THE GEORGIAN POETS:
A CRITICAL EXAMINATION OF THEIR POETRY
AND POETIC THEORY.

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SYNOPSIS.

As the Introduction explains this thesis sets out to look at the Georgians' achievement in poetry in the light of their intentions as avowed in prose and their methods as exemplified by their poems. This is chiefly a critical exercise but history has been used to clear away the inevitable distortion which results from looking at Georgian poetry after fifty years of Eliot-influenced hostility. The history of the movement is dealt with in Chapter 2. The next three chapters examine aspects of poetry which the Georgians themselves considered most interesting. Chapter 3 deals with form, Chapter 4 with diction and Chapter 5 with inspiration or attitude to subject matter. Chapter 6 looks at the aspect of Georgianism most commonly thought by later readers to define the movement, that is its subjects. Chapter 7 considers the Georgians' outward looking attitude and their concern to popularise poetry as well as looking at the effects on their poetry of their considerable success. In Chapter 8 I examine the Georgian attitude to tradition and the way in which individual poets were influenced by their predecessors. Finally Chapter 9 attempts to make some tentative critical judgments not entirely in line with the Georgians own view of themselves. Two appendices list the poems which are central to this study, those published in the five volumes of Georgian Poetry and the poetry books from which Marsh drew for his anthology and on which I have relied for a more general field of study.
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CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION.

Who were the Georgians, and what did they stand for in poetry? These questions must be answered, as far as this is possible, before any criticism of their work is embarked on. Immediately, this raises fundamental problems, which even the briefest look at the small amount of criticism about the Georgians confirms. Very often who the Georgians were is in itself a critical statement producing results as varied as the multitude of candidates for the title permits. What the poets stood for, seems, even more, to invite prejudging the poets; it is difficult, without criticism to arrive at any idea of a poet's aim, or a group of poets' aims. It is, however, necessary to have at least a well-formed idea that the Georgians did stand for something in particular where poetry was concerned. Too often readers of twentieth-century poetry have received the impression that the Georgians were merely second-rate, washed-up remnants of Romanticism, the producers of unconsidered rural idylls. Closer inspection soon shows that this is in no way true.

Georgian writings, prose as well as verse, will be examined in this thesis in an attempt to discover the essential qualities of the poetry. At the same time the prose especially will be used to demonstrate that, for the original Georgians, at least, Georgian poetry was new and revolutionary. For this reason, it is, I think worthwhile to look first, however briefly, at the two questions set out above. In this way the movement and the poetry can be put in a true historical perspective.

The history of the movement is of paramount import-
ance especially when, as in the case of the Georgians, a short period of time has eclipsed any sense that the poets were writing for today, much less for all time. At various points in the thesis the history will be used to illuminate the development of the poetic phenomenon, and for the facts of the case I am much in the debt of Robert Ross whose *The Georgian Revolt* I have used extensively and of the late Christopher Hassall whose two biographies of Edward Marsh and Rupert Brooke, have filled out the details of the very personal nature of the founding of the volumes. However, this is not primarily a historical work. In the end, the hope is that the description "Georgian Poetry" will emerge as a useful critical term having a precise meaning, referring to the work of specific poets, work, which, moreover, has enough in common despite wide variety, to warrant its being described by a collective adjective.

Who were these Georgians? The answer to this is frequently tied to prejudiced views of their poetry. As John Press remarked:

"Some writers who dislike all the connotations of the word Georgian are at pains to deny this title to any poet of merit who flourished between 1912 and 1922, the years spanned by Edward Marsh's anthologies. Robert Graves, we are assured was not a Georgian, nor were D.H. Lawrence, Edward Thomas, Siegfried Sassoon, Wilfred Owen, Isaac Rosenberg, and Edmund Blunden. Whether or not they appeared in *Georgian Poetry* is, according to such
"sweep critics, totally irrelevant. What matters is the quality of their work: if it is good it cannot be Georgian; if it is Georgian, it must, ipso facto, be feeble." (1)

Conversely if the writer is working for the Georgian cause the popular names are emphasised and the rest forgotten, usually without any attempt to give reasons for the selection. James Reeves' introduction to the Penguin anthology is a case in point. He writes throughout of "Georgianism" and "Georgian Poets" as though he were quite clear in his mind what the description entailed but nowhere is there any more critical definition of the criteria adopted than this:

"My determining object has been to make a selection of Georgian poetry which will appeal to the unprejudiced modern reader after a generation of neglect." (2)

Accordingly he chooses poems by Housman, Davies, Brooke, Flecker, Thomas, Owen, Masefield and other equally well known names. The hundreds of minor obscure poets who flourished in the period are represented by one poem each of J.C.Squire and Victoria Sackville-West, two of Ivor Gurney and three of Charles Sorley.

If the critical attitude is abandoned, the answer to "Who were the Georgians?" must be a historical one. Frank Swinnerton in The Georgian Literary Scene considers all writers in whatever genre, who flourished in the reign of George V (1911-1935), though within this period some writers are seen to be more typically Georgian than others. For the average reader — if he considers the Georgians at all — the answer to who they were is found in a combination of this wide historical perspective and a vague and not very
favourable definition of Georgian as rural in inspiration and conventional in form at a time when the fashionable poets were exclusively urban and almost outrageously original.

Clearly for practical purposes a more precise definition has to be adopted. In this thesis the Georgians will be defined as those poets who contributed to any of the five anthologies of Georgian Poetry edited by Edward Marsh and published between 1912 and 1922. A list of these poets is found in Appendix A together with details of their contributions to each volume. This answer to the question "Who were the Georgians?" has certain drawbacks. Firstly, several of the poets who did contribute to the anthologies have little bearing on the second question "What did the Georgians stand for?" One poem contributors like Edmund Beale Sargant, Robert Calverley Trevelyan, Maurice Baring and Herbert Asquith cannot be considered as playing as important a role in the defining of Georgianism as other figures. Another factor makes some poets unsuitable material for research into peculiarly Georgian poetics. As the editor admitted in the Prefatory Note to the second anthology some poets were included in the first volume who were now seen to belong to:

"an earlier poetic generation, and their inclusion must now be allowed to have been an anachronism." (3)

Primarily Marsh is here referring to T. Sturge Moore and G.K.Chesterton whom he had included in a shrewd endeavour to help sales for the sake of lesser-known more genuinely Georgian poets. A.E. Housman, who was approached for a contribution, presumably with the same end in view, declined. These writers and some
of the contributors to the fifth volume, Richard Hughes, William Kerr and J.D.C. Pellow, who seem to epitomise the development of what Graves called "Georgianismatism" receive scant attention in the following pages.

The definition of a Georgian poet has indeed been more rigorously followed in deciding who is to be omitted from discussion. This makes plain the second drawback. Two of the brightest poetic talents of the period, Wilfred Owen and Edward Thomas were not included in the anthologies and are, therefore, not included in the following discussion. In the case of Thomas this is an especial loss because in many ways he exemplifies many of the traits generally considered Georgian and at the same time he is recognised as a poet of considerable stature. Other lesser poets were not selected by Marsh and must be omitted here and in some cases, though not many, useful material has to be ignored.

Despite these two major drawbacks, the definition has one advantage which makes its adoption unquestionably more useful than the use of any other looser system. Where a poet agreed to contribute to any of the volumes of Georgian Poetry it can safely be said that at least for some period of his working life he was content to be known as a "Georgian". Oddly, defenders of some Georgian poets have sought to disentangle them from the Georgian group by proving that the poet was motivated merely by business considerations. D.H. Lawrence is often cynically protected in this way from his own Georgianism; and yet he was willing four times to be presented to the public in a "Georgian" anthology. It seems to me that
if Lawrence (or any other poet) is to be allowed any artistic integrity, the decision to be published in these volumes must be taken as a serious one, made with other than the purely financial aspects in mind.

The history of the Georgian Poetry volumes which created this group of poets and often constituted their only connection, will be dealt with in detail in the next chapter. Here, however, one aspect of the history is relevant to the discussion of who the Georgians were; that is the selection of the name for the volumes. Marsh in his first Prefatory Note boldly defended the title with the expression of a hope that the poems would help readers:

"realize that we are the beginning of another "Georgian period" which may take rank in due time with the several great poetic ages of the past." (4)

This unmistakeable claim to equal the productions of the Elizabethan and Augustan ages, in the long run, did Marsh's much more modest proteges little good, and from the outset some of them, Brooke, Abercrombie, Drinkwater, Gibson and Monro were not happy with the name which, it must be stressed, was chosen by the editor and not by any of the poets concerned, although they eventually consented to its use.

In contributing to the volumes a poet had to consider not only the general title but also the associative meaning of the title conferred by other contributors. Clearly not the name itself but eventually those who appeared under it, gave "Georgian" its peculiar meaning. Marsh was in this matter too, the final arbiter. Who was to be included and who omitted were questions which he decided. In the early days he sometimes listened to the advice of Brooke and Monro
but more often than not, as will be seen in the next chapter, advice was rejected. This policy eventually forced several Georgians to withdraw from the volumes. Sassoon's comment in a letter to Marsh is pertinent:

"I am entirely out of sympathy with several of the Georgian shavers in the shade of your laurel tree." (6)

These dissensions are important because it must be stressed that no answer to "Who were the Georgians?" can accurately imply that they were a coherent group, all waving the same banner, much less an organised coterie. They were possibly the most nebulous of the group of writers then in existence. The Imagists, the Bloomsbury group and the Sitwells and followers, were all more tightly organised according to agreed principles. Possibly this is because they came together as friends (or relations) with shared aims. The Georgians were brought together by a man who, although the kindest of friends to many of them and a sincere and generous patron of the arts, was not one of the group himself. In so far as there was any friendship (and there was a good deal especially early on) it was between the individual poet and the editor, and then as a friend of his with the other poets. There was no spontaneous unity and again especially in the beginning, there was a strong desire to prevent any uniformity in the work or members of the group.

What then, to move on to the second of the original questions, did the Georgians stand for? Or to ask the preliminary question first are there any grounds for thinking that they stood for anything beyond their own individual work? To an extent the
answer to this is no, and perhaps it is time to so modify the term "stand for" with its implications of a united and slightly defiant front and to rephrase the question. Is there any ground for thinking that the term 'Georgian' can be used to denote a particular type of poem? Can one really expect that one Georgian poem will have factors in common with other Georgian poems? To this, I think the answer should be yes. And my reasons for thinking so will shape the following chapters.

At a superficial glance, most of the uses of the word "Georgian" in criticism of twentieth-century poetry dissuade one from thinking that the word can have any precise value (apart from its limited historical meaning). Muriel Spark's energetic outrage is perhaps typical in her defence of a poet, too often neglected in her opinion because he is considered Georgian:

"My first task...is to dissociate Masefield from the category of the Georgian Group, for, to many people, the belief that he is one of the Georgians is an obstacle between them and his work. The time is perhaps already past when it was a kind of calumny to regard a poet as a Georgian; an attitude of hostility towards Georgian verse has been replaced by one of apathy on the part of critics, which I dare say is just; the only point I wish to make is, that it is inaccurate to include John Masefield's work in the genre for which the Georgian poets were famed."(7)

From which one learns two things; Miss Spark does not admire the Georgians and as she does admire
John Masefield she cannot think that he was a Georgian. Interestingly enough the aspect of Masefield's art which Miss Spark most emphasises is his story-telling and it was Masefield's influence which coloured the narrative poems which figure so prominently in books of Georgian poetry. To some he was as near as they approached to a father-figure.

Other critical uses which might lead one to despair of finding a real meaning for the term 'Georgian' are such as is found in J.M. Cohen's comment on Robert Graves' poem "The Boy in Church" which appears in Georgian Poetry 1916-17:

"Though Georgian in colour, it is not derivative" (8)

Here the only clue to the meaning of Georgian is that it is somehow equivalent to "derivative". It is also, similarly equivalent to many uncomplimentary terms. Often it appears in combined form as, in the same critic's reference to:

"Victorian grandeur and Georgian smugness." (9)

where the difference in meaningfulness between the word "grandeur" and "smugness" is an additional slight of the Georgians, the one being a legitimate critical term, the other only a sneer at personalities.

Exaggeration of some characteristics to the point of ridicule is another frequent method of not defining Georgianism. David Daiches' description of the Georgian poets is humorous and obviously meaningless. He pictures them:

"each choosing a favorite emotion and a favorite scene, and ringing a few select changes." (10)

Despite this he gives to the Georgians a whole chapter
of detailed if not very favourable criticism, and
the above mockery might not too fancifully be seen
as a sign of embarrassment at the approach to what
Joy Grant, in a work which was significantly a sign
of new academic interest in the Georgians, calls a:

"handy but imprecise term" (11)

However, even such jocular injustices have some
interest for those who would like to use the word
Georgian in a meaningful way. Although not overtly
critical (in the best sense) they do betray that
the writer has at least some idea of what he means
by "Georgian". There is some coherent image there.
There is an interesting example of this being
unearthed in J.H. Johnston's remarks on C. Day Lewis's
calamity:

"The Georgian poets, a sadly
pedestrian rabble flocked along
the roads their fathers had
built, pointing out to each
other the beauty spots and
ostentatiously drinking small-beer
in a desperate effort to prove
their virility. The winds blew,
the floods came; for a moment a
few of them showed on the crest of
the seventh great wave; then they
were rolled under and nothing
marks their graves." (12)

Johnston's view is that with unspecified
exceptions;

"the majority - those who would
more easily qualify as "typical"
Georgians - clearly embody the
less attractive characteristics
indicated by Day Lewis: timidity,
conservatism, self-consciousness,
and lack of originality and
genuine imaginative power." (13)

This hardly constitutes a critical definition
of Georgian but it does give ground for hope. What were the characteristics which appear as timidity and self-consciousness, for example, to later critics? and how did they appear to the Georgians? It can be assumed from a general knowledge of human nature, that the Georgians did not think their own poetry timid and self-conscious - or at least, not to the exclusion of other characteristics. Moreover from the evidence of their prose writings and of the claims of the editor it is clear that, on the contrary, they considered their work to be a brave flouting of dead poetic conventions and the rebirth of a public future for poetry.

Of the first Georgian Poetry, its editor wrote:

"This volume is issued in the belief that English poetry is now once again putting on a new strength and beauty." (14)

And the word which surely should attract the attention of those who subscribe to the idea of Georgian timidity is "strength". "Beauty" might fit in well with the conventional picture of the Georgian but not "strength" and a quick glance through the volume reveals that there is at least as much of the latter as the former. Besides "Grantchester" there is Rupert Brooke's "Dust" and as well as Davies' depiction of "The Kingfisher" there is that of the demented tramp in "The Heap of Rags"; and to open the volume there is the serious argument of Lascelles Abercrombie's "The Sale of St. Thomas" which as the following extract shows does not flinch from the unbeautiful in the quest for realism and strength:
"Another stranger,
Who swore he knew of better gods than ours,
Seemed to the king troubled with fleas, and slaves
Were told to groom him smartly, which they did
Thoroughly with steel combs, until at last
They curried the living flesh from off his bones
And stript his face of gristle, till he was
Skull and half skeleton and yet alive." (15)

Often too, when writing of each other's work it was qualities of intellectual strength and intensity of feeling which attracted attention. Wilfrid Wilson Gibson reviewing Lascelles Abercrombie's *Emblems of Love* (1912) in the *Poetry Review* wrote:

"Consumed by an insatiable spiritual curiosity, gifted with an extraordinary grip and range of fresh, vivid and resonant speech, controlled by a virile, intense and complete imagination, and fulfilled of the inspiration of vast and vehement rhythms...he is able to embody with emotional life other supreme ecstasies of the soul."

and:

"Mr. Abercrombie's verse is strenuous with thought."

and, to reinforce the impression of these remarks:

"Mr. Abercrombie does not write for the indolent reader, who only cares for verse he can turn over in his mouth, like a lollipop." (16)

This last comment is peculiarly relevant because it appears here quite clearly that what Gibson, at least, admired in Abercrombie was the very reverse of what later critics claimed to find in Georgian poetry. Both these writers were prominent members of the Georgian group especially at the outset. Gibson indeed contributed to all five volumes and here he is, at the time of the first volume's publication, declaring himself an enemy of poetry which is merely easy on the senses.
Although to a certain extent it is true to say that later Georgian poets are kinder to the ear, and less of an effort for the intellect, there can still be found even much later praise by one Georgian of another in terms to suggest that quiet unobtrusive easy verse was not respected. Walter de la Mare's comment on John Freeman's poetry is an example of this:

"No reader of his poems, from first to last, could fail to realise their persuasive gravity, the intensity of feeling, the torment of spirit so frequently expressed in them." (17)

Should there still be doubts that the Georgians did not in general regard their poetry as a week-end activity, to be carried out in spare-time only and with proper reticence, Gordon Bottomley's statement to the painter Paul Nash should dispel them. In reading this one should remember that Bottomley was for all of his adult life a semi-invalid and must have known almost painfully how much energy and effort the practice of his art required:

"Art needs steadfastness and endurance just as much as tropical exploration or football do. Many weaklings can be brilliant at a spurt; but it needs much concentration of nature to do even as much steady glowing as a glow-worm does." (18)

While the glowing of a glow worm may seem all too modest a result for so much effort, I hope the following pages will make clear that in the case of the Georgians the unpretentious nature of the light they tried to shed on the universe was the result of a well-considered and humble bafflement at the state of the world and not
a reflection of the limitation of their prowess.

Finally as a counterbalance to the idea of the Georgians as a pedestrian rabble one may look at D.H. Lawrence's review of the first Georgian anthology (in Rhythm). It should be read as a whole for its sustained rapture of praise and at the same time the reader should remember that Lawrence had not then the reputation he has now to act as surety for his wilder moments. Edward Marsh was the first person to publish Lawrence's poetry in hard covers and while the fact of the review certainly had something to do with the desire to see the volume a success, its tone can only be explained by genuine admiration. Here are two extracts:

"I think I could say every poem in the book is romantic, tinged with a love of the marvellous, a joy of natural things, as if the poet were a child for the first time on the sea-shore finding treasures. "Best trust the happy moments," says Mr. Masefield, who seems nearest to the black dream behind us. There is Mr. W.H.Davies' lovely joy, Mr.de la Mare's perfect appreciation of life at still moments, Mr. Rupert Brooke's brightness, when he "lived from laugh to laugh," Mr. Edmund Beale Sargent's pure excited happiness in the woodland - it is all the same, keen zest in life found wonderful. In Mr. Bottomley it is the zest of activity, of hurrying, labouring men, or the zest of the utter stillness of the long snows."

and:

"What are the Georgian poets, nearly all, but just bursting into a thick blaze of being. They are not poets of passion, perhaps, but they are essentially passionate poets. The time to be
"impersonal has gone. We start from the joy we have in ourselves, and everything must take colour from that joy. It is the return of the blood, that has been held back, as when the heart's action is arrested by fear." (19)

These quotations from four of the Georgians themselves should make it clear that whatever their success, their intentions were serious and their poetic practice whole-hearted. Indeed it could be said that enthusiasm for poetry was one of the most common characteristics found in a Georgian poet; not a quiet belief in what each poet himself was doing but a conviction, often publicly stated that poetry was one of the highest achievements of man and ought therefore to be brought to prominence. From this belief resulted the publication of the anthologies of poetry themselves, the Poetry Bookshop and poetry reading evenings organised by Harold Monro in Devonshire Street; the issuing of his Monthly Chapbooks and such periodicals as New Numbers to which Brooke, Drinkwater, Abercrombie and Gibson contributed and which they published and distributed themselves from Abercrombie's home at Ryton, Dymock, Gloucestershire. And in this attempt to popularize poetry, at least, they enjoyed a considerable success.

When all this is said, however, there remains an immense gap between the prose statements and the effect of reading the Georgian Poetry volumes themselves. No reader nowadays could match Lawrence's enthusiasm for the whole volume and many would have little difficulty in remaining quite unmoved by any of the poems they read. Why? The obvious answer is, perhaps, ultimately the right one: they were not, as
poets, good or at least great enough to convey in poetry the urgency and seriousness of their thought and vision. Hence this thesis will frequently have recourse to the prose, of which the Georgians were prolific producers, to discover exactly what were their intentions, what they believed they were doing. Often, too, if one reads the prose carefully and then returns to the poetry without prejudice, a new coherence in their output emerges.

Because the Georgians made large claims for poetry it must not be thought that they therefore believed only in grandiose poetry; on the contrary many of them explicitly stated in verse and prose that poetry could at that time only have validity by avoiding the universal theme and the large scale. But this is a matter which will have to be dealt with in detail later on. What may be said now, is that, as the quotations from the poets show, we are justified in beginning a search of their poetry in the hope of finding there something more than pleasant rhythms and simple themes. In short we can say that the Georgians did write the sort of poetry of which we can loosely but fairly ask "What does it stand for?"

The second obstacle is less easily surmounted. And that is the difficulty of finding sufficient in common between the forty one contributors to Georgian Poetry's five volumes to be able to say with any confidence this is a particularly Georgian trait and not merely a characteristic of some four or five poets. To a certain extent, of course, it is not necessary for the poets each to display the same characteristic for it to be thought typically Georgian; critics are never failing to point out how different
was each of the Romantics from the others and yet the term "Romantic" has not yet ceased to have meaning for many readers and uses as a definition for critics. It would soon appear ridiculous if it were said that the Georgians wrote on rural themes and an attempt was made to give forty one examples from each poet—even with such a general and vague theme as that difficulties would arise. And even if the attempt were successful it would prove nothing—there can be few poets in the English language who have not somewhere touched on rural themes. Clearly we shall soon see that some poets more than others seem to fit the type of poet who emerges as typically Georgian. To every comment that the Georgians display a certain use of technique, there will have to be several exceptions and sometimes to avoid tedious repetition these will be silently passed over as such as might be expected.

An alternative method of defining the group is to see it against its background—the other poets of the time. This is a method which has its uses and in the cases of the Georgians especially, seems at first to yield positive and persuasive results. Look at any Georgian poet and then look at the writings of, say, Pound and Eliot at this time and "Georgian" appears to have an immediate definition. Turn and look at the writings of the Sitwells and it seems the definition is confirmed. The danger with this method is that it is purely negative and the shortcomings of so doing would soon appear if the process were reversed and Poundian verse was defined by comparison with the Georgians. Pound it would soon be obvious, was obscure, not using native English
forms nor in any way writing within the English tradition and his themes are not recognisable by any usual standards, seeming too trivial for such a name. But from this emerges no picture of what Pound's verse was really like; and so it is with the Georgians who have suffered ever since Pound and, more especially, Eliot rose to fame in the twenties by being defined by readers (if they still had any) as not writing in Eliot's way which by them seemed exactly right for the twentieth century. Now that it is no longer so universally accepted that the European - American tradition is the answer to the problems of twentieth-century English poetry, and now that other writers more recently have turned for inspiration to native speech idiom and the English scene, it should be possible to look at the Georgians objectively. To recognise what they were doing for its own sake and not merely as an expression of what they failed to do, that other more famous and better poets, maybe, were doing.

Avoiding more obvious comparisons with their contemporaries and recognising that there is no uniformity of type or ability within the group itself, what hope is there of isolating characteristics which emerge as typically Georgian. There are still two major aids to our study - the poetry and the prose of the Georgians themselves and the material at our disposal is so vast that it has to be pruned. As far as the poetry goes, this thesis has confined its attentions to the poetry volumes published between the years 1911 and 1922 and attention has been focussed more especially on those volumes whose titles appear at the end of each of the Georgian Poetry volumes, as being the books in which the poems in the
anthology first appeared. (20) As some of the poems were first published in *Georgian Poetry* this has had to be supplemented in the case of a few poets, notably Abercrombie and Bottomley, by other volumes published in the period. As poetic drama was a Georgian phenomenon several plays, where possible those contemporary with the volumes, have been studied in addition.

This method of selection, as well as making the matter of research and reading less unwieldy, has three major advantages. The first of these is that it enables the reader to see the poems as the poetry-buying public of the time saw them (and it must be remembered that in the period under discussion there was a considerable market for poetry books). One can look at the work as a whole in the company in which it first appeared. Where there is any development of the poet in the dozen years under study this too can be seen. Furthermore, even such hackneyed pieces as Davies' "Kingfisher" and Monro's "Milk for the Cat" restored to their original poetic surroundings can be read with unprejudiced minds free from the taint of school recitations and popular anthologies. Finally the Georgian revival of interest in poetry was such that it supported the production of many small volumes. The amount of poetry the public would stand can only fully by gauged when it is seen how many poets saw fit to issue volumes almost yearly - often reprinting the same material on the pretext that new meaning was given by a different context. John Freeman's *Poems New and Old* published in 1920 is a case of this. It contained material from *Twenty Poems* (1909), *Fifty Poems* (1911),
Presages of Victory (1916), Stone Trees (1916) and Memories of Childhood (1919) as well as thirteen new poems (four of which appeared in Georgian Poetry 1920-1922. This was not a case of a poet making a retrospective collection of his work for the following year appeared Music, a volume of new poems. Nor even was Freeman in dire need of the proceeds of publication, for he had full time employment with an Insurance firm during all this period. The only explanation is that there was a ready public for poetry which these volumes (which were by no means all short or slight) were designed to satisfy. Nor was Freeman the only poet to publish so frequently. Davies was a prolific writer and published volumes at regular intervals and so did John Drinkwater.

Another aspect of this appetite for poetry which is reflected in the production of the actual volumes of these writers is the production of fine editions. Both John Drinkwater's Tides (1917) and his Loyalties (1918) first appeared in limited editions from the Beaumont Press (Tides was in fact the first volume the press produced); the two books were published by Sidgwick and Jackson, Drinkwater's regular publishers in the same year and with additions. Often illustrated volumes were produced and Walter de la Mare's Flora (n.d. 1919) appeared with the following title: "Flora, A Book of Drawings by Pamela Bianco with illustrative poems by Walter de la Mare."

These are interesting sidelights on the poetry of the period; and cumulatively they must affect a view of Georgian poetry. Clearly there is no justification for thinking it as ill-regarded and unpopular as it has since become. It must be seen
as highly fashionable which at the time of its publication it was. This aspect was not, of course, slow to attract criticism. Sherard Vines, writing specifically of the London Mercury—a periodical which was started some years after the first appearance of Georgian Poetry under the editorship of J.C.Squire and Edward Shanks, could not resist the sneer:

"Now, as much as yesterday, the upper middle class, when it feels disposed to read poetry, cannot do better than purchase the London Mercury."

And there would be more than a little truth in the remark if it were extended to much later Georgian poetry in general. The Georgians had begun with an ideal of bringing poetry to the market-place; having succeeded in doing this in the early days, later on some of them appeared to be primarily popular poets.

The second advantage of reading the original publications from which the poems were selected for the five Georgian Poetry volumes is that it provides a picture of exactly what was available to the editor. So that one can judge whether or not the Georgian image was the result of Marsh's selection of poems; how far Georgian Poetry is a representative sample of the poetic output of the chosen writers and how far, if at all, it reflects one man's taste. It has in recent years been the view of some who would revive critical interest in the Georgian poets to lay the blame for the weaknesses of the volumes at Marsh's door. Robert Ross in his The Georgian Revolt makes the point over and over again that it was Marsh who chose the poems and that the poets themselves had little room for manoeuvre.
It does not necessarily follow from this that the poems which Marsh chose were in any way unrepresentative, and in the final analysis, of course, the individual poet always had the right to refuse permission to reprint. In the case of Ezra Pound and the first volume this is exactly what happened. Marsh liked Pound's poem "The Goodly Fere" but Pound would not agree to the inclusion of that poem and offered others but none of these met with Marsh's approval and so Pound was not represented at all in the volume. That Marsh should have been interested in Pound's work is of biographical and historical significance but it can hardly be doubted that the term "Georgian" would have even less precise meaning had either side compromised.

So in general it seems to be there is throughout the volume a nicely judged tension between the individual contributions and the collective image. Moreover a reading of the contemporary publications by the chosen poets will provide, I believe, several alternatives which would not materially affect the Georgian image. There are besides, few if any poets of whom it could be said that Marsh's selection was misleadingly biased. Nor, especially at first, did Marsh's desire that the books should sell well influence his choice of poem unduly. It is not the easiest and slightest poems of each poet that appear. In the first volume for instance, not only is Abercrombie represented by "The Sale of St. Thomas", but Lawrence by "The Snapdragon" and Drinkwater, from whom many light and graceful lyrics could have been selected, by "The Fires of God" a lengthy
narrative about a mediaeval stone mason.

Finally, by selecting from contemporary volumes only, the historical objection to the use of the term "Georgian" in the case of the younger poets is met: As James Reeves said of Robert Graves:

"His most significant work, which is not represented here, has, however been done since the decline of Georgianism. It cannot be called Georgian." (23)

By the same token, of course, Blunden's most significant work has been done in the same period, as indeed has the bulk of the work done by such of the Georgians who were young enough to continue writing and who survived the war. The point is not made in the case of Blunden because as Reeves himself says:

"No one would seriously dispute that the bulk of [his] work is Georgian in character: [his] best poems are Georgian poems." (23)

It seems difficult therefore to see why such an idea should invalidate for the earlier poems of Graves the Georgian description and the same is true of Harold Monro who similarly developed in a very different way from what might have been forecast. There is no need to adopt the cry "Once a Georgian, always a Georgian" and for the purposes of this thesis, at least, the idea of Georgian poetry seems to have more validity than the concept of a Georgian poet. Such argument however is avoided if we concentrate on the work produced within the Georgian period, ignoring the later development of individual poets.

The choice of prose for discussion is not so easy. Here the confines cannot always be those of period, although in the case of journalism especially
it has been found advisable to study more carefully what the poets wrote at the same time as they were writing the poems in *Georgian Poetry*. In addition, though, works written up to 1930 have been read whenever it has seemed that these might have some light to throw on the Georgians in general or the individual writer and autobiographical material and anything produced after that date which by its title suggests an obvious relevance in critical terms has been duly read.

