The literary critical ideas of Sidney Lanier

Capon, Reginald Lawrence
Boston University

http://hdl.handle.net/2144/19613

Boston University
BOSTON UNIVERSITY
GRADUATE SCHOOL
Thesis

THE LITERARY CRITICAL IDEAS OF SIDNEY LANIER
by
Reginald Lawrence Capon
(B.S. in Ed., Boston University, 1933)
submitted in partial fulfilment of the
requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts
1936
Table of Contents

Outline

Foreword

I The Formative Influences
   The General Formative Influences
   The Literary Formative Influences

II Lanier's Theory and Practice of Criticism

   Aesthetic Theory
   The Artistic and the Moral
   Art and the Individual
   Art and Science
   Art and Nature

   Literary Theory
   Literature
   Types of Literature
   Prose
   Drama
   The Novel
   Poetry
   Theories of the Creative Ability
   Genius
   The Poet
   Inspiration

   Critical Theory

   Practice of Criticism
   American Literature
   Prose
   Poetry
   English Literature
   Anglo-Saxon
   The Norman Conquest to 1500
   Chaucer
   From 1500 (The Elizabethans)
   The Elizabethan Sonnet-Makers
   Other Elizabethans
   Shakespeare
   The Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries
   Prose
   Poetry
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Nineteenth Century</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Prose</td>
<td>208</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poetry</td>
<td>222</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Literatures</td>
<td>232</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>French Literature</td>
<td>233</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>German Literature</td>
<td>235</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III An Estimate of the Literary Critical Ideas of Sidney Lanier</td>
<td>236</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Summary of the Thesis</td>
<td>252</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bibliography</td>
<td>258</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
OUTLINE

The Literary Critical Ideas of Sidney Lanier

Part I

I The Formative Influences

A The General Formative Influences: Lanier's Life
B The Literary Formative Influences
   I Reading, Study, and Other Matters of Literary Significance
   2 Lanier's Literary Friendships

Part II

II Lanier's Theory and Practice of Criticism

A Esthetic Theory
   I The Artistic and the Moral
   2 Art and the Individual
   3 Art and Science
   4 Art and Nature
B Literary Theory
   I Literature
   2 Types of Literature
      a Prose
      b Drama
      c The Novel
      d Poetry
   3 Theories of the Creative Ability
      a Genius
         (I) The Poet
         b Inspiration
C Critical Theory
D Practice of Criticism
   I American Literature
   2 English Literature
   3 Other Literatures
      a French Literature
      b German Literature

Part III

III An Estimate of the Literary Critical Ideas of Sidney Lanier

A Summary of the Thesis
Foreword

In this thesis I shall present a study of the influences in Lanier's life which seem to have affected the formation and expression of his critical ideas, the critical theories and practice which sprang from those ideas, and an estimate of them. Part I concerns the formative influences and is a summary of Lanier's literary life from its earliest beginnings. This section is based on the authoritative full-length biographies by Mims and Starke. Part II contains Lanier's critical theories with examples of their general application and their specific use in his direct literary criticism. This section, it should be noted, is based on Lanier's published writings. There is a considerable body of unpublished material, chiefly letters, and located in other parts of the country, which, for the purposes of this paper, has been inaccessible. The conclusions of Mims and Starke, however, would seem to indicate that this material would not alter the findings of this paper. Part III is a brief estimate of Lanier's critical ideas based on the material in Part II.

To the best of my knowledge this is the first general survey and organization to be made of Lanier's literary critical

I The biography by Lorenz which appeared at the end of 1935 was actually completed before the publication of Starke's work in 1933, and has comparatively little worth for the serious student of Lanier.
ideas. I have a definite conviction that a clearer understanding of Sidney Lanier's literary work would be of value for American literature. It is my hope that this thesis may play its small part in arousing a new interest in and appreciation for Lanier on the part of both the general reader and the scholar.
PART I

THE FORMATIVE INFLUENCES

A. The General Formative Influences: Lanier's Life

In Macon, Georgia, of the 1840's were to be found all the best elements of the old South. Thus Lanier grew up in the traditions of Southern hospitality and chivalry, in a society which enjoyed music, poetry, literary conversation, and found the will to sponsor a pioneer woman's college, in a society with an intense religious spirit and with the most democratic consciousness in the states which were to turn against the Union, in a society with revealing cross-sections of life (as represented, for example, by energetic business men of the town and shiftless "crackers" of the countryside), and in a society favored with beautiful natural surroundings. All these left their mark indelibly on the boy who was to be Georgia's greatest poet.

The ancestry of Sidney Lanier has never been satisfactorily traced beyond a few American generations which seemed to come, with traditions of gentility, from Virginia and North Carolina. The poet himself delighted in assuming that he was descended from a line of Huguenots who were court painters and musicians to Tudor and Stuart rulers of England. As late as 1932 an authority wrote that "there is no proof but some probability." Certainly the nature of Lanier's

---

1 Pattee, History of American Literature Since 1870, p. 274
2 Starke, p. 476
talents indicated at least a spiritual kinship.

In the middle nineteenth century Lanier’s family leaned towards the law and finance with avocational interests in literature and music. The poet’s father was an industrious lawyer who left spectacular legal work to his more brilliant partners. Like many lawyers of the old South, Robert Sampson Lanier might have preferred a literary career to a legal one. His son wrote of his considerable literary acquirements and his excellent taste. His legal associates called him a true gentleman. As a parent he was unusually sympathetic in action if sometimes conventional in attitude.

Mary Jane Anderson, the daughter of a Scotch planter of Virginia and a lady of Scotch-Irish blood, an element in Southern life which has probably been underestimated, proved a splendid wife to Robert Sampson Lanier and a devoted mother to his children. She was intensely religious in a peculiar though not a narrow way, and she possessed a romanticism of temperament which expressed itself chiefly in a love for poetry and music. At her request her husband left the Methodists, the Lanier denomination, and joined the Presbyterians.

Sidney and his brother and sister were thus brought up in the strict tenets of the Presbyterian creed. Though Lanier gave up formal contact with the church in later years, he never lost the firm moral convictions which it had implanted. Southern Puritanism, however, Mims tells us, differed from the early

I Mims, p.I7
New England Puritanism in possessing a certain affectionateness and sociability. It seems to have been the nature of the Laniers in their home life to emphasize this difference. The poet's wife observed that her husband's family had "a talent for deep and tender love and home happiness." Sidney Lanier's intense, life-long devotion to all his family ties bore witness to the character of his early life. Starke feels that the days in Macon, idyllic as they were, were characterized by an excess of emotion and sentiment which was not entirely wholesome. Such an excess was doubtless the foundation for much of Lanier's later sentimentality which is sometimes intimate to the point of embarrassment. It is only fair to observe that this "sentimentality", as Starke himself admits later, was largely a matter of vocabulary. Lanier felt deeply, truly. Some critics, unhappy, have overlooked this approach.

The boy's mother played the piano well, and encouraged both singing and instrumental music in the home. Lanier is said to have made a start on the violin, the organ, and the guitar. The violin had so powerful an emotional effect on the lad that his father persuaded him to take up the flute instead. In old Georgia a gentleman was expected to be able to perform on a musical instrument, but this ability, like the ability to produce what passed for literature, was supposed to be regarded

I Kims, p. 17
2 Starke, p. II
3 Ibid., p. II
I as only incidental. Lanier, however, could not stop at this conventional attitude. Music was always a passion in his life.

Macon, like most cities of the ante-bellum South, was sadly deficient in elementary schools. Lanier attended small private single-roomed establishments, probably longest at the Bibb County Academy which was housed in a remodeled stable pleasantly located in a grove of oak and hickory trees. Here the boy is said to have been an able and persistent student, but one who also liked informal sports and frolics, particularly in the open air. Here, too, he wrote his first poems, and began to assert what Starke thinks was his most significant character trait, his difference from other boys. This difference, it appears, was found in the "knightly and clean-tongued" qualities which made Lanier, in his own words, to be considered "a model for the Sunday-school children of all times." 2

In 1854 the Bibb County Academy was closed, and for three years Lanier and his brother studied in private classes with various local teachers. On January 6, 1857, he matriculated as a Sophomore at the comparatively new Oglethorpe University at Midway, not far from Macon. In later years Lanier called the education gained in this atmosphere of conservative Presbyterian piety "farcial". At any rate, it stimulated his musical and literary interests and brought the valuable friendship of Professor Woodrow.

---

1 Starke, p.15
2 Ibid., p. 13  Such a self-description has not improved Lanier's treatment at the hands of recent critics!
When the young man had finished his junior year his father took him from college for a season of clerking in the Macon post-office. This practical experience, with its opportunities for observing all types of people, was perhaps a direct source for the dialect poems of later years.

Lanier spent the summer of his graduation in idyllic ease at the beautiful estate and hotel of his grandfather, Sterling Lanier, in the Smoky Mountains of eastern Tennessee. In a letter he enumerates the facilities for enjoyment, but adds in Puritan vein, "Not finding my delight in life increased, I am come to the conclusion that the luxuries of this world are humbugs and the idea that they are essential to happiness is a most magnificent absurdity". Mims observes that these weeks of relaxation in the mountains gave Lanier a glimpse of life at its best in the old South just before it vanished in the smoke of the Civil War.

That winter, through the interest of Woodrow (whom I will describe in the next section), Lanier served as tutor at Oglethorpe, and his friendship with the professor steadily ripened. A young Northerner, Milton Harlow Northrup, then, conducting the Oglethorpe Academy for Boys, became much attached to Lanier and, in later years, wrote enthusiastically of their rounds of pleasure, music, and philosophy. Meanwhile, the youthful tutor whose flute playing was known the length of

1 Starke, p. 34
2 Mims, p. 35
Georgia dreamed of graduate study at Heidelberg and a professorship in America. Yet he had not done questioning the assumption of his parents and of Southern society that music was no occupation for a gentleman. He felt that his "primal inclination" was for the art of sound, and that his talent was such that he could "rise as high as any composer." He asked himself earnestly, continually, "What is the province of music in the economy of the world?" Then shots were fired at Sumter--Sidney Lanier had long to wait for the answer to his question.

The nineteen year old lad soon entered the Southern army and saw service in the infantry, in the signal corps, and, finally, as an officer on a blockade runner. Lanier refused promotion three times that he might stay in the ranks beside his younger brother. The capture of his ship brought him as a prisoner to Point Lookout. Physically, his stay there was a nightmare of filth and disease. That Lanier could later set aside this terrible cause for rancor against the North is striking proof of the spiritual strength in his character.

When he reached Macon an exhausted but free man in March, 1865, Lanier had spent nearly four years in the service of the Confederacy. His future prospects were dark. The war period, particularly the months of wretched prison life, had actively induced that disease to which he was susceptible by heredity--tuberculosis. Thereafter, he could never shake its grip. In the chaos of Reconstruction his plans for study abroad were shattered. He was faced with the grim and immediate
necessity of earning a living in a community which was experiencing at once the aftermath of war and the throes of social revolution. He began work as a hotel clerk. Then he turned to teaching.

In 1867, just before he accepted a post at the difficult, unattractive Prattville Academy, Lanier married Mary Day. His marriage was one of the most significant events of Lanier's life, and one that tempered every phase of his subsequent actions. His kindly, optimistic spirit in the face of bitter obstacles, and the exalted nature of his standards for Art and for Life were maintained in large measure by the influence of this rare partnership.

The poorly-paid teaching drudgery led the young husband who was soon a father to try the lot common with so many young Southerners of artistic natures, i.e. the law. For four exasperating years he studied at Macon. Then fresh attacks of consumption brought a release which was to be permanent.

While convalescing in Texas Lanier revelled in music and literature. His flute playing took San Antonio by storm. Thus inspired, impelled by his own genius asserting itself, and realizing that he might not have long to live, he made up his mind that he would have an artistic career, and went determinedly north. In a few months he was first flutist in Hammerick's new Peabody Orchestra at Baltimore. Thereupon he wrote, with some justification, that through the trials of twenty years

I Mims, p. 123
"these two figures of music and poetry have steadily kept in my heart so that I could not banish them."

The new life was delightfully but dangerously congenial. In the strain of trying, with few friends and little influence, to support a family, to acquire a thorough foundation for his art, and to express that art, Lanier constantly overmatched his strength. With grim sureness disease tightened its grasp on the body of Sidney Lanier, however little it could bind his spirit. Lanier's growing reputation as a poet and ability as an interpretative lecturer finally won him an appointment at Johns Hopkins. The peace and assurance of success were in his grasp, and the path seemed open to a brilliant future. But his enemy would not relent, and the first lectures at the university were given in physical pain. Before two summers had passed, disease received the final surrender of Lanier. In his brief artistic career of eight years, it has been truly said, is found "as brave and sad a struggle as the history of genius records."

1 Starke, p. 168
2 Long, American Literature, p. 362
B. The Literary Formative Influences

I. Reading, Study, and Other Matters of Literary Significance.

Starke feels that no adequate study has been made of Lanier's early reading and of its influence upon his later thought. We do know that the boy's father had the literary tastes of a cultivated Southern gentleman. Thus Lanier met and grew to love such annalists, poets, and prose masters as Geoffrey of Monmouth, Malory, Gower, Chaucer, Langland, Froissart, Shakespeare, Addison, Scott, and contemporary verse makers. The medieval code of chivalry---at least that part which appealed to an earnest Victorian---became a real basis for his self-conduct, and the archaic flavor of the works in which it appeared began to color the style of even his most casual writing.

For the period of Lanier's college years Starke culls from various sources a reading list which includes Shakespeare, Burton's Anatomy, Jeremy Taylor, Keats's "Endymion", the poetry of Chatterton, Coleridge, James Hogg, Byron, Wordsworth, Mrs. Browning, and Tennyson, and the essays of Carlyle, particularly those on Burns, Jean Paul Richter, and Novalis, as well as the writings of Ruskin. Through Carlyle Lanier found the German romantic writers among whom he ever after had his

1 Starke, p. 27 It seems true that there are not too many authoritative sources concerning Lanier's childhood. For example, there is still a dispute as to the house he was born in. 2 Ibid.
spiritual home.

Despite his fondness for Shakespeare and Keats, it seems that Lanier's favorite poet at this time was Tennyson. For Tennyson wrote of the chivalric days and of the present, reconciling science and religion and proclaiming the supreme power of love—Lanier meant to do all this himself.

Perhaps the most fruitful part of Lanier's reading at this time was done in the company of an Oglethorpe secret literary society which was accustomed to read, declaim, and debate on interesting subjects at its meetings. For the rest, he seems to have read the usual Greek and Latin classics, to have excelled in mathematics, and to have shown interest in philosophy and science. At graduation he shared the valedictory honors with a representative of the rival literary society.

In these days Lanier's impulse to write poetry apparently slumbered or was confined to "Byronesque if not Werther-esque" efforts which he promptly destroyed. He was known to his classmates particularly by his devotion to music and his love for nature and art.

His flute-playing, his love for nature, his interest in science, and his eager, active mind were all factors in the growth of his significant friendship with Professor James Woodrow, at that time thirty-one, and fourteen years older than Lanier. After brilliant graduate study at Harvard and at

1 Starke, p. 29
2 Mims, p. 38
3 Woodrow was a maternal uncle of Woodrow Wilson.
Heidelberg, Woodrow had come to Oglethorpe as professor of natural science. He seems to have been a scholar and teacher of the best modern type. Liberal, tolerant, always abreast of the knowledge in his subjects, he wished to develop in his students a sense of responsibility for their own opinions and an ability to reach them intelligently. Woodrow was a pioneer of the viewpoint that there is no conflict between science and theology, and he maintained this stand despite official Presbyterian condemnation as a heretic some thirty years later. Succeeding pages will show how Lanier drew the attitudes of this wholesome master deep into his life.

The winter after graduation, while tutoring at Oglethorpe, Lanier did a good deal of miscellaneous reading and brooded over plans for a sort of music drama to be founded on the medieval peasant uprising in France called the Jacquerie. Then came war, and literary and academic plans were rudely shaken.

Active military service cannot be expected to hasten the growth of an artist. Lanier, however, seems to have made the most of his opportunities. "For all knowledge," a comrade wrote, "he had an unappeasable hunger; in all odd moments, with every chance acquaintance, gaining something." Thus we find the young soldier, while his regiment rested at Petersburg, haunting the small public library. Carlyle had made him long to know more of the German tongue. With a glossary and a small volume of German poetry he went earnestly to work.

I Starke, p. 47
After the Battle of Chancellorsville in May, 1863, Lanier spent over a year in scouting service along the James River, a period which he later called "the most delicious" of his life in many respects. In these months, "full of romance as heart could desire", with "beautiful women, the serenades, the moonlight dashes on the beach, and the spirited brushes of our little force with the enemy", there was much talk of poetry and books. The young signal scout was a favored and constant guest at "Bacon's Castle", the picturesque home of the cultured Hankins family. Mims finds this term of army life important because it was then that Lanier definitely began to consider literature as a probable vocation. Meanwhile, he read English poetry and begged his father to "seize at any price" volumes of the German poets, Uhland, Lessing, Schelling, and Tieck. Once when the enemy raided his camp, he lost a collection of poems by Coleridge, Shelley, and Keats, Augusta Evans' Macaria, Hugo's Les Miserables, a German glossary, Heine's poems, and Aurora Leigh. At this time Lanier sent his father some original poems for criticism, and made apt remarks upon his own tendencies to a diffuse style.

1 Starke, p. 50  
2 Mims, p. 54  
3 Ibid. p. 55  
4 Mims, p. 56 Starke, p. 57
The terrible prison days were brightened, as we shall see, by his friendship with John Tabb. Lanier found further relief in writing poetry and in making translations from the German of Heine and Herder.

Did the four strenuous years of war mean more to Lanier's literary future than a closer acquaintance with certain German and English poets? Perhaps its chief contribution was in terms of character. The experience brought a forced but none the less real maturing. The lad of 1861 was an enthusiastic, conventional idealist. When he rushed to the Confederate colors he felt unhesitatingly that he was conforming to his beloved code of chivalry. Four years later he was ready to amend his interpretation of that code, and to find for it a truer spiritual basis. The doctrines of tolerance and reconciliation which he had accepted eagerly from Dr. Woodrow were ready for the testing. The new Lanier was no less an idealist, but his approach was broadened by a sane realism. The change was shown, for example, in the fact that this man, the truest poetic voice of the post-war South, was one of the first to achieve a finely national, even an international viewpoint. In Lanier's case, certainly, a deepening of character meant a deepening of artistic power.

In the chaos of the opening months of peace perhaps the first definite literary influence came with Lanier's subscription to the Round Table. This New York weekly had a list of contributors which included Howells, Aldrich, Stedman, and
Stoddard. Its excellent book reviews and foreign letters, and its sane editorial comment on timely matters encouraged Lanier to feel that he might begin to satisfy his eager desire to "get into the doings of literary men." Before long he offered to its pages with success some translations of German poetry.

In 1867 appeared Lanier's only novel, Tiger-Lilies. Its kindly reception in both the North and the South was a definite incentive toward a literary career. The book is largely the spiritual autobiography of an ardent, imaginative youth who has steeped himself in an atmosphere of German romanticism. The effects of the war show particularly in the absence of a sectional spirit and in the genuine realism of the second half. Tiger-Lilies has basic ideas to which Lanier clung with remarkable fidelity in later years.

In the confining period of law study at Macon Lanier sought relief by writing essays and poems. He was stimulated especially by a new literary friend, Paul Hamilton Hayne. Lanier could hardly find inspiration in contemporary Macon opinion that he was "a young fool trying to write poetry." On the whole, these years were not fertile in a literary way. Certain essays, however, such as "Nature-Metaphors" and "Retrospects and Prospects", suggest that many ideas of his later prose criticism were already in his mind. A letter to Hayne has Lanier's brilliant discussion of The Ring and the Book. Then, strangely enough, the law student was rescued for literature.

1 Starke, p. 76
2 Ibid., p. 144
by that same force which later reduced his literary career so tragically.

When tuberculosis reasserted itself vigorously in 1872, Lanier went first to Virginia and then to Texas in search of relief. His accounts of these trips reveal both his knowledge of human nature and his talent for reporting --- capacities surely of value for a critic.

At San Antonio he wrote to his father of literary work: "I have ... managed to advance very largely my conceptions of the Jacquerie through a history which I secured from the Library of the Alamo Literary Society." This was apparently Michelet's History of France which gave him the essence of an old book which he had despaired of ever seeing, "but which is the only authority extant,---save Froissart and a few others equally unreliable; it is the chronicle of the 'Continuator of Guillaume de Nangis.'"

In Texas Lanier reached the important decision which led first to his musical and then to his literary careers. This period from November, 1872, to April, 1873, thus marked an epoch in his life. For twelve years he had given his time and abilities to uncongenial work. Everything had conspired against the carrying out of his most cherished ambitions. Mims points out that Lanier's final determination to give him-

1 Mims, p. 117
2 Ibid., p. 118
3 Ibid., p. 123
self to Art involved heroism of a rare type. For it meant that he must seem to disobey an affectionate father, that he must face the disapproval of friends and relatives, and that he must for a time leave behind his beloved wife and children— he must do all this for a career with a most uncertain future. Nevertheless, Lanier went steadfastly forward to eight brief years of artistic life, years in which the pain of the body and the joy of the spirit grew together.

If he rebelled personally to enter the literary world, Lanier soon found that this literary world was itself in a state of rebellion. Ever since the appearance of Innocents Abroad in 1869 an explosive new spirit had been gathering strength. While Emerson, the Cary sisters, Longfellow, Whittier, and Holmes sang their swan songs in the Romantic twilight, the rebels, the local color realists, the nature priests, the new poets, came crowding onto the scene. Like its young neophyte from Georgia, literature was abandoning the old "gentlemanly" attitude towards its work. It was fleeing the Hyperions, the conceits and prettinesses, the fine phrases, the castles in Spain, the incidental role assigned to it by a dying culture, to find the life of a new America in the wholeness of its stark and amazing reality. Meanwhile, cruel circumstances kept Lanier from meeting at close range the mellow spirits of the old regime or the dynamic personalities of the new era.

1 Ibid., p. 124
2 See Pattee, F. L., History of American Literature since 1870, Chapter I
Yet, as I trust the following pages will show, this artist, who
was the Romantic at heart and something of the Realist in mind,
drew wisely in his short time from both sources.

One of Lanier's first letters from Baltimore exclaims:
"I can finish my darling Jacquerie midst of the great libra-
ries. I am overjoyed at this prospect." Lanier's move to the
North had given him for the first time access to adequate li-
braries. He was particularly fortunate in the library of the
Peabody Institute, then one of the finest research libraries in
the country. Mims aptly calls it the "university" of Sidney
Lanier. Its donor, Mr. Peabody, wished the library to be well
equipped in every department of knowledge "to satisfy the re-
searches of students who may be engaged in the pursuit of
knowledge not ordinarily obtainable in the private libraries
of the country." The institution was rich in scientific
journals and in the publications of the Early English Society,
the Chaucer Society, the Percy Society, and in reprints of
Elizabethan literature. Here Lanier, since he could not go a-
broad, found that the dream of his college days was being ful-
filled. He lacked the patient, careful training of men who
can give a lifetime to some special field of work. He did not
have the time to explore the fields of learning which he chose
to enter. "Into those two or three years of study and research,
however, were crowded results and attainments that many less

1 Starke, p. 167
2 Mims, p. 304
3 Ibid., p. 205
4 Ibid., p. 202
gifted men, working with less prodigious zest and power, do not reach in a decade."

The Peabody Library, then, might be called Lanier's greatest single aid in the writing of his critical works. We see its influence directly in the acoustical ideas of The Science of English Verse. Spurred on by Helmholtz's monumental researches in that direction, Lanier ransacked the Library for books on the subject, many of them still unpacked. Again, Lanier made his real acquaintance with Early English and strengthened his knowledge and old love for Elizabethan writings at the Peabody center. This study resulted in the Shakespeare lectures and in various essays.

A late, but, I believe, a very real stimulus to Lanier's critical labors may be ascribed to Johns Hopkins University and to its able President, Daniel Coit Gilman. Here, too, the Library played an important role. In the enthusiasm of his research Lanier gave the Shakespeare series of the Peabody Institute course, and thereby assured himself a place as a lecturer in English literature at the university. Formerly he had hoped for a chair of music and poetry. At that late hour, however, Lanier's thoughts were centered on literature. The appointment reached him on his thirty-seventh birthday. It was the achievement of a goal the poet had sought for years, and it came as sorely-needed encouragement after many dark months.

Mims stresses the importance of the connection with the university in its "early days of unbounded enthusiasm and unfettered

Ibid., p. 205
ideality."

Lanier was now acknowledged as a scholar and engaged to do a scholar's work. Characteristically he threw himself with zeal into the university life. "He breathed its atmosphere... He caught its spirit and grew with it into a real sense of the ideals of University work." If Lanier had been spared for many years at Johns Hopkins, the body of American literary criticism and his own fame would have been the richer.

2. Lanier's Literary Friendships

A comparison of the roster of Lanier's literary friends with the roster of eminent contemporary writers reveals at a glance the poverty of Lanier's literary associations. It is a fact that he had no close contact with any artist who has proved to be as great or greater than himself. Though, it is true, Lanier met many of the major figures on various occasions he lacked the time, the strength, and the connections to improve his acquaintance with them. However, this condition may not have been such a loss for him. Starke observes that in prose or poetry the Georgian seldom followed changing custom or the advice of friends. Perhaps this was a result of his isolation in the early days of writing. At Macon, soon after the War, he complained that his literary life was lonely, for he found a sympathetic attitude only in his father and brother.

I Mims, p. 234
2 Ibid., p. 233
3 Starke, p. 134
4 Ibid., p. 76
Blankenship feels that "the lack of any living sympathy around him drove Lanier to the library for much of his inspiration." Such conditions apparently developed a lasting habit of literary independence.

John B. Tabb

Lanier met Tabb, the Virginian, at diseased, despair-ridden Point Lookout. His fellow prisoner first heard the notes of Lanier's flute from a bed of fever. As soon as he was well he sought out the young Georgian, and a remarkable friendship began. The two were constantly together, sometimes in company with a cultivated Polish doctor, forgetting their terrible surroundings in long talks on literature, operas, and art. Tabb was released some weeks before Lanier. In the chaos of Reconstruction they lost sight of each other.

In July, 1877, Lanier read a poem in Harper's Magazine signed by John B. Tabb. He wrote to his friend who was then preparing for the Roman-Catholic priesthood, and thus began an enduring correspondence. It is said that Tabb was the only friend younger than himself that Lanier ever had. There seems to be no evidence that Tabb had any literary influence upon Lanier. Theirs was a David and Jonathan friendship of the spirit. In the days at Point Lookout, however, Tabb surely played a part in Lanier's literary career by helping to sustain the Georgian's faith in mankind and his devotion to art.

1 Blankenship, R., American Literature, p. 431
2 Starke, p. 292
Paul Hamilton Hayne

Some time before 1869 Paul Hamilton Hayne read a poem by Lanier which he found to be "distinguished by a peculiar and scarcely definable quality of fancy." His letter to its author opened an interesting and valuable correspondence. Hayne's chief service to Lanier was encouragement during the bleak years of law study at Macon. His letters, indeed, may be considered a definite factor in Lanier's important decision at San Antonio. To the young law clerk they meant the appreciation and friendship of a recognized literary figure.

Hayne was disturbed at first by Lanier's tendency to an archaic style. He came to realize that through the boyhood absorption of the old English annalists and poets this style was "as natural to Lanier as breathing." Hayne pointed out Lanier's chief defect as a "deep, over-refining intellectuality, with its searching introspections, German rather than English." Starke believes that this was the natural outcome not only of Lanier's reading of Carlyle and the German romanticists, but of the reaction of those German ideas upon a keen mind trained from youth in Calvinistic orthodoxy. Whether Lanier tried to or not, he never really overcome this weakness.

The correspondence with Hayne served Lanier as a field for exercising his critical judgement. We see the Georgian, for example, in astute comment upon Hayne's poetry. It is in one of

1 Letters, p. 219
2 Letters, p. 219
3 Starke, p. 134
these letters, too, that the striking paragraphs on Robert Browning occur. Here, also, appear early thoughts on critical theory. Lanier's friendship with Hayne was undoubtedly a genuine literary stimulus.

Edward Spencer

Edward Spencer, all but forgotten now, was called one of the most gifted writers of his time. Born in Maryland in 1834, Princeton valedictorian for 1855, sympathizer and sacrificer for the Southern cause, Spencer wrote for the Atlantic Monthly, New York dailies, and the stage. Friends spoke of his "encyclopaedic" mind. Kuhl tells us that Spencer, William Hand Browne, and Lanier often met and talked literature. He quotes intimate letters from Lanier to Spencer, and likens their devotion to that of Castor and Pollux.

Gibson Peacock

"Corn", Lanier's first genuine poetic success, attracted the attention of Gibson Peacock, editor of the Philadelphia "Evening Bulletin." Kindly, reserved, educated in music and in drama as well as in literature, a discriminating critic, Peacock and his delightful wife soon became warm friends of Lanier. Their home in the Quaker City was often a refuge for the sick and disappointed Southerner. Their private gatherings for music and literature brought Lanier into contact with many inter-

Strangely enough, Starke does not stress this friendship, and Mims does not even mention it.
esting people. Through the Peacocks, indeed, Lanier met Bayard Taylor and Charlotte Cushman. The poet from Georgia was deeply appreciative of the able reviews of his work written by Gibson Peacock, and came to consider them models for newspaper criticism. The published letters of Lanier to Peacock reveal less of the artist than do the letters to Hayne and Taylor, but they do give valuable glimpses of the man.

Bayard Taylor

The publication of "The Symphony" in Lippincott's for June, 1875, and the solicitation of Gibson Peacock won for Lanier his most important literary friend in the person of Bayard Taylor. After a letter or two Taylor invited the Southerner to the celebration of Goethe's one hundred and twenty-sixth birthday in New York, an occasion on which Lanier heard Bryant give the address and Taylor himself the ode. A long visit at Taylor's home sealed the friendship. Soon Lanier sent the New York writer some sonnets for criticism. Taylor answered: "I can't tell you how rejoiced I am to find in you the genuine poetic nature, temperament, and morale."

Thereafter, Bayard Taylor proved himself a sincere and valuable friend. He introduced Lanier to the all-important Century Club, with such leaders in it as Whitelaw Reid, Stoddard, and Stedman. It was through Taylor's suggestion that Lanier was chosen to write the text of a cantata for the Centennial Commission. This assignment brought the Southerner

Letters, p. 125
revealing experiences with the critics, and a resultant clarification of literary theories. Taylor and his wife were delightful, stimulating friends to Sidney and Mary Lanier on the rare occasions when it was possible for the four of them to meet.

The New Yorker's chief help to Lanier, however, was in the giving of sane critical advice. We remember Bayard Taylor today as a translator of Goethe and as a second-rate poet who did not catch the new spirit of his age. But, particularly in the case of Lanier, he was something of a critic. If he could not appreciate Lanier on all points, he did have extensive literary knowledge, a certain restraint, a love for beauty, and an intelligent sympathy. Starke believes that Taylor was largely responsible for the improvement in Lanier's sonnet writing, and that he may have urged the Southerner to a closer study of the Elizabethan sonnets. From the published letters we know that Taylor offered sound advice concerning the Centennial Cantata. From these letters, too, we can see him trying to relax Lanier's over-exacting conscience for details and to stress the need for a greater reliance on the poetic intuition.

Lanier, of course, was thus moved to formulate and express various critical theories. We find, for example, his ideas on the sonnet and on poetic unity here developed. The sudden death of Bayard Taylor at Berlin, Germany, was a distinct loss to Lanier the artist and to Lanier the man.

I Starke, p. 221
Charlotte Cushman

Lanier enjoyed a brief but rare friendship with the gifted and pure-minded actress, Charlotte Cushman, who, like himself, was doomed by disease. Not long before her death she invited him to visit her at the Parker House in Boston. Lanier responded and spent a week in the New England center. Though he met Longfellow and Lowell at this time his brightest memories were of the hours with the brave, suffering Miss Cushman. It is doubtful that this friendship brought any specific literary result, but it was certainly a bulwark for his lofty ideals in Life and Art.

----------

If one compares the above brief review of the formative influences for Lanier's critical ideas with the actual expression of those ideas in the following pages, I believe it will be evident that Sidney Lanier was true to his heredity and environment. The Macon home, Oglethorpe and its Professor Woodrow, the romantic and the sordid days of war, the trying years of uncertainty before the decision to go North, the ties of a beloved wife and children, the stimulus of a few, sincere friends, the constant struggle in poverty and disease to achieve a literary career, the final shelter of Johns Hopkins—all these factors played their large or small parts in shaping Lanier's critical ideas and practice. But Lanier does not merely ring true to his background. He often rises above it. In that case, I believe, the cause is no obscure psychological mystery. It is found in the man's spiritual strength.
PART II
LANIER'S THEORY AND PRACTICE OF CRITICISM
A. Esthetic Theory

"Fine and beautiful souls ... appear after awhile to lose all sense of distinction between these terms, Beauty, Truth, Love, Wisdom, Goodness, and the like." Lanier never wrote truer words about himself. To our poet's generation a moral-ribbed interpretation of Keats's famous dictum on Beauty and Truth was a most useful epigram for what it felt was a simple affair --- the relations between the artistic and the moral. A true man of his time in this respect, Lanier built his esthetic theories on such a formula. His Victorian assurance did not lead him into exhaustive thinking on such matters, and it did lead him into some illogical conclusions. Yet the man's integrity is nowhere more evident than in the exalted character of these esthetic fragments.

I. The Artistic and the Moral
a. Theory

It is not surprising to find the roots of Lanier's whole philosophy of art under this heading. He expresses the principles thus:

"First, Art is a genuine creation. Second, God is the first Creator, and therefore the first Artist. Third, God is Love, and Love only is creative, while Satan is Hate, and Hate only is destructive. Therefore, Fourth, every artist must be like God, that is, must be full of love (not a sentimentality but a grand overmastering passion for all that is noble in

I English Novel, p. 273
human life'), which is creative, and empty of hate, which is destructive."I

Since our poet believes that Love is identical with Beauty and with Truth we can understand his agreement with the declaration of Keats. He reveals it most completely, perhaps, in the closing pages of The English Novel, when he is roused by the attacks on George Eliot for her didacticism, particularly in Daniel Deronda. "Permit me to recall to you in the first place that the requirement has been from time immemorial that wherever there is contest as between artistic and moral beauty, unless the moral prevail, all is lost." But this is faulty logic in view of Lanier's foundation principles and the passage where he makes his famous assertion that "the beauty of holiness and the holiness of beauty mean one thing." If moral and artistic beauty are one, they can have no contest. Lanier soon recovers himself. In defence of the unity of the moral and the artistic he quotes from Keats, from Emerson's "Each

1 Starke, p. 140
2 English Novel, p. 272
3 Ibid., p. 273 Concerning didacticism we find Lanier elsewhere inconsistent when he criticizes old Anglo-Saxon prose such as that of Alfred and Aelfric because "the form is so far overridden by the direct pressing purpose, either didactic or educational, that --- with exceptions I cannot now specify in favor of the Wyclif Bible --- I can find none of them in which the prose seems controlled by considerations of beauty." (Ibid., p. 12) Once again he implies a struggle between moral and artistic beauty with victory for the former at the expense of the latter. However, we must constantly remember that we are considering isolated points in popular lectures which Lanier never saw for revision.
and All" and "The Celestial Love", from Mrs. Brownings' "The Drama of Exile", from Swedenborg's Divine Providence, and from Psalm CXIX.

Lanier hastens to point out that he is not concerned here with art which is "merely natural, which is --- not immoral but --- merely immoral." This is the type of art generally meant for sheer recreation, art in which we do not feel the "Eternal Debate" of moral questions.

In a stirring challenge to the young artist Lanier bids him not fear the effect of moral purpose, but rather test his work by it. Indeed a man should not meddle with art unless he is "suffused --- soul and body --- ... with beauty, truth, wisdom, goodness and love," with that "moral purpose which finds its largest expression in love --- that is, the love of all things in their proper relation." In this moral purpose, Lanier believes, lies power for artistic control. Thus, as the moral aim is raised the artistic worth is increased.

b. Practice

To Lanier the past has shown conclusively that "the greatest work has always gone hand in hand with the most fervent moral purpose." Hence the Bible poetry in Job and the Psalms is supreme. "These poems alone, of all ever written, bear trans-

1 English Novel, p. 280
2 Ibid.
3 Ibid., p. 281
4 Lanier's explanation here involves an interesting technical point of criticism which, unfortunately, he seems to have developed in no other passage.
lation from one language into another without hurt," for they are "so purely composed of ideas which are universal, essential, fundamental to the personality of man that they remain absolutely great, absolutely artistic, in whatever language they are couched." Thus Lanier finds Homer "pitiful" even in Pope's English, Dante "childish" as interpreted by Longfellow, and Goethe "tedious and flat" in the version by Taylor.

In Shakespeare, who ranks just below the Bible, Lanier believes that "as the moral purpose becomes the loftier the artistic creations become lovelier." Again, the old Anglo-Saxon masterpieces find beauty in their wholesome, earnest tone, while the Elizabethan sonnets are a delight because of their sincere reverence for Woman and Love.

In contrast, Plato's art loses appeal for Lanier because of the Greek's communistic theories of marriage and property with their immoral implications. By the same token the "so-called" classic writers of eighteenth century England condemn themselves with their hypocritical morality and their ugly details. "I protest that I can read none of these books without feeling as if my soul had been in the rain, draggled, muddy, miserable." Much of the praise of Richardson, Fielding, Smollett, and Sterne must be "simply well-meaning ignorance."4

As an example of immoral art Lanier points to the

1 English Novel, p. 282
2 Ibid., p. 284
3 Ibid., p. 180
4 Ibid.
wholesome novels of Walter Scott.

Coming to his own day Lanier, of course, finds and warmly approves a high moral purpose in the work of George Eliot. In defense of her didacticism, Lanier notes that the English novel first announced itself as "the vehicle of moral purposes." Richardson and Fielding sheltered their works behind this claim. Thus, says Lanier to Eliot's critics, "if moral purpose is a detriment to Daniel Deronda, it is simply destruction to Clarissa Harlowe and Tom Jones."

Though Lanier directly avoids the moral elements involved, it is not difficult to see that his attack on Zola is inspired in part by the "police-reporter" specifications of the Frenchman. The naturalist school proposes to misuse both art and science, "noblest of instruments", and to attempt "nothing more than the day-drudge with the meanest." Lanier is convinced that beautiful art cannot come from such a procedure.

In an enthusiastic essay of 1867 he notes the effects of a higher moral purpose which has brought about an etherealization of poetry. He cites the calm strength of Tennyson with his "steady spiritual enthusiasm" in comparison with Milton who is strong rather from "the main force of physical vastness and the unwieldy pressure of colossal matters."

Sidney Lanier looks at Walt Whitman with the eyes of a Southern gentleman and a literary hermit. He feels that a

---

1 English Novel, p. 285
2 Ibid., p. 286
3 Ibid., p. 68
4 Retrospects and Prospects, p. 22
doubtful moral basis undermines the New Yorker's art with its "enormous fundamental error that a thing is good because it is natural." To one who calls "each union of self and self ... incest and adultery and every other crime," Whitman's unabashed egoism is repellent. He decides that Whitman is "poetry's butcher" who feeds our souls with "huge raw collops slashed from the rump of poetry, and never mind gristle."

Lanier has not breathed the freedom of the esthetic revolt set up in the North by the Sage of Concord. He does appreciate Whitman when the moral and the formless aspects are subdued. The latest edition of the lectures on the novel includes a paragraph which calls "0 Captain! My Captain!" "surely one of the most tender and beautiful poems in any language," —— praise omitted in the first edition by a Victorian editor. A letter to Taylor after Lanier's first reading of Leaves of Grass describes it as "real refreshment ... like rude salt spray in your face." This last opinion, it seems to me, is a significant hint as to the broad road Lanier's criticism might have taken in the passing of years.

Lanier's stand on the relations of the artistic and the moral has not been widely approved in the era of reaction to Victorianism (an era which, happily, seems at last to be passing into sanity). His conceptions are rather narrow for

1 Starke, p. 306
2 Ibid., p. 308
3 Poems, P. XXXVIII
4 Starke, "Lanier's Appreciation of Whitman" The American Scholar II, 398-408, October, 1933
5 Starke, p. 306
this day. For his own day and background, however, they are reasonably large. Above all, let us emphasize again that Lanier's code is not the outcome of sanctimonious posing. It is genuine and wholesome to a degree far greater than the pulpless codes of many of his "enlightened" critics.

