major poet." 86 He finds difficulty in accounting

84. Lahey, op. cit., pp. 87-88.
85. Ibid., pp. 107-108.
86. F. R. Leavis, New Bearings in English Poetry, p. 159.
for Dr. Bridges' attitude towards Hopkins' poems. What the editor called "blemishes", he feels are an essential part of Hopkins' aim and achievement. "He (Hopkins) aimed to get out of his words as much as possible unhampered by the rules of grammar, syntax and common usage," he asserts.87 In reply to Bridges' complaint that Hopkins used words that are grammatically ambiguous, Leavis says that Hopkins "felt no obligation to subscribe to that particular notion of Good Form" which "assumes that poetry ought to be immediately comprehensible."

Taking issue also with the editor of the second edition of the Poems, Leavis says that "if one were seeking to define the significance of Hopkins by contraries, Milton is the poet to whom one would have recourse."88 Charles Williams had said that the "poet to whom we should most relate Gerard Hopkins" is Milton.89 Leavis is of the opinion that the "way in which Hopkins uses the English language . . . . contrasts him with Milton and associates him with Shakespeare."90 He quotes from Coriolanus, lll.i. to prove that Shakespeare handled grammar and syntax "in the spirit of Hopkins:"

87. Leavis, op. cit., p. 162.
88. Ibid, p. 162.
89. Poems, op. cit., p. xiii.
48.

In a rebellion, When what's not meet, but what must be, was law, Then were they chosen: in a better hour, Let what is meet be said it must be meet, And throw their power in the dust.

After a detailed analysis of "Spelt from Sibyl's Leaves," which, Leavis states, "exhibits and magnificently justifies most of the peculiarities" of Hopkins' technique, the critic remarks:

In comparison with such a poem of Hopkins' as this, any other poetry of the nineteenth century is seen to be using only a very small part of the resources of the English language. His words seem to have substance, and to be made of a great variety of stuffs. Their potencies are correspondingly greater for subtle and delicate communication. The intellectual and spiritual anaemia of Victorian poetry is indistinguishable from its lack of body.91

Earlier in his study, Leavis had observed that "Hopkins' genius was as much a matter of rare character, intelligence and sincerity as of technical skill." When one considers his great poetry, he says, "the distinction disappears; the technical triumph is a triumph of spirit."92

The first detailed study of Father Hopkins' poetry was published at the end of 1933. Elsie Elizabeth Phare (Mrs. Austin Duncan-Jones), in her book, The Poetry of Gerard Manley Hopkins: A Survey and Commentary, analyzes the poet's imagery and attempts by this means

91. Leavis, op. cit., p. 186.
92. Ibid., p. 182.
to trace the workings of his exquisite intelligence.

Hopkins, as many critics have remarked, was highly sensitive, highly intelligent and, in addition, scrupulously honest. Therefore, when he endeavors to put an experience into words, it must be the whole experience with all its details. The effort to do this results in language so complicated that the meaning he wishes to convey is often obscured. But, as one critic has remarked, the obscurity is of a different kind from that of the moderns who write "private" poetry. "It is the obscurity of night, not of blindness or short-circuits in tunnels. It takes time. The reader need merely be patient."

Miss Phare comments that much of the obscurity of which Hopkins has been accused has proceeded from the attitude of the reader. Hopkins, she says, "had no opportunity of winning a public gradually, nor had he, as some poets have had, any minor predecessor to put the reader into the attitude required." She recalls that Wordsworth, "who is now spoken of habitually as the most limpid of poets, was accused of obscurity while the public was in the process of adjusting itself to his own peculiar kind of poetry." Undoubtedly, as Miss Phare

94. Ibid., p. 228
says, "Hopkins' poetry presents more impediments to hurried and superficial reading than Wordsworth's does." Hopkins himself asked to be read with the ear. 96 "The unusual richness and complexity of his verse makes this demand not only justifiable," adds Miss Phare, "but necessary." 97

In speaking of the charge of oddity that had been so repeatedly brought against Hopkins' verse, Miss Phare says:

Odd in the sense of being the product of a mind which deflects from the normal in a way not to be desired Hopkins' poetry considered as a whole is not. Nor is it odd in the sense of standing apart in essentials from what is often called the mainstream of English poetry. Hopkins' successful poems, and those that are not are very few, appeal to no freakish or abnormal mood in the reader. They bear very strongly the marks of their author's idiosyncrasies but the idiosyncrasies are those of a mind singularly well-poised and for all its extreme sensitiveness singularly healthy. 98

Miss Phare's final estimation of Gerard Manley Hopkins associates her with the critics who have called Hopkins the greatest poet of the nineteenth century.