As far as critical works by other writers are concerned, selection has varied with each writer. In the case of Rupert Brooke for example, one could easily be overwhelmed by biographical minutiae and critical irrelevance if an attempt was made to read every word written. On the other hand where to find criticism, helpful or otherwise, of such writers as William Kerr, Frank Prewett and Fred gond Shove is the problem and selectivity is impossible. To cover writers of such short-lived reputation and to discover what the criticism of the time thought of these and other Georgians one must turn to the periodical publications of the period, notably *The Times Literary Supplement*, and general histories of early twentieth century literature writers near enough to the period in question for some at least of the minor figures to appear. Altogether the aim has been to avoid two major traps; treating the giants of the group with inordinate attention on the one hand and overlooking the lesser fry, or those whose reputations have not survived so well, on the other.

Gradually various members of the Georgian group are being resurrected in critical journals
and biographies. But this is having the effect of diminishing the image of a Georgian group as the reclaimers of each poet protest loudly that his protegé is best seen apart from the other poets of the period and dissociated from the Georgian school. Several volumes of letters by Georgian poets have appeared at the same time and these have helped recreate interest in the period and thrown light on the personalities and the human interchange as well as, less frequently, on the literary happenings of the time. However there has been as yet no major attempt to reassess the Georgians as a group. Robert Ross's book, admirable and useful as it is, is primarily a history and a source-book for critics; the two introductions by Alan Pryce-Jones and James Reeves to their anthologies of Georgian poetry are brief and, naturally, conditioned by their function. It is hoped in this thesis to look at the available material in a newly critical light, trying to forget preconceptions and avoiding as Ross astutely points out, "the temptation to start a literary crusade" (24) The aim is to be able, finally, to see the Georgians for what they were, as just a few of the many poetry-writers of this century, and to find out in what significant ways they differed from the others. In that way, maybe the word Georgian can find a place in the critical vocabulary of the twentieth-century that is not just as well filled by several other derisory adjectives.
NOTES TO CHAPTER 1.


(3) G.P. II. Prefatory Note.

(4) G.P. I. Prefatory Note.

(5) The exact members of the first meeting which discussed the publication of Georgian Poetry is uncertain. The two sources for this, as for most of the historical material are:


There is an enormous debt to both these works in the thesis as a whole. I have relied entirely on them for historical facts, contenting myself with letting their differences as here, rest, and continuing on my different path of criticism.

(6) The Marsh Letter Collection is in New York. It is unpublished and I have not seen the originals. Letters are quoted from either Ross or Hassall or volumes of letters where these exist. Where possible the letter's date is given but Hassall is often imprecise, here.

S. Sassoon to E. Marsh 11th July (1920)
Ross p. 227. Ross has "shavers" but I think this must be a mistaken transcription of sharers as I can see no possible meaning in the term "shavers" relevant to Sassoon's point.


(10) D. Daiches: Poetry and the Modern World Chicago (1940) p. 22.


(14) G.P. I Prefatory Note.
CHAPTER 1. NOTES (continued)

(15) ibid p. 12.

(16) Wilfrid Wilson Gibson: Review of Emblems of Love P.R. II February 1912. pp. 82-4. p. 82, 82, and 83 respectively.


(20) c.f. Appendix B.


(22) Ross: c.f. especially Chap. 5.


(24) Ross: p. 15.
CHAPTER 2. GEORGIAN POETRY: Historical background.

Before tackling the critical questions involved it will be as well to examine briefly the history of the movement from the publication of the first volume to the fifth and last ten years later. At the same time it is hoped to throw some light on the background of the period, not world history, which impinged indeed violently on the Georgian movement in the shape of World War I, for this is too large and too complex a subject to enter into here, and moreover the fact of it is well enough known. Instead I shall try to give a picture of the literary background and by reference to some of the memoirs of the period to sketch in something of the mood of the times.

The enthusiasm with which the Georgian adventure began was part of a more general mood of intellectual exhilaration not confined to the Georgians. Even the Bloomsbury group were optimistically sure that the times were ripe for innovation as Clive Bell writes in his memoirs:

"It was a moment [1910] at which everyone felt excitement in the air: had not I - even I just sat down to discuss the general state of affairs in an opus to bear the pregnant title The New Renaissance, ...Certainly there was stir: in Paris and London at all events there was a sense of things coming right, though whether what we thought was coming could properly be described as a 'renaissance' now seems to me doubtful. The question is academic, as usual the statesmen came to the rescue, and Mr. Asquith, Sir Edward Grey and M.Vivian declared war on Germany. But in 1910 only statesmen dreamed of war, and quite a number of wide-awake people imagined the good times were just around the corner." (1)
And indeed Clive Bell and Roger Fry were responsible for a good deal of the exhilaration in the world of art caused by their exhibitions of Impressionist paintings at Heal's. For poetry readers though, the chief excitement came as a result of the publication in 1911 of John Masefield's poem "The Everlasting Mercy." This poem tells the simple story of Saul Kane, a poacher; his boxing match against another poacher as a result of a dispute over ground and of his subsequent reactions leading to his conversion to Christ. Its style is equally simple and it seems difficult now to understand how it came to cause such a stir. That it did so is not open to question. First of all, it was immensely popular. It was originally published in November 1911 and by the end of that year had run through three impressions. Its presence today in almost every second-hand bookshop testifies, sadly, to its widespread sale once and its equal loss of support now. Masefield had already published *Salt Water Ballads* (1902) and several other volumes and was well enough known before *The Everlasting Mercy* appeared, but none of his earlier works seem to have caught the attention of readers in the same way. Perhaps the reasons are not too difficult to find. First of all there was some scandal over the language. The lines:

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"You put
You liar
You closhey put
You bloody liar."
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(2)

attracted a good deal of outraged notice and no doubt boosted sales. Moreover the story though simple is strong and the whole is fairly short and accessible. But it is useless and unnecessary to try to recapture the reception which Masefield had when there is on
record a contemporary reaction of much greater interest. On the 3rd November 1912 Charles Sorley, then a schoolboy of seventeen years, wrote an essay on Masefield, which has been published in the third edition of his poems. Here we can recapture some of the original excitement:

"Masefield has founded a new school of poetry and given a strange example to future poets; and this is wherein his greatness and originality lies: that he is a man of action not imagination. For he has one of the fundamental qualities of a great poet — a thorough enjoyment of life."

and even more fully:

"The voice of our poets and men of letters is finely trained and sweet to hear; it teems with sharp saws and rich sentiment: it is a marvel of delicate technique: it pleases, it flatters, it charms, it soothes: it is a living lie. The voice of John Masefield rings rough and ill-trained: it tells a story, it leaves the thinking to the reader, it gives him no dessert of sentiment, cut, dried — and ready made to go to sleep on: it jars, it grates, it makes him wonder: it is full of hope and faith and power and strife and God. Till Mr. Masefield came on earth, the poetry of the world had been written by the men who lounged, who looked on. It is a sin in a man to write of the world before he has known the world, and the failing of every poet up till now has been that he has written of what he loved to imagine but dared not to experience."

and finally:

"We stand by the watershed of English poetry; for the vastness and wonder of modern life has demanded that men should know what they write about. Behind us are the poets of imagination; before us are the poets of fact." (3)
But there were other poets writing at the same time; for instance, Rupert Brooke's Poems appeared in 1911, Walter de la Mare's Songs of Childhood in 1902, and both Gordon Bottomley and Wilfrid Wilson Gibson had left behind earlier fanciful Pre-Raphaelite techniques with their more recent publications. In Gibson's case the two volumes The Stonefolds (1907) and Daily Bread (1910) marked the change and in Bottomley's case Chambers of Imagery (1907) and a series of dramatic poems beginning with The Crier by Night (1902). The difference between these poets and Masefield was that they did not catch the public's attention and as far as they were concerned there was neither a boom in poetry sales nor a revival of interest in the serious reviews.

It was this state of affairs which prompted Brooke and Marsh into action. Brooke's original idea was that he should write a collection of poems in various styles, give them different 'authors' and launch the book. Having, as he hoped, exposed the obtuseness of the reviewers he would reveal his hoax. Incidentally this plan indicates some of Rupert Brooke's flair for publicity and in some ways one regrets that it never came to fruition for it would have surely affected both Brooke's contemporary reputation and posthumous estimates of his character. However, wisely enough, Brooke's friend and poetic adviser Edward Marsh persuaded him that the hoax was unnecessary because there were plenty of actual poets about who would contribute to such a volume and bring the neglect of poetry before the public eye. (4) The rest of the original arrangements are given in the
words of Christopher Hassall because he, as a personal friend of Marsh in later years, seems to capture something of the spirit in which the book was planned:

"He [Marsh] was beginning to realise that they had stumbled on to a practicable idea, so that when Brooke proposed that he should be the editor he agreed on one condition, he must be allowed to remain in the back-ground and not put his name to it; the Private Secretary at the Admiralty openly shepherding a group of poets might strike the uninitiated as a trifle absurd and so damage the cause. Finance was the next problem. The obvious person to approach was the editor of the Poetry Review [Harold Monro] whose office was at 43, Chancery Lane, within a stone's throw of Gray's Inn, and who printed his magazine at the St. Catherine's Press in the Strand... In a fever of excitement they decided to telephone Monro first thing in the morning.

Next day (20th September, 1912) there was a luncheon party at Gray's Inn. Brooke fetched Gibson, Monro brought his sub-editor Arundel del Re and John Drinkwater, and Marsh came back from the Admiralty. There was considerable opposition to the title 'Georgian Poetry' but nothing better could be thought of, so it was agreed to publish under that name before Christmas an edition of 500 at 3s 6d a copy, half the royalties to go to the Poetry Review (Monro's Poetry Bookshop was still only a vague scheme) and half to Marsh, who said he would distribute his share equally among the contributors. He was to be solely responsible for making the selection and for the accounting on behalf of the poets, and of course he gave assurance that he would make good any loss." (5)

Georgian Poetry 1911-1912 was published less than three months later in order to catch the Christmas sales, and during those three months there must have
been feverish activity both at Monro's offices in Chancery Lane and especially from Marsh's flat, 5, Raymond Buildings, Grays Inn which became the headquarters of Georgianism. Two things seem to have occupied Marsh's attention above all; the contributors to the book and their poems and the ensuring of good sales and indeed to a certain extent it was this which influenced the choice of contributor. At the same time Marsh continued to work as before as Private Secretary to Winston Churchill at the Admiralty and, no doubt, to pursue his dining out and first-nighting activities with the enthusiasm for which he was renowned.

Some of the contributors selected themselves; Brooke, Monro, Gibson and Drinkwater were obvious choices as they were in the scheme from the start. Marsh sought to ballast his unknown names with the weight of older men and Housman, Chesterton and Sturge Moore were asked and of these only Housman refused on the grounds:

"I do not really belong to your "new era", and none even of my few unpublished poems have been written in the last two years." (6)

Masefield, too, must have acted as advertisement for the younger poets. Mostly the poets accepted, though as we saw Ezra Pound refused; mostly, too, the poets accepted Marsh's choice of poem though with W.H.Davies himself suggested "The Kingfisher" which was included with Davies's other poems. This is a significant fact for the assessment of Marsh's reputation as compiler of the volumes. It was not Marsh but the poet himself who chose the one poem out of five which was quickly to become an anthology piece. Moreover Marsh's selection is diverse, representing various aspects of Davies's work. There are two lyrical nature pieces in what
has become the accepted Davies manner, and also "The Child and the Mariner", a narrative, possibly autobiographical poem of some length in blank verse, and "The Heap of Rags" an observation of one of London's down-and-outs:

"When any steamer passed
And blew a loud shrill blast
That heap of rags would sit
And make a sound like it." (7)

as well as the now too well-known "Kingfisher."

As for how Marsh came across the work and then tracked down the author, we have a letter from him to Walter de la Mare which amply demonstrates his thoroughness:

"I very much want D.H.Lawrence's poem in the June English Review 'Snapdragon', for my book. I don't know what you think of it. It's far from perfect, but like his two novels it seems to me to have elements of great and rather strange power and beauty. I've been trying to find out where he is, and now Mrs. [sic] Royde-Smith tells me you are the best person to ask. If you know will you kindly direct and post this? And if you could spare the time to put in a line saying I'm a respectable person it might be a help - but don't bother." (8)

With or without de la Mare's good word for Marsh, Lawrence was willing enough to be in the volume and within a fortnight the following reply was sent from Lake Garda:

"I shall be very glad if you will print my poem "Snapdragon" in your book, which sounds awfully nice... If there is anything else I could at any time give you, some unpublished stuff, I shall be glad. I shall love to see the book. It will be quite profit enough in itself." (9)
In fact, although as the tone of this letter shows, merely to have been asked at this stage in his career was a great boost to Lawrence's self-confidence, Lawrence as well as other contributors made quite a good financial profit from the anthologies.

The compilation of the original volume brought the first conflict over literary principle in the shape of an argument between Sturge Moore and Marsh over the poems by R.C. Trevelyan "Dirge" which was eventually included because Moore made the inclusion of his own "Sicyllian Idyll" conditional upon the acceptance of Trevelyan's piece. The argument, as was so often the case was about form and Marsh's criticism of the poem as formally imperfect brought the following angry retort from Moore:

"As to your criticism about formally perfect - it is the very type of criticism which I abominate; that it refers to a mechanical criterion as ultimate. There is no reason or commonsense in any such reference... It's [the Dirge] not being what you call formally perfect is really in its favour and means that the writer's mind was more dominated by a real taste than by a mechanical pedantry... It is certainly far finer than anything of Bottomley's [represented in G.P. 1911-12] and I think as fine as the best of Bridges [to whom the volume was dedicated]... In fact I don't suppose I shall ever really forgive you if you leave it out." (10)

This argument was to be the source of frequent disagreement between Marsh and his contributors, second only to the argument about metre and poetic style. A discussion of the issues involved will be found in a later chapter; here we must content ourselves with noticing the opening of hostilities and the outcome...
of the skirmish. For Marsh had no alternative. He wanted "The Sicilian Idyll", because it would be good for sales, so he had to have Trevelyan's "Dirge".

This confrontation with Moore was one aspect of the efforts Marsh was making to ensure a good sale of his book. The aim of his salesmanship it must be stressed was not his own profit nor even self-aggrandisement but the financial benefit of his young poet protegés. Rupert Brooke was no less energetic in the advertisement of the volume and he wrote frequently to Marsh from Germany of schemes and reviewers to try. And all the poets themselves were pressed into service. As has been seen Lawrence reviewed the book for Rhythm and John Drinkwater used his influence to secure a good review in the Birmingham Post. Abercrombie, Monro and Brooke were among a band of volunteer packers who sent off copies from Raymond Buildings and Marsh did not scruple to use his connection with society and the political world to advance the cause of his poetry book. So it was that the Prime Minister's car was waiting outside Bumpus's on the day of publication.

The more prosaic work was being carried on by Monro, who negotiated with printers, submitted papers to the editor and generally assured the success of the volume by its speedy publication. Monro's part is often overlooked: it was not so interesting as his work in the Bookshop soon to be opened nor is it so extraordinary as the work done by Private Secretary Marsh. But it is doubtful if, without Monro's cooperation and know-how, the book (or succeeding
voice would have been the triumph it was. The actual production of the volume is not our concern here but it should perhaps be noted that Monro's efforts ensured that the book although inexpensive and plain in binding and layout was not unattractive. The poems are well arranged and the notes on author's publications are helpful but not too obtrusive.

All the efforts were rewarded when it became immediately apparent that the book was a success. Within twelve months nine editions had been published and that was not the end. The book continued to sell steadily until the early 1920s and the contributors soon began to receive cheques which caused general congratulation and surprise. Marsh's achievement is best expressed by W.H.Davies who wrote to his editor:

"You have performed a wonder, made poetry pay." (11)

It is hardly surprising therefore that a second volume should have been planned. Originaly due to be published at the end of 1914, it was delayed by the outbreak of war and eventually came out in November 1915. By this time Georgian Poetry had suffered casualties. Flecker had succumbed to tuberculosis in Switzerland and Brooke had died in the Dardanelles. The volume which contained work from them both was dedicated to their memory and Marsh wrote in his Prefatory Note:

"Two of the poets - I think the youngest, and certainly not the least gifted - are dead."

Other omissions were due to a hardening of policy. Having achieved his aim by the inclusion of older poets in the first book Marsh was now ready to omit them. In their place were two new names, Ralph
Hodgson and Francis Ledwidge. Unlike the first volume, this was not arranged alphabetically. Instead prominence was given to two plays, one placed at the beginning Gordon Bottomley's *King Lear's Wife* and the other, Lascelles Abercrombie's *The End of the World* at the end of the book. *King Lear's Wife* indeed was something of a cause with Marsh and it merited mention in the Prefatory Note of:

"the honour which Mr. Gordon Bottomley has done to the book by allowing his play to be first published here."

Marsh wrote of his enthusiasm for the play to Rupert Brooke:

"The poetic drama is born again, of that there is no doubt. It is short, but the action, the character drawing, and the verses are all the work of a master. There are lines that are like nothing but the famous things in Webster." (12)

Other Georgians were no less enthusiastic. Drinkwater persuaded his friend Barry Jackson at the Birmingham Repertory Theatre to produce the play, and for its opening with Drinkwater's wife in the title role, several other Georgians, though not Marsh, detained on business, were there. Ultimately, on the 19th May 1916, the play, along with Gibson's *Hoops* and Brooke's *Lithuania*, was given at a 'Georgian Matinee' in London. Despite all this the public was not to be converted. Drinkwater reported to Marsh from Birmingham "The houses have been bad," and:

"The papers to-day are brutal and obscene, to poet and play and instigation of the event alike." (13)

Nor was The Times Literary Supplement any more impressed:

"He draws ugliness, as the Victorians
"drew beauty, for the sake of the
ugliness, as it if were interesting
in itself quite apart from what is made
of it." (14)

Even J.C. Squire in the New Statesman, himself to
come a Georgian poet in the very next volume, was
harshly critical of the drama, and Abercrombie's
The End of the World was not immune. D.H. Lawrence
wrote to Marsh when he saw Abercrombie's poem in
the periodical New Numbers, which Abercrombie,
Drinkwater, Brooke and Gibson produced themselves:

"I hate and detest his ridiculous
imitation yokels and all the silly
hash of his bucolics; I loathe his
rather nasty efforts at cruelty, like
the wrapping frogs in paper and putting
them for cartwheels to crush; I detest
his irony with its clap-trap solution
of everything being that which it
seemeth not; and I hate that way of
making what Meredith called Cockney
metaphors:— moons like a white cat
and meteors like a pike fish. And
nearly all of this seems to me an
Abercrombie turning cheap and wicked?
What is the matter with the man? There's
something wrong with his soul. Mary and
the Bramble and Sale of St. Thomas
weren't like this. They had a certain
beauty of soul, a certain highness,
which I loved:— though I didn't like
the Indian horrors in the St. Thomas.
But here everything is mean and rather
sordid, and full of rancid hate... I
wish to heaven he were writing the best
poems ever written, and then he turns
out this." (15)

As can be seen from the poem's publication in
Georgian Poetry 1913-1915 Marsh did not at all agree
with Lawrence's criticism, nor did he submit to the
outburst. At least not at the time. But there is
little doubt that the critical hostility which the
book, unlike its predecessors, aroused, caused Marsh considerable pain, despite the fact that sales were even better than before. Subsequent volumes are more restrained in the giving of pride of place; the next volume had reverse alphabetical order throughout and the two remaining were, as the first, in strict alphabetical sequence. Nor were there any contributions as long as the two offending plays in Georgian Poetry 1913-1915; the longest poem in all the remaining volumes is Martin Armstrong's "Miss Thompson Goes Shopping", the inoffensiveness of which is well suggested by its title. This, moreover, spread over a mere seven pages against the forty-five taken up by King Lear's Wife. Not only are the contents of later volumes shorter they are also almost completely inoffensive, a notable exception being the war-poems though these are outnumbered by other contributions. Moreover in proportion to the poetic output in this kind they were under-represented in the books. Marsh had not changed his mind about Bottomley and Abercrombie, nor had he given up the inclusion of poems of questionable popularity which were to his taste. The third volume, for instance, contains Isaac Rosenberg's chorus from Moses, a poem in the true Georgian tradition of strong drama. It seems however that he had sensed the limits beyond which he could not go without giving up prestige and ultimately audience. Having defined the limits, he did not overstep them.

Opposition to Georgian Poetry was by this time being organised by other poets. Edith Sitwell started her annual anthology Wheels in late 1916, and the following year her brother Osbert began his quarterly,
Art and Letters. In Noble Essences, Osbert Sitwell records a conversation with Arnold Bennett which took place in Spring 1918 about the financing of this magazine. Recalling Bennett's generosity Sitwell paints a picture of the literary climate of the times:

"the young writers possessed no journal in which to vent their opinions or publish the writings of those whom they admired. Poetry, in those days, especially was a closed shop, to which admission was only gained through friendship with the leaders or secretary, and, of course, by an absolute adherence to the bird-loving tenets of the day. The mention of a blackbird or thrush in a poem meant you were a safe man, unlikely to give trouble to the Union. It was necessary also to take an interest in cricket." (16)

By this time, too, other poets' work was making clear the conflicting tendency of a large group of writers, not represented in Georgian Poetry. The magazine Blast which appeared in 1914 and again in 1915 contained poems by Pound and Eliot as well as stories, drawings and a manifesto. The anthology Des Imagistes brought the work of H.D., Richard Aldington, T.E.Hulme and Ezra Pound to the public's notice, and the many magazines of the time amply displayed the diversity of talent.

All of this inevitably had its effect on Georgian Poetry, though perhaps the third volume escaped to some extent from the criticism that the Georgians had by now formed a coterie. The Prefatory Note is noticeably less provocative than that of the first volume and there is a certain irony in this. Had the tone of the first preface been less jubilant,
and had there been no suggestion in it that the work which the book presented was a sign of a new age, Marsh's later critics, whose words must have caused the quieter note in this third preface, would not have been able to make the case they did against Marsh, that his work was not, as he had claimed, representative of the Georgian age as a whole.

Here is the third Prefatory note:

"This third book of Georgian Poetry carries to the end of a seventh year the presentation of chosen examples from the work of contemporary poets belonging to the younger generation. Of the eighteen writers included, nine appear in the series for the first time. The representation of the older inhabitants has in most cases been restricted in order to allow full space for the newcomers and the alphabetical order of the names has been reversed, so as to bring more of these into prominence than would otherwise have been done."

It seems almost conciliatory, but there is also a hint of authority in such words as 'series' and 'older inhabitants', as though Marsh was now thinking of his anthology as a permanent feature of the times. However, his new contributors were nothing to be ashamed of. They include Sassoon, Graves, Rosenberg and Nichols, whose names have survived, albeit thanks to the vogue for war-poetry, better than those of many Georgians. And of the remainder, Shanks, Squire, Turner and Freeman were thought considerable poets in their day.

With eighteen poets represented, Marsh may seem to have spread his approval more widely and indeed this is how Ross interprets the third volume:
"In the preface to both volumes I and II he [Marsh] had specifically disavowed any intention of broad catholicity. Georgian Poetry III, on the other hand, was more nearly representative of all kinds and conditions of poetry than any other volume in the series. Obviously Edward Marsh's poetic canons would not allow the inclusion of such avant-garde poets, as, say, the Sitwells. But within the limits of his own taste and at several points indeed by stretching his tolerance to the utmost - Marsh made Georgian Poetry III a reasonably representative anthology." (17)

This view must overlook several facts. One is the large number of poets then writing; any history of the poetry of the period written by a contemporary will illustrate this. For example, Harold Monro's Some Contemporary Poets 1920 mentions, besides the Georgians and other well-known names, Charlotte Mew, F.M.Hueffer, F.S.Flint, Frederic Manning, Herbert Read, Susan Mills, Max Weber, John Rodker and others.

Moreover Ross overlooks Marsh's idiosyncratic methods of selection. That he was not seeking catholicity is evident from the fact that some of the reviews and periodicals published by other poets were scanned for contributors. Moreover, now, as before, Marsh's friendship was the best entrée to Georgian Poetry. Both Siegfried Sassoon and Robert Graves were known personally to Marsh and he had helped the former establish himself in a neighbouring flat in Raymond Buildings early in 1914. Isaac Rosenberg, too, had been a protégé for some time and Marsh had been interested in his education as a painter as well as in the poems which he later sent to Marsh from the trenches. Maurice Baring on the other hand was a
contemporary of Marsh and a family friend; his representation of one poem was not popular with Monro and was not repeated.

Of the others only Turner seems to have been selected by a new method. He was suggested to Marsh by Squire, himself a new member, and for once the recommendation was accepted. At the same time though, other suggestions were refused. Harold Monro’s advice to include Charlotte Mew was not heeded, though Marsh took de la Mare’s advice on the matter as well. And several poets who wanted Edward Thomas included were disappointed. It could not be done, said Marsh, because it was not his policy to include poets no longer living. There is a suggestion in John Freeman’s letter to Marsh on being told this, that it was but a poor excuse:

"I didn’t know before the principle which restricted your choice – perhaps its unfortunate that fine work should be permanently excluded from representation...I only made the suggestion because so far as my own opinion might stretch or be worth anything, it would be splendid if the next Georgian book included any other new poetry of comparable individuality and power." (18)

And in fact both Flecker and Brooke had been represented in Georgian Poetry 1913–1915 after their deaths. This was to a certain extent exceptional, because that volume had been planned while both were still alive and its production delayed by the war. And it was the war, with its abundant crop of dead soldier poets which made Marsh’s rule a necessity. Had he given in over Thomas it seems likely, as Hassall points out, that many importunate mothers would make Marsh’s editorial task almost impossible.
Moreover it is quite in keeping with the original aim of the volumes, as conceived by Brooke and Marsh, to bring publicity and possibly financial reward to unknown living poets, that the work of dead poets should not be included. So it was indeed, for neither Isaac Rosenberg nor Francis Ledwidge were represented after they were killed in action.

Furthermore if Marsh in his preface says nothing to deny that *Georgian Poetry 1916-1917* was a representative selection, equally, as we can see he says nothing to suggest that this is the case. The only evidence to support a contrary view is found in two letters, one from Maurice Baring and one from Monro, advising Marsh to resist the temptation to choose his poets as though they would represent the finest of the age. Here again there is nothing to suggest that Marsh did not follow the advice he was given by Baring:

"It doesn't matter what you have as long as they smell sweet and are pretty. But if you try to have a specimen of every single remarkable flower you will find that your bouquet is impossibly big, and in that case it is much better not to pick the flowers at all but to leave them in the garden and the conservatories." (19)

Possibly Marsh lost his nerve a little, because of the unfavourable remarks about the second volume; possibly too he felt a certain responsibility to the poets who were collectively becoming known as Georgians. Hence, a new willingness to ask advice (though not necessarily to take it) and the signs of his worrying over the task of selection which appear in his correspondence. This does not add up to making
Georgian Poetry 1916-1917 a representative volume.

Nor did it appear to be so when it came out in November 1917. T.S. Eliot reviewing the book in The Egoist wrote:

"In Georgian poetry there is almost no crossing visible; it is inbred. It has developed a technique and a set of emotions all of its own. In the present volume there are exceptions; [e.g. J.C. Squire's "Lily of Malud." ] Most of the authors (including the fresh recruits) are true to type... There are, of course, differences between the writers: Mr. Stephen's syntax is not quite the same as Mr. Drinkwater's and still more different from Mr. Turner's. What nearly all the writers have in common is the quality of pleasantness." (20)

This charge of 'pleasantness' is manifestly untrue, or at least it cannot be applied to all the writers. Sassoon, Graves and Nichols' poems are almost as unpleasant as anything in Abercrombie's "The End of the World" and in so far as they relate to real events and personages a good deal more uncomfortable. Some of the Georgians it is true seem capable only of easy rhythms and undisturbing sentiments; Drinkwater as always is the epitome of this type, though Freeman and Turner as represented by Marsh are little more exacting. It is, though, precisely because the charge is so unjust to the volume as a whole that it is so interesting to literary historians. What makes it stick is that however untrue of some poets it is undeniably true of others within this collection; and it is not true of any of the poets sheltered by other anthologists or reviews. Drinkwater would never have found his way into Wheels or The Catholic Anthology. The Georgian group was beginning to be
affected by the nature of its membership. No longer just a contributor to a successful anthology, the poet within its covers was being thought of as a Georgian poet; and the characteristics of each (as seen by any one reader or reviewer) were being transferred to the rest.

This was not the anthology’s only trouble. When *Georgian Poetry 1916–1917* appeared Freeman wrote to Gordon Bottomley:

"Do you refuse any personal application and agree that the book isn’t very good? Much of it I can’t read or can’t read with pleasure." (21)

John Freeman was a new contributor to the anthology and his reaction to the experience, especially in writing to a founder member, is markedly different from the enthusiasm displayed by the poets when *Georgian Poetry 1911–1912* came out. This raises two issues; first with respect to the anthology. The original collection had been an adventure, success in financial terms was not a consideration, and indeed more thought seems to have been given to insurance against financial ruin, and as far as one can tell the attitude of most contributors before the book came out was that their reward would be in seeing in hard covers their work along with that of contemporaries presented so as to catch the public notice. When it became obvious that the adventure had succeeded, that both notice and sales were beyond expectation the individual poets and, naturally, Marsh himself, were delighted. But, inevitably, the anthology, especially in the eyes of new contributors changed. It was now a successful venture and could stand criticism, even from within.
Secondly, with respect to the poets; Freeman, like the first Georgians was an obscure poet, as Walter de la Mare remarked in a review of his poems in 1919:

"Mr. Freeman, at all events, is in no danger of too much attention...he is probably less widely known than writers who have not yet securely survived their first [published volume]" (22)

and yet there is a very different attitude to the publication of his poems in *Georgian Poetry* than that of not much less well-known poets in 1912 and 1913. The reason for this is not difficult to see. The anthology was first thought of with the idea of bringing poetry to the attention of the public. For a variety of reasons, good timing (following the success of *The Everlasting Mercy* the previous year), good salesmanship, and not to be too cynical, contents which were interesting and to the readers of that time, vital, the volume more than achieved its aim. Poetry became more popular than it had been since Tennyson's heyday; and a vast number of poetical volumes, most of them with little merit, were able to find publishers and an audience. All this must have given the poets of the time, especially when as in the case of Freeman, they were intimate with recognised poets like de la Mare, a certain confidence in their craft. To a considerable degree then the criticism which *Georgian Poetry 1916-1917* provoked both from within and without must be seen as the result of its own success.