2. Art and the Individual

"Personality," says a commentator, "is Lanier's one supremely precious truth, in whose light all else must be interpreted." This reverence for personality is to be expected in the eager, nineteenth-century romanticist. It is not a reverence, however, for the self-contained, in-grooving type of individuality affected by extreme romantics of his own and later days. True to his conceptions of Love, of God the Father, and of Man the Brother, Lanier cries:

"I am one with all the kinsman things
That e'er my Father fathered...
All's in each, yet every one of all
Maintains his Self complete and several." 2

That superior man, the artist, also "maintains his Self complete and several." If his finished art must serve all mankind it is the artist's solemn duty and privilege to create it from himself alone. Thus Lanier declares:

"Awful is Art because 'tis free.
The artist trembles o'er his plan
Where men his Self must see.
Who made a song or picture, he
Did it, and not another, God nor man." 3

---

1 Kaufman, "Sidney Lanier, Poet Laureate of the South" Methodist Review LXXXII, 94-107, January, 1900
2 "Florida Sunday". The italics are Lanier's.
3 "Individuality"
Lanier hastens to assure us that solitude in the process of creating is not a mere solitude of Self:

"I work in freedom wild
But work, as plays a little child
Sure of the Father, Self, and Love, alone." I

Lanier's prose works particularly emphasize his reverence for human personality (especially the artist's) and his ideas of its relation to Art. Such a relation, indeed, furnishes the unifying idea of the English Novel and a basic line of thought in the Shakespeare lectures.

Lanier's thesis in the English Novel is that the unfolding of the consciousness of "personal identity" has "wrought all the stupendous changes in the relation of man to God, to physical nature, and to his fellow, which have culminated in the modern cultus." The growth into more complex individuality has necessitated the development of the modern, elastic novel from the more rigid Greek drama through the transitional Elizabethan drama. The novel, then, is the truest modern literary form for depicting personality.

In works of Aeschylus, Shelley, Bayard Taylor, and George Eliot, Lanier traces broadly the growth of man's self-consciousness. The average man in the Greek era, he feels, must have had a feeble sense of personality to accept the im-

I "Individuality"
2 English Novel, p. 5
All the characters portrayed, even the gods, are static. They are "not acquainted with that model of infinite compactness which every man finds in his own ego." Jove's power rests on cumbrous apparatus and gross physical conceptions of pain and punishment. Today such conditions would be an affront to our "very conception of personality" which, says Lanier, "seems to me to imply a conception of growth." Before leaving the Greek field this American Romantic takes time to condemn Plato as the "most monstrous thinker in the Greek cultus", since he failed to conceive of personality.

Lanier, as we saw above, is profoundly shocked at the philosopher's communistic, eugenic idea of marriage and his related theory of property.

With too great ease, perhaps, Lanier makes the prodigious leap to Shelley's Prometheus Unbound. Here the modern

---

I Lanier has been rebuked for his lack of understanding of Greek character and thought. He does admit that the Greeks had an explicit theory of Individuality, but he believes that, as in the case of their apparent conception of (musical) Harmony, it was an "amateur" theory. (English Novel, p. 121) One can argue long and well in the matter. Greek achievement did not spring from men with no sense of personality --- yet one, particularly a Romantic, does not escape such factors as the sense of fate and the presence of the slave classes.

2 English Novel, p. 91
3 Ibid., p. 121
4 Ibid., p. 96
attitude is shown by adding spiritual to the Greek's physical torments, and by dignifying the character of Prometheus and the play's catastrophe with "that enormous motive of forgiveness which seems to be the largest outcome of the developed personality."

Lanier believes, however, that Shelley's modern sense of character is but implied, not consciously possessed. In *Prince Deukalion* Bayard Taylor expresses this modern sense in an explicit formula. Two shadowy figures, Deukalion and Pyrrha, watch the Greek, the medieval, and the present eras pass away. Finally these two, the ideal man and the ideal woman of the future, are united in deed as well as in inspiration, and are installed as rulers of themselves and of the world. Before the crowning joy, however, the pair are sternly tested. Lanier quotes a speech by Eos, the Goddess of the Dawn, to young Deukalion and Pyrrha concerning the strength needed to combat spiritual temptations — a strength which few people have had in greater measure than Lanier himself:

"Faith, when none believe;
Truth, when all deceive;
Freedom, when force restrained;
Courage to sunder chains;
Pride, when good is shame;
Love, when love is blame,—
These shall call me in stars and flame!"

In their final triumph the perfected Deukalion and Pyrrha, at peace with nature and with their own souls, go forth to use

---

1 English Novel, P. 96
2 Ibid., p. 110
gladly and nobly this lesser life of the omnipotent, loving God, I...

To Sidney Lanier, however, no artist draws the modern personality in its true worth with such vivid yet tender skill as does George Eliot. While the English Novel lectures unfold, indeed, we begin to suspect that Lanier's intense admiration for her art is based in large measure upon its treatment of the individual. The English woman is an "epoch-maker ... both by virtue of the peculiar mission she undertakes and of the method in which she carries it out." Her "peculiar mission," it seems to Lanier, is to preach "the possibility of such moral greatness on the part of every most commonplace man and woman as completely reduces to a level the apparent (tragic) inequality in the matter of genius." Here is modern art championing the sacred worth of every individual, the new spiritual democracy.

Thus it is natural to find Eliot picturing true repentance, one of the most powerful phenomena in the whole range of life. This is something Shakespeare never did, Lanier believes, because man's developing personality was only beginning to enter literature at the end of the sixteenth century.

Lanier brings Eliot into the Promethean sequence by placing the tired, but sweet-souled Milly, wife of Amos Barton,

1 English Novel, p. 112
2 Ibid., p. 190
3 Ibid., p. 194
4 Ibid., p. 211
5 Lanier feels, for example, that Prince Hal's soliloquy in Act I of King Henry IV betrayed the fact that his heart is not in the revels — thus his later course does not suppose a true repentance.
beside Prometheus nailed to the Caucasian rock in pain and hate. In contrast to the Aeschylean picture of feeble personality and justice shines the Eliot picture of strong personality and love.

Despite the cries of critics Lanier believes that the strength of Daniel Deronda lies in its depiction of the growth in the characters of Gwendolen and Daniel. The novel can best reveal such progress in personality because it can best lay bare the workings of the heart. Drama is of necessity too condensed, the writer's viewpoint too restricted for developing character. Shakespeare, then, though his plays show a parallel ripening of technique and spirit, cannot give the individual his just due. Eliot and the novel are obviously at a later and higher stage of development in art and in human personality.

In this matter of art and the individual Lanier shows interest in the literary treatment of women. A section of the Shakespeare lectures is entitled "Women of English Poetry Down to Shakspeare." Lanier notes that Anglo-Saxon has retained only three "considerable poems written in praise of great women." These women (Elaine, Judith, and St. Juliana) are all of the grand, epic type. Not until the sixteenth century does the developing feminine personality bring a literary picture of the "vivacious, sparkling young woman who can cut a man into mincemeat with keen repartee" and then make him whole again with tender speech. Shakespeare, of course, is the most brilliant contributor to this gallery.

1 English Novel, p. 98
2 Ibid., p. 114
Lanier finds that Anglo-Saxon literature does not depict woman as the wife. Middle English presents her thus, and with obedience as her chief virtue. The wife asserts herself immediately, however, for she sometimes plays the nagging scold. The perfect spouse in the old conception is found, of course, in Griselda of the Clerk's Tale. Lanier seems to go no further on this line of thought in the Shakespeare lectures. In the *English Novel*, however, he does insist on the higher worth of Victorian women and their finer conceptions in literature. "When the pessimists accuse the time of small aims and over-selfishness, I plead the Victorian women" who are "more beautiful than any product of times ... picturesque and ideal" for which the Pre-Raphaelites may clamor. Modern novelists have "redeemed the whole time" with their pictures of fine women. Literary art is also following the growth of woman's individuality in its relation to the other sex. Lanier believes that Bronte and Tennyson, "with the widest difference in method" preach the "co-equal sovereignty of man and woman"—man and woman equal though properly differentiated. Our critic went on record as an opponent of political suffrage, but he was a true champion of the more vital suffrage of human worth.

These examples may illustrate the way in which Lanier used the relationship of Art and the Individual as an important factor in what we may begin to recognize as his synthesis of

---

1 *English Novel*, p. 244
life. It was natural for the full-hearted Romanticist to stress the human element in this synthesis. The years since bleak years -- have challenged his conceptions. We cannot tell as yet whether they have overthrown them. To many lovers of mankind the permanent loss of such a respect for the worth of the individual would be a spiritual calamity.

3. Art and Science

a. Theory

On the relations of Art and Science Sidney Lanier's Romantic optimism took a most un-Romantic stand. His conviction that they are friendly allies may be ascribed chiefly to the nature of his own mind and to the influence during a critical period of Professor Woodrow. At college Lanier led his class in mathematics and displayed a marked interest in science. His interest in natural science was so great that Starke, writing of Lanier's ambition to prepare himself at Heidelberg for a professorship in America, believes that the young Southerner would have chosen this field for his career. In later years Lanier's attempts at perfecting a new type of flute, his Science of English Verse, and his general approach to the task of scholarly research (however, circumstances prevented him from doing it full justice) are convincing evidence that he was scientifically-minded in good measure. To Mme. Blanc, indeed, Lanier with his conscience for Truth, a conscience which could hardly

I Starke, p. 39
be stilled in the heat of a creative fever, was deficient in genius -- he did not leave enough to intuition.

The influence of Professor James Woodrow, the Oglethorpe teacher who was finally condemned as a heretic for refusing to find a conflict between religion and science, has been described in Part One. Lanier's writings bear witness that as his career progressed the poet's art with its frankly spiritual basis became a religion to him. Near the close of the Poem Outlines we find him admitting: "The Church is too hot, and Nothing is too cold. I find my proper temperature in Art." In any case it was a logical step for the disciple of the tolerant Woodrow to turn to the linking of Art and Science.

In The English Novel Lanier asserts that Physical Science, Music, and the Novel took their rise at the same time, and cites as proof the contemporaneous dates of Newton, Bach, and Richardson. To the Woodrow follower this is no mere coincidence. Science and the two arts are specific and related expressions of the new sense of personality attained to by man. Science is the result of the modern man's sense of intimacy with physical nature and his desire to know the exact truth. Likewise, Music springs from Man's new attitude towards the Unknown, and the Novel arises from his relations with his fellow-man. Unfortunately, Lanier does not develop these theories.

2 Poem Outlines, p. 104
3 The English Novel, p. 9
(except that concerning the novel which has been discussed in the section on Art and the Individual) --- at least they show a stage in his linking of Art and Science.

The Georgian does carry further his association of the two, with Art represented by Music, in his essay called "From Bacon to Beethoven." Here he makes the claim that "the Art of any age will be complementary to the Thought of that age." In an era of physical science man's intellect demands the exact truth, reality. By way of compensation the spirit of man seeks relief from "the pressure and grind of Fact" and yearns for that which most easily relates him to the Infinite. Of all the arts Music has the least to do with realism. Accordingly, it brings man to the Infinite. Thus Physical Science and Modern Music have arisen together. "The musician is the complement of the scientist. The latter will superintend our knowing; the former will superintend our loving." Lanier wrote this in or before 1876. Later his artistic creed seems to infer that he would have broadened the term "musician" for the last quotation to the all-inclusive "artist."

Lanier has more to say in The English Novel for the harmony of Art and Science. He cites three popular misconcep-

---

1 Music and Poetry, p. 15
2 Ibid., p. 16
3 In this matter Lanier is impressed by the modern rise of music in the churches. Ibid., p. 18
4 Ibid., pp. 16-17
tions as to the influence of the latter:

"(1) that science will destroy all poetry
all novel-writing and all imaginative work
generally; (2) that science will simply destroy
the old imaginative products and build up a new
formless sort of imaginative product in its stead;
and (3) that science will absorb into itself all
imaginative effort, so that every novel will be
merely the plain, unvarnished record of a scien-
tific experiment in passion." I

In reply Lanier declares that Science is giving not destroying
form. The whole universe is "a great congeries of forms of
motion" and Science is the knowledge of these forms, while Art
is the creation of beautiful forms. In Art as in Life Lanier
finds that form is inevitable and imperative. Obviously, the
artist needs a knowledge of form. Thus Science is not crushing
Literature --- they are growing together. For Lanier feels
that Science has "pruned our poetic form and technic, cutting
away much unproductive wood and efflorescence and creating
finer reserves and richer yields." Meanwhile, the poetry born
"within the very grasp and maw of this terrible science" seems
to show a "steadily increasing confidence and joy in the mis-
sion of the poet." Lanier finally arrives at the position that
Art (particularly Poetry) and Science work together, but that
the latter is servant to the former. Thus he declares Science
to be the "quartermaster and commissary" of Poetry.

I The English Novel, p. 28
2 Ibid., p. 29
3 Ibid., p. 37
4 Ibid., p. 38
5 Ibid., p. 44
b. Practice

Lanier’s artistic life mingled the artistic and scientific to an unusual degree. His first definite attempt at a career in Art, the venture into music, was no exception. Though few men have appreciated more the art of music and its spiritual content, Lanier realized that there is a science of music with its laws and facts "as thoroughly recognized among musicians as are the laws of any other sciences among their professors." He enumerates the sciences of harmony, of composition, of orchestration, and of performance on the various types of instruments. "music is so much a science that man may be a thorough musician who has never written a tune and who cannot play a note upon any instrument." In his essay "The Physics of Music" Lanier takes the stand that all art profits from the aid of science, for by dissection the artist need not destroy, but can understand and learn to create anew.

On a more practical level, Lanier experimented with a long flute to give a wider range of tone. He hoped that this invention would make possible the inclusion of as many flutes in the orchestra as there were violins. In 1874 he writes of work and argument with the famous flute maker, A.C. Badger, and exclaims, "The long flute will succeed, in time. It is near enough finished for me to see that." This, however, seems to be the last published reference to the matter. Lanier was turning

1 *Music and Poetry*, p. 50
2 *Letters*, p. 101
definitely to poetry where he needed all his time and strength. After examining Lanier's musical activities Mims finds it "easy to conceive" that he might have become an able teacher in the science of music. Moses calls him "the first real professor of the science of music in this country" by adoption if not by appointment.

Lanier's first long prose work, the novel Tiger-Lilies, published in 1867, shows that he is already decided as to the question of linking Art and Science. A character anticipates one of the central ideas in the lectures on the novel thus:

"Who can believe all this humbug of Macaulay, that the advance of the imagination is inverse to the advance of reason, and that poetry must decline as science flourishes? It is true Homer was at one end, and Newton at the other, of a time. But how long a time intervened between Humboldt and Goethe; how long between Agassiz and Tennyson? Moreover and what is more, one can scarcely tell whether Humboldt and Agassiz were not as good poets as Goethe and Tennyson were certainly good philosophers." 3

The Science of English Verse is obviously the result of Lanier's faith in the partnership of Art and Science. In both preface and epilogue Lanier makes it clear that he does not mean to imply --- as too many readers have inferred --- that the scientific is the dominant phase of poetry. "For the artist in verse there is no law: the perception and love of

---

1 Mims, p. 144
2 Moses, Literature of the South, p. 372
3 Starke, p. 97 The character speaking, Philip Sterling, is taken to be the more realistic of two personifications of Lanier himself.
beauty constitute the whole outfit; and what is herein set forth is to be taken merely as enlarging that perception and exalting I that love." As in the case of music Lanier is convinced that there is a science of verse. After reviewing briefly the historical attempts at investigation of this science he concludes that "it still cannot be said that we possess a theory or even a working-hypothesis." Thus the poetic art suffers from the "shameful circumstances" that criticism is without a scientific basis. Such conditions reveal an anomaly which Lanier feels is "without parallel in the history of human thought." Accordingly, he finds no need to apologize for making known his theories for placing poetry on a formal basis. Lanier believes that verse and music are two closely related species of the art and science of sound. With certain variations he adapts musical laws for use in the analysis of verse. Thus the science of English verse observes and classifies the musical phenomena of rhythm, tone, and color so far as they can be indicated through the medium of the spoken English word.

Lanier expressly stated in the Preface that the work was planned only as "a popular treatise for the general reader and a manual for the academic student." Certain poets like Stedman, however, took it to be a set of laws for their fraternity

---

1 Science of English Verse, p. 315
2 Ibid., p. vi
3 Mims, p. 353
4 Science of English Verse, p. vii
5 Ibid., p. 58
and chafed at the idea of leashing their inspiration to write by rule. Lanier was amazed to find among such men "even when the functions of form, of science, in literary art have been comprehended" a sense of danger in knowing too much of the forms of their art. Perhaps Lanier also remembered a letter written to him some four years earlier by Bayard Taylor in which the New Yorker admitted that "some instinct in me shrinks from too rigidly defining" the beauty of perfect form in verse, and asked, "Is this comprehensible to you?" Like Mme. Blanc, Taylor shrank from the analytic habits of Lanier. For all this the latter remained convinced that the study of the formal element in poetry would help to bring a finer poetry than we have yet had in America. The Science of English Verse has serious faults, but it is an important work. Its author has been likened not unfairly to a Columbus in the field of poetic theory. The book is undoubtedly Lanier's most striking application of his belief in the cooperation of Art and Science.

In The English Novel Lanier observes that for two hundred and fifty years Science has advanced with prodigious strides, and side by side has gone Poetry. This is surely a period long enough for testing the effect of the association. Hooke, Wilkins, Newton, Horrex, the Mershels, Franklin, Davy, Faraday, the Darwins, Dalton, and Huxley have worked while

I. Starke, p. 347
2 Ibid., p. 350
3 Letters, p. 157
4 Starke, p. 358
Dryden, Pope, Byron, Burns, Wordsworth, Keats, Tennyson, and Longfellow have been singing. In Germany Goethe pursued both science and poetry. "In Memoriam" does not allow one to think that Science has killed the faith, the love, and the imagination of the son it shares with Poetry, Alfred Tennyson.

If Lanier used or intended to use Science openly in the structure, he used it also, though less obtrusively, in the settings of his verse. His Nature backgrounds are unusually authentic. Commentators are apt to cite two instances of particularly conscientious attention to scientific detail. "The Mocking Bird" closes thus:

"Sweet Science, this large riddle read me plain:
How may the death of that dull insect be
The life of yon trim Shakspeare on the tree?"

Whatever their artistic effect, these lines show that the poet knows that the mocking-bird sings only after it has eaten.

Again, in "The Bee" Lanier changes the pronoun "his" referring to the bee to "its" --- he has suddenly remembered that the worker-bees, formerly thought to be sexless, have recently been found to be imperfectly developed females.

In "The Psalm of the West" the poet speaks openly for the union of Art and Science:

1 English Novel, p. 37
2 Ibid., p. 39
3 Starke, 272
4 Letters, p. 185
"—Till Science to knowing the Highest shall lovingly turn,
Till Art to loving the Highest shall consciously burn,
Till Science to Art as a man to a woman shall yearn,
---Then morn
When Faith from the wedding of Knowing and Loving shall purely be born."

Lanier's final conviction, as we have seen, found Science the willing servant of Art. In this vein he quotes Tennyson's belief that Science is knowledge which must await the true poet to be vivified with wisdom. Lanier himself writes in "The Legend of St. Leonor", which is a fragment from an unfinished lecture on the relations of Poetry and Science; "The scientific man is merely the minister of poetry. He is cutting down the Western Woods of Time; presently poetry will come there and make a city and gardens." Lanier proceeds to the medieval legend of Bishop Leonor and his sixty disciples who, by brave persistence and the aid of a bird which guided them to old Gallo-Romano wheat stalks and of miraculous stags which drew the ploughs, prepared a wilderness for generations of happy dwellers. The bird and the stags, terms of poetry, are "not real; but they are true." They mean the powers of Nature which will offer themselves to one who works faithfully for the good of his fellow-man. The legend merely affirms the principle in concrete forms; "the people, who are all poets, know this truth. We moderns, indeed, have seen a wilder (beast) creature than a stag come out of the woods for a faithful man. We have

1 English Novel, p. 43
2 Music and Poetry, p. 91
3 Ibid., p. 94
seen steam come and plough the seas for Fulton; we have seen lightning come and plough the wastes of space for Franklin and Morse." Lanier perceives also that Science may follow as well as precede Art. In Poem Outlines we find him bidding us observe Science in modern times "proving the old poet's dreams."

The last years of his life, which brought Lanier to study at the Peabody Library and to teach at Johns Hopkins, meant artistic activity with a generous share of the scientific aspect. His eager mind, his passion for truth, his facility in organizing and relating material all helped to make him, as Moses justly says, "one of the first examples of the university investigator in the modern and American sense." In the teaching as well as in the study of literature Lanier did not overlook Science. A letter to President Gilman outlines a scheme for a course in English Literature. One of the major points is called a "Working Stock of Illustrative Ideas" drawn from all those departments of learning which are within range of poems of average culture. Under this heading Lanier includes short but authoritative expositions of Pythagoras, Socrates, Aristotle, and other great thinkers of the ancient world, as well as condensed views of modern science.

If Sidney Lanier were alive today it is probable that

1 Music and Poetry
2 Poem Outlines, p. 4
3 Moses, Literature of the South, p. 361
4 "Independent" XXXVIII, 325-26, March 18, 1886

In the last summer of 1881, wracked with pain and fever though he was, Lanier, the student and teacher of English, carried on meteorological observations.
he would hold fast to his convictions on the relations of Art and Science. Though mobs and demagogues seem temporarily bent on chaining them to their selfish purposes, he would perceive that a rational minority has begun to glimpse their cooperative uses. Great scientists are acknowledging that they cannot escape the spirit --- here is surely a major point of contact for the artist and the scientist. The Darwins of today need not starve for beauty as with aircraft, radio, television, and the like, they steadily "prove the old poet's dreams." The alert Lanier would also find assurance, for example, in the fact that the amazing new composite art, the motion-picture, realizes that through Science it was born and that, to a considerable degree, through Science it is growing. On a lower plane there is the trend to things (i.e. products of Science) of beauty in all departments of life. Lanier would rejoice at this, but he would not fail to plead for more thoughts of beauty --- he would still look ahead to that time when from the wedding of Science and Art "Faith ... shall purely be born."

4. Art and Nature
   a. Theory
      (I) The Old Relationship

Lanier is insistent on the contrast in the old and new relationships between Art and Nature. To him the change is an important fact not only in modern Art but in all life. In early times Nature was ponderous, grim, and savage to Man, or at best one who did not invite intimacy. If Science failed then to dis-
cover basic natural secrets, thinks Lanier, it was because the old scientists lacked conscience (at least the energizing type which springs from a friendly interest) about Nature. By the same token the old artists were generally stiff and restrained in their relations with the physical world.

One way, however, in which artists have always used Nature with a certain amount of freedom is through the nature-metaphor. Lanier discusses this poetic device in perhaps the most interesting of his essays. To him a nature-metaphor is "a union of human nature with physical nature." If clay informed with a soul is a type of nature-metaphor, then Man himself may be called the first metaphor. The nature-metaphor brings together "the two most widely differing forms in the universe, i.e., matter which is dead and spirit which is alive." Appropriately combined they make a beautiful One. In the deeper sense a nature-metaphor is an "eternal bridal of spirit and matter, in which the immortality of the former gains the form of the latter, and the form of the latter gains the immortality of the former." A fine nature-metaphor is "noble by divine lineage, since God has decreed the correlative intersignificance of man and man's earth." It is also noble by a long pedigree, for, since the beginning of recorded time, man has found "delight and faith in the wildest of metaphors," and has filled his

---

1 English Novel, p. 127
2 "Nature-Metaphors" in Music and Poetry, p. 95
3 Music and Poetry, p. 98
4 Ibid., p. 99
highest love-songs with metaphoric sweetness. The first poets, also, moved by an instinct (which overrode fear) to a blind reverence for such natural events as sun-risings, star-gatherings, seas, and storms, fashioned nature-metaphors which, if recent comparative philology be correct in its examination of old mythologies, became largely the origin of great religions of antiquity.

(2) The New Relationship

Nothing impresses the thoughtful reader of modern literature so much, thinks Lanier, as the "great yearning therein displayed for intimate companionship with nature." Since the ancient time "one has appeared who continually cried love, love, love --- love God, love neighbors, and neighbors today are not only men-neighbors but tree-neighbors, river-neighbors, star-neighbors." Nature has acquired individuality in the eyes of Man. If Nature is finite herself she is now infinite in her suggestions for the artist. "The mood of Nature has become finer and sweeter, her fancy has abandoned the old savagery and revels in forms of unspeakable beauty."

Since the time of Shakespeare Man has deepened his philosophy concerning his relations with Nature. The old popular veneration which made the ancients endow her with living attributes has come to be the chief Fact in the history of modern man. Today it has two phases. The first is modern Science

1 Music and Poetry, p. 93
2 Ibid., p. 96
3 Ibid., p. 103
4 Shakespeare and His Forerunners, I, p. 54
which preserves for us the truth and wonder of Nature. The second is the artistic phase. Within this phase comes the nature-metaphor, now modern in spirit and still a significant factor in the linking of Art and Nature. It is modern because Man, demanding expression for his new sense of intimacy with Nature, finds it in the nature-metaphor "with the finest and completest of satisfaction." It is modern, too, because it comes "of love rather than of thought," and love is the spirit of the new age.

Lanier thinks also of the artistic phase when he writes, "Day by day we find that the mystic influence of Nature on our human personality grows more intense and individual." Thus the out-of-doors has become a place of refuge, of inspiration --- particularly of inspiration "to be natural, natural in our art, natural in our dress, natural in our behaviour, natural in our affections." To Lanier this means a "modern consummation of culture."

b. Practice

(I) The Old Relationship

Lanier says little concerning the relations of Art and Nature before the Anglo-Saxon period. In the case of the Greeks he feels that their nature-seeking was on a far different basis than is ours. A stream, for example was wonderful to the Greek not because of itself, but because of the nymph associated

---

1 Music and Poetry, p. 104
2 Shakespeare and His Forerunners, I, p. 72
3 Ibid., p. 73
with it. Again, the cumbersome Greek language, in contrast to
the flexible modern English tongue, hampered artistic expres-
sion. These matters of conventional deities and unwieldy lan-
guage also applied to the Romans. Lanier finds that the nature-
metaphors of Virgil are monotonous figures, mostly based on
some idea connected with fire --- this despite the fact that
Virgil is closer to the "passion-unfolding poets of later days"
than most of his contemporaries. The Hindu poet, Jayadeva, is
under less restraint. Lanier shows this by quoting metaphors
from Gita-Govinda such as:

"Her face is like a water-lily veiled in
the dew of tears...herself is a timid roe, and
love is the tiger who springs on her like Yama,
the genius of death...the breeze which has kissed
thy cheek...a mind languid as a drooping wing,
feeble as a trembling leaf...flowers are indeed
the arrows of love, and he plays with them cruelly."4

Turning to a period in which Lanier is more at home,
we find him pointing out that the Nature attitude of our Anglo-
Saxon forbears is reflected in the somber gloom of the descrip-
tions of Beowulf. The rugged Anglo-Saxon tongue, "a much more
rigidly formulated language than modern English," is well
fitted to picture this vast and hostile Nature. The old epic
with its drear marshes, its boiling meres, its joyless woods,
and its great unnamed beasts reveals Gothic "outcroppings of the
rude war which was not yet ended against Nature, traces of a

1 Music and Poetry, p. 103
2 Ibid., p. 99
3 Ibid., p. 105
4 Ibid., p. 104
5 Shakspere and His Forerunners, I, p. 50
time when Nature was still a savage Mother of Grendel, tearing
and devouring the sons of men."

In a chapter of the first volume of *Shakspere and His Forerunners* called "Some Birds of English Poetry" Lanier discusses the use of Nature in the Anglo-Saxon poetic version of the Phoenix legend. He notes that the Happy Land has no mountains --- evidence that the poem was written when mountains were still objects of dread. The section in which the bird builds its nest of death convinces Lanier that the old poet has been in the English woods, alone, many a time. Here is nature description for its own sake in English poetry several centuries before the time at which it is usually supposed to have appeared. The poet's loving care for the details of the nest-preparing is prophetic of the modern spirit. Already, in this lyrical outpouring of the Old English period, Art and Nature are seeking each other.

(2) The New Relationship

In *Shakspere and His Forerunners* Lanier shows the change in the relations of Art and Nature by contrasting Nature in *Beowulf* with Nature in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. As he passes from the old epic to the Shakespearian fantasy he pauses to exclaim at the nature touches in *The Flower and the Leaf* (which he ascribed to Chaucer). "One will look long in the lit-

1 *Shakspere and His Forerunners*, I, p. 56
erature of any land or of any time to find a picture of the deep woods in Spring painted with such fresh and vital and up-lifting color, and conveyed in such marvelous easy words that seem to follow along after each other by some limpid necessity and yet fall as freely, as the 'showers sweet of rain' which they describe." Lanier then stops a moment with the Scotch Gavin Douglas who is describing a May morning in *The Palace of Honour*. "His poem is like one great round dewdrop in which the whole face of Nature is reflected, pure, serene, and glittering as in a mirror of tranquillity." Whereupon Lanier turns to Sackville as the old poet in the Induction to his *Mirror of Magistrates* finds not destruction but "great and salutary thoughts" in the approach of winter.

Before turning to *A Midsummer Night's Dream* let us glance at additional links between *Beowulf* and Shakespeare as found in the chapter on Birds of English poetry. After the discussion of *The Phoenix* Lanier refers to the "copious" bird poetry of Chaucer and then quotes a love song of two doves by the Scotch William Dunbar of the fifteenth century. Here Nature is surely in a gentle mood and Art makes an appealing response. "The Phoenix and the Dove", Lanier declares, shows Shakespeare using Nature for the expression of "more complex ideas... for the number of words, than perhaps any other poem in our lan-

1 *Shakespeare and His Forerunners*, I, p. 56
2 Ibid., p. 62
3 Ibid., p. 63
language,"--- a sign, it appears, of the new intimacy.

At last in A Midsummer Night's Dream all restraint between Man (who represents Art in this case) and Nature is broken down. The evil-working Grendel's mother has softened down to Puck who works evil still, but an airy kind which vanishes in a smile. Instead of monsters in the woods we meet Oberon, the Mermaid, and Cupid. Nature goes masking in comical or cunning or lovely figures. "We find the spirit of man making love, as it were, to the spirit of Nature, and wedding it; indeed, the soul of Nature, having long fought the soul of man as Hippolyta, Queen of the Amazons, fought Theseus, has finally surrendered to him in love." At the close of the Shakespeare lectures Lanier, to show a further advance in the relations of Man (as interpreted by Art) and Nature, contrasts the "brutal" hunt of Theseus with the "moral" hunt of Prospero in The Tempest. The Athenian duke seeks the blood of a beast; the philosopher duke strives to reform a fellow-man. "Nothing could more finely typify the great height of Nature-view to which Prospero is risen above Theseus."

The most convincing proof of Lanier's belief in the alliance of Art and Nature, however, is found in his own poetry. The 1926 edition of his verse contains nearly one hundred poems, and but three short examples lack some use of Nature. As he

1 Shakspere and His Forerunners, I, p. 94
2 Ibid., p. 65
3 Ibid., II p. 309
4 Two of the poems, "To Dr. Thomas Shearer" and "On Violet's Wafers," are occasional verse and thus, of course, make the lapse more understandable.
sings, the Southern Romanticist consistently follows the modern attitude which he sets forth in his prose. The physical world is a sympathetic, inspiring friend to Man, whatever mood he may be in. Thus Lanier pictures Nature almost entirely in the kinder seasons of Spring and Summer, and a Nature not in precise forms but in its own gentle, luxuriant, and free aspects.

If Keats is called the moon-poet of England, Sidney Lanier "justly deserves to be called the sun-poet of America." The sun dominates much of his finest poetry, particularly in the greater Marsh Hymns known as "The Marshes of Glynn" and "Sunrise." The first is placed at sunset time, and the second rises to its climax at the time named by its title. Both poems hail "my lord the Sun." Lanier's wife recognizes his supreme devotion to the "manifold One ... friend Sun," when in the recent edition of the poetry she edited, she calls "Sunrise" "the culminating poem, the highest vision of Sidney Lanier, and the work which he dedicated to the friend he acknowledged as the 'father of his spirit.'" To Starke all of Lanier's songs are hymns to the sun. If the basic cause of this devotion cannot be really determined, to those who know Lanier the man it is not surprising. With his virile mind and active spirit he would

---

1 Snoddy, "Color and Motion in Lanier," Poet-Lore XII, 558-70, 1900
2 Poems, p. 3 This friend was George Westfeldt, an old acquaintance of Mrs. Lanier's parents. Lanier met him only a month before the fatal September of 1891, but he felt a spiritual kinship at once.
3 Starke, p. 316
rarely be content with settings of gray clouds and pale moonlight. Starke feels that there may have existed a subtle connection between this passion for the healing warmth and Lanier's own tubercular condition. It seems logical to suppose that he who loved life so deeply and yet found so little of it, at least in the physical sense, was drawn irresistibly to the power in Nature which Man increasingly acknowledges as the great source of life.

An analysis of the sense-words in Lanier's poetry revealed that even in his colors he stays close to Nature. The investigator, J.S. Snoddy, found that the poet prefers the characteristic hues of Nature -- green, blue, red, and gray. He also found, however, that Lanier's scenes are more in lights and shadows than in colors. Through those most typical poems, "The Marshes of Glynn" and "Sunrise", the poet delights in such pictures. Here, again, it is not easy to explain Lanier's preference. It seems true that he never acquired any real knowledge or taste for the art of painting. In compensation for an ear extraordinarily sensitive to tone-color, perhaps Lanier's eye was defective in its color sense. At any rate

1 Starke, p. 316
2 Lanier seems to have been acquainted with the theological writings of Emmanuel Swedenborg, the Swedish thinker, in which the Sun is interpreted as corresponding to the all-life-giving God. To a student of Swedenborg, indeed, the poet's whole life and philosophy seem far more closely related to the great Swede's teachings than the few references scattered through Lanier's works would suggest.
his eye seized upon form and motion more distinctly.

Foerster points out that Lanier as a poet of nature does what "none of his predecessors had done, Poe least of all --- he presents with some adequacy the Southern scene ... and he alone reveals a musician's feeling for nature." In keeping with his temperament Lanier gives us the romantic Southern scene with its light and cheer, its sunny cotton-fields, its shining corn, its red soil, its green pines, its blue sky, its farmhouses under the sycamores, its redbirds and wrens and mocking-birds, its negroes and its mules.

However, if Lanier gives us the Southern scene in general, he offers in particular the settings of his native Georgia. In later years he writes of the country around the Macon of his childhood that there man "can find such temperances of heaven and earth --- enough of struggle with nature to draw out manhood, with enough of bounty to sanction the struggle --- that a more exquisite co-adaptation of all blessed circumstances for man's life need not be sought." It is in this spirit of devotion to Georgia that Lanier's verse treats the birds, the flowers, the grasses, the trees, the hills, the brooks, the rivers, the marshes, and the sea.

On the whole, it must be admitted, Lanier gives us few bird portraits and those few are incomplete. He does show an affection for the mocking-bird which suggests the traditional

---

1 Foerster, Nature in American Literature, p. 221
2 Ibid.
3 Mims, p. 19
attachment of English poets for their nightingale — witness "The Mocking-Bird" and "To Our Mocking-Bird" as well as the prose piece (which rises to poetry more than once) called Bob: The Story of Our Mocking-Bird. Lanier also singles out the robin and the dove. In "Raven-Days" he uses appropriately (but not characteristically) the sinister connotation of the raven.

Beyond birds Lanier makes little use of the animal world in his poetry — and, as is true with so much of the Nature phase of his songs, almost never does he use it for itself. In "The Bee", for example, despite the scientific conscience displayed (referred to above), the busy insect soon gives place to the poet he is meant to typify. In "Clover" a weak artistic figure portrays the "cool, unasking Ox" as the Course-of-Things which twists off the poet clover-blossoms. The hunted animals in "The Revenge of Hamish" are soon passed over — in ballad fashion Lanier is here most concerned with his story. Lanier loved to ride a horse in field or wood. It seems strange that he makes no striking use of that animal in his poetry. However, The Jacquerie, which was to be his great epic, is set in an age of horseback. Perhaps the completed work would have included a tribute to the four-footed friend of man. It is not easy to explain Lanier's general indifference to animals in his poetry. In his delight in Nature's inanimate forms of beauty, his love for fellow man, his emphasis on a tender, sympathetic Nature (which makes obvious an emphasis on sweet-singing birds), and his brief poetic life — in all these there may be reason enough.
Perhaps it is Lanier's distrust of man-moulded Nature which makes him ignore most individual flowers. He does, however, fall unfortunately into the poetic tradition which is too often a vice --- the use of the rose. Grass, clover, the fern are freer and, being more to his taste, bring better verse. We must not forget that the poem which first brought him fame was "Corn." Whether it was an esthetic appeal or post-war conditions in the South which evoked this appreciation of corn is an open question.

Lanier is deeply sensitive to the beauty of trees. They are to him symbols of refuge from Life's cares, symbols of prayer, symbols of aspiration to the highest things of the spirit. Thus in "The Marshes of Glynn" there is cool and prayerful rest at noon in the "glooms of the live-oaks," and in "Sunrise" these beloved oaks weave "designs on the night of our knowledge." Their "cunning green leaves" are "consciences murmuring faiths under forms ... ministers meet for each passion that grieves," and they pray "a myriad prayer!" At Bayard Taylor's Cedarcroft estate in Pennsylvania stood a chestnut tree thought to be more than eight hundred years old. Lanier expresses his admiration for the fine old tree and for its owner by "Under the Cedarcroft Chestnut," a poem in which he likens Taylor, the poet, to the leafy monarch. In the beloved "Ballad of Trees and the Master" (originally planned as an in-

---

A letter of Mrs. Taylor's reveals that the chestnut and its mate died soon after the passing of Lanier. (Poems, p. 255)
Lanier stresses the tender sympathy of the trees for the Saviour men had forsaken. In poetic passages of his prose Lanier cannot forget the trees. A sentence in "Tiger-Lilies" describes them as "praying always" and as leading "the finest of all lives, since it is nothing but a continual growing and being beautiful." One of the Shakespeare lectures calls the oaks "a sweet and noble company of friends." These beautiful forms of Nature surely inspired much of Lanier's noblest singing. To many, doubtless, the thought of his poetry brings up most characteristically the picture of great, cool-shading trees with the magic of their "gospelling glooms" -- an atmosphere which his powers of word and rhythm seem best fitted to describe.

The poet loves hills. In 1877 from Florida he cries, "What heartache -- ne'er a hill, "and begs that he may glimpse some hill my Georgia high uprears." The sparkling "Song of the Chattahoochee" caresses the Hills of Habersham. In "Corn" is the old hill, a "gashed and hoary Lear" whom Spring, "the divine Cordelia, ... will vainly strive to cheer." It accords with Lanier's social and artistic purposes that he creates in us a sympathy for the indignity to Nature wrought by man's stupidity. Strangely enough, perhaps through a comparative lack of familiarity, he makes little use of mountains. He seems to prefer the more intimate aspects of Nature.

1 Mims, p. 37
2 "From the Flats"
Probably Lanier's choices in the matter of inland waters are not accidental. He makes little use of lakes --- they may suggest indulgence and stagnation to him. The rivers, the brooks call to him, often in their calmer moods. The former he immortalizes, of course, in "The Song of the Chattahoochee." "A living brook" climaxes "From the Flats." Lanier likes to use brooks in similes as we see in "Clover" where the autumn day ripples "as a brook right pleasantly half-way to noon," and in "The Symphony" where the quiet forest brook is likened to orchestral harmony over which may float flute-notes like wild-rose petals.