Using Arnold's touchstone method, the critic might easily find that Hopkins' best poetry is not dimmed or made to seem trivial by comparison with the best of Shakespeare and Dante. He has not their variety but his best poetry is not inferior to theirs

97. Phare, op. cit., p. 94.
98. Ibid., p. 87.
in kind. Arnold's phrase 'high seriousness' describes most justly the quality of Hopkins' greatest poems. His poetry is that of a man with exceptional intelligence and exceptional sensibility, who is constantly taking into account all the facts of his experience; he uses religion not as a solution but as an approach, a way of keeping all the facts in mind without losing sanity.

It would be a great pity if Hopkins came to be generally thought of as a poet for the few, for those willing to take disproportionate trouble in order to enjoy the work of a brilliant eccentric, or for those drawn to him by a common religion, only. In spite of the peculiarities of his mind and circumstances, Hopkins in his best work comes as near as, say, Dante, to making his experiences available to all; he merits the extreme of popularity which he himself, a critic as just as modest, thought his due. 99

As an example of "the use of poetry to convey an indecision and its reverberation in the mind," William Empson in his challenging book, Seven Types of Ambiguity, gives a detailed analysis of Hopkins' sonnet, "The Windhover." 100 Mr. Empson is perhaps too eager to make the poem illustrate "the Freudian use of opposites, where two things thought of as incompatible, but desired intensely by different systems of judgments, are spoken of simultaneously by words applying to both." 101

100. "The Windhover" has also been explained by I. A. Richards in The Dial, Sept., 1926; by G. F. Lahey in Life of G. M. Hopkins and by E. E. Phare in The Poetry of G. M. Hopkins.
But, his commentary evidences the fact that he shares a quite general disagreement with Bridges' assertion that "ambiguity or momentary uncertainty destroys the force of the sentence."\(^{102}\)

Laura Riding and Robert Graves consider the poems of Gerard Manley Hopkins proper subject matter for their book, *A Survey of Modernist Poetry*. These authors consider that poetry which they have termed modernist appears "when the poet forgets what is the correct literary conduct demanded of him in relation to contemporary institutions (with civilization speaking through criticism) and can write a poem having the power of survival in spite of its disregarding these demands."\(^{103}\) From this viewpoint, no one will deny that Father Hopkins is a modernist.

To illustrate their point, the authors quote the sestet of sonnet 47 and discuss the use of some of its words. The history of "Jackself" as it is used in the lines

Soul, self; come, poor Jackself, I do advise
You, jaded, let be;

is of particular interest:

First of all **Jackself**. The plain reader will get no help from the dictionary with this, he must use his wits and go over the other uses of **Jack** in combination: **jack-**

\(^{102}\) Poems, op. cit., p. 98.
screw, jackass, jack-knife, Jack Tar, Jack of all trades, boot-jack, steeple-jack, lumber-jack, jack-towel, jack-plane, roasting-jack. From these the central meaning of 'jack' becomes clear. It represents a person or thing that is honest, patient, cheerful, hard-working, undistinguished - but the fellow that makes things happen, that does things that nobody else would or could do. ••• 'Jackself', then, is this workaday self which he advises to knock off work for awhile; to leave comfort or leisure, crowded out by work, some space to grow in, as for flowers in a vegetable garden; to have his pleasure and comfort whenever and however God wills it, not, as an ordinary Jackself would, merely on Sundays (Hopkins uses "God knows when" and "God knows what" as just the language a Jackself would use).104

Modern anthologists have been slow to include selections from Father Hopkins' poems in their volumes. Compilers of verse from Catholic poets have, however, usually given him some space, and Louis Untermeyer in Modern British Poetry was far-seeing enough to print three poems and a sympathetic introductory comment.