At this stage it is perhaps helpful to look at the summary of the development of the original Georgian plan, given by Frank Swinnerton in his book *The Georgian Literary Scene*:

" "Georgian Poetry" - what a claim!
It suggested that the poetry of the
"age differed from the poetry of all other ages. The claim was more modest than the title: the claim was merely to present in a single volume examples of work done by a few proper writers in the preceding two years. These writers were poets admired by Edward Marsh and his collaborators. But "Georgian"! Did not that indicate something more than the preferences of a group? As long as the group could deal with the numbers of poets who had published books within recent memory, the difficulty, although great, was not overwhelming. But Marsh and his friends had not imagined that the war was coming to stir every undergraduate who took commission into publishing his verses. They had not foreseen that their bold title would be turned against them. They had planned a peace-time rallying point for an unfashionable art, in time of war they found themselves bombarded with every kind of poetic artillery. The alternatives were an obstinate restriction of entries to those writers for whose work the editor felt some personal sympathy, or such an enlargement of scope as would turn the two hundred pages of the first volume into an omnibus book...Quite obviously, the latter alternative was unacceptable. But by this time the title, "Georgian Poetry", had a prestige, and similarly there had arisen some poets who did not quite conform to Edward Marsh's extremely gentle but extremely firm notion of what poetry was: "You call this book "Georgian Poetry"; I am a Georgian; therefore my poetry ought to be included in your book "When told that his poetry could not be printed in our book, every such rebel replied with heat that the title "Georgian Poetry" was a lie. He charged Marsh with trying to establish a canon. Marsh had intended no such thing." (23)

Swinnerton, of course, is theorising. He was not a poet, but he was a publisher's assistant and must have had a good overall picture of the literary politics of the
times. All in all it seems as though there might be a good deal of truth in Swinnerton's re-construction. It is interesting, incidentally to notice that Swinnerton only suggests two possible ways out of the predicament for Marsh; he seems not to have considered, what might seem the most logical solution, that of terminating the series.

However, nor did Marsh. Although Monro, as reported by Ross, expressed his usual doubts as to sufficiency of material and Marsh himself was for a while doubtful, the fourth volume was published in November 1919, at the increased price of 6s. There were more new names. Among them, Edward Shanks, closely associated with Squire and Freeman, in the publication of *London Mercury*, a periodical founded during the war, and after the inclusion of Squire's poems in the third *Georgian Poetry* a strong and sometimes unhelpful ally of the Georgians. Also represented was Thomas Moult, who perhaps acting like the poet in Swinnerton's reconstruction, actually asked to be included. A woman poet was a new departure. The idea seems to have been that there should be one woman represented. Disagreement arose over which one. Monro again was for Charlotte Mew, Sassoon and Shanks were for Edith Sitwell. But Marsh's decision was for Fredegonde Shove, whose work, for reasons now difficult to imagine, he admired. Many of the old names, Abercrombie, Bottomley and Gibson, for example, are still there too. But as the *Times Literary Supplement*, expressed it in the headline to its review of the volume this was "Georgian Poetry...New Style."

The review has some interesting observations on the development of the series.
"The title more and more sits like a man's hat on a boy's head, for it might easily cover much that there has never been any intention of covering; besides, the character of the volume has altered slowly till this last volume is least like the first; in fact, quite different. Long poems are fewer and shorter, and the bulk of the contents has acquired a strong family likeness. The original group of authors was more varied in aims and achievement. This may be no reproach to the editor; two of the most promising of that group are dead; others are middle-aged, others have become too well known for space in a collection limited as this is to be fairly assigned to them; those who have filled these places have perhaps necessitated this slighter and more ornamental character... It is possible, and may be gracious, to illustrate this change from the work of those authors who can most highly be praised. In 1912 the alphabet seemed well inspired, as it placed Mr. Abercrombie first with "The Sale of St. Thomas", one of the finest, if not the finest, poem of an equal length of recent years. This year he once more opens the volume with "Witchcraft": new Style. Alas! its effect on the imagination resembles that of a clumsy lie on the intellect: unconvinced, you blush for the author; yet the writing is not careless, the invention is still abundant and bold, only both seem forced and vain."

It is interesting to notice that the reviewer unlike Mr. Swinnerton does not see the decline in the quality of the book as a necessary result of the basic idea of the anthology. Instead he suggests that the individual poets have changed in themselves or that the new poets introduced represent a changed type of poetry. Later in the review he elaborates
on this:

"The waste of gift and labour saddens a critic who broods over the vast surplus of lyrics produced, which attract, promise, but fail to fulfil. How few capture memory, live on and can be trusted not to grow stale! Have the minds that produce this waste, though truly gifted and moved, not been related to a sufficiently wide realm of imagination (for actual experience is of little use until it has become imaginary), so that their creations lack an appropriate atmosphere and background? This book is crammed with zestful eloquence about landscapes, birds (especially blackbirds and night-jars), gold flowers and gold light, flames of passion, young women, and even the small literary bravery of approaches to the particularities of female anatomy. But "the sound is forced". This sparkling flood of choice and careful speech has no background, or suggests a commonplace one from which it is a vain effort to fly." (24)

It is a damning criticism, and it must be remembered that it loses strength for us in an age when a background of experience is not recognised as a prime requirement for life. It seems little wonder that some of the Georgians felt that the time had come to call it a day. The sentiment expressed by the *Times Literary Supplement* reviewer, was perhaps silently shared by some of the contributing poets:

"One of the most foreboding facts about Georgian Poetry is its acceptance as representing the best contemporary opinion; and yet is it not a narrow selection from the work published since 1911 with a growing family likeness to mark it off?" (24)

Indeed a letter of de la Mare's to Marsh
discreetly suggests the same thought:

"You must shed as you go, if you decide to continue...To be in 5 would be monstrous...So, pray, seriously reconsider this. I am quite certain the critics would welcome some removals. "Old ruts "— can't you hear the echoes?" (25)

De la Mare had, in fact, not been keen to be included in the fourth volume but Marsh had prevailed upon him as he did again. Gordon Bottomley echoed the same sentiments and was not to be represented in the final volume. Abercrombie although doubtful of the value of continuing the series was willing to be included. Even the younger poets were not enthusiastic. Sassoon was not willing to be in the fifth, nor was W.J. Turner and even Edward Shanks required the persuasion of the editor. It was not a good sign but there seems little evidence of dispiritment in Marsh's preparation, and many new names were added for what was to be the final volume of *Georgian Poetry*; Martin Armstrong, Edmund Blunden, Richard Hughes, William Kerr, Frank Prewett, Peter Quennell and Victoria Sackville-West are all added to such older contributors as had survived. The addition of Blunden represents a real enrichment of the Georgian group, and by common consent D.H.Lawrence's "Snake" published in this volume is one of the finest things in the whole series. On the other hand, few anthologies can ever have included worse work than Richard Hughes' "Poets, Painters, Puddings" which reveals the following sentiments:

"Puddings should be
Full of currants for me:
Boiled in a pail,
Tied in the tail
"Of an old bleached shirt:
So hot that they hurt,
So huge that they last
From the dim, distant past
Until the crack of doom
Lift the roof off the room." (26)

It is difficult to imagine what could have recommended this poem to Marsh, the style is pseudo de la Mare, the content pointless and the whole thing clumsy. It casts a retrospective slight on all of Marsh's choice for this and the other volumes; where now is that sureness of taste? Perhaps Marsh sensed that the end was at hand and was no longer so rigorous in his standards of selection.

Now for the first time the book has an extended Prefatory note, two and a half pages long. Both its content and its tone are revealing.

"When the fourth volume of this series was published three years ago, many of the critics who had up till then, as Horace Walpole said of God, been the dearest creatures in the world to me, took another turn. Not only did they very properly disapprove my choice of poem; they went on to write as if the Editor of Georgian Poetry were a kind of public functionary, like the President of the Royal Academy; and they asked — again, on this assumption, very properly — who was E.M. that he should bestow and withhold crowns and sceptres, and decide that this or that poet was not to count...I have wished for an opportunity of disowning the pretension which I found attributed to me of setting up as a pundit, or a pontiff, or a Petronius Arbiter; for I have neither the sure taste, nor the exhaustive reading, nor the ample leisure which would be necessary in any such role."

The playful manner of the disclaimer is not as deceptive as perhaps Marsh intended it to be; here
is a significant retreat from the position of that first anthology "issued in the belief that English poetry is now once again putting on a new strength and beauty." Here a humbler explanation is given:

"I found, ten years ago, that there were a number of writers doing work which appeared to me extremely good, but which was narrowly known; and I thought that anyone, however un-professional and meagrely gifted, who presented a conspectus of it in a challenging and manageable form might be doing a good turn both to the poets and to the reading public. So, I think I may claim, it proved to be. The first volume seemed to supply a want. It was eagerly bought; the continuation of the affair was at once taken so much for granted as to be almost unavoidable; and there has been no break in the demand for the successive books. If they have won for themselves any position, there is no possible reason except the pleasure they have given."

Marsh seems to have been forced into this position of modesty by the too literal acceptance of his original claims for Georgian poetry. To be sure if the book had been a failure or only a modest success no one would have been concerned about the grand ideas of its editor, or his qualifications for the task, and Marsh was probably unprepared for the manner in which his "proud, ambiguous adjective 'Georgian'" (27) assumed such great importance in the literary world. It seems however an odd defence of his prediction of a new Georgian age to say that the success of it proved the confounding of its originator. Surely the success of 'Georgian Poetry' ought to have proved Marsh right. In a sense of course it did. There was a rebirth of interest in
poetry, sales were phenomenal, and there were more poets writing than for a long time before, and at the same time there were good poets writing.

An era which boasts the flowering of talents like those of de la Mare, Lawrence, Davies, Eliot, Pound, Edith Sitwell, Edward Thomas, Siegfried Sassoon, Robert Graves and Wilfred Owen is entitled to think of itself as a new age for poetry, especially if, as it surely should, that phrase is taken to suggest a number of good poets emerging rather than one genius.

But although half of the names mentioned in what is anyway a fairly arbitrary list were represented in *Georgian Poetry* the other half were not. And towards the end of the life span of the volumes it was those who were not represented who were seen to be more important to the development of English poetry. To a certain extent to his contemporaries as to modern readers Marsh must be considered to have failed to usher in the new age. In so far as there had been an upsurge of poetry writing it had overwhelmed Marsh and his anthology, and left him after ten years high and dry and looking, in comparison with the extent of the whole movement rather insignificant. Though, to be fair, this was not a universal view and Marsh in his memoirs was able to recall, somewhat wistfully, perhaps, "the 'place besides Tottel' which Gosse had foretold me"(28)

Although Monro with his bookselling experience at the Poetry Bookshop told Marsh that there would probably be a market for a sixth volume, it never seems to have been seriously considered. In fact it
seems difficult to understand the basis for Monro's optimism for Georgian Poetry 1920-22 only had a total sale of 8,000, barely more than half the sales of the fourth volume. Marsh felt, and rightly, that the new developments in poetry were so alien to his own tastes that he could no longer act as their sponsor in the bookshop. The announcement that the series was terminated was made in one of Monro's Monthly Chapbooks, and the Georgian heyday was formally over, although it survived for a few years in the London Mercury and the publication of several volumes of undemanding rural verse which, no doubt, appealed to an audience uninterested in Prufrock's predicament and such problems.

In this thesis I shall concentrate my attention on the poetry which the movement produced, trying to look critically at some of the enormous output of this prolific period; trying to assess what it was that made the poetry Georgian. Here, however, I must consider what effect if any the actual production of the anthologies had on the poets writing at the time. First of all, the book was an opportunity to reach a wider audience, and nothing more; later it became something of a bugbear to the poets, as we have seen and there were two reactions to this; some opted out, others out of loyalty to the editor stayed with the volume to the end. It must be said, however, that there is no evidence that any of the established Georgians wrote poems specifically with the anthology in mind, and only in the early days did poets accept Marsh's emendations. On the other hand Marsh's opposition to the more 'modern' tendencies in the work of some of his poets, seems to have
enabled them to formulate more exactly what they were trying to do. In later chapters, the skirmishes over rhythm, form and even content will be examined and from these come some of the most concise expressions of the poet's theory on these subjects.

Finance, cannot be forgotten and the sales of these volumes must have been of material benefit to many of the contributing poets. Not all of them were financially dependent on their writings, but those who were, de la Mare, Davies, for a short while Abercrombie, Lawrence and Bottomley must have genuinely welcomed the intermittent cheques of royalties, and the financial rewards which increased popularity meant in terms of the sales of their other volumes. Ultimately, of course, it is possible that reputations were damaged by the umbrella-term "Georgian." Some, notably Lawrence amongst the oldest, and of the younger members the group who are more widely known as War poets, have escaped but de la Mare, Davies, Monro especially seem to have suffered, until more recent years have revived interest in them.

All this must have some bearing on any judgment of the anthology's success. Certainly it did create an audience for its member poets which they might otherwise not have reached. A comparison with the effect of Monro's Poetry Bookshop emphasises how much greater was the practical achievement of Marsh. Monro's chapbooks, although more catholic in content, did not reach the same wide audience, nor did his poetry readings held above his shop in Devonshire Street ever seem to appeal to any beyond the cognoscenti. As a forum for poets and committed poetry-readers the success of the Bookshop cannot
be denied, but in comparison with Marsh's books it had but scant success in creating a wider public for poetry. As the reverse of the same fact, it did make the public more aware of poetry so that not only was there a readership for Georgian poetry, but also for the production of innumerable reviews and anthologies of other sorts. Here, of course, the war coupled with the early death of Rupert Brooke seems to have played its part, and for a while it seems as though anything written by an officer at the front could be sure of a public as could any poem of suitable war-time sentiment by any poet (or poetess). But the initial success of Georgian Poetry 1911-1912 came before the war was thought of by the general public and that fact alone, coupled with the popular success of "Masefield's The Everlasting Mercy" should make us sceptical of attributing the boom in poetry entirely to the war.

In less material terms, there can be no truth in calling a failure an anthology which published such poems as Rupert Brooke's "The Fish", de la Mare's "The Listeners", Hodgson's "The Bull", Lawrence's "Snake", Blunden's "Almswomen" and a whole list of short lyrics by Davies, Sassoon and Graves. Too often, it is remembered that Marsh did not publish this or that contemporary poet, Thomas or Owen are the names most frequently mentioned while it is forgotten that Georgian Poetry did publish the work of Blunden and Graves when they were only in their early twenties. Had Marsh included Thomas and Owen and omitted Graves and Blunden one wonders if the same regrets at lost opportunities would be uttered. Probably they would, for this must be the anthologist's lot.

All things considered, the passage of time changes
in literary taste, as well as personal preference, Georgian Poetry still seems a pretty fair anthology. It is true that the early ones are better than the late and equally it is true that there is much dross even in the first two volumes. But in what anthology is there not? Moreover, there is throughout a greater variety of writing than the reviewers gave credit for, and in some cases the poets benefit from the diversity of the company. The poetry of Mrs. Shove or Frank Prewett, for example, becomes un­bearably monotonous if even a small book of verse is read from cover to cover; in Georgian Poetry the lack of variety in their work is concealed by the different work of each contributor.

What of the anthologist? How well does he acquit himself, and does he serve his poets well? We have said some of the poets benefit from the variety within the anthology, could it be said that any suffer at the editor's hand because of inept selection? Let us look at the poems selected for one book from the work of one poet. In the 1916-1917 volume, Robert Graves who had then had published just two short volumes, Over the Brazier (1916) and Fairies and Fusiliers (1917) was represented for the first time by the following poems. "It's a Queer Time", "Star Talk" and "In the Wilderness" from the former volume and "David and Goliath", "A Pinch of Salt", "The Boy in Church", "The Lady Visitor", and "Not Dead" from the latter. These represent, it seems to me a fair cross section of the work in those two volumes; there are three war poems, a poem about dreams and the poet, a religious poem of surprising subtlety, as well as a poem about a child's boredom during a religious service, finally there's the social
commentary of "The Lady Visitor in the Pauper Ward" and the gossip of the stars preserved in nursery-rhyme type stanzas. No doubt other anthologists would have chosen other poems and Graves preserved none of these in his selection of his own work (Penguin, 1961) but he chose to ignore altogether the contents of these early volumes so that is perhaps not significant for our present purpose. Marsh represents the major strands of the two volumes, the reference to childhood both in content and the nursery form, the friendship poems, "David and Goliath" subtitled For D.C.T. killed at Fricourt, March, 1916 is but one of several dedicated to or written about friends of Graves, the admiration of Skelton, "In the Wilderness" is written in Grave's adaptation of Skeltonics, and the youthful high spirits are so well mixed that it almost seems as though Marsh was using this section of Georgian Poetry as an advertisement for Graves' books and to a certain extent, of course, he was.

This is just a random instance chosen from the middle volume and of a poet chosen for the first time but I believe that it would be a pattern which generally repeats itself in the case of poets represented by more than one poem. The choice of poet is perhaps more open to doubt, especially in the case of the one poem only poets. Asquith and Baring seem to have qualified only by friendship with Marsh, some of the older poets in the first volume and Masefield retained against his will until the third book were chosen primarily to boost sales. But all of these taken together form a very small proportion of the whole.

Marsh's personality is another point which should perhaps be dealt with here for it seems to have been
one of the decisive elements in the formation of each book. Christopher Hassall's biography, Marsh's own memoirs and, shortest and perhaps most revealing of all, a memorial booklet published for the Contemporary Art Society (29) have made public most of the aspects of his character, and critics of the Georgian period have, equally, been fascinated by this unusual civil servant, devoting his spare time to poets, artists, first nights and high society, all with equal dedication. Let us here sum up two attitudes to Marsh with two quotations. First Alan Pryce-Jones' assessment in the Introduction to his selection, Geogrian Poets:

"the Georgians must be seen as they were: a group rather than a movement, and a group loosely woven round the central personality of one man not himself a poet...the kind of group which Eddie Marsh might assemble was certain to show explicit faults and virtues. Marsh was very much a man at the centre of things. He liked good company, fine houses, consequential people. He was what is now called an Establishment figure; and although his nature held important reserves of kindness and simplicity, he could not mix with creative artists without a headiness - no doubt delicious to experience - overcoming his natural caution. The poets and the painters were like brilliant creatures in an aquarium, himself was always on the outer side of the tank, looking eagerly in." (30)

But the poets and painters did not all regard their patron in this light; Walter de la Mare's tribute speaks of the other side of the picture:

"Alas, I don't see how, to Eddie, one could be grateful enough. A sentence or two of his life-giving
"approval of some scrap of verse,
for example - even to the most
elderly of Georgians - was as
welcome as a bag of goodies to a
child. And it lasted much longer.
He was, of course, a superb textual
critic, resembling in this A.E.Housman.
Rarer yet is the imaginative critic
who at need can tell you what you intended to say, but didn't; or even,
with the utmost delicacy what you should have intended to say. This implies of
course not only an intense discrimination,
but a scarcely conscious interplay of
imagination and emotion...imaginative
insight is precious enough in all conscience; scalpel-keen candour is also
beyond price. And Eddie's, infinitely to
one's advantage, could cut to the bone.
He could be completely frank, outspoken,
and witty at the same time - a devastating
collusion of humour is also in reserve.
Indeed, however indulgent his heart, he
seldom, I fancy, wholly abandoned his head." (31)

There are two sides of the man, differently seen
but not incompatible. This was the man responsible for
the Georgian Poetry books, but it must not be forgotten,
he was not responsible for the poetry in those books.
If he gave advice, and it was followed as de la Mare
suggests it often was, with gratitude, this must be
seen as the poet's responsibility. And it is to the
creative minds behind the books that we must look if
we wish to understand more of the poetry.
NOTES TO CHAPTER 2.

(1) C. Bell: Old Friends (1956) p. 80
(2) J. Masefield: The Everlasting Mercy (1911) p. 3.
(3) C.H. Sorley: Marlborough and other poems
Third edition with illustrations in prose
(4) The source for this is E. Marsh: A Number
of People 1939 but here as everywhere Ross
and Hassall are invaluable.
(5) C.V. Hassall: Edward Marsh: A Biography
(6) Undated letter from Housman to Marsh
quoted Hassall. p. 194.
(7) G.P. 1911-12 p. 62.
(8) Letter from Marsh to de la Mare 29th
(9) Letter from Lawrence to Marsh 5th November
1912. D.H. Lawrence: Collected Letters
(10) Undated letter from T. Sturge Moore to
(12) Undated letter from Marsh to Brooke.
Hassall p. 277.
(13) Letters from Drinkwater to Marsh. 1st October
(14) T.L.S. 9th December 1915.
(15) Letter from Lawrence to Marsh 24th May 1914.
(18) Letter from Freeman to Marsh 5th August 1917.
John Freeman's Letters ed. G. Freeman and Sir
(19) Letter from Baring to Marsh 13th April 1917.
Ross p. 179.
CHAPTER 2  NOTES (continued)

(20) T.S.Eliot: "Verse pleasant and unpleasant" Egoist. March 1918. p. 43. The 'unpleasant refers to Wheels. A Second Cycle, also reviewed.


(22) W.De la Mare: "To the Heavenly Power" a review of Memories of Childhood: J.Freeman. T.L.S. 27th March 1919. as always the article is anonymous but it is identified by Edward Wagenknecht in "Walter De la Mare: Book Reviewer" Boston University Studies in English I. Winter 1955-6. pp. 211-36.


(24) T.L.S. 11th December, 1919.


(26) G.F. 1919-1922. p. 103.

(27) E.Marsh: A Number of People. 1939. p. 321.

(28) ibid.

E.Marsh: A Number of People 1939.


(31) W.De la Mare's contribution to Eddie Marsh: Sketches for a Composite Portrait. (see note 29) p. 21.
In defence of his anthologising principles, Edward Marsh wrote in the preface to *Georgian Poetry 1920-22*:

"Much admired modern work seems to me, like gravy imitating lava. Its upholders may retort that much of the work which I prefer seems to them, in its lack of inspiration and its comparative finish, like tapioca imitating pearls. Either view - possibly both - may be right."

The statement is very revealing of Marsh's views on poetic form and is worth looking at closely because of this and because his opinion expressed strongly to the poets themselves brought from them interesting and useful statements of their beliefs about form. Gravy or lava, tapioca or pearls; the implication is that Marsh would have been willing to include the work of modern poets had it exhibited the natural dynamic form of lava, but Marsh is not really being quite honest. It appears doubtful from what he said elsewhere that he would recognise organic form with the energy and scope suggested by lava; it hardly agrees with his confession to Rupert Brooke of "a prejudice in favour of poetry I can read at meals". (1) Indeed, where his anthology includes poems which he might have thought to approach the lava-like, often there is to a reader far more of the appearance of something man-made and domestic, almost gravy-like indeed. In general, the longer poems in the books are notable either for a simple chronological or narrative progression, sometimes well
handled as by Gibson in "The Hare", sometimes tame to the point of banality as in Martin Armstrong's "Miss Thompson Goes Shopping", or an accretion of observations on a fairly simple central theme, among these the best are those of W.H.Davies, or John Masefield's "Biography" but this technique comes near to inanity in J.C.Squire's list, "Rivers". Dramatic poems come into a different class, and such a poem as D.H.Lawrence's "Snapdragon" with its crude force, makes the rest of the poems in the first volume seem contrived in form. In fact the contributions of Lawrence, and, (if lava could be imagined in small enough quantities) the war poems of Sassoon, are the only evidence that Marsh had any appreciation of the rugged vitality which he is trying to suggest in his phrase "gravy; imitating lava."

"Tapioca imitating pearls" seems to me much more accurate as an estimate of Marsh's taste and this is what we should expect, both from the context in which it is written and from what we know of Marsh's preferences in poetry. In his memoirs, he as good as admitted that where nothing better offered his choice would be tapioca rather than anything less self-contained. He wrote there:

"it is perfectly true that in choosing between what someone wittily distinguished as good bad plays and bad good plays, my preference is decidedly for the former." (2)

His natural taste was for well-polished, not over-ambitious verse and this is well reflected in his translations from Horace and La Fontaine. His Forty-two Fables of La Fontaine published in November 1924, when, had the series continued, a sixth volume might have
been expected, provides a better example of Marsh's own poetry than the trivia and competition pieces published under the title *Minima* (1947). As Marsh does not follow slavishly La Fontaine's form and words, his own poetic style emerges clearly. Here is the opening of "The Frog and the Ox":

"A Frog upon an Ox once cast her eyes,  
And thought him the ideal of shape and size;  
So, being about the bigness of an egg,  
She needs must swell, and strain, and pant, and puff,  
In emulation of his fine proportions;  
Saying "Look, sister dear, I beg,  
How am I getting on? Is that enough?"  
"Not yet." "Then this?" "Scarce better than at first."  
"But now?" "So far, dear, that's your worst."  
Alas, the end of her contortions  
Was that the tiny creature burst." (3)

Here is well-contained colloquialism in language, nicely varied regularity of metre, not over-obtrusive pattern of rhyme, all well suited to the urbanity of the content. Much of this derives naturally, from La Fontaine but the choice of original was entirely Marsh's own.

On the other hand, Marsh was frequently heard by visitors at his apartment reciting from *Paradise Lost* aloud in the bath.(4) Also a list of his requirements for poetry to be found in his memoirs included as well as intelligibility and music, raciness which he amplified as:

"intensity of thought or feeling...to rule out the vapidity which is too often to be found, alas, in verse that is written with due regard to sense, sound and correctness."

A fourth desideratum was added:
"I was happier with it if it was written on some formal principle which I could discern, and from which it departed, if at all, only for the sake of some special effect." (5)

From these quotations we have a clear enough idea of Marsh's own preferences in poetry to understand more accurately what he thought of as a 'pearl' - not something necessarily small and flawless but with well-compassed size, recognisable shape and natural beauty. All too often, however, the term tapioca which Marsh supplied seems to sum up the entire formal interest and meaning of a Georgian poem, though we look in vain for the homely nourishment of that food in lines such as:

"The lonely lovely trees sigh
For summer spent and gone;
A few homing leaves drift by,
Poor souls bewildered and wan." (6)

Even at its best the pearl-like in poetry has limitations well summed up by the contemporary critic in a review of Drinkwater's *Loyalties*. He compares Drinkwater with the:

"Oriental craftsmen who spend many years in carving a single ivory"

and he continues:

"The ivory carvings are, for the most part, very exquisite. The poems are choice and subtle in metre; delicate in thought. They are delightful little things to turn over and examine in a strong light; and the detection, here and there, of a slip of the carving tool rather increases than diminishes our interest. But joy in craftsmanship is other and smaller than joy in poetry. Mr. Drinkwater's poems tell us nothing of the poignancy or the splendour of life. Very seldom do they glow with the sudden and miraculous radiance of great art flowering out of a great passion for life." (7)
How far is Marsh's conception of poetic form shared by the Georgian poets themselves? We cannot answer for all, but fortunately several of the writers were provoked into full expression of their opinions on form by a natural antagonism to what were felt to be Marsh's over-rigid views. The first clash seems to have been with Sturge Moore, on the subject of R.C. Trevelyon's "Dirge". The poem, which seems unexceptionable enough, even by Marsh's own standards was finally included in the original Georgian Poetry but the concession was made mainly so that Marsh could also have Sturge Moore's own "A Sicilian Idyll". Here is the last verse of the "Dirge":

"O vain belief!  
O'erweaning dreams!  
Must not fond hope,  
Nor think that bliss  
Which neither seems,  
Nor is  
Aught else than grief" (8)

Marsh's views may be deduced from Sturge Moore's answer to them:

"As to your criticism about formally perfect. It is the very type of the criticism which I abominate; that is, it refers to a mechanical criterion as ultimate. There is no reason or common sense in any such reference. There is an unrhymed line in most of the divisions of Lycidas, and they do not occur in the same relative position. Its not being what you call formally perfect is really in its favour, and means that the writer's mind was more dominated by real taste, than by mechanical pedantry when he wrote it..."

Even in triumph Sturge Moore re-iterates the point:

"A perfect form may be beautiful but we know so many impeccable ones that are not. A broken vase may be more
"beautiful than a new one uncracked, 
so may a broken form...success 
conforms to no standards...Mere 
conformity is never a virtue...". (9)

Although outspoken enough in its opposition to Marsh, there is little here to tell us of Sturge Moore's own conception of form. The 'broken vase' metaphor is vivid but, on close inspection, meaningless unless ridiculously it denotes a perfect form deliberately made imperfect by the writer. The phrase "success conforms to no standards", on the other hand, is a useful commentary on Georgian poetry, which comes in many shapes and sizes and excludes no known form and few innovations.

