

VIRGIL AND CHARLES STUART CALVERLEY

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by

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Over a century and a half has passed since the birth at Martley in Worcestershire of the fun-loving parodist and fearless athlete whom we know now as Charles Stuart Calverley. From the beginning of the 19th century, the family, who traced their ancestry to pre-Norman times and whose native county was York, had been known as Blayds. In 1852 they resumed their proper name of Calverley. In this year Charles, after a fickle flirtation with Balliol College, from which he was sent down in his second year, transferring his allegiance from Isis to Cam, moved to Christ's College, the quondam home of Milton, whose Lycidas he turned into most attractive hexameters.

Charles did not attend a preparatory school but was under the care of private tutors (from his subsequent history it may be assumed that they found him quite a handful!) until in February 1846 he entered Marlborough School, where his sojourn was of brief duration, since he left in March of the same year. In autumn he began his remarkable career at Harrow, where a notable coeval was the great Henry Montagu Butler, Headmaster of Harrow at the age of 27 (a post he held for 25 years) and Master of Trinity from 1886 to 1918.

Calverley, a son of the vicarage, indubitably became very familiar with the unsurpassed liturgical prose of the Book of Common Prayer and the scriptural readings from the Authorised Version. When the boy was eight his father was admitted to the living of Monkton Combe with Combe Down, near Bath, which was in the gift of Christ Church, Oxford. Later he became Rural Dean and Prebendary of Wells. This saturation in Anglicanism bore fruit in the published versions of eighteen Latin hymns. Indeed the last work he prepared for the press was a rhyming version of the abecedarian poem on the Last Judgement, No. 13 in Raby's anthology, which begins Apparebit repentina dies magna Domini.(1)

His irrepressible sense of fun enabled him to cite scripture to devastating effect. Having 'borrowed' an inn-sign from the Green Man at Trumpington and sought haven within the college-gates from the wrathful pursuit of the publican and his cronies, he justified the fracas to the astonished Dean in the words of Matthew 12,39: "An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign, and there shall be no sign given to it." Lord Clonbrock, a Balliol contemporary, tells how, when C.S.C's secret ingress and egress from college was detected by Dr Wall, he parried the don's rebuke by instructing him to seek his answer in Psalm 18,3 and Acts 23,3; these read: "I call upon the Lord who is worthy to be praised and I am saved from my enemies. God shall smite thee, thou whited Wall." This facility argues no mean familiarity with Alexander Cruden's invaluable Concordance. When precise theological expertise failed him, as it did at one of those viva voce tests quaintly termed 'Collections', his capacity for improvisation was endearing. "With what feelings," asked Dr. Jenkyns, "ought we to regard the Decalogue?" The examinee, whose fondness for this branch of knowledge was unrepentantly Laodicean, pondered before venturing the reply: "Master, with feelings of devotion, mingled with awe." "Quite right, young man, a very proper answer," rejoined the Master of Balliol.

This modest paper cannot probe Calverley's own religious feelings. Both

undergraduates and fellows must have been gravelled by certain numerical aspects of the O.T. Such a one was the learned mathematician and tutor of St. John's College, John Williams Colenso, referred to in Carmen Saeculare as pueris tu detestate, Colenso. Colenso, by 17 years Calverley's senior, became Bishop of Natal before the younger man took his degree. In his commentary on Romans (1861) and his papers on the Pentateuch and Joshua he showed how hard it was to persuade simple Zulus of the literal truth of the Bible. For rudimentary calculations established (1) that every Hebrew family must have been blessed by 42 sons on average, (2) that at the second Passover the priests, in sacrificing 50,000 lambs, achieved a work-rate of 400 lambs per minute, (3) that the digestive system of every priest had to cope with a daily intake of at least 88 pigeons!

Oxford and Cambridge in the 19th century were, with a few notable exceptions, not addicted to the rigorous pursuit of scholarship. For his second Alma Mater Calverley was fortunate to choose (or have chosen for him) Christ's where Gunson, a remarkable tutor, had resolved that his college should be something more ambitious than a mediocre hotel for athletic young bloods with time on their hands. Leslie Stephen, in Sketches from Cambridge, recalls a tutorial on the Kaine Diatheke, perfunctorily given by a don who, like Jesus's Steve Fairbairn, refused to let his studies impair his rowing. Faced by an unfamiliar word he exclaimed: "Easy all! Hard word there! Smith, do you know what it means? No? No more don't I. Paddle on, all!"