"A reader of Hopkins should expect obstacles," says Mr. Untermeyer. "But," he adds, "he will be rewarded. Behind the tortured constructions and heaped-up epithets there is magnificence . . . . Hopkins' poetry is sometimes eccentric, but it is always logical, never arbitrary or perverse."105

Shane Leslie, in An Anthology of Catholic Poets,

describes Hopkins' technique in a manner rather too fanciful to be convincing. Hopkins "essayed broken meters and disappearing sevenths", he says, "to express the thoughts of an ascetic too reserved in his inner life to burst into flame. Technically he seems a casualty to his own cadences. He arranged his words sometimes like coloured counters of mosaic and sometimes like the notes in a harmony of music. His poems are handed down by the initiated not like candles of flame or glowing coals, but like enamels that have run into each other with intensity of heat upon a reliquary." 106

Theodore Maynard, who is himself a poet of the traditional type, calls Father Hopkins a Catholic poet of "lesser stature" than Francis Thompson and Alice Meynell. 107 Although he rather reluctantly admits that "there is a new sort of beauty to be discovered in these poems by the reader who will grapple manfully with the minor and ignore the major difficulties," the following passage shows plainly that he does not approve of the poet's experiments in style:

He (Hopkins) is among the most obscure of poets, for his style was loaded with

107. Theodore Maynard, Modern Catholic Verse, p. 11.
eccentricities and even, at times, with intolerable barbarities of rhyme. One instance of this will be seen in the magnificent sonnet on the Windhover; but the cutting of the word "kingdom" in half is nothing to some of the crimes of poetic violence he did not scruple to commit. 108

The Catholic Anthology, edited by Thomas Walsh in 1927, includes an excellent selection of Father Hopkins' poems. 109 The factual material that is given about the poet, however, is annoyingly inaccurate. We read:

In 1866 he (Hopkins) became a Catholic; in the following year he entered Balliol College, Oxford, and studied under Walter Pater. He left the university to enter Birmingham Oratory with Father John Henry Newman and in 1868 he joined the Society of Jesus. He served as priest in Liverpool, London and Oxford. In 1884 he was appointed classical examiner at Dublin where he died. His poems are still uncollected.

Hopkins went to Oxford in 1862. He left the university after taking his degree in the spring of 1867. His poems were collected, as it seems the editor should have known, in 1918.

A reviewer of Elsie Elizabeth Phare's book "The Poetry of Gerard Manley Hopkins," stated that it was the first of what would probably be a series of works on Father Hopkins. 110 He was right. The Letters of Gerard Manley

Hopkins to Robert Bridges and The Correspondence of Gerard Manley Hopkins and Richard Watson Dixon, edited with notes and an introduction by Claude C. Abbott, have just been published. Humphrey House is writing a Life of Gerard Manley Hopkins; Pepler and Sewell have announced a critical study of the Jesuit poet by Bernard Kelly; and Daniel Sargent has a lengthy essay on Hopkins in his book called Four Independents.

Although Father Hopkins has been dead for nearly half a century, the fame of his poetry will go on and increase. A recent critical comment stated that our generation "is suddenly aware of Hopkins as the most powerful revolutionary force in English poetry since the Lyrical Ballads."

111. February, 1935.
112. This book will be published by Sheed and Ward.
CONCLUSION

The strange poetry of Gerard Manley Hopkins forces the reader to wonder just how the poet happened to write as he did. What was he trying to do?

His editor, Robert Bridges, has answered the question. Hopkins, he tells us, was "aiming at an unattainable perfection of language (as if words — each with its twofold value in sense and in sound — could be arranged like so many separate gems to compose a whole expression of thought, in which the force of grammar and the beauty of rhythm absolutely correspond)." \(^{113}\) Bridges considered that his friend was striving for a perfection that was impossible of attainment; he repeatedly expressed his displeasure because Hopkins, in this attempt, neglected "those canons of taste, which seem common to all poetry." \(^{114}\) The modern reader, however, is amazed at the sustained consistency and the general success of the attempt. It is true that Hopkins excises from his structures the "cement of connectives, relatives and transitional words." \(^{115}\) In order to get the accuracy he desires in diction, he does batter "it into his own shape. He combines words, breaks them, transposes

113. Miles, op. cit., p. 164.
114. Ibid., p. 164.
the parts of speech, forges them anew."\textsuperscript{116} To gain the effects he wishes to make, his mind often discards "ordinary word sequences and grammatical arrangement, creating for itself an original order which has its own habits of ingenious displacement and irregularity, making sometimes grace and sometimes grandeur."\textsuperscript{117} He is at times guilty of a "lavish outlay in words."\textsuperscript{118} But why? Is he revolting against the standard metrics of tradition merely for the sake of a revolt?