At the same time Marsh's opposition was to bring from another Georgian poet perhaps the fullest statement he ever made on the subject of poetic rhythms. D.H.Lawrence wrote the following defence in answer to Marsh's criticism of some of his poems, of which he wrote to Lady Cynthia Asquith:

"Marsh will hold it a personal favour if I will take more care of my rhythms...He thinks I'm too Rag-time! - not that he says so." (10)

Here are extracts from Lawrence's letter to Marsh:

"You are wrong. It makes me open my eyes. I think I read my poetry more by length than by stress - as a matter of movements in space rather than footsteps hitting the earth... I think more of a bird with broad wings flying and lapsing through the air, than anything, when I think of metre...
It all depends on the pause - the natural pause, the natural lingering of the voice according to the feeling - it is the hidden emotional pattern that makes poetry, not the obvious form."
"I have forgot much, Cynara, gone
with the wind.
It is the lapse of the feeling,
something as indefinite as expression
in the voice carrying emotion. It
doesn't depend on the ear, particularly,
but on the sensitive soul. And the ear
gets a habit, and becomes master, when
the ebbing and lifting emotion should
be master, and the ear the transmitter.
If your ear has got stiff and mechanical,
don't blame my poetry. That's why you
like Golden Journey to Samarkand - it
fits your habituated ear, and your feeling
crouches subservient and a bit pathetic.
'It satisfies my ear' you say. Well, I
don't write for your ear. This is the
constant war, I reckon between new
expression and the habituated and mech­
anical transmitters of the human
constitution... You are wrong, I think,
about the two rhymes - why need you
notice they are rhymes? You are a bit of
a policeman in poetry. I never put them
in because they are rhymes." (11)

Here we have perhaps the best statement of the
theory of metre by any of the Georgians: and there is
much in it which applies to the Georgian movement as
a whole. There are obvious exceptions and the
opposition to Flecker's verse mentioned in an earlier
letter to Marsh:

"Remember, skilled verse is dead in
fifty years - I am thinking of your
admiration of Flecker." (12)
is not the only case. Another letter to Marsh at the
same period criticises Hodgson's "A Song of Honour":

"There's the emotion in the rhythm,
but it's loose emotion, inarticulate,
common - the words are mere currency.
It is exactly like a man who feels
very strongly for a beggar, and gives
him a sovereign. The feeling is at
either end, for the moment, but the
sovereign is a dead bit of metal.
And this poem is the sovereign." (13)
But there are two major aspects of Lawrence's theory of metre which characterise much of Georgian poetry, in intention if not always in achievement. One is the naturalness and the other is the "emotional pattern". It must be emphasised that few of the Georgians would have echoed the vehemence of Lawrence's belief in blood and emotion. On the other hand Lawrence's remark in his review of the first Georgian volume:

"They are not poets of passion, perhaps, but they are essentially passionate poets. The time to be impersonal has gone. We start from the joy we have in ourselves and everything must take colour from that joy." (14)

is a fair comment on many of the poems, not excluding the narrative and dramatic poems, in all five volumes. 'Passionate' is not a word which springs to mind but 'personal' is obviously true of W.H. Davies' contributions, of John Freeman's and many of Drinkwater's. It is a creed echoed by Masefield in his poem "Biography":

"This many-pictured world of many passions
Wears out the nations as a woman's fashions,
And what life is is much to very few;
Men being so strange, so mad, and what men do
So good to watch or share; but when men count
Those hours of life that were a bursting fount
Sparkling the dusty heart with living springs
There seems a world, beyond our earthly things,
Gated by golden moments, each bright time
Opening to show the city white like lime,
High-towered and many-peopled. This made sure,
Work that obscures those moments seems impure,
"Making our not-returning time of breath
Dull with the ritual and records of death,
That frost of fact by which our wisdom gives
Correctly stated death to all that lives."

It seems odd perhaps to find Lawrence and Masefield in agreement and odder still to find expression of a like joy in life in their Georgian poems. Although we may agree with Lawrence about the inadequacy of the poems to the emotion in Ralph Hodgson's "A Song of Honour" it is not difficult to see why Marsh thought that he might have found in Lawrence another admirer of the poem. Nor does it seem impossible that Hodgson's ecstasy in the final stanza of the poem was in fact an attempt to find the emotional pattern that makes poetry:

"I heard it all, I heard the whole
Harmonious hymn of being roll
Up through the chapel of my soul
And at the altar die,
And in the awful quiet then
Myself I heard Amen, Amen,
Amen I heard me cry!
I heard it all, and then although
I caught my flying senses, oh,
A dizzy man was I!
I stood and stared; the sky was lit,
The sky was stars all over it,
I stood, I knew not why,
Without a wish, without a will,
I stood upon that silent hill
And stared into the sky until
My eyes were blind with stars and still
I stared into the sky." (16)

The shape of the stanza is controlled by the repetition of words and phrases "Heard" and "I heard it all", "I" and "sky", and the repeated rhyme words, only five different rhymes for the whole stanza of eighteen short lines, the penultimate form of which are rhymed alike. The syntax too is that of excitement, the
sentences, although long, are in reality simple, one clause amplifying another until the whole picture is built up. The rhythm too seems to be controlled, as Lawrence would have desired, by "the natural lingering of the voice according to the feeling". The first few lines building up to a crescendo, with an intermediate couplet of light slow words:
"And at the altar die,
And in the awful quiet then"
before the outburst of "Amen, Amen, Amen". After that the stanza ends with the disjointed rhythm of stunned amazement and the seemingly clumsy line endings, falling at "unsuitable" grammatical moments heightens this effect.

Here, too, is naturalness of effect, the rhythms of the passage, its syntax and diction are all such as seem natural to a man in the state the poet describes. But before going on to discuss this second aspect of Lawrence's statement about rhythm more must be said about the Georgians and the shaping emotional pattern. The best examples of this are found I think, in first person narrative poems like Gibson's "The Hare" and also in that poet's dialogue poem "Hoops" where two circus artists are talking together about their futures and pasts, the differing emotional states shaping the progress of the poem. In the later years the "emotional pattern" became less prominent and straight narrative of events, or impersonal observation of nature took the place of the story or picture transfused with emotion. This is not without exceptions in either case. The work of Flecker is not emotional, even in such a poem as "The Dying Patriot". The poem's progression is historical, metaphorically expressed as a day, the stanza pattern
is varied only slightly for effect in the whole poem and the final exhortation like the opening stanza is controlled not by emotion but by aesthetic considerations. The first verse begins:

"Day breaks in England down the Kentish hills,
Singing in the silence of the meadow-footing rills,
Day of my dreams, O day!"

and the final verse parallels this:

"Sleep not, my country: though night is here, afar
Your children of the morning are clamourous for war:
Fire in the night, O dreams!" (17)

In contrast to this the final volume has poems shaped by personal emotion, Robert Nichol's "Night Rhapsody" is one example and John Freeman's "The Caves" is another. This poem, shaped by the metaphor of the tide beating into a cave in the cliff is unlike the Hodgson poem in two respects. One, the syntactical progression is not easy to follow, and two, there is beside the emotional pattern, the control of stanzas. In these two respects the comparison is, I think, typical. As the Georgian movement progressed, clarity of meaning became less and less a feature of the poems, and at the same time poems became more organised according to recognised verse patterns. These two things can be seen as a reflection of the lessening importance of the personal emotional pattern in the forming of poems.

Naturalness, especially of rhythm did not suffer the same decline in importance; when we come to look at diction in a later chapter it will be seen that here there was a development towards more exotic and poetic language among some of the later Georgians.
Naturalness, though, must be seen as linked with the emotional pattern and the rejection of rigid super-imposed form. To adopt Lawrence's own image, natural rhythm and form, meant using rhyme, metre and stanza form as a speaker uses expression of voice to convey feeling. John Freeman in a letter to Marsh used a different metaphor which equally stresses the importance of unforced rhythm and form:

"Content is the root - not fixed in a pretty crystal bowl but growing in the earth and sending up at length some flower which is neither form nor subject alone, but truly the flower - the poem." (18)

In the case of the earlier Georgians this naturalness meant poems of irregular structure, often in blank verse, or if rhymed, either in couplets or unequal stanzas, especially in the longer poems. Hodgson's "The Bull" is a rare example of a poem conforming to its stanza pattern at all rigidly for any length. The shorter poems, do, it is true, more often conform to a standard and Walter de la Mare, superb musician that he was, having created his rhythmic norm generally maintained it without any violent break or transformation. The narrative or dialogue form, too, gave the poet the maximum freedom. In some cases the pursuit of naturalness meant an abandonment of recognised poetic form which was then quite startling. Harold Monro's "Overheard on a Saltmarsh" has become familiar so that its originality is lost on readers who remember the poem all too well from school anthologies. That it has also been a favourite recitation piece, testifies, however, to the success of its naturalness. No child could meaninglessly sing-song the lines:

"Give them me. Give them me.
No."
"Then I will howl all night in the reeds,  
Lie in the mud and howl for them,  
Goblin, why do you love them so?  
They are better than stars or water,  
Better than voices of winds that sing,  
Better than any man's fair daughter,  
Your green glass beads on a silver ring." (19)

The urgency of the goblin's demand, the implacability of the nymph are conveyed through the rhythms of the exchange. We are never in doubt as to who is speaking, and the repeated pattern "Give them me. No." not only unifies the poem but ensures that the total effect of the poem, when reading is finished is one of greedy demand, and utter refusal.

The same natural rhythm, reflecting more often than not the cadence of speech, is found even in the more regular lyrics. Sometimes, as notably in the case of Davies, it imparts a roughness to the lyric form as in the short "Thunderstorms", which is heavy with stressed monosyllables. Its seven syllable lines all end heavily with only the hint of lightness in the repeated hours/flowers rhyme. Here is evident craftsmanship, such effects are not achieved unconsciously and yet Davies succeeds in conveying the natural rhythms with seeming artlessness:

"My mind has thunderstorms,  
That brood for heavy hours;  
Until they rain me words,  
My thoughts are drooping flowers  
And sulking, silent birds.  
Yet come, dark thunderstorms,  
And brood your heavy hours;  
For when you rain me words  
My thoughts are dancing flowers  
And joyful singing birds." (20)

The war poets were adept at this use of lyric norms combined with colloquially easy rhythms and it
has sometimes been thought that this was an innovation made by Sassoon. In fact there is plenty of evidence of this style of writing in the two volumes which contain predominantly pre-war verse. Not only Davies but also de la Mare and Gibson provide excellent examples of the technique. Here from the first volume is the opening of de la Mare's "The Sleeper":

"As Ann came in one summer day,
She felt that she must creep,
So silent was the clear cool house,
It seemed a house of sleep." (21)

and of Gibson's "Geraniums":

"Stuck in a bottle on the window-sill,
In the cold gaslight burning gaily red
Against the luminous blue of London night,
These flowers are mine: while somewhere out of sight
In some black-throated alley's stench and heat,
Oblivious of the racket of the street,
A poor old weary woman lies in bed." (21)

In the first case the simplicity of diction contributes to the effect of a story-teller speaking, while in the second the homeliness of the subject matter compensates for the fanciful ideas poetically expressed in the third and fifth lines, though these are compensated by the totally unpoetic opening "stuck in a bottle" and the conversational banality of the final line.

The technique was certainly used to maximum poetic effect by Sassoon and the third Georgian volume has several of his poems in this mode, the spectacular "They" and "In the Pink" and the quieter "A Letter Home" dedicated to Robert Graves. And Graves, too writes in this style as "It's a Queer Time" and the pre-war "The Boy in Church", in this book, show. Graves' "It's a Queer Time" is an example of the
If in the hands of the earlier Georgians the technique seemed to owe something, at least, to Wordsworth, then now the debt seems rather to be to Browning and Donne. Graves sacrifices nothing in the way of regularity of form but in reading, the stanza demands the use of colloquial stress, so that in the first line "safe" has a prominent place and the sudden transportations of the soldier to his childhood is heralded by the pause which must, naturally, precede "hullo" in the third line.

After the war, the tendency was towards even more recognised formal structures, though this did not mean the loss of naturalness of rhythm. Two passages from John Freeman's letters are worth quoting on this subject. Both were written to fellow Georgians, one to Marsh himself and the other to J.C. Squire, which is a reflection of the interest which the Georgian poets in general had in poetic form. The first, from which I have already quoted a part, is clearly an answer to some criticism of Marsh's. It is notable for its self-confident outspokenness and lack of apology for the disagreement. The later Georgians were not so careful as the earlier of giving offence to their editor:

"Or you'll be dozing safe in your dug-out -
A great roar - the trench shakes and falls about -
You're struggling, gasping, struggling,
then...hullo!
Elsie comes tripping gaily down the trench,
Hanky to nose - that lyddite makes a stench -
Getting her pinafore all over grime.
Funny! because she died ten years ago!
It's a queer time." (22)
"1. I was never farther than now from throwing over form, and please God never shall dream of doing so: that wd. be suicide indeed. Things I am doing now will show you that it is at least as great an urgency of form as of content that drives me to... well, longer lyrics. Content is the root - not fixed as in a pretty crystal bowl but growing in the earth and sending up at length some flower which is neither form nor subject alone, but truly the flower - the poem. 2. I don't except even Donne from the obligation of form: nor does his work ask it. 3. I can't apologise for not agreeing with you about the two lines in The Visit. True the second line you quote may run into a different metrical shape, but I find it fits into a shape which sixteen preceding lines have already determined; and I fancy it has some value too - as sound supporting sense, by reason of a fractional retardation and then prolonging of the "knock" - I'm fairly certain about my rhythms, yet grateful for such close "sounding" of them." (23)

From this we see first of all that the battle between Marsh and his poets, over metre and rhyme never ceased. Lawrences's attack on Marsh's position was written nearly six years before this but, as far as we can tell from Freeman's letter, he still speaks from the same critical basis. Even as late as 1941 there is evidence that the struggle was not over. In a letter, quoted by his wife in her biography, Francis Brett Young wrote to Marsh:

"I think you are still too much obsessed by the idea of feet rather than stresses." (24)

Unfortunately there is no amplification, nor are there any other letters to Marsh, from earlier years, to give us in more detail the view of this contributor
to the final volumes. But it is interesting to notice that even such latecomers to the Georgian scene, chosen when Marsh is generally supposed to have become more narrow and less adventurous in his poetic taste, should share with earlier and more prominent Georgians, like Lawrence, a more adventurous attitude to metre. Another of the younger Georgians, Graves, recorded in the memorial volume of reminiscences of Marsh, his part in the struggle:

"His critical principles were gentlemanly ones in the best English tradition. Everything must mean what it says; the ear must never be cheated, or the reason offended; punctuation must be exact, diction clean, metaphors and quotations accurate. Yet he believed in genius and conceded my premises that as the test of a gentleman is his ability to wear the wrong hat and make it seem the right one, so the test of a poet is his ability to transcend formal poetics." (25)

and Marsh himself acknowledges that his disagreements with Lawrence failed to take proper account of the poet's genius. In his memoirs he conceded:

"I tried him rather high by carping, with what I see in retrospect to have been overweening presumption, at his use of rhyme and metre"

"He was too great and strange for the likes of me." (26)

It is as though there were two sides to Marsh's attitude to the work of his proteges: first a recognition of their genius, or superior ability and second, an assumption that his own feeling for poetic correctness was more important than their feeling for poetic form. Seldom was he able to persuade the poets, more often, though, he did help them to formulate their own poetic theory. Merely by making Lawrence and Freeman, to take two examples, consider so
closely this aspect of their writing must have had a marked effect on their poetry.

The second thing which we notice in Freeman's statement is that his belief in organic form "sending up at length...the flower – the poem." is not inconsistent with the most rigid application of formal technique. His answer to Marsh's criticism of "The Visit" is all the more remarkable when we realise that the poem is no short tightly organised lyric but a narrative some five pages or so long. The technique may by Marsh's standards seem irregular but quite clearly it is not in any way haphazard. We can see this more clearly if we look at one of Freeman's contributions to the Georgian volumes. "November Skies", first published in 1916 in *Stone Trees and other Poems* was one of Freeman's first contributions to *Georgian Poetry* and appeared in the third volume, with five other poems by him:

"Than these November skies
Is no sky lovelier. The clouds are deep;
Into their grey the subtle spies
Of colour creep,
Changing that high austerity to delight,
Till ev'n the leaden interfolds are bright.
And, where the cloud breaks, faint far
azure peers
Ere a thin flushing cloud again
Shuts up that loveliness or shares
The huge great clouds more slowly, gently, as
Reluctant the quick sun should shine in vain,
Holding in bright caprice their rain.
And when of colours none,
Not rose, nor amber, nor the scarce late
green,
Is truly seen, –
In all the myriad grey,
In silver height and dusky deep, remain
The loveliest,
Faint purple flushes of the unvanquished sun"

(27)
First and foremost the poem is unified by the simple observation of the sun setting in November, (in passing it might be said that the poem does not even attempt to portray the violent melodramatic sunsets which truly characterise November evenings) but this is fortified by Freeman's manipulation of the rhyme scheme and rhythm. There are nineteen lines in the poem and these are conveniently divided into three, the first six lines, ending with the second sentence, the second six lines ending with the fourth sentence, and the final seven lines. The final third of the poem is not in reality, or in effect, any longer than the preceding two thirds, for the lines are shorter. The line lengths (in syllables) are again in groups of three: 6. 10. 8. 4. 11. 10: 10. 8. 8. 10. 10. 8: 6. 10. 4. 8. 8. 4. 10. No pattern emerges here, but there is a nice balance of short and long lines with the middle section of the poem, as befits its content, the most regular in organisation. Not even Marsh himself could have imposed on the poem patterns of feet and stresses on classical lines. However, evidence of Freeman's thought in creating the pattern of stresses emerges, for instance, in the final line of each three sections where there is a more or less regular iambic rhythm. Furthermore the patterns of "The clouds are deep" is repeated in "of colour creep" and towards the end of the poem in "Is truly seen" where the pattern's repetition is reinforced by the recurrence of the same vowel, though with a different final consonant. When we turn to look at the rhymes the poem is even more revealing of forethought. The first group of lines rhymes regularly enough a b a b c c. The second group, which is more
regular in line length, is less regular in rhyme but if 'again' is allowed as a rhyme for 'vain' and 'rain' has the equal number of rhymed and unrhymed lines d e f g e e. Here as in the rhythm there is regularity at the end of the group, which echoes furthermore, the rhyme at the end of the first group. The third group of lines is no more regular in rhyme than the second and its pattern is h i i j e k h. Here 'remain' links this group with the preceding lines but otherwise the rhymes in themselves are less certain in that 'none' and 'sun' rhymes only for the ear (and then not according to some regional speakers) and 'green' and 'seen', a perfectly acceptable rhyme occurs with an interval of only three syllables. The disintegration of the rhyming pattern reflects accurately the dissolving colour and form of the sky, but here as before there is in the rhyming of the last line with the first of the group a recognition of pattern which gives the poem, for the reader, a wholeness which it would otherwise not have.

There is plenty of evidence here that Freeman had carefully organised the poem. The haphazard appearance of the mingled long and short lines on the page does not reflect any disorganisation of thought. If, however, the reader asks himself whether the poem is a success the answer has to be no. It is simply neither vivid nor memorable enough; it is the sort of poem which goes well in an anthology because if there were many in the same style and mould the reader would soon lose interest. The reasons for its failure are I think mostly to do with its form. The content is simple enough and although
Freeman has little to add to the known picture of sunsets, there can be, as several Georgians well illustrate, pleasure in reading of accurately observed natural phenomena however unoriginal. The truth is that all Freeman's manipulation of rhyme and rhythm has obscured his poem. While it is true that syntax and meaning are not strained to fit rigid rhyme pattern, instead the poetry is so unobtrusive that it defeats its own purpose. The rhythm and rhyme is at such a low pitch of intensity that it runs contrary to the poem's intended meaning:

"Changing that high austerity to delight,
Till ev'n the leaden interfolds are bright"

for all its rhyme does not convey as it should any change from austerity to delight. Where Hodgson's poem was perhaps too emphatic of ecstasy, this is too lacking in climax and excitement. The last line "Faint purple flushes of the unvanquished sun" is rendered meaningless because all the colour has been faint, at least in the reader's imagination and the sun's being unvanquished comes as no surprise because there seems to have been no real conflict. Freeman's attempt, in this poem at least, to find an organic form has been a hindrance to the poetry; the result seems like an exercise in verse technique rather than a genuine inspired utterance. One cannot help but feel that one of Davies's seemingly unstudied two quatrains verses would have better suited the subject.

In the other passage in his letters written two years earlier than the letter to Marsh but after the poem discussed above, Freeman seems to express his uncertainties about the freer form. Freeman's desire was not to overthrow form but to find a new form; the reason why he so seldom succeeds is to be found in
this letter, there was not in Freeman's inspiration the emotional urgency which finds a form for itself and Freeman's own attempts to find a new form for his poems seldom have any advantage over recognised structures and patterns:

"There seems nearly always something of evasion or indolence in irregular verse, unless the passion behind the poem is felt in it, making its own strong native rhythm; and only very seldom is anything won which would compensate for the lack of form...I do think that emotion seeks for and hungers after and wholly needs form, and needs it not only for resistance, as a swimmer needs water, but for the very means of life. So far as the free versers are dispensing with form, and not seeking or making new form, they are fundamentally, metaphysically and even demonstrably wrong— and nothing could be wronger. I suppose in the abstract the ideal would be for every poem a new and different form, the expression of every lyric utterly completing and enfolding—simply embodying—the individual impulse; but since the mind hardens and grows firm, and the character comes more and more surely into the work—half blessedly and half not—the form tends to repetition, embodying over and over again the same passion in nearly the same shape—and this, not always because inspiration has failed but because it hasn't, the passion has become a ruling passion, the idea pure Idea, seeking satisfaction in repetition merely because it is incapable of satisfaction." (28)

There is within this passage a confusion of ideas on form so great that it is difficult to sum up what Freeman actually meant, or where his certainty about rhythms of which he spoke to Marsh, derives from. If the ideal form is 'embodying' the impulse of the poem, how can a poem need form as a swimmer needs
water "not only for resistance" but as the "very means of life"? The second idea is much more in line with Marsh's thinking on the poetic forms, as control, support and restraint for the poet. The first idea of 'embodiment' comes much nearer to the free verser's position; and as to the concluding history of the development of recognised form being parallel to the growth of passion to ruling passion, it is impressive sounding but naïve nonsense. Does it mean, taken to its logical conclusion that each 'idée fixe' has its own shape, immediately recognisable? Clearly not. Nor can it mean as it seems to imply that every poet is only saying the same thing over and over again in more or less the same way because he is never satisfied with his previous poem. All that we can safely conclude from the passage is that Freeman was much interested in forms (though both of these statements of his ideas on the subject are private utterances, his published criticism confines itself to particular issues and avoids the underlying principles) and that he did not adhere to the free verse school, thinking, for reasons not at all clear, that form was essential to poetry. At the same time he was not satisfied with the standard poetic shapes and sought, as his poems make clear, more freedom within certain limits. What tends to happen in practice is that many of Freeman's poems leave the reader with the impression that Freeman worked hard for naturalness and deliberately eschewed the obviously regular forms. Even his poem "Stone Trees", the most regular looking of his contributions to Georgian Poetry 1916-1917 has considerable variation in the rhyme pattern and the rhythm cannot be reduced
to any scheme at all; but that the effect is not of a spontaneous embodiment of poetic impulse, but of a regular form deliberately jumbled. And the limitation of Freeman's belief in the value of form is seen in a comment in an undated letter:

"even a bad painting of say a beautiful leg must give more pleasure than a good painting of a thick leg in which only the abstract beauty may be inferred."

(29)

Of course, not all the Georgian utterances on form were occasioned by a difference of opinion with Edward Marsh, and the extract from Freeman's letter to Squire for instance seems to be an unprompted utterance of Freeman's position. It is however significant that there are elsewhere few statements on the subject so extensive; Lawrence and Freeman, who we know to have disagreed with Marsh on this subject, provide us with the most ample evidence of a Georgian poet's position. This is not to say that the other poets were uninterested in form; on the contrary, there is plenty of evidence in the poetry that they were. In a way, the very variety of forms which they attempted is testimony to this; poetic drama and long narrative poems, dialogue poems and short lyrics, sonnets and sonnet sequences are all found. What will only be found infrequently is verse of complex formal scheme or at the other extreme, free verse at its most untamed. As Robert Graves pointed out in a Hogarth Essay entitled Contemporary Techniques of Poetry: A Political Analogy the Georgians were of the centre party, and this applied to form no less than other aspects of poetic practice. Graves offers a useful summary of Georgian structures:

"not much of it is written beyond lyric
"length. It will be found well-catenated but not on the rigid classical plan, having more in common with the modern short story or descriptive essay. Couplets or longish stanzas will be used, or blank verse. Occasionally it takes the form of poetic drama...lyric sequences on an amorous or contemplative theme are also favoured." (30)

It would be unjust to attribute this middle-of-the-road selection of forms to timidity or even ignorance of the contemporary scene. Freeman shows himself well aware of developments in twentieth-century poetry as does Monro in his survey (and Graves in his) of contemporary poetry. What does seem to be true is that the Georgians were dissatisfied with what they saw as the limited verse techniques of their immediate fore-runners of the nineties and after; a poetry, which relied heavily on the attention of polished formal beauty and the interest of structural organisation, seemed to them to appeal too narrowly to the literary mind, to be too cut off from the wider audience which they wished to reach and from the basic realities of life, which they wanted to incorporate in their verse. Not for them, therefore, the new rigidities of the Imagists' form or the arty convolutions of an Edith Sitwell, what they sought for in poetic form was a means of conveying their emotional impulse with as little obstacle as possible and of compassing the range of their thoughts as far as possible without restraint; at the same time they recognised the need for organisation. As Gordon Bottomley wrote in a letter to Paul Nash:

"You can make your own laws in art, and make them afresh for every work if you like; but once you have made them you must keep them, and if you
"want to be wilfully irregular you must choose an irregular form" (31)

And Robert Graves echoed this belief in a letter to Wilfred Owen:

"One can't put in too many syllables into a line & say "Oh, it's all right. That's my way of writing poetry" One has to follow the rules of the metre one adopts. Make new metres by all means, but one must observe the rules where they are laid down by custom of centuries." (32)

If anything, this, by one of the Georgians who has best stood the test of time, approaches more to the views of Marsh than anything said on the subject by his fellows.

Abercrombie, who in his article in the Poetry Review echoed Lawrence's sentiments with:

"metre gives to the poet's words a form which is itself a direct expression of the emotion which the poet's words enclose"

elsewhere expressed his belief in the importance of structural unity in poetry:

"Whatever else may follow from a poem being the utterance of an inspiration this must certainly follow: that the poem will have Form. It will, that is to say, however brilliant and varied and elaborated in its parts be capable of existing as a whole: our minds can accept it as one shapely thing."

"Every inspiration has its own unity, and every poem should have its own form since the form must be the efficient equivalent of the unity." (33)

and in the conclusion to his The Idea of Great Poetry Abercrombie acknowledges that this belief hardly adds to the sum of human thought on the subject of poets but at the same time he reaffirms in the strongest
terms his belief in its importance:

"Form - coherence - unity - these are well-worn terms; and just because they are, I thought it a fitting topic for such a course as this to argue in favour of their unchangeable importance, by considering poems which cannot rightly be appreciated at all unless these terms have some meaning for us." (34)

If these affirmations by Abercrombie and Bottomley are general and indeed commonplace they do also have in common the insistence that the form may or should vary with each separate poem. It is a view quite in line with Lawrence's statement about "emotional pattern" and his outburst against Marsh's ear and "the habituated and mechanical transmitters of the human constitution". (35) And, apart from Graves, most of the Georgians would have reckoned themselves, especially in the early days, on the side of Lawrence and Bottomley in the belief in the appropriate form for each utterance. This conflict, though, and the opinion of Graves should serve to make us realise that although commonplace seeming the ideas of the Georgians were innovative enough to cause disquiet in the more conventional mind of their editor.

If we seek for a clue to Abercrombie's own poetic form we must look to his book on Wordsworth where writing on that poet's Construction he says:

"it is especially important to insist on this power of psychological construction, because in it we may see a clear indication of the peculiar nature of his genius." (36)

How true this is of Wordsworth is not our concern here, but it seems very illuminating in relation to the poet of "The Sale of St. Thomas" and the dialogues
in "The Emblems of Love." In the former poem, which appeared in the first Georgian volume, the "psychologica
construction" is the most interesting feature of the narrative of the tremulous St. Thomas who, on the eve of departure as a missionary to India, where as the poet unsparingly tells us, may be met with the cruellest torture, is saved from running away by an unnamed Stranger who we are obviously supposed to identify with Christ. The summary sounds sentimental in the best Victorian tradition but what gives the poem a quality of toughness is the understanding of Thomas's untracting "prudent" nature and the shaping of the poem according to the fluctuations of his temper. At the beginning we see him reach a state of self-induced courage after much argument in a long soliloquy then at the ship's captain's stories of the voyage and his destination his courage leaves him until he argues himself into a rational belief that his journey was never meant to be:

"If Christ desired India, He had sent
The band of us, soldier'd in one great purpose,
To strike His message through those dark vast tribes
But one man! - O surely it is folly,
And we misread the lot!...No, no;
Impetuous brains mistake the signs of God
Too easily. God would not have me waste
My zeal for Him in this wild enterprise,
Of going alone to swarming India...
- Shipman! Master of the ship! -
I have thought better of this journey;
now
I find I am not meant to go." (37)

Here the stranger intervenes, claims Thomas as his slave and sells him as a carpenter to the captain for twenty pieces of silver and finally lectures him that
"prudence is the deadly sin." There is an obvious pattern of irony in this the poem's only action, but as soon as the stranger arrived and Thomas becomes a passive figure the drama loses impetus. It is in the earlier and longer part of the poem where we follow Thomas's musings on his fate that the real interest of the work lies.

It is however but a qualified success, there is an academic air about the poem which critics have not failed to notice in Abercrombie's work. Sherard Vines, a contributor to Wheels, and it may be assumed not altogether sympathetic to Georgian aims wrote more favourably of Abercrombie than of many other Georgians, but pointed out at the same time:

"The form of Lascelles Abercrombie has been praised by his admirers for its suppleness, and the manner in which, according to them, his complex rhythms bend and vary themselves to every change of mood. While it is true that he varies both metre and rhythm, it is no less true that variety of effect is but seldom the result, owing perhaps to a predominating woodenness — no other term seems applicable, which immobilises every gesture, whether in the irregular blank verse of the dramatic pieces, or the more lyrical rhythms of, say, 'Ryton Firs' " (38)

How different in achievement, according to this critic is Abercrombie's work from his own poetic ideal, or even more from Lawrence's. It is the same shortcoming here that was noticed in Freeman; the poem, although evidently carefully thought out, never leaves the page. The reader's interest is always disengaged from the poetic impulse and distanced by the very form in which both Abercrombie and Freeman sought to embody their inspiration. The desire was there to reject orthodox forms and to discover anew for each poetic
impulse its appropriate rhythm and structure. What we feel too often in reading the poem is that this desire became part of the poetic impulse, so that very often the most successful Georgian poems are those constructed in a less obtrusive way, that is in a recognised form. Not all, of course. Hodgson's "A Song of Honour" which was studied above may not please because of its over-emotional tone, but its form seems as natural as it was intended to. Similarly Lawrence's "Seven Seals" chosen by Marsh for his fourth anthology has captured completely the inconsequential nature of lovers' talk but the apparent aimlessness is conveyed in a poem constructed to a carefully considered pattern. The kisses, of which the lover speaks, themselves help to give the poem shape, and the mounting tension from the jocular tone of opening:

"Since this is the last night I keep you home,
Come, I will consecrate you for the journey"

which maintained throughout underlies the heavy emotional significance of the metaphors, so that after the high emotion of:

"I kiss your mouth. Ah, love,
Could I but seal its ruddy, shining spring
Of passion, parch it up, destroy, remove
Its softly-stirring, crimson welling-up of kisses"

we have a more playful stanza,

"and round your neck you'll wear -
Hay let me work - a delicate chain of kisses. Like beads they go around, and not one misses To touch its fellow on either side"

and the balance is well-maintained even at the fervent close of the poem:

"So you shall feel
Ensheathed invulnerable with me, with seven
"Great seals upon your outgoings, and woven
Chain of my mystic will wrapped perfectly
Upon you, wrapped in indomitable me." (39)

Critic s have been reluctant to admit that Lawrence was a Georgian. V. de Sola Pinto in 1951 wrote that he:

"contributed both to Georgian Poetry and the later Imagist anthologies but he was neither a Georgian nor an Imagist;" (40)

and eighteen years later he is echoed by John Press:

"Lawrence, though permitting himself to be represented in the Georgian as well as the Imagist anthologies, remained entirely Lawrentian." (41)

The reasons for this are not difficult to find, and as was noticed before it is commonly the case that the Georgians of more lasting reputation have been denied their Georgian status by later critics. In justification, it is seldom that any other Georgian is quite so successful in embodying his inspiration in a natural form, but it was not a different sort of achievement in Lawrence's case from that sought by other Georgians, as their prose statements make clear.