The marshes and the sea fascinate and inspire Lanier. Foerster believes that the Georgian is entitled to be called the "poet of the marshes." Perhaps his greatest poetry is found in the verse which was planned as part of an uncompleted series of six Marsh Hymns to constitute a single volume. In "The Marshes of Glynn" the marshes are "tolerant plains, that suffer the sea and the rains and the sun", and they are like "the catholic man who hath mightily won God out of knowledge and good out of infinite pain." In "Sunrise" the "reverend marsh" is the old chemist who offers a silence which may give a clear solution for life's problems, a silence of true freedom. And close at hand is always the sea whose full tide brings to the marshes beauty and mystery. The poet, however, is not blind to the sea's moods. "At Sunset" gives us a "humped and fishy",

I Foerster, Op. Cit., p. 221
a "huge and huddling", a "monstrous shambling", a "Caliban" sea. In that grim and stirring ballad, "The Revenge of Hamish", the sea, "a waste of blue", stands coldly ready and does at last receive the murderer huntsman and his victim.

In a letter to his wife written from Alleghany Springs in 1872, Lanier in a manner summarizes his impressions as to the influence of Nature upon himself. Though "the flat land, the bare hillside, the muddy stream ... come directly from the creative hand, they do not bring one into the sweetness of the heartier moods of God." Surrounded by them "it is as if one were transacting the business of life with God: whereas, when one has but to lift one's eyes in order to receive the exquisite shocks of thrilling form and color and motion that leap invisibly from mountain and groves and stream, then one feels as if one had surprised the Father in his tender, sportive, and loving moments."

"To the soul then, weak with the long flesh fight and filled with a sluggish langor by those wearisome disappointments which arise from the constant contemplation of men's weaknesses, and from the constant back-thrusting of one's consciousness of impotence to strengthen them — thou, with thy nimble fancy, canst imagine what ethereal essences of new dignity, of new strength, of new patience, of new serenity, of new hope, new faith, and new love, do continually flash out of the gorges, the mountains, and the streams, into the heart, and charge it, as the lightnings charge the earth, with subtle and heavenly fires.

"A bewildering sorcery seems to spread itself over even those things which are commonplace. The songs and cries of birds acquire a strange sound to me: I cannot understand the little spontaneous tongues, the quivering throats, the open beaks, the small bright eyes that gleam with unknown emotion, the nimble capricious heads that twist this way and that with such bizarre unreasonableness.
"Nor do I fathom this long unceasing monotone of the little shallow river that sings yonder over the rocks in its bosom as a mother crowning over her children; it is but one word the stream utters: but when we speak a well-known word over and over again until it comes to have a frightful mystery in it, so this familiar stream-sound fills me with indescribable wonder.

"Nor do I comprehend the eloquence of the mountains which comes in a strange patois of two tongues; for the mountains speak at once the languages of repose and of convulsion, two languages which have naught in common.

"Wondering therefore, from day to night, with a good wonder which directs attention not to one's ignorance but to God's wisdom, stricken, but not exhausted, by continual tranquil surprises; surrounded by a world of enchantments which, so far from being elusive, are the most substantial of realities, --- thou knowest that nature is kind to me."

Nature, then, plays a vital part in the artistic work of Sidney Lanier. Through his poetry especially we can see how large a part it played in the philosophy of his whole living. With his physical and emotional makeup it was natural for Lanier to be drawn away from the sordid city and industrial life of his time to the freedom of the hills and valleys and marshes. The poet's love for life and his intensely religious nature, however, conspired to deepen his Nature feelings beyond a mere craving for the out-doors. If one looks closely at his verse, one sees a Nature which is almost never used for itself alone, a Nature which so weaves itself into the heart of the singer's noblest thoughts and passions that one is tempted to call Sidney Lanier, in this Nature phase, at least,

---

I Mims, p. 112
a Transcendentalist. For surely Nature is to him a "reflection of the mind of God, the embodiment of the divine love," and Man, also a reflection of the mind and goodness of God, I thus feels an identity with both Nature and God. Out of this philosophy Lanier's genius, whatever its esthetic limitations, created some imperishable Nature pictures for American literature.

I Blankenship, American Literature, p. 287
B. Literary Theory

I. Literature

In his published writings at least, Lanier gives no concise definition of literature as a whole. This omission, however, is not from any lack of conviction as to its value and function. The last paragraphs of the Introduction to the Shakespeare lectures speak eloquently, though in a very general way, as to the role of literature.

"Now it is true, and true to an extent undreamed of by those who have not happened to think specially upon this matter, that the world we really live in is the world which the poets have made for us far more than the crude material-of-a-world which we are accustomed to call the actual or real or physical universe; to us, as we drive about our business, it does not appear as if there were much connection between literature and actual life; nor, in the year 1590, would it have seemed a very startling piece of information to the busy throngs about Paul's Cross that a young man named Shakspeare was writing a play for the theatre somewhere about London.

"But the literary man, the poet, is so much a maker that this may be called his world.

"You English-speaking people of the nineteenth century are completely and practically the creatures of English Literature. Caedmon with his wild Bible-song, and Langley with his Vision of the Ploeman, and Chaucer with his Tales, and Shakspeare with his awful-beautiful pictures: these literary men moulded the very souls of your ancestors before you. You are the products of Poetry. It determined you before you were born. You cannot escape Literature.

"How crude are our views of this matter! We speak of this or that poem as "literary", we talk of "polite Literature," and the like. Literature has translated your Bible and interpreted it for you. Literature has arranged your public constitutions, your social codes, your private morals; nay, not only English Literature, but Greek and Latin Literature, with all those prodigious world
ideas which we owe to them. This has indirectly penetrated your houses; it fills your homes like suffused sunlight; you read your life by it; you see how to eat, how to drink, how to trade, and how to marry by it; you live by it, you die by it.

"For how can you think yourself out of thought? How can you run away from your own feet?

"If you endeavour to fly away from Literature, it stands and cries to you in that superb loving sarcasm with which Emerson's Brahma cries to the sceptic who would fly from his god:

'I am the wings wherewith you fly.'"

2. Types of Literature

Lanier apparently says nothing on the general types of literature. Only in discussing the novel does he make such distinctions as the classic, the romantic, the realistic, and the naturalistic (which he separates from the realistic). For his opinions in the broader fields we must look to his own practice of criticism. He stands essentially, I believe, for a disciplined sort of romanticism. The classic attitude pleases him in certain phases of technique. In the section on Art and Science we have seen his insistence on the necessity for Form. In the soul of literature, however, he brooks no classic rigidity. He must have a romanticism of passionate warmth, but a romanticism on a highly spiritual plane -- i.e. with a certain emotional discipline. Meanwhile, realism in its more general sense (since he apparently does not recognize naturalism as a legitimate phase) does not greatly disturb one to whom all things of the spirit are so acutely real. By this I mean, for

I Shakspere and His Forerunners, I, p. xiii
example, that since only the beautiful and the true are real to Lanier he does not fear the growing demand for realism.

a. Prose

To Lanier the fact that English prose was of later development than English poetry is rather convincing evidence that prose in general followed poetry. It also tends to prove his theory that prose, in its relation to poetry, is not formless but with more forms, i.e. it came as a complication of simple poetic rhythms. To illustrate this last theory Lanier quotes Dr. Johnson's "I put my hat upon my head" sentence in verse stanza form. He then gives this version:

"I hastily put my hat upon my head,
And rushed forth into the Strand,
And there I encountered another man,
Whose hat was hanging in his hand."

Lanier observes that in the first line he has not destroyed the rhythm, for he has preserved the rhythmic sequence of "my hat upon my head," but has merely added brief rhythms. This line was originally all iambic; now it has varied rhythms and the result is prose. For in verse "we must use one form, in prose we may use many forms, and just to the extent of these possible forms is prose freer than verse." Lanier is insistent that "prose has its rhythms, its tunes, and its tone-colors, like verse." The extremes of prose and poetry are sufficiently unlike each other, but the near grades of intermediate forms over-

1 English Novel, p. 26
2 Ibid., p. 25
and any dividing line is more or less arbitrary. Lanier's theories bring him naturally to the conclusion that "prose, scientifically considered, is a wild variety of verse." Here is but another instance of the fact that Lanier's sensitive ear found rhythm to a unique degree in all artistic use of language.

b. Drama

In his lectures Lanier deals with Shakespeare as poet, psychologist, and philosopher, but hardly ever, in the technical sense at least, as dramatist. I find little evidence that the Southerner was a theatre-goer --- probably his most real contact was in the study of the Shakespeare plays.

In defending the point of view that "Shakspeare's work is moral teaching," Lanier declares that "every play is, in the strictest sense, a powerful sermon ... For a play is simply the modern form of what in its earliest form was nothing more or less than a sermon." Lanier then describes the conditions in medieval England whereby plays found a natural use as pictorial sermons, and briefly characterizes the miracle and mystery plays and the morality. The last type was nearer our conception of a play. After a time, in place of the Virtue or abstract personage used as characters in the morality, appeared some actual historic personage who was noted for that virtue. From that point the

---

1 *English Verse*, p. 57
2 Lanier's New York and Baltimore letters refer constantly to concerts and gatherings of artistic friends, but even in the matter of his friendship for the actress Charlotte Cushman they neglect the theatre.
3 *Shakspere and His Forerunners*, I, p. 395ff
development to the Shakespeare dramas with their none the less real teaching implications was obvious.

With his attention centered upon the Bard of Avon Lanier makes another point. "Every drama must of necessity always differ enormously from real life, because in the drama the action must be mainly told by the words of the dramatis personae." In real life words cannot begin to express our deepest emotions. In a play a dramatist must have the power for this expression. Thus, contrary to real life, every character should have this power. From this view "there is not a real man or woman in Shakespeare." But if his men and women are not real "they are absolutely true" --- for their speeches give us true conceptions of their underlying emotions.

What seems to be Lanier's only other point on the theory of the drama is found in the Novel lectures. He contrasts the comparative range of the novel and the drama for depicting changes in human character, "an element of difference ... which has not hitherto been fairly appreciated, so far as I know." The novelist has liberty to reveal the full workings of heart and brain, but the dramatist may show them only by scenery or by the word and gesture of the actor. Thus the latter is hopelessly limited in an attempt to show such a great character change as repentance and reformation. If the dramatist does

1 Shakspere and His Forerunners, I, p. 299
2 Ibid., p. 301
3 English Novel, p. 260
make the attempt he must resort to much soliloquy — a dangerous step from the practical dramatic standpoint. Even Shakespeare, Lanier believes, could not have presented George Eliot's drama in his own day on a paying basis.

The above comments are hardly striking or prophetic. If Lanier had known more about the actual drama of his century, he might have foreseen in some manner the progress of an Ibsen and an O'Neill.

c. The Novel

In 1883 a series of lectures given by Sidney Lanier at Johns Hopkins in the last year of his life appeared in book form as "The English Novel and the Principle of Its Development." Many of its first readers must have wondered at the relation of the book's title to its contents. It would have helped them to have known that Lanier himself had called the lectures, "From Aeschylus to George Eliot: Twelve Studies in the Modern English Novel as a Development of the Greek Drama." It would have helped them more, however, to have known that in the 1897 revised edition Mrs. Lanier was to insert the subtitle, "A Study in the Development of Personality."

For the book is not at all a technical study of the novel. Lanier originally planned twenty lectures, and intended to discuss among others the four leading English novelists of the eighteenth century and such American writers as James, Howells, and Cable. Because of his failing health he reduced the course to twelve lectures. For some reason less clear he devoted the final lectures to the glorification of George Eliot.
Starke suggests that Lanier, with his strength ebbing and in a fit of disgust over the old English classic writers and even such moderns as Thackeray, felt that he could do no better service than by concentrating upon the writer whom he felt to be the supreme English artist. At any rate the result was a book singularly lacking in actual literary theory, and a book held together only by a conception of the development of man's personality through the ages — yet withal an interesting and stimulating work.

Lanier does explain that, since he has discussed verse form in general in his preceding lectures, he now intends to discuss a prose form in particular "from the point of view of literary art rather than of literary science." He goes on to say that he has chosen the novel, because, if one is to believe public library figures, it is the literary form which the great majority of Americans read. "As a people," he exclaims, "the novel is educating us." Thus it behooves Americans to become acquainted with and to set up some standards for judging "this fascinating universal teacher."

Lanier proposes to treat his subject by developing four lines of thought: (1) "the enormous growth in personality which our time reveals when compared, for instance, with the time of Aeschylus; (2) the simultaneous rise of modern music, modern science, and the novel; (3) the "necessity of the wonderfully

1 Starke, p. 413
2 English Novel, p. 2
3 Ibid., p. 4
free and elastic form of the modern novel" for the depiction of
the complex modern personality; (4) readings from some of the
more characteristic modern novels to illustrate general princi-

ples thus discovered.

In hinting (that is the word, for there is no solid
statement on the matter) at the origins of the novel, Lanier
observes that English prose was later than English poetry by at
least eight centuries. He feels that the first really musical
prose writer was Sir Thomas Malory who in his King Arthur may
"with but little strain, be said to have written the first Eng-
lish novel." Lanier says little in explanation of this state-
ment beyond pointing out that Malory gave the old legends a
certain unity and made them really his own, and that the be-
haviour of Lancelot as he is attacked by Arthur and Guenivere
is as noble as any in English literature --- i.e. Lanier seems
to feel this a novel because of the personalities involved,
both of the author and of the characters. Perhaps he is justi-
fied, though the usual historical approach to the novel does
not emphasize character until years later.

Lanier has little to say of the so-called formal be-
ginnings of the English novel as they occurred in the eighteenth
century. Pamela was "the first revolutionary departure from
the wild and complex romances ... which had formed the nearest

1 English Novel, p. 4
2 King Arthur, p. xx
approach to the modern novel until then. His subsequent remarks are chiefly attacks on the "commercial" morality found in the four English pioneers who "play upon life as upon a violin without a bridge, in the deliberate endeavor to get the most depressing tones possible from the instrument... to show men with microscopic detail how bad men may be." Lanier would deny the works of Richardson, Fielding, Smollett, and Sterne the rank of classics. One feels, however, that here his artistic judgment is plainly warped by his moral judgment. There is little evidence that he has made a close study of these works as pieces of literary art.

In stating his third line of thought Lanier argues that the great increase in personalities now going on has brought such complexities of relation that the older forms of expression are inadequate, and so necessity is developing the free and elastic form of the modern novel "out of the more rigid Greek drama, through the transition form of the Elizabethan drama." Here is a statement with interesting possibilities from the point of view of the history and theory of the novel. Unfortunately, beyond passages on the growth of personality, Lanier does not describe the evolutionary process, and he is far too general in picturing the results. His discussion of this line of thought which would fall properly under novel technique centers about the point of contact in the range of the drama and

1. *English Novel*, p. 169
2. *Ibid.*; p. 180
3. *Ibid.*; p. 10
the novel which was cited in the last section. To Lanier the omniscience by which the novelist views the secret workings of the minds and hearts of his characters is a godlike power for "what power less than God's can make me see the deepest thought and feeling of a fellow-creature?" This consideration seems "to lift the novel to the very highest and holiest plane of creative effort." The attitude of the novelist indicates a "vast ascent" in the growth of human personality from the attitude of the dramatist.

Before turning to the final and more important technical points upon the novel as expressed in the lectures, it may be of interest to discuss a matter of theory, conjectural though it is, in connection with Lanier's only novel, Tiger-Lilies. He wrote to his friend Northrup that among the critics of his book "what was written in illustration of a very elaborate theory of mine about plots of novels has been mistaken for the 'carelessness of a dreamy' writer: I would I knew some channel through which to put forth this same theory." But we do not know what this theory is. Lanier says:

"I have in the last part (of Tiger-Lilies) adopted almost exclusively the dramatic, rather than the descriptive, style which reigns in the earlier portions, interspersed with much high talk. Indeed, the book which I commenced to write in 1863 and have touched at intervals until now, represents in its changes of style almost precisely the change of tone

---

1 English Novel, p. 260
2 Ibid., p. 260
3 Ibid., p. 260
4 Starke, p. 192
which has gradually been taking place in me all the time. So much so, that it has become highly interesting to me: I seem to see portions of my old self, otherwise forgotten here preserved." I

Whatever this means to the theory, it is plain that the last part of the novel has, strictly speaking, no plot. In his Preface Lanier explains that he avoids the "thrill of many murders" and a "titillation of dainty crimes", not through youthful temerity or through the lure of the unusual, but because of his love "strong as it is humble, for what is beautiful in God's Nature and in Man's Art." This love sends a faint cry from "a region where there are few artists to happier lands that own many" that these latter may give "more sunshine and less night in their art ... more household sweetness and less Bohemian despair ... broader quiet skies and shorter grotesque storms." Lanier creates his broad skies and abundant sunshine largely through the romantic "high talk." Starke suggests that from this we might assume that Lanier's theory was that the plot should be subservient to the "high talk of the author's didacticism" --- a theory more fitted for the essay-writing to which Lanier soon turned. It would not have been a surprising conviction when one looks at the Georgian of that period. But he never wrote another novel, and the matter does not come up in the lectures.

The English Novel, however, surely stresses the need for character and idealism which, it is likely, was bound up with the

---

1 Starke, p. 102
2 Ibid.
3 Ibid., p. 103
other theory.

Lanier approaches his definition of the novel and his brief sentences on its general types through a discussion of Zola and naturalism. He cites Zola's contention in "Le Roman Experimental" that every novel must hereafter be the entirely unimaginative record of an experiment in human passion.

He then quotes, "We (the novelists) are experimental philosophers, showing by experiment how a passion exhibits itself in certain social surroundings." Lanier proceeds to single out the popular Zola heroine, Nana, who dies of small-pox after a singular career. He believes that logically, since Nana is purely a creation of Zola's, Zola is the only person in the world who understands her feelings on any occasion. Zola, then, should make the scientific experiment of death by small-pox himself. But he can give only his opinion and the results of a general study of small-pox. Thus the "boasted experiment, the pivot of the whole system," fades out.

To Lanier this "whole elaborate system of the Experimental Novel" is nothing but a repetition of the "old, old trick of the hand of Jacob and the voice of Esau ... The hand is the hand of science; but the voice is the voice of the beast." Generations of noble scientific spirits have invested the mere name of scientific experiment "with that sacredness under which the Zola school is now claiming the rights and privileges of

1 *English Novel*, p. 64
3 *Ibid.*, p. 68
science, for what we have seen is not science, and what, we might easily see if it were worth showing, is mere corruption."

This animal voice need not bring fear:

"George Eliot, somewhere in Adam Bede, has a mot: when a donkey sets out to sing, everybody knows beforehand what the tune will be. This voice has been heard many times before. Long before Zola came on the stage, I find Schiller crying in his sweet silver tones to some who were likewise misusing both art and science: 'Unhappy mortal, that, with science and art, the noblest of all instruments, effectest and attemptest nothing more than the day-drudge with the meanest; that in the domain of Freedom bearest about in thee the spirit of a slave.'

"In these words, Schiller has at once prophesied and punished The Experimental Romance." 2

Lanier then declares that, according to his views of form, "even if Zola's Experimental Novel were a physical possibility, it would be an artistic absurdity." Otherwise it would be only fair to call Huxley's late work on the crayfish or a physician's report on a clinical experience novels.

All this brings the necessity to secure "perfectly clear conceptions as to certain relations between that so-called poetic activity and scientific activity of the human mind which find themselves in a singularly interesting contact in the true and worthy novel." What we variously call the "poetic", the "imaginative", or the "creative" activity is essentially synthetic, a process of putting together, while the scientific process seems distinctively analytic, or a tearing apart. A

---

1 *English Novel*, p. 68
3 *Ibid.*, p. 69
short way to gain a clear working idea of this difference is to describe the two results: "the scientific imagination results in a formula, whose paramount purpose is to be as short and as comprehensive as possible; the poetic imagination results in a created form of forms, whose paramount purpose is to be as beautiful and as comprehensive as possible." When the true scientific activity and the true poetic activity "engage themselves upon one and the same set of facts, we arrive at the novel. The great modern novelist is at once scientific and poetic, and here, it seems to me, in the novel, we have the meeting, the reconciliation, the kiss, of science and poetry." For example, in Daniel Deronda George Eliot, having collected, analyzed, and sorted many facts of British life, "binds them together into a true poetic synthesis."

Thus Lanier observes that the Romantic school rely most upon the poetic activity, the Realist school upon a combination of the poetic and scientific activities, while the Naturalistic school stands, or professes to stand, only upon the scientific, i.e. to reject entirely the imaginative. From this one might conclude that the Realist school is Lanier's choice. There seems to be more proof in the Shakespeare lectures when he says:

"The progress from the merely true in general (Shakespeare's plays) to the true in general plus the real in particular (George Eliot's novels) is a line of growth distinctively traceable in culture for the last three

1 English Novel, p. 69
2 Ibid., p. 70
hundred years, resulting on the one hand in Music as a relief from realism and on the other in the Novel as unsparing realism. We do not like to forgive: in the drama we have to make many allowances, in the novel and music none. We have ceased to play at fairy-tales." I

The novel, then is grounded in, has in fact arisen because of, its realistic scope.

In contrast to the Naturalists who "call that an experiment which is only an imaginative product", Lanier is prepared to "study the Novel as a work in which science is carried over into the region of art. We are not to regard the novel therefore as ought else but a work of art, and the novelist as an artist." In this spirit Lanier quotes from Emerson's "Books" in which the Concord Sage observes that:

"While the prudential and economical tone of society starves the imagination, affronted Nature gets such indemnity as she may. The novel is that allowance and frolic the imagination finds." 3

Thus in some measure Lanier gives us his ideas as to the origins, the development, the function, and the ideal characteristics of the novel. As in most of his criticism we can admire the fragments more for their spirit and prophetic intuition than for their scholarly content. His aversion for the eighteenth century novelists is sincere, plainly spoken, and not wholly without cause, but it betrays an incomplete understanding of the

1 Shakspere and His Forerunners, I, p. x
2 English Novel, p. 71
3 Ibid.
period. There is more to be said, perhaps, for his stand on Zola. Lanier's emphasis upon the role of personality in the novel is orthodox, but his way of presenting that emphasis deserves attention. I am inclined to agree with Arthur Penn that (for its date of presentation) Lanier's idea of a developing personality "is more philosophic and nearer the truth than we can find in the work of any one who has hitherto considered the history of fiction." Lanier's declaration that "the great modern novelist is at once scientific and poetic" is now perhaps more timely than ever. To write the modern interpretative novel, which is to many an authentic document of sociology, a "barometer of civilization", the novelist surely needs the power of utilizing the data of life as well as a creative, synthetic imagination.

Starke believes that Lanier was the first American to point to the novel as a form of literature worthy of serious thought. For a man who was by nature and training a Puritan of the South this involved both tolerance and courage. Those who dismiss Lanier as an impossible prude are apt to overlook such points as these. Meanwhile, we may agree with Starke that The English Novel has been too quickly forgotten in our college course on modern literature of which it was one of the first examples. In the field of the novel, Sidney Lanier deserves respect as a high-minded pioneer of criticism whose work, though

1 Penn, Arthur, "Sidney Lanier on The English Novel", Century Magazine, XXVII, 951-59 April, 1894
2 Starke, p. 419
cut off far too soon, has points of enduring value. Such respect should and is being accorded him by those who feel that the true function of a novelist is, in Lanier's own eloquent words, to show man "what he may be, in terms of what he is."

**d. Poetry**

In 1873 Lanier wrote to Paul Hamilton Hayne:

"... whatever turn I have for art is purely musical; poetry being, with me, a mere tangent into which I shoot sometimes. I could play passably on several instruments before I could write legibly; and since then, the very deepest of my life has been filled with music, which I have studied and cultivated far more than poetry." 2

This statement seems a bit exaggerated, and may have come to his pen partly as a sort of shyness in the presence of an acknowledged man of letters. At any rate, seven years later, he could in all sincerity write, "To be an artist and preach the gospel of poetry: that is the breath of my life." 3 And poetry had become to him "the most remarkable, the most wide-spread, and the most noble" branch of literature.

In his brief artistic life the Southerner proved that this was no mere lip-service by doing not only his finest imaginative work, but also his most original research in the field of poetry. To literary people, indeed, he is probably as well known for his verse theory as for his verse. Since most of this theory is found in *The Science of English Verse* my discus-

---

1 *English Novel*, p. 293
2 *Starke*, p. 164
4 *English Novel*, p. I
sion will be largely confined to that work.

First, however, it seems logical to cite his ideas on the origins of poetry which are briefly shown in The English Novel. If the prehistoric man's syllables were uniform, and his breath periodic, then "it seems probable that the whole earlier speech of man must have been rhythmical." In his breathing man necessarily divides his words into rhythmic periods. The average rate in breathing is seventeen to twenty respirations a minute. Assuming that the faster rate is the more probable one in speaking, a man would, from the regular necessity of refilling his lungs, divide his words into twenty groups, equal in time, every minute. If the syllables were equally pronounced at about the rate of two hundred a minute, he would have ten syllables in each group, each ten syllables occupying (in the aggregate at least) an equal time with any other ten syllables, that is, the time of his breath. And here is the rhythm of English blank verse. Such a theory fitted logically into Lanier's convictions that both man and Nature are intuitively rhythmical.

In The Science of English Verse Lanier goes to his task with high seriousness not only because he feels that English poetry has been sadly lacking in scientific theory, but also because he believes that he may thereby help to strengthen poetry in its mission of service to religion. "Music already occupies one end of the church; the same inward need will call

I English Novel, p. 23
poetry to the other." This was a historical condition which must be revived. To reach all kinds of men religion can use "no forms of less subtlety than those of tone." Lanier proposes to give "an account of the true relations between music and verse" which may help to explain the arrival of the former at its present position in the church and the turning of the latter in the same direction. He sees this turning in his conviction that the world has abandoned the "elegant" ideal of poetry which was prevalent in the eighteenth century and is now ready for the poetry of true beauty and of noble service to men.

Thus in his first paragraph Lanier broaches what is the core and distinctive feature of his theory --- the close relations of music and poetry. "The art of sound must always be regarded the genus, and music and verse its two species." From this proposition the man who possessed one of the most sensitive ears in the history of American art went on to analyze poetry. As more than one observer has remarked, this ear was cause for both his triumph and his failure in the matter.

Lanier's first chapter, called the "Investigation of Sound as Artistic Material," is properly one of general definition. Verse is "a set of specially related sounds, at least in the case of a formal poem repeated aloud." For "all ideas may be abolished out of a poem without disturbing its effect upon

---

1 Verse, p. iii
2 Ibid., p. 57
3 Ibid., p. 22
the ear as verse," -- i.e. verse is still verse though it be reduced to its first element, sound. Thus "if we can ... ascertain all the possible relations between sounds we will have discovered all the possible determinants of verse, and will have secured phycial principles for the classification of all verse-effects from which there can be no appeal."

Sounds can be studied in only four relations: (1) their relative duration in which must be remembered the correlative duration of the silences between sounds, which are called "rests", and which are as necessary to many forms of verse as the sounds; (2) their relative intensity; (3) their relative pitch; and (4) their relative tone-color.

"A formal poem is always composed of such sounds and silences (or of the signs, or of the conceptions, of such sounds and silences) as can be coordinated by the ear." Lanier explains that by "sounds which can be coordinated by the ear" he means sounds which the ear can perceive with such clearness that it is able to compare them in some one or more particulars (i.e. for example, as to time, or to pitch).

He soon reaches a more distinctive proposition. "The sound relations which constitute music are the same with those which constitute verse, and ... the main distinction between music and verse is, when stated with scientific precision, the difference between the scale of tones used in music and the scale of tones used by the human speaking voice."

1 Verse, p. 21
2 Ibid., p. 24
3 Ibid., p. 33
4 Ibid., p. 33
Experiment proves that the ear can exactly coordinate sound only as to duration, pitch, and tone-color. Since the art of sound demands exact coordination, these "constitute three distinct principles to one or the other of which all the primary phenomena of this art must be referred." In duration is found rhythm; in pitch is found tune; and in color are found rhymes, alliteration, and the like. Thus when the ear exactly coordinates a sound as to duration it has found a conception of rhythm, and so on for the other relations.

There is a secondary use of sound relations in which a whole body of sounds is so arranged that the ear can group it into smaller bodies for a greater ease of handling. For example, a total of eight sounds could be grouped into four groups of two sounds each by a variation of accent or of tone color or of pitch or of time.

Lanier proceeds to one of his basic contentions. Verse as surely as music has tunes. Our unwillingness to believe this is due only to the "complete unconsciousness" with which we use them after their countless repetitions in daily speech. These "tunes" are "definite and organized melodies of the speaking-voice," with precise variations of pitch which can be instantly recognized by the ear. If they could not be thus recognized, many of the ideas which we now convey with ease would be inexpressible.

1 Verse, p. 39
2 Ibid., p. 47
Lanier goes on to insist that verse as well as music has all the three great classes of phenomena called rhythm, tune, and tone-color and that thus "there is absolutely no difference between the sound relations used in music and those used in verse." Words are themselves musical sounds, for they are the results of regular vibrations. The distinguishing characteristics of verse from musical sounds are the "generic and specific tone-colors of the human speaking voice", and the peculiar scale of tones used by this voice. This scale includes every tone perceptible to the ear within the limits of its range.

Lanier follows this introductory chapter with Part I, an extended discussion of rhythm, and Parts II and III which are short sections on the tunes and the colors of English verse respectively.

Part I is Lanier's most striking and complete unit. To the Southern poet-musician rhythm, commonly called the "soul of music", is an indispensable and sadly misunderstood fundamental of English verse. It is the most obvious phase for the linking of music and verse, and he makes good use of it.

One of the foundation points for Lanier's theory rests in his belief that "it is the English habit to utter each word, whether prose or verse, in such a manner that the sounds of which it is composed bear to each other definite and simple relations in point of time --- ... the relations either of equal-

I Verse, p. 48
ity or of proportion according to the small numbers 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, etc." This is due to man's natural rhythmic sense. Thus all English sounds can be said to be rhythmical.

Lanier describes primary and secondary rhythm by using the figure of a clock ticking. The regular "tick-tick" of the seconds illustrates primary rhythm. Secondary rhythm is apparent when the "tick-tick" takes on the sound of "tick-tack". The "tack" may seem to differ in both pitch and intensity. Persons of normal rhythmic feeling instinctively sense this secondary rhythm, even though it is not actually present. In ordinary discourse secondary rhythm is usually meant by the term "rhythm", and variations in pitch and intensity are indicated by "accent". For the rest of the section Lanier is occupied largely with secondary rhythm.

The theorist reaches a basic point. All secondary rhythm presupposes a primary rhythm: "in other words, ... rhythm of any sort is impossible, except through the coordination of time. Time is the essential basis of rhythm." Accent can only arrange materials which are already rhythmical.

"Quantity" is a term originally supposed to denote relative verse-sounds in Greek or Latin which were alleged to have been confined to the single proportions of 1 to 2, i.e. all

1. Verse, p. 60
2. Lanier reminds us that he is referring to the relative not the absolute time occupied by English words. Verse, p. 61
3. Verse, p. 65
4. Lanier offers nearly a page of footnotes to show that rhythm is independent of intensity, pitch, and tone-color.
the sounds were divided into fixed longs and shorts. When students found that English verse did not have these limitations, many of them inferred that it therefore had no such thing as quantity. But English verse does have variable quantity in more flexible proportions.

Lanier quotes a line of verse with a musical notation of the rhythm. The fact that a person reading such a line will instinctively sense a rhythm in it makes him observe that written or printed English words are a sort of system of notation for both primary and secondary rhythm. He then varies the rhythm of two syllables in a word ("rhythmical" becomes "rhythmic") to prove that the quantity of English sounds is variable, and to reveal that primary rhythm can vary within the limits of simple proportions, and that the primary rhythm of a doubtful word can be indicated by the secondary rhythm or grouping into bars.

Lanier divides rhythm in English verse into what he calls the six orders of rhythmic groups: (I) Syllables (primary rhythm); (2) Bars (secondary rhythm); (3) Phrases, Alliterative Groups, and Emphatic Word Groups; (4) Lines (metre); (5) Stanzas; and (6) (complete) Poems.

Lanier's next chapter is devoted especially to primary rhythm. If rhythm depends upon quantity, "those who deny the existence of quantity in English sounds must deny the possibility
of rhythm in English verse." The opinion of many able scholars that accent not quantity is the basis of rhythm in English verse is due to their failure to distinguish primary from secondary rhythm. One cannot group sounds into rhythm by accents. Rhythm, for example, can be "absolutely dependent upon measured silences," --- one cannot accent silences. Thus musical rhythm and hence verse rhythm is based on exact time relations among their sounds and silences. The office of accent cannot begin until after rhythm is established. Then it may be used to suggest various secondary arrangements of primary rhythmic material into groups or bars. The rhythmic accent must be inseparably associated with the bar. Let it be understood that "neither the bar (a late refinement of music) nor the accent is essential to rhythm."

At this point Lanier suggests that, because of the similarity of time relations, the system of music notation can also serve for verse notation. He proceeds to explain this notation. Thereupon he observes that a musician, after announcing by the time signature the length of the bars in his piece, feels at liberty to fill them up with as many or few sounds as he likes. Thus the English poet, not tied to classical longs and shorts, may fill his bars or "feet" in many ways. Shakespeare brings "marvelous and subtle music" out of the "bare type of blank verse" by a constant redistribution.

1 Verse, p. 97
2 Ibid., p. 98
3 Ibid., p. 103
of rhythmic schemes in the bars.

Lanier begins his intensive study of secondary rhythm with a discussion of the forms of accent. He enumerates the rhythmic accent (which is louder), the pronunciation accent (which is louder, often higher pitched, and generally emphasizes the special dignity of the root sound), and the logical accent (an exaggerated pronunciation accent which is louder, and generally higher pitched). Lanier feels that the failure to discriminate between the regular rhythmical and the irregular logical accents has spoilt many otherwise authoritative studies of the versification in Chaucer and Shakespeare.

The rhythmic accent always serves to mark off the bar, or secondary rhythm. As the musician establishes the normal time-value of the bar by his time signature so the poet can establish the type of his bar by beginning with words which unequivocally suggest it. "Wistfully," for example, suggests 3/8 time with the rhythmic accent on the first beat. Lanier insists that the poet should not make uncertain rhythmical beginnings. "The resources of our language as to rhythm are so copious that not the laziest ballad-maker need ever be at a loss for means of indicating the intended movement of verse with unmistakeable clearness."

Lanier calls the 3-rhythm and the 4-rhythm types the "two great classes of secondary rhythm" which comprise "all the

1 Verse, p. 120
2 Ibid., p. 127
rhythmic combinations made with English words." He explains 3-rhythm as that in which the rhythmic accent recurs "at that interval of time represented by three units of any sort --- no matter among how many sounds this amount of time may be distributed", and he gives 4-rhythm a corresponding definition. These two main forms of rhythm have in practice subdivided into favorite patterns, the 3-rhythm into three particular forms and the 4-rhythm into two. Lanier, we see, is dropping the old poetic terms such as iambic, trochaic, dactylic, and the like.

He then considers a question which he feels will naturally arise in the student's mind --- that concerning the status of other rhythms such as 2-rhythm or 5-rhythm. To Lanier 4-rhythm is "substantially 2-rhythm in the only form in which it will be tolerable to the ear." For the supposed Pyrrhic foot in Greek Lanier believes we must accept one of two conclusions. Either the Greeks did use the rhythmic accent for secondary rhythm as we do, or their Pyrrhic foot was --- as is our 2/3 bar (\(\frac{2}{3}\)) in English --- merely theoretical. Lanier observes here that "among several acute remarks which peer through the mass of error in Poe's Rationale of Verse is one which ridicules the idea that any such measure as the Pyrrhic exists in English verse."

The oddness, not the length, of a 5-rhythm bar troubles
the ear. Lanier turns to music and finds what, I believe, is the accepted opinion of musical theorists, that a 5-rhythm is only a combination of the 3-rhythm and the 2-rhythm (which, as used in music, resembles the poetic 4-rhythm he has named). Larger rhythms are thus either doubles or combinations of the two fundamental 3 and 4 types.

Lanier devotes the two following chapters to a special treatment of the 3-rhythm and the 4-rhythm and their typic variations. I think no circumstance in the history of aesthetics is so curious as the overpowering passion of the English ear for 3-rhythm as opposed to 4-rhythm ... From the beginning of English poetry ... down to the present day, every long poem and nearly every important short poem in the English language has been written in some form of 3-rhythm." Lanier then proposes to trace the course of English rhythm by musically-notated schemes of the distinctive metres of the greatest poems. He begins with a quotation from The Battle of Maldon, for he finds that a single form of 3-rhythm prevails in Anglo-Saxon "exclusively for the first five hundred years of our poetic history." There is no question in his mind as to the existence of rhythm in Old English poetry. Its well-defined system of alliteration enabled the early poets to use rhythmic variations with a certainty that their hearers would recognize their significance at once.

1 Verse, p. 142
2 Ibid., p. 142
3 Ibid., p. 145
Lanier proceeds through Caedmon, Beowulf, the Cuckoo-Song, and Piers Plowman, to Chaucer. The creator of the Canterbury Tales, Lanier feels, began a special form of 3-rhythm which prevails thereafter throughout English poetry. It is the form $\text{}/\text{}/\text{}/\text{}/\text{}/$ with five bars to the line which, but for the presence of rhyme, is precisely the scheme ascribed to Surrey.

Lanier goes on to a discussion of blank verse, centering his material about the practice of Shakespeare. In his opening paragraph he observes that "nothing can be more remarkable than the confidence with which English nursery-songs and proverbial expressions count upon the rhythmic perceptions of the people, as contrasted with the timidity of minor poets and the forgetfulness of commentators in this particular... The most complex rhythms of our language... are to be found in Mother Goose and in the works of our greatest poets."

In his paragraphs on 4-rhythm Lanier distinguishes the true classic dactyl ($\text{}/\text{}/\text{}/\text{}/$), from the bar generally called a dactyl in English verse, the 3/8 ($\text{}/\text{}/\text{}/$). The confusion arose from the so-called "logoeodic dactyl" in which the first (long) of the classic dactyl was spoken rapidly as might happen in rapid speech or prose.

The manner in which the 4-rhythm called the classic dactyl dominates the old epic verse almost as completely as the 3-rhythm ($3/8\text{}/\text{}/$), called the iambus, dominates English verse "reveals to us a remarkable difference in the rhythmic bent or

I Verse, p. 196
genius of English people as compared with Greek and Latin people." The classic dactyl is "studied, formal, ponderous" with the pulse of a march: the iambus has the swing of a waltz and is "capable of infinite variety." To Lanier a predominance of the form 4/8 (\(\overline{J\overline{J}}\)) produces a comic effect. As evidence he quotes the rhythms of a humorous song and of a plantation dance.

Lanier moves to the third and fourth orders of rhythmic grouping i.e. the phrase and the line. He passes quickly over the former with the observation that in the phrase-group, the logical group, and the alliterative group "each writer must show the stuff of his own ego." In the matter of the fourth rhythmic order he remarks that the prevalence of run-on lines, as in Shakespeare's later dialogue, has almost obliterated metre, or line-grouping. Lanier believes that English poetry would profit "if we would at once frankly recognize this rhythmic but unmetric verse as a strictly-rhythmized prose, and print it as such without the deceptive line division ... A development of English rhythm lies, I feel sure, in this direction."

In verse with rhyme the habit of placing the rhymes generally at the end of the line has made it a distinctive feature of the line-group. This end position is justified only by the rhythmic function the rhyme fulfills. Lanier prefers

1 Verse, p. 226
2 Ibid.,
3 Ibid., p. 229
4 Ibid., p. 234
5 Ibid., p. 235
the rhythmical use of rhyme to its use for mere tone-color, and feels that any future development of rhyme should be along this direction.

In his chapter on the fifth order of rhythmical groups or the stanza Lanier goes almost at once to his favorite form, the sonnet. (He is strangely silent on other forms.) In describing the Italian or "strict" form he scoffs at the idea of certain people that there should be different sentiments in the "major" and "minor" portions.

In the English or "free" type of sonnet Lanier finds that its rhymed couplet ending is superior to that of the Italian. It gives an opportunity for a "sharp and epigrammatic snapping off of the action ... which is a great advantage in the hands of him who knows how to use it." Lanier calls the English sonnet "the primal form of modern English lyric poetry." He believes that it "has become sacred to all serious people since the heavenly series of private prayers and confessions which Shakespeare whispered in it." For two and a half centuries English poets have chosen this stanza to express their most sacred and intimate emotions. "Each sonnet is like a letter from the poet to you, marked 'confidential' at the top."