The answer is unquestionably a negative one. Gerard Hopkins found the diction, meters, and rhythms of his day inadequate to the needs of his thought. He required new forms to express what Charles Williams has called "a passionate emotion which seems to try and utter all its words in one, a passionate intellect which is striving at once to recognize and explain both the singleness and division of the accepted universe..... a passionate sense of the details of the world without and the world within, a passionate consciousness of all kinds of experience."\textsuperscript{119}

In \textit{A Survey of Modernist Poetry}, Laura Riding and Robert Graves maintain that Hopkins cannot be accused of

\textsuperscript{116} \textit{Symposium}, op. cit., p. 134.  
\textsuperscript{117} Hildegarde Flanner, \textit{New Republic}, vol. 65 (February 4, 1931), p. 331.  
\textsuperscript{118} Sturge Moore, \textit{Criterion}, vol. 9 (July, 1930), p. 600.  
\textsuperscript{119} \textit{Poems}, op. cit., p. xv.
trying to antagonize the reading public. To prove their assertion, they cite two quotations from Hopkins himself, relating to "the typographical means he used in order to explain an unfamiliar metre and an unfamiliar grammar:"120

There must be some marks. Either I must invent a notation throughout, as in music, or else I must only mark where the reader is likely to mistake, and for the present this is what I shall do.

And again:

This is my difficulty, what marks to use and when to use them: they are so much needed and yet so objectionable. About punctuation my mind is clear: I can give a rule for everything I write myself, and even for other people, though they might not agree with me perhaps.

There is, not a complete similarity, but a striking resemblance between what Hopkins was quietly doing in the seventies and eighties in England, and what Stéphane Mallarmé, the leader of the Symbolist Movement, was doing at the same time in France. It is probable that Mallarmé did not know of the Jesuit poet's existence; Hopkins may have been aware of the new tendencies in French literature but it must be remembered that Le Mercure de France, a review which later became the official organ of the Symbolist School, was started only in 1889, the year of Hopkins' death.

120. Riding and Graves, op. cit., p. 90.
What do we mean by Symbolism? Remy de Gourmont, one of the French symbolists, has defined the word in the "Preface" to the first Livre des Masques:

If one keeps to its narrow and etymological sense, almost nothing; if one goes beyond that, it means: individualism in literature, liberty of art, abandonment of existing forms, a tending toward what is new, strange, and even bizarre; it also may mean idealism, disdain of the social anecdote, antinaturalism, a tendency to take only the characteristic detail out of life, to pay attention only to the act by which a man distinguishes himself from another man, and to desire only to realize results, essentials; finally for poets, Symbolisme seems associated with vers libre.121

To consider fully Hopkins' unconscious affiliations with the Symbolists would take us beyond the scope of this thesis. It will be of interest, nevertheless, to point a few likenesses between Hopkins' experiments in poetry and those of Mallarmé.

Arthur Symons, in his book The Symbolist Movement in Literature, says of Mallarmé:

Mallarmé was obscure, not so much because he wrote differently, as because he thought differently, from other people. His mind was elliptical, and, relying with undue confidence on the intelligence of his readers, he emphasised the effect of what was unlike other people in his mind by resolutely ignoring even the links of connection that existed between them. Never having aimed at popularity, he never needed, as most writers

121. Quoted by Amy Lowell, Six French Poets, p. 119.
need, to make the first advances. He made neither intrusion upon nor concession to those who, after all, were not obliged to read him.\textsuperscript{122}

This might have been written in explanation of Hopkins' obscurity.

Again, in discussing Mallarmé's poems, \textit{L'Après-midi d'un Faune} and \textit{Hérodiade}, Symons says:

In these two poems I find Mallarmé at the moment when his own desire achieves itself; when he attains Wagner's ideal, that "the most complete work of the poet should be that which, in its final achievement, becomes a perfect music:" every word is a jewel, scattering and recapturing sudden fire, every image is a symbol, and the whole poem is visible music.\textsuperscript{123}

One readily recalls here Hopkins' remark about "The Leaden Echo and the Golden Echo" - "I never did anything more musical;"\textsuperscript{124} his preoccupation with new rhythms, and his desire to be read aloud.