Generally speaking the successful Georgian poems are those which follow orthodox patterns more or less closely. The Times Literary Supplement review of the third volume emphasises the comfort of this aspect of the Georgians:

"To read this volume of "Georgian Poetry" knowing that it contains only a few poems from a few of the younger poets of the day is to be encouraged and comforted in woful times. They do not turn their backs on the tradition, these young poets most of whom are living lives that no poet every lived before. They take up their heritage, as an heir takes
"his estate, and make what changes they will. But poetry goes on: and, with poetry, all that poetry stands for."

This is a view which seems calculated to alienate any modern reader from the Georgians as a whole, and one which moreover, is altogether alien to the intended aims of the Georgian poets themselves. Comfort "in woful times" was the very reverse of what Sassoon, Nichols or Graves had in mind but the reviewer finds consolation even in the war poetry of Sassoon. Of "The Kiss" he writes:

"When the metre of "In Memoriam" may be used thus - and used, we feel, not with deliberate, cold purpose but with an instinctive sense of rightness - the notion that any form of poetry can become outworn seems absurd."

Characteristically another war poem praised by Childs (for that he is the reviewer was revealed by The Times Literary Supplement when his review was reprinted in 1967) is Gibson's "Lament" a poem meant to convey how even the commonplace natural experiences are now saddened, embittered by the sense of their loss to so many soldiers. This too is perfectly regular in form and is made cosy by this for the reviewer:

"It says for us all, in those very words that we wanted, what we have all been trying to say:-

"We who are left, how shall we look again Happily on the sun or feel the rain Without remembering how they who went Ungrudgingly and spent Their lives for us loved, too, the sun and rain?

A bird among the rain-wet lilac sings - But we, how shall we turn to little things And listen to the birds and winds and streams Made holy by their dreams, Nor feel the heart-break in the heart of things?"
"The artfulness of it - with the repetition, for instance of "rain" and "things" to express sorrow winds back upon itself - only becomes apparent after the truth and beauty of the poem have got home; and then we think not how clever of the poet to use this form, but how faithfully this form has fixed his meaning." (42)

This is shrewd criticism of the poem which does not really bring home as forcefully as it should "the heart-break in the heart of things", but it is more significant to us now that this poem should have been chosen while the three preceding poems by Gibson on the war, Sassoon's "They" "In the Pink" Nichol's "The Assault" and Graves' "It's a Queer Time" are all passed over. So it has been since in the critics' silent selection of what is a Georgian poem. The smoothest, the least demanding, most pastoral poems are remembered, the roughly innovative, intellectually demanding poems are dismissed. Childs in 1917 sums up the general critical attitude to the Georgians' achievement in poetic form:

"what they found for the most part to be doing is pouring their new wine into the old bottles; or - to use a more homely and perhaps more "Georgian" simile - thrusting their proud young feet into old boots, and finding them good to march or to dance in...They often make the old means look new; but the old means abide...Poetic form...discovered to be something other than the self-imposed difficulties of a game...If these young poets write in metre and shape it is because they want to, because expression urges them to form." (43)

The difference between this estimate of the Georgian achievement and that of later readers (if any) and critics is that here is praise of the very
qualities which now cause the Georgians to be so neglected. It is perhaps small wonder that such accolades, while praising the Georgians denigrate the achievement of their more adventurous contemporaries, as Childs says with evident relief:

"Where in the restlessness that heralded the war, strange experiments were tried and the old means were contemptuously or angrily thrown away, the new conditions, enforcing sincerity, have maintained the old ways." (43)

Attitudes such as these led all too quickly to the consignment of such fine poets as Davies, de la Mare and Blunden to oblivion while the work of the experimenting Pound and Eliot flourished. However, no summary of the Georgian use of form would be complete without some attention to the success of these men in writing good if not great poetry within the existing forms. Here is de la Mare's "Titmouse" published in the final volume, generally thought the weakest. It is a poem of unobtrusive and deceptively unpretentious tone. With its observation of suburban nature, its regular rhymes and ordered stanzas it seems almost too typically Georgian. But there is more to the poem than either the Georgian enthusiast or detractor will see if he is unprepared to forget his preconceptions:

"If you would happy company win,
Dangle a palm-nut from a tree,
Idly in green to sway and spin,
Its snow-pulped kernel for bait;
and see,
A nimble titmouse enter in."
"Out of earth's vast unknown of air,
Out of all summer, from wave to wave,
He'll perch and prank his features fair,
Jangle a glass-clear wildering stave,
And take his commons there —

This tiny son of life; this spright,
By momentary Human sought,
Plume will his wing in the dappled light,
Clash timbrel shrill and gay —
And into time's enormous nought,
Sweet-fed, will flit away." (44)

The Human with the portentous capital letter and his opposite "tiny son of life" verge on the sentimental but only if we overlook the careful juxtaposition of the two. The Human is the seeker, is "momentary", the bird, the spright is the inhabitant of the "vast unknown of air" "time's enormous nought"; by putting out his palm-nut the human sees the titmouse, performing no doubt his usual duties but also sees the whole garden scene in a new perspective of time and space. It is an observation typical of de la Mare, it is not something we find as a "Georgian" formula but it demonstrates how what seem to be Georgian limitations of subject matter to the local and the observed and of form to the more regular did not preclude the writing of poetry expressing truly the poet's own individual meanings. Moreover, on careful examination the poem's construction reveals the craftsmanship which manipulates the stanza form into something peculiarly suited to this poem. The swinging nut and the abrupt break at "bait" suggest well the poet's purpose — the momentary trapping of the infinite. Similarly the balance of the final two lines juxtapose nicely the vastness of "time's enormous nought" with its three very long vowels and the sprite-like disappearance of the bird suggested by the much shorter
vowels of "sweet-fed, will flit away."

It is not much, perhaps, to say for Georgian Poetry that it embodied such virtues as these in numerous equally forgotten poems. Certainly this does not seem now like the foundation of an era as great as "the several great poetic ages of the past". Nor does it seem a fitting close to ten years of what R.H.Ross called "poetic revolt"; but because it is neither the great poetry which Marsh hoped, nor the radically original work which Ross thought it set out to be, that does not mean that there is no merit in Georgianism. It is a sad fact perhaps that despite the grand theories on form, the belief in a new structure for every new expression that the best of Georgian Poetry is, as a rule, written in the accepted forms. On the other hand it was just that theory which revitalised poetic technique at a time when traditional poetry had become stagnant and infertile in the hands of such poets as Henley, Watson and Philips. It is because we can read such poems as de la Mare's aware of the suitability of the form to the poet's personal statement that these poems, if carefully read, do not seem dull or outworn; and it is because the Georgians themselves were aware that the relation of form to poetic impulse was of greater importance than adherence to rules and classical theory that such poems were possible. That we accept this as normal and even inevitable now should not minimise its importance then when Sir Edward Marsh spoke for the majority of the reading public.
CHAPTER 3 NOTES.

(1) Letter from Marsh to Brooke c. 20th December 1911. C.V.Hassall: Rupert Brooke (1964) p. 293.
(2) E. Marsh: A Number of People p. 366.
(3) E.Marsh: Forty-Two Fables of La Fontaine (1924)
(4) C.V.Hassall: Edward Marsh (1959) p. 607 has a list of poems which Marsh had by heart at one time.
(5) E.Marsh: A Number of People pp. 322-3.
(7) T.L.S. 8th May 1919.
(12) Lawrence to Marsh 18th August 1913. op. cit. p. 221.
(13) ibid. 28th October 1913. op. cit. p. 223.
(16) G.P. 1913-1915. p. 149.
(17) ibid. p. 115.
(20) ibid. p. 65.
(21) G.P. 1911-1912. pp. 68 and 106 respectively.
CHAPTER 3. NOTES (continued)

(22) G.P. 1916-1917. p. 103.

(23) Freeman to Marsh c.f. note (18)

(24) J.Brett Young: Francis Brett Young (1962) p. 256. The letter is undated but from the text it appears that it was probably written in May 1941.


(26) E.Marsh: A Number of People (1939) pp. 227 and 234.


(35) See note (11).

(36) L.Abercrombie: The Art of Wordsworth (1952) p. 75.

(37) G.P. 1911-1912. p. 17.


(40) V. de Sola Pinto: Crisis in English Poetry 1880-1940. (1951) p. 155.
CHAPTER 3. NOTES. (continued)


(42) T.L.S. 27th December 1917 reprinted with the author’s name, Harold Childs, 28th December 1967.

(43) ibid.

CHAPTER 4. "COMMON WORDS": THE GEORGIANS AND LANGUAGE.

The naturalness of form and rhythm to which the Georgians aspired was reflected also in their syntax and especially in their choice of words. The two were really part of the same aim, to free poetry from the opaque poetic devices which, they felt, distanced it alike from subject matter and reader. Whereas, however, in the choice of form, the freedom in many ways proved too much for their poetic ability to control; in the use of language the freedom enabled them to make some of their finest achievements and, perhaps, their greatest contribution to the development of poetry in the twentieth century. Now, when we look back from present day colloquial verse styles to Wordsworth ignoring both the Georgians' over literary predecessors of the nineties and the Georgians themselves, it seems an insignificant aspect of their verse. At the time however of their first volume one reviewer expressed the opinion that it was an attempt which was almost too difficult to succeed. Analysing the basic qualities of the poems in Georgian Poetry 1911-1912, Henry Newbolt isolated first poetic "imagination", then "constructive power" and finally:

"The third quality is truth of diction - an achievement so hedged with entanglements as to seem, theoretically, almost beyond reach for a modern poet. The absolute impossibility of forgetting the richly coloured words and haunting cadences of the past; the more absolute necessity of speaking in a natural voice and in the language of to-day; the risk of distracting or offending a hearer whose ear is differently tuned; the increased difficulty of dyeing speech of common material with deep
"shades of thought, - if all this were in the poet's consciousness at once we may be sure we should have little poetry. Fortunately, it is hardly in his consciousness at all. The younger poets of to-day - it follows inevitably from their imaginative gift - have no temptation to a false and embarrassing aesthetic. They are not for making something pretty, something up to the standard of the professional patterns; they are not members of an arts-and-crafts industrial guild. They write as grown men walk, each with his own unconscious gesture; and with the same instinctive tact as the walker they vary their pace and direction, keep their balance and avoid collisions. In short, they express themselves, and seem to steer without an effort between the dangers of innovation and reminiscence." (1)

If Newbolt seems to exaggerate both the obstacles to be overcome and the success of the poets, this is perhaps because of his extra enthusiasm in responding to the efforts made by the leading Georgians to secure favourable reviews. Newbolt's article appearing in Harold Monro's *Poetry and Drama* was almost certainly part of the publicity scheme. One thing which he does make clear is that the Georgians were, in their desire to be natural, avoiding "embarrassing aesthetic" and eschewing the poetic language of the past.

The term "Georgian revolt" which Ross used for the title of his history of the movement and which was used before that by Herbert Palmer in his study of the Georgians in *Post-Victorian Poetry* (2) often seems to suggest a conscious rebellion against the poetry of the past which is out of key not only with the Georgians' poetry but also with their statements about their writing's aims. Indeed, nowhere among the utterances on form studied in the previous chapter was there any
suggestion that the Georgians were striving to free poetry from the shackles imposed by the past. In the use of language however there is a feeling, especially among the earlier Georgians, that they must eschew the terms and word-patterns which had been used by the successors of Tennyson and Keats to such an extent as to become almost meaningless. Instead they felt that they must revive a new language for poetry, turning for this to colloquial speech. Their leading spokesman in this was Lascelles Abercrombie and their leading influence, Wordsworth. It has become a cliché that so much Georgian poetry (and other twentieth-century nature poetry) is Wordsworth-and-water; at the time at which they wrote, however, to return to Wordsworth in this way was a new departure. Before the publication of Georgian Poetry, the accepted literary language had been Tennyson-and-water, or more accurately Tennyson-and-wine. Nor was Wordsworth the only influence; more surprising but equally common is an expressed admiration of John Donne, whose rhythms and diction display the same freedom from literary convention as the Georgians sought. In this interest in Donne such poets as Brooke and Freeman were soon to be outdone by Eliot and his followers. It is hoped to trace some of the chief influences on Georgian poets in a later chapter; it will suffice here to point out that the Georgians' return to colloquial diction was not a mere pale echo of Wordsworth.

Comparatively few of the Georgians have written about their use of language. Gibson who was a notable innovator in this field published no prose at all in hard backs. We have to rely on his poetical works for example and on two isolated statements for an idea
of the principles from which he worked. The first is to be found in an article on the future of poetic drama which Gibson contributed to the Poetry Review. Here he is, of course talking about plays, but it is not insignificant that the leading figures in the use of colloquial contemporary language among the Georgians were those who, like Gibson and Abercrombie, wrote verse plays. The influence of Masefield (who in his turn was influenced by J.M.Synge's use of the Irish peasant speech) is at work here, and also perhaps in the choice of rural folk-loric themes. Gibson writes:

"Poetry is an arrow that wins home most directly, and pierces most deeply because it is sped by the impetus of the tensest of bowstrings, metre. But, in his speech, the poet of to-day must avoid the flabby conventional paraphrases of the "college poets," "Miltonic inversions" freakishly dislocated sentences and all the trumpery...that is pleased to call itself "poetic licence". The 'he of paternal parent death bereft' kind of thing does not carry instant meaning over the footlights, not because it is "poetry" but because it is not poetry, nor prose, nor common speech. The dramatist cannot afford to indulge in such "scholarly" extravagances. His speech must be alive, and it must be as direct and straightforward as the speech of everyday seems to be. I say seems to be, because the actual speech of everyday is, for the most part, the makeshift convention of inarticulate people." (3)

This is a statement of the broad principle of the abandonment of "poetic licence" and the adoption of such speech as will "carry instant meaning across the footlights". This is an important aspect of the Georgian use of language and not confined to dramatic works. Many of the poets read their own works at Harold Monro's
weekly or twice-weekly readings at his Poetry Bookshop in Devonshire Street, and the kind of poetry in which many of them excelled was exactly the kind to suit such readings. This poetry must make an immediate impact, be readily understood and adopted to the modulations of the human voice. Not all the Georgians excelled in poetry reading even where their poems were quite suitable. Rupert Brooke, it is reported, could not be heard when Amy Lowell attended. (4) On the other hand W.H. Davies made such an impression on Ezra Pound as to change that poet's opinion of his work. (5) The fact of these readings as well as of the Georgian interest in drama influenced considerably the way the poets wrote and the spoken voice is often heard very clearly in their work.

But, as the quotation from Gibson equally makes clear, the Georgians were not beguiled into thinking that "a selection of language used by men" would convey the desired effect. Instead they relied on the absence of over-elaborate rhythm and structure to help them give their poetry the immediacy of speech and chose words and adopted syntax to convey the liveliest impression of contemporary speech. As Rupert Brooke wrote in his criticism of Gibson's volumes, *Fires*:

"With almost terrifying severity he abstains both from the realistic "bloody" and other colour-giving idioms of the lower classes, and from poetic generalisations or morals. These romantic devices - devices, that is, which aim at the beauty or power of some single line or part of the work of art, rather than at the effect of the whole - are alien to his purpose of telling a plain tale. So he is at utmost pains to keep out of his metre and language anything
which would disturbingly arrest the reader's attention on its own account. His rhythms are of the most ordinary; his language is of the commonplace middle-class kind, rather stronger and more actual than the average, and with a certain conscious and unrealistic convention, but studiously unobtrusive." (6)

Here Brooke emphasises how the use of language was but part of Gibson's technique of conveying a "plain tale", along with the scrupulous attention to the shape of the whole poem and the avoidance of obtrusive rhythms or Masefield-like swear words. What is not brought out in this passage is revealed in the other statement by Gibson on his choice of language; that Gibson like several other Georgians sought to emphasise the background of his poems by the use of regional words. In the introduction to his dramatic poem "not conceived with a view to stage-production", Kindlesyke Gibson explains:

"While "Krindlesyke" is not in dialect it has been flavoured with a sprinkling of local words; but as these are, for the most part, words expressive of emotion, rather than words conveying information, the sense of them should be easily gathered even by the south-country reader." (7)

Even here we can see the truly Georgian emphasis on as wide a comprehensibility as possible; this is the aspect of the language about which Gibson displays most concern. We are not told why the poet uses these local words at all, except for flavour; we can only infer that the poet felt that in this way he was best able to introduce the sensation of the real speech of the district. A short extract from the play serves to illustrate how this technique worked:
"Yes, I was young, and agape
For your wheedling flum, till it fleeced
myself from me.
There's something in a young girl seems
to work
Against her better sense, and gives her up
Almost in spite of her." (8)

The dialect words are not allowed to interfere with the sense of the passage, nor do they attract undue attention to themselves; but their use alongside the plainer vocabulary displays that "conscious and unrealistic convention" of which Brooke spoke. The heightened speech of the alliterative dialect words, would not naturally be combined with the almost stately plainness of the second sentence quoted. Despite this, though, the technique gains the desired effect. We understand the passage clearly enough, perhaps even more vividly than if it had all been written in Gibson's rather bleak style, and the use of the dialect does convey a sense of place and of actuality which would otherwise be lost.

Gibson did not confine the plainness of speech which he advocates to poems about specifically rural topics or to dialogue works. His poem on Rupert Brooke, published in the second Georgian anthology exemplifies the same lack of poetic inversion, literary diction and convoluted syntax. Its' baldness is emphasised moreover in keeping with the subject, the bleakness of the loss is stressed even in the way the poem is printed:

"The Going
R.B.
He's gone
I do not understand."
"I only know
That as he turned to go
And waved his hand,
In his young eyes a sudden glory shone,
And I was dazzled with a sunset glow,
And he was gone." (9)

The austerity of this poem is best emphasised by a simple statistic; poem, title and dedication are all expressed in forty-two words. When we go on to look at the kind of words which Gibson chose for the poem the austerity acquires an additional quality of restrained emotion. There is a bald air of factual statement about the first five lines consistent with any speaker's controlled sense of loss and this is heightened when we turn to the end of the poem, still expressed in normal colloquial speech, but embodying an idea of greater complexity than spoken prose is accustomed to carry. The "sunset glow" with its unspoken feeling of the darkening of that "sudden glory" adds a second sense to the departure of which we hear again in the final line. Two sorts of going are clearly telescoped here; the actual physical departure presaging the death which followed soon after. Similarly the language enables Gibson to write, in true elegiac fashion a poem at once deeply felt and impersonally expressed. The language is everyman's, the feelings are Gibson's own universalised by the language. To a modern reader it may, of course, still seem a vehicle overladen with emotion, but this I think is because we cannot separate the poem from a modern disdain of the Rupert Brooke cult which followed quickly upon his death.

The charge which is more accurately made against Gibson is that his style varied too little. When we
have read half-a-dozen poems we seem to have exhausted him. In part this is due to the universal adoption of this very plain style, its syntax inseparable from that of spoken prose, its diction purged even of heightened colloquial expressions; but more it is on account of the similarity of his material, and this does not concern us here. Here, too Edward Marsh deserves a certain amount of credit for choosing for his Georgian volumes poems which do not conform to the standard Gibson. The five poems in *Georgian Poetry 1918-1919*, for example, eschew completely the Northumbrian characters and local speech, which characterise so much of Gibson's work and of which Marsh had he so desired could have found many examples in Gibson's most recently published volumes, *Home* (1919) and especially *Whin* (1918). Instead he includes "The Cakewalk", a colourful description of a street dance in Smyrna:

"In smoky lamplight of a Smyrna cafe',
He saw them, seven solemn negroes dancing,
With faces rapt and out-thrust bellies prancing
In a slow ceremonial cakewalk
Dancing and prancing to the sombre tom-tom
Thumped by a crookbacked grizzled negro squatting." (10)

The relevant aspect of this passage is its language, and curiously this is not what strikes us when we read the poem. Instead we are transported to the cafe and like the character in the poem engrossed by the dancers. The scene is allowed to speak for itself, the language is as ordinary and prosaic as that of his Northumbrian poems. Only the name Smyrna conveys the exotic and the almost English folk-term "tom-tom". Nor is the syntax altered to convey the rhythm of the dance, though there is repetition to suggest both the pattern of the movement and the mesmerised spectator. The choice of words,
though, conveys exactly the proud strutting of the
cakewalk; "slow solemn ceremonial" even suggests the
proper rhythm, in the order of the adjectives which,
alliterating, confirm the ritualistic pattern of the
occasion. The result of this carefully chosen simple
language is that it allows the pictorial aspect of the
poem to make the maximum impact on the reader; although
the rhythm of the lines is seen to convey the dancing
movements of which the poet speaks, we do not read the
poem for its music, but for the picture, which as the
poem progresses changes to display the negro in the
jungle swinging to the same ancient rhythm. It is a
poem of observation and the language fulfils its
function by allowing the observation to be immediately
understood and enjoyed by the reader. In this, despite
its far from rural English setting, this poem is
typically Georgian.

Gibson's use of language has been studied in some
detail because he, best of all the Georgians exemplifies
the success of the almost negative qualities of their
language. But he was no theorist and the two isolated
statements are almost the only indication of the
principles which underlie his practice. The other sign
of where Gibson stood on the question of the language
for poetry is his friendship with Abercrombie and his
association with him, Brooke and Drinkwater in the
production of *New Numbers* in which they published their
poetry quarterly in 1914, when production ended because
of the outbreak of war, for which Gibson and Brooke
volunteered. This periodical did not contain any
statement of poetic faith or even any indication of
editorial policy, but it was seen by others to re-
represent the Georgian innovation in language and
published as it was from Abercrombie's house was closely associated with his ideas. Harold Monro reviewing the first two issues of the magazine especially mentioned the poets' language:

"Like John Masefield, he [Abercrombie] is conferring a great service by the wholesale introduction of colloquial words into our poetic language...John Drinkwater still confines himself to the traditional language of poetry. W.W. Gibson and Rupert Brooke, like Lascelles Abercrombie, are palpably on the side of an increasing freedom of vocabulary." (ll)

Monro underlines for us the importance of this interest in language when he calls it "a great service" to contemporary literature and we see how at least one other Georgian associated himself with this work. The interest in diction was more prominent among the earlier Georgians; ten years later the period of innovation was over and the poets clearly felt themselves free to use what words they chose in writing their poems. It is, however, interesting that Robert Graves writing of diction in On English Poetry should acknowledge a specific debt to Abercrombie's Poetry and Contemporary Speech which is made quite clear in the following passage:

"Ideally speaking, there is no especially poetic range of subjects, and no especially poetic group of words with which to treat them. Indeed the more traditionally poetical the subject and the words, the more difficult it is to do anything with them. The nymph, the swain, the faun, and the vernal groves are not any more or less legitimate themes of poetry than Motor Bicycle Trials, Girl Guides, or the Prohibition Question, the only difference being a practical one; the second category may
"be found unsuitable for the imaginative
digestion because these words are still
somehow uncooked; in the former case
they are unsuitable because overcooked,
rechauffe, tasteless. The cooking process
is merely that of constant use. When a
word or a phrase is universally adopted
and can be used in conversation without
any apologetic accentuation, or in a
literary review without italics, inverted
commas or capital letters, then it is
ready for use in poetry." (12)

Two things emerge from this passage, besides the
surviving influence of Abercrombie. First there is
the close link between diction and subject matter and
second is the link between poetic language and accepted
or common prose terms. In both Graves emphasises for
us the difference between the Georgian contribution to
the broadening scope of poetic language and the work
in this field of the Imagists. Before looking in detail
at the theories of Abercrombie it is useful to look at
the following statement by Pound and notice how similar
in theory the Georgians and Imagists were in this
matter. Writing to Harriet Monroe in 1915, Pound
explained his position:

"Objectivity and again objectivity and
expression: no hindside-beforeness, no
straddled adjectives...no Tennysonianness
of speech; nothing - nothing that you
couldn't, in some circumstance, in the
stress of some emotion, actually say.
Every literaryism, every book word,
fritters away a scrap of the reader's
patience, a scrap of his sense of your
sincerity. When one really feels and
thinks, one stammers with simple speech;
it is only in the flurry, the shallow
frothy excitement of writing, or the
inebriety of metre, that one falls into
the easy - oh, how easy! - speech of
books and poems that one has read.
Language is made out of concrete things.
"General expressions in non-concrete terms are a laziness; they are the reaction of things on the writer, not a creative act by the writer." (13)

What first strikes one is the resemblance of this to the Georgian theory and practice, and it is all the more striking because of the naked difference between Georgian poetry and Imagist, and later Eliot's poetry. The two things which closely ally Pound and the Georgians are what he calls "objectivity" and the refusal to let literary terminology come between poet and reader, and the reliance on conversational English as a guide to what is the proper language of poetry. The similarity is borne out by Pound's contribution to Blast of which the following is an example:

Meditatio

"When I carefully consider the curious habits of dogs,
I am compelled to admit
That man is the superior animal.

When I consider the curious habits of man,
I confess my friend I am puzzled." (14)

There is nothing that does not conform to Georgian theory, both words and syntax are perfectly plain and conversational, the difference between this poem and say, Gibson's "The Going" is in the subject matter (this is also reflected in a difference in tone). There are signs in the letter of what was the real difference between the Georgians and Pound's followers. First the style of the letter itself is an indication of the difference between Poundian conversational style and the Georgian. Instead of the unassuming and retiring Georgian manner there is a theatrical self-consciousness which we feel rejoices in those very words which Graves..."
would exclude from poetry because they are spoken "with accentuation". This is exemplified by the accompaniment of the plain diction of the poem quoted with the mock-presumptuousness of its Latin title. Secondly the first statement which rejects generalisations indicates another difference from the Georgians who were not averse to abstract nouns or "general expressions". The Imagists and Eliot were even more concerned to present nothing but the subject, a fact which has tended to become obscure because of the bizarre nature of their 'conversational' style, where quotations, foreign phrases, modernisms and archaisms all blend together.

Lancelas Abercrombie made a contribution in his theory which was less startling than that made by the followers of Pound in their poems, but they were, despite Pound's frequently expressed antipathy to Abercrombie, leading lights in the same movement. The very difference in personality as well as in poetry between the two leaders and their schools ensured success for their revolution. Between them they must have succeeded in reaching the greater part of the serious poetry-reading public, and the rewards of their effort can be seen in continued use in English poetry of the conversational style. It is, I think, important to see Abercrombie in this context and for this reason it seemed wise to look first at a typical Georgian practitioner of his theories and then at the parallel development of language in a totally different sphere. The very quantity of Abercrombie's prose tends to attract attention to itself, isolating the writer as a lonely exception to twentieth-century fashions; but this is not really an accurate impression.
The first exclusive study of the subject which Abercrombie published was the English Association pamphlet *Poetry and Contemporary Speech*. Here is the original statement which Graves later echoed:

"There is always a tendency, a dangerous tendency, as literature accumulates, for poetry to develop a language of its own. It is dangerous, because a conventional select poetic vocabulary is apt to be apart from the rough and tumble of spoken life: it has only such spoken life as the poet can imagine for it. A word in traditionally poetic language may get plenty of use - of use in poetry; but this kind of use by itself is not good for a word, but rather very bad for it. The word tends to be put more and more to a precisely identical use: and this, far from enriching its suggestive power, will very soon exhaust it." (15)

The emphasis on the sterility of mere literary use, the importance of the vitality of the spoken word recalls Pound, but there is an essential difference in the basic theory from which Abercrombie was working. Here Abercrombie seems to stand on much less sure ground:

"every sentence in poetry is like a live shell fired from a cannon, and in mid-flight. There you have both kinds of energy: kinetic in the onward movement of the shell; potential in the mixture of chemicals in the shell's charge. Well, so it is with poetic diction. The onward movement of the sentence is its grammatical meaning: that is the kinetic. But it is also charged with potential, in the way the words are put together so as to explode into a novel dilating compound of verbal suggestion when the sentence hits the target - the reader's mind. And diction is felt to be poetic according as it is charged with this potential. Indeed, the charging of the shell is where the specific business of the poet comes in. The shooting of it
"is with him pretty much what is is with all dealers in language; and, while any sentence is to a certain degree explosive, outside poetry it is the momentum, the sheer weight and movement of the meaning, that is to do the most of the damage. But the poet relies for his penetrating effect on a reader's mind just as much on the charge of potential his sentence carries as on its own momentum." (16)

Where Abercrombie tries to distinguish between the differing means and effects of prose and poetry he, like all theorists, fails quite to convince; more than this his assertion of the differing poetic value of grammatical structure and diction does not seem proven. It is, however, of interest in the study of the Georgians because it makes the choice of the words themselves the most poetic aspect of the poet's task. It weighs Coleridge's definition of poetry as "the best words in the best order" (which John Drinkwater thought "the one perfect and final answer to the question, "What is poetry?" (17) ) heavily in favour of the "best words" although the order is not dismissed as unimportant. With this emphasis it is not surprising that Abercrombie was so interested in poetic language, and in the spirit of a reformer; he saw the empty potential of the over-literary phraseology of his immediate forebears as a loss of vitality for poetry. The form of poetry had already been released from rigidity by Whitman and Swinburne.