---

1 Verses, p. 94
2 Ibid., p. 241
3 Shakespeare and His Forerunners I, p. 191
4 Ibid., p. 167
5 Verses, p. 243
6 Ibid.
Lanier finds that the sonnet has a range of powers. It may depict "the idle conceit of a lover dying for a kiss... the powerful outcry of a man in the moment of triumph, ... the thrilling agony of remorse for sin, ... the outbursting praise of the Christian believer."

Lanier demands unity for the sonnet:

"Every sonnet ... ought to be really a little drama, with every idea in every line converging directly upon some special idea in the last two lines, like rays of light into a focus. A good sonnet should always therefore be read with a certain suspension of the reader's thought until the end is reached, and the end should always throw back a new and comprehensive interest upon all that precedes it."

In the Shakespeare lectures he outlines a three act scheme for the form. Act I presents the characters and their relations to each other. In Act II the plot ripens. In Act III the crisis occurs. Thus a sonnet should have: (1) the central idea; (2) the subordinate ideas (which come onto the stage like characters in a play --- their interaction making a sort of plot); and (3) the crisis (in the last two lines where the whole motive is displayed in relation to minor ideas in an "epigrammatic fire of beauty.")

Lanier's final chapter on Rhythm is short and of a general nature. It is chiefly reinforcement for his contention that rhythm is "perhaps the widest artistic instinct in man" and probably, as science seems to prove, "a universal principle throughout nature." It concludes with the old saying, "The

1 Shakspere and His Forerunners, I, p. 177
2 Verse, p. 241
3 Shakspere and Hir Forerunners, I, p. 190
4 Verse, p. 247
father of metre is rhythm, and the father of rhythm is God."1

Other than the material just given on the sonnet
Lanier devotes no space in The Science of English Verse to what
he calls the sixth order of rhythm, i.e. the complete poem. It
seems permissible at this point, therefore, to examine some
scattered writing on poem wholes.

In a letter to Taylor Lanier defends his idea that a
hymn should have a definite unity (the two friends had been dis-
cussing the Hymn for the Centennial celebration which Taylor
had been asked to write), and goes on to say that he feels that
every poem "from a sonnet to Macbeth" should have: (1) a Hero
(the central idea in a short poem); (2) a Plot (whatever is said
about the idea); and (3) a Crisis ("the unity of impression
sealed or confirmed or climaxed by the last connected sentence,
or sentiment, or verse, of the poem"). In this connection
Taylor has objected to "a rigid architectural structure" for
such a short work as his hymn. Lanier writes:

"I do not think that there is, as you
feared, any necessary reason why a poem so
constructed should present a 'too-conscious
air of design'; that is a matter which will
depend solely upon the genuineness of the
inspiration and the consummate command of
his resources by the artist. Is not this
framework essentially that of every work
of art?" 3

In an essay on Paul Hamilton Hayne's poetry Lanier
observes that whatever one thinks of Poe's theory that a long

1 Verses, p. 250
2 Letters, p. 153
3 Ibid., p. 154
The ideal of the lyric poem is a brief, sweet, intense, electric flashing of the lyric idea in upon the hurrying intelligence of men."

Lanier made interesting ventures into at least two rather unique fields of poetry, the cantata and dialect verse. Part of his defense for the much-discussed cantata written for the Centennial celebration of 1876 deserves attention. Doubtless some of his critics overlooked a point for which Lanier had peculiar appreciation --- that a cantata is not a poem to be judged by ordinary standards, but can be judged only in terms of its performance by a chorus and orchestra. He writes to Gibson Peacock:

"I have tried to make the whole as simple and as candid as a melody of Beethoven's; at the same time expressing the largest ideas possible, and expressing them in such a way as could not be offensive to any modern soul. I particularly hope you'll like the Angel's Song, where I have endeavored to convey, in one line each, the philosophies of Art, of Science, of Power, of Government, of Faith, and of Social Life. Of course, I shall not expect that this will instantly appeal to tastes peppered and salted by Swinburne and that ilk; but one cannot forget Beethoven, and somehow all my inspirations came in these large and artless forms, in simple Saxon words, in unpretentious and purely intellectual conceptions; while nevertheless I felt, all through, the necessity of making a genuine song --- and not a rhymed set of good adages --- out of it." 2

1 Music and Poetry, p. 207
2 Letters, p. 24
Elsewhere he says that the cantata should have one general idea, while "the separate central ideas of ... subordinate stanzas or movements, should not run into each other, but begin and end abruptly." Each of these stanzas "should be boldly contrasted in sentiment with its neighbor stanza, in order to permit those broad outlines of tone-color which constitute the only means known to music for differentiating ideas and movements from each other."

Lanier explains that the metrical forms in the cantata were selected "purely with reference to their descriptive nature." For example, the poem opens with a strophe of four trochaic feet to depict reflection, the Mayflower strophe "swings and yaws like a ship," a bizarre, bony effect occurs when the line of two and a half trochees is interposed among the four trochaic lines, the swift Huguenot strophe is achieved in dactylics, and, as the nation becomes secure, the Iambic metre --- the genius of English words --- appears. For another descriptive effect Lanier utilizes his knowledge of the orchestra. In the Jamestown stanza the ghostly ee's ar...
select gigantic figures which would have to be even harshly outlined in order to make them distinct. Thus, too, the painter would allow himself freedom as to the background and the space between separate figures. Lanier has tried to do all this in his text. As evidence for his theories he points to Berlioz's *Opium Dream of an Artist*, Liszt's tonal interpretation of Lamartine's *Meditation upon Death*, a skeleton dance by Saint-Saens, and von Bulow's tone-translation of Uhland's *The Minstrel's Curse*.

Starke says that Lanier was a true pioneer in the field of dialect poetry. His "Power of Prayer" antedated Irwin Russell's "Uncle Cap Interviewed" by six months and "Uncle Remus" by four full years. We read nothing of Lanier's theories on the subject beyond his impatient queries of Charlotte Cushman in a letter. "Tell me," he writes, "ought one to be a little ashamed of writing a dialect poem, --- as at least one newspaper has hinted? And did Robert Burns prove himself no poet by writing mostly in dialect? And is Tennyson's 'Death of the North Country Farmer' --- certainly one of the very strongest things he ever wrote --- not a poem, really?" His questions, surely, indicate the tolerant answers he probably arrived at in time.

Turning back to *The Science of English Verse* we find that Lanier gives but twenty-eight pages to Part II which concerns verse tunes. He has first to establish his claim that

1 *Music and Poetry*, p. 94
2 *Starke*, p. 185
English verse has tunes. It is his belief that "ordinary talk is a series of tunes and that the greater part of expression is carried on by means of melodies rather than words... Every affirmation, every question, has its own peculiar tune; every emotion, every shade of emotion, has its tune." These tunes are not mere accidents, but are essential for fixing precise meanings. They not only fix the significations of different words, but they also modify the meaning of the same words — i.e. a phrase according to one tune means one thing, according to another tune another thing. For partial illustrations Lanier cites a little German comedy which is based upon the words "Come here" used in a variety of situations, and the repetition of "Oh Lord, sir!" by the clown in All's Well that Ends Well. The "readings" or recitations of an actor are nothing more than "performances of speech-tunes."

Lanier notes the comparatively recent separation of poetry and music wherein the latter has turned to pure instrumental expression, i.e. the symphony, and the former has turned to its music, i.e. the tunes of verse. Through this the speech-tune "is an art in its infancy, which we may observe actually rising among us at the present day" and is "destined to noble and beautiful extensions in the future." In this connection Lanier observes that the Greek musical declamation seems linked to our modern speech tune by a common tendency in the final cadences.

1 Verse, p. 252
2 Ibid., p. 261
3 Ibid., p. 263
to rise or fall a fourth.

It is impossible to indicate at least four-fifths of the tunes of speech in musical notation because they use smaller intervals than the minimum half-tone of (European) music. The invention of a suitable notation is hindered at present by our lack of knowledge as to just how far the human ear can go in recognizing such intervals as the third and fourth of a tone. Lanier believes that the ear has a remarkable capacity for cultivation. This seems a reasonable assumption when one considers the historic growth in appreciation of various chords which once sounded intolerable.

Like Part II, Part III is short and has an air of haste and incompleteness. Lanier finds that tone-color in verse depends on four main effects: (1) rhyme (which involves both vowels and consonants); (2) vowel-distribution (with reference to securing agreeable successions of vowels in the line); (3) consonant-distribution (with reference to securing agreeable junctions of the terminal consonant of each word with the initial consonant of the next word, and with reference to arranging pleasant recurrences of similar consonant-colors); and (4) alliteration (which involves both vowels and consonants). Lanier does not maintain that these effects constitute a complete list, but that they do involve most of those with real

---

1 Lanier does not remark on the possible significance in the fact that the most natural harmonic progression of music is up a fourth.
2 Verse, p. 274, Lanier expresses the hope that he himself may find the range by experiment before long.
artistic importance.

He outlines briefly the history of rhyme in English poetry up to the time of Shakespeare. He then lists "practical cautions for the use of rhyme in English verse." First, he warns the poet to beware of "rhyme without reason," to use nothing less "than the best word in the language for the idea in hand." Second, he insists that the rhyme be perfect. Third, he finds no law as to the position of rhymes outside of the poet's own ear. It is true, however, that rhymes are often put too far apart and thus lose their effect. Fourth, he feels that rhymes of more than two syllables are to be handled with care, "as easily running to the finical, and passing into the province of the comic verse-maker." Fifth, Lanier warns the young poet to avoid neighboring rhymes which are nearly alike in tone-color. Last, he suggests that rhymes of "sweet, sonorous, and dignified vowel-colors, such as 'ore' and 'restore,' 'name and blame', ... are in general to be favored beyond those of more finical color, as 'pity' and 'witty', 'seem' and 'gleam', and so on."

Lanier says a few words on the artistic care needed in the vowel-color distribution to prevent insidious repetition. "No rules beyond the judgment of the artist's ear need be given."

1 Verse, p. 283
2 Ibid., p. 296
3 Ibid., p. 299
4 Ibid., p. 301
5 Ibid., p. 303
The same holds true for consonant-distribution. Lanier calls attention to "phonetic syzygy" a term coined by Professor J.J. Sylvester of John Hopkins to indicate a succession of related consonant-colors irrespective of their positions in the word. He quotes these famous Tennyson lines as an illustration of phonetic syzygy in m-colors:

"The moan of doves in immemorial elms
And murmuring of innumerable bees." I

In the Shakespeare lectures, however, Lanier does not leave this matter of vowel and consonant distribution entirely to the poet's judgment. He quotes from Tom Hood's "Plan for Writing Blank Verse in Rhyme" with its comical effects and decides that "we may formulate the principle that our ear does not like several identical vowel-colors in succession." In contrast, he finds that our ear does like several consonant-colors in succession. Thus from these two principles "the inference is clear that in verse there are two precisely opposite functions of vowels and consonants, when coordinated as syzygetic tone-colors --- besides, of course, all the other functions discharged by them when coordinated with reference to other particulars ... (Lanier repeats the two principles)... In other words, the vowel-colors represent the chaos element, the consonant-colors the form element: the vowel-colors represent accident, the consonant-colors law."
Lanier decides that "phenomena of tone-color ... reduce themselves in the last analysis to phenomena of rhythm (for a tone-color is the joint product of several different tones, each one of which represents so many vibrations, i.e. a type of rhythm, and thus tone-color is "simply a combination of a number of different-rated rhythms acting simultaneously upon the ear)" ... But we have found also that the principle of Opposition is at the bottom of all rhythm. Since, then, tone-color analyses into rhythm, and rhythm into Opposition, we may ... regard tone-color ... as another phase of the great organising principle of Opposition."

Lanier points out the different ways in which the Anglo-Saxon and the modern poets use alliteration. Here again, no rules can be given. He can only advise that "in modern English verse it is to be used with such delicate art that the ear will unconsciously feel its indefinite presence, varying the verse as brief irregular bird-calls, heard in the wood here and there, seem to add a delight to the mass of green."

The final chapter of The Science of English Verse is a single paragraph in which the author affirms that, after all, the "educated love of beauty" is the "artist's only law." In a broad sense of course, this is consistent with the rest of the book. It does suggest, however, the mood (a mood which, as we have seen in the section on Art and Science, certain

1 Shakspere and His Forerunners, II, p. 203
2 Verse, p. 314
3 Ibid., p. 315
friends thought difficult for him) in which he wrote to Stedman that the book had been "indescribably irksome to write. To go back, and interrogate one's own artistic procedure, and formulate in cold propositions for the general mind processes which are so swift and instinctive as those of the poet's technique: none but the artist knows the appalling constraint of this task."

But Sidney Lanier was a desperately sick man, and his poetic spirit chafed at the time snatched from the periods of free creation.

The Science of English Verse has been open to critics for more than sixty years. It has run the gauntlet, accordingly, from being considered a scheme for making money to being thought "the only thing extant on the subject that is of any earthly value." It would be difficult, and the present writer does not feel adequate to offer any really new criticism of Lanier's poetry theories. These words of Starke particularly impress me as a fair appraisal of the Southerner's work:

"In spite of inaccuracies and the mistaken judgments expressed ... Lanier did much more to clarify his discussion of English prosody than merely to ask 'a few challenging questions.'"

"He demonstrated beyond dispute the musical nature of poetry; he showed that time, whether strict musical time or time of a freer order,

1 Starke, p. 347
2 Ibid., pp. 346, 359
3 An element of freshness --- and of bias ---, however, may enter in the fact that I have had a professional training in music and still prefer a Browning to a Tennyson."
is the basis of rhythm; and he defined
the little understood use of silences in
verse." I

Doubtless the poet's physical condition was in some
measure responsible for the positive sweep in his pages which
ignores moments of thoughtful hesitation. For example, in
Lanier's enthusiasm for persuading the reader that verse and
music are closely-knit species of the art of sound he exclaims
on the opening page that "all ideas may be abolished out of a
poem without disturbing its effect upon the ear as verse." This
statement is true in a sense, of course, but it has a misleading
emphasis. The reader who is at all sceptical about a poetic
"science" may be jostled into supposing that Lanier forgets that
thought (not mere technical thought, but thought content) must
finally control the art of sound. To those who know him, of
course, the supposition does not hold, but many of Lanier's ex­
eruant statements and too much of his poetry lend an unfortu­
nate support.

The poet-musician demonstrated that "strict musical
time or time of a freer order, is the basis of rhythm." Among
those critics who seem assured that Lanier insisted on the strict
time is Dudley Miles who writes:

"No such mathematical relation (in the
values of poetic feet) exists. Accent nor­
mally appears at equal time intervals and an
accented syllable tends to acquire length."

1 Starke, p. 359
2 Verse, p. 21
Dr. Miles continues in a kindly, and for the "strict constructionists," a logical vein:

"But Lanier wrote long before the psychological investigation of rhythm had begun. He therefore could not see the impossibility of trying to reduce to one rule all the innumerable individual senses of rhythm... Lanier was on the right road. He merely made the mistake of taking his own sense of rhythm for a universal law." I

This last sentence brings to mind a remark by Chesterton that in Sordello Browning, at once the most and the least educated poet of his day, naively over-estimated the capacity of his readers. In like manner, perhaps, Lanier, with little formal musical training, but with a rich musical insight and experience, over-estimated the rhythmic and tonal capacity of his readers.

For my part, I wish that Lanier had stressed more plainly "time of a freer order." He pleads, we must admit, for a flexible scheme within the usual limits of musical time. Yet the thought that the ordinary musical system for rhythmic notation can serve for verse, is probably his most concrete confession to the "strict constructionists". I am inclined to agree with Lanier in the case of obviously musical poetry. For less musical verse, however, I feel that a different instrument of correlation is needed. The representative of prose in music is often thought to be "plainsong", broadly defined as unmeasured.

---

I Miles, Cambridge History of American Literature, II, P. 341
I melody. The apparently unmusical, the freer verse might be understood in correlation as a compromise between the extremes of flexible plainsong and strict rhythmic tone --- this has been recently hinted at, perhaps, by composers' experiments with mixed and contrapuntal rhythms. Such a step might interest those who have dropped Lanier and his theory because of the apparent bondage to regular forms which his correlation implied.

Personally, I sense with Lanier the English habit of uttering each word rhythmically. As to a succession of words I am less sure. Mono-syllabic words in particular seem to weaken the rhythmic swing. Another uncertain element lies in the pauses, or as Lanier would say in borrowing his terms from music, the rests. These breaks, it seems to me, tend to be less regular in verse than in music. The break at the end of a phrase in music (a phrase is called a "musical sentence") generally admits of no change in rhythm. Except in the obviously rhythmic verse this does not seem to hold for the breaks in poetic thought. Music, however, does have its uneven pauses

I Plainsong reached a splendid development in the medieval Latin church. A renaissance of late years has again proved its artistic worth. Apparently Lanier had no first-hand contact with this type of music --- a circumstance not surprising when one considers that the ritualistic churches were none too strong in America then. Otherwise, in view of his statements as to poetry's return to religion's service, he might have found it significant that the conception of verse rhythm for which he pleaded could be linked with an art form which directly serves the church.

2 Lanier observes that the rests necessitated by dramatic business "almost destroy the metrical character of dramatic verse." In fact, a play "cannot ever really be said to have metre."
for important places, as for example those marked by the "hold" (\(\text{\textsuperscript{2}}\)) --- pauses for which there are theories but no hard and fast rules. Perhaps in all this we are feeling what Paul Elmer More calls the "normal unrhythmical enunciation of the language" which is in constant conflict with "the rhythmizing instinct." I

It seems, however, that a poet with a rhythmic gift and conscience can resolve such a conflict for the normally rhythmic reader. There are experimenters as well as theorists to support this. In a review of Guy Wilson Allen's *American Prosody*, Wilbur L. Schramm writes:

"M. Verrier's kymographic measurements were interesting evidence for the principle of isochronism, which both Lanier and Poe defended; that such a keen analyst as Mr. T.S. Omond has again and again demonstrated the supreme importance of time in English verse; and that music is still found to be the most illuminating analogy to verse."

Dr. Schramm says that his own measurements of fine readings of verse with precise machines demonstrate "the astonishing penetration of Lanier's viewpoint. His book is more than an oddity; it is by far the most important American prosody which Mr. Allen considers."

Lanier insists on the prevalence of 3-rhythm in English verse. A reviewer of 1880 believes that "the mass of English

---

1 *Shelburne Essays*, First Series, p. II7
2 Many critics seem to overlook the importance of judging Lanier's theories by these "fine readings." One would not judge a Beethoven symphony, for example, by its performance at the hands of an amateur orchestra.
3 *American Literature*, VII, No. 1 March, 1935, pp. 108-II0
poetry is in 2/4 and not in 3/8 time. It is my own impression that Lanier's theory does not hold true for music. Most authorities, however, seem to agree with Lanier in the matter of verse rhythm. Some of those who do not may think, as Omond does, that the heroic measure is in duple time. To my (trained musical) ear the iambic foot is plainly in triple measure. One may find a sort of compromise, however, in the belief of some rhythmic theorists that all forms of rhythm can be considered duple, for all have the down and up stroke, i.e. the sense of press and release. In 3-rhythm, accordingly, one feels merely that the release begins earlier then in 4-rhythm.

Lanier's theory of speech-melody is both interesting and puzzling to one with a musical background. It still seems to be true that we do not know the possible range of the average human ear. Many fine musicians lack a sense of absolute pitch, and many professional musicians are none too sure as to relative pitch. Training helps only up to a certain point.

1 Nation XXX, 310-II, October 28, 1880
2 4/4 is called "common time". A casual examination of thirty-one Beethoven pianoforte sonatas, for example, reveals that only eight begin in triple time. It is true that the third movement and sometimes the second movement of these (ordinarily) four movement compositions are in triple time, but duple time is safely predominant.
3 Schlieder, Lyric Composition, p. 13
4 As support for Lanier's emphasis upon the correlation of music and poetry in general and upon musical and poetic rhythm in particular, it may not be beside the point to note that one who is really defective in the rhythmic sense is simply not a musician.
On the other hand, those of Lanier's school can refer to the intricate intervals in Oriental music and, as he himself says, the gradual acceptance of what were once jarring discords. For myself, at present I should not urge a general recording and diffusion of speech-melodies beyond the walls of research laboratories. The human voice, in normal speech at least, is such an individual matter that it seems a psychological mistake to try to standardize it in these intimate uses --- we already have too many goods stocked in our mental "A. and P."

Whatever our opinions of Sidney Lanier's theories we cannot deny that poetry has since turned in many respects to the path they indicate. The emphasis on free rhythms and on verbal tone-color, for instance, show the Southerner's prophetic insight. Analysis reveals that Lanier's theories outstrip his own verse practice in fore-telling the future. We may concede that in his brief, harassed artistic life he did not feel seasoned enough to express himself freely in new ways. This does not vitiate his thinking, for theory surely precedes intelligent practice.

Again Sidney Lanier merits the honors of a pioneer. Starke, with good reason calls The Science of English Verse "the boldest attack on conventional verse forms that had, at the time, appeared --- not excepting Walt Whitman's." And Omond declares: "The name of Sidney Lanier is imperishably

---

1. Starke, p. 354
2. Ibid., p. 135
associated" with the great advance of prosodic science in the eighth decade of the nineteenth century; "he led its triumphant attack upon the fortresses of prejudice and superstition."

3 Theories of the Creative Ability

a. Genius

In his Preface to The Boy's Mabinogion Lanier quotes with approval from the old Welsh "Triads" that the three primary requisites of genius are: "an eye that can see nature, a heart that can feel nature, and boldness that dares follow nature." If we expand nature so that it includes God, Man, and Physical Nature, this could very well be Lanier's own statement. He surely asked and exemplified a seeing eye, a feeling heart, and the courage of convictions.

Drawing on his own experiences, perhaps, Lanier feels that a genius must prove himself in conflict, both internal and external. Thus he complains of Schumann the composer and critic:

"... his sympathies were not big enough, he did not go through the awful struggle of genius, and lash and storm and beat about until his soul was large enough to embrace the whole of life and the All of things, that is, large enough to appreciate (if even without understanding) the magnificent designs of God, and tall enough to stand in the trough of the awful cross-waves of circumstance and look over the heights along...

1 Starke, p. 360
2 The Boy's Mabinogion, p. xii
the whole sea of God's manifold acts, and deep enough to admit the peace that passeth understanding." I

Concerning the external struggle Lanier believes that it is "a wise provision of nature by which the new man, in literature or in art, is always required to prove himself by a thousand tests, and to confirm his substance by enduring the gnawing tooth of obscurity and non-recognition, before the ages will accept him as a great artist."  

Though most of Lanier's remarks upon the characteristics of genius center on the moral aspect, there are a few which are more related to the artistic. As we have seen before, Lanier asserts that the genius is no mere receptacle for inspiration from God, but must take responsibility as an independent creator. Elsewhere he defines genius in part as the power to give the great emotions "logical and beautiful embodiments." 4 Again, Lanier declares that the genius "is forever ravenous after new forms, after technic." In contrast to men of "clever-ness and small talent" he never fears that too much form and technic will hamper his spontaneity. Thus the genius is synthetic --- he combines art and science, the heart and the head. Naturally the genius has a superior power of discrimination. Hence, in studying genius we learn as much from his

I Mims, p. 149  
2 Shakspere and His Forerunners, I, p. 269  
3 The section on Art and the Individual, p. 32, and the poem, "Individuality".  
4 Shakspere and His Forerunners, I, p. 300  
5 English Novel, p. 34
As we should expect from Lanier, the man of genius is great in character as well as in art. Moral and artistic growth come together. Examining the plays as to form and content Lanier was convinced that this was true in the case of Shakespeare. Using this supreme genius as an example he declares that the artist grows as a whole, not in parts. He grows historically (in years), in the grasp of the facts of life (morally), and in the grasp of the facts of Art (artistically). With this growth develops a power natural to the genius -- the power to harmonize life's contradictions in his creative work. "To Beethoven" holds stanzas on the genius of mature character:

"To know all things, save knowingness;
To grasp, yet loosen, feeling's rein;
To waste no manhood on success;
To look with pleasure upon pain;

Though teased by small mixt social claims,
To lose no large simplicity,
And midst of clear-seen crimes and shames
To move with manly purity;

To hold, with keen, yet loving eyes,
Art's realm from Cleverness apart,
To know the Clever good and wise,
Yet haunt the lonesome heights of Art."

It is evident that to Lanier the genius is emotionally and intellectually efficient, i.e. he works never in haste, hate, or even sarcasm, but always reflectively, calmly, in a spirit of love. Love, the key to all life, is surely the key

1 English Novel, p. 264
2 Ibid., p. 35
to the artist's power. Thus Schumann died a maniac because he lacked "a broader Love." But such a tragedy is not always the fault of the great one.

"The truth is, the world does not require enough at the hands of genius. Under the special plea of greater sensibilities and of consequent greater temptations, it excuses its gifted ones, and even sometimes makes 'a law of their weakness.' But this is wrong: the sensibility of genius is just as much greater to high emotions as to low ones; and whilst it subjects to stronger temptations, it at the same time interposes --- if it will --- stronger considerations for resistance."

In the same spirit Lanier ends his little volume, *Bob*, The Story of our Mocking Bird, with a beautiful figure in which he likens the genius to the bird:

"We have heard much of 'the privileges of genius,' of 'the right of the artist to live out his own existence free from the conventionalities of society,' of 'the unmorality of art,' and the like. But I do protest that the greater the artist, and the more profound his pity toward the fellow-man for whom he passionately works, the reader will be his willingness to forego the privileges of genius and to cage himself in the conventionalities, even as the mocking bird is caged. His struggle against these will, I admit, be the greatest: he will feel the bitterest sense of their uselessness in restraining him from wrong-doing. But, nevertheless, one consideration will drive him to enter the door and get contentedly on his perch: his fellow-men, his fellow-men. These he can reach through the respectable bars of use and wont; in his wild thickets of lawlessness they would never hear him, or, hearing, would never listen. In truth this is the sublimest of self-denials, and none but a very great artist can compass it: to abandon the sweet green

1 Mims, p. 150
2 Ibid.
forest of liberty, and live a whole life
behind needless constraints, for the more
perfect service of his fellow-men.

From all this one might imply that Lanier feels that
great moral achievement is reserved for men of great genius,
that he ignored a spiritual democracy. He reassures us, how-
ever, when he states what he believes is George Eliot's message.
To him the English novelist (as we have seen before) answers
the problem of why there is but one genius to a host of ordi-
nary folk by preaching the possibility of moral greatness on
the part of "every most commonplace man and woman." In the
last analysis, then, Lanier's man of genius is to be distin-
guished from other people not by his character, lofty though
that may be, but by his artistic power. Lanier's democratic
instinct thus saves him from moral prudery.

(I) The Poet

Again Lanier turns to the Welsh "Triads", this time to
find an apt summary of the qualifications for his favorite type
of genius, the poet. He must have natural endowment, judgment
of experience, and happiness of mind. We are not surprised to
note Lanier insisting that for this happiness of mind the art-
ist embrace "beauty, truth, wisdom, goodness, and love." It
is only natural, too, that he should assert that "those are the
best poets who keep down cloudy sorrow-songs and wait until

1 Bob, p. 61
2 English Novel, p. 194
3 The Boy's Mabinogion, p. xii
4 English Novel, p. 230
some light comes to gild them with comfort." The Southerner is still consistent when he asks as an aid to the power of judgment that the poet be "informed and saturated at least with the largest final conceptions of current science."  

Perhaps no writer has ascribed a more exalted function to the poet than Sidney Lanier. The singer of songs owes a many-sided service to the world, and must give it whether the world receives him well or poorly. Each worthy poet belongs "substantially to the school of David," and it is his business "to keep the line of men touching shoulders with each other." He is a giver of texts upon which lesser men comment in later years. 

He is "in charge of all learning to convert it into wisdom." Thus he must "stand off in thought at the great distance of the ideal, look upon the complex swarm of purposes as upon ... dancing gnats and find out for men the final form and purpose of man's life." But he must also sit at the center of things and teach men how to control Life's oppositions. For the artist is placed over a gulf which has on one side the "flame of chaos," and on the other side "the ice of form," and he is bound to convert "this hell of antagonism into the heaven of art." 

1 Mims, p. 7  
2 English Novel, p. 47  
3 Verse, p. iv  
4 Poem Outlines, p. 49  
5 Verse, p. iv  
6 Shakspere and His Forerunners, II, p. 329  
7 Ibid., p. 229
Lanier speaks of the poet in the poet's language. In "Corn" he continues his figure of the poet as a leader. "One tall corn-captain" leading against the "battling hedge" typifies the poet-soul sublime "that leads the vanward of his timid time and sings up cowards with commanding rhyme." This captain is soul-calm, of selfless chivalry, and though he towers above mortal man he keeps hold upon the "steadfast earth" which gave him birth. He stands smiling in his future grave with a hardihood built up by a "universal food" drawn from both "honest mould and vagabond air." This poet-soul leavens the "strength of earth with grace of heaven," and marries the new and the old into "one of a higher mould." He expends his "much-bruised heart" in equal care for man and beast. He takes from all that he may give to all.

In "To Bayard Taylor" the poet leads, but he has a lonely, a bitter task. Though the bard range "along a heavenly height o'er-seeing all that man but undersees" and though he "loiter down lone alleys of delight," yet he must bear "the artist's pain --- to walk his blood-stained ways, a special soul, yet judged as general --- the endless grief of art, the sneer that slays, the war, the wound, the groan, the funeral pall."

"The poet's wish is Nature's law." The poet himself is a "perpetual Adam: events pass before him, like the animals in the creation, and he names them." When the earth is dry with

1 Poem Outlines, p. 4
2 Ibid., p. 38
trades and creeds and politics he can be the rain which lays the dust. In his song he can make life's clod a flower, and, as the whole earth "is summed in a violet", he can sum Beauty in a two-lined stave. Again, the poet is "a mocking-bird of the spiritual universe. In him are collected all the individual songs of all individual natures." He is, too, a bee with "starry stuff" to fertilize the worldflower. And the poet is the genius who invented spiritual shoes and thus made the earth tolerable to the spiritual feet of man.

Aldhelm, the Saxon bishop who was Bede's senior, and who wrote Anglo-Saxon poetry (now lost) which was greatly admired by King Alfred the Great, became an idealized symbol to Lanier. The old churchman, scholar, and writer came to represent not only the first English poet and the first English poetic authority, but also the poet "as a leader of men, correcting their errors, calling them to worship, and commanding their respect." In this fragment from "The Song of Aldhelm" which Lanier puts into the old bishop's mouth, the modern singer surely reveals his all-consuming passion for the poet and his mission. It was this passion which, even as it brought

---

1 Poem Outlines, p. 5
2 Ibid., p. 49
3 Starke, p. 272
4 "The Bee"
5 "The Story of a Proverb"
6 Starke, p. 392
Death, gave Life to Sidney Lanier.

"There is not time, O World,
Till you hear me, the Poet Aldhelm,
To eat nor to drink nor to draw breath.
For until the Song of the Poet is heard
Ye do not live, ye cannot live." I

b. Inspiration

From the preceding pages one may understand that on
the question of Inspiration Lanier goes to no Romantic extremes.
Inspiration may burn fiercely, but it is essentially deliberate
and it is always under some form of control. The great artist
who must harmonize Life's oppositions can hardly let himself
be caught up in vagabond frcenzies.

Lanier's few direct comments on the matter are con-
ined to his own experiences. Perhaps his most explicit words
are found in this interesting paragraph with its Wordsworthian
implications from a letter to Paul Hamilton Hayne written in
the spring of 1870.

"Do you like --- as I do --- on such a day
to go out into the sunlight and stop thinking,
--- lie fallow, like a field, and absorb those
certain liberal potentialities which will in
after days reappear, duly formulated, duly
grown, duly perfected, as poems? I have a
curiosity to know if to you, as to me, there
come such as this day: --- a day exquisitely
satisfying with all the fulnesses of the Spring,
and filling you as full of nameless tremors as
a girl on a wedding-morn; and yet, withal, a
day which utterly denies you the gift of speech,
which puts its finger on the lip of your ins-
piration, which inexorably enforces upon your

I Poem Outlines, p. 50
soul a silence that you infinitely long to break, a day in short, which takes absolute possession of you and says to you, in tones which command obedience, today you must forego expression and all outcome, you must remain a fallow field, for the sun and wind to fertilize, nor shall any corn or flowers sprout into visible green and red until to-morrow, mandates, further, that you have learned after a little experience not only not to fight against, but to love and revere as the wise communication of the Unseen Powers."

Nearly five years later Lanier describes the birth of "The Symphony" in a manner which, if one does not know the man and the poem, surely suggests Romantic extravagance.

"About four days ago, a certain poem which I had vaguely ruminated for a week before took hold of me like a real James River ague, and I have been in a mortal shake with the same, day and night, ever since ... It is now nearly finished; and I shall be rejoiced thereat, for it verily racks all the bones of my spirit." 

Still later, when Disease and Poverty are closing in, Lanier cries out for the freedom to create in the Wordsworthian tranquillity he pictured years before. Perhaps the American's art would have been the richer if he could have let Inspiration divorce him more completely from harsh reality.

"I long to be steadily writing again. I'm taken with a poem pretty nearly every day, and have to content myself with making a note of its train of thought on the back of whatever letter is in my coat-pocket. I don't write it out, because I find my poetry now wholly unsatisfactory in consequence of a certain haunting impatience.

I Letters, p. 226
2 Ibid., p. 12
which has its root in the straining uncertainty of my daily affairs; and I am trying with all my might to put off composition of all sorts until some approach to the certainty of next week's dinner shall remove this remnant of haste, and leave me that repose which ought to fill the artist's firmament while he is creating. Perhaps, indeed, with returning bodily health I shall acquire strength to attain this serenity in spite of all contingencies." I

I Letters, p. 42
Critical Theory

Like most poets Lanier thought of himself as a creative rather than as a critical writer. It appears that he had little or no acquaintance with the great critics of his time. He mentions Arnold casually once, and he wholly ignores Taine and Saint-Beuve. This may explain his failure to talk at any length in the technical terms of criticism or to formulate more openly any critical theory.

His direct remarks upon critics generally spring from his own none too happy experience with them. After examining these remarks I am tempted to believe that Lanier feels, if he does not announce, a distinction between professional magazine and newspaper critics and the less-labelled judges in universities and among the creative writers themselves. It will soon be plain that if he does feel such a distinction it is with a distrust of the journalists. We may imply that in his own critical writing he feels himself to belong to the less professional group which, in his opinion, leans rather to an enlightened interpretation than to caustic dissection.

This group has formulated those metrical tests (see the section on Shakespeare) which, Lanier believes, "mark the rise of exact method in the science of criticism." (Shakespere and His Forerunners, II, p. 320)

At this point a comment by Higginson seems pertinent for its suggestion of the types of critics and for its testimony as to the type Lanier did actually exemplify. "Lanier was a critic of the best kind, for his criticism is such as a sculptor receives from a brother sculptor, not such as he gets from the purchaser on one side or the marble worker on the other." (Higginson, Contemporaries, p. 95)
Lanier declared more than once that criticism of his work did not move him. However, when we read his vigorous defense of the Centennial Ode and various letters concerning the fate of various poems, we see that up to the closing year or two, this was not the case. He almost wrote the critics out of his own thought, but it took years for him to be above feeling them.

These are the comments which seem to concern chiefly the journalistic class of reviewers. In "The Story of a Proverb: A Fairy-Tale for Grown People" Lanier tells of the Giant (the Genius or Poet) who becomes a king's Grand Vizier and isolates the critics of man by themselves. These critics unwittingly build a fort upon the Giant's naked body as he lies sleeping. Whereupon he moves them gently to a safer place.

"How can these poor ones know Genius when they see him? Their eyes are hurt with much work, with much error, with much wrangling, with little food, with ignorance. Unworthy, indeed, is that artist who allows himself to be bitter against them."

Lanier proceeds to classify these critics. He finds that there are: (1) those born with talent for abuse; (2) those born with perverse ingenuities; (3) those who are critics for self-revenge; (4) those who have failed at other things and know little; (5) the dyspeptic diplomats, those "bloodthirsty newspaper colonels"; and (6) the common scolds and place-hunters. This is rather a comprehensive list of bad critics. The tale gives no indication that its writer believes that there are any good

---

I Lippincott's Magazine XXIII, 109-13, January, 1879
critics.

It is the journalistic gentlemen, doubtless, who drive Lanier to the doctrine of Incuria.

"If we inquire who are the poets that must be read with the greatest allowance we find them to be precisely the greatest poets." 1

"The more I think of it, the more I am convinced that every genuine artist may be safely trusted with his own defects." 2

We can see the background for these statements in a letter describing the reception of his first important poem, "Corn."

"In the very short time that I have been in the hands of the critics, nothing has amazed me more than the timid solicitudes with which they rarefy in one line any enthusiasm they may have condensed in another --- a process curiously analogous to those irregular condensations and rarefactions of air which physicists have shown to be the conditions for producing an indeterminate sound. Many of my critics have seemed --- if I may change the figure --- to be forever conciliating the yet-unrisen ghosts of possible mistakes." 3

After meeting critical opinion more closely he writes in a brighter vein:

"Somebody saith every original writer has to educate his readers gradually to himself. How true this is in New York. Here the people are at once the boldest and timidest in the world."

Each one, he feels, waits for the other to pronounce decisively.

"Once give them a start --- these singular New Yorkers,--- and

---

1 Letters, p. 177
2 Ibid., p. 176
3 Ibid., p. 10
they will go to any length." As time went on, however, critics became violent as well as friendly or lukewarm. Lanier's final attitude is characteristic of the man and of the artist.

"My experience ... is ... that the artist shall put forth, humbly and lovingly, and without bitterness against opposition, the very best and highest that is within him, utterly regardless of contemporary criticism." 2

For contemporary criticism, he reasons, crucified Jesus, tortured Galileo, and killed Keats.

Nevertheless, knowing that both the young artist and the young critic are only human, Lanier warns them against the dangers of irritation. He believes that there are stages of growth, particularly with sensitive artists who live apart from business life, when their "habitual faults are already apt to be unhealthily exaggerated from within; and the additional forcings of such a tendency from without, through perpetual reminders of shortcomings, become positively hurtful, by proud-fleshing the artistic conscience and making it unnaturally timid and irritable." 3

There is apparently only one reference to the more acceptable type of critic, and this, arising from Lanier's own experience, places the critic in an informal position.

"Of course, the value of a friend's criticism ... is simply that when one has to write in a hurry (Lanier has been offering suggestions to Bayard Taylor concerning the latter's Cen-

1 Letters, p. 31
2 Poems, p. XXV
3 Letters, p. 176
tenniel Hymn) the friend is in the nature of one's own Conscience of Beauty ... as that conscience will be after the coolness of time has come. The friend is a mere anticipation of time, --- one's self-after-a-while."

This friendly critic, indeed, fits into the doctrine of Incuria.

Finally, certain lines of a Poem Outline have interesting if puzzling implications.

"As for us, we give you texts
O World, we poets.
If you do not understand them now,
Behold, hereafter an army of commentators will come:
They will imitate, and explain it to you." 2

The "army of commentators" may mean either or both types of critics. More important, the last line may suggest Lanier's basic conception of criticism as compared with art. Elsewhere he has insisted that art creates and does not imitate. In this Outline he seems to declare that criticism merely imitates and explains --- a rather forlorn brief, perhaps, for interpretative criticism. On the strength of this and of most of the statements in this section Lanier would appear to take his place with that formidable array of geniuses who have found no art in criticism.

His practice, however, belies this attitude. We have seen that he acknowledges criticism to be a science --- with Lanier's views on the relation of Art and Science such an admission shows a genuine respect. Lanier's distrust is for the
criticism he knows at close range, a criticism too often filled with affectation and petty meanness — qualities particularly obnoxious to the Southerner. His deeper convictions may be found, broadly expressed, in an address he gave to the graduates of Furlow College in 1869. Here is advice which Lanier himself, in the face of tremendous obstacles, tried passionately to follow. Here is an admirable creed for the true scholar-critic.