When Symons speaks of Mallarmé's diction, we are particularly reminded of the Jesuit poet. It will be remembered that Hopkins must always have just the exact word to express his meaning. In a letter to Bridges in November, 1882, we wrote:

\textit{You must know that words like charm and enchantment will not do; the thought is}

\textsuperscript{122} Arthur Symons, \textit{The Symbolist Movement in Literature}, p. 113.
\textsuperscript{123} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 125.
\textsuperscript{124} \textit{Poems, op. cit.}, p. 113.
of beauty as of something that can be physically kept and lost and by physical things only, like keys; then the things must come from the mundus muliebris; and thirdly they must not be markedly oldfashioned. You will see that this limits the choice of words very much indeed.\textsuperscript{125}

About Mallarmé, Symons remarks:

Words, he has realized, are of value only as a notation of the free breath of the spirit; words, therefore, must be employed with an extreme care, in their choice and adjustment, in setting them to reflect and chime upon one another; yet least of all for their own sake, for what they can never, except by suggestion, express. \ldots The word, chosen as he chooses it, is for him a liberating principle, by which the spirit is extracted from matter; takes form, perhaps assumes immortality. Thus an artificiality which comes from using words as if they had never been used before, that chimerical search after the virginity of language, is but the paradoxical outward sign of an extreme discontent with even the best of their service.\textsuperscript{126}

It is of interest to note that two writers whom critics often name as having been influenced by Gerard Hopkins, Gertrude Stein and James Joyce, are considered by Edmund Wilson to represent the culmination of the Symbolist Movement.\textsuperscript{127} Although the likeness between these writers and Hopkins is obviously superficial, the

\textsuperscript{125} Poems, op. cit., pp. 112-113.
\textsuperscript{126} Symons, op. cit., pp. 126-127.
\textsuperscript{127} Edmund Wilson, \textit{Axel's Castle}, p. 1.
allegation that some of their technicalities resemble Hopkins' experiments is not without foundation.

Gertrude Stein uses rhythmical repetitions to convey the recurrences of ideas in the mind. In speaking of her use of this device in Three Lives, Edmund Wilson says that "she seems to have caught the very rhythms and accents of the minds of her heroines." 128

Harman Grisewood notices the "Steinish leanings" 129 especially in an unfinished poem of Hopkins called "The Woodlark," the last five lines of which are:

Through the velvety wind V-winged
To the nest's nook I balance and buoy
With a sweet joy of a sweet joy
Sweet, of a sweet, of a sweet joy
Of a sweet - a sweet - sweet - joy.

Another striking case of Hopkins' use of repetitions may be found in "The Leaden Echo and the Golden Echo" which is quoted in Chapter III of this thesis.

Hester Pickman cites passages from Ulysses to illustrate her contention that there is a likeness between the style of James Joyce and Hopkins: 130

Blue bloom is on the
Gold pinnacled hair. (Ulysses, 1922 ed., p.245)
or

It flows purling, widely flowing, floating foam-pool, flower unfurling. (p. 49)

or

The white maned sea horses, champing, brightwind-bridled. (p. 38)

Unquestionably, however, Hopkins will not exert his greatest influence through the technicalities of his verse.\(^{131}\) It is the man himself as he is discovered through his poetry, and the force of his example that gives him power over poets.

Early reviewers of the poems, even when they sensed that they were dealing with genius, seldom got beyond the consideration of Hopkins' phenomenal innovations in meter and diction. They noticed the defiance of conventional rhythms, the assonance, alliteration, exotic vocabulary, and earthy imagery. But, as Charles Williams said, after reading this breathlessly swift poetry, they were sometimes too concerned with their own bruises to understand exactly what the experience had been.\(^{132}\) Not until 1930 did students of Hopkins seem to notice that it is not meter but a meter-making argument that produces great poetry. And they discovered that Hopkins had the argument; that his strange technique was but the form needed to express

\(^{131}\) For a discussion of the possible derivation of Hopkins' metrics, see TLS, February 16, 23, and March 2, 9, 1933.

\(^{132}\) Poems, op. cit., Introduction, p. xiii.
his unusually passionate and compelling experiences. Today, few dare to deny that Father Hopkins is a great poet.