Abercrombie did not, however, underestimate the importance of grammatical structure and form. In The Theory of Poetry he emphasises how the words must be part of the poet's total concern:

"the instrument of poetry is not so much words as language."
"Poetic language must, in fact, first be syntax; or it will never achieve the unity of form."

"the continuous sound of language is its rhythm; and the rhythm of language can symbolise as nothing else can the emotional comment with which mind accompanies its experience. Moreover, rhythm, like syntax, is capable of organising its sequence of momentary effects into one inclusive major effect; and is, therefore, the means whereby a poem may be heard, as well as understood, as a unity." (18)

This is sound orthodox stuff, and, oddly, it has done Abercrombie's name no good that his interest in poetic diction should have been so correctly expressed as a part of the whole picture. Had he flung all his weight behind a change in the nature of poetic language his reforming interest might have been better remembered. Another aspect of Abercrombie's interest in diction which has prevented his being given his proper due in this respect is the wide gap between theory and practice. Here is a bold enough statement:

"Poetry knows too well what can be done with its approved manner; it would do wisely to see what can be done with all sorts of disapproved manners of speech— with taken in for instance, or show up. I even believe that there is not only convenience but, for poetry, real and positive value, in the use of forms like don't and won't; forms which are still so conscious of eighteenth century disapproval that they can only come into print wearing an apologetic apostrophe. Don't is not simply a contraction of do not; it is, somehow, another and slightly different form of verbal life. I am sure, at any rate, that it is the fine differentiations, the subtle specializations, in verbal life that poetry most deeply requires; it is in
"common speech that these fine differences begin and grow; it is in poetry that repudiates contemporary speech in favour of the language it has already tamed that their need will be the most grievously felt." (19)

Despite the occasional contraction, usually accompanied by an "apologetic apostrophe" the poems of Abercrombie, except occasionally in the dialogue, do not have the vitality of colloquial speech. "Ryton Firs" is the only non-dramatic poem by which Abercrombie is represented in the Georgian anthologies but it demonstrates well the timidity with which he put his theory into practice. The poem is in two parts, "The Dream" and "The Voices in the Dream" and, predictably, it is in the latter section that the colloquial contractions occur, although they are only few and not really startling. There is:

"For all that's left of winter
Is moisture in the ground"

and "But here's the happiest light can lie on ground" (20) but these are matched by false contractions of 'ed' usually by means of apostrophe but sometimes with a 't', and the poetic shortenings of "'twas" and "'tis". In the first part the language is unashamedly literary, even to the Italian interjection and the list of place names:

"From Marcle way,
From Dymock, Kempley, Newent, Bromesberrow,
Redmarley, all the meadowland daffodils seem
Running in golden tides to Ryton Firs,
To make the knot of steep little wooded hills
Their brightest show: O bella età de l'oro!" (21)

To be sure in The Theory of Poetry, Abercrombie does allow:

"Of course, poets will always delight in rare or archaic or even dialect
"words - in anything which may increase the range of expression and give it some desired peculiarity."

though he concludes, in this passage with:

"But it is common words that have the finest triumphs in poetry, because they necessarily have the greatest suggestive power behind them." (22)

All in all, there is a hesitancy about Abercrombie's utterance which we do not find, either in the unswerving austerity of Gibson's poetic style, or in Pound's several assertions on language. The reasons for this are, perhaps, temperamental. Abercrombie was almost certainly rather aloof from the sort of colloquial language which he had in mind for poetry. He came from a bookish family and seems, despite his time as a journalist in Liverpool, never to have been in close contact with the people who might have given him a colloquial style of his own.

A letter he wrote to Marsh, although we might suppose from its contents, written in a relaxed if not high-spirited mood demonstrates a certain stiffness which never seems to have left Abercrombie:

"It is quite impossible for me to thank you for the perfectly glorious time you gave me. The time of my life, nothing less. I seem to have been in the visions of God, on a Miltonic mount of speculation, viewing the whole of modern life in an amazing succession of dazzling instants, from Henry James to Austin Harrison, from lovely ladies to Cubists." (23)

Abercrombie never deserted his principles, and frequently in the dramatic poems put them into practice. The following extract from "Witchcraft - New Style" in the fourth Georgian volume demonstrates how Abercrombie could, in other personae capture the rhythm
and raciness of folk speech. Even the quality of the retorts have a poetic force as well as a proper suggestion of cliche':

"The Man: You can't do what's not nature: nobody can.
The Woman: And louts like you have nature in your pocket?
The Man: I don't say that -
The Woman: If you kept saying naught, no one would guess the fool you are.
Second Man: Almost my very words!
The Woman: Oh you're the knowing men!
The spark among the cinders!
First Man: You can't fetch a free man back, unless he wants to come.
The Woman: Nay, I'll be bound he doesn't want to come!
Third Man: And he won't come: he told me flat he wouldn't." (24)

In this passage there are no "colloquial" words wrenched into poetry, but equally there are no "poetic" phrases or terms; the pace of the dialogue, emphasised by the ejaculations and the contractions, the sentiments expressed are sufficient link with folk speech without Abercrombie's putting into practice his doubtful sounding theory of the adoption in poetry of archaisms surviving in dialect-speech.

He says:

"Far better than imagining an archaic word back again into spoken life, is to hear it in natural and careless use as a dialect-word; and fortunately this may still happen." (25)

This savours too much of the academic with his
note-book and it is not surprising that Marsh did not choose for his anthology such works as relied on these techniques; nor is there much among Abercrombie's poetry that uses these revived dialect archaisms. Even so, as late as 1931, Abercrombie is still asserting:

"literary English has always had one unfailing source to draw on for fresh energy and subtly invigorating power; and that, of course, is colloquial English." (26)

nor did the Georgian movement as a whole fail to follow in Abercrombie's path. We have already seen Graves' debt to Abercrombie generously acknowledged and another late Georgian put the theory into practice with greater persistence and success than Abercrombie ever did. This was Edmund Blunden whose poems first appeared in the last of the anthologies. Although not specially prominent in the poems selected by Marsh, the introduction of rural dialect words in Blunden's first published volume The Waggoner (1920) was prominent enough for Robert Bridges to contribute an article "On the Dialectal words in Edmund Blunden's Poems" to the Society for Pure English Tract V in 1921. He, Bridges, as suits his readers, confines his attention to the sources of the rural words and the possible variants, commenting occasionally on the superiority of Blunden's word to that commonly used. The tone of the whole article is approving and it is interesting to find the dedicatee of the first volume so praising a poet who was the most significant contributor to the last. It indicates a continuity in the general thought of the period, a unity of idea behind the multiplicity of poems published in the anthologies.
The two volumes of Blunden's, from which Marsh chose poems for his anthology reveal how the poet introduces the dialect words and how their presence affects the poetic style. In a poem called "The Idlers" in *The Shepherd* (1922) Blunden describes a gipsy encampment and:

"the hoppled horses supped in the further
dusk and dew;
The gnats flocked round the smoke like idlers as they were
And through the gossand bushes the owls began to churr." (27)

Here, in three lines are three unusual words "hoppled" "gossand" and "churr", the precise meaning of which is not available to the ordinary reader; the poet cannot be relying on what the words mean for their contribution to the poem's total meaning. What then is their effect? They help to particularise an otherwise rather general description; however little we know of "hoppled" "gossand" and "churr" we are transported to a time and place where such words do have meaning, and, rightly or not, we place the poem's gipsies in a region where this language is understood and their observer becomes a part of the local background. Furthermore they enrich the poem with the past tradition of English dialect speakers, giving it a history as well as a locality; raising the poem from the banality of a thousand simple and similar descriptions of the quiet country scene, they at the same time place it more firmly in the same English countryside by a recall of history, in actuality as opposed to art, of such scenes. Nor does the introduction of unusual words in anyway counteract the plainness of the conversational style.

The particular effect which Blunden obtains with
his use of these words is emphasised by contrast with T.S. Eliot's similar use, in The Wasteland also published in 1922, of words not easily understood by the ordinary reader. Blunden's innovation is narrowly linguistic - he refers only to a different, ancient and local language; Eliot on the other hand calls upon a whole culture using language and literature alike as indications. Here, as well as foreign quotations, where neither the precise meaning nor, sometimes, the tradition to which the poet refers are accessible to a reader less well read than the poet, are English quotations where the words may be readily understood while the background remains unknown. Certainly a high degree of sophistication is required even to recognise that there is a reference in the lines:

"The change of Philomel, by the barbarous king so rudely forced" (28)

and yet the poet informs us of a precise place in Ovid's Metamorphoses which supplied the material. Here the introduction in a poem generally written, like Blunden's in a colloquial style, of exotic material imparts value to the poem by a reference to a tradition as ancient as and wider than that of Blunden's, and also more sophisticated and literary. The same effect is gained by the reference to Ophelia's words in Hamlet, where the poet might expect a more general understanding of the reference. Where Blunden's dialect words particularise and narrow the scope of his observation, Eliot's quotations broaden the reference of his poem to include much of European culture, both ancient and modern, and generalise what might otherwise appear to be curiously local dialogues and scenes.

Not all Blunden's references are as difficult to
understand precisely as those quoted from "The Idler". The lines in "Shepherd":

"Where the kind shepherd never takes them wrong,
And gently leads the yoes that are with young."

have a meaning that is perfectly clear despite the dialect word "yoes" which, moreover, the reader readily identifies from the sound and the context as "ewes". Here, too, we have in a manner more akin to Eliot's an indirect quotation. Though the quotation has a purpose in line with that of the dialect word which is introduced into it. The Biblical reference complements the picture the poem gives of the rural shepherd in his craft; the English tradition of Bible-reading is seen to give an added meaning to his chosen calling in life so that he sees his shepherd in relation to that of the Bible's "Good Shepherd". Blunden relies for his meaning on our ready understanding of the quotation and in fact, he makes the assumption that he is calling on a tradition which unites poet, reader and subject. This too is a common facet of Blunden's use of specifically rural dialect words, that they are in keeping with the origin and character of the poem's personae or setting. Although Abercrombie said that the colloquial style was the best for poetry, we seldom find a distinctive speaking style used except in poems with common life characters usually in country settings. Whereas Eliot introduces Shakespeare to the public house, without intending the reader to think that the type of person he was writing about was educated in literature, the Georgians do not introduce rural language into poems where they do not wish to infer from it something of the character of the poem's setting. Even where in a
poem describing the French landscape where he was stationed, Blunden introduces English dialect words such as the following from "In Festubert":

"A hissing dragonfly that daps
above his muddied pond...
...There, where the floods made fields forlorn
The grinzy ice grows thicker through" (30)

the reader is clearly intended to infer a similarity in tradition and simplicity of the country here and in rural England. This use does constitute not a particularising but a generalising of the poem's content; it links the poet's war-experience and the history of his country, it connects the young soldier with the thousands of Englishmen dead and living who have used such words. Nevertheless, it still refers, and meaningfully, to the particular rural tradition, uneducated and unchanging, which produced such words. This use of dialect confirms and strengthens the strong sense of Englishness which was highly typical of the Georgian poets.

Although few of the other Georgians had either the connection with one English region which Blunden had, or his willingness to satisfy local clarity of meaning for the sake of enriched significance, the widespread use of colloquial English speech among the Georgians often serves the same purpose of linking the poems to the general non-bookish culture of England. Commonly it is part of a general desire to bring the reader into the poet's experience, to share his state of mind and to join with an unknown number of others in this. Harold Monro's "Solitude" is a good example of this, using as it does the second person:

"When you have tidied all things for the night,
And while your thoughts are fading to their sleep,
"You'll pause a moment in the late firelight,
Too sorrowful to weep."

Already in this the first stanza there is a
suggestion of something more than an ordinary general
experience and as the poem continues the poet's
precise state of mind becomes clearer and more particular:

"A distant engine whistles or the floor
Creaks, or the wandering night-wind bangs
a door.

Silence is scattered like a broken glass.
The minutes prick their ears and run about,
Then one by one subside again and pass
Sedately in, monotonously out.

You bend your head and wipe away a tear.
Solitude walks one heavy step more near." (31)

The description of the unwelcome alertness to the
tiniest least significant of sounds and the vividness
of the empty passage of time impress the reader, despite
an in-built resistance, maybe, to the sentimentality of
tone, that the experience is genuinely the poet's. At
the same time the colloquial line revealing the self-
conscious, almost self-pitying emotion of loneliness,
"You bend your head and wipe away a tear" draws the
reader into the experience so that the poem communicates
not only the poet's sense of solitude but the nature of
the sensation as felt by anyone.

Not all the Georgians confined themselves either
to the possibilities of English conversation or to
the potential of unexplored dialect words. Walter de
la Mare was perhaps the founder of a fad for the exotic
with his poem "Arabia". Robert Graves and Laura Riding
were soon to point out how unlike the real Arabia was
the poet's picture, and dismiss the first verse of
de la Mare's poem:
"Fair are the shades of Arabia,
Where the Princes ride at noon,
'Mid the verdurous vales and thickets,
Under the ghost of the moon;
And so dark is that vaulted purple
Flowers in the forest rise
And toss into blossom 'gainst the phantom stars
Pale in the noonday skies." (32)

with the following cold analysis:
"If we are to trust travellers, there are no shades in Arabia at noon except during sand storms. There are no forests. The moon and stars are not visible at noon either there or anywhere else south of the Arctic Circle. The Arabians, princes and all, do most of their riding at night. Flowers do appear in certain Arabian districts each spring, but grow low and are soon burned up." (33)

There is undeniable truth in this refutation of De la Mare's accuracy but the critics themselves invalidate their own criteria of objective accuracy and reasonable reporting when in conclusion they write:

"Mr. De la Mare has had a confused, luxurious dream in which the hackneyed lines "I'll sing thee songs of Araby and tales of far Cashmere" have developed without any wakeful restraint into this foolish fantasy combining the silken Princes of Araby with the forests, flowers and silk of Cashmere and identifying the "song of Araby" with the Victorian song which celebrates them." (33)

Here clearly is the true explanation of the poem's "inaccuracies"; De la Mare's Arabia was not a geographical phenomenon, it was a symbol of the exotic and the luxurious deliberately related to the other real world where observers would comment on the poet's condition:

"He is crazed with the spell of Arabia
They have stolen his wits away."
and this world is drawn into the poem's spell by the very word "Arabia" linked as it is to the English popular song, and also to the "Tales of Arabian Nights". Here the use of the foreign place is cleverly related to the English tradition so that instead of being, as the two critics seem to think we are entitled to expect, transported to foreign regions we are compelled to see the attraction of the strange and new for those confined to dreams of distant lands.

The same is very often true of later Georgian users of foreign place names. This inclusion of the exotic did not include untranslated foreign quotations or foreign words at all because it did not depend on a literary background in the readers. The common assumption is that like De la Mare, the Georgians themselves had no knowledge of foreign culture and were therefore obliged to rely on folk substitutes. This seems unlikely and in the case of one poet, Rupert Brooke, it is clearly untrue. His "Tiare Tahiti" in the second Georgian volume depends for its effect on the many Tahitian names and words which are, possibly, not understood by the reader but which we know Brooke derived from actual experience. But perhaps Brooke is too atypical to be a relevant example. His poem "The Old Vicarage, Grantchester" published in the first Georgian Poetry is dated from "Café des Western, Berlin" and contains quotations of admittedly non-literary German but also of Greek. Here the poem is deliberately placed in a literary tradition; the wood is "bosky" and there is a Faun and a Naiad and besides this qualities in capital letters. Despite this the poem quickly achieved and maintains an almost notorious popularity. The reason for this lies partly in the
style which is deliberately inclusive and almost cosy, for instance in the description of Cambridge people:

"And folks in Shelford and those parts
Have twisted lips and twisted hearts,
And Barton men make cockney rhymes,
And Coton's full of nameless crimes,
And things are done you'd not believe
At Madingley on Christmas Eve."

This friendly tone of sharing gossip is maintained in the poem's final questions culminating in:

"Oh! yet
Stands the Church clock at ten to three?
And is there honey still for tea?" (34)

Here the tone of conversation is reinforced by the subject matter and overrides such poetic inversions as "Oh! yet stands" which are not uncommon in the poem as a whole. In this poem although the technique is somewhat different from that generally found in Georgian poetry the poet's standpoint is very similar in relation to his subject and readers; the poem depends for its success on a sense of shared experience and this is reinforced, not undermined by the German ejaculations which make even the Greek words seem part of the foreign world of which poet reassuringly tells his readers he is tired.

W.J. Turner, although in many ways not a typical Georgian, nor for long a contributor to the volumes, was the most prominent poet to continue the evocation of the exotic which began in the first volume with the two poems just discussed. His "Romance" is clearly derivative, both in subject matter and style, in fact it seems almost to be an amplification of De la Mare's less emphatically stated theme:

"My father died, my brother too,
They passed like fleeting dreams,
I stood where Popocatapetl
In the sunlight gleams."
"I dimly heard the master's voice
And boys far-off at play,
Chumborazo, Cotopaxi
Had stolen me away." (35)

and his poem "The Hunter", in the same volume, similarly evokes a very generalised dream country:

"The land, the land of Yucatan,
The low coast breaking into foam,
The dim hills where my thoughts shall roam
The forests of my boyhood's home,
The splendid dream of Yucatan!" (36)

In both these poems the language is deliberately undemanding; the vocabulary, apart from the place names is limited to the commonest words and the syntax, is equally undemanding. The second quotation is also cliche-ridden, roaming thoughts and "boyhood's home" and "dim hills" belong to the great store of travelling and reminiscing stock phrases. These things, although they do not turn either poem into a compelling experience do counteract the strange world evoked by the names. The author's standpoint here as in all these poems is home and this is conveyed most clearly to the reader by the language. What is especially interesting about these two poems and "Arabia" is that they depend on banalities to make their effect. As I hope I have made clear, these common factors are used with some skill to create a special effect. It is, in the end, the effect itself to which the modern reader objects; there is something unwelcome about this shared sense of home admiring complacently, because at a distance, the far-off strange places. Also it is a subject outdated by modern travel, in a sense the present day
reader has had these dream places brought within his everyday circle of awareness by the aeroplane and the mass-media. But these objections to the contents of the poem should not be carried over into a criticism of technique, thinking that it is a thoughtless reflection of an empty theme.

De la Mare, at least, has recorded his reverence for words, though as might be expected, in a way totally different from Abercrombie. Of words he wrote in an article on "Pure English" in the Times Literary Supplement:

"Practice in them is not only audible. We think in them, can dream in them. We make magic with them, may comfort and solace with them beyond belief or injure and wound irrevocably. We pray in them, and we die with a poor last few of them on our lips. Should we not then be a little bolder, more human, humorous, bold and original in our efforts to acquire and use them, to become fully articulate."

and of English specifically:

"Pure English...is English truly characteristic of the language, howsoever derived, whether only of yesterday's standing or hoar with the centuries - an English unpedantic, exact, unifying, and so, of its nature, racy, musical, idiomatic; a decoy to the imagination, a steadfast to the reason." (37)

A certain amount of this has to be dismissed as reviewer's emphasis of the importance of the subject under review, but at the same time the passages do stress the importance of lively use of language and the final sentence is a neat summary of the sort of English which characterises De la Mare's best in
prose and poetry. The word which strikes a new note is musical and this is the quality which De la Mare above all the Georgians added to the plain prose style. Whereas the rhythm is almost unobtrusive in, for example, Gibson's narratives, in De la Mare's poetry it makes an immediate impact. Yet here as everywhere else in the Georgian's use of language in poetry the qualities are seen as being rooted in the spoken word. As well as being musical English is essentially for De la Mare, too, "unpedantic", "racy", "idiomatic". What is noticeable about De la Mare's poetry is his range in the use of language; sometimes music is paramount, and although the syntax always remains simple the vocabulary is sometimes chosen for the beauty of its sound, as in this description of "Wanderers":

"'Tired in their silver, they move,  
And circling, whisper and say,  
Fair are the blossoming meads of delight  
Through which we stray." (38)

In other poems, and often in those for children, the diction is limited to conversational phrases and the music is less important, as in this poem of make-believe, "Suppose":

"And we walked in a magical garden with rivers and bowers,  
And my bed was of ivory and gold;  
And the Queen breathed soft in my ear a song of enchantment -  
And I never grew old..." (39)

Here the sounds first convey the excited garrulity of the child and then the words show the conventional nature of the dream; the musicality of the rhythm is of negligible importance.

The conversational style had for the Georgian
poets many advantages, as will be seen more clearly in later chapters where their subject matter will come under discussion. It gave them maximum freedom to develop stylistic idiosyncracies and at the same time provided an essential control. By and large, despite the occasional intrusion of poeticisms, not uncommon among the most minor Georgians, they did abide by Pound's rule that if it could not be said it should not be found in poetry. How much this helped them in their writing can be seen if we compare two poems from the final volume. First, Frank Prewett's "Burial Stones":

"The blue sky arches wide
From hill to hill;
The little grasses stand
Upright and still.

Only these stones to tell
The deadly strife,
The all-important schemes,
The greed for life.

For they are gone, who fought;
But still the skies
Stretch blue, aloof, unchanged,
From rise to rise."

and then Peter Quennell's "A Man to a Sunflower":

"See, I have bent thee by thy saffron hair
- O most strange masker -
Towards thy face, thy face so full of eyes
- O almost legendary monster -
Thee of the saffron, circling hair I bend,
Bend by my fingers knotted in thy hair
- Hair like broad flames.
So, shall I swear by beech-husk, spindleberry,
To break thee, saffron hair and peering eye,
- To have the mastery?" (40)

In the first poem the grammar is the simplest possible and so is diction. The poem gains its effect by its restraint, by what the reader has to infer for himself
and this is well reflected in the only uncolloquial aspect of the language, the omissions of phrases to complete the meaning as, for example, where the main verb is omitted in the third stanza. Moreover the poem's modest tone is an important truth in the communication of its meaning. Were the sense of the loss of many lives expressed in, for example, the same over-written way as in the second example chosen, then the meaning would be lost as we read just another "memorial poem"; instead the poem's simplicity draws our attention to its theme, to the poet's observation of landscape and burial ground.

The second poem, too, has at its core the poet observing a fairly limited aspect of life, the sunflower. Here, though, the language is definitely not colloquial; "thee" and "thy" abound, the adjective "saffron" is literary, and the poetic inversions are almost tortuous. If there is buried in all this heightened language a central idea it has been quite lost and the poet's desire for "mastery" is bewildering or pointless, depending on how much credibility the poem still has for the reader. It is not possible to rewrite the poem simply, because the reader cannot tell what poem the poet is trying to write. Instead of transparent clarity of language, Quennell's poem has such profusion of literary effect that we cannot be sure whether there ever was anything which the poet had to say.

As well as providing necessary control in the use of a wide variety of not very strict rhythmic patterns, the use of conversational language contributes other defining aspects to Georgian poetry. The reader will
look in vain for compressed taut poetry, crammed with telescoped images and pregnant with meaning. The conversational style does not permit such economy of language, so that even a poet like W.H. Davies, who was capable of making startling comparisons, expressed them fully and at length rather than by the oblique reference of one word. In "The Hawk", for example, Davies devotes the whole poem to the development of the one comparison. Having described the hovering hawk in the first verse, in the second he likens it to an "evil mood" in his mind. Because of the extended treatment of the metaphor, however, Davies is able, without any loss of simplicity, to tell us the exact reason for the comparison:

"Thou dost not fly, thou art not perched,
The air is all around:
What is it that can keep thee set,
From falling to the ground?
The concentration of thy mind
Supports thee in the air;
As thou dost watch the small young birds,
With such a deadly care.

My mind has such a hawk as thou,
It is an evil mood;
It comes when there's no cause for grief,
And on my joys doth brood.
Then do I see my life in parts;
The earth receives my bones,
The common air absorbs my mind—
It knows not flowers from stones." (41)

In the second stanza we appreciate more fully the truly predatory nature of Davies's depressions. They, like the hawk, have no support but "concentration" on their object, in the second case on what would otherwise be the joys of the poet's life. It remains a simple idea and the expression despite the archaic second person is equally simple, especially in the poet's use of grammar. Because, however, the comparison is stated at length and
simply, the reader has time to think out the implications of the metaphor (it is not, as might be expected, a simile) and this intellectual involvement of the reader is half the poem's attraction.

This is by no means an isolated case among Davies's poems of a metaphor being used for a whole lyric. Other examples include "The Green Tent" from Farewell to Poesy (1910) and "The Black Cloud" and "A Midsummer Night's Storms" from The Bird of Paradise (1914). Nor was this the only way in which Davies used metaphor; but however startling his comparison the language which embodies the idea is always conversational, and easy to understand. The process which results in such metaphors as:

"golden stocks are seen in fields,  
all standing arm-in-arm entwined"

"She's big with laughter at the breasts,  
like netted fish they leap"

or this of an airship:

"Oh it was strange to see a thing like jelly  
an ugly, boneless thing all back and belly,  
among the peaceful stars - that should have been  
a mile deep in the sea, and never seen:  
a big, fat, lazy slug that even then,  
killed women, children, and defenceless men." (42)

is outlined by Davies himself in "The Mind's Liberty":

"No matter where this body is,  
The mind is free to go elsewhere.  
My mind can be a sailor, when  
This body's still confined to land;  
and turn these mortals into trees,  
That walk in Fleet Street or the Strand.  

So, when I'm passing Charing Cross,  
Where porters work both night and day,  
I oftentimes hear sweet Malpas Brook,  
That flows twice fifty miles away,  
And when I'm passing near St. Paul's,  
I see, beyond the dome and crowd,  
Twm. Barlum, that green pap in Gwent,  
With its dark nipple in a cloud." (43)
Here, the poet's mind is laid bare and what is of interest to students of Georgian poetic theory is the way in which the poet presents two images, the real and the imagined side by side, neither losing clarity. At the same time we notice that there is no blending of the two, no suggestion that a new truth is derived from these dual observations, nor is there any question of one image being subservient for poetic purposes to the other. Nor is there any idea of the poet "constantly amalgamating disparate experience": the two experiences are disparate enough but there is no fusion. As a poetic method the amalgamation has, in this century at least, received more attention but a close reading of Davies's poems, and some of the other Georgians will show that this less "poetic", more conversational combination of the two ideas is not without meaning.

Whether it is the reliance on the possibilities of colloquial English which causes this use of metaphor, or that the same type of mental process produces both the extended treatment of image and the diffuseness of spoken English it is not possible to say. What can be said is that the style of writing and the type of image-making are well-suited and are part of a general habit of single-stranded writing. It is seldom that a Georgian writer fuses two meanings in one utterance and if there is ever any "ambiguity" in the Empsonian sense, it is always of the simplest kind. In the case of Davies this single-stranded utterance suits well the poet's persona of the simple man used extensively in his many short lyrics, but not all the Georgians were so successful. John Freeman's "Caterpillars" is in the same form as Davies's poem "The Hawk" but here the poet's voice is
too knowledgeable and the comparison seems like a straining of the intellect rather than an almost unconscious association of two images:

"Of caterpillars Fabre tells how day after day around the rim of a vast earth pot they crawled,
Tricked thither as they filed shuffling out one morn
Head to tail when the common hunger called.

Head to tail in a heaving ring day after day,
Night after slow night, the starving mommets crept,
Each followed each, head to tail, day after day,
An unbroken ring of hunger – then it was snapt.

I thought of you, long-heaving horned green caterpillars
As I lay awake. My thoughts crawled each after each,
Crawling at night each after each on the same nerve,
An unbroken ring of thoughts too sore for speech.

Over and over and over and over again
The same hungry thoughts and the hopeless same regrets,
Over and over the same truths, again and again
In a heaving ring returning the same regrets."

The way in which the comparison is developed in the poem is curiously parallel to that in Davies's poem, but here a great many more words are used (albeit many of them the same words repeated) and the comparison is exhausted by the poet. The repetition, furthermore, detracts from the conversational style which the diction and grammar otherwise preserve – philosophical reflections of this sort are not usually accompanied by such repetition as there is here. That the comparison is an artefact is suggested finally by its inaccuracy; the hunger which
impelled the circle eventually killed its components but we are not led to think that the regrets would in the end destroy the thoughts. What this poem illustrates about the conversational style is that it is like any other, a discipline which will not allow the poet any carelessness. For a poem is not a piece of conversation, it is a finished article from which the reader expects integrity of meaning and style which no seeming casualness of language can conceal. As Gibson remarked the language of poetry can only be "as direct and straightforward as the speech of everyday seems to be" (45) There must be artistry and control, not found in the colloquial speech which the Georgians mined for their poetry, or even the true illusion of everyday language will be forfeited.
CHAPTER 4. NOTES


(2) H. E. Palmer: Post-Victorian Poetry (1938) p. 78.

(3) W. W. Gibson: "Some Thoughts on the Future of Poetic Drama" P. & R. III March 1912. pp. 119-22. p. 120.

These thoughts are paralleled by Rupert Brooke who writing of the Elizabethan dramatists emphasised "Their language was greater than speech, but it was in that kind; it was not literature." The Prose of Rupert Brooke ed: C. V. Hassall (1956) p. 139.

(4) Ross. p. 97.


(10) G. P. 1918-1919. p. 75.


(14) E. Pound: in Blast 1914. p. 49.


(16) Ibid. p. 5.


(20) G. P. 1920-1922. p. 5.

(21) Ibid. p. 3.


CHAPTER 4. NOTES (continued)

(27) E.Blunden: The Shepherd (1922) p. 15.
(34) G.P. 1911-1912 p. 35.
(35) G.P. 1916-1917 p. 3.
(36) ibid. p. 9.
(37) W. De la Mare: Private View (1953) pp. 239 and 241 respectively. Reprinted from T.L.S. 3rd May, 1923.
(38) G.P. 1913-1915. p. 78
CHAPTER 4. NOTES (continued)

(39) G.P. 1920-1922. p. 53.
(40) ibid. pp. 146 and 154 respectively.
(41) G.P. 1913-1915. p. 70.
(43) G.P. 1913-1915. p. 66.
CHAPTER 5. "THE GREATEST MYSTERY COMES BY THE GREATEST DEFINITENESS."