"Educate your intellectual powers. Question unceasingly, question audaciously, all history, all science, all philosophy. Be content with no half answers. Be bold enough to accept any truth. Be wise enough to preserve from improper distortion, and to classify, in proper relation, every fact. Beware how ... quick intuitions ... hurry you on to erect isolated instances into general principles. Life and art and knowledge will cast upon you the necessity of drawing many grand conclusions. Let these conclusions be from large deductions, be slowly drawn, be carefully weighed, be rigidly outlined." I

I Starke, p. 325
D. Lanier's Practice of Criticism

I. American Literature

Probably the nearest approach to Lanier's opinion of American literature as a whole is found in his few words about certain prose and poetry fashions of the day. Even here he is not restricting himself to our national practices. True patriot that he was, however, Lanier encouraged American writers whenever he had the opportunity. What is finer --- he did not run to extravagant praise of these fellow-craftsmen, not even of those from the South.

a. Prose

If Lanier often seemed blind to Victorian moral prudery, the following quotation shows that he was not unconscious of the prudery in the Victorian prose style.

"Our literature needs Anglo-Saxon iron ... Current English prose, on both sides of the water, reveals an ideal of prosewriting most like the leaden sky of a November day that over spreads the earth with dreariness, --- no rift in its tissue nor fleck in its tint." I

He goes on to speak of a "model editorial:"

"The sentences are all of a height, like regulars on parade; and the words are immaculately prim, smug, and clean-shaven. Out of all this regularity comes a certain prudery in our literature. It ought not to be that our sensibilities are shocked with strong individualities of style like Carlyle's or even Ruskin's." 2

1 Music and Poetry, p. 139
2 Ibid.
Lanier could distinguish this "literary language" from the modern scientific English which is an "admirable instrument" in the hands of such men as Tyndall and Huxley.

Lanier's lack of sectional prejudice is shown in his frank words on some contemporary Southern novels:

"God forbid we (Southerners) should really be brought so low as that we must perforce brag of such works as 'Clifford Thorpe' and 'Heart Hungry': and God be merciful to that man (he is an Atlanta editor) who boasted that 16,000 of these books had been sold in the South!"  

In a few years The English Novel was to show at some length that Lanier's tastes in the field were wholesome if not too comprehensive.

Emerson

Turning to the Southerner's comment on specific writers we find cautious but genuine appreciation of Emerson. Starke believes that of all the New England writers of the day the un-typical Emerson was the only one to hold Lanier's interest for any length of time. The biographer suggests a reason in the similarity of their ethical qualities. Both were individualists rebels against orthodoxy, though, as Lanier realized, in a different manner. Thus the Georgian admires Emerson "because he does not propound to me disagreeable systems and hideous creeds, but simply walks along high and bright ways where one loves to

1 Music and Poetry, p. 143
2 Letters, p. 237
3 Starke, p. 220
4 Ibid., p. 450
I go with him." He has this thought in mind, too, when he writes in the Poem Outlines: "The United States in two hundred years has made Emerson out of a witch-burner." Quoting an opinion of the Concord man's on a Shakespeare play Lanier calls him the "deep-seeing eye." Of Emerson's poems we know that he liked the surprising "Each and All" and the simple yet difficult "Brahma." 5

In his own poem, "The Crystal," Lanier gives the Concord Sage the honor of being the sole American in the company of world masters. Emerson's "little mole" of defect (which all have but Christ) is that in finding Wisdom, he sometimes loses sight of Christ. Though bred in the "infallible" Presbyterian church, Lanier had come a long way from its orthodoxy. Even then, however, he did not quite understand or appreciate Emerson's approach to God. Perhaps it was not accident that Lanier wrote on the fly-leaf of Representative Men, a paragraph beginning, "I fled in tears from the men's ungodly quarrel about God." It may have been that at times, particularly in the sweeping lines of the essays, Emerson was too much of an egoist for the man who cried out that "each union of self and self is, once for all, incest and adultery and every other crime." 6

1 Letters, p. 196
2 Poem Outlines, p. 34
3 Shakspere and His Forerunners, II, p. 238
4 He uses it in the novel lectures to defend the union of artistic and moral beauty. (English Novel, p. 274)
5 Starke calls Lanier's "Nirvana" a "superb companion-piece" to "Brahma." (Starke, p. 145)
6 Poem Outlines, p. 41
Others

Lanier has but a passing reference to Hawthorne when he includes him in a group of modern writers who have put poetry into their prose.

In the proposed course of lectures on the novel, Lanier was to have included a discussion of Henry James. The actual lectures merely contrast the modern, sophisticated American boy in *Daisy Miller* with the loveable Maggie in Eliot's *Mill on the Floss*. One can imagine that the leisurely, rather cold James exasperated Lanier to a considerable degree.

In the lectures on the novel Lanier had also meant to consider Cable. A letter to his brother Clifford has a comment on the novel he had hoped to discuss. "Have you read Cable's book, 'The Grandissimes'? It is a work of art, and he has a fervent and rare soul."

It is to Lanier's credit that he was one of the first admirers of Joel Chandler Harris. In his article on the New South he calls Uncle Remus a

"famous colored philosopher of Atlanta, who is a fiction so founded upon fact and so like it as to have passed into true citizenship and authority, along with Bottom and Autolycus. This is all the more worth giving, since it is really negro-talk, and not that supposititious negro-minstrel talk which so often goes for the original. It is as nearly perfect as any dialect can well be; and if one had only some system of notation by

1 Retrospects and Prospects, p. 23
2 English Novel, p. 232
3 Mims, p. 294
which to convey the tones of the speaking voice, in which Brer Remus and Brer Ab would say these things, nothing could be at once more fine in humor and pointed in philosophy. Negroes on the corner can be heard any day engaged in talk that at least makes one think of Shakespeare's clowns; but half the point and flavor is in the subtle tone of voice, the gesture, the glance, and these unfortunately, cannot be read between the lines by anyone who has not studied them in the living original." I

Such remarks and his own early attempts in the field lead one to suppose that, if he had lived, Lanier could have made a significant contribution to dialect literature.

In the case of Richard Malcolm Johnston, whose Dukesborough Tales bring to life the old Middle Georgia, we can see Lanier in direct action as the friendly critic. He writes to Colonel Johnston in 1877:

"I have attentively examined your 'Dukesborough Tale.' I wish very much that I could read it over aloud in your presence, so that I might call your attention to many verbal lapses which I find and which, I am sure, will hinder its way with the magazine editors... Again... I find that the action of the story does not move quite fast enough during the first twenty-five pages, and the last ten, to suit the impatience of the modern magazine man.

"Aside from these two points, --- and they can both be easily remedied, --- the story strikes me as exquisitely funny, and your reproduction of the modes of thought and of speech among the rural Georgians is really wonderful. The peculiar turns and odd angles, described by the minds of these people in the course of ratiocination (Good Heavens, what would Sammy Wiggins think of such a sentence as this!), are presented here with a delicacy

I Mims, p. 293
of art that gives me a great deal of
enjoyment ... I would not dare to make
these suggestions if I thought that you
would regard them otherwise than as pure
evidences of my interest in the success
of the story." I

b. Poetry

Lanier's poem "Remonstrance" leads Starke to declare
that "no-where in American literature has orthodoxy (of opinion
and practice in poetry, politics, and religion) been more
severely trounced than in this poem, unless perhaps in the prose
of Emerson and Melville." We know from the probable date of
writing that Lanier had been smarting from the barbs of con-
tventional critics. Starke finds it an ironic triumph of art
that the Southerner should confuse these critics in a poem
which is highly conventional in form and diction. In prose,
too, Lanier spoke plainly on the poetic defects of the day:

"In looking around at the publications
of the younger American poets I am struck
with the circumstance that none of them even
tempt anything great. The morbid fear of
doing something wrong or unpolished appears
to have influenced their choice of subjects.
Hence the endless multiplication of those
little, feeble magazine-lyrics which we all
know: consisting of one minute idea, each,
which is put in the last line of the fourth
verse, the other three verses and three lines
being mere sawdust and surplusage." 5

1 Mims, p. 295
2 Starke, p. 318
3 In Poems the date is given as 1873-9. Starke thinks it to be
   August, 1878 (p. 317)
4 Starke, p. 317
5 Letters, p. 176
Lanier writes of the collection called *A Masque of Poets* with its one hundred and seventy-five poems (of which his "Marshes of Glynn" is one of the two or three that have survived and is by far the most famous):

"The truth is, it is a distressing, an aggravated, yea, an intolerable collection of mediocrity and mere cleverness ... I could only find four poems in the book ... One marvels that a man (in this case the author of the novelette in verse, *Guy Vernon*) with any poetic feeling could make so many stanzas of so trivial a thing. It does not even sparkle enough to redeem it as *vers de societe*. This is the kind of poetry that is technically called culture poetry, yet it is in reality the product of a want of culture. If these gentlemen and ladies would read the old English poetry ... they could never be content to put forth these little diffuse prettinesses and dandy kickshaws of verse."  

Apparently Lanier has in mind contemporary poets for this tentative sketch of a poem theme:

"One of your cold jelly-fish poets that find themselves cast up by some wave upon a sandy subject, and so wrinkle themselves about a pebble of a theme and let us see it through their substance --- as if that were a great feat."  

Lanier complains again of pseudo-culture when he writes that the age is trying "in most of its purely literary work, to convert the large, manful, and simple idioms of Alfred and Cynewulf into the small, finical, and knowing cleverness of a smart half culture, which knows neither whence it came nor whither it is going."

---

1 Letters, P. 58  
2 Poem Outlines p. 9  
3 Music and Poetry, p. I43
Poe

William Hayes Ward wrote that Lanier esteemed Edgar Allan Poe "more highly than his countrymen are wont to do". (This, of course, was before Poe's star had risen). As one might suppose, however, the Georgian found in the poet and short story writer a lack of range. He declared:

"The trouble with Poe was, he did not know enough. He needed to know a good many more things in order to be a great poet." 2

Lanier appreciated Poe's *Rationale of Verse* although he felt it had a fundamental error which was "quite fatal to the usefulness of even the shrewd detached glimpses occurring here and there." Lanier is also much impressed by Poe's "enormous idea" in *Eureka* "where he develops from the simple postulates of attraction and repulsion and a uniform matter the course of creation ... until he winds up with that comparison which I think sometimes is the mightiest in our language --- that comparison of this successive outsending and inbringing of the worlds by the Creator at the center of things to the beating of the heart of God." Poe had suitably enthroned rhythm.

While visiting Charlotte Cushman at the Parker House

---

1 Poems, p. xxxvi
2 Ibid.,
3 "Namely, that the accent makes every syllable long, --- a conception wholly unaccountable to the musician, and so absurd as to render a large proportion of existent music and verse theoretically impossible." (Verse, p. xiv)
4 Shakspere and His Forerunners, II, p. 329
in Boston in 1875 Lanier spent two afternoons with Longfellow and Lowell. In later years Lowell expressed appreciation of the Southerner, but Longfellow seems to have remained silent. Whether Lanier felt repulsed or not, the following poem outline implies a lack of sympathy with the latter Brahmin which, after all, is not surprising.

"Do you think the nineteenth century is past? It is but two years since Boston burnt me for witchcraft. I wrote a poem which was not orthodox: that is, not like Mr. Longfellow's." I Whitman

The attitude of Sidney Lanier to the outstanding American poet of his day, when all the evidence is considered, is consistent and fair-minded. The Georgian first read Leaves of Grass in company with Lowell's "Among My Books" and Swinburne's "Atalanta in Calydon." Thereupon he wrote to a friend:

"Upon a sober comparison I think Walt Whitman's 'Leaves of Grass' worth at least a million of 'Among My Books' and 'Atlanta (sic) in Calydon.' 'Leaves of Grass' was a real refreshment to me --- like rude salt spray in your face --- in spite of its enormous fundamental error that a thing is good because it is natural, and in spite of the world-wide difference between my own conception of art and its author's." 2

But Lanier wrote in his notes:

"Whitman is poetry's butcher. Huge raw collops slashed from the rump of poetry, and never mind gristle --- is what Whitman feeds our souls with.

---

1 Poem Outlines, p. 19
2 Starke, p. 306
"As near as I can make it out, Whitman's argument seems to be, that, because a prairie is wide, therefore debauchery is admirable, and because the Mississippi is long, therefore every American is God." I

Lanier examines Whitman's philosophy again in *The English Novel*. He asserts that the latter's conception of "our great radical republic" with its "measureless viciousness" is not accurate. Washington, Jefferson, Franklin, the Adamses, for example, were hardly of the blatant, vicious type. Lanier thinks that Whitman's ideal is an unwashed, brawny loafer. But republics, he declares, are made of spirit, not of brawn and muscle. Lanier prefers the pale young clerk who is supporting his mother to the husky idler (who smacks far too much of the bohemian). Whitman's democracy, he feels, does not provide for the sick, the puny, and the deformed.

He is amused that Whitman calls Tennyson a dainty, over-perfumed dandy, for to Lanier the New Yorker presents a "six foot dandyism of the roustabout" which also poses. Soft dandyism at least leans toward decorum and gentility. Rude dandyism is a tiresome blasphemy of real manhood. Lanier continues in this vein:

"One half of Whitman's poetic work has consisted of a detailed description of the song he is going to sing. It is the extreme of sophistication in writing." 5

---

1 Poems, p. xxxviii
2 *English Novel*, p. 50
3 *Ibid.*, p. 54
4 *Ibid.*, p. 60
Lanier finds it curious that the two poets who have most avowedly written for the people have been accepted rather by the extremely cultured. Wordsworth is received by Arnold, while Whitman is hailed by Emerson and the English illumined. Whitman's poetry is possible only in a highly civilized society. He is an aristocrat masquerading as a peasant.

Lanier answers Whitman's expressed contempt for poetic beauty with a quotation from Carlyle in which this form of beauty is described as being born and dwelling in "the inmost Spirit of Man, united to all love of Virtue, to all true belief in God; or rather, it is one with this love and this belief, another phase of the same highest principle in the mysterious infinitude of the human Soul." To apprehend it clearly, the Scottish seer continues, "to require and maintain a sense of heart that sees and worships it, is the last perfection of all humane culture."

Lanier concludes that Whitman's school of thought is "not free, because the slave of nature, not progressive, because its whole momentum is derived from the physically large which ceased to astonish the world ages ago, in comparison with spiritual greatness." In Whitman's religious spirit there is merely the "general feeling of good fellowship" common to certain classes."

1 English Novel, p. 45
2 Ibid., p. 57
3 Ibid., p. 62
4 Ibid., p. 73
When the novel lectures were published in 1883 a paragraph which rounds out Lanier's opinions of Whitman was, unfortunately, omitted. The suspicion is that it was "censored" by William Hand Browne who apparently resented any approval of the irritating New Yorker. At the wise insistence of Mrs. Lanier this paragraph was added to a later edition of the lectures. It shows her husband in a mood of kindly tolerance which prompts a courageous defence of Whitman. I quote from the paragraph:

"Here let me first carefully disclaim and condemn all that flippant and sneering tone which dominates so many discussions of Whitman. While I differ from him utterly as to every principle of artistic procedure ... yet, ... I owe some keen delights to a certain combination of bigness and naivety which make some of Whitman's passages so strong and taking and indeed, on the one occasion when Whitman has abandoned his theory of formlessness and written in form he has made My Captain, O My Captain! surely one of the most tender and beautiful poems in any language." I

Lanier also tempered his remarks on Whitman's "dandyism" by saying, "I do not mean this disrespectfully." 2

Whitman's place in American literature is assured today, but --- to an unusual extent --- in spite of his faults. Lanier pointed out some of these major faults, and few men, under the circumstances, would have done it so graciously.

---

1 Starke, "Lanier's Appreciation of Whitman," "The American Scholar," II, 393-403, October, 1933
2 Ibid.
3 Lanier was a dying man as he gave the lectures. After the discussion of Whitman he expresses relief that he may leave the "truculent tone" of criticism --- a tone particularly exhausting for a man of Lanier's character.
As America has exalted Whitman the poet above Lanier the poet, so it has tended to exalt the spirit and philosophy (too often in their cruder aspects) of the New Yorker above those of the Southerner. Some of us, however, suspect that the course of events for our country would have been far smoother in the past fifty years if America had paid more attention to Lanier's warning against the worship of size and to his plea for emphasis upon the truly spiritual (in contrast to a spiritual often absorbed by the natural.)

Bayard Taylor

Bayard Taylor's role as literary sponsor and adviser doubtless prevented Lanier from expressing more fully his opinion of his friend's artistic work. It is plain that the Southerner has a sincere respect for Taylor the poet as well as for Taylor the man. In a letter of 1876 he does offer some criticism. Lanier has been asserting his belief that every poem --- every work of art, indeed, --- should have a unity of construction and idea.

"I have been studying your work within the last two or three months, and have become already satisfied that that (towards the centralization) is the direction in which you should grow. You tend from it by reason of the very stress and crowding of the multitudinous good things which you give to the world."

I The followers of Whitman can claim, with some justice, that their master has been misinterpreted. Walt Whitman, however, was not over-conscientious in the matter of presenting a clear-cut message.
Thus Lanier finds exquisite productions of Taylor's which "do not give a full white light as poems for want of a proper conveyance of the components upon a single point." We have seen that Lanier used Taylor's *Prince Deukalion* to illustrate the growth of man's personality as depicted in art. He thinks that the great number of characters used give a powerful modern note to the drama. Here Lanier seems a bit inconsistent with his theory of artistic unity and his criticism of "multitudinous good things" in Taylor's poetry. It seems, however, that at least four years had intervened before the note on Taylor's drama. Doubtless, Lanier's ideas on artistic unity had broadened.

**Henry Timrod**

Some of Lanier's sentences about Henry Timrod, as someone has well said, might have been written about Lanier himself --- though the Georgian was plainly of a larger stature:

"Few more spontaneous or delicate songs have been sung in these later days than one or two of the briefer lyrics which appear in the published volumes of his poems. It is thoroughly evident from these that he had never had time to learn the mere craft of the poet --- the technique of verse; and that a broader association with other poets, and a little of the wine of success and of praise without which no man ever does the very best he might do, though many have done amazing things who never tasted it, would have been of inestimable service to his poetic faculty. But he had a dainty artless art withal; as witness, e.g., particularly the last four lines of 'Baby's Age.'*

---

1 *Letters*, p. 155
2 *English Novel*, p. 106
3 *Florida*, p. 235
In a Shakespeare lecture Lanier quotes Timrod's sonnet called "Love" as a successor to the exquisite love sonnets of the Elizabethans, and calls its author "one who, I devoutly believe, if he had lived in Sir Philip's time, might have been Sir Philip's worthy brother, both in poetic sweetness and in honorable knighthood." Sidney Lanier himself was surely of this elect group.

Paul Hamilton Hayne

Lanier has frank and kindly opinions for the man who was at one time his sole inspiration to follow the literary life, Paul Hamilton Hayne. In an essay on his friend's poetry he says that his only material quarrel with Hayne is the latter's choice of William Morris as successor to Chaucer. Hayne is best, Lanier feels, when he escapes the influence of Morris. Thus "The Wife of Brittany" is not "real" compared with the sonnet to the mocking-bird. Lanier does not seem consistent with his own theories when he praises Hayne's Legends and Lyrics for its lack of "Science" or of mention of "progress" and of philosophies. He does approve its stress upon the "grand phenomena" (such as fear, hope, love, patriotism) which no one doubts. Lanier likes best in this collection the "Fire-Pictures." He finds it a true recitative "with energy, melody of metres, changes of rhythm, variety of fancies, and artistic advance to

1 Shakespeare and His Forerunners, I, p. 170
2 Music and Poetry, p. 193
3 Ibid., p. 202
the climax. With three exceptions the poem is in trochees and is "an admirable example of the music which can be made with these elements." Lanier says of the section which begins, "Mingled with a richer boon": "I do not know of anything, of the same style, in our language which is so beautiful." He senses in the poem a melody comparable to that in Poe's "Bells."

Lanier finds, however, two classes of faults in Hayne's work. The first is a frequent lapsus of thought into trite similes, worn collocations of words, and commonplace sentiments, while the second is a diffuseness principally from a lavish and loose use of adjectives.

On the whole Lanier concludes that Hayne's poetry is "essentially, thoroughly, and charmingly tuneful. In a time when popular poetry is either smug and pretty, or philosophically obscure and rhythmically ragged, this quality becomes almost unique. There is, indeed, nearly the same difference between poetry and culture-poetry that exists between music and counterpoint-music." Lanier goes on to explain that culture-poetry is neither satisfactory nor captivating to the ear.

1 Music and Poetry, p. 206
2 Letters, p. 233
3 Hims, P. 292
4 Music and Poetry, p. 206
5 Ibid., p. 203
6 For most people "counterpoint-music" does require listening experience. If Lanier's conception of culture-poetry is limited to his statements quoted a few pages back, however, his analogy is not valid. Much of the greatest music, including the masterpieces of the supreme Bach, is contrapuntal. It is possible, of course, that Lanier is referring to the pedantic abuses which flourished in the contrapuntal era.
In a letter Lanier continues the musical figure by likening Hayne to the melodious Mendelssohn, Abt, or Schubert.

Concerning a minor poet, Henry R. Jackson of Savannah, Lanier that his verses have been much admired by those who appreciate the chaste simplicities of a style of poetry which is unfortunately too much obscured by the less substantial though more dazzling productions of later schools.

2. English Literature

English literature from its Anglo-Saxon beginnings to Shakespeare, particularly in the Elizabethan days, held a peculiar fascination for Sidney Lanier. As one might suspect, there was little in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries to interest him. In the Romanticists of the nineteenth century he found spiritual brethren. When one considers the time and circumstances of Lanier's work it is only natural that much the greater part of his attention should be given to English literature.

a. Anglo-Saxon

We find Lanier concerned over the fact that the old English poetry has never taken a real hold on English-speaking people. To him it is not a question of values. The Greek and Latin classics are still priceless. But the modern Anglo-Saxon language and the modern Anglo-Saxon culture need some of the

1 Letters, p. 236
2 Florida, p. 245
3 Music and Poetry, p. 137
iron strength which is in the idioms and thought of the ances-
tral poetry. A sympathetic acquaintance with these old songs
would bring a psychological revelation and a new apprecia-
tion of the life of our race in its childhood. Thus Lanier is con-
vinced that the early literature should be taught in the schools
and colleges:

"Surely it is time our popular culture
were cited into the presence of the Fathers.
That we have forgotten their works is in itself
matter of mere impiety which many practical
persons would consider themselves entitled to
dismiss as a purely sentimental crime; but
ignorance of their ways goes to the very root
of growth." 1

Where modest houses have their copies of Homer, there are prob-
ably not fifty copies of Beowulf in the United States. Most
English-speaking boys know something of the death of Hector,
but how many could relate the death of our tenth century English
hero, Byrhtnoth? 2

We have seen something of Lanier's general opinions
of Anglo-Saxon in earlier sections, particularly in the one on
poetry. He feels that it is more rigid than modern English and
that it developed according to regular laws. Analysis at some
length convinces him that its verse has genuine rhythm based on
quantity not accent --- perhaps the most original opinion of
Lanier's in the field. For the rhythmic scheme he finds an

1 Mims, p. 215
2 In line with this thought Lanier once urged members of a
Johns Hopkins class to attempt by investigation a comprehen-
sive study of all word-changes from the earliest Anglo-Saxon
days --- a study which he thought would be fascinating for
the workers and valuable for scholars.
3 Shakspere and His Forerunners, I, p. 50
The absolute opinions of the old writers attract him by their naivete. An occasional trace of a more modern tenderness gives him especial pleasure. Some one has said that Lanier always uses the past with an eye to the present, i.e. he does not fall into a blind worship of the past, but tries to examine it as to helpful links with the present. This is surely true for the matter in hand. On the whole, probably the most distinctive aspect of Lanier's relation to Anglo-Saxon is the contagious enthusiasm with which he presents and bids us enjoy it. Many things can be forgiven a scholar who treats his subject thus.

We have seen Lanier's particular interest in Aldhelm. In The Science of English Verse he calls the old bishop's Epistola Ad Acircium "the first essay on verse by an Englishman" and adds this footnote:

"It seems highly probable that Aldhelm --- surely the most fascinating figure in our literature before Chaucer --- must have written vernacular verse earlier than Caedmon, and that he is therefore entitled to be called the Father of English Poetry. See William of Malmesbury's Life of him, here and there, and scraps in Asser's Life of Alfred. Of course, in this location of Aldhelm, as hinted in the term 'historic beginning' of our literature, one bears in mind the possible sixth-century date of Widsith's Traveller's Song, of Dear's Lament, and of other poems." 2

Elsewhere Lanier expresses a longing for one of Aldhelm's English ballads, since his poetry in the foreign idioms and cold limitations of the Latin "contain such wealth of power, such
delicate tenderness of feeling, and such true sense of music." He likes, too, the words of an old chronicle which describe the versatile bishop as "an excellent harper, a most eloquent Saxon and Latin poet, a most expert chantor or singer, a Doctor egregius, and admirably versed in the Scriptures and liberal sciences."

Let us turn to Lanier's scattered remarks on various poems. The Battle of Maldon (known also as The Death of Byrhtnoth), which Lanier assigns to the year 993, "sets the grace of great loyalty and the grimness of wild battle to glorious music." Its author, probably one of the fighters, properly conceals his personality. Lanier makes two examinations of the rhythm of this poem, a rhythm which beats "like sword-strokes on helmets." In the essay printed in Music and Poetry (from which, unfortunately, sixteen pages of manuscript were missing) Lanier translates the first hundred lines for "the send and drive of the rhythm", using for the most part dactyls "which continually urge the voice forward to the next word, with an occasional trochee for breath and variety." In translating the next hundred lines he abandons the metrical purpose to show such characteristics of Anglo-Saxon poetry as its order of words, its vigorous use of nouns and verbs, its parallelisms and repetitions, and its sparing use of particles. In The

1 Shakspere and His Forerunners, I, p. 164
2 Ibid., p. 163
3 Verse, p. 145
4 Music and Poetry, p. 145
5 Ibid., p. 151
**Science of English Verse**
Lanier arranges twenty-five lines of four bars each of the original Anglo-Saxon in musical rhythmic notation according to 3/8 time. He finds that 3/8 \( \frac{\Hl}{\Hl} \frac{\Hl}{\Hl} \frac{\Hl}{\Hl} \) is the type line with four kinds of bars recurring in frequency in the order named: (1) \( \frac{\Hl}{\Hl} (43) \); (2) \( \Hl \Hl \Hl \Hl \Hl \\) (34); (3) \( \Hl \Hl \Hl \Hl \) (16); (4) \( \Hl \) (also \( \Hl \) or \( \Hl \) \( \Hl \)). The bars of types two and three represent "a sense of rush and hurry"; those of type one depict a more ordered rapid movement; while those of the last type show an arrest of movement; "as if the torrent of metre flowed now into a broad pool, now into an eddy." Lanier finds Byrhtnoth's speech unsurpassed in old or new English poetry "for a succession of words which make ... manly music as mere sounds."

Though the number of bars may differ, the first two forms just noted for The Battle of Maldon hold good for all Anglo-Saxon poetry. In support Lanier quotes passages from Caedmon's Paraphrase, seventh century; Beowulf, eighth century; The Wanderer (date uncertain).

In the Shakespeare lectures Lanier discusses Beowulf particularly in connection with its nature descriptions. He finds its hero the "first and purest type" of knight-errant.

---

1 *Verse*, p. 151
3 In citing a rhythmic sample from Caedmon Lanier pauses to note that the word "heofonrices", a compound of "heofon" and "rices", probably had the contraction as does our modern English possessive case, though it was late in being indicated in writing. Thus "heo-fon-ric's" \( (3/8) \) fits the typic bar of 3-rhythm. *(Verse, p. 154)*
4 See the section on Art and Nature.
5 *Shakspere and His Forerunners*, I, p. 43
The lecture on birds is concerned largely with The Phoenix. This Anglo-Saxon poem has a "varied and impetuous rush" compared with the "smooth and regular grandeur" of its Latin source.

Lanier cites the eighth century Dream of the Rood as one of the few Anglo-Saxon poems which are beautiful in the modern sense --- most of them are merely big, manful, and strong. He notes, too, the tender, assured manner with which the Soul talks to the Body about the coming of the Lord in the tenth century Address of the Happy Soul to Its Body. Concerning The Wanderer Lanier calls attention to the "profound mournfulness and gentle dignity which breathe subtly out of the melodious movement of verse. Nothing could be more beautiful than the rhythmic play of this poem. Even those who understand no word of Anglo-Saxon must be deeply impressed with the tender sing which goes all along through the poem, when it is properly read aloud."

For ideas in these old poems Lanier is especially impressed by the source of The Phoenix, "a gigantic old fable" with its "tremendous guesses which verge upon the very borders of the Unknown Land, and which bring a man squarely up against the subtlest phases of the great problems of God, of Creation, of man's Individuality, of Free-Will, and the like. He stress-
es, too, the allegorical interpretation of the myth set forth
by the old Saxon poet in which the bird is likened to Adam or
I

I

to other "saintly servants of Jesus." In one of the few Anglo-
Saxon poems which praises a great woman, St. Juliana, Lanier
notes the reality with which the poet invests the devil in the
temptation of Juliana. He finds the same vivid situation when
the devils of wealth and position tempt Gwendolen Harleth to
marry Grandcourt in George Eliot's Daniel Deronda.

b. The Norman Conquest to 1500

Sidney Lanier was much impressed by the eight hundred
year struggle of the English tongue. This "Washington of
languages," he observes, fought first with Latin, then with
Danish, and then with Norman-French. Lanier thus sees impor-
tance in the work of Layamon, "an old English poet who seems to
me the most delightful boy-that-never-grows-old in the world,
and declared that his poem of the thirteenth century, The Brut,
began one of the most remarkable revolutions in the whole
history of language." As the Magna Charta worked politically
so this poem worked in a literary way for the overthrow of
tyranny. From this victory the native language fought on until
in the time of Berners, More, Wyatt, and Surrey it was our
first "full-developed English", a "strong, bright-colored, vi-
vacious tongue."

1 Shakspere and His Forerunners, I, p. 91
2 Ibid., p. 107. Lanier thinks that "St. Juliana" has the
earliest love-talk preserved in English. (Ibid., p. 105)
3 King Arthur, p. xii
4 Shakspere and His Forerunners, I, p. 165
When Lanier is trying to illustrate the prevalence of 3-rhythm in English poetry by examples in historical order he includes "The Ormulum" of the thirteenth century. Its metre, he believes is "most artfully arranged to carry out its 3-rhythm, and the flow of it is wonderfully fine. The final e's must all be pronounced, as in Anglo-Saxon ... except where, as in 'forr lufe off Crist' ... the e of 'lufe' is plainly slurred into the e of 'off' making practically one sound.

Concerning the Cuckoo-Song of the same century Lanier writes:

"This bright spring-song is of special interest in the present connexion (i.e. its exemplification of 3-rhythm) because the music to which its words are found set has a rhythm so exactly reproducing the typical scheme of the poem that it is hardly necessary to do more than transcribe the notes of the music." 2

Lanier observes that this song is famous since it is the first found with the music to which it was sung.

Lanier considers next The Vision concerning Piers Plowman. To him Langland differs in such a way from Chaucer that he must be considered as the termination of "the ancient period," the line of Aldhelm, Caedmon, and Cynewulf. Lanier notes as evidence the appreciation of Puttenham for Chaucer in contrast to the old theorist's contempt for Langland. 4

---

1. Verse, p. 160
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid, p. 160
4. Ibid, p. 165
no rhythm," says the American of Piers Plowman, "was ever so thoroughly misunderstood as the gentle and incessant sing which winds along through these alliterative fixed-points as a running brook among its pebbles." It is a distinct 3-rhythm with the rhythmic accent at the second beat of the bar instead of at the first. Lanier finds that Meres in the Palladis Tamia showed an unexpected appreciation of this metre when he wrote: "As Homer was the first that adorned the Greek tongue with true quantity: so Piers Plowman was the first that observed the true quantity of our verse without the curiosity of rime."

Lanier does not overlook the Scotch contemporary of Chaucer and Langland, John Barbour. Music and Poetry contains a short essay on the latter's "dear and simple Romance" of the life of Robert the Bruce. To Lanier the poem is a revelation of its author.

"It shows him to us over again. We see clearly how simple, how lofty, how clean are all his thoughts; ... how keen and intelligent are his ideas of the remarkable degree in which Robert Bruce added perseverance, prudence, ready wit in emergencies, wisdom in handling his resources, to his personal bravery and physical strength; how true is his passion for freedom; and how fine and large is his ideal of manhood as given in his account of James the Douglas."

The poem reveals also the "perfect fellow-feeling" of Barbour. Lanier offers no literary criticism of the work. We are led to

I Verse, p. 165
2 Ibid, p. 164
3 Music and Poetry, p. 212
4 Ibid., p. 213
believe that he was drawn to it largely by its subject of idealized courage.

If Lanier overpraises the Scotch poets of the fifteenth century, his acquaintance with them is a tribute to the scope of his abbreviated reading. In the Shakespeare lectures he observes that after Chaucer English poetry really transferred itself for one hundred years to Scotland. Then he singles out Gavin Douglas, "one of the greatest poets of our language", in his description of a May morning from the Prologue to The Palace of Honour. Elsewhere he mentions Douglas's "exquisite" Prologue to the twelfth book of Virgil.

Of The Twa Dows by William Dunbar, "one of that group of Scotch poets of the fifteenth century which has been so long neglected," he says, "This little song ... is in my judgment without any rival in the English language for sweet music and fluent tenderness." Here is a large statement to be supported by a poem which seems to have only the modest charm of a musical naivete.

Lanier did not lack appreciation for Sir Thomas Malory. We have seen in the section on the novel that he felt that Le Morte D'Arthur could be called the first English novel. Else-

---

1 Shakspeare and His Forerunners, I, p. 61. Lanier also calls attention to the fact that the Scotch dialect of today has many Anglo-Saxon words in a purer form than the dialect of modern England. (Ibid., p. 62)
2 Ibid., p. 62
3 Ibid., p. 93
where he contrasts the "bagpipe" prose of Chaucer with the "never-cloying sense of proportion and rhythmic flow" in the prose of Malory. In a letter to Paul Hamilton Hayne he calls the good knight "one of the sweetest, cunningest, simplest, and skillfullest writers of English, as well as story-tellers, that ever lived."

Lanier was much drawn to the lyric, The Nut Browne Mayde, generally dated around 1500.

"It is an almost perfect specimen of simple, pathetic, strong, unaffected English ... there is not a word to spare, there is not a word wrong-aimed, it is good music; one does not see how language could readily get all these particulars into a smaller space." 3 Lanier then quotes as "pitiful mush" the version of this ballad made by Matthew Prior in 1718. This is surely just criticism.

Chaucer

Paradoxically enough, Lanier's fullest characterization of Chaucer is found in the essay on Paul Hamilton Hayne's poetry. In calling his fellow-Southerner to task for choosing William Morris as Chaucer's successor, Lanier gives a positive picture of the vigorous old singer. In Chaucer "how does the spire of hope spring and upbound into the infinite!" He is eager and expectant with a youthful assurance in the "reserved powers of nature and of man." He is joyful with a spring sun-

---

1 English Novel, p. 21
2 Letters, p. 244
3 Shakspeare and His Forerunners, I, p. 166
4 Ibid.
5 Music and Poetry, p. 193
shine. In Chaucer's scenes Nature is "artlessly free and un-speakably blissful," yet "all other forms, whether of monstrous, terrible, or wicked, are truly revealed." The old poet spirit-ualizes his healthy animalism so that "the mere drawing of breath is at once a keen delight and an inwardly-felt practical act of praise to the God of a strong and beautiful world." Chaucer lives. He tells old-world tales with the mouths and manners of his living time, to give a picture like life itself. Faith shines in Chaucer. "Has there been any man since St. John so loveable as 'the Persoune'? or any sermon since that on the Mount so keenly analytical, so pathetic, so deep, so pitiful, so charitable, so brotherly, so pure, so manly, so faith-ful, so hopeful, so sprightly, so terrible, so childlike, so winning, so utterly loving, as The Persoune's Tale?" No man but Shakespeare has been capable of all that.

"Let us Shakspere-worshippers not forget that Chaucer lived two centuries earlier than Shakspere, and had to deal with a crude poetic language which Shakspere found a magnificent song-instrument, all in tune and ready for his hand. Let us not forget that Shakspere is first poet and Chaucer second poet, and that these two repose alone, apart, far, far above any spot where later climbers have sunk to rest." 4

Thus Lanier writes: "So far as concerns the mere music of verse I cannot call Chaucer a great artist, yet he was the greatest of his time."

---

1 Music and Poetry, p. 193
2 Ibid.
3 Ibid., p. 200
4 Ibid., p. 201
5 English Novel, p. 12
Lanier's view of the music in Chaucer is doubtless conditioned by his stand on the final e's in the old poet. This stand represents a transition stage from the old to the new ideas on the matter. He notates the e as a sixteenth note (i.e., half the value of a time unit in 3/8 measure) and calls it "mainly a sort of audible remission of the breath", as a person would say eh in the sentence, "I was walking down the --eh--the --eh--the Hofenstrasse when I met etc.," or the short u in "but:

Lanier defends his opinion with four points:

"(I) that Chaucer evidently did not intend this final e at the end of each line to have the full force of a syllable, else he would have used more of other terminations than e in the same place: or in other words his tendency to confine the sound to that of the final e, which was already becoming a sound that could be slurred at pleasure (Lanier finds this the conclusion of the researches of Ellis and Professor Child), shows a peculiarity in that sound which must have suited his rhythmic purpose.

(2) that this rhythmic purpose did not demand a full syllable at the end of the bar, as shown by ... large numbers of lines.

(3) that the pronunciation and rhythmical effect herein given harmonize all these kinds of lines, for the lines not terminating in a final e would admit a similar audible remission of the breath, --- as we hear it used by many readers of the present day.

(4) that thus the original rhythmic intent would be consistently carried out in every line, and would reveal itself as merely a sort of reminiscence of the final bar in each line of Anglo-Saxon poetry and particularly in each line of Piers Plowman." I

Lanier is annoyed by the famous line, "Dan Chaucer, well of English undefiled." From this well, he insists, the
bucket will bring up two distinct specimens, one good English, and one good French --- "there is no mixture."

In an article for the "Independent" called "How to Read Chaucer" we find Lanier calling him "of all English poets ... the most uniformly clear in sense and form." Chaucer's carefulness, indeed has been made a criterion for judging genuine Chaucer poems. Thus The Court of Love, The Flower and the Leaf, and The Cuckoo and the Nightingale, "three lovely poems," are rejected because of their irregularities. Lanier thinks that the causes for rejection in these cases need further study. Perhaps he is biased by his devotion to The Flower and the Leaf which he feels is "a far finer poem than any of the Canterbury Tales," by reason of its nature pictures and the flow of its "marvelous easy words."

Music and Poetry contains three papers called "Chaucer and Shakspere" which were to have been part of an introduction to an English literature text-book of the latter name. Lanier begins by asserting that research has made us know the two poets better than their own wives ever knew them. In coming nearer to us they have also come nearer to each other so that a man "may kiss both their hands in one and the same reverence."

Thus Lanier feels that there is timely value in a comparative study of Chaucer and Shakspere. He proposes to contrast

---

1 Shakspere and His Forerunners, I, p. 165
2 "How to Read Chaucer," Independent LXIII, 1749, Nov. 26, 1891
3 Shakspere and His Forerunners, I, p. 56
The Knight's Tale with *A Midsummer-Night's Dream*, The Pardoner's Tale with *Hamlet*, and The Clerk's Tale with *The Tempest*. As the papers are printed, however, he treats the older poet in rather a preemptory manner.

Lanier believes that these tales and plays are related as to motivation. The first two seem to embody the idea that "the Course of True Love never did run Smooth"; the second pair seem to urge that "the Course of True Hate never did run smooth" while the last two assume that "in the Course of True Love all Things run smooth." Wisely enough, Lanier does not try to establish the three tales as he does the three plays as representing the Dream, the Real, and the Ideal periods respectively in their author's life. Lanier makes no further attempt at comparisons beyond a rapid summary of the six plots, and the observation that *The Knight's Tale* has not been emphasized enough as a source for *A Midsummer-Night's Dream*, and the point that both *The Clerk's Tale* and *The Tempest* are motivated upon Forgiveness.

As we have seen above, Lanier finds little art in the prose of Chaucer. He believes that a large part of its monotonous effect is due to the fact that nearly every sentence has the tune of an aphorism or a proverb, and repetition of the same pitch-succession in the voice soon becomes tiresome. Such prose has a "sententious monotone" which to a modern ear

---

1 *Music and Poetry*, p. 190  
2 *English Novel*, p. 21
has "almost a comical tang", even in the gravest utterances. Lanier does realize, however, that Chaucer partly redeems his prose by his genius for telling a story. Thus The Tale of Meliboeus has more variety and picturesqueness in its sentences than has The Persoune's Tale.