Gerard Manley Hopkins was an excellent critic of his own works; he was excellent enough seriously to believe that his poetry had merit. And he was not unaware that it was odd. In 1879, he wrote to Robert Bridges:

No doubt my poetry errs on the side of oddness. I hope in time to have a more balanced and Miltonic style. But as air, melody, is what strikes me most of all in music and design in painting, so design, pattern, or what I am in the habit of calling inscape is what I above all aim at in poetry. Now it is the virtue of design, pattern, or inscape to be distinctive and it is the vice of distinctiveness to become queer. This vice I cannot have escaped. 133

But two months later he vindicated the "oddness."

Moreover the oddness may make them repulsive at first and yet Lang might have liked them on a second reading. Indeed when, on somebody returning me the Eurydice, I opened and read some lines, as one commonly reads whether prose or verse, with the eyes, so to say, only, it struck me aghast with a kind of raw nakedness and unmitigated violence I was unprepared for: but take breath and read it with the ears, as I always wish to be read, and my verse becomes all right. 134

Writing about "Tom's Garland," he said, "I think that it is a very pregnant sonnet, and in point of execution very highly wrought, too much so, I am afraid." 135 Again, in

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134. Ibid., p. 97.
135. Ibid., pp. 115-116.
reference to "Harry Ploughman," "I have been touching up some old sonnets you have never seen and have within a few days done the whole of one, I hope, very good one and most of another; the one finished is a direct picture of a ploughman, without afterthought." 136

If, as I have said, Hopkins realized the worth of his poetry, why did he not make some attempt to have it published? It is possible that he could have gradually built a public for himself even in the staid Victorian period. A reviewer of the recently edited letters has admirably accounted for this lack on Hopkins' part.

He (Hopkins) distinguished between the writing of poetry and the possible fame resulting from its being known. Publication should be left to obedience, for St. Ignatius looked upon individual fame as the 'most dangerous and dazzling of all attractions': 'there is more peace, and it is the holier lot to be unknown than to be known!' 137

We have an answer too in a letter Hopkins wrote to Dixon:

Now if you value what I write, if I do myself, much more does our Lord. And if he chooses to avail himself of what I leave at his disposal he can do so with a felicity and with a success which I could never command. 138

This is the expression of an exceptionally mortified man—a man whose intellectual qualities were of no ordinary

type and whose spirituality was extraordinary. Indeed, we learn that his desire for a higher way of life exhibited itself early. While he was still a student at Oxford, he wrote "The Habit of Perfection."

Elected Silence, sing to me
And beat upon my whorlèd ear,
Pipe me to pastures still and be
The music that I care to hear.

Shape nothing, lips; be lovely-dumb:
It is the shut, the curfew sent
From there where all surrenders come
Which only makes you eloquent.

Be shelled, eyes, with double dark
And find the uncreated light:
This ruck and reel which you remark
Coils, keeps, and teases simple sight.

Palate, the hutch of tasty lust,
Desire not to be rinsed with wine:
The can must be so sweet, the crust
So fresh that come in fasts divine!

Nostrils, your careless breath that spend
Upon the stir and keep of pride,
What relish shall the censers send
Along the sanctuary side!

O feel-of-primrose hands, 0 feet
That want the yield of plushy sward,
But you shall walk the golden street
And you unhouse and house the Lord.

And Poverty, be thou the bride
And now the marriage feast begun,
And lily-coloured clothes provide
Your spouse not laboured-at nor spun.

The accomplishing of his ideals was not easy; undoubtedly, it caused him exquisite suffering. We know this from the comments of his contemporaries, from his
letters, and from the evidence in his poems. The "terrible" sonnets cannot be interpreted in any other manner. There is little uncertainty about the state of mind that generated this poem:

I wake and feel the fell of dark, not day.
What hours, 0 what black hours we have spent
This night! what sights you, heart, saw; ways you went!
And more must, in yet longer light's delay.
With witness I speak this. But where I say
Hours I mean years, mean life. And my lament
Is cries countless, cries like dead letters sent
To dearest him that lives alas! away.

I am gall, I am heartburn. God's most deep decree
Bitter would have me taste: my taste was me;
Bones built in me, flesh filled, blood brimmed the curse.
Selfyeast of spirit a dull dough sours. I see
The lost are like this, and their scourge to be
As I am mine, their sweating selves; but worse.

