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B.A. Part I (English Honours)

"Cavalier Poets"

John Donne influenced both the secular and the religious poets of the age. The secular poets came to be known as Cavalier poets due to their political affiliations and loyalty to the King. But here political affiliation is misleading because all the religious poets were not Puritans and some of them took their King as God. One of the earliest Cavalier poets is Thomas Carew whose love lyrics and madrigals have found ~~the~~ a place in the anthologies. He has a refinement of style, elegance and artistic restraint. His refinement recalls Robert Herrick but Carew was a courtier and hence, was more sophisticated and witty but less genial and ~~more~~ naive than Herrick. He is the finest lyric writer of his age. He ~~lacks~~ lacks the spontaneity of Herrick but is superior in fine workmanship. His poems, especially amatory, are less fanciful

but more sensual. He owes to a great extent, to Donne for the flexibility of style. He is never obscure or unclouth. His 'He that Loves A Rosy Cheek' may be cited as an example of one of the finest lyrical poems. Those of his poems which find a place in the anthologies are 'ASK me NO more, When Thou poor EXcommunicate', and 'Read in these Roses the Sad Story'. His work retains the Elizabethan glow of imagination. Thomas Carew combined in himself the influences of both Johnson and Donne. He was a courtier and a love poet writing his verses with difficulty. He is a careful stylist and his lines are shaped with much attention. Even the two great pioneers of the Classical School, Sir John Denham and Edmund Waller failed to improve much upon it. Robert Herrick falls in between the ~~classical~~ cavaliers and the

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Anglicans. He was the most gifted and delicate of all. He ~~wrote~~ wrote both secular and religious verses. His religious poetry were published under the general title 'Hoble Humbers' and the secular poems are in the same volume under the title 'Hesperides'. It is in the secular verses that Herrick is found to be at his best. At a time when people were passing through great mental turmoil due to fiercest passion, a natural consequence of tumult and confusion, Herrick kept himself aloof from these things and preferred to sing the joys of life.

Sir John Suckling is a typical Cavalier poet with his loyalty, dash, lightness of heart and moral. Impetuosity, audacity and swiftness are characteristic of Suckling. He laughs at the painstaking labour of Carew. He is reminiscent of Donne so

far as hyperbole is concerned because he left his master's metaphysics alone. Witty and glamorous, he was a favourite of the court of Charles I but being involved in rescuing ~~Stratford~~ Strafford from the Tower, he had to seek safety out of England. There are very few situations when he is gloomy or out-of-humour and laughter. He makes the cynicism and insincerity of Donne flippant and light-hearted. Some of his noted lyrics are 'out-upon it' I have loved three whole days together, 'Why so pale and wan fond lover' and 'Oh! For some honest lover's ghost'. He wrote an original wedding ode in the form a ballad entitled 'A Ballad upon a wedding'. Sir John Suckling is King among the "mob of gentlemen who wrote with ease". Richard Lovelace "the most amiable and beautiful person that ever was beheld" was born in

1618 and was educated at Oxford. He suffered imprisonment twice for his enthusiasm for the Royalist cause during which he wrote 'Lucasta' and some of his best lyrics and yet surprisingly died at forty in poverty. The works of Lovelace are deficient in craftsmanship but he is regarded as the Sidney of his age. His poems are full of obscure conceits. In his sincerity he deserves a comparison with Wyatt and Sidney though his refinement shows an influence of Ben Jonson and his wit reminds one of Donne though it is a "pale ghost" of the wit of the great master.

John Cheeland was a satirist and his best work is 'The Rebel Scot'. His lines are full of conceits. He is an imitator of Donne. He paved the path for the poetical satires of the Restoration. Francis Quarles is another prolific versifier of the age. He was appointed cup

beaver to Elizabeth of Bohemia and on his return to England he was appointed as Secretary to Arch Bishop Usher of Ireland. His most popular work is 'Emblem'. His other works are 'A Feast for Worms', 'Madagascar' and 'Sion's Elegies'. He supported the Royalists in the civil war. The grief at the loss of his library brought about his death in 1664.

- Some of the common features of Cavalier poetry are that-
- (i) though all the poets wrote short lyrics, they had no liking for sonnet writing. They had lost the fine careless rapture of the Elizabethan lyricists,
 - (ii) the Cavalier lyricists were not professional. The meaning is that they did not write for publication but they wrote as amateurs of poetry,
 - (iii) the lyricists revealed their lyrical power of high order,
 - (iv) the conversational ~~form~~ fervour is also explicit in their

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poems.

The end.

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