Just as all the emphases in the Georgian attitudes to form and language are upon the eradication of the poetical and obscure in the interests of greater clarity, so the Georgian attitude to subject matter emphasises the thing itself and eschews any theorising, romanticising or generalisation which might cloud the object. In turn as the quotation from Bottomley's letters at the head of the chapter suggests this concentration on the object emphasised for the poet, at least, the unfathomable mystery of life.

The Georgian refusal to draw conclusions from his experience of life has frequently been taken to show an inability to do more than blink shortsightedly at the immediate foreground. W.H.Davies in particular has suffered from this type of criticism, but it has affected the assessment of the Georgian movement as a whole. To be fair it is a view which the poems all too often bear out especially in the later work; no one could be blamed for dismissing the work of such a poet as William Kerr, represented in Georgian Poetry 1920-1922 by, among others, "The Trees at Night", which opens:

"Under vague silver moonlight
The trees are lovely and ghostly,
In the pale blue of night
There are few stars to see" (1)

However, the prose which the poets produced makes clear that this refusal to theorise was not merely oversight but an integral part of their theory of poetry and philosophy of life. Lascelles Abercrombie most thoroughly thought out the thesis, but it has to be sought among
the other critical dicta of his prose works. In The Theory of Poetry Abercrombie attempts to discover the value of poetry. Here, more than in the work of the other Georgians we find exalted claims for poetry but significantly Abercrombie stresses that the poem must avoid overt "meaning". He writes:

"The value of things in poetry is the value of experience simply as such: the value which living spirit must feel in every vivid motion of its life."

and,

"I do not propose to meddle with that vexatious problem, the meaning of meaning. It is enough for us to note that when we find a thing significant, we certainly do not profess to look down on it from above and assign to it some mystical import outside the world of here and now; by whatever process we arrive at it, the significance of a thing takes us no further than some relationship with other things. The sense of significance, in fact, is at bottom nothing else than a sense of clear and close relationship." (2)

There is a touch of idealism about Abercrombie's theory which is confined to his own work and not very relevant here; what is relevant is the remark that "we certainly do not profess to look down" on life or give it "some mystical import outside the...here and now". What poetry does give us, which life cannot always, is the sense of harmony which comes from poetic form and intensity of experience attainable only rarely in common life:

"Poetry is always the communication of unusually vivid experience charged with an unusually personal delight. The sense of the greatness of poetry is nothing but a sense of the richness of each moment
"of the life which is being communicated to us...Momentary richness of experience means also an intensity of experience."

It is for Abercrombie the intensity with which the world is apprehended which is of value in poetry, this makes redundant any other qualification for poetry's proper subject matter:

"poetry does not need to decline the actual in order to be ideal; it is ideal in the manner of its experience - an image of the ideal way of experiencing this present world of here and now" (3)

The concentration is all upon the thing seen or experienced, the poet's contribution lies in the intensity with which he feels and by implication in his refusal to withdraw into abstractions of "mystical import".

What is noticeable and surprising is that Abercrombie repeats the phrase "world of here and now". Concentration on the present has generally not been considered a Georgian virtue, nor has it been thought that they were concerned with the "here and now" except to escape from it into a vaguely rural, "olde world" idyll. Indeed when we examine the poetry there is, at least to the casual reader much to support the latter view. There is however more in the actual poems to support Abercrombie's words in a limited sense than is usually recognised. Not only country leisure but also rural workers are celebrated, notably but not exclusively in the poems of Wilfrid Gibson. Besides these rural topics the town too is seen as fit material and Harold Monro, for one, emerges in his sonnet sequence "Week-end" as a poet who has a real knowledge of the escapist attitude to country and town. Curiously, though, Abercrombie himself provides few examples of
contemporary themes in his poems. His volume *Emblems of Love* for example ranges from prehistoric times to the poet's own day and of necessity has little that, narrowly interpreted, relates to "here and now". Part II is taken up with the stories of three girls in Carlisle at the time of the '45 and Vashti and Judith are also represented. However the theme of love is clearly related to "here and now" in the manner of the story-telling and I think it is fair to assume that when Abercrombie said "here and now" he did not mean to be limited to the contemporary in a newspaper sense but rather confined by the actual and knowable. Hence the Georgian fondness for the narrative and dramatic forms, suited to the presentation of the immediate uncluttered by abstraction and philosophy.

Gordon Bottomley, the chief of the Georgian poetic dramatists, in the introductory poem to *Gruach* clearly stated what he wanted from poetry:

"I desire from art
And from creation not repeated things
Of every day, not the mean content
Or discontent of average helpless souls,
Not passionate abstractions of loveliness,
But unmatched moments and exceptional deeds
And all that cannot happen every day
And rare experience of earth's chosen men
In which I cannot by intermitting
And narrow powers, share unless they are held
Sublimated and embodied in beauty." (4)

This is an individual position and there is no question of trying to find here a Georgian trait (indeed the line about the "discontent of average helpless souls" might have been written with Gibson in mind). However there is in Bottomley's "unmatched moments" something of Abercrombie's "intensity of experience" and in his
dislike of "passionate abstractions" the same desire to keep his "rare experience" tied to the real and living. Like Abercrombie, Bottomley frequently turned to history and literature for his themes and the dramas have as a result little to do with the life of the poet's own day. On the other hand the supernatural and mystical have no place in the works. Gruach which is the story of Macbeth's abduction of Gruach, later to be Lady Macbeth, is rich in natural description but has no witches. Similarly King Lear's Wife telling of Lear's widowing is concerned only with limited domestic personalities, the cosmic frame of Shakespeare's drama is absent entirely.

The Georgian did not aim to be defined by his subject matter - the English local scene provides a smaller percentage of poems than is usually reckoned, but by his attitude to his subject. Lascelles Abercrombie states this clearly enough:

"There is no such thing as a poetical subject: or if you like, all subjects can be poetical; but the poetical thing about them will always be not what they are, but the way they come to us." (5)

From this it follows "nothing is beneath a poet's notice". (6) Bottomley would agree with this, no doubt, even while adhering for his poems, especially the dramas, to his preference for great deeds and great men. The Georgian freedom in choosing his subject matter was genuine and total; it did not confine the poet to the lowly or to the grand, to the homely or to the exotic. W.H.Davies's grandfather and St.Thomas both appear in the first volume and the reader moves easily from contemporary Grantchester to ancient Sicily.

John Drinkwater also makes the point:
"It is true enough to say that it does not matter what subject the poet may contemplate, but there is an implied provision that the subject shall be one that grips his emotions, one, that is to say, that he perceives poetically." (7)

Poetic perception for the Georgian meant two things, first, as Lascelles Abercrombie made plain, a quality of observation in experience in the poet and secondly a very real precision of both observation and expression. This will be dealt with later in the chapter. The effect of the first in practical terms is seen in John Drinkwater's criticism of Rupert Brooke, from which the above statement was taken. Drinkwater goes on to say, unusually critical of Brooke in a posthumous eulogy:

"To control sentiment was a determination that never left him, but to control sentiment is not at all the same thing as being afraid of it, and at the beginning he was apt to be afraid. And he would often substitute for the natural emotions which most young poets experience and cannot shape, an intellectual fancy that he cannot have felt with passion, and shape it with astonishing skill and attractiveness. Poetry cannot prosper on these terms; it must sit at the world's fire, or perish." (8)

It is this emotional qualification which, colouring as it does the Georgian attitude to form as well as to content, is one of the most common factors of Georgian poetry. It is at the same time one of the characteristics which most easily alienate later twentieth-century readers. In the Drinkwater quotation above, for instance, critical taste is offended by the repetition of the word sentiment, and the idea of sitting at the world's fire appears almost ludicrously
emotional. Yet at the same time Drinkwater has here, probably for the first time, isolated one of the major shortcomings in Brooke's poetry, and one that is felt by almost all readers as a sense of the inadequacy of the poetic motive behind the graceful lines.

It is worth emphasising Drinkwater's assertion that "poetry...must sit at the world's fire, or perish". It demonstrates the same preoccupation with the world that Abercrombie displayed in his discussion of subject matter, at the same time it tells us something of the Georgian attitude to that world. For Drinkwater, and in this he is typical of many of the earlier Georgians, commitment to the world meant sharing the common attitudes to it. It does not mean examining the social and economic developments, or even, necessarily the urban background for these developments. What it did frequently mean in practice is perhaps best exemplified in W.W.Gibson's volume Neighbours (1920). The volume contains, among other poems, monologues and dialogues by a variety of characters, men and women, several of them shown in terms of their professions which include slating, pear-selling, laundering, tanning, school-teaching and even housework. What unifies the volume is a depressing and finally a meaningless gloom in the attitudes of these characters to their own personal lives; what gives the book its force is the feeling that accumulates that such a gloomy attitude as that of "Katherine Weir", does create a bond between men. We see Katherine Weir, in the poem, which like many in the volume bears the name of its speaker, summing up the drawbacks and finally the one consolation of marriage:

"Though I have been a none-too-happy wife, And now my children grow away from me, Bringing to old age fresh anxiety, I have been used; and to be used by life,
"Even ill-used and broken utterly
With every faith betrayed and trust abused
It is a kinder lot than in security
To crumble coldly to the grave, unused." (9)

This poem does not represent an evasion of the twentieth-century any more than it displays any particular relation to it. Its connection with the world is not temporal, but emotional. The poem stands or falls according to whether such feelings as Katherine Weir displays are felt to be real and common enough to have value. As well as giving ample proof of Gibson's willingness to "sit at the world's fire" this volume demonstrates the other peculiarly Georgian attitude to subject, that it should be precisely observed and even, in many cases, factually accurate. Here, of necessity as well as timeless qualities we see especially twentieth century objects and conditions. There is a section of the book called "Casualties" dealing with the dead of the first World War and another called "In Khaki" which has other observations of war-time situations. Here the observation of detail, set against a background then almost too well-known to need the poet's especial attention, often, as in "John Elsdon", provides the poems only meaning:

"Stripped mother-naked save for a gold ring
Where all day long the gaping doctors sit
Decreasing life or death, he proudly passed
In his young manhood; and they found him fit.

Of all that lustiness of flesh and blood
The crash of death has not left anything,
And tumbled somewhere in the Flander's mire
Unbroken lies the golden wedding-ring." (10)

If there is in this particular observation a certain sentimentality, the reader's belief in the poet's accuracy to the facts of the situation tempers it a little. He may not like the emphasis on the wedding-ring
and yet cannot deny that in such a situation it would be the only symbol of his personality left to a man, and the only one, possibly, to survive his death. It is left to the reader, after all, to assume belief in the permanence of human love; there is no comment by Gibson. The subject, emotionally conceived by the poet, and, hopefully, received by the reader does not display the emotion as an additive to the scenes; it is the scenes themselves which carry the feeling - as they would in life. Gibson acts as an impartial reporter - except in the choosing of the scenes.

The reader is merely shown the two scenes and it is therefore of the utmost importance that he should trust the poet as reporter. As John Freeman said:

"A strict test of poetry is that it should be capable of the most literal interpretation, that it should be literally true...Poetry is not speech upon impossible things it is the only form of speech upon certain things that must find expression. It is a purely human utterance upon matters affecting man. The truest poetry is inevitably unextravagant, among poets there is no such thing as poetic licence. They do not need it, they abhor it, as being false to the spirit of their noble, exacting art." (ll)

There is very little Georgian poetry that does not pass this test, not merely by being capable of literal truth but by avoiding the "impossible" subjects where the reader would have no means of checking the poet's accuracy. And again the writer makes plain this belief in poetry's relation to the world, poetry is "purely human utterance upon matters affecting man". It is a very low claim to make for his art, but in this too, Freeman is typical of many Georgians who felt that the time had come to abandon the role of seer and to return
to Wordsworth's position as "a man speaking to men". If the poet's work was to be justified it had therefore to be precise and exact before it could be meaningful. Harold Monro employs the same criterion in his criticism of J.C. Squire's:

"It is a function of the imagination to be scientifically precise. Imaginative statements that can be emphatically denied by science lay the whole art of the poet open to suspicion. The poem entitled "The Moon" does not bear any kind of analytic examination. It is rhetoric chiefly." (12)

As Monro expresses the idea it is easy to see it in relationship to the twentieth-century, with its emphasis on scientific accuracy. The poet, as Monro expresses it, cannot run away from the demands of a public educated to new standards of knowledge into words, however beautiful, instead he must face the new tests and pass them in the same manner as the scientist. The example of Georgian poetry under discussion is interesting only because Monro's criticism of it shows it, rightly, as detached from the true Georgian concept of poetry. This is especially valuable because the poem's subject and manner, as exemplified in the following stanza, have come to be identified by subsequent critics as typically Georgian and justifiably rejected. Squire in one of the poem's less high-sounding verses, is describing the moon's first appearance:

"The Moon, the Summer Moon, surveys the vale:
The boughs against the dawning sky grow black,
The shades that hid those whispering waters fail,
And now there falls a gleaming, lengthening track
That lies across the wide and tranquil river,
Burnished and flat, not shaken by a quiver.
She rises still; the liquid light she spills
Makes everywhere quick sparkles, patches pale;
And as she goes, I know the glory fills
The air of all our English lakes and hills." (13)

To say that this is "rhetoric chiefly" is a kindness,
typical of Monro, for this, without exaggeration is one
of the best of the poem's twenty-one stanzas and it is
mostly plain nonsense. It cannot be analysed; merely to
read it carefully is to see its substance crumble to nothing.
But as Graves remarked in a letter to Harsh this sort of work
is "not Georgianism but Georgianismatism", (14) an echo of the
earlier Georgian observation of certain natural phenomena,
taken as a poetic subject in the first place because it had
been observed, but now taken merely because it is an accepted
subject for poetry. The difference is made clear if this poem
is compared with another Georgian poem, for which no very
high claim is made, John Drinkwater's "Moonlit Apples":

"At the top of the house the apples are laid in rows,
and the skylight lets the moonlight in, and those
apples are deep-sea apples of green. There goes
a cloud on the moon in the autumn night.

A mouse in the wainscot scratches, and scratches,
and then
There is no sound at the top of the house of men
Or mice; and the cloud is blown, and the moon again
Dapples the apples with deep-sea light.

They are lying in rows there, under the gloomy beams;
On the sagging floor; they gather the silver streams
Out of the moon, those moonlit apples of dreams,
And quiet is the steep stair under.

In the corridors under there is nothing but sleep.
And stiller than ever on orchard boughs they keep
Tryst with the moon, and deep is the silence, deep
On moon-washed apples of wonder." (15)

At the centre of this poem is the picture of the "moon-
washed apples" laid out in the loft, but equally important
to the poem's success is the accurate commentary on the
observer's attitude. To him they are "apples of wonder"
and "apples of dreams" and it is clear that he alone in
the silent sleeping house is a witness to the play of the
moon and the shadows on the fruit. It is a slight enough
occasion for a poem even so, and the poem achieves its success because it is well-contained within its limits and at the same time impresses the reader with the truth of its observation. Circumstantial details, the skylight and the steep stair and the repeated phrase "top of the house" emphasise how lofty the place seemed to the observer and reader of Drinkwater's autobiographical *Inheritance* will not be surprised when they come across confirmation of the actuality of the experience. He writes there of:

"Going up into the attic at Boarstall in the moonlight, and seeing the apples laid out on the floor. Twenty years afterwards I made those "Moonlit Apples" into a poem." (16)

To the Georgian this kind of literal accuracy was often essential for his poem's success. Poets of greater vision, a more universal imagination, may not need the prop of factual truth, but such poems as this by Drinkwater and that by Squires illustrate the need for a careful reproduction of the "here and now" in their poems of simple observation. It may be that somewhere buried in Squire's stanzas there is a situation which the poet had observed, by refusing to accept the limitation of his seen picture he has amplified the image to blurred meaninglessness. Losing precision, Squires at the same time loses intensity and all he has left is as Monro says, rhetoric. This might be sufficient, were Squires a better rhetorician, to make an interesting poem; but it would still not truly be a Georgian poem for above all else the Georgians wished to avoid rhetoric. For them poetry was the most immediate communication of inspiration. Instead of poetic devices they prized factual accuracy, which in its turn necessitated that
intensity of experience on which Abercrombie is so insistent. Drinkwater's short poem illustrates the type of success which this theory made possible, while Squire's poem makes clear how necessary were the twin disciplines of literal accuracy and intensity of inspiration - for without them Georgian poetry has nothing.

A further illustration of the close link between a Georgian poet's actual experience and his poems is found in Robert Graves' poem "The General Elliott" and his prose analysis of it. The poem was first printed in The Spectator and later in Georgian Poetry 1920–1922:

"He fell in victory's fierce pursuit
Holed through and through with shot,
A sabre sweep had hacked him deep
'Twixt neck and shoulderknot...

The potman cannot well recall,
The ostler never knew,
Whether his day was Malplaquet,
The Boyne or Waterloo.

But there he hangs for tavern sign,
With foolish bold regard
For cock and hen and loitering men
And wagons down the yard.

Raised high above the hayseed world
He smokes his painted pipe,
And now surveys the orchard ways,
The damsons clustering ripe.

He sees the churchyard slabs beyond,
Where country neighbours lie,
Their brief renown set lowly down;
His name assualts the sky.

He grips the tankard of brown ale
That spills a generous foam:
Oft-times he drinks, they say, and winks
At drunk men lurching home."
"The poet very seldom writes about what he is observing at the moment. Usually a poem that has been for a long while maturing unsuspected in the unconscious mind, is brought to birth by an outside shock, often quite a trivial one, but one which — as midwives would say — leaves a distinct and peculiar birthmark on the child.

The inn which you saw at Hinksey is the only "General Elliott" I know, but I do not remember ever noticing a picture of him. I remember only a board

The General Elliott
Morrells Ales and Stouts

and have never even had a drink there; but once I asked a man working in the garden who this General Elliott was, and he answered
"that really he didn't know; he reckoned he was a fine soldier and killed somewhere long ago in a big battle. As a matter of fact, I find now that Elliott was the great defender of Gibraltar from 1779 to 1783, who survived to become Lord Heathfield; but that doesn't affect the poem. Some months after this conversation I passed the sign board again and suddenly a whole lot of floating material crystallized in my mind and the following verse came into my head — more or less as I quote it: —

"Was it Schellenberg, General Elliott,  
Or Hinden or Waterloo  
Where the bullet struck your shoulderknot 
And the sabre shore your arm,  
And the bayonet ran you through?"

On which lines a poem resulted which seemed unsatisfactory, even after five drafts. I rewrote it in a different style a few days later and after several more drafts the poem stood as it now stands. There appears to me to be more than one set of conflicting emotions reconciled in this poem. In the false start referred to, the I.A. idea was not properly balanced by I.B. and I.C., which necessitated reconstruction of the whole scheme; tinkering wouldn't answer. I analyze the final version as follows: —

1. A. Admiration for a real old-fashioned General beloved by his whole division, killed in France (1915), while trying to make a broken regiment return to the attack. He was directing operations from the front line, an unusual place for a divisional commander in modern warfare. B. Disgust for the incompetence and folly of several other generals under whom I served; their ambitions and jealousy, their recklessness of the lives of others. C. Affection, poised between scorn and admiration, for an extra-ordinary, thick-headed, kind-hearted Militia Colonel, who was fond enough of the bottle, and in private life a big farmer. He was very ignorant of military matters but somehow got through his job surprisingly well.

2. A. My hope of settling down to a real
"country life in the sort of surroundings that the two Hinseys afford, sick of nearly five years soldiering. It occurred to me that the inn must have been founded by an old soldier who felt much as I did then. Possibly General Elliott himself, when he was dying, had longed to be back in these very parts with his pipe and glass and a view of the orchard. It would have been a kind thought to paint a sign-post of him so, like one I saw (was it in Somerset or Dorset?) — "The Jolly Drinker" and not like the usual grim military scowl of "General Wellingtons" and "General Wolfes". B. I ought to have known who Elliott was because I used once to pride myself as an authority on military history. The names of Schellenberg, Minden, Malplaquet, The Boyne (though only the two middle battles appear on the colours as battle honours) are imperishable glories for the Royal Welsh Fusiliers. And the finest Colonel this regiment ever had, Ellis, was killed at Waterloo; he had apparently on his own initiative moved his battalion from the reserves into a gap on the front line. J.A. My own faith in the excellent qualities of our national beverage. B. A warning inscription on a tomb at Winchester over a private soldier who died of drink. But his commander had added a couplet — "An honest soldier ne'er shall be forgot, Whether he died by musket or by pot". There are all sorts of other sentiments mixed up, which still elude me, but this seems enough for an answer." (18)

This explanation was written to a reader, who had been sufficiently impressed with the realism of the poem to enquire whether the "General Elliott" he knew and the one in the poem were in fact one and the same. This kind of interest in literature remains constant despite the fluctuations of poetic theory with regard to authorial voice, sincerity and such. That it is a common source of popularity in art is generally recognised even while this is felt to be contrary to the true worth of the
work concerned. What is unusual about the Georgian in this respect is that he, too, like the reader concentrates his attention on the source material - sometimes as here at greater length in prose than in the poem. As surprising as the seriousness with which Graves received the question is the way in which this reader's query revitalises his interest in the source material for the poem. This is quite a different parallelism than that between Drinkwater's short reference in his prose memoirs to the same experience as we find in the lyric "Moonlit Apples"; here the prose is a good deal longer than the poem and it is the poem and not the original experience which has set off the process of analysis. What it was that went into a poem, we can safely say, was of great interest to Graves at this stage in his life.

The difference in balance between prose and poem serves to emphasise how unsatisfactory a vehicle for Graves' material was the poetic form which, as the analysis shows, he chose after some uncertainty. The prose reveals far more about the poet's experience on passing the sign than the poem is able to, even to the most searching reader. There is no sense of the conglomeration of military leaders which Graves seems to feel helped form the poem in his mind; and where the poem does parallel the prose as in the final verse, the idea seems incongruous to the theme of the poem and a trifling but annoying irrelevance until we are enlightened by the prose of its source.

Moreover the poem, as the prose reveals, lacks that literal precision which, according to Georgian theory it ought to have displayed in the recounting of the details of the inn and its sign. Hence it was necessary for the reader to enquire if this was the same pub that he knew - the detail is not such that recognition is sure. Graves
reveals that he did not see but invented the sign; and when we look closely at the sign as pictured in the poem it seems deficient in pictorial qualities. There is too much fantasy on the real man.

"He sees the churchyard slabs beyond,
Where country neighbours lie,"

and too little to suggest the two-dimensional limitations of the sign-painters art; the only reference to paint has a clear symbolic value.

"And paint shall keep his buttons bright
Though all the world's forgot"

etc. The result of this is that we do not see the sign, the inn or its surroundings in any clarity; and we do not therefore trust the poet. Moreover it seems right that we do not. "He fell in victory's bold pursuit," we are told and yet Graves tells us that he did not know when he wrote the poem who the General was. In the prose he says that he was commander of the English forces in Gibraltar, but even this is not accurate.

Nor can it be said in Graves' defence that he did not adhere to the Georgian principle of accuracy, for, on the contrary, he asserts in The White Goddess, the importance of factual truth and the dependence, therefore, of the visionary poet on the prosaic scholar:

"The scholar is a quarry man, not a builder, and all that is required of him is that he should quarry cleanly. He is the poet's insurance against factual error. It is easy enough for the poet in this hopelessly muddled and inaccurate world to be misled into false etymology, anachronism and mathematical absurdity by trying to be what he is not. His function is truth, whereas the scholar's is fact. Fact is not to be gainsaid; one may put it this way, that fact is a Tribune of the People with no legislative right but only the right of veto. Fact is not truth, but a poet who wilfully defies fact can not achieve truth."(19)
How rigorously Graves put this into practice in criticism was seen in his analysis of Walter De la Mare's "Arabia" in Chapter Three. In that case we saw that Graves was fixing on the wrong kind of fact, topographical instead of psychological by which to test the poem and yet in his own poem the basis for the observation is all within Graves' mind to the disregard of the external facts. This would not matter were readers led to expect a reverie or revelation of the poet's mind; instead by the title and the style of the narrative we are conditioned to an impersonal observation. The poem fails, therefore, because it does not fulfil the Georgian criterion of accuracy, it is neither true to Graves' depth of commitment to reflections on military life, which cannot be guessed from the poem and yet in the prose, seem an over-riding impulse, nor does it have the literal precision of observation which would give the reader the true situation of the public house sign and allow him freedom to draw his own conclusions about the relevance of the parallel between Graves' military service and the fate of the General. The poem is vague and confused: it is unconvincing, therefore, in its portrayal of fact and its revelation of truth.

"The greatest mystery comes by the greatest definiteness" (20) wrote Gordon Bottomley to Paul Nash, and rarely for a Georgian includes in his discussion of poetry's realism the end to which this tends. Typically he does not elaborate the exact nature of the mystery which is to be displayed by this definiteness, but just because of that it is clear that Bottomley meant that the poet could best elucidate the inherent mystery of life by the precise observation of it in close-up. Ignoring the larger issues the poet must concentrate
on what is and displaying that, leave the reader with the sense of the miraculous strangeness of it made clear but unexplained. It is in this type of poetry that the Georgians best succeed; and it was to this that their typical form and style were ideally suited. The plain spoken easy going rhythms of "The General Elliott" simply did not allow Graves the layers of meaning, which according to his own explanation were an essential part of its creation; but such unobtrusive transparent writing does well convey the simple observed fact or phenomenon, and at the same time permits the poet to make his own comment equally unobtrusively and without standing between reader and subject matter. This is most obviously true in the war-poems, for example in Sassoon's "In the Pink"

"So Davies wrote: 'This leaves me in the pink' Then scrawled his name: 'Your loving sweetheart, Willie' With crosses for a hug. He'd had a drink Of rum and tea; and, though the barn was chilly, For once his blood ran warm; he had pay to spend. Winter was passing; soon the year would mend.

He couldn't sleep that night. Stiff in the dark He groaned and thought of Sundays at the farm, When he'd go out as cheerful as a lark In his best suit to wander arm-in-arm With brown-eyed Gwen and whisper in her ear The simple, silly things she liked to hear.

And then he thought: to-morrow night we trudge Up to the trenches, and my boots are rotten. Five miles of stodgy clay and freezing sludge, And everything but wretchedness forgotten. To-night he's in the pink; but soon he'll die. And still the war goes on; he don't know why." (21)

The poem depends entirely for its effect on the accuracy of the portrait of the soldier, unless we believe in Willie Davies, countryman and sweetheart, the poem has no force. The reason why we do believe in him is the attention to detail which makes him credible. The three slightly Welsh
names all fit well together. Sassoon, like Graves was in the Royal Welsh Fusiliers and he might in his officer duties have read such a letter as he described for censorship purposes; though whether he did or not is unimportant, that all should be as simply of a piece as it would be if he had is essential to the poem's success. The rum and tea and the accumulation of pay are well-attested compensations for a soldier's life; equally the cold sleeping quarters and the rotten boots, two of its well-known hardships. So successful is the illusion that any inaccuracy jars. The crosses surely should stand for kisses not for a hug; the total picture is not spoiled because the reader can understand the contrivance but it would be a better poem if the inaccuracy were not there. And clearly such manipulation of fact for poetic effect worried the poet as we can see from the fact that Sassoon himself confessed to an inaccuracy in another poem in the same Georgian volume "To Victory", where he wrote:

"I would have hours that move like a glitter of dances
Far from the angry guns that boom and flash."

In a letter to Marsh, emphasising the vividness of his raw material he wrote:

"How I long to be a painter, everything out here is simply asking to be painted or etched: It is wildly picturesque. Soldiers in barns with one candle burning, and wintry evening landscapes with guns flashing and thudding. I put 'angry guns that boom and flash' in my poem, but really they flash and thud - the flash comes first, and they only boom when very near and in some valley." (22)

The flash comes after the boom in the poem because of the rhyme with "ash" and it is similar exigencies of metre that transform the more exact kisses into a hug in "In the Pink". That we notice them at all (not that
the second instance could be spotted by someone unused
to such guns as those of Sassoon's time) is evidence of
how closely Georgian poetry is linked to the real world.
The intimacy of poet, subject and reader in "In the
Pink" is essential if the proper shock is to come in
the poem's last stanza; Davies must not only be real but
also sufficiently like the reader or his acquaintance
for us to feel his death and not merely to allow it to
pass us by as part of war's inevitable statistics.

This is a well-recognised facet of Sassoon's art
and similar examples could be found in other war-poems,
but what must be emphasised here is that this is a
general Georgian trait, and not one confined to the
war-poets among them. Here is an extract from W.H.Davies'
"The Child and the Mariner"; the poet is talking of his
relative, Henry, as he seemed to his childish romantic
mind:

"And all his flesh was pricked with Indian ink,
His body marked as rare and delicate
As dead men struck by lightning under trees
And pictured with fine twigs and curled ferns;
Chains on his neck, and anchors on his arms;
Rings on his fingers, bracelets on his wrist;
And on his breast the Jane of Appledore
Was schooner rigged, and in full sail at sea."

and this nicely displayed heightened picture of the man
is offset by the grandfather's parting:

"A damn bad sailor and a land shark too,
No good in port or out - my grandad said." (23)

Here are three people drawn vividly and convincingly: the
child, the mariner and the prosaic but finally respected
grandfather. Moreover relations between them are linked
as the poem progresses and as well as the glimpses of
the glamour of life at sea we clearly see the sort of
home in which the boy lived. As in Sassoon's work, the
poem depends for its success on its accuracy; despite the flamboyant image of dead men, traced with the twigs on which their corpses fell (is this supposed to be a piece of the mariner's relating, or an example of the child's eagerness to add his own touch of colour?), the list of the tattooist's artistic works is carefully convincing; the false jewellery in appropriate places, the pricked look of the lines and the major show piece on the breast are all of a piece with any real example of tattooing. This kind of accuracy is the poet's reference, so to speak; in this way the poet proves himself to be honest and a sound workman, not aiming at cheap show but striking at one of life's basic realities. 