Lanier's encouraging advice for the reading of Chaucer is sane if it is not unusual. Clear Chaucer, he says, is easy to read. For true enjoyment one needs, not modernized versions but the master himself. New readers, for example, are often delighted by the repetitions, the commonplaces, and similar characteristics of the old poet. It helps immensely if the reader learns the peculiarities of Chaucer's words in their sense, their rhythm, and their rhyme.

It is plain that Lanier makes no scholarly contribution to the criticism of Chaucer. For his time and training, however, he shows a commendable appreciation, and one which is not far from the modern stand. When he says, for example, that Chaucer's works are "full of cunning hints and twinkle-eyed suggestions which peep between the lines like the comely faces of country children between the fence-bars as one rides by," he is surely uncovering an essential quality. If one considers the average Victorian attitude toward the lusty old singer, one wonders again just how far one can charge this Lanier of Macon with prud.

1 English Novel, p. 19
2 Ibid., p. 15
3 "How to Read Chaucer," Independent, LXIII, 1748, November 26, 1891
4 Miles, Cambridge History of American Literature, II, p. 340
"I earnestly think sometimes that we need a reminder against the ever-tyrannic radiance of the sun. It cannot be quite well that the multitudes of other stars which beam down through the daylight should be utterly blotted out from our senses and our thoughts. Somehow the starlight has never mixed in trade; it has never become so commonplace as the sunlight." I

Thus Lanier complains of the emphasis on Shakespeare which has left in neglect the other writers of the Elizabethan period, that "high noon of English letters." However, he admits that it is not alone the preponderance of the supreme genius which is responsible for this neglect. "I know scarcely a more curious circumstance than the fact that Elizabethan literature has been so much read about that it has never been read." The flood of manuals about the period seems to breed a false sense of familiarity with writers one has never read, and the very object of these manuals is defeated thereby. When one complains that he has not time to read such as Drayton, and Daniel, and the shorter works of Spenser, then cries Lanier,

"I reply with vehemence that in any wise distribution of your moments, after you have read the Bible and Shakespeare, you have no time to read anything until you have read these. ... They are so noble, so manful, so earnest; they have given to all earnest men and strong lovers such a dear ritual and litany of chivalric devotion ... that --- I speak it with reverence --- they have made another religion of loyal love and have given us a second Bible of woman-hood." 4

1 Shakspere and His Forerunners, I, p. 3
2 Ibid.
3 Ibid., I, p.4
4 Ibid., p.7
The Elizabethan Sonnet-Makers

"Never, since time began, was there such exquisite lovemaking as in this short fifty years or thereabouts of English life. And I wish you particularly to note that this was not frivolous love-making." 1

Then, as now, the bravest are the tenderest. If one looks at the age one finds it is no feeble "dandy" period. Its sonnets, then, are not mere pretty conceits. Even if they are fanciful, "is fancy despicable? ... Is a man less a man because he is in love?" He is happy who makes his whole life a sonnet to his lady. The Elizabethan sonnet-maker was exuberant by nature. Restraint in word or deed was foreign to his age. To describe the playful use of words to which this sonneteer was so addicted, Lanier uses the Chinese term for a style which is full of delicate allusions --- a dragonfly-sipping-water style. For all this the nineteenth century reader must and can make allowances.

The above paragraph is largely from one of the Shakespeare lectures which was delivered to young ladies. Lanier might be accused of trying to "sell his subject" to the feminine taste in such sentences. They ring true, however, to the life-long chivalric devotion of the man. On such matters, indeed, he was himself of an Elizabethan ardor.

These sonnets, Lanier firmly believes, have literary worth as well as a noble message. "The really great poems of

1 Shakspere and His Forerunners, p. 168
2 Ibid., p. 169
3 Ibid., I, p. 261
the minor Elizabethan writers are the very short ones. Hundreds of their sonnets are wonders of beauty." Their long poems have gone to oblivion, for in those their "vigorous and springy" minds continually bounded off on momentary fancies. The ensuing loss of unity was fatal.

To Lanier the field of Elizabethan sonnets is extraordinarily wide. He suggests twenty-five sonnet writers from the time of Henry VIII to the death of Shakespeare, but deplores the fact that the limit imposed by four lectures will give him time for the discussion of only six. Lanier was not a man for false inferences. We can believe that he had explored at first hand the mass of sonnets indicated in his list.

Lanier points to "the first printed collection of modern English poetry ... and the initial book of that prodigious list which soon included the immortal works of Spenser, Shakspeare, and Jonson," Tottel's Miscellany, published in 1557. Strangely enough, twenty years passed before another such book appeared. Then, however, the flood came. In the later collections many poets still showed an ignorance of the sonnet form. Some affected verse in doleful alliterative bits.

Wyatt

Since one of Wyatt's sonnets appears to be the first in the English language, he may be considered the "father of
the sonnet among us." Lanier quotes one of his first sonnets which was included in the Miscellany, "The Abused Lover Seeth His Folly, and Intenteth to Trust No More." He finds that Wyatt gives strong ideas and a "fibrous" whole, but that he has not really mastered the form. He falls into a jolting and ungainly movement. It is strong doctrine in stiffly-set terms. The sonnet here sounds like "broken crockery falling downstairs" in contrast to the clear music of a Spenser sonnet. In "That Hope Unsatisfied is to the Lover's Heart as a Prolonged Death," however, Wyatt sets a "perfect polished opal" among the rough stones of his other works. The rhythm is dactylic instead of the conventional iambic. In other respects the sonnet, in Wyatt's usual manner, is strictly on the Italian model. It has a "quaint artless pathos" of ideas which combine effectively with the unusual rhythm.

Surrey

This pioneer is at once the father of the English sonnet and of English blank verse. To Lanier the sonnets of this "charming spirit" are "much smoother than Wyatt's and show a great advance in the pliable quality of language. Lanier is further impressed by the old poet, because he finds that some of his sonnets carry out the Southerner's ideal of a little

1 Shakespeare and His Forerunners, p. 194
2 Ibid., I, p. 195
3 Ibid., p. 194
4 Ibid., p. 197
5 Lanier quotes "A Vow to Love Faithfully, Howsoever He be Rewarded," a sonnet Puttenham assigns to Wyatt. The phrasing and tone, however, convince Lanier that it is the work of Surrey. (Ibid., p. 197)
drama (cited in the section on Poetry).

Sidney

In Sidney and Shakespeare, says Lanier, "English character and English genius culminated." He approaches such men with reverence. In the case of Sidney he is concerned most with the spirit of the man. The sonnets of this great gentleman do not compare "in point of mechanical excellence, of technic, of musical flow" with those of Daniel, of Constable, of Drayton, of Spenser, or of Griffin: "but they are so rich in ideas, so genuine as outbursts of passion, and so sacred as revelations of one of the deepest and sweetest of human souls that they must remain among those inviolate confidences which we all cherish as a sort of open secret among the whole human race." Lanier insists that the sonnets are a record of Sidney's hopeless love for Lady Rich, and thus were written solely for her. Biographers seem to have forgotten this and to have misconstrued these poems "in such a way as to fasten a stain upon the reputation of two of the whitest natures that ever the world saw. Lanier uses five of the sonnets to represent "the beginning, the progress, the thickened plot, the agony and the final crisis of Sir Philip Sidney's love."

1 Shakspere and His Forerunners, p. 246
2 Ibid., I, p. 254
3 Ibid., p. 247
4 Ibid.
Drayton

At one point Lanier indicates that he intends to give special attention to Michael Drayton, but the printed lectures hold only passing references. He includes Drayton with Daniel and Spenser as Elizabethans who are unjustly neglected. He links these three again in pointing to the smoothness of their sonnets as compared to those of Wyatt.

Constable

Henry Constable is introduced with Samuel Daniel and William Habington as one of "the maddest lovers this world ever saw. Mad lovers (these three), indeed; yet with so beautiful a method in their madness that all the rhapsodies and ecstasies of lovers before or since have found a form and body of matchless perfection." Constable's sonnets are "excellent conceitful poems." Some have thought them too much so. Lanier, however, remembering the period in which they were written, finds in them a manly passion clothed with an "infinitely tender, cunning, and artless appearance" in naive forms. The sonnet which begins "To live in hell, and heaven to behold" is "above the plane of conceits" and is "a piece of imaginative art." In two other sonnets ("Forgive me, deere, for thundering on thy name" and "Prometheus, for stealing living fire") Lanier does admit that the conceits are over-strained. On the whole, Con-

1 Shakespeare and His Forerunners, p. I94
2 Ibid., I, p. 216
3 Ibid., p. 233
4 Ibid., p. 234
stable is of "less compass, less weight, less dignity, than Daniel; but withal a poet of nimble fancy, of lively wit, and of tender heart."

Daniel

Samuel Daniel was the friend of Shakespeare, Fulke Greville, and Marlowe, and "altogether a great, strong, and tender man."

"In a certain tender swing of movement, attained by great art in the relation of words presenting sounds upon which the tongue and ear can linger, and which at the same time suavely melt into each other with the true liquid flow of genuine poetic sequences, Daniel must be esteemed the greatest English artist." 3

Thus the sonnet beginning "Let others sing of Knights and Palladines" is "well-nigh the best music ever made with English words." In the short poems Daniel reveals his true self. He has the loyal, manly tone of tender pleading. "No man ever more completely identified spiritual cadences with physical than does Daniel." Lanier likes the sonnet which begins "Restore thy tresses to the golden Ore." In No. XXIX of the Sonnets to Delia he finds "a certain blue blooded and hidalgo stateliness of lofty fervour," which he contrasts with the "less large and noble" No. XVII from Spenser's Amoretti.

1 Shakspere and His Forerunners, p. 236
2 Ibid., p. 215
3 Music and Poetry, p. 127
4 Ibid.
5 Shakspere and His Forerunners, I, p. 222
Drummond

Lanier was particularly touched by the tragic story of William Drummond of Hawthornden whose fiancee died just before the wedding was to take place. He quotes key sonnets in the development of the drama with an imaginative running comment. He has unreserved praise for the poems.

"Drummond is the author of some scores of sonnets which are of such silken texture, and yet of such earnest and manly passion, of such fervent tenderness, yet of such airy grace, of such fibrous intellectual substance, yet of such delicate quality altogether, that I think them one of the chief glories of the English tongue." 1

"There is not the least strain of words or thought to make them fit: everything seems grown together naturally, the similes hanging upon the motive like so many rosebuds pendant from one stem." 2

Habington

Though later in time than the other sonnet-makers referred to, Lanier feels that William Habington "in virtue of the earnestness, the fervour, and the directness of his poetry, and of its entire freedom from that artificial tang which begins to appear with the Charlestes, "may be classed with the Elizabethans." In contrast to the experience of Daniel and Constable the course of Habington's love seems to have run smoothly. In consequence, the poet wrote joyous sonnets before

1. Shakspeare and His Forerunners, p. 205
2. Ibid., p. 210
3. Ibid., I, p. 236
and after his marriage.

Barnes

Lanier quotes with evident approval Sonnets LXXIV and LXXIII from the Divine Centurie of Spirituall Sonnetts by Barnaby Barnes to illustrate the range of thought and emotion possible to the form.

Sylvester

Lanier finds Joshua Sylvester an admirable illustration of the doctrine that the characteristic diffuseness of Elizabethan poets is apt to disappear when they are "reined up by vigorous forms like the sonnet." Sylvester was responsible for pages of dull verse such as we find in his Tobacco Battered, yet when he tried sonnets he revealed "a vein of poetry ... which yields passable metal on occasion." Lanier quotes two sonnets and part of spring song, and hopes that these few samples will stimulate further reading of "this beautiful poet."

Griffin

"A Forgotten English Poet"

Lanier's efforts on behalf of the obscure Bartholomew Griffin, enthusiastic though they were, left the Elizabethan hardly less obscure. Those who do not know Lanier, might be tempted to think that he felt obliged (as the modern scholar too often and too obviously seems to feel) to bring something

1 Shakspere and His Forerunners, pp. 187, 211
2 Ibid., I, p. 226
new from his research. It is far more likely, however, that he happened upon the Griffin sonnets when he was in a moment of intense fascination with Elizabethan lyrics and of irritation at the world's neglect of them. In much of his writing on the matter, surely, the wish seems father to the thought.

Lanier found no romantic details about the life of the old poet to spur his sympathetic imagination. The one surviving reference is for the year 1532, and concerns an application by Griffin to the Bishop of Worcester for a license to eat meat in Lent! From the sonnets themselves, "To Fidessa, more chaste than kind," preserved in the three original copies at the Bodleian, Huth, and Lamport Libraries, Lanier decides that they were written by a young man. They exemplify the ease with which English idioms fit this poetic form. Lanier quotes the sonnet beginning "The sille bird that haste unto the net" as a model of simplicity, directness, and genuine English. Its "limpid transparency" of sentences is no happy accident, "but an achievement of deliberate art." Lanier exclaims at "the exquisite variations in the sequences of vowel-sounds, the perfect anastomosis of terminal letter with initial letter", and "the light and delicate use of alliteration, not only to mottle the prevalent rhythm, but to intensify a logical antithesis,

1 Shakespeare and His Forerunners, I, p. 133 Lanier also mentions the hundred copies printed by Dr. Philip Bliss in 1815 and the fifty copies with notes and corrections more recently prepared by the Rev. A.J. Grossert, (Music and Poetry, p. 119)
2 Music and Poetry, p. 123
and other technical particulars." Here, it seems, Lanier's ear is over sharp.

In these sonnets "the beginning has always an eye to the end," i.e. Lanier's idea of the sonnet as a little drama is carried out. In rounding out his little poems as wholes Griffin "has a certain bright vivacity which is constantly presenting the reader with charming surprises by suddenly changing the statuesque dramatic personae of a demure tableau into actual and active people."

Occasionally, in the midst of the extravagance of the despairing lover's cries "a roguish consciousness of that extravagance" peeps out to make a sort of interplay "between the real pathos and the real absurdity of the situation." Griffin shows a playful side in a sonnet with a "comical kind of refrain" on the word "more." The sonnet beginning "Poor worme, poore sillie worme" reveals his sympathy with nature.

Lanier concludes that Bartholomew Griffin deserves "a high and immortal place in English Literature, not only for the beauty of his thoughts, but specially for his skill in employing a certain subtle rhythm of ideas." Lanier adds that he hopes to elucidate this rhythm of ideas "in another branch of my subject" --- a hope which he does not seem to have realized.

These forgotten sonnets, he is convinced, rank with the

---

1 *Music and Poetry*, p. 123
2 Ibid.
3 Ibid., p. 131
4 *Shakspeare and His Forerunners*, I, p. 184
Amoretti of Spenser, the Ideas of Drayston, the Sonnets to Delia of Daniel, the Sonnets to Stella of Sidney, and of Drummond.

In 1899 Clyde Furst of Columbia University found that the eight sonnets of Griffin quoted by Lanier were "excellent in thought and structure" and "by no means unworthy of the comparison" with such men as Sidney, Daniel, and Drummond. As most scholars, however, have tended to ignore Lanier himself, they have had little to do with the obscure singer he championed. The case for Griffin, it seems to me, rests naturally on the individual's general attitude towards the Elizabethan sonnets. In this year of 1936, I fear, few of us can muster up on this subject the rapt enthusiasm of Sidney Lanier --- perhaps it were better if we could.

Other Elizabethans

Though Lanier gives in some detail the story of Nicholas Udall's Ralph Royster Doyster he offers no literary criticism for "the first clearly developed English comedy." He also discusses the pioneer tragedy, Gorboduc, written by Sackville and Norton. Sackville, Lord Buckhurst, to whom critics have assigned the best share of the work, was a "great and strong soul and a true poet," as is shown by the Induction to The Mirror for Magistrates and the portions of Gorboduc. Lanier finds that the latter is "a vast and solid mass of good thought.

1 Furst, Clyde, "Concerning Sidney Lanier," "Modern Language Notes XIV, pp. 197-203, November, 1999
2 Shakespeare and His Forerunners, Il, p. 166
and correct language, "an attempt to impose the limitations of Greek tragedy upon the English drama. Shakespeare "unquestionably drew liberal sustenance from ... the weight and sweet dignity and courteousness of the speeches." They show a "rhythmic tendency to group terms by threes, particularly at the end of a stately line," which agreeably varies the monotony or regular rhythms in poetry. Lanier compares the lament of Marcella at the murder of Porrex with Othello's farewell to the instruments of war.

Lanier has respect but apparently not an affectionate admiration for Ben Jonson. In his fanciful account of the young Shakespeare attending his first play at a London theatre Lanier quotes from the well-known Prologue to Every Man in His Humour in which the stage devices of the day are satirised. He also speaks of Jonson's visit to William Drummond in 1618, and quotes from the Scotch poet's record of the conversation. The plain-spoken Ben, it seems, was in a fit of irritation with "pretty much everybody and everything." As one outlet for his temper he "cursed Petrarch for redacting verses to sonnets; which he said were like that Tirant's bed, wher some who were too short were racked, others too long cut short." Lanier observes: "That Jonson could say such a thing at all is merely

1 Shakspeare and His Forerunners, p. 170
2 Lanier observes that some years ago these three groups became regular rhythms in English prose, with the natural tendency to excessive use. (Ibid., p. 171)
3 Ibid., p. 175
4 Ibid., I, p. 148
another evidence of that lack of breadth (as far as I know, Lanier does not give other instances of this "lack of breadth") which was so serious a defect in this otherwise admirable man."

One can understand that the impetuous Southerner was not drawn to the gruff old realist.

Of Robert Greene, the "rival and good hater" of Shakespeare, Lanier feels that his Edward II or one of his comedies can assure their reader that Greene is "quite the loveliest, brightest, and most musical writer" that preceded the man of Stratford.

In his lecture on the domestic life of Shakespeare's time Lanier describes at some length John Heywood's interlude The Four F's which "represents the spirit of the first formal English Comedy" and is a mine of information about life of that day. He observes that Heywood advanced the interlude from the status of a mere filler between the acts of a mystery play or a morality to an independent type of theatrical representation. He also records the sneer of Puttenham at Heywood "the Epigrammatist" who won royal favor by "the mirth and quicknesse of his conceits" rather than by "any good learning" --- which sounds remarkably like the conservative critic and the Hollywood entertainer of today.

---

1 Shakspere and His Forerunners, I, P. 205
2 Shakspere and His Forerunners, II, p. 149 Lanier's discussion of the famous dispute which involved Greene, Nash, Harvey, and Shakespeare is described in the section on Shakspere
3 Ibid., p. 100
4 Ibid., p. 101
Lanier notes that the metrical tests seem to prove that King Henry VIII was written by both Shakespeare and John Fletcher. He is interested in the suspicions Emerson had about the play's authorship. The Sage of Concord felt that the non-Shakespearian parts were written by "a superior thoughtful man with a vicious ear." Whether these words were meant for Fletcher or not, Lanier finds them an apt description of the man.

Lanier calls George Pattenham "in many respects one of the most acute and right-minded critics of Elizabeth's reign."

He refers more than once to the chapter in The Arte of English Poesie which, as its title indicates, tries to show "that there may be an Arte of our English Poetry as well as of the Greeke and Latine." Lanier is naturally drawn to Puttenham for his wish to make the art of poetry "vulgar for all Englishmen's use," and for his condemnation of the "licentious maker" who "is in truth but a bungler, and not a Poet."

In tracing the history of the science of English verse Lanier quotes from Gascoigne and Webbe to establish his point as to the lack of science in prosody during the sixteenth century. He also quotes a "simple-hearted narration" of Gascoigne's for a picture of Elizabethan festivities.

For details of the domestic life of Shakespeare's time

---

1 Shakspere and His Forerunners, p. 237
2 Ibid., I, p. 164
3 Verse, p. iii
4 Shakspere and His Forerunners, I, p. xiii
5 Verse, p. viii
6 Shakspere and His Forerunners, II, p. II2
Lanier uses a letter concerning the Kenilworth celebrations for the Queen written by Robert Laneham, usher to Elizabeth's privy council, a "fop---who, I have always thought, must have sat as a model for that heart-breaking factastico, Don Adriano De Armado, in Shakspere's Love's Labour's Lost."

For a description of the English theatre's early struggle Lanier quotes at length from Stephen Gosson's Schoole of Abuse of 1579 in which the author attacks poetry, music, and drama. He also offers a sample of Gosson's poetry which is "comical enough and yet shows through all the crookedness of metaphor and thought a certain strength of feeling and nimbleness of fancy which give one a solid liking for this evidently, earnest, pure-hearted and straight-souled man."

Lanier has a word for Bishop Hugh Latimer and long quotations from his sermons which, "nearly extempore," have "the most touching flavor of that mingled authority and sweetness which is won by a strong man who has lived and who knows whereof he speaks." Though his addresses are often prolix and wordy, Latimer can "tell a story in a few right English terms when he comes to it."

Shakespeare

Lanier's reverence for Shakespeare was a conventional attitude for a nineteenth century Romantic. His expression of
that reverence, however, though not original from the standpoint of criticism, is so fresh and whole-souled in its attitude and even in its technique that it still deserves our attention. The two volumes entitled *Shakspere and His Forerunners* sparkle under the pen of the fervent author who cannot help being the poet in both thought and word. It is a dull lover of Shakespeare, indeed, who does not find therein some new points of delight concerning the master.

Beyond all shadow of a doubt Shakespeare is "first poet" to Lanier. The Southerner not only ascribes to him the first place in artistic power, but also the first place in moral power --- as we have seen, he could hardly dissociate the two in the case of a great genius. To establish Shakespeare thus, Lanier examines the contrasting techniques, tone, and messages of the plays in the various stages of the dramatist's life, and looks into the sonnets. Lanier finds, perhaps too eagerly and too easily, evidence for the well-rounded development of a noble soul. But in his discovery he formulates an admirable philosophy for the relation of the artist man to his art and, as Lorenz well says, unconsciously reveals "the symmetrical architecture of his own soul."

---

1. *Music and Poetry*, p. 201
2 The manner in which Lanier tries to reach his broad and unique objective makes the ordinary compartmental type of analysis of his criticism seem at once difficult and inappropriate. One can hardly isolate, for example, his discussion of Shakespeare's verse technique. In general, I shall proceed from the more technical to the less technical aspects.
3 Lorenz, *The Life of Sidney Lanier*, p. 262
The Sonnets

What appears to be Lanier's only note on verse technique for the sonnets concerns their tunes --- and it is hardly a technical statement.

"The sonnets of Shakspeare are supreme for subtlety and often for beauty. Sometimes the antithesis of thought are so manifold, the turns of expression so doubling and twisting, that we can hardly find any tunes for them: they can scarcely be read aloud! While others such as 'When I consider everything that grows', or 'No longer mourn for me when I am dead' ... and many more --- create in our voices as we read them such faint-changing, indefensible, strange, and beautiful tunes that we seem to be speaking some language out of a finer and brighter star than our own." I

These "incomparable poems" which are so suggestive that a year of lecturing would not do them justice reveal their writer as a man of supreme character. Lanier quotes from various sonnets which make a sort of consistent drama of Shakespeare's progress along the "thorny path" of friendship and of love. He finds in the poet's devotion to a false friend a parallel to Beethoven's love for his wretched nephew. Lanier decides that sorrow was the "main fibre" of these great men.

He quotes Sonnets XVIII, XIX, and XXI. Concerning the first he writes:

1 Verse, p. 278
2 Shakspere and His Forerunners, I, p. 255
3 "Must we say that sorrow is the nourisher of poetry and music, and that she stands --- a veiled figure --- ever by the germs of art, to mulch them with the ashes and dead leaves of hope, and to water them with her tears ... Are the poets and musicians a sort of nightingales of time, who can sing only when it is dark?" Lanier is not sure of the answer. (Ibid., p. 257)
"Noto particularly how the thought skips daintily from one idea to another, just touching each with a sort of salutation. You will see that ever and anon, by using a term in a double sense, he causes two significations to meet in the same word... Nothing can be more agile and dainty than this movement."

To a marked degree this sonnet uses the dragonfly-sipping-water style Lanier describes in the section on Elizabethan sonnets.

Sonnet CXVI is one of the greatest, Lanier feels, and gives Shakespeare's ideal of constancy in friendship. No. LXXI presents an unsurpassed ideal for unselfish love. Sonnet XLII holds a "sublime... silliness" in the verbal subtlety by which the poet forgives his friend, the most "enormous forgiveness in history."

In his haste Lanier goes no farther with the sonnets. We see that he has made no specific mention of a single poem addressed to the lady. Curiously, Lanier ignores the apparent character of this person and its implications with relation to Shakespeare. His view of the sonnets, we may conclude, is decidedly an idealized one.

The Plays

The first lecture in the Shakespeare series which examines the dramatist's verse in a technical sense is that which concerns the pronunciation of the period. Since, as Lanier believes, "the only proper view of verse is that which regards it as a phenomenon of sound," this seems a logical approach for

1 Shakspeare and His Forerunners, I, p. 260
2 Ibid., p. 267
"more living relations with the matter in hand." Shakespeare's language gives a different set of tone-colors to the ear than does ours. Referring to the theories in *The Science of English Verse* by which each syllable is a "sort of large sign of tone-color," Lanier argues that "unless we find out what tone-color was meant by a given letter in Shakspere's time, we are in the case of a musician who, in studying the music of a given period, should be ignorant of the pitch or time-value indicated by a given note." This matter of pronunciation is also a clue to the time and character of the Stratford man.

Lanier's actual discussion of Elizabethan pronunciation is based upon the *Early English Pronunciation* by the English scholar, Alexander J. Ellis, and the investigations of the Americans, Noyes and Pierce, who published their findings in the *North American Review* for April, 1864. He prefers for "literating" sounds, however, the system prepared by Melville Bell of England (in which sectional cuts of the positions of the vocal organs used for all possible sounds are featured) to that proposed by Ellis.

The pronunciation thus recaptured by the scholars brings to the sounds of Shakespeare's words "a gravity, a dignity, a certain largeness and majesty of port ... which, as soon as we throw away the merely accidental associations we have with

1 *Shakspere and His Forerunners*, I, p. 271
2 Ibid., p. 273
3 Ibid., p. 277
4 Ibid., p. 289
some of the tone-colours, make them extremely interesting," and bring back Shakespeare "with an unaccountable vividness."

Lanier suggests for trial the quiet passage in which Hamlet advises the Players and the more ranting passage of Henry IV's soliloquy on Sleep. Lanier hopes it is not mere fancy which leads him to believe that "Shaksper's rant and bombast sounds less ranting, less bombastic, in the old sounds than in the modern pronunciation ... A certain largeness of port about the older words ... lessens the distance between the word and the big idea." The sounds themselves are more "robustious", are more such sounds as one would think likely to come in connection with the "tempestuous metaphors."

A sentence from Lanier's notes (quoted by Henry Wysham Lanier in the Preface to the Shakespeare lectures) would seem to fit here.

"Shakspere's vocabulary is wonderfully large: it does not seem to have occurred to those who have thought him an unlearned man that whatever words he uses he must have read; for words, which are wholly artificial products, cannot come by intuition, no matter how divine may be one's genius."

Lanier gives some space to the examination of five metrical tests which he feels have significance for the understanding of Shakespeare: (I) the rhyme, (2) the run-on and end-stopped line, (3) the weak-ending, (4) the double-ending, and (5) the rhythmic accent tests. He quotes Malone's pioneer ob-

---

1 Shaksper and His Forerunners, I, p. 290
2 ibid., p. 291
3 ibid., p. ix
4 ibid., II, p. 216
servation as to the preponderance of rhyme in the earlier plays, and then presents tables from Fleay's report of 1874, in which the rhymes of the various plays were actually counted. Lanier, however, is aware of the danger of relying too much on the rhyme test. Such a procedure, for example, would place A Midsummer-Night's Dream a long time before The Two Gentlemen of Verona. Shakespeare, it appears, adopted the wise view of rhyme (in contrast to the violent opinions of lesser men of his day) which found it appropriate for some types of verse, and inappropriate for others.

Lanier turns to the metrical test in which the proportion of end-stopped and run-on lines for each play is studied. In contrasting the stiffness of the former with the freedom of the latter, he quotes a passage from Pope in which "the lines move two and two, by inexorable couples, like charity-school children in procession, each pair holding hands." Shakespeare's increasing preference for the run-on line indicates "a certain advance in breadth of view which simply embodies in technic that spiritual advance in majesty of thought, in elevation of tone, in magnanimity, in largeness of moral scope," which we perceive when we reflect upon the plots of the plays as chronologically arranged. The run-on line, like the long phrase in music, gives the poetry "a larger port and a more sweeping carriage."

1 Shakspere and His Forerunners p. 221
2 Ibid., p. 223
3 Ibid., p. 225
4 Ibid.
Lanier observes that the rhythmic function of rhyme and of the end-stopped line is one of regularity and form in contrast to the disrupting function of the run-on line.

He describes the weak-ending line test which reveals that Shakespeare seemed to avoid this kind of run-on line until the writing of *Macbeth*. Thereafter the master used it freely. The dramatist shows a more gradual growth in the use of the double-ending line which, like the weak-ending species, breaks up the normal rhythmic flow of the verse. In contrast to John Fletcher, however, Shakespeare did not over-indulge in these double-endings. Their varying use of this type of line has proven especially helpful in determining the two writers' contributions to *King Henry VIII* and *The Two Noble Kinsmen*.

The final metrical test which concerns the rhythmic accent has special interest for Lanier, since it is most closely bound up with his own theories of rhythm. Indeed, it is apparently his own idea, an idea, however, which he regretfully admits he has not had time to test thoroughly. At least he is certain that the changes of the normal rhythmic accent are far more numerous in *The Tempest* than in *A Midsummer-Night's Dream*. Lanier believes that in every line (with some exceptions) the five rhythmic accents are always present or accounted-for, and that Shakespeare's mastery is in his method of "accounting-for" them.

1 Shakespere and His Forerunners, II, p. 233
2 Ibid., p. 237
3 Ibid., p. 243
4 Verse, p. 215
The Science of English Verse has a more detailed discussion of Shakespeare's use of the devices in the Metric Tests I preaced by a section on the master's use of the rest. Perhaps Lanier had by this time examined more closely the rhythmic accent test, for he speaks with assurance:

"In his peculiar management of the rhythmic accent, ... Shakspere's supreme mastery of the technic of blank verse shows itself with great clearness. We can see him learning to think in verse. Indeed, growing always, in the way of the artist, ... he finally made his whole technic a constitutional grace, so that his passion flowed with a hereditary pre-adaptation to rhythm." 2

Thus in Shakespeare's later plays he seems "absolutely careless as to what kind of word the rhythmic accent may fall on."

"This apparent carelessness is really perfect art. It is the consummate management of dramatic dialogue in blank verse, by which the wilder rhythmic patterns of ordinary current discourse are woven along through the regular strands of the orderly typic lines." 3

Concerning the rest, Lanier finds that the Stratford artist, "just like the nursery-rhymer, does not hesitate at a rhythmic intention which requires a rest to be supplied in the body of the line, while, far in advance of the nursery-rhymer, he uses this device with special purpose, where he desires that the rhythmic dress of his idea should not flap about its body but clothe it with absolute fitness." He uses a rest, for example, in the place of an accented sound, and thus heightens
"the current idea."

Lanier suggests the question of many an impatient layman about these metrical tests and the dates assigned to the plays through their help. "Why potter about your dates and chronologies?" He is not at loss for an answer:

"It so happens that here a whole view of the greatest mind which the human race has yet evolved hangs essentially upon dates: it so happens that the entire process of Shakspere's growth as a man and artist comes blazing out upon us in clear and --- to me, I confess --- startling sequence the instant we admit the chronology of his plays to be presently given." 2

Shortly Lanier gives a table in which the plays are listed under the Bright Period of Carelessness, I590-I601, (elsewhere called the Dream Period with the dates I590-I602), the Dark Period of Bitterness, I601-I608 (also called the Real Period), and the Heavenly Period of Forgiveness, I608-I613 (also called the Ideal Period).

Lanier asks us to note that all the comedies, "a de-bonair and immortal set of plays," belong to the first period. In the one strict tragedy, Romeo and Juliet, the "real reason of being" is not the tragic deaths of the lovers, "but their young love ... depicted with the unspeakable fire and freshness of a young imagination. Romeo and Juliet is simply a bridegroom's passionate song, set off with a funeral-hymn for a foil." 4

---

1 Verse, p. I94
2 Shakspere and His Forerunners, II, p. 207
3 Ibid., II, p. 208
4 Ibid., p. 210
Meanwhile, the purely historical plays, written to comply with the current popular demand, treat their subjects in a "distinctly lighter and less personal manner than later plays." In Richard III and the second and third Henry VI the master is writing "more from Marlowe than from Shakspere." The first and second Henry IV really belong to the comedies in right of those of their dramatis personae who have retained the greatest hold upon the world's affection. Henry V gives "some show of a serious thought." Perhaps Prince Hal's reformation means that Shakespeare is awaking to some graver necessities of life. His father's poverty and his son's death, however, do not interrupt the flow of comedies as Much Ado About Nothing, As You Like It, Twelfth Night, and others appear.

Some prodigious wrench in Shakespeare's life must have come around 1601 when he brings out Julius Caesar and Hamlet with their heroes who are strong, yet not quite strong enough, for their times. Next comes Measure for Measure, "that wretched slough of a play." After the false-hearted Cressid come "the enormous single-passion tragedies," King Lear, Macbeth, Antony and Cleopatra, Coriolanus, Timon of Athens. "These plays are like a mortal outcry of grief." Sonnets LXVI and CXII seem to echo this period.

Then, in his final plays, Shakespeare achieves the
"great and beautiful calm of a spirit which ... has at length attained God out of knowledge and good out of infinite pain."

Pericles, Cymbeline, The Tempest, The Winter's Tale, Henry VIII, all hinge upon "the sweet that follows the bitter," are motived upon Forgiveness and Reconciliation. Probably the dramatist went back to Stratford about 1612 for a quiet, simple life with his family, which is reflected in his plays. Lanier is drawn to what seems to be "the only genuine relic of Shakespeare preserved at Stratford," a round piece of glass dated 1615 with the letters W and A (for William and Anne) under S, which may be symbolic of the closing years.

In the "Chaucer and Shakspere" essay and in the closing Shakespeare lectures Lanier discusses the three creative periods and uses as type plays A Midsummer-Night's Dream, Hamlet, and The Tempest. To an extraordinary degree, he believes, these plays by their moral views, their actual dates, and their artistic structure converge to illustrate "the process of every healthy man's growth." He devotes most of his time to a study of Shakespeare's opinions upon man's relation to the supernatural, to man, to nature, and to art.

Lanier observes that he has shown something of the artist's management of artistic oppositions as implied in the results of the metrical tests. He now intends to show Shakespeare's growing perfection in the oppositions of character.

1 Shakspere and His Forerunners, p. 215
2 Ibid., p. 216
3 Music and Poetry, p. 161
against character, of figure against figure, and of event against event. In the early comedies the dramatist tends to present every figure with a sort of contrasting figure or foil to set it off, "or at least with a kind of echo or companion." Thus, in The Two Gentlemen of Verona we have Valentine, the symbol of constancy in love, opposed by Proteus, the symbol of inconstancy. In Love's Labour's Lost the whole company finally go off in pairs, "every Jack having his Jill." In A Midsummer-Night's Dream there is Theseus against Hippolyta, Lysander against Hermia, Demetrius against Helena, by way of echoes; and, for foils, clowns against fairies, an ass against a queen, the tragedy of Pyramus and Thisbe turned into a farce. The later plays show a clear advance towards a less distinct pairing of figures and events, in short, towards less direct oppositions. There are still certain oppositions, however, for the spectator's esthetic sense of proportion demands them.

In A Midsummer-Night's Dream we find the powers of Nature playing with man as the supernatural,

"sometimes crossing him, sometimes blessing him, but with no reason or order in either cross or blessing. The logical outcome of it, here, is simply chance. ... In short, here is no formulated faith at all in Shakspere. Why have any faith? What is faith? He does not know the meaning of it. The world is rich; life is full. If there is a twist and a contradiction in things, why, come forward, imagination; I will build me a better world. Down with care and dismal thought; this is May-time ... Such seems the final utterance of this dream." 2

1 Shakspere and His Forerunners, II, p. 255
2 Ibid., II, p. 263
Presently, however, life arises, "puts out a stern finger, and says to our young Shakspere: Answer me these questions straightway:

"What is death, and why is it?... What is the ministry of revenge in this life? How far may a man pay off murder with murder? What is duty to a time out of joint? What is love, what is religion, what is the soul, what is the grave?" I But Hamlet never answers. He is "morally an interrogation-point." His only answer is to ask another question. When the real thrusts at Hamlet he leaps aside and does not thrust back.

"Perhaps, with all the floods of Hamlet commentary and Hamlet literature, this absolute lack of belief, combined with the yearning belief that he does believe in Hamlet, has never been properly insisted on." 2

For an example Lanier quotes Hamlet's wondering soliloquy as to what comes after death --- the Prince feels plainly that we do not and cannot know this. Only two scenes later, however, he does not kill the guilty king in prayer because "of a perfectly clear conviction as to what will happen to the king after death.

At last, in The Tempest "there is a Providence indeed. 4 We find Him shining, here and there, all through." In Hamlet, Providence sends a ghost to organize revenge. In The Tempest it gives supernatural powers to Prospero to organize Forgiveness. When things are gathered to a head and Prospero's

---

1 Shakspere and His Forerunners, II, p. 263
2 Ibid., p. 264
3 Ibid., II, p. 265 Lanier observes that this "shifting the belief to suit the desire, this half-belief which is worse than no belief, seems wonderfully characteristic of our present age, and well may it be called the Hamlet age," --- an observation hardly outmoded! (Ibid., p. 267)
4 Ibid., p. 268
In _A Midsummer-Night's Dream_ the supernatural is the flippant Oberon; in _Hamlet_ it is a ghost; and in _The Tempest_ it is first God and then man in God's image. Each play has a suitable epilogue. The first ends with "nothing: fit end of a dream." The second ends with a peal of guns, "like inarticulate cries from beyond the grave." The last ends with a set epilogue, a noble farewell, perhaps "the passionate human appeal of Shakspere ... as a personal supplication from the master to his fellow-men whom he had so long entertained with his art."

For man's relations to man Lanier confines his remarks to the three plays-within-plays of the three type dramas. In _A Midsummer-Night's Dream_ the ostensible motive for the anti-masque is amusement for Theseus and his bride, "while the underlying thought is gentle fun over somebody's play-writing; that is to say, the ground-motive is Ridicule." In _Hamlet_, of course, the motive is to trap the king's conscience, while the ground-motive is Revenge. Finally, _The Tempest's_ anti-masque is to honor the marriage of beloved ones, while the underlying motive here is Blessing.

Lanier has his own theory as to the real subject for

---

1 Shakspere and His Forerunners, p. 269
2 Ibid., p. 273
3 Ibid., p. 274
4 Ibid., II, p. 278
the ridicule in the Pyramus playlet. He is quite satisfied that "in this figure of Bottom, the Ass, and of Snug, the joiner, and in these absurd speeches of Pyramus and Thisbe, Shakspeare is laughing at the one man whom history has ever acquainted us with as his enemy - I mean at Robert Greene."

Lanier recalls the circumstances. In 1592 Henry Chettle published Greene's Greatworth of Wit Bought with a Million of Repentance, which contained the popular dramatist's attack upon Shakespeare. Lanier wishes us to remark therein such words as "peasant", "painted monsters", and "jeast" which follow shortly after the direct attack. Then he calls to mind some of the pamphlets with which Gabriel Harvey, the friend of Spenser and Sidney, answered another personal attack by Greene. Harvey calls Greene "that Terrible Thunder-smith of termes" and runs off into a learned excursion upon asses, mentioning almost every literary ass known to us except "bully Bottom." Harvey also suggests the idea of satirising living persons in comedy when he writes, "Nay, if you shake the painted saabbard (a symbol of the satiric lampoon in comedy) at me, I have done." In exclaiming at the popularity of Greene's Arcadia Harvey gives these words which Lanier finds significant, "O strange fancies! 0 monstrous new-fanglednesse!"

Lanier then quotes a lover's speech from the Arcadia which has more than the usual share of ludicrous comparisons.