At Harrow Calverley was remembered for his athleticism, especially as a jumper, his phenomenal skill in composing English, Latin and Greek verse, and his feat of learning in a single night the whole of Iliad 1. In 1849 a set of Latin verses produced seemingly without much cerebation won for him a coveted Balliol scholarship. He "lisped in numbers, for the numbers came." Going up to Oxford in 1850 he won the Chancellor's

Prize in 1852 with an hexameter poem of 236 lines, the longest of all his Latin poems, entitled Parthenonis Ruinae. We shall pass over the clashes with authority which were the precursors of the exodus of Blayds from Balliol in 1852. Omnia mutantur, nihil interit: errat et illinc/Huc venit, says Ovid's Pythagoras. Blayds quits Oxford, and Calverley descends on an unsuspecting Cambridge. In his freshman year the great hymn-writer J.M. Neale of Trinity won the Seatonian Prize for sacred verse, and F.W. Farrar, not yet (as Ovid would put it) the author of Eric, or Little by Little, won the Chancellor's English Medal. Farrar, fourth classic in 1854, I mention because, as I have written elsewhere (2), he refers clearly in his tale of Roslyn School to lines 20 and 21 of Carmen Saeculare for which C.S.C. was awarded the Camden Medal in 1853. In this same year Butler carried off the Browne Medallion (Greek Ode), and on June 3 our poet was admitted a scholar of Christ's. In 1854, black with Crimean clouds, Butler took the Porson Prize and the Camden Medal as well as the Greek Ode for the second year running. In the next year Calverley qualified again for Camden Medal and Greek Ode, while Butler sealed a marvellous undergraduate career by being placed Senior Classic. The Crimean War ended in 1856, in which year C.S.C. sat for the Mathematical and Classical Triposes. In the former were 35 Wranglers, 41 Senior Optimes and 38 Junior Optimes. Calverley's position was 26th in the second class. These figures show, first, that nearly three times as many men took maths as classics; second, how hard it was to notch up a real "double first" by gaining first class honours in two simultaneous triposes. Forty passed the Classical Tripos, of whom 13 scored a first, 15 a second and 12 a third. Calverley came second, and in 1857 was elected a Finch and Baines Fellow of Christ's. With Butler out of the running, who passed Calverley? Another Trinity man, Edward Lawford Brown, taught at Shrewsbury by the formidable Benjamin Hall Kennedy. Not for long did his star brighten the classical firmament, for he died at 27 after four years as Assistant Master of Marlborough.

The rest of Calverley's life is quickly told. For a few years he remained at Cambridge as classical lecturer and assistant tutor, publishing Verses and Translations in 1862. Having no mind to seek ordination he left Cambridge next year, entered the Inner Temple, and married his cousin, Ellen Calverley, by whom he had three children. In 1866, one year after being called to the Bar, he struck his head in what seemed a trivial skating accident. Not realizing he was concussed he sought no immediate treatment. However, with brief intermissions his health deteriorated for many years. In his fifty-third year he died of Bright's disease. Though he was a most tuneful and versatile 'mocking-bird', he failed to scale the sublime heights of song expected of him.

From his able pen we have 128 lines of Greek verse (Sapphics and Anacreontics), plus 1561 of Latin. Of these latter 1007 are in hexameters; the rest (apart from 18 lines of hendecasyllables and 28 of iambic dimeters) are all in the metres of the Odes and Epodes. Of the hexameters one piece only (from Butler's Analogy) imitates Lucretius. Catullus's distinctive hexameters are nowhere attempted. Only Juvenal of the Post-Augustans seems to have been much in Calverley's mind. The Greek Ode of 1855, the theme of which is Agamemnon's prophecy 'the day shall come for holy Ilios to be laid low' (Iliad 4, 167) is so masterly that it is clear it's author could have written splendid Homeric lines. If he wrote any, they have not survived, alas. A study of his Greek and Latin epic verses would have helped us to unravel his deeper thoughts about the two great epics. We do indeed have a full blank verse rendering of Iliads 1 and 2. There is also an interesting translation into accentual hexameters of Iliad 1, 1-129. Some time after these translations were published the London Student for June 1868 carried an eight-page article on metrical translation, wherein C.S.C. easily demolished an earlier contributor's view that there can be no true translation of Greek or Roman poetry that does not reproduce the metre. With aptly-chosen examples he mocked scholarly attempts to write English elegiacs, sapphics and alcaics. Much of

this, like the observation "The ancients, I contend, made it a special point that their verses should not scan themselves" is quotable. Of a more glorious failure cited by Calverley I give three lines and invite identification -

