

Date : 24.09.21

Page (62)

lier poets but as a revelation of the man himself it is remarkable. In a vain and sophomoric preface he declares that poetry is to him an idle experiment and that this is his first and last attempt to amuse himself in that line. Curiously enough as he starts for Greece on his last, fatal journey, he again ridicules literature and says that the poet is a "mere babbler". It is this despising of the art which alone makes him famous that occasions our deepest disappointment. Even in his magnificent passages, in a glowing description of nature or of a Hindoo woman's exquisite love, his work is frequently marred by a wretched pun or by some cheap buffoonery, which ruins our first splendid impression of his poetry. Byron's later volumes, 'Manfred and Cain', the one a curious, and perhaps

Date: 23.09.21

read them. His literary kinship is with the Elizabethans in his love for romance and beauty and in his craving for the Renaissance spirit of learning. We find in his poetry a continuation of the Elizabethan tradition. That is why many a critic agree to call Milton a belated Elizabethan. A. J. Wyatt remarks in this connection, "He belongs in spite of chronology, to the glorious earlier Elizabethan period, and not to the later period of partial decline." Mr. David Daiches observes, "Milton who in many respects was more of an Elizabethan, a man of the seventeenth century shared the Elizabethan feeling for Ovid as the great narrator of classical myth the poet who transmitted in lively and picturesque form the whole achievement of the classical imagination." Verity also believes that Milton belonged to the Elizabethans. He says "Milton was the last of the

Date: 25.09.21

of human kindness, the sympathy with the poor was strongly felt by Chaucer as by Shakespeare. Both Chaucer and Shakespeare like Juvenal did not fall foul on their characters. There was a spirit of sunny endeavour about Chaucer and Shakespeare to make things better for the people. Chaucer's aloofness from starving people was also the outcome and result of his conservatism and optimism. He saw the world as it was full violence, treachery, avarice and haunted by the ~~shadow~~ shadow of disease and death, but he saw it - whole with calm, amused and delighted eyes. He was not like some of the doubt-racked Victorians who took a pessimistic view of life, but like Browning he had enough courage, faith and optimism to enjoy the world in the midst of miseries. ~~Chaucer~~ Chaucer took delight like a roe in the sunny and bright pleasure of life. intense

Date : 23.09.21

Elizabethans, a lonely survival lingering on into days when French influence was beginning to dominate English taste. Even the metre of his poetry must have sounded stranger to ears familiarised to the crisp clearness and epigrammatic ring of the rhymed couplet."

In his use of Blank verse and in his classical strain Milton was truly an Elizabethan. His early poems grew on Elizabethan soil and drank Elizabethan air. They fully reveal his love of beauty and romance, a passion for music and art and imaginative exuberance. These were the qualities which characterized the Elizabethan poetry. For example, these lines from 'On May Morning' reveal his Elizabethanness:-

"Now the bright morning star,
Day's harbinger
Comes dancing from the East,
and leads with her
The flowery May, who

from her green lap throws
 The yellow cowslip, and
 the pale Primrose ..."

Milton's first substantial poem 'On the Morning of Christ's Nativity' is written within the Spenserian tradition. There are clear echoes of Spenser himself, of Phineas Fletcher and other Elizabethans. 'The stanzaic forms and the texture are the culmination of Milton's early Spenserian phase'. Keats the great romantic, admired the lovely nineteenth stanza:

"To oracles are dummm
 No voices are hideous
 hummm

x x x

Apollo from his shrine
 Can no more divine,
 With hollow shriek the
 steep of Delphos leaving"

His Lycidas is based on the sixteenth century Italian pastoral poetry. Milton was never a more completely Renaissance

Date: 23.09.21

once, artist than he is in this poem. We have in this poem the echoes of Theocritus, Virgil, Ovid, Spenser, Sidney and Shakespeare. Lycidas recalls the Elizabethan elegies in tone and expression, though it is predominantly puritan. The Elizabethans composed Sonnets frequently. Milton also wrote Sonnets. In this too he was mostly an Elizabethan. The imagination, style and picturesque images of his great epics also establish his kinship with the Elizabethan poetry. His decision of writing the first national epic speaks of his Elizabethan quality, that is love for the nation, nationalism and patriotism. In fact, he possessed the qualities of a true Elizabethan hero. "The world of Paradise Lost is also an ideal, conventional world, like the world of the Arabian Nights, or the world of the chivalrous romance, or that

Page (1) B.A. Part I (English Honours)

Date: 23.09.21

Question: Discuss Milton as a belated Elizabethan.

Answer: When Milton was born most of the Elizabethans had already written their great works. Spenser had written his 'Faerie Queene' and was dead before 1600. Sir Philip Sidney had died a dozen years before Spenser's birth. By the time Milton came to compose his epics, the spirit of Renaissance had almost died down and there was a marked change in the temper and outlook of the new age. But Milton did not allow himself to be tied down to his age. No doubt he was a puritan, but his ~~poor~~ puritanism had the catholicity of a broad-minded and large-hearted man. He could not bind himself to narrow puritanism of his age. He rose above his age and walked like a solitary and majestic figure. He did bestride the narrow world like a colossus, and the petty man walked under his huge legs, and peeped