1 Shakspeare and His Forerunners, p. 279
2 Ibid., II, p. 233
and is lower-pitched than even Shakespeare's clown's travesty of it. The nineteenth century commentator finds in Thisbe's lament over Pyramus: (1) a general similarity of ludicrous comparisons; (2) the special similarity in comparisons of fruits and vegetables; and (3) an identity of terms in the cherry which typifies the nose of Pyramus and the eyes of Greene's Carmela.

Lanier finds that Shakespeare takes Greene's contemptuous "Tygers heart wrapt in a Players hide", turns it upside down" --- as natural for a dream --- and throws back this hide over Greene's head." "Bottom and his captivating asses" discuss, not a tiger's heart in a player's hide, but a player's heart in a lion's hide." If this is only a suggestion it is all we need, for "Shakspere never makes a precise allegory: that is for the more creeping wits of time." In the Pyramus playlet Lanier feels that Greene's "peasants" have become the group of peasant players, that the "painted monster" is Bottom, and that Bottom in such speeches as "The raging rocks" (Act I, Scene 2), or in "Approach, ye Furies fell" (Act V, Scene 1) is surely a "terrible Thundersmith of termes." In the final scene there is a tableau called

"The thrice three Muses mourning for the death of Learning, late deceas'd in beggary." which doubtless refers to the death of the poverty-stricken

---

1 Shakspere and His Forerunners, p. 235
2 Ibid., p. 236
Greene. Harvey called him the "Minion of the Muses"; Greene was well-known for his pride in his own learning --- he liked to call himself Doctor Utriusque Academicae. Finally, there is the propriety of making Greene "an ass who for a time wins the doting affection of the world, as the ass wins Titania's, and then suddenly goes out in neglect and scorn." With such clues Lanier is sure that in this anti-masque Shakespeare is having "his little retaliatory laugh at his rival Greene."\(^2\)

As to matters of interpretation this is probably Lanier's most original contribution to Shakespearian criticism. I confess that it does not convince me, though I do not deny its possibilities. There seems to be a stretching of terms and the use, perhaps, of too much poetical intuition. For example, I believe that one could find as many similarities in other works contemporary with Greene's Arcadia (which was hardly a unique production). It may be granted that Shakespeare is satirising the type. At any rate it is an interesting theory. Its obscurity may be largely due to its lack of startling implications.

From the desperate horror of the Hamlet anti-masque, "out of the very smoke and brimstone of the pit," we come to the anti-masque of The Tempest with its "large blue heaven of moral width and delight." Here, surely, man is in "the culmination of his glory as towards his fellow-men." Prospero calls down the gods to minister to his beloved. Towards his enemies he

---

1 Shakspere and His Forerunners, II, p. 287
2 Ibid., p. 239
3 Ibid., II, p. 239
has greatened beyond revenge. Lanier closes his lecture on Shakespeare's views of man's relations to man with Scene 2, Act III of Pericles in which is pictured the noble Cerimon, "charitable, courteous, grave, energetic, at once the scientific physician and the artistic physician. To my judgment, there is nothing lovelier than this scene in all Shakspere."

Lanier has woefully little to say about Shakspere's views on the relations of the artist to his art. He sees it mostly in the Stratford master's own artistic growth. Most directly, he comments on the anti-masques in the three type plays as works of art used as factors in the plots. The inter-relations of the motives for these playlets (which we have seen above) "exist, of course by no intent, but solely through the wholeness of Shakspere's life." He wrote a play "from the deepest of his then state of mind." This is, in part, an answer to the realistic protest (true enough to some extent, Lanier admits) of one who scoffs at the assumption that Shakespeare "meant to portray this and that 'view' of things," and declares that "the fact was simply that the manager wanted a play and Shakspere wanted money."

In connection with this thought of Shakespeare and his art I quote Lanier's only adverse criticism of the artist he

---

I Shakspere and His Forerunners, p. 291 Shakespeare's attitude on the relations of man and nature has been described in the section, "Art and Nature."
2 Music and Poetry, p. 189
3 Ibid.
4 Ibid., p. 168
admired above all others. It appears in the poem "The Crystal":

"Thus unto thee, 0 sweetest Shakspere sole,
A hundred hurts a day I do forgive
('Tis little, but, enchantment! 'tis for thee):
Small curious quibble; Juliet's prurient pun
In the poor, pale face of Romeo's fancied death;
Cold rant of Richard; Henry's fustian roar
Which frights away that sleep he invokes;
Wronged Valentine's unnatural haste to yield;
Too-silly shifts of maids that mask as men
In faint disguises that could ne'er disguise --
Viola, Julia, Portia, Rosalind;
Fatigues most drear, and needless overtax
Of speech obscure that had as lief be plain;
Last I forgive (with more delight, because
'Tis more to do) the labored-lewd discourse
That e'en thy young invention's youngest heir
Besmirched the world with."

If conventional, these comments are fair enough. It is not clear whether or not Lanier recognized that most of these faults were among those which any Elizabethan dramatist had to risk if he wanted public appreciation. Perhaps he had not read enough of other Elizabethan dramas to realize this truth strongly. Doubtless, he preferred to roam in the sonnet field.

Looking back over his pages Lanier, in concluding, cannot forego a statement on the moral stature of his artist.

"Surely the genius which in the heat and struggle of ideal creation has the enormous control and temperance to arrange and adjust in harmonious proportions all these esthetic proportions of verse, surely that is the same genius which in the heat and battle of life will arrange the moral antagonisms with similar self-control and temperance. Surely there is a point of technique to which the merely clever artist may reach but beyond which he may never go, for lack of moral insight." I

Lanier cannot doubt then that "if we compare, I say, Greene, Marlowe, Nash, with Shakspere, surely the latter is a whole
heaven above them in the music of his verse, as well as in the
temperance and prudence of his life, as well also as in the
superb height of his later moral ideas."

d. The Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries

(1) Prose

Richardson

Lanier has little affection for Samuel Richardson,
"probably the last man who would have been selected as likely
to write an epoch-making book of any description."  Lanier is
pleased that this pioneer avowed the wish to promote "the cause
of religion and virtue."  But the Southern Puritan proceeds to
contrast this wish with the "silly and hideous realization of
it which meets us when we come actually to read this wonderful
first English novel Pamela."  Lanier gives the substance of the
action, and then comments upon the commercial view of religion
which allows Mr. B., the villain, to fare better than Pamela,
for "the sole operation of his previous villainy towards her
is to make his neighbors extol him to the skies as a saint when
he turns from it."  The book, indeed, ought to be called, not
The Reward of Virtue, but The Reward of Villainy.  "Perhaps a
more downright creed, not only of worldliness, but of 'other-
worldliness', was never more explicitly avowed."

1 Shakspere and His Forerunners, p. 325
2 English Novel, p. 169
3 Ibid., p. 171
4 Ibid.
5 Ibid., p. 174
6 Ibid., p. 173
To Lanier Clarissa Harlowe is "a patient analysis of the most intolerable crime in all history or fiction, watered with an amount of tears and sensibility as much greater than that in Pamela as the cube of eight volumes is greater than the cube of four volumes." He finds Sir Charles Grandison "a work differing in motive, but not in moral tone, from the other two, though certainly less hideous than Clarissa Harlowe."

Fielding

Lanier cares no more for Fielding. He thinks that this gentleman's comparatively high birth may have had something to do with his tendency to oppose Richardson, the joiner's son. Joseph Andrews --- Lanier notes that this is still thought by many to be the greatest English novel --- was written to ridicule some points of Pamela. Lanier feels that it is "not different in essence from the moral effect" of Pamela, though its tone is more "clownish." Lanier describes as fair samples of the humor in the book the arrival of Joseph and Parson Adams at the Slipshod inn and the good Parson's fall into the hog-pen. The American notes without comment that these incidents were among the number selected by Fielding's ardent admirer, Thackeray, for illustrations upon his own copy. Perhaps Lanier's dislike for the creator of Vanity Fair began in this connection.

Lanier has no praise for Tom Jones. Squire Allworthy

1 English Novel, p. 176
2 Ibid.
3 Ibid., p. 175
4 Ibid.
is but a man meditating, if one puts it "in plain commercial terms, how he might obtain the largest possible amount upon the letter of credit which he found himself forced to buy against the inevitable journey into the foreign parts lying beyond the waters of death." Lanier only mentions *Amelia* and the book on Mr. Jonathan Wild.

The American's one point of comparison or contrast for the two pioneers is to recall someone's observation that "Fielding tells us what o'clock it is, while Richardson shows us how the watch is made," i.e. Fielding is synthetic, while Richardson is analytic.

Lanier does not seem to perceive that Fielding as a satirist upon Richardson should have different moral conceptions. Many students of the period, I believe, have thought that this difference does exist. It is apparent that Lanier did not look too deeply into these writers.

Smollett

For this third "so-called classic writer" Lanier comments thus: *Peregrine Pickle* is "famous for its bright fun"; *The Adventures of Ferdinand Count Fathom* presents "a new and very complete study in human depravity"; *The Adventures of an Atom*, though really a political satire, gave Smollett "a field for indecency which he cultivated to its utmost yield"; *Humphrey Glinker*, "certainly his best novel," presents the first

---

1 English Novel, p. 177
2 Ibid., p. 176
"veritable British woman, poorly-educated and poor-spelling," who begins to express herself in the actual dialect of the species, and whose letters contain "some very worthy and strongly-marked originals not only of Mrs. Malaprop and Mrs. Partington, but of the immortal Sairey Gamp and of scores of other descendants in Thackeray and Dickens, here and there."

Sterne

Tristram Shandy is a "Chinese puzzle of humor ... which pops something grotesque or indecent at us in every crook."

Lanier admits that he knows good people who love the book for its morality. Personally, however, he believes this:

"... when you sum it all up, its teaching is that a man may spend his life in low, brutish, inane pursuits, and may have a good many little private sins on his conscience, but will, nevertheless, be perfectly sure of heaven if he can have retained the ability to weep a maudlin tear over a tale of distress; or, in short, that a somewhat irritable state of the lachrymal glands will be cheerfully accepted by the Deity as a substitute for saving grace or a life of self-sacrifice."

From the above it is not hard to see how Lanier arrived at his blunt condemnation of the four eighteenth century novelists. He marvels (though man's tortuous behaviour in history makes any human inconsistency seem possible) that the sale of gunpowder, the storage of nitro-glycerine, and the administration of poison, all of which hurt only the body, is regu-

1 English Novel, p. 178
2 Ibid., p. 179
3 Ibid., p. 180
4 See the section on the novel.
lated, while the sale of these insidious books, which hurt our souls, is carried on "in a security of fame and so-called classicism that is more effectual for this purpose than the security of the dark."

Goldsmith

Goldsmith's *Vicar of Wakefield* is "a snowdrop springing from" the muck of classics. Lanier feels that he need waste no time in speaking of the difference between the moral effect of this work and that of the four pioneers. He does recall the impression its purity made upon Goethe.

Erasmus Darwin

Lanier moves on to Scott through a passing mention of Fanny Burney, Mrs. Radcliffe, William Godwin, Maria Edgeworth, and Jane Austen with her "quiet and elegant narratives." He does pause, however, to point out a book which shows the scientific and the poetic faculties (which should merge perfectly to produce a true novel) "working along together, not merged, not chemically united, not lighting up matter like a star, --- with the result, as seems to me, of producing the very drollest earnest book in our language." Lanier refers to *The Loves of the Plants* by Dr. Erasmus Darwin, grandfather of "our own grave and patient Charles Darwin." It is practically a series of

---

1 *English Novel*, p. 181
little novels in which the heroes and heroines belong to the vegetable world. The "diligent and truly loving Doctor" took the Linnean theory of plant sexuality and framed it in poetry "which so far as technical execution goes is quite as good as the very best of the Pope school which it follows." Sometimes the old botanist comes "within a mere ace of beautiful poetry."

The book has what it calls Interludes in which the Poet and the Bookseller discuss various points which have come up in its pages, "and its oddity is all the more increased when one finds here a number of the most just, incisive, right-minded and large views not only upon the mechanism of poetry, but upon its essence and its relations to other arts." Lanier notes without irritation Carlyle's opinion of the book, given with a "comical grimness", in which the old sage writes: "Wonderful to me, as indicating the capricious stupidity of mankind: never could read a page of it, or waste the least thought upon it."

(2) Poetry

Milton

Strangely enough, Lanier has almost nothing to say about Milton, and what little he does say is hardly appreciative. We know that the age in which the Puritan lived was distasteful to the American. Lanier's comments show us something of what he considered to be the defects of Milton's poetry. Still, I

1 English Novel, p. 184
2 Ibid.
3 Ibid., p. 185
4 Ibid., p. 186
confess, it puzzles me that the spirit and genius of the man who was isolated in his time, somewhat as Lanier himself was, did not attract the American Puritan.

Here are the few clues Lanier gives us. In The English Novel he asks why Milton and not Shakespeare chose the supreme subject for his great work. The result, he thinks, is that the second-class genius treats the first-class subject. Then Lanier believes that Milton's epic failed in its intent. One proof is the fact that Satan becomes the most vivid character. There is another reason in "The Crystal":

"And I forgive
Thee, Milton, those thy comic-dreadful wars
Where, armed with gross and inconclusive steel,
Immortals smite immortals mortalwise
And fill all heaven with folly."

Again, in contrasting Tennyson and Milton he complains that the latter is "strong rather from the main force of physical vastness and the unwieldy pressure of colossal matters" in comparison with the former's spiritual strength. Lanier is displeased, too, with the "purely material accessories" of Milton's poetry, such as the elisions, the apostrophic shortenings, the involutions, and "the anaconda conceits which in mere kindness wind about us and crush us to death."

Apparently then, Milton's treatment of what would naturally be to Lanier a great subject reeked too much of old theology and poetic mannerisms. At that stage (the last criti-

1 English Novel, p. 262
2 Retrospects and Prospects, p. 22
cism in the above paragraph was a youthful outburst) Lanier was still taking theology with some seriousness, and was accumulating strong opinions on poetic mannerisms. This romanticist of the nineteenth century could not help resenting what he felt to be an inappropriate treatment of the most ideal theme. He missed, perhaps, the relieving tenderness which appealed to him deeply in Shakespeare's Tempest.

It seems that Lanier lacked either the opportunity or the inclination to look more deeply into the works of Milton as pure literature. In time, surely, he would have come to a true appreciation of the great Englishman who, like himself, was both musician and poet.

Lanier's introduction to The Boy's Percy contains a note on the state of English poetry around 1765. It was then "more silly, affected and insincere than at any other period in its history ... dandy poetry, pure and simple." The appearance of the ballads was a refreshing influence, and showed that the times were becoming conscious of their weaknesses. The ballads actually written then, of course, were plainly imitative, since the art of English ballad-making had been lost from the sixteenth century. If Percy shared the insincerity of the

---

1 It is only fair to point out that "The Crystal" in calling Tennyson the "largest voice since Milton" does imply the latter's accepted rank --- the poem was written in 1880. In the Novel lectures of 1881, however, Lanier's "testament and farewell" (Starke, p. 412) occurs the reference to Milton as a "second-class genius.

2 The Boy's Percy, p. xi
times he did make some "happy and effective echoes of the old
songs.

e. The Nineteenth Century

(I) Prose

Scott

In 1814 Scott's Waverley astonished the world. Lanier
feels that he does not need to dwell on the novels of the good
Scottish knight. They are un-moral, young, healthy, miraculous,
and "among the most hale and strengthening waters in which the
young soul ever bathed."

Bulwer-Lytton

Lanier is well aware of the modern tendency to dis-
parage this man as a "slight creature." Yet he cannot help re-
membering that "every novel of Bulwer's is skilfully written and
entertaining, and that there is not an ignoble thought or im-
pure stimulus in the whole range of his works." If this author
is uncivil and undignified and "many other bad things" in the
New Timon and in the Tennyson quarrel, and sometimes comes dan-
gerously near to snobbery --- Lanier forgives him for being
only human.

1 The Boy's Percy, p. xxix
2 English Novel, p. I86
3 Ibid., p. I98
4 Ibid. At this point those who perceive the distinct influ-
ence of Carlyle and Ruskin upon Lanier may look for the
latter's opinions of these men. The truth seems to be that,
beyond a remark on the former's prose style and the term
"over-brimming Ruskin," Lanier makes no criticism of them.
Perhaps these writers and their ideas were so close to him
that he felt comment to be superfluous.
Thackeray

Lanier draws censure, of course, for his characterization of Thackeray as a "low-pitched satirist." Nor does he win favor when he finds the novelist much lesser than George Eliot. Thackeray, he observes, "was accustomed to lament that 'since the author of Tom Jones was buried, no writer of fiction among us has been permitted to depict to his utmost powers a man ... Society will not tolerate the natural in art.' Under this yearning of Thackeray's after the supposed freedom of Fielding's time, lie at once a shortcoming of love, a limitation of view and an actual fallacy of logic, which always kept Thackeray's work below the highest, and which formed the chief reason why I have been unable to place him here, along with Dickens and George Eliot." Lanier thinks that the Fielding-Thackeray school when they speak of drawing a man as he is, mean that they would draw him as he appears in such a history as the daily newspaper gives us. But the newspaper gives largely a criminal history of man. If its record were really representative it would present a completely changed tone --- the items of normal, virtuous behaviour would overflow all bounds. "And it is perfectly characteristic of the inherent weakness of Thackeray that he should so utterly fail to see the true significance underlying society's repudiation of his proposed natural picture. The least that such a repudiation could mean, would be that even if the picture were good in Fielding's time, it is bad now."
Lanier does admit that Thackeray exposes "shame and high vulgarity and minute wickedness." He even goes so far as to print, though he wonders at it, Charlotte Bronte's praise for the creator of Vanity Fair in the Preface to the second edition of her Jane Eyre. As Starke observes, Lanier's misjudgment of Thackeray is no worse than Thackeray's own estimate of Swift.

Dickens

Dickens with his appealing characters and his influence for social reform impresses Lanier. He feels that, like Eliot, this writer expands the text: "Be ye perfect as I am perfect." His teaching is infectious. Like the boy in the fairy tale whose fiddle compelled every hearer to dance in spite of himself, Dickens gathers a great train of people ready to do his bidding in reforms while they rock with genial laughter "at the comical and grotesque figures" which this peculiar story-teller has "fished up out of the London mud." The American delights greatly in the novelist's depiction of animals. Lanier regrets, however, that Dickens in his social gospel tends towards a satiric or destructive view of the old conditions.

George Eliot

It seems fitting to close this section of Lanier's prose

1 English Novel, p. 188
2 Ibid., p. 189 Lanier's fair-mindedness is evident when we find Miss Bronte calling Thackeray "the first social regenerator of the day."
3 Starke, p. 441
4 English Novel, p. 198
5 Ibid., p. 188
6 Ibid., p. 203
criticism in nineteenth century English literature with his estimate of the writer to whom he apparently conceded the highest place, George Eliot. It is in the lectures on the novel that he reveals his admiration for the English woman. If the proper title for those lectures is *A Study in the Development of Personality* then Lanier's should and do center around her artistic treatment of human personality. He prepares for this, as we have seen, in his comparisons of the conceptions of personality shown in Aeschylus, Shelley, and Bayard Taylor, and more directly, in his paragraphs on the formal beginnings of the novel in the eighteenth century. This latter period is the "unsavory muck" from which springs the "many-petalled rose" of George Eliot's fiction.

For an actual introduction to Eliot's work Lanier asks us to consider four dates of literary importance, all ending in seven, 1827, 1837, 1847, 1857. Beside the first date he places Bulwer-Lytton's *Pelham*, and Carlyle's edition of *Specimens of German Romance*. With the next date he links the appearance of the "adorable" Pickwick. In 1847 appear *Vanity Fair*, *Jane Eyre*, and *The Princess*. Finally comes Eliot's *Scenes from Clerical Life* and, shortly after, *Mrs. Browning's Aurora Leigh*.

Lanier describes these dates more graphically. In 1827 a well-dressed man advances, "bows a fine bow, and falls to preaching his gospel:

---

*I English Novel*, p. 169
'My friends, under whatever circumstances a man may be placed, he has it always in his power to be a gentleman; and Bulwer's gentleman is always given as a very manful and Christian being.'

Ten years later "comes on a preacher who takes up the slums and raggedest miseries of London and plumps them boldly down in the parlors of high life." Thus Dickens prods the social conscience. The year 1847 finds Thackeray exposing evil in this same high life, while Bronte and Tennyson, "with the widest difference in method, are for the first time expounding the doctrine of co-equal sovereignty as between man and woman, and bringing up the historic conception of the personality of woman to a plane in all respects level with, though properly differentiated from, that of man."

At last, into "this field of beneficent activity" created by the novel comes George Eliot "with no more noise than that of a snow-flake falling on snow." She comes as an epoch-maker, both by virtue of the peculiar mission she undertakes and of the method in which she carries it out.

Lanier has thus named the group of modern writers (in his specific reference he omits Bulwer-Lytton) which he wishes to place against the classic group. The chief difference between the groups lies in the nature of their avowed purposes.

---

1 English Novel, p. 188
2 Ibid., p. 188
3 See the section on Art and the Individual, p. 36
4 English Novel, p. 189
5 Whether Lanier meant to or not, he has Thackeray identified first with one group and then with the other. Perhaps this indicates a struggle between the American's moral sense and his sense of literary justice.
The older novelists professed to promote human virtue by "confronting a man ... with nothing but a picture of his own unworthiness." The final effect of such a procedure, thinks Lanier, is to paralyze the man's moral energy. "The picture of the man I becomes the head of a Gorgon." The later writers, while glozing no evil, show man how good he may be, and thus stimulate his moral energy to "the most beneficent practical reform."

From Aeschylus to Eliot the conception of the organic idea of moral order has evolved from stern Justice to tolerant Love. Somewhere between, with its cynical, illogical realism, the eighteenth century school placed its conception.

George Eliot is the supreme exponent of the modern group. Thus, says Lanier, "during all her later life the central and organic idea which gave unity to her existence was a burning love for her fellow-men." From this love comes her reverence for personality, her wise and gentle tolerance. It is this love which makes her, despite her apparent reserve, "so sincerely communicative and so frankly desirous of sympathy." She writes:

"O fellow-men! if I trace with curious interest your labyrinthine self-delusions ... it is not that I feel myself aloof from you: the more intimately I seem to discern your weaknesses the stronger to me is the proof I share them ... No man can know his brother simply as a spectator. Dear blunderers, I am one of you."  

1 English Novel, p. 198
2 Ibid., p. 198
3 Ibid., p. 204
4 Ibid., p. 164
5 Ibid., p. 213
From this affection flows her stress on love towards the neighbor rather than love towards the Lord. Though some have objected to this, Lanier welcomes the stimulus to human love, and feels that George Eliot's words contain more religion than she herself dreamed of. This love, too, is the source of her power to make commonplace things divine.

If Lanier so emphasizes Eliot's spiritual power, it is not because he doubts her technical power. In his eagerness to defend the spiritual, however, he largely ignores the latter or ties it in a subordinate position. We do find certain comments. George Eliot is a painstaking, accurate writer with modern features of technique. Vitally modern is her depiction of character. She shows "for the first time that, without approaching dangerously near to caricature as Dickens was often obliged to do, a loveable creature of actual flesh and blood could be drawn in a novel with all the advantage of completeness desirable from microscopic analysis, scientific precision, and moral intent; and with absolutely none of the disadvantages, such as coldness, deadness, and the like, which had caused all sorts of meretricious arts to be adopted by novelists in order to save the naturalness of a character." It is such an achievement as this which prompts Lanier to declare that Eliot has "the most remarkable combination of poetic tolerance with the sternness of scientific accuracy" of any figure in English literature.

1 English Novel, p. 218
2 Ibid., p. 235
3 Ibid., p. 208
She paints a true repentance. Lanier quotes from *Janet's Repentance* sentences in which one of the characters observes that emotion, obstinately irrational, cares for the individual and refuses to adopt "the quantitative view of human anguish," i.e. to admit that thirteen happy lives offset twelve miserable lives. Thus the English novelist sees meaning in the statement that the angels find more joy in the repentance of one sinner than in the calm existence of the ninety-nine just. Not until the nineteenth century, Lanier believes, could an artist reach such a point of view.

George Eliot, of course, does her splendid share in depicting the "remarkable development of womanhood, both in real life and in fiction, which arrays itself before us when we think only of what we may call the Victorian women." To Lanier, this womanhood with its literary portrayal is one of the chief glories of the nineteenth century.

Despite Eliot's association with Herbert Spencer, Lanier does not believe that her work can be considered, as a critic declared, "one of the earliest triumphs of the Spencerian method of studying personal character and the laws of social life." The American finds that many of Eliot's characters appear like "living objections to the theory of evolution." He asks, for example, how one could evolve the "moral stoutness

---

1 *English Novel*, p. 200
of Adam Bede ... from his precedent conditions, to wit, his I drunken father and querulous mother?" Maggie Tulliver, also, demands another explanation. Lanier admits that Eliot's characters are influenced by circumstances, but he feels that they "flout evolution in the face." 2

George Eliot carries her modern skill to the depiction of animals. In Adam Bede, for example, the dog Gyp is a genuine creation subtly done. All of Eliot's animals are "true neighbors" and are shown "those touches of true sympathy ... such as only earnest souls or great geniuses are capable of." Her animal-painting always recalls to Lanier a picture which he remembers from childhood:

"... it is the figure of man emerging from the dark of barbarism attended by his friends the horse, the cow, the chicken, and the dog." 5

Still another modern feature of Eliot's technique is her happy use of scientific phrases (such as "dynamic power" to describe the glance of Gwendolen Harleth) which "form an integral part of that ever-brooding humor which fills with a quiet light all the darkest stories" of this author.

The rest of the material Lanier gives on George Eliot is either biographical, or, what is more to our purpose, concerns specific novels. The American who knew the pleasures and pains of a poverty lightened by love was particularly fond of

---

1 English Novel, p. 289
2 Ibid., p. 290
3 Ibid., p. 214
4 Ibid., p. 217
5 Ibid.
6 Ibid., p. 202
the Rev. Amos Barton and his good wife. He finds the climax for a lecture in comparing Milly Barton "going to bed with her unmended basket of stockings in great fatigue, yet in great love and trust ... with that figure of Prometheus, nailed to the Caucasian rock in pain and hate." This illustrates the "prodigious spiritual distance" man has advanced in the centuries. It is in Amos Barton that George Eliot begins to preach "the russet-coated epic' of everyday life and commonplace people," i.e. to fulfill her distinctive mission. Of the three stories in Scenes from Clerical Life Lanier feels that Janet's Repentance is "altogether the most important." Perhaps he reaches this opinion through his belief in the spiritual greatness of repentance as a phenomenon of personality.

The publication of Adam Bede, says Lanier, "placed George Eliot decisively at the head of English novel-writers, with only Dickens for second. In this novel lie 'subtle revolutions' (which Lanier does not find time to explain precisely). The admirer of Victorian women is carried away by the 'solemn, fragile, strong Dinah Morris ... that rare, pure and strange Dinah Morris who would alone consecrate English literature if it had yielded no other gift to man." Lanier quotes a letter of Eliot's which describes her life in the country and mentions especially an aunt, Elizabeth Evans, who may have dimly suggested the character of Dinah — Lanier feels, however, that the

1 English Novel, p. 165
2 Ibid.
3 Ibid., p. 159
letter proves Dinah Morris to be almost entirely an original creation.

The Mill on the Floss, Eliot's second great novel, is in some respects her greatest work. Lanier finds the book of extraordinary interest because of its autobiographical character. Maggie Tulliver has many of the traits of her creator. Again Lanier contrasts the struggles of Prometheus, this time with the "microscopic struggles" of Maggie, to show that both authors, with the apparati of their respective ages, are studying the same phenomenon, but in contrasting spirits. Lanier quotes from the novel to show the difference between Maggie and her parents. He sees in the little English girl an intense, dark-eyed creature something like Aurora Leigh. Both have their garrets with the congenial dark and loneliness. The Mill on the Floss particularly exemplifies George Eliot's power to elevate "the plane of all commonplace life into the plane of the heroic by keeping every man well in mind of the awful ego within him which includes all the possibilities of heroic action."

"In some particulars Silas Marner is the most remarkable novel in our language." The scene at the Rainbow Inn reminds Lanier of Dogberry and Verges and makes him feel as if Shakespeare were sitting close by. In contrast, the "downright ghastliness" of the young Squire's punishment for stealing Marner's gold recalls Chaucer's Pardoner's Tale in which gold

1 English Novel, p. 159
2 Ibid., p. 217
3 Ibid., p. 235
4 Ibid., p. 247
is so cunningly identified with death. Lanier cannot help describing Eliot's scene in which the gold hair of the child replaces the miser's gold. The transformation of character in this novel is rather typical of the author. Eliot continually depicts "intense and hungry spirits first wasting their intensity and hunger upon that which is unworthy, often from pure ignorance of anything worthier, then finding where love is worthy, and thereafter loving larger loves, and living larger lives."

At this point Lanier observes that George Eliot's novels divide into two groups: the first group includes all her writing up to 1876; the second group consists solely of Daniel Deronda. He bases this classification on the fact that all the works of the first group concern the life of the past, while Daniel Deronda concerns the life of the present.

Lanier regrets that this last novel is so completely misunderstood. Some admirers of its author have called it a failure, while less friendly critics have found Gwendolen Harleth weak and disagreeable, Mirah and Daniel prigs, and have charged that the plot is an absurd attempt to awaken interest in the religious patriotism of the Jews, and have declared that the moral purpose of the book has overweighted its art. This comparative failure to please current criticism reveals "a singular and lamentable weakness in certain vital portions of

1 English Novel, p. 252
2 Ibid.
3 Ibid.
the structure of our society." Such a weakness includes the conventional descriptions and attitudes towards prigs, the stands on race questions, and "the whole question of Art for Art's sake which has so mournfully divided the modern artistic world."

To Lanier Daniel Deronda has two distinct strands of story. One, the longer part, might be called The Repentance of Gwendolen Harleth. The other might be called The Mission of Daniel Deronda. These two strands are united into one artistic thread by the book's organic purpose which is to give a satisfactory answer to the question confronting the two young protagonists: "Is life worth living?"

The repentance of Gwendolen and the growth of Daniel are done with such a "skillful reproduction of contemporary English life, with such a wealth of flesh-and-blood character, with an art altogether so subtle, so analytic, yet so warm and so loving withal, that if I were asked for the most significant, the most tender, the most pious and altogether the most uplift-

---

1 English Novel, p. 253
2 Ibid., p. 265 (See the section on the Artistic and the Moral)
3 Ibid. (Ibid.)
ing of modern books, it seems to me I should specify Daniel Deronda." In her characterizations Eliot makes full use of the broad scope of the novel.

Lanier replies to the charge of didacticism in this book with a vigorous defence of the moral obligations of art. He observes that if didacticism is fully avowed with the moral "asides" George Eliot seemed to delight in for Amos Barton, for Janet's Repentance, and for Adam Bede, these "asides" are conspicuously absent in Daniel Deronda. The moral purpose of this book, far less obtrusive than that of any other novel by Eliot, grows by its very nearness, i.e. its picture of modern conditions, "out of all perspective." Though a "mere gnat", it sits on the "very eyelash of society" and seems a monster. English society is irritated at the thought that an "unspeakable brute" like Grandcourt should be enthroned above the multitude and receive the adoration of fresh young English girls. Yet it can not deny the truth of the picture --- a truth which cuts deeply. George Eliot, however, draws the knife with such a deft, light hand that her readers do not recognize where or how the wound is.

In his enthusiasm Lanier gives a convincing picture of the English novelist and her work. If one accepts his standards of art one can accept his estimate of George Eliot in

1 English Novel, p. 255
2 See the section on the Artistic and the Moral
3 English Novel, p. 271
4 Ibid.
5 Ibid., p. 267
many respects. As Starke well says: "Important critics have
gone wrong in betting on less important novelists than George
Eliot." At present, however, our age, rightly or wrongly, has
lost sight of the faith in man which spurred on the English
writer and her American disciple.

(2) Poetry

Wordsworth

Lanier refers only once to Wordsworth, and the refer-
ence implies that he considers this poet as a sort of English
Whitman --- which is not an impossible yoking. When attempting
to prove that Whitman's poetry is really sophisticated, Lanier
declares that the two poets who have avowedly written most for
the people are Wordsworth and Whitman, and they are precisely
the ones who have been accepted rather by the extremely cultur-
ed. As in the case of Milton, I am somewhat at a loss to ac-
count for Lanier's comparative indifference to Wordsworth. We
do know that he enjoyed the Lake poet's work to a certain ex-
tent. Both of these singers loved Nature. Lanier, however,
sensed within it a humanity and an ecstasy which the English-
man with his more impersonal reverence never felt. Perhaps
Wordsworth's Old World conservatism and doubts influenced the
American reader who placed so much stress upon a poet's atti-
tudes.

1 Starke, p. 441
2 English Novel, p. 45
3 Starke, p. 409
Coleridge

It is not strange that Lanier practically ignored
Coleridge as a poet. In the Preface to The Science of English
Verse he minimizes this poet's "grave announcement, in the Pre-
face to Christabel of 1816, that he had discovered a new prin-
ciple of English versification, to wit, that of accents." To
Lanier this principle had been employed in English poetry for
over a thousand years, and nursery-rhymes and folk-songs "pre-
sent us everywhere with applications of it far more daring and
I
complex than any line of Christabel."

Shelley

In our section on Art and the Individual we have seen
that Lanier uses Shelley's Prometheus Unbound to illustrate a
step in the growth of the conception of human personality.
Though the English poet does modernize his theme considerably
as contrasted with Aeschylus, he retains much of the old ma-
chinery such as the physical torments and the thunder and light-
ning. But Shelley finds no Greek-hearted audience for his play.

"We moderns cannot for our lives help seeing
the man in his shirt-sleeves who is turning the
crank of the thunder-mill behind the scenes,"-
We who have seen "a man (not a Titan nor a god)
... go forth into a thunder-storm and send his
kite up into the very bosom thereof, and fairly
entice the lightning by his wit to come and perch
upon his finger, and be the tame bird of him and
his fellows thereafter and forever." 2

Lanier scores the weak manner in which Shelley brings

1 English Verse, p. xiii
2 English Novel, p. 96
the curse of Prometheus to his reader. He follows with a para-
graph of genuine criticism:

"In truth, Shelley appears always to have
labored under an essential immaturity: it is
very possible that if he had lived a hundred
years he would never have become a man: he was
penetrated with modern ideas, but penetrated as
a boy would be, crudely, overmuch, and with a
constant tendency to the extravagant and illo-
gical: so that I call him the modern boy." I

Lanier thinks Act IV of Prometheus Unbound "the most
amazing piece of surplusage in literature; the catastrophe has
been reached long ago in the third act." Act III has closed
with a radiant picture of the new regime. "Yet ... Shelley drags
in Act IV which is simply leaden in action and color alongside
of Act III" and has "endless sweetish speeches that rain like
ineffectual comfits in a carnival of silliness." This super-
fluous lyric outburst gives Lanier occasion to warn young writers
to choose quality above quantity.

But Lanier will not leave Shelley on this note. He
quotes from Act II, Scene I, Asia's Invocation to Spring and from
a speech of the Second Faun, "compact of pellucid beauty: it
seems quite worthy of Shakspere." In another speech by Asia
which describes the successive deposits in the earth's crust the
"whole treatment is detailed, modern, vivid, powerful." And
years before, in a youthful essay, Lanier had exclaimed at the
"angelic Shelley."

1 English Novel, p. 99
2 Ibid., p. 100
3 Ibid., p. 103
4 Ibid., p. 104
5 Retrospects and Prospects, p. 9
Keats

Lanier had a warm sympathy and admiration for the life and poetry of Keats. He felt a natural kinship with the singer who, like himself, fought disease and circumstances to use his genius. Thus in the poem describing the untimely death of his mocking-bird ("To Our Mocking-Bird") he refers persistently to the bird as Keats, "the world's best wood-bird, wise with song," whom the Lord "was fain, at some late festal time ... should set all Heaven's woods in rhyme". Thus came Death the Cat.

Lanier inscribed "Clover", one of his best poems and one to which he himself was particularly attached, to the memory of Keats. The clover-stems on the meadows about Chester are artists, "sweetest masters!", who are destroyed by an ox, the Course-of-things. In the list of thirteen masters the poem gives, the only English singers are Shakespeare and John Keats. The message of "Clover" is that refuge from contemporary censure is found in faith and the desire to create one's art for love alone. In these lines Lanier is close in spirit and achievement to the English brother he addresses.

In his lectures on the novel Lanier uses Keats' Ode on Melancholy to illustrate "a subtle modern conception" of pain as contrasted with the gross physical conception set forth by Aeschylus. Concerning the Ode he writes:

I Starke, p. 263
"I am often inclined to think ... that ... for thoughts most mortally compacted, for words which come forth, each trembling and giving off light like a morning star, and for the beauty and strength and height of the spirit ... (this poem) reaches the highest height yet touched in the lyric line." I

Perhaps the gentlest of rebukes in "The Crystal" is for Keats:

"... tense Keats, with angels' nerves
Where men's were better."

Tennyson

We remember that the youth Lanier was especially drawn to Tennyson, the modern poet who wrote of chivalry, reconciled science and religion, cherished music, and glorified the power of love. In 1874, however, he failed to name the Englishman in a list of favorite writers informally given. This, of course, may have meant little beyond the fact that he was not thinking closely of Tennyson in those days. Yet his later writings hold, in contrast to Tiger-Lilies, few references to the author of the Idylls. Perhaps Tennyson's subsidence into a "gray" if firm sort of faith and the placid regularity of his verse were less attractive to the mature Lanier.

Tiger-Lilies, as I have just hinted, makes considerable use of Tennyson, particularly in quotations from the Idylls. Lanier was a lover of "In Memoriam". The title-page of his novel has a stanza, strangely misquoted. There are verbal and metrical

---

1 English Novel, p. 92
2 Starke, p. 94
echoes of this poem in Lanier's "To Beethoven" --- too many, I indeed, for the good of the verse. The opening stanza of another Lanier poem, "To J.D.H. (killed at Surrey C.H., October, 1866) is almost a paraphrase of Tennyson lines. Lanier warmly approves of the ideals for womanhood set forth by The Princess, and likes to contrast the poem's conception of marriage with that of Plato. It is particularly through The Princess that gives Tennyson a place beside Eliot, Dickens, and others in the nineteenth century group working in constructive opposition to the influence of the four classic novelists. Lanier finds the "Death of the North Country Farmer" a strong piece of work.

Lanier seems to begin his general critical remarks on Tennyson in the early essay called "Retrospects and Prospects." He finds the English poet great by virtue of his "calm, collected, intense potential momentum of steady spiritual enthusiasm." Tennyson has artistic strength in his "full words, direct arrangements of clauses, terse phrases, Saxon roots, light airy metaphors, three-word conceits." In Tiger-Lilies a character calls the Englishman an able philosopher. Two objections to Tennyson come in later years. A letter of 1873 declares that he "(let me not blaspheme against the Gods!) is not a musical, tho' in other respects (particularly in that of phrase-making) a very wonderful writer." In "The Crystal" this poet is called the "largest voice since Milton", though he lacks "some register

1 Starke, p. 263
2 Ibid., p. 120
3 Retrospects and Prospects, p. 22
4 Letters, p. 236
of wit" --- which is rather sound criticism.

Elizabeth Barrett Browning

With her beautiful spirit and genuine lyric gift Mrs. Browning made a natural appear, often implied if not always expressed, to Sidney Lanier. Basically, the chief point of attraction was the "deep-thoughted" English woman's doctrine of love. Though Lanier does not openly comment upon it, he must have seen a parallel in the ideal happiness of the Browning marriage and that of his own.

He links the poetess more than once with George Eliot. In the seventh lecture of the novel series he declares that these two can furnish him with all the necessary material if he desires to "construct a final text and summary of all the principles which have been announced in the preceding lectures." Thus the "burden of Aurora Leigh as well as of George Eliot's whole cycle of characters is love." I have referred to Lanier's comparison of Aurora and Maggie Tulliver. In his warning against the insidious moral influence of the eighteenth century novelists Lanier quotes from Aurora Leigh. When he observes that George Eliot gives us more religion than she herself realizes, he cites as a somewhat parallel case Lucretius as described in Mrs. Browning's Vision of Poets --- the old Roman who "denied

1 Retrospects and Prospects, p. 9
2 English Novel, p. 149 These lectures are concerned chiefly with the development of man's sense of personality, a development in which he has established for himself a relation with the unknown (music), with his fellow-man (the Novel), and with Nature (Physical Science).
3 Ibid., p. 166
divinely the divine."