Phantom sound of blows descending, moan of an enemy massacred,
Phantom wail of women and children, multitudinous agonies.
Bloodily flowed the Tamesa, rolling phantom bodies of horses and men.

Yes, it is Tennyson's experiment in Catullian galliambics, Boadicea.

Admirable as are Calverley's writings on classical metres, a close scrutiny forces the conclusion that his modus scribendi did not allow for scholarly verification of sweeping assertions. "A pentameter" he claims, "ending with a monosyllable, would not be found in Latin literature." Surely he had read -

Aut facere, haec a te dictaque factaque sunt. (Catull. 76,8) and
Hoc tantum possum dicere, non amo te.

When he enquires "Why is a verse bad, which has no caesura?" and offers melaina nux, melaina nux, melaina nux, had he forgotten such Aristophanic oddities as chair' o Charon, chair' o Charon, chair' o Charon (Ranae 184)? His concluding paragraph contains a splendid metaphor showing the relationship of metre to verse. "It seems possible to train a rose or a vine upon a trellis so that, while it adheres firmly, it is still left to follow its own devices and form its own pattern over the laths, which are only seen here and there among the leaves and tendrils."

Conington's translation of the Aeneid into the metre of Scott's Marmion appeared

in 1866, three years after C.S.C. left Cambridge for the Bar, and gained a sympathetic review, in which he voiced a deep conviction. "Virgil's language," he said, "is Virgil. His diction is an essential part of him, and Milton has taken such pains to show how it may be recast in English, that we cannot help wishing Professor Conington had elected to take more hints from him than he has taken; without becoming absolutely Miltonic, which would ill accord with Scott's metre. Two duties, he argues, bind a translator; (1) towards his original, (2) toward his readers. If we take the reductio ad absurdum of the first, we arrive at Milton's rendering of procellas emirabitur insolens as "Storms unwonted shall admire." Hang on, dixerit quispiam, didn't he write aspera nigris aequora ventis emirabitur insolens (Carm. 1.5.6-8)? He did! This citation demonstrates not only our poet's 'grand memory for forgetting' but also his uncanny knack of conjuring up a fifth Asclepiad from a 17th century translation.

Translators may, through the fascination of logorrhoea, journey to the opposite pole. It is a mark of high intelligence to choose the most forceful examples, a thing our author could certainly do. His comment is slightly expanded -

Through all the changing scenes of life,
 In trouble and in joy,
 The praises of my God shall still
 My heart and tongue employ

Tate and Brady's New Version of the Psalms (1696) eschews Spartan brachylogy. Psalm 33,1 (Vulgate) reads: Benedicam Domino omni tempore; semper laus eius in ore meo. Twelve words eke out the meaning of omni tempore!

Calverley offers no translations from the Aeneid, nor despite his proven familiarity

with the epic, did it hold much appeal for him. His version of The Dead Ox (Georgics 3,515-530) is doubtless selected because of the author's demonstrable sympathy with animals.

Not shadiest forest-depths, nor softest lawns,
 May move him now: not river amber-pure,
 That tumbles o'er the cragstone to the plain.
 Powerless the broad sides, glazed the rayless eye,
 And low and lower sinks the ponderous neck. (520-524)

If I select from the Bucolics some lines for which C.S.C. could find no convincing equivalent, it is not because my opinion of the translation as a whole is unenthusiastic, but rather because no-one seems able fully to reproduce the verbal magic.

Sicilian Muse, I would try now a somewhat grander theme.

Day Lewis's line is scarcely superior to translationese.

Muses of Sicily, a loftier song
 Wake we!

Calverley's uncalled-for enjambement, followed by the inelegant spondee "Wake we", gives Eclogue 4 a lamentable send-off.

But snakes will die, and so will fair-seeming poisonous plants.