Hopkins referred to the "terrible" sonnets in a letter to Bridges, saying that they "came like inspirations unbidden and against my will. And in the life I lead now, which is one of a continually jaded and harassed mind, if in any leisure I try to do anything I make no way--nor with my work, alas! but so it must be." 139 It must not be supposed, however, that his life as a Jesuit was solely responsible for the poet's suffering. His was a nature which, as one critic remarks, "in whatever life would have turned a great part of his experience into a cause of pain." 140

Another commentator states, "He entered the Society bringing his own grief and carrying his private cross. The society could only consecrate his pain and anoint an artist's hands." 141

It is true that in the ordinary meaning of the phrase, Father Hopkins was neither a brilliant pulpit orator nor a successful teacher. A French critic comments succinctly, "Ses changements fréquents de résidence sont l'indice d'un succès incertain." 142

Concerning his methods of teaching while he held the chair of Greek at the Royal University, Dublin, we read that "out of a quixotic justice to those who could not or would not hear him lecture, he would not allow his examination papers to refer to his lectures so that students only came to find out what would not be set. Interest must have lagged, for to illustrate the dragging of Hector he made a student lie on his back and be drawn through the room." 143 His procedure in making out marks was characteristic of Hopkins. It is said that "he caused chaos by indecision in deciding single marks out of possible thousands. He marked each sentence down to halves and quarters with unerring taste, but his mathematical

powers were unfortunately not always equal to adding up the fractions. While the Examining Board were crying for his returns, he would be found with a wet towel round his head agonizing over the delivery of one mark."\textsuperscript{144}

In the pulpit, we are told that he was "never sure of himself . . . . and in his humility knew that he was often saying the wrong thing, or the right in the wrong way."\textsuperscript{145}

But these thwarting circumstances were probably valuable as instruments to sharpen and make poignant his experiences. Furthermore, most critics do not believe that the limited scope of experiences which his life as a Jesuit necessarily imposed upon him, was detrimental to his art. Many consider that thereby his poetry gained in intensity anything it may have lost in breadth. "This limitation was in several ways valuable," says one critic. "In the first place he was able to exploit to its fullest what experience he had, and 'working on a concentrated vein,' produced his finest poetry. Then, his limitation also saved him from the emotional, social and political muddle which vitiated the writing of so many great Victorians, while his detachment made him all the more an acute critic."\textsuperscript{146}

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{144} Dublin Review, op. cit., p. 53.
\item \textsuperscript{145} Ibid., p. 54.
\item \textsuperscript{146} TLS, January, 1935, p. 59.
\end{itemize}
Gerard Hopkins was courageous enough to write exactly as he wished. His ideas forged the form—a form that in his own day was so alien to traditional standards as to be almost incomprehensible. The remonstrances of Bridges and Patmore did not deter him; he himself wrote that the Jesuit publication, The Month, "dared" not print "The Wreck of the Deutschland," but this did not induce him to alter his manner; he announced that masterpieces made him "admire and do otherwise." Gerard Manley Hopkins was obstinate in his originality because he was convinced that the matter, the experience he had to communicate demanded just the form he used. With him, form was not impinged upon content; idea and form were inseparably welded, were one. This conviction and its unswerving practice make him an energizing influence for young writers. Because of this he "is likely to prove," as F. R. Leavis remarks, "the only influential poet of the Victorian age, and . . . . the greatest."¹⁴⁷

¹⁴⁷. Leavis, op. cit., p. 193.
Because this thesis traces the history and the critical reception of the poems of Gerard Manley Hopkins from the dates of their publication to the present time, the bibliography of magazine articles is arranged chronologically rather than alphabetically. Both a chronological and an alphabetical bibliography of books have been supplied.
CHRONOLOGICAL BIBLIOGRAPHY OF MAGAZINE ARTICLES


CHRONOLOGICAL BIBLIOGRAPHY OF BOOKS


ALPHABETICAL BIBLIOGRAPHY OF BOOKS


The thesis "The History and the Critical Reception of the Poems of Gerard Manley Hopkins, S.J.," written by Sister Mary Julienne, S.S.N.D., has been approved by the Graduate School of Loyola University, with reference to form, and by the readers whose names appear below, with reference to content. It is, therefore, accepted as a partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts.

Dr. Morton D. Zabel

April 21, 1935

Professor James J. Young

April 28, 1935