Browning

The impromptu list of favorite writers in 1874 contains the name of Robert Browning. In Lanier's published writings there seems to be only one critical reference to the great dramatic poet --- a reference, however, decidedly worth quotation. In a letter to Bayard Taylor Lanier writes concerning Browning's epic, then recently published:

"Have you seen Browning's 'The Ring and the Book'? I am confident that, at the birth of this man, among all the good fairies who showered him with magnificent endowments, one bad one --- as in the old tale --- crept in by stealth and gave him a constitutional twist i' the neck, whereby his windpipe became, and has ever since remained, a marvelous tortuous passage. Out of this glottis-labyrinth his words won't, and can't come straight. A hitch and a sharp crook in every sentence bring you up with a shock. But what a shock it is! Did you ever see a picture of a lasso, in the act of being flung? In a thousand coils and turns, inextricably crooked and involved and whirled, yet, if you mark the noose at the end, you see that it is directly in front of the bison's head, there, and is bound to catch him. That is the way Robert Browning catches you. The first sixty or seventy pages of 'The Ring and the Book' are altogether the most doleful reading, in point either of idea or of music, in the English language; and yet the monologue of Giuseppe Caponsacchi, that of Pompilia Comparini, and the two of Guido Franceschini, are unapproachable, in their kind, by any living or dead poet, me judice. Here Browning's jerkiness comes in with irresistible effect. You get lightning glimpses --- and, as one naturally expects from lightning, zig-zag glimpses --- into the intense night of the passion of these souls. It is entirely wonderful and without precedent. The fitful play of Guido's lust, and scorn, and hate, and cowardice, closes with a master stroke:--
Christ! Maria! God! ...  
Pompilia, will you let them murder me?

Pompilia, mark you, is dead, by Guido's own hand; deliberately stabbed, because he hated her purity, which all along he has reviled and mocked with the Devil's own malignant ingenuity of sarcasm.

A lover of both Browning and Lanier I am somewhat puzzled as to why the American did not recognize more openly and at length a spiritual kinship with the man of Camberwell. The great difference in their material circumstances may have been a factor. However, the purpose of this paper does not permit me to give my reasons for believing that, whether the two poets sensed it or not, there is a close relationship in their records as men and artists. I believe that the matter is worthy of study.

Morris

Lanier, we may remember, is concerned at Paul Hamilton Hayne's choice of William Morris as Chaucer's successor. His indignation makes him contrast the two Englishmen with a negative emphasis, of course, upon the nineteenth century singer. Thus Morris is "blank, world-bound," with a "stone facade of hopelessness." To-morrow may not come and if it does, "it will be merely today revamped; therefore let us amuse ourselves with the daintiest that art and culture can give: this is his essential utterance." The poetry of Morris has a "late, pleasant,

I Letters, p. 206
golden-tinted light" with a hint of the coming twilight chill, falling on "an exquisitely wrought marble which lies half buried in the sand, and which, Greek as it is, dainty as it is, marvelous as it is, is nevertheless a fragment of a ruin."

Lanier thinks that Morris has almost the unique musical quality of Hayne himself, but that the Englishman lives too close to Tennyson to write "unbroken music."

Lanier feels that the sensualism of Morris is dilettante, amateurish, and not strong, though sometimes excessive. "It is nervously afraid of that satiety which is at once its chief temptation and its most awful doom." Chaucer lives: Morris dreams. The Earthly Paradise is a reverie which would hate real life. If Morris with his Hindu-life-weariness is our modern Chaucer, the American would like to know where the human race will be in five more centuries. Lanier sums this all up in a sentence rich with implications: "He (Morris) caught a crystal cupful of the yellow light of sunset, and persuading himself to dream it wine, drank it with a sort of smile."

Strangely, Lanier did not seem to realize how much he and Morris did have in common. Both felt an intense love for beauty of the past and for the present happiness of man. Their expressions of this love, however, emerging from environments that were far apart in many ways, perhaps obscured the relation-

1 *Music and Poetry*, p. 199
2 *Letters*, p. 236
3 *Music and Poetry*, p. 199
4 Ibid., p. 201
5 *Poems*, p. xxxviii
Swinburne

A student of Lanier finds the Macon Puritan's attitude towards Swinburne, as seen in the three references available, quite as he expected. In a youthful essay Lanier writes: "Swinburne has overheard some sea-conversation which he has translated into good English." About ten years later Bayard Taylor loaned the Georgian copies of Leaves of Grass, Lowell's Among My Books, and Swinburne's Atalanta in Calydon. In Lanier's opinion the Whitman work is "worth at least a million of the Lowell and Swinburne writings". In the two latter he can not find anything which has not been much better said before. Finally comes the masterly bit of criticism: "He (Swinburne) invited me to eat; the service was silver and gold, but no food therein save pepper and salt."

3. Other Literatures

Lanier gives us no real criticism of writers in other languages. After his college days he did not have time to pursue foreign tongues in earnest. Though he seems to have done some active reading in French, Lanier found German, if we are to judge by its influence, his major interest beyond English. It is doubtful that the American, for all his Latin love of grace

1 Retrospects and Prospects, p. 9
2 Letters, p. 208
3 Poems, p. xxxviii "Retrospects and Prospects," the essay written in 1867, speaks of "sweet Christina Rossetti" and "quaint Jean Ingelow" --- apparently Lanier's only mention of these writers.
could ever have felt really at home in Romance literature. Basically, his temperament was Teutonic. The few references below have small critical value, but they do hint at the nature of Lanier's reading in other tongues.

a French Literature

Froissart

In 1879 appeared Lanier's edition of The Boy's Froissart. He uses the translation by Thomas Johnes, published in 1802-05. The Georgian's laudable purpose is to inspire boys to be more manly. Thus the Introduction states that Froissart "sets the boy's mind on manhood and the man's mind on boyhood." The book was a success, due probably to the editor's enthusiasm and to attractive printing rather than to the occasional comparisons of modern English with old French and old English and other scholarly items. Lanier includes a dash of criticism. "Froissart's Chronicle is, in a grave and important sense, a sort of continuation of Malory's novel. If Sir Thomas deals with twelfth and thirteenth century knighthood, the Frenchman, though he is concerned with real history, deals with fourteenth century knighthood --- a knighthood Lanier believes, undermined by the temptations of ransom-money. Froissart has

---

1 In the section on Art and Nature we have seen Lanier's few words concerning Greek and Latin, and concerning Virgil and the Hindu poet, Jayadeva. In a footnote for The Science of English Verse he notates musically a Japanese ode, and states his belief that it has the same rhythmical forms and limitations --- judging from readings by Japanese students at Johns Hopkins --- as English poetry. (Verse, p. 132)
2 Starke, p. 381
3 The Boy's Froissart, p. x
the faults of his time: long dialogues with all the particulars; and a lack of chronological sense. The modern editor calls attention to the fact that he includes one chapter (on the Battle of Crecy) from Berners' beautiful Henry VIIIth English. The Boy's Froissart is about one-ninth the length of the original, with much of the material chronologically rearranged to help the sequence. Strangely enough, and hardly in accord with his mature convictions about war, Lanier gives a large proportion of space to military campaigns. He probably decided that such events offered the sternest tests for the ideals of knighthood which could be found in the old chronicles.

Du Bartas

Lanier mentions this obscure sixteenth century poet in connection with a translation by Joshua Sylvester. Du Bartas an early contemporary of Shakespeare's "was perhaps the most renowned poet of his own day that ever lived.

"He wrote two long religious poems, one on the First Week of Creation, the other on the Second Week of Creation; and his works were so sought after that they passed through thirty-eight editions in less than six years, and were translated into Latin, Italian, Spanish, English, German, and Dutch. Yet ... it is two hundred years since anybody considered them worth reading, except Goethe, who found a certain largeness and dignity in the ideas." 4

1 The Boy's Froissart, p. vi
2 Ibid., p. xiv
3 Starke, p. 381
4 Shakspere and His Forerunners, I, p. 225
In the section on the novel we have seen Lanier's reaction to Zola. References to "sad Maurice de Guerin" and "that tempest Victor Hugo" would seem to close Lanier's recognition of French writers.

b. German Literature

For all Lanier's debt to German romanticism he gives almost no direct attention to its writers. Perhaps, as I suggested in the case of the man who introduced if he did not largely interpret German literature to the American, Thomas Carlyle, the philosophy of these men had become so much a part of Lanier's own thinking, that he felt criticism, particularly literary criticism, to be superfluous or impertinent. Critics complain that Tiger-Lilies is saturated with Richter. About the time he wrote the novel, Lanier referred to the "all-mingling Jean-Paul" and the "priestly Novalis." It is of interest to note that Lanier wrote a sonnet in German ("To Nannette Falk-Auerbach") which made that able German scholar, Bayard Taylor, remark that his friend showed a mastery of the secret of the language and presented a truly German idea.

1 Retrospects and Prospects, p. 9
2 Ibid.
3 Starke, p. 302
PART III

AN ESTIMATE OF THE LITERARY CRITICAL IDEAS

OF SIDNEY LANIER

Neither as poet nor as critic has Sidney Lanier reached his final status in American literature. I believe that we are making some progress toward an understanding tolerance for such Victorians. In the post-war turmoil, however, our nerves are still so brittle that we have little will or power to look steadily at the "calm bigotry" of the last century. In such a situation I trust that the reader will accept these paragraphs based on the preceding material, as merely the opinions of one who is more than ordinarily sympathetic to Lanier and the age in which he worked.

The defects of Lanier's literary criticism are all too obvious. His lack of learning and experience, his habits of digression, his sense of hurriedness, his enthusiasm in its undisciplined moments, his lack of catholicity in judgment, and his inevitable urge to didacticism --- all these faults glare at the informed reader.

Lanier himself would have been the first to admit his comparative poverty in literary knowledge and experience. "I have no more claim to 'scholarship' than to the throne of England" he wrote in irritation at certain reviewers of The Science of English Verse. His acquaintance with English lit-

I Starke, p. 348
erature was unusual for the nature and extent of his study opportunities. But it lacked that indispensable groundwork—an adequate general understanding of world literature and an adequate particular understanding of the old classics. At any rate, we must admit that the defection in learning was not voluntary upon Lanier's part.

His habits of digression may be laid to many causes. I have emphasized more than once, but I find it only just to emphasize again the fact that most of Lanier's criticism appears in unrevised lecture form, much of it prepared for non-university classes. Under such circumstances, and with his desire to stress vividly the spirit of literature, we can see why Lanier does not build up his subjects with compact formality. On the other hand, parts of The Science of English Verse surely prove that he can plot his course and then follow it closely. In the informal atmosphere of the lectures, then, it is easy for various enthusiasms to lure him off the subject. Lanier's poetic imagination, too, plays no small part in these digressions, for he is generally willing to give it free rein, particularly if he is handling ideas which threaten to be "dry-as-dust." And, of course, the didactic urge is only too willing to assert itself at odd moments.

In much of Lanier's extended critical work there is a disturbing sense of hurriedness. It is most apparent, perhaps, in the final pages of The Science of English Verse, in The English Novel, and in parts of the essays in Music and Poetry. Between the press of bread-winning and disease and meagre train-
ing, Lanier realizes more and more, particularly in the last years, that he and his art are racing with death. Thus we find too many statements with a nervous tone or with an experimental air. Yet, with his Puritan and scientific conscience he wants desperately to reflect more on some matters and to experiment on others. This lack of time with its attendant results is one of the most tragic phases of Lanier's artistic life.

Lanier's enthusiasm has much to do with that defect which puts so many twentieth century readers on their guard, best described by Starke as a "sentimentalism of vocabulary." This enthusiasm is, too, as I have just indicated, a major factor in the tendency to digress. Unrestrained enthusiasm, conditioned by other failings, is largely responsible for Lanier's more startling pronouncements of taste, as in the case of Bartholomew Griffin, or of the early Scotch poets, or of the Elizabethan sonnet writers. This enthusiasm is at the base of an optimism which is occasionally justified, but which sometimes crystallizes into a Victorian smugness. Here again it is only fair to point out (as I have in Part I) that this optimistic ardor is not wholly voluntary on Lanier's part. Tuberculosis experts tell us that the disease generally intensifies the susceptibility to nervous optimism in its victims. Since the patient must seek as the best curative measure physical and mental rest, his mind, particularly in the case of a highly-strung intelligence, is apt to seek compensation in such an

I Starke, p. 125
attitude.

The lack of catholicity in Lanier's judgment is generally ascribed to his early experience in an atmosphere of Southern Puritanism. For my part, I believe that this direct environment is only part of the explanation. If there ever was a Puritan (of the Southern type which is less rigid) by nature Sidney Lanier was that Puritan. His aversion for the eighteenth century novelists, for the theories of Whitman and Zola is inevitable and entirely honest. By no process of the imagination or of rationalization can Lanier feel or reason himself into a comfortable tolerance for their attitudes. Perhaps more years of life would have modified the expression of his stand, but I doubt if they would have altered his essential feeling. He seems impervious to cynical realism in literature as he does to cynical realism in the life about him. In manhood, I believe, two factors strengthen the influence of Lanier's early environment and his own nature. From the harsh realities of the world he takes refuge in the love of an ideal marriage and of devoted relatives and friends. From offensive realism in literature he finds haven in the expressions of chivalry (whether in a Froissart chronicle or in an Elizabethan sonnet) and romanticism (whether in Shakespeare or in Victorian prose and poetry) and in the creative fires of his own genius.

Lanier's urge to didacticism has much the same roots.

I Lorenz stresses more than any other biographer the influence of Lanier's love for his wife --- a stress, I believe, in large measure justified.
as the limitation in his range of judgment. By nature and training he is convinced that Life has a definite meaning and purpose and that it is Man's duty to search out that meaning and purpose. It is not so often recognized, however, that, his training aside, Lanier is a born teacher by inclination and equipment. We remember that in his college days he dreams of study in Germany and a professorship at home. We recall, also, that the first work he turns to after college and again after the War is teaching. Only the chaos of Reconstruction which makes this profession mere ill-paid drudgery for a married Southerner who lacks money and a real academic background, drives Lanier from the classroom. Environment, endowment, and desire all conspire to make Lanier a teacher, but they are thwarted by circumstances. What more natural, then, that he seizes upon the didactic opportunities in writing. In his day the disciples of "Art for Art's Sake" were not a prepossessing lot. Today, I believe, an increasing number of authorities deem their theories as fanatical as those of the more intense Victorians. I, for one, am with those who find that these Victorians were mistaken more in method than in intent. In a certain sense, surely, all great art is didactive. Meanwhile, we must admit that Lanier in his didactic expression does not escape the crudities of his age.

The virtues of Lanier the critic, though they outweigh the defects, are more elusive. For my part, I have finally evolved a list which is fairly specific and tangible. Certain of his faults, of course, are also the germs of virtues. Thus
his raw scholarship and his tendency to digress, paradoxically, it may seem, have a certain value, his enthusiasm is a major asset, and his didactic habit, strangely enough, is partly justified. For the rest I should like to stress Lanier's Americanism, his honest wholesomeness, his kindly spirit, and -- last, but far from least -- his use of poetic imagination.

When I speak of Lanier's raw scholarship here, I mean the benefits of spontaneity. Much of his criticism is written on the basis of fresh reading --- the material has not had time to "set" in his mind. In consequence his reactions are not hobbled like those of a scholar who knows many sides to the question and finds it hard to reach any definite convictions. Thus Lanier's reactions have the decision and brilliance (often, we must admit, of an uneven quality) of a fine young mind meeting its first problems. In this respect Lanier is a precocious literary youngster.

Lanier's tendency to digress makes for flexibility and for interesting revelations of cross-sections of his mind. The last point, of course, is not directly related to the man's critical work. Lanier wrote for so short a time and under such baffling circumstances, however, that such revelations are valuable for a complete understanding of the man and his ideas.

Some years ago a reviewer found Lanier's lectures full of "things technically abstruse and things patently obvious."

I Outlook LXXIV, 476-77, June 20, 1903
In the second point, at least, there is more truth than the Lanier lover cares to admit. Yet, before judgment is passed, it ought to be conceded, as I have implied before, that many of these lectures were written for popular consumption. This excuses, in some measure, the "things patently obvious." The point I wish to emphasize here is that these faults are largely redeemed by Lanier's enthusiasm. It is this spiritual tension, too, which may be chiefly responsible for the fact that --- and this is literally true --- there is scarcely a dull page in his critical writings. Life of the spirit, if not of the body, is a continual joy to Lanier. It generates an enthusiasm which, passing through his chivalrous nature and his poetic genius, becomes irresistible. The reader who does not respond to Lanier's infectious pages, it seems to me, is mal-adjusted. Great literature has been sadly lacking in critics with such enthusiasm.

Particularly in the Shakespeare lectures, I believe, Lanier's desire to draw a moral lesson gives organic unity. Both the great art of the Stratford master and the content of the lectures are made symmetrical and justified when the American fits to this art, though it seem to many in too hypothetical a manner, a superb, rounded moral character. The conception of the growth of personality which is plainly the unifying thought of The English Novel owes much to the didactic urge. This urge, too, occasionally sees to it that Lanier's criticism does not become entirely petty for want of a literary foundation, though it may inject irritating moral emphases. In the chaos of
Lanier's last years his didactic impulse can be likened to a confident if overbearing traffic officer who does bring a certain order to a corner where thoughts and fancies are constantly at a "rush hour" tempo.

Lanier's criticism is American, it seems to me, because of its stress upon man's individuality, its pioneering character, its energy (enthusiasm), its freedom from slavery to convention, and its preference for vigorous, healthy literature.

His emphasis upon the development of man's sense of individuality and his consequent enlargement of personality may have been acquired as much from reading European literature as from contemplating his native scene, but Lanier's reactions and expression are predominantly American. Lanier's conceptions here do not take on frontier extravagances, but they are none the less of his own country. In such an aspect as his distrust of industrialism, for example, there is an American desire for robust, out-of-doors freedom.

In Part II we have seen how Lanier, in his conception of Chaucer, his examination of English prosody, his treatment of the novel, and his approach to Shakespeare --- to mention some of the major points --- is a true blazer of new trails. Lanier is not only a pioneer in the subjects but also in the methods of preparation for and expression of his criticism. Moses rightly calls him one of the first university investigators "in the modern and American sense" --- surely the authen-

---

I Moses, The Literature of the South, p. 361
tic critics of today must use the methods of modern research. For this phase of criticism Lanier has the ideal attitude, "the temper of a poet and the methods of a scientist."

In its range of critical ideas and in its didacticism, of course, much of Lanier's work seems to be bound up with convention. He did not have time, it is granted, to outlive certain influences of his early environment. But there are as proofs of his love for freedom such attitudes as those on Anglo-Saxon, on the Elizabethan sonnets, and on George Eliot. When Lanier does bow to convention I am convinced that it is not because of convention, but because of a sincere conviction. This is a saner stand than that of the confirmed iconoclast.

After reading some of his poetry an uninformed commentator condemned Lanier along with other Southern poets as "effete." A thorough examination of his critical tastes, however, reveals them as decidedly vigorous and wholesome. His love for the rugged Anglo-Saxon verse, for the clearness and sanity of Chaucer, for the simple beauty of the old ballads, his distrust for Morris, and his appreciation for Browning and the "salt spray" of Whitman are all present as evidence. In the dependable consistency of his taste Lanier exhibits something of the British heritage of America. Knowing Lanier the man and his convictions, one can generally predict or at least under-

---

1 Few, "Sidney Lanier as a Student of English Literature," South Atlantic Quarterly II, 157-68, April, 1903
2 Compare, too, his final attitudes on such matters as religion and industrialism.
3 Starke, p. 475
stand the course of his reactions. There is a distinct value, I believe, in such stability. Incidentally, I am tempted to feel that Lanier's critical taste, coming out of the American "wilderness" of the seventies, would have astonished and pleased Europe - if Europe had really known it and its possessor.

An estimate of a literary critic often has little to do with that elusive property, his spirit. In this case, however, in dealing with perhaps the most loveable character in American literature, one cannot avoid such a reference. The ideal critic, it is declared, should be absolutely impersonal. Since in the human nature of things this is impossible, it behooves the critic to be at least positively, constructively personal. To one who understands Sidney Lanier he is honestly and supremely so. No reasoning normal-tempered reader or subject of his writing should ever lose himself in malignant indignation. Criticism which thus allows calm study and reflection is certainly not the poorer thereby.

Professor Mims makes what is to me one of the truest of statements about Sidney Lanier's critical writing. He declares that a good title for many of the passages would be "lyrics of criticism." The more I examine Lanier's lectures the more I am convinced that, "Innately, Lanier was the poet whatever the task set before him." In language and ideas his criticism continually runs to the poetic. Indeed, I am almost ready

1 Mims, p. 350
to say that there is more poetry in Lanier's prose criticism than in most of his lesser poetry --- the language seems less forced, the similes more striking (there are passages, as I have pointed out above, where the poetic touch is overdone). Lines in the Shakespeare and Novel lectures and in Music and Poetry --- several of which are quoted in this thesis --- should convince a doubting reader. One reviewer observes that Lanier displays an epigrammatic skill which almost equals Lowell's. This skill is infused with poetic beauty (see, for example, Lanier's pronouncements upon Morris and Swinburne).

If, as it is said, Romanticism is essentially an escape from reality, then Sidney Lanier, as we look at his work and at the age in which he lived, seems to emerge a Romanticist of unusual intensity. Few artists have so understood (at least, intellectually) their epoch and yet written so apart from it. Lanier could do this chiefly because, somewhat in the manner of the Plato he did not know, he felt to a remarkable degree that the ideal was the true real. He belongs, indeed, to that higher group of Romanticists whom we might call spiritual realists. Lanier's life and character led him to an all-pervading sense of reality in the spirit. It is hard to find a real unit of thought in his criticism which does not stress the spirit in some way.

2 The outstanding exception, and one which may be excused by the nature of its subject is, of course, The Science of English Verse.
Few Romanticists have had Lanier's vivid faith in the basic goodness --- perhaps, more specifically, in the possibilities for goodness --- of man. It is this faith which does not let him slip into the opposing Romantic practice which has been the starting point for many extravagances --- I mean the practice of willful and continued solitude. Lanier never seeks seclusion for its own sake.

For other conventional Romantic characteristics I suggest Lanier's love for Nature, his belief in the doctrine of the Incuriae, his conviction that genius is destined to persecution at the hands of contemporaries, his hatred of rigidity, his stand on man's individuality, his use of the poetic touch, and, of course, his impetuous enthusiasm in its various manifestations.

On more than one important count, however, Lanier is no Romanticist. Perhaps the first is his urge to didacticism. In his theory and practice Lanier was only continuing, however crude his method, a literary function with a long and honorable pedigree. It was his Romantic brethren, indeed, who began the first real revolt against this literary didacticism. As we have seen above, Lanier's heredity and environment contained many checks on a pure Romanticism.

Again, though Lanier believes in the basic goodness of man he is no worshipper of the "natural" man. We see this in his comments on Whitman's barbarian, and in his veneration for such a man as Sir Philip Sidney. This point is indirectly linked with Lanier's belief that the artist needs knowledge and
experience and character as well as endowment to perfect his art. Thus Poe did not know enough, and Schumann lacked range in sympathy and experience. In this connection, also, Lanier asks for quality — a quality, he implies, won by hard effort — rather than quantity in creative production.

In close relation to these points is Lanier's insistence on the necessity for form. To him Art is simply defined as the creation of beautiful forms — without form it is a pulpless chaos.

Lanier's passionate stand for man's individuality is decidedly Romantic, but his exaltation of man above any other subject for study smacks of perhaps the finest principle in Neo-Classicism.

Neo-Classic, too, seems his interest in Science, the prime field for the operation of Reason in his century. On all the above points in which Lanier departs from Romanticism, indeed, we can see something of Neo-Classicism.

Again, Lanier's attitude of "high seriousness", his whole artistic life has, it seems, the tone of Greek Classicism. Life seems to close upon him like the evil Destiny of a Greek tragedy. He fights on, finally attaining the calm grandeur of spirit which one finds in the old dramatic heroes of Hellenism.

In more modern terms, Lanier's emphasis upon man (particularly in such a case as when he approves George Eliot's stress of love towards the neighbor rather than towards God), his insistence upon the need for an inner discipline which must control Life's oppositions as the artist controls the conflict-
ing elements of his art (seen in his treatment of Shakespeare), and his unalterable belief in the freedom of the will bring him into contact with the Humanists.

How, then can we place this Lanier of criticism? To a certain extent, as we have seen, he was both artist and man of science, and believed in the possibilities and worth of such a union. Though he finally chose to emphasize the artist, he did not have time to subordinate properly the scientist. This may be a fundamental explanation for the confusion of schools of thought noted above. By his prevailing tone and method of presentation and by such a key idea as that on human personality with all its implications I feel we can safely call Lanier, as have those few who have considered him heretofore, essentially a Romanticist. If his strongest virtues are Romantic, so are many of his weakest faults. Even his departures from Romanticism, though inclining intellectually to Neo-Classicism, are framed in a Romantic spirit. On the whole, when I consider these variations, such, for example, as the distaste for a "natural" man, the insistence on form, and the assertion of the need for hard work in artistic creation I find them, however they may be classified in a literary way, to be distinctly Victorian. May I suggest, then, that Lanier is not merely a disciplined Romanticist; he is a Victorian Romanticist of a liberal American order. Such a description would seem to make of Lanier a unique type in literary criticism --- I believe that he is.

What of Lanier's place in American criticism? In 1904 a volume of critical extracts edited by William Morton Payne
included the Georgian in a list of twelve outstanding American critics born before 1850. Here we find Lanier in company with Emerson, Poe, Lowell, Whitman, Howells, and Henry James. At about the same time a magazine reviewer declared that "as a judge of what is best in literature and as a natural appreciative critic on poetry and life, he (Lanier) yields to none who has written on this side of the water." In contrast has been the ignoring of Lanier in more recent works such as Foerster's American Criticism. His true place probably lies between the two extremes.

It is my thought that Lanier's final position in our criticism will be unique if not too prominent, solid if not too large. He draws admiration and devotion for a sincerity, a nobility, and a beauty of conception. He demands attention as a versatile pioneer --- one who explored in both method and material. "Lanier," says Mims, "with his reverence for science, his appreciation of scholarship, his fine feeling for music, and withal his love of nature and of man, ... laid broad the foundation for a great poet's career," --- and, I venture to add, a great critic's career. For with Dr. William Few I believe that, given the time and the opportunity, Lanier would have been "almost an ideal student and critic of literature." Such a foundation and the building, splendidly foreshadowed if only half begun, hold definitely a historical interest and a

1 Payne, American Literary Criticism
3 Mims, p. 3
present value. A living American criticism should not easily I 
forget the qualities of Sidney Lanier.

The publication of Starke's authoritative biography in 1933, 
of Lorenz's biography in 1935, and of Gay Wilson Allen's 
American Prosody with its attention to the Southerner in 
the same year, seem to indicate a revival of interest which 
should lead to a new measure of appreciation for Lanier.
A SUMMARY OF THE THESIS

In this thesis the author has tried to present in an organized manner the literary critical ideas of Sidney Lanier as found in his published writings. In Part One, as a background, he has traced Lanier's life with emphasis upon what seems to have influenced his critical thinking. In Part Two the author has presented Lanier's critical theory and practice. Finally, in Part Three the author has attempted an estimate of Lanier the critic based on the findings of Part Two. So far as the writer knows, this is the first general examination of the critical ideas of Lanier. He hopes that this thesis may be of some value in the furthering of what seems to be a new interest in Sidney Lanier and in the attempt to evaluate his work more definitely.

I

In his boyhood home at Macon, Georgia, Lanier came to know the best elements of the old Southern culture. A family life of unusual devotion encouraged a love for music and literature, while three years at small Presbyterian Oglethorpe University confirmed a love of science. At Oglethorpe Professor Woodrow advocated to the receptive lad the reconciliation of religion and science. The Civil War did allow Lanier a glimpse at German poetry and did broaden while saddening his outlook on life, but it also brought on active tuberculosis and uprooted his academic ambitions. In 1867 he published his only novel, Tiger-Lilies, steeped in German romanticism and largely a
spiritual autobiography. In the same year came his ideal marriage. The strain of teaching and law study brought on fresh attacks of tuberculosis and hastened his decision upon an artistic career. In 1875 "Corn" won him the first literary fame, while orchestral work in Baltimore brought him close to a fine library and a few inspiring literary friends. For six years thereafter Lanier battled poverty and disease and grew artistically, only to die as he attained a major objective and stimulus to greater achievement, the appointment as lecturer at Johns Hopkins.

II

Lanier's esthetic theories arrange themselves under four headings concerning the linking of art and various elements. Since he finds that Love, Truth, and Beauty are synonymous he believes that the union of the artistic and the moral is essential. Art plays a vital part in describing and interpreting man's growth in personality and in the new acknowledgment of its sacred character. Science is the indispensable servant of Art. Art interprets Nature, while Nature, particularly in its new role as a kindly friend to man, supplies Art with beautiful forms.

In his literary theory Lanier expresses a preference for a disciplined Romanticism. He finds the modern novel a synthetic type of art and the ideal form for depicting the complexity of modern character. Poetry, the noblest type of literature, has been wanting in scientific theory. Music and verse are two closely-related species of the art of sound, and they
are chiefly distinguished from each other by the musical scale as contrasted with the scale used by the human voice. All English sounds are (relatively) rhythmical. Time is the essential basis of rhythm. Like music, verse has its tunes and its colors. For poetic wholes Lanier likes particularly the English type of sonnet. Every sonnet, he believes, should be a little drama. To Lanier the genius is a man of great character as well as ability who must prove himself through conflict. The poet genius is the leader and teacher whose song is the first need for the world. Inspiration is essentially deliberate and controlled. In this literary theory Lanier emerges as a pioneer concerning the importance of the novel and concerning the relations of music and poetry, particularly in the stress on rhythmic quantity.

Lanier's few comments on critics and critical theory stress the doctrine of the Incuria, and show a distrust for the criticism of his day, based upon his own experiences. His general attitude and his practice, however, reveal a true sympathy and understanding for scholarly criticism.

Lanier, though sympathetic, has comparatively little to say on American literature. Outstanding is his disapproval of Whitman's technique and philosophy and his appreciation for the New Yorker's freshness and vigor and for the lyric power of "O Captain, My Captain!" He believes Whitman's art to be highly sophisticated and his philosophy, derived from the physically large, to be un-American and the slave of Nature. Of the New England writers Lanier is drawn most to Emerson, who is, in some
respects, a spiritual affinity.

In English literature Lanier prefers the years from Anglo-Saxon beginnings to Shakespeare, particularly the Elizabethan period, and the nineteenth century. He wishes for English-speaking people a greater knowledge and appreciation for their sturdy, ancestral Anglo-Saxon. Chaucer is second poet after Shakespeare, and Lanier makes a start at relating their work.

In the sonnet field the minor Elizabethans are at their best and create a message of noble chivalry framed in beautiful poetry. Lanier tries to rescue from the oblivion of this period the sonnet-maker called Bartholomew Griffin.

In Shakspere and His Forerunners Lanier approaches the supreme poet by describing the social and literary background, and then he develops his thesis that the master evolved simultaneously a marvelously flexible, perfect art and a superb moral character.

Old theology and poetic mannerisms seem to turn Lanier against Milton. He is disgusted at the moral attitude of the eighteenth century novelists. Lanier shows an odd interest in old Erasmus Darwin's "drolly serious" The Loves of the Plants.

For nineteenth century prose Lanier finds Thackeray "low-pitched", and approves the immoral Scott and those preachers of the social gospel, Charles Dickens and George Eliot. With her tolerant sympathy and understanding for men and her finely synthetic art, George Eliot is perhaps the supreme artist. She may be greater than Shakespeare through the range of her art and of her conceptions of human personality possible.
in the novel form and in nineteenth century thought.

For poetry Lanier finds: Shelley immature, but with occasional lyric mastery; Keats a tragic figure who touches the supreme lyric heights; Tennyson not musical but a great and noble voice; Mrs. Browning related to George Eliot; Browning magnificent in his own peculiar manner; and Morris and Swinburne possessing an effete charm.

Lanier finds, in his few comments on French and German writers: admiration for the message of Froissart, repulsion for the school of Zola, and a devotion, implied rather than directly expressed, for the German romanticists.

III

Lanier has not been finally judged as a critic. His chief defects are a lack of training, the habits of digression and haste, undisciplined enthusiasm, a lack of catholicity in judgment, and didacticism. These spring particularly from his brief, harassed artistic career and a temperament of Puritanical Romanticism which found neither the time nor the conditions for outgrowing its limitations.

His principal virtues are spontaneity, flexibility, an exhilarating enthusiasm, a fine Americanism, a sincere, kindly wholesomeness, and a poetic imagination.

Essentially a Romanticist, Lanier's moral and scientific intuitions allow him certain points of sympathy for a spiritualized Neo-Classicism. We may call him a Victorian Romanticist of a liberal American order.
In American criticism Lanier's place will probably be unique if not too prominent. In what he fore-shadowed as well as in what he actually did, Sidney Lanier the critic should be of permanent worth to his native literature.
BIBLIOGRAPHY

Lanier's Works

Florida: Its Scenery, Climate, and History.
Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott & Company
Edition, 1876

The Boy's Froissart: Being Sir John Froissart's
Chronicles of Adventure, Battle, and Custom in
England, France, Spain, etc.
New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1879

The Science of English Verse.
New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1880

The Boy's King Arthur: Being Sir Thomas Malory's
History of King Arthur and His Knights of the
Round Table.
New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1880

The Boy's Mabinogion: Being the Earliest Tales of
New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1881

The Boy's Percy: Being Old Ballads of War, Adventure,
and Love from Bishop Thomas Percy's Reliques of
Ancient English Poetry.
New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1882

The English Novel and the Principle of Its Development.
New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1883

Music and Poetry: Essays upon Some Aspects and Inter-
Relations of the Two Arts.
New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1898

Bob: The Story of our Mocking-Bird.
New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1899

Letters of Sidney Lanier: Selections from his
Correspondence, 1866-1891
New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1899

Retrospects and Prospects: Descriptive and
Historical Essays.
New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1899
Shakspere and His Forerunners: Studies in Elizabethan Poetry and its Development from Early English. (Two Volumes)
New York: Doubleday, Page & Company, 1902
(There was a limited edition of 102 numbered copies printed on Van Gelder handmade paper.)

Poem Outlines.
New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1908

Poems of Sidney Lanier: Edited by his Wife. With a Memorial by William Hayes Ward.

Uncollected Prose

"Devil Bombs." Unpublished essay, quoted in part by Mims, Sidney Lanier, pp. 45-47

"How to Read Chaucer." Independent LXIII, 1748, November 26, 1891

"Mazzini on Music." Independent XXX, 1543, pp. 3-4 June 27, 1878

"A Scheme for a Course in English Literature."
(Extract from a letter to President Gilman, of Johns Hopkins.) Independent XXXVIII, pp. 325-26, March 18, 1886

"The Story of a Proverb: A Fairy-Tale for Grown People"
Lippincott's Magazine XXIII, pp. 109-13, January, 1879

Biographical and Critical

Baskerville, W.M.
Southern Writers: Biographical and Critical Studies
Nashville, Tennessee; Publishing House of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, 1897

Blankenship, R.
American Literature.
New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1931

Bradford, G.
American Portraits, 1875-1900.
Callaway, M. Jr.
Select Poems of Sidney Lanier: Edited with an Introduction, Notes, and Bibliography.
New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1895

Foerster, N.
New York: The Macmillan Company, 1923

Higginson, T.W.
Contemporaries.
Boston: Houghton, Mifflin Company, 1899

Jones, H.M.
In American Poetry (edited by P.H. Boynton)
New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1921

Le Gallienne, R.
Attitudes and Avowals.
New York: John Lane Company, 1910

Long, W.J.
American Literature.
Boston: Ginn and Company, 1913, 1923

Lorenz, L.
The Life of Sidney Lanier.
New York: Coward-McCann, Inc., 1935

Lowes, J.L.
Convention and Revolt in Poetry.
Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1919

Macy, J.A.
The Spirit of American Literature.
New York: Boni & Liveright, Inc., 1913

Mims, E.
Sidney Lanier.
Boston: Houghton, Mifflin and Company, 1905

Monroe, H.
Poets and Their Art.
New York: The Macmillan Company, 1926

More, P.E.
Shelburne Essays, First Series.
Cambridge: Houghton & Mifflin Company, 1904

Moses, M.J.
The Literature of the South.
New York: Thomas Y. Crowell and Company, 1910
Omond, T.S.
A Study of Metre.
London, England: Grant Richards, 1903

Pattee, F.L.
English Metrists.
Tunbridge Wells, England: R. Pelton, 1903

Painter, F.V.N.
Poets of the South.
New York: American Book Company, 1903

Schlieder, F.
Lyric Composition Through Improvisation: First Year.
Boston: C.C. Birchard & Company, 1927

Starke, A.H.
Sidney Lanier.
Chapel Hill, North Caroline: The University of North Carolina Press, 1933

Stedman, E.C.
Genius and Other Essays.
New York: Moffat, Yard and Company, 1911

Trent, W., Erskine, J., Sherman, S., Van Doren, C.,
editors
The Cambridge History of American Literature.
New York: G.P. Putnams' Sons, 1918

Wayland, J.W.
Sidney Lanier at Rockingham Springs.
Dayton, Virginia: Hurbush-Elkins Company, 1912

Williams, S.T.
In American Writers on American Literature
(edited by J.A. Macy)
New York: Horace Liveright, Inc., 1931

Weirick, B.
From Whitman to Sandburg in American Poetry.
New York: The Macmillan Company, 1924
Periodicals

Anonymous

Review of Music and Poetry.
Critic n.s. XXXI, 355-66

Review of The English Novel.
Dial IV, 40-41, June, 1933

Nation XXXI, 310-11, October 28, 1880

Review of Shakspere and His Forerunners.
Outlook LXXIV, 476-77, June 20, 1903

Browne, F.F.
"Sidney Lanier"
Dial V, 244-46, January, 1895

Few, W.P.
"Sidney Lanier as a Student of English Literature"
South Atlantic Quarterly II, 157-69, April, 1903

Furst, C.
"Concerning Sidney Lanier"
Modern Language Notes XIV, 197-205, November, 1890

Greenslet, F.
"Lanier's Lectures on Shakspere"
Atlantic Monthly XCI, 266-67, February, 1903

Kaufman, M.S.
"Sidney Lanier, Poet Laureate of the South"
Methodist Review LXXXII, 94-107, January, 1900

Kent, C.W.
"A Study of Lanier's Poems"

King, F.A.
"Sidney Lanier: Poet, Critic, and Musician"
Sewanee Review III, No. 2, 216-30, February, 1895

Kuhl, E.P.
"Sidney Lanier and Edward Spenser"
Studies in Philology XXVII, No. 3, 462-76, July, 1930
Mabie, H.W.
"Sidney Lanier"
Outlook LXXI, 235-39, May 24, 1902
(Reprinted from "The Poetry of the South,"
International Monthly V, 201-23)

Northrup, M.H.
"Sidney Lanier. Recollections and Letters."
Lippincott's Magazine LXXV, 302-15, March, 1905

Payne, L.W., Jr.
"Sidney Lanier's Lectures"
Sewanee Review XI, 452-62, October, 1903

Penn, A.
"Sidney Lanier on the English Novel"
Century Magazine XXVII, 957-59, April, 1884

Schramm, W.L.
American Literature VII, No. I, 105-10, March, 1935

"Melodies of Verse"
Science 82:61-2, July 19, 1935

Snoddy, J.S.
"Color and Motion in Lanier"
Poet-Lore XII, 555-70, 1900

Spann, M.
"Sidney Lanier's Youth"; "Sidney Lanier's Manhood"
Independent XLVI, 783, 821-22, June 21, June 23, 1894

Starke, A.H.
"Lanier's Appreciation of Whitman"
The American Scholar II, 393-409, October, 1933

"William Dean Howells and Sidney Lanier"
American Literature III, 79-82, March, 1931

Thorpe, H.C.
"Sidney Lanier: A Poet for Musicians"
Musical Quarterly XI, 373-32, July, 1925