Again Day-Lewis, and how far from the graceful and semantically chiasmic original!

Occidet et serpens, et fallax herba veneni

occidet

C.S.C. does better here -

Die must the serpent, treacherous poison-plants

Must die.

The most ambitious English commentary suggests that at this point we observe the genitive of reference! I do not think that Virgil reproduces the pattern of Ecl. 4,24-25 exactly, but when Dido, drinking deep of love cannot hear enough about Troy, we have the patterned verse -

multa super Priamo rogitans, super Hectore multa. (Aen. 1,750)

Day-Lewis's version falls flat -

Asking over and over again about Priam and Hector.

Fallax herba veneni is not an expression easy to disregard. Only 62 lines before the verse just quoted we have the clearest reference to Eclogue 4.24-25 -

occultum inspires ignem fallasque veneno. (Aen.1,688)

Nor do we quite forget the pastoral source when in Aeneid 12, 828 the verb occidere is repeated not with framing but in juxtaposition -

occidit, occideritque sinas cum nomine Troia.

A further example demonstrates Calverley's fidelity to his text at a point where critics, seeing Virgil below his best, demand drastic textual surgery -

"In her son's blood a mother dipped her hands
 At fierce love's bidding. Hard was her heart too -
 Which harder? her heart or that knavish boy's?
 Knavish the boy, and hard was her heart too. (Ecl.8,47-50)

"The triple occurrence of crudelis and mater," says Coleman, "is very jejune, and the rhetorical word-play of 49-50 has an irrelevant touch of Ovidian wit about it." Right he may be; but in Catullus 62, 20-24, a passage of roughly equal length, crudelior is balanced by crudelius in the same verse-positions, natam, complexu and matris repeated in two consecutive verses, avellere similarly recurring in the same verse-position, as well as ardenti picking up ignis. Was Virgil playfully outdoing Catullus?

Before we pass to more serious translations a brief digression will show with what fidelity Calverley sought to bring back the manner and spirit of his original. In 1812 the ingenious parodists Horace and James Smith had published Rejected Addresses. From Horace's pen comes Laura Matilda's Dirge, which our poet put into elegiacs. The writers here satirised were the 'Della Cruscans', whose namby-pamby verses were collected into two volumes in 1790 entitled The British Album. Conspicuous among these sentimentalists was Hannah Cowley (1743 - 1809) whose poetic talent fell below her skill as a dramatist. This is how Smith pictures her style -

Lo! from Lemnos limping lamely,

Lags the lowly Lord of Fire,
 Cytherea yielding tamely
 To the Cyclops dark and dire.

Such alliteration is quintessential Quince -

Whereat with blade, with bloody blameful blade,
 He bravely broach'd his boiling bloody breast. (M.N.D. 5.1.145-6)

Here is Calverley -

Lustra sed ecce labans claudo pede Lemnia linquit
Luridus (at lente lugubriterque) Deus:
Amisit veteres, amisit inultus, amores;
Teter habet Venerem terribilisque Cyclops.

Surely readers were meant to catch an echo of the defeated bull on Sila's heights -

multa gemens ignominiam plagasque superbi
victoris, tum quos amisit inultus amores. (Geo. 3,226-7)

It was almost predictable that Calverley should measure himself (albeit parva sub ingenti) against Milton, his college's most distinguished alumnus, who had shown great facility in many metres, both Latin and Greek, had translated several Psalms into rhyming English verse (even dressing Psalm 114 - In exitu Israel de Aegypto - in Homeric hexameters) and had clearly proved in Epitaphium

Damonis (218 lines long) and in Lycidas his fondness for pastoral. After his long apprenticeship in translating the Eclogues and the whole of Theocritus he believed he was ready to try to clothe Lycidas in a garment not wholly unworthy of him who wrote -

Exstinctum Nymphae crudeli funere Daphnim

Flebant.

(Ecl. 5,20-21)

whereon see R.D. William's excellent note)

Milton's monody for Edward King, drowned in the Irish sea in 1637, runs to 193 lines of which 14 are short; possibly this feature is in imitation of Virgil's unfinished lines, but more probably the poet is seeking a mode of increasing emphasis or intensifying pathos. The elegy is (quis nescit?) steeped in Virgilian and other classical allusions, permeated with Hellenic and Roman poetic techniques, and, like Hamlet, overflowing with surprisingly familiar quotations. Two further qualities should be stressed, the deceptive simplicity of many of the best verses and the sheer music of Miltonic diction. Let two lines emphasise this point -

But O the heavy change, now thou art gon,

Now thou art gon, and never must return! (37-38)

Compare it with -

Jamque, relictæ tibi, quantum mutata videntur

Rura - relictæ tibi, cui non spes ulla regressus!

Note the repetition of relictæ tibi in the same verse-position and the evocation of ei

mihi, qualis erat, quantum mutatus ab illo/Hectore (Aen. 2, 274-5).

Also perhaps admissible (since in Virgil regressus is an hapax legomenon) is the faint echo of funditus occidimus neque habet Fortuna regressum (Aen. 11,413). Of course a couplet with fourteen monosyllables out of seventeen words defies reproduction in Latin.

In this passage Miltonic artistry is splendidly copied in the translation -

For Lycidas is dead, dead ere his prime
 Young Lycidas, and hath not left his peer:
 Who would not sing for Lycidas? He knew
 Himself to sing, and build the loft rhyme. (8-11)

In Calverley -

Nam periit Lycidas, periit superante juventa
Imberbis Lycidas, nec par manet illius alter.
Quis cantare super Lycida neget? Ipse quoque artem
Norat Apollineam, versumque imponere versu.

The triple repetition of the name is to remind us of Eurydice in Georgics 4, 525-7. No more could the nymphs avert the watery doom of Lycidas than the Muse herself intervene to save Orpheus, her son, when -

His goary visage down the stream was sent,
 Down the swift Hebrus to the Lesbian shore. (62-63)

Probably the best-known quotation from Lycidas is -

Fame is the spur that the clear spirit doth raise
 (That last infirmity of Noble mind)
 To scorn delights and live laborious days. (70-72)

No versifier would relish tackling this; Calverley's solution is worth noting -

Scilicet ingenium cor Fama, novissimus error
Illa animi majoris, uti calcaribus urget
Spernere delicias ac dedi rebus agendis.

For the pairing of cor with ingenium see Martial, 3.26-4 -

Et cor solus habes, solus et ingenium.

The metaphor of the spur, weakened by Calverley's addition of uti to a simile recalls Ovid's inmensum gloria calcar habet (Ex Ponto, 4.2.36). Dedi rebus agendis derives from natum rebus agendis in Ars Poetica 82. This version is, by my reckoning, indebted to Virgil in some forty places; there are, of course Lucretian, Tibullian, Horatian and Ovidian echoes. The conclusion of Lycidas forms an eight-line sphragis or seal-signature, a device borrowed in essence by Virgil from Hellenistic poets. Its length exactly matches the conclusion of Georgics 4. C.S.C. fastidiously preserves the same quota of verses, beginning thus -

Haec incultus aquis puer ilicibusque canebat;
Processit dum mane silens talaribus albis.

Thus sang the uncouth Swain to th' Okes and rills,
While the still morn went out with Sandals gray. (186-7)

Haec, canebat and dum are all taken from Virgil -

Haec super arborum cultu pecorumque canebam
et super arboribus, Caesar dum magnus ad altum
fulminat Euphraten bello. (559-561)

Among Calverley's papers was found an alternative rendering of -

Where were ye Nymphs when the remorseless deep
Clos'd o're the head of your lov'd Lycidas? (50-51)

The rejected couplet ran thus -

Quae mora vos tenuit, Nymphae, quum immitibus aequor
Delicias Lycidam vestras submergeret undis?

The translator wisely preferred -

Qua, Nymphae, latuistis, ubi crudele profundum
Delicias Lycidam vestras sub vortice torsit?

Its superiority is obvious: (1) it is altogether more direct and adheres closely to Milton, (2) the question is not "What delayed you?" but "Where could you be found", as is shown by line 57 "Had ye bin there -", (3) though submergeret undis awakens memory of summergere ponto (Aen. 1,40), sub vortice torsit (Geo. 4,528) comes appropriately from the Orpheus epyllion, and (4) the weak caesura after latuistis is employed, as often in Virgil (cf. Daphnin ad astra feremus: amavit nos quoque Daphnis, Ecl.5,52) to heighten

emotion.

Of the longer poems which won Calverley university prizes Parthenonis Ruinae (Oxford 1851), 236 lines long, does not easily lend itself to a brief exposition of its undoubted merits. Into its complex fabric are woven dozens of Virgilian borrowings, deftly altered so as to defy easy recognition. The composer was familiar not only with Virgil's complete vocabulary, but with his full armoury of sense-pauses, and his capacity for handling weighty sequences of polysyllables.

Atlantea feror trans aequora, transque sonorum

Nimbis Ionium, pastoralesque recessus

Arcadiae.

(Parth. Ruin. 1-3)

If we omit the second line, we see a resemblance to -

illas ducit amor trans Gargara transque sonantem

Ascanium.

(Geo. 3,269-70)

The metrical shape of C.S.C's second line is found rarely in Virgil, determined as it is by the placing of a dispondaic word followed by enclitic -que just after the main caesura. Virgilian examples include tempestatesque sonoras (Aen.1,53) tempestatesque serenat (Aen.1,255), inconcossosque hymenaeos (Aen.1,651) and Dodonaeosque lebetas (Aen.3,466); it seems to be an Ennian borrowing. Persius strangely uses it four times in 640 hexameters. Some later writers (e.g. Statius and Claudian) used it to excess. Not finding in Virgil a sentence quite as ponderous as Calverley's, I turned hopefully to Statius and was not disappointed. Consider how Achilleis 1 begins -

Monstratur Sinus.

We are reminded of the Sibyl guiding Aeneas through Limbo -

nec procul hinc partem fusi monstrantur in omnem
lugentes campi. (Aen. 6,440-1)

Here the convict, patriis e finibus exsul (cf. Ecl 1,61) worked the land with hated plough (terram tractabat aratro). Is the repetition of consonants here an attempt at the effect of -

ergo aegre rastris terram rimantur? (Geo.3,534)

It was a soil bearing a rich yield of punishment - Fecundumque solum poenis, a phrase recalling the torture of Tityos (fecundaque poenis / viscera, Aen. 6. 598-9). "You could fancy," writes Calverley, "that the shore still groaned with the dragging of chains."

Credas littus adhuc tracta stridere catena;

Sed fuit.

We see here stridor ferri tractaeque catenae (Aen.6,558). Sed fuit ("But that is all in the past") clearly imitates sed fortuna fuit ("but her old prosperity is no more"), spoken of Ardea, which is still a magnum nomen (Aen. 7,411-413). Most Virgil-lovers, however, would think first of fuit Ilium et ingens/gloria Teucrorum (Aen.2,325-6). These examples show, as well as brief citations can, with what assurance Calverley interwove disiecti membra poetae which crowded his mind when he sought classical parallels for conditions in the early colony. When he was born there would be many old men alive who

remembered the year 1770 when Captain Cook landed to the south of what is now Sydney. By his eighth birthday transportation was virtually over. Gold was found at Bathurst, a town in New South Wales on the Macquarie River, one of the first settlements west of the Blue Mountains as early as 1851, two years before this poem was written. At that time the ex-Harrovian was diligently pursuing everything except his studies in the University of Oxford.

The poem ends with an eleven-line passage modelled on Georgics 2, 490ff. The essential framework is felix qui potuit followed by fortunatus et ille. Here are the last three verses -

Patris amans illi soboles, nec laeta laborum
Uxor abest; non ille timet de nocte latrones,
Non auctumnalem maturis frugibus imbrem.

Is it entirely fanciful to read in the word soboles a possible allusion to si qua mihi de te suscepta fuisset / ante fugam suboles, (Aen. 4,327-8), the little Aeneas whom Dido bore, and behind that to the Catullian baby of poem 61, 219 "smiling sweetly to greet his father"? Laeta laborum (Aen.11,73) certainly brings us to Dido and to the garment she made, in which was shrouded the lifeless form of Pallas. In the next line we are by contrast whisked away to Horace -

ut iugulent hominem, surgunt de nocte latrones. (Ep. 1.2.32).

The third line is of course based on the amoebaeon song of **Eclogue 3** -

Triste lupus stabulis, maturis frugibus imbres. (80)

Though it is less than fair to judge this poem on the basis of the small selection here

given, I feel strongly that Calverley's heart never lodged in the Antipodes, and that it might apply the cutting phrase used by Tacitus of Galba's **ingenium - magis extra vitia quam cum virtutibus**.

Far different is the case with **Carmen Saeculare**, (2) a far superior hexameter poem, also composed in 1853, the motto of which was **Quicquid agunt homines, nostri est farrago libelli**. The setting is Cambridge. After an introductory passage of fifteen lines describing the winter delights and perils of ice and snow we are concerned exclusively with undergraduates as they prepare or fail to prepare for the rigours of the Mathematical Tripos. Reference is even made to the mathematical text-books of John Hymers (1803-87 -**dirus "Hymers"** - James Wood (1760-1839) -**nec pondus inutile "Lignum"** -, George Salmon (1819 - 1904) - "**Salmogue**" - and John William Colenso (1814 - 83) - **pueris tu detestate Colenso**. The latter became Bishop of Natal in 1853 and ten years later was solemnly excommunicated by Robert Gray, Bishop of Cape Town and Metropolitan of Africa. All these torturers of the juvenile mind were subsumed in an almost Virgilian phrase **horribiles visu formae** (cf. **Aen** 6,277). C.S.C. respected a man who in a non-Horatian way could be termed **numerosus**. In the amusing verses entitled "**Hic vir, hic est**" (**Aen**. 6,791) he described his feeling as "an unassuming Freshman" -

Each perambulating infant
 Had a magic in its squall,
 For my eager eye detected
 Senior Wranglers in them all.

It is probably coincidental that 1853, the date of this poem, saw the appearance of the first part of "The Adventures of Mr. Verdant Green, an Oxford Undergraduate", written by the Reverend Edward Bradley (1827-89), who as a graduate of Durham

University, adopted the **nom de plume** of Cuthbert Bede. Since in his **Hic vir, hic est** the poet confesses that Bacon Brothers, the famous tobacconists of 17 Market Hill, Cambridge, accelerated the blunting of his moral feelings, we shall cite in full the section on smoking in **Carmen Saeculare**, merely remarking in passing that the notorious Cambridge Tobacco Riot of November 3, 1854, was not occasioned by these innocent hexameters -

At juvenis (sed cruda viro viridisque juvenus)

Quaerit bacciferas, tunica pendente, tabernas:

Pervigil ecce Baco furva depromit ab area

Splendidus quiddam solito, plenumque saporem

Laudat, et antiqua jurat de stirpe Jamaicae

O fumose puer, nimium, ne crede Baconi:

Manillas vocat; hoc praetexit nomine caules.

I append the author's own scholarly annotations.

tunica pendente: h.e. "suspensa e brachio. Quod procuratoribus illis valde ut ferunt, displicebat. Dicunt vero morem a barbaris tractum, urbem Bosporiam in fl. Iside habitantibus. **Bacciferas tabernas:** id. q. nostri vocant "tobacco-shops".

We all recognise Charon's hand (**Aen.** 6,304) in the composition of the first line. As for line 3, we may not so readily remember that Juvenal (8,158) writes of low taverns kept open at night (**pervigiles popinas**). **Antiqua de stirpe** in the fifth verse is practically Virgilian (cf. **Aen.** 1,626; 6,864). **Eclogue** 2, 17, the source of the penultimate line, is rendered by Calverley himself thus -

Put not, oh fair, in difference of hue

Faith overmuch

The theft of *Aeneid* 4,172 -

coniugium vocat, hoc praetexit nomine culpam

to supply the last line is obvious. In these two lines we cannot help but admire the ingenious pairing of 'block hexameters from pastoral and epic. To illustrate the word **caules** I quote *Punch* 1851, p.63), a publication dear to Calverley -

SCENE: A greengrocer's shop. DRAMATIS PERSONAE: Greengrocer and Old Lady.

O.L. (holding a very small cabbage) "What! 3d for such a small cabbage? Why, I never heard of such a thing!

Greengrocer: "Werry sorry, Marm; but it's all along 'o that Exhibition! What with them foreigners and the gents as smokes, cabbages has riz"

It was of course an old joke. In *Punch* for 1843, the year of the first appearance of 'Liddell & Scott', the *University Intelligence* on page 218 complains of the 'vile effluvia of their penny rolls of cabbage leaf"

In the year after *Carmen Saeculare* appeared a great Trinity classicist, Frederick William Farrar, the too-much-maligned author of *Eric: or Little by Little* (1858), became an assistant master at Marlborough College. In chapter 13 Eric, deputed to buy Easter eggs for a picnic, having taken longer than expected, says, to forestall the chaffing of Montagu and Russell -

"Ay, but I've procured a more refined article. Guess what it is. "A more

refined article" echoes **splendidus quiddam solito**, as is proven by the sequel, when Eric, the Satanic tempter, enlightens his young companions by inviting his **fraterculus** Monty to have a whiff.

"A whiff! Oh! I see you've been wasting your tin on cigars - **alias** rolled cabbage-leaves. Oh fumose puer!"

Whether the Balliol drop-out who in some ways out-Ericed Eric, would sympathise with a story "written with but one single object - the vivid inculcation of inward purity and moral purpose' **aliis post me memoranda relinquo!**

This remarkable pastiche, which I edited thirty-five years ago (3), abounds in scholarly wit, but I shall bring this discursive lecture to an end by translating and commenting on the last eight lines. "Your fourth year has arrived. Having now properly prepared your subjects, go in exultantly and win, and compel the dons to give you a B.A. If you bear all this in mind you will escape the vast abyss. Aye, industrious youth, and, if you should somehow break the harsh bars of fate, you will end up as a Wrangler. At least you will not turn up year after year at the old diggings (i.e. the Senate House) and be plucked, spending the whole of your youth in misery. Nor, when you have failed to get into the class-list and are given up to unproductive grief will the witty Mr. Leach poke fun at you."

Quartus venit: ini, rebus jam rite paratis,

Exultans, et coge gradum conferre magistros.

His animadversis, fugies immane Barathrum.

His, operose puer, si qua fata aspera rumpas,

Tu rixator eris. Saltem non crebra revises

**Ad stabulum, et tota moerens carpere iuventa;
 Classe nex amisso nil profectura dolentem
 Tradet ludibriis te plena leporis HIRUDO.**

The Latin sources are easily enumerated. Rebus iam rite paratis (Aen.4,555): Aeneas is about to be warned by Mercury in a dream. **Coge gradum conferre iuencos** (Geo. 3,169): bull-calves must be trained to step side by side. **His animadversis** (Geo.3,123): a didactic formula referring to the wise choice of a stallion. **Immane barathrum** (Aen. 8,245): the sight of Cacus's den is like a sudden vision of Hades. **Heu, miserande puer ... eris** (Aen. 6,882-3): comment on Calverley's adaption is superfluous! (**Crebra revisit / ad stabulum desiderio perfixa iuenci** (Lucretius 2,359-60): the moving description of the cow vainly seeking her calf slain at the altar; but earlier in **Carm. Saec.** the words **desiderio perfixa galeri** have been used of an old gentleman's fruitless pursuit of a topper snatched by a gust of wind. **Perpetua maerens carpere iuventa** (Aen. 4,32): Dido's loneliness excites Anna's pity, **Plena cruoris hirudo** (Ars Poetica 476): an incurable verse-monger is like a leech which refuses to let go until gorged with blood. On this we must quote C.S.C's annotation -

Obscurior allusio ad picturam quandam (in collectione viri, vel plusquam viri, Punchii repositam,) in qua juvenis custodem stationis moerens alloquitur.

The issue of **Punch** for Saturday, Feb 12, 1853, p.70 carries an illustrated joke with this legend -

Railway Porter (picking up a young man's luggage): "First class, Sir?"
 Unfortunate Oxonian: "No, plucked!"

I have tried to paint a picture of an age long-dead, an age before (I quote Dacre

Balsdon) "even Oxford came to grips with the new and ugly word Research." Calverley would, I am sure, have been amused by the plight of modern academics who, the more they grope towards the ever-receding light of knowledge, the more they are hag-ridden by the sinister shadow of the **curriculum vitae**.

NOTES

1. See "Charles Stuart Calverley and the **DE DIE JUDICII**" in **CLASSICA ET IBERICA: A Festschrift in honor of the Reverend Joseph M. - F. Marique, S.J.** (Worcester, Mass. 1975).
2. Edited in **Proceedings of the Leeds Philosophical Society (Literary & Historical Section)**, VI, 472-481, May 1950.
3. **Notes & Queries**, July 1972, 265-6.