The same is true in quite a different setting of Rupert Brooke's "Dining-Room Tea". Here not only is the setting more sophisticated but so, too, is the poet's attitude to his material and the manner of his retelling it. Nevertheless there is the same precision on which, finally the poem is dependent. First of all there is the situation:

"When you were there, and you, and you, Happiness crowned the night; I too, Laughing and looking, one of all, I watched the quivering lamplight fall On plate and flowers and pouring tea And cup and cloth;"

then comes the transformation in the poet's eyes:

"I saw the immortal moment lie. One instant I, an instant, knew As God knows all. And it and you I, above Time, oh, blind! could see In witless immortality. I saw the marble cup; the tea, Hung on the air, an amber stream; I saw the fires unglittering gleam, The painted flame, the frozen smoke." (24)

The idea of the poets suddenly seeing life's transience suspended may seem unconvincing enough, but the conception
would not have even a chance of being believed if we could not picture the real scene "plate and flowers and pouring tea"; it is general enough, and yet convincing and, therefore, the contrasted Ideal immortal view of marble, amber and paint is given its full value in contrast. It must first seem real in order to be Ideal, and moreover it is of interest in this discussion of Georgian attitudes to subject matter to see how the basic reliance on the actual and tangible is expressed in poetry as well as prose.

It has often been remarked that the Georgians had nothing to say about life as they found it, but this is largely because critics have chosen to ignore what they did say. Brooke himself in his letters reveals that the refusal to draw conclusions from observation need not merely be an oversight. He wrote to a friend of his cure for despair:

"The remedy is mysticism or Life, I'm not sure which. Do not leap or turn pale at the word Mysticism. I still burn and torture Christians daily. It is merely the feeling - or a kindred one - which underlay the mysticism of the wicked Mystics. Only I refuse to be cheated by the feeling into any kind of belief. They were convinced by it that the world was very good or that the Universe was one or that God existed. I don't any more believe the world to be good. Only I do get rid of the despair that it isn't, and I certainly seem to see additional possibilities of its getting better. It consists in just looking at people and things as themselves - neither as useful nor moral nor ugly nor anything else, but just as being. At least that's a philosophical description of it. What happens is that I suddenly feel the extraordinary value and importance of everybody I meet, and almost everything I see. In things I am moved in this way especially by some things; but in people by almost all people."
"That is when the mood is on me. I roam about places — yesterday I did it even in Birmingham! — and sit in trams and see the essential glory and beauty of all the people I meet. I can watch a dirty middle-aged tradesman in a railway-carriage for hours, and love every dirty greasy sulky wrinkle on his weak chin, and every button on his spotted unclean waistcoat. I know their states of mind are bad. I'm so much occupied with their being there at all, that I don't have time to think of that. I tell you that a Birmingham goat tarif-reform fifth rate business-man is splendid and desirable. Its the same about the things of ordinary life. Half an hour's roaming about a street or village or railway station shows so much beauty that it is impossible to be anything but wild with suppressed exhilaration. And it's not only beauty and beautiful things. In a flicker of sunlight on a blank wall, or a reach of muddy pavement, or smoke from an engine at night there's a sudden significance and importance and inspiration that makes the breath stop with a gulp of certainty and happiness. It's not that the wall or the smoke seem important for anything, or suddenly reveal any general statement, or are rationally seen to be good and beautiful in themselves — only that for you they're perfect and unique. It's like being in love with a person. One doesn't (now-a-days, and if one's clean-minded) think the person better or more beautiful or larger than the truth. Only one is extraordinarily excited that the person, exactly as he is, uniquely and splendidly, just exists. It is a feeling, and a belief. I suppose my occupation is being in love with the Universe — or (for it is an important difference) with certain spots and moments of it." (25)

It seemed worth quoting this passage at length because the fact that it is so long, and part of a letter written over a few days, helps to show how serious Brooke was in this matter. Also the length of it displays the re-iteration of his belief that it was not so much
unnecessary as wrong to draw conclusions from observation. Moreover, the style of the passage and certain expressions, - 'clean-minded' stands out - display how typical of Brooke this letter is. Also it was written before there was any thought of starting Georgian Poetry and so escapes easily the criticism that this is just an expression of the coterie spirit. Instead what it does show is that Brooke could be himself completely and still be a Georgian poet, even assuming that this means more than merely contributing to the relevant volumes.

The critical relevance of this faith in things appears in a review of Gibson's Fires which Brooke contributed to the first issue of Poetry and Drama. Here Brooke writes approvingly of Gibson's refusal to romanticise life:

"His poems are narratives, generally in the first person, of the important, but not extra-ordinary, events in the experience of fairly ordinary "lower-class" people. The lives of fishermen, miners, young poachers, and such afford him material - folk nearer actuality than most of the rich, but scarcely touched with the romance that hangs about Mr. Conrad's denizens of the tropics or Mr. Masefield's bygone peasants and far-wandering sailors. "Romance" though he achieves much of the better part of it is indeed what he splendidly and almost determinedly avoids. No one could suspect him of "How full of romance modern life is, after all!" He is far too cleanly-minded, and too near to life. That sort of "romance" implies foot-lights between you and reality. Mr. Gibson, by virtue of emotional sincerity, knows some of the actors, as well as Life the author, and so takes up his position where a poet (qua poet) should stand - in the wings. He deals with what he calls -

The things I care to hear about,
The little things that make up life;
that is, with love, friendship, hatred, child-bearing and death." (26)
This passage brings out clearly the Georgian hatred of anything distancing the author and reader from reality and emphasises (perhaps in Brooke's case a little self-consciously) that the Georgian was aware that for many life meant work in less than idyllic surroundings.

As with many valuable critical statements of the Georgian position, the passage reveals not only the theory behind the work but the inadequacies of many of the practitioner poets. Here Brooke seems at the last to undermine his argument by equating 'little things' with "love, friendship, hatred, child-bearing and death." Except for the purposes of argument it is difficult to see Brooke really believing in the littleness of these things and it belies entirely his faith in the poets being "near to life" — such a reduction being available to only those who have (to borrow Brooke's metaphor) not only the footlights but also the whole of the stalls between them and reality. Perhaps the truth is that the Georgian reluctance to theorise about life did tend to a trivialising of its basic pattern. Over and over again in Fires Gibson portrays characters in situations which place them in touch with life's basic pattern, 'birth, and copulation and death': but no conclusion is drawn and ultimately the events seem banal, and equivalent to other merely anecdotal situations. Unlike Eliot who in the fragment Sweeney Agonistes meaningfully juxtaposes these three things and the surface apparatus, telephones, gramophones, motor-cars, the Georgian seems unaware of the essential difference between, for example, death and the snaring of the wild animal. At its finest as in Brooke's clear-headed letter to Keeling this means an unusual ability to appreciate all life's manifestations.
for what they are, elsewhere as here it tends to trivialise. In other situations a sentimental romanticising of the ordinary results from the attempt to give due attention even to the little things. Brooke provides an apt example of this in his poem "The Great Lover" which appeared in 1914 and other poems in the section headed "The South Seas", which suggests that it was written in 1913. Here the flamboyant opening of love's ecstasy:

"I have been so great a lover: filled my days
So proudly with the splendour of Love's praise,
The pain, the calm, and the astonishment.
Desire illimitable, and still content,
And all dear names men use, to cheat despair,
For the perplexed and viewless streams that bear
Our hearts at random down the dark of life"

Brooke surprises the reader with the identity of the loves who have been so great a comfort to him:

"These I have loved:
White plates and cups, clean-gleaming,
Ringed with blue lines; and feathery, faery dust;
Wet roofs, beneath the lamp-light; the strong crust
Of friendly bread; and many-tasting food;
Rainbows; and the blue-bitter smoke of wood;"

In this poem Rupert Brooke concludes with a reminder of the essential transcience of both things and men: it serves as a reminder that the Georgians would not accept the comfort of "I go on for ever" from the objects which they observed with such loving attention to detail:

"But the best I've known,
Stays here, and changes, breaks, grows old,
is blown
About the winds of the world, and fades from brains
Of living men and dies Nothing remains." (27)

Nor was Brooke the only Georgian to express this idea in his poetry. Monro's "Everything" in Georgian Poetry
1916-1917 echoes Brooke's sentiments while at the same time convincing the reader that this is not a mere literary borrowing but a genuine individual thought. The expression may be too sentimental for the modern reader:

"The Kettle puffed a tentacle of breath: —
'Pooh! I have boiled his water, I don't know
Why; and he always says I boil too slow.
He never calls me "Sukie, dear" and oh,
I wonder why I squander my desire
Sitting subsmissive on his kitchen fire."

but, especially when he abandons the speech of domestic utensils and writes in his own voice, the feeling is unmistakably the same as that in Brooke's poem:

"You do well to remind me, and I praise:
Your strangely individual foreign ways.
You call me from myself to recognise
Companionship in your unselfish eyes.
I want your dear acquaintance, although
I pass you arrogantly over, throw
Your lovely sounds, and squander them along
My busy days. I'll do you no more wrong

Purr for me, Sukie, like a faithful cat,
You, my well trampled Boots, and you, my Hat,
Remain my friends: I feel, though I don't speak,
Your touch grow kindlier from week to week.
It well becomes our mutual happiness
To go toward the same end more or less
There is not much dissimilarity
Not much to choose, I know it well, in fine,
Between the purposes of you and me,
And your eventual Rubbish Heap, and mine." (28)

Both Brooke and Monro in these poems, united in their sense of the vitality of objects and in their refusal to draw from them philosophical comfort in Eternal Truths. Later on when criticism of the Georgians drew attention to their reluctance to go beyond the surface of things, W.H.Davies, also in a poem, "The Song of Life" made the following defence, which many of the other Georgians
might well have stood by:

"I hear men say: "This Davies has no depth,
He writes of birds, of staring cows and sheep,
And throws no light on deep, eternal things -"

I say: "Though many a man's idea of them
Have made his name a shining star,
Yet Life and Death, Time and Eternity,
Are still left dark to wonder what they are." (29)

In general the Georgians shared this view that the
mysteries of eternity were insoluble and therefore well
left alone. Some critics have seen this as in part a wish
to dissociate themselves from Victorian pontification and
in this view they were anticipated by Robert Graves in
his A Survey of Modernist Poetry, published in 1927 when
Graves was making an effort to dissociate himself from
his war-time self and poetic beginnings. He wrote:

"Another thing understood between the
Georgians was that their verse should avoid
all formally religious, philosophical or
improving themes; and all sad, wicked cafe-
table themes in reaction to the 'nineties'.
It was to be English yet not aggressively
imperialistic; pantheistic rather than
atheistic; and as simple as a child's
reading book." (30)

And, oddly enough while we might think that this reluct-
ance to offer solutions to age-old problems; the refusal
to moralise over world-developments would have won
support for the Georgians in the twentieth-century, the
reverse seems to be true and John Press sums up accurately
enough, the attitude of the century as a whole when he
talks of the 'thirties:

"In their eyes the greatest weakness of
the Georgians was their preoccupation with
individual hopes and fears, their reluctance
to tackle the kind of large-scale, impersonal
problems which shaped the daily lives of
most human beings." (31)

And yet despite this, as far as there is any evidence,
the Georgians have stood their ground. The two leading Georgians still alive, Blunden and Graves, are still avoiding the world-wide and concentrating on the small fragment closely observed. Robert Graves, indeed, when answering a questionnaire sent out to poets by the London Magazine, defended his choice of subject-matter as follows:

"Personal issues are all that interest people, not newspaper issues." (32)

This is dismissing the question in Graves' usual style, half-flippant, half-authoritarian but it reflects accurately the Georgian position even to the eye cast to his readers; even where the Georgian, in the war-poems chose to deal with "newspaper issues" it was almost always in terms of what effect these had on individual people and local landscapes. Sassoon's peculiar concern is for the ordinary man ensnared by politicians and military officials in a physical and mental hell; Blunden's major interest was in the destruction of villages and countryside. It is such arguments as these that the Georgians brought against the war, pacifism as a belief, the politics of the European situation were not their concern either as private individuals or as poets.

In some cases the Georgian refusal to face the world's turmoil with concern for public issues or to tax the eternal verities with fresh answers became a more positive thing than a humble reluctance to attempt the impossible; the refusal became an answer in itself, at least for the individual if not for the world. This is frequently W.H. Davies' position:

"This life is sweetest; in this wood
I hear no children cry for food;
I see no woman, white with care;
No man, with muscles wasting here.
"No doubt it is a selfish thing
To fly from human suffering;
No doubt he is a selfish man
Who shuns poor creatures pale and wan.

But 'tis a wretched life to face
Hunger in almost every place;
Cursed with a hand that's empty, when
The heart is full to help all men." (33)

Here, Davies, while running away from the appearance of hunger and want is facing up to one of life's more distasteful realities that the will to help and the ability are not in any way the same thing. He, in refusing to wallow in his own sympathy, is taking a more realistic attitude than the Georgians are usually given credit for.

Another poet who set out quite clearly a philosophy of nature as a cure for over anxious care about the world at large is Robert Nichols. This is found in "The Philosopher's Oration" from "A Faun's Holiday" which appeared in Georgian Poetry 1916-1917. In this extract, the Philosopher lists the troubles of the world and the inability of men to cope adequately with them and then concludes:

"Though all these be, yet not grows old
Delight of sunned and windy world,
Of soaking downs aglare, asteam,
Of still tarns where the yellow gleam
Of a far sunrise slowly breaks,
Or sunset strewn with golden flakes
The deeps which soon the stars will throng.

For earth keeps yet her undersong
Of comfort and of ultimate peace,
That whoso seeks shall never cease
To hear at dawn or noon or night.
Joys hath she, too, joys thin and bright,
Too thin, too bright, for those to hear
Who listen with an eager ear,
Or course about and seek to spy,
Within an hour, eternity.
First must the spirit cast aside
This world's and next his own poor pride
And learn the universe to scan
More as a flower, less as a man." (34)
This is perhaps the most coherent and fully-developed expression of the theory of avoidance of blurring generalisations to be found anywhere among Georgian writing; it is, however, spoken by the Philosopher in a dialogue poem and it seems curiously, less true of Nichol's own poetry than of many Georgian poems. Even in the expression of the philosophy in the above lines there is an evident tendency to move away from the particular and this results inevitably in a loss of sharpness. The natural observation is all generalised, clearly nowhere in particular and there is a vagueness of expression throughout; the earth's "undersong" "bright" joys that one can hear, "the world's and... his own poor pride" these are fine sounding but imprecise. And although Nichols can here be excused a theorising style in the pursuit of a theory, not often found so cogently expressed, the truth is that his other poems all betray the same unGeorgian vagueness in the use of words. Clearly not merely the acknowledging of the theory but careful and consistent practice were essential to Georgian poetry.

What was needed above all by the true Georgian poet was what Walter De la Mare, quoting Beatrix Potter" called "the seeing eye" and of which he wrote:

"It is, of course, not only a heaven-sent possession but also the grace, inspiration and joy of every poet that has ever walked this earth, and shared the stars." (35)

To appreciate the full value of this, it has to be emphasised that De la Mare is here using rather overworked phrases literally "heaven-sent" and the trio of "grace, inspiration and joy" have a religious quality which should not be missed nor, I think taken lightly. The ability to see was for De la Mare the means of grace;
it meant that the perception of the created world, and, in De la Mare's own view, a privately created fantasy world, which were this world's chief glory, were all the justification the universe needed.

The possession of such a seeing eye meant not only other negative virtues, the refusal to be led away from the actual to the literary, or the ideal, or to turn the real into the pretty or sentimentally satisfying. It also required very positive virtues not least of which is what Edmund Blunden called:

"patient watchings for the significant thing." (36)

To this Blunden attributes Sassoon's success as a poet, and he repeats the assertion elsewhere, quoting Wordsworth as his authority for placing such emphasis on the trait:

"if "the eye on the object" is as ample a provision for the result, poetry, as Wordsworth has told us, no soldier-poet of that period was more likely to triumph than this one. It is a peculiar question how such writers, while their own lives were in intense danger every moment, and while they attended to all their duties as young leaders of men in grotesque settings could have the eye on the object so firmly." (37)

Earlier in this chapter I discussed how important it was for Sassoon and the other war-poets that they should not only be accurate but be seen to be accurate in all detail; here Blunden is telling us how this accuracy was obtained. It seemed to Blunden, writing quite some time after the event, that this ability of Sassoon's was peculiar under the special circumstances of war; it might on the other hand be said that if as De la Mare maintained "the seeing eye" is a "heaven-sent possession" that it was this which conditioned Sassoon's reaction to the war, and that of many other
war-poets. It has often been remarked that Brooke's idealised view of the 1914 sonnets looks pretty thin beside the real war which Sassoon, Owen and the others, show us; and it has less often been remarked that had Brooke lived to see the full horror of the war he would have written as did the others. This may seem like generosity in giving Brooke the benefit of the doubt but there is evidence in some if not much of Brooke's pre-war poetry that he too possessed "the seeing eye"; it is clearly there behind "The Old Vicarage: Grantchester", for example.

As a part of poetic training the ability to see and express clearly was well established before the outbreak of war. Bottomley's plea for the "greatest definiteness" came well before the war and the style of writing is well illustrated by Davies, Monro and others in pre-war volumes. What the war did provide for these poets was something to see. What differentiates the war-time Georgian poetry from that written in peace either before or after, especially in the eyes of later readers is the quality of what was observed. While the peace time Georgians saw little that was startling or even obviously worth attention, the war-time Georgian by the force of circumstance and merely by using his eyes in the same way as other Georgian poets received inspiration socially relevant to his own times, meaningfully connected to the larger issues of the day. When Bullough talks of Sassoon's war poems as revealing:

"the Georgian turning from the lyrical moment to the socially significant, shedding his romance under the compulsion of disillusion and sympathy." (38)

What he talks of is not so much something which the Georgian poet himself consciously achieved but something which happened to him. A violently different world came across his field of vision as replacing the earlier
and equally clear cowslips and larks.

There is no better way of testing this than by looking at the poetry of Edmund Blunden. In his work there is a continuing use of the simplest forms and the most unobtrusive language and always there is evidence of these "patient watchings" of which he spoke. In *Georgian Poetry 1920-1922* this manifests itself clearly in "The Poor Man's Pig":

> "Already fallen plum-bloom stars the green
> And apple-boughs as knitted as old toad's backs
> Wear their small roses ere a rose is seen;
> The building thrush watches old Job who stacks
> The bright-peeled osiers on the sunny fence,
> The pent sow grunts to hear him stumping by,
> And tries to push the bolt and scamper thence,
> But her ringed snout still keeps her to the sty.

Then out he lets her run; away she snorts
In bundling gallop for the cottage door,
With hungry hubbub begging crusts and orts,
Then like the whirlwind bumping round once more;
Nuzzling the dog, making the pullets run,
And sulky as a child when her play's done."

Here the very patience of the poet tries the patience of the reader who is not content just to watch but is always waiting for something 'significant' or meaningful. What such a reader misses is that the significance is in the objects observed, the ritual pattern of the life of man and sow, the intricately painted detail, and if there must be meaning, the stability and continuity which the picture suggests.

The same technique also produced "Transport Up" at Ypres", dated 1917 but first published in *Poems 1914-30*:

> "The thoroughfares that seem so dead to daylight passers-by
> Change character when dark comes down, and traffic starts to fly;
> Never a noisier street than the Rue de Malon then becomes
> With the cartwheels jolting the dead awake, and the cars like rumbling drums."
"The crazy houses watch them pass, and stammer with the roar,
The drivers hustle on their mules, more come behind and more;
Briskly the black mules clatter by, to-day was Devil's Mass;
The loathly smell of picric here, and there a touch of gas.

From silhouette to pitch blur, beneath the bitter stars,
The interminable convoy streams of horses, vans and cars.
They clamour through the cheerless night, the streets and slattern maze,
The sentries at the corner shout them on their different ways.

And so they go, night after night, and chance the shrapnel fire,
The sappers' waggons stowed with frames and concertina wire,
The ration-lumbers for the line, the lorries for the guns;
While overhead with fleering light stare down those withered suns" (40)

In this poem the same detailed observation has an obvious significance inherent in its subject-matter. The same reader who is genuinely baffled to see the point of a poem about a pig can usually recognise the point of a poem about war; The war is the point. In the same way, of course, the pig is the point but this, for reasons mostly non-literary, is not so easy to accept in a socially aware twentieth-century. What the two poems do demonstrate is that it is only the subject matter that has changed; the poets attitude, detached, watchful and deliberately refraining from comment has remained the same.

It may seem like special pleading to claim for the Georgians the poetic virtues which critics have often credited to the war-poets, sometimes at the same time
emphasising how in this the war poets differed from the Georgians. J.H. Johnson in his book *English Poetry of the First World War* naturally sees the poetry of the period in this light, as the following extracts show:

"Functioning largely as the exercise of personal sensibility Georgian poetry failed to go beyond the limits of carefully chosen poetic situations – situations that evoked a predictable, somewhat self-conscious personal response to rural beauty. Whatever the Georgians made up for by their comforting sense of numbers and by their illusory impression of a poetic "renaissance".

"The deliberately shocking techniques of the new realism may be seen in part, as a frequently exaggerated reaction to Georgian blandness and decorum."

"The frenetic quality of the poem [Nichol's "The Assault"] may be a literary reaction to the static Georgian lyric," (41)

Other critics have seen the failure of the Georgian movement as being due to the war itself. David Daiches was one of these:

"The Georgian experiment had begun before the war as an attempt to recapture decaying traditions, to mark time with faces turned away from the clock. It was an important experiment, and in some degree a successful one; but it could not hope to survive the war...The Georgian retrenchment collapsed when it became clear – as a result of the war and of the whole movement of European civilization – that tea had to be consumed without honey and the church clock had ticked on long past ten to three." (42)

What both these critics overlook is the remarkable coincidence of war poets and Georgians. Of the major war poets only Wilfred Owen was not represented in the Georgian volumes; Sassoon, Graves, Nichols, Rosenberg, Blunden and of course Brooke were all represented. Nor
did other Georgians totally ignore the war in their poems; Gibson has war-poems in the third volume and the fourth where there are also war-poems by Turner. In addition to these there are memorial poems to dead soldiers, both personal as, Maurice Baring's "In Memoriam, A.H." and general as Herbert Asquith's "The Volunteer". Outside the five volumes of Georgian Poetry there are many other instances of Georgian poets writing war-poems. Even W.H. Davies, who as was seen earlier in the chapter, valued his peace of mind, did not totally ignore the war even though it was not brought close to him personally. "The Holly on the Wall" shows Davies aware not only of the war but of the ignorance of it in peaceful seeming England:

"Play, little children, one and all,  
For holly, holly on the wall.  
You do not know that millions are  
This moment in a deadly war.  
Millions of men whose Christmas bells  
Are gun reports and bursting shells;  
Whose holly berries made of lead,  
Take human blood and stain them red." (43)

This is clearly a war-poem in the approved realistic style, at the same time it is an obviously Georgian poem akin in form and style to many other poems by Davies. Furthermore there is a curious parallel in idea with Owen's "Anthem for Doomed Youth". (It is unlikely to be an echo on either poets' side).

All this argues a certain continuing tradition which embraces both Georgian and war poet; or at any rate some of each, for it cannot be denied that some of the Georgians fit all too well the strictures of Daiches and Johnson (though generally speaking these were more prominent after than before the war). There is further evidence of a sense of community in the writings of the poets. Wilfred Owen's correspondence reveals a surprising eagerness to be associated with the Georgians, as these following
quotations reveal:

"They believe in me, these Georgians"

"I am held peer by the Georgians; I am a poet's poet"

"We Georgians are all so old...someday I'll lend you my Georgian Poetry 1917."

Nor was his eagerness rebuffed, Robert Graves replied to one of his letters:

"You must help S.S. and R.N. and R.G. to revolutionize English Poetry." (44)

This constitutes factual evidence to reinforce the basic critical point that there is in the best Georgian poetry (and only in the best) a concentration on the foreground which is identical to the technique used so successfully by Sassoon, especially, and other war poets to bring home to their contemporaries the true horror of war. This must be seen for what it is in the Georgians if they are to receive their due. Daiches calls it having "their faces turned away from the clock"; the truth is that, without any compulsion as to what they ought to see, the Georgians had their vision so concentrated on what was immediately before them that they did not notice Time or Eternity; the best Georgians, moreover, saw the only answer to the evanescence of worldly beauty in whole-hearted absorption in its observation. To concentrate upon Time or "the times" was merely to waste precious hours.

Now, a full half-century since their work began its rapid descent into disfavour there is abroad a similar mistrust of grand themes, and "Georgian Poetry" (if for once an unhistorical use of the term is allowed) is once more new poetry:
"This house has been far out at sea all night,
The woods crashing through darkness, the
booming hills,
Winds stampeding the fields under the window
Floundering black astride and blinding wet.

Till day rose; then under an orange sky
The hills had new places, and wind wielded
Blade-like, luminous black and emerald,
Flexing like the lens of a mad eye.

At noon I scaled along the house-side as far as
The coal-house door, I dared once to look up —
Through the brunt wind that dented the balls of
my eyes
The tent of the hills drummed and strained to
its guyrope,

The fields quivering, the skyline a grimace,
At any second to bang and vanish with a flap:
The wind flung a magpie away and a black-
Back gull bent like an iron bar slowly. The house

Rang like some fine green goblet in the note
That any second would shatter it. Now deep
In chairs, in front of the great fire, we grip
Our hearts and cannot entertain book, thought

Or each other. We watch the fire blazing,
And feel the roots of the house move, but sit on,
Seeing the window tremble to come in,
Hearing the stones cry out under the horizons."(45)

What is surprising about this poem is not so much the
coincidence of the same limited field of vision, domestic,
rural and ordinary which is typically Georgian and the same
conversational style cast in conventional verse form, but
a feeling that it would be so much better a poem if it
were more like a true Georgian work in the avoidance of
the over-written phrase and heightened metaphor which here
detracts from the essential homeliness of the theme. To a
contemporary reader Hughes' attempt to draw attention to
this scene, precisely confined in time and place seems
almost consciously a defiance of the world's fret. It is
not possible now to feel the same deliberate choice of emphasis in the poetry of the Georgians, though I hope this chapter has made it clear that if Georgian poetry was "escapist" it was by no means unaware of what it was escaping from or why it was escaping. The Georgian could rely on his contemporary reader to know all about the newspaper issues of the period and to appreciate the offer of an alternative in much the same way as Hughes' readers do. Perhaps it is simply that this sort of poetry, despite its timeless appearance ages less successfully than poetry which comes straightforwardly to terms with contemporary issues.
CHAPTER 5. NOTES.

(1) G.P. 1920-1922. p. 113.
(4) G.Bottomley: Gruach and Britain's Daughter 1921. p. 4.
(5) L.Abercrombie: The Idea of Great Poetry (1925) p. 34.
(8) ibid. p. 13.
(9) W.W.Gibson: Neighbours (1920) p. 10.
(10) ibid. p. 94.
(22) ibid. p. 44 and undated (early 1916) letter from S.Sassoon to E.Marsh in Hassall p. 380.
CHAPTER 5. NOTES (continued)

(23) G.P. 1911-1912 p. 57 and 59.
(24) ibid. p. 45.
(27) G.P. 1913-1915 p. 54.
(29) W.H. Davies: The Song of Life and other Poems (1920) p. 51.
(34) G.P. 1916-1917. p. 64.
(35) W. De la Mare: Private View (1953) p. 250.
  Jon Silkin in his book Out of Battle (1972) also draws the readers attention to Sassoon's "ability to focus precisely on a particular situation" (p.158) He, however, relates this to actuality and not to any relation to his Georgian contemporaries. "This directness is not a literary device, but the result of his responses to war. The stronger these become, the clearer his aims, and the more the poems are composed into direct, compact units." (p. 152)
My contention is that the focussing ability had literary precedents among a group of poets with whom Sassoon was closely in touch via Marsh and that this conditioned his response to the war and not vice-versa. It is impossible to prove one way or the other and very possibly both helped condition Sasson's poetry. His related assertion made on p. 343 that "The war poet's use of contemporary speech and vocabulary was not in the main the result of any alteration in literary attitudes, but rather, the result of new and terrifying circumstances" is more questionable. Firstly how do circumstances of actuality affect poetic diction without the mediation of literary attitudes? Secondly literary history really will not bear out the assumption that only after trench war impinged on poets was there any return to colloquial language. Abercrombie, a non-combatant, was, as an earlier chapter indicates, a well-recognised pioneer here.


(39) G.P. 1920-1922. p. 25.

(40) E. Blunden: *Poems* 1914-30.


(43) W. H. Davies: *Forty New Poems* (1918) p. 35.


CHAPTER 6. GEORGIAN SUBJECTS.

What were the subjects on which the Georgians so resolutely concentrated their own and their reader's gaze? The list is much longer than critics allow for. David Daiches' list:

"romantic accounts of the East, nature subjects, meditative descriptions of English scenery, or accounts in a subdued lyrical strain of personal experiences in listening to birds or watching sunsets." (1)

typifies the general attitude but by no means covers the range of Georgian subjects. Even if, for the moment the war is omitted the Georgian volumes yield love poems, religious poems, narratives set in ancient times and against contemporary industrial settings and a host of unclassifiable verses.

Often the Georgian poet is castigated for evasion of important twentieth-century issues; the critic considers that the Georgian poet deliberately cut himself off from such experience as would yield troublesome ideas relevant to the complexities of twentieth-century life and Georgian hence means rural, traditional and uninteresting. But, as Abercrombie's repeated reference to poetry's involvement with the "here and now" suggests this is by no means an accurate summary of the position. The error is made often because the critic with hindsight sees the Georgian as unaware of developments which for him were still in the future. Even the Great War, horrible and real as it was to the Georgians was not, and could not have been, seen by them in the same way as later writers, aware of its long term effects see it, and yet the Georgians are often blamed for their unawareness. De Sola Pinto's criticism of the first Georgian Poetry
exemplifies this attitude:

"Taken as a whole, however, it is a strange collection to represent English poetry at the moment when Europe was preparing for the First World War and England's stability was being rocked by the constitutional crisis and the impending disruption of the Protestant Ascendancy in Ireland. The smooth rhythms and pleasant homely landscapes of most of the poems in it belong to the England of "the rich man in his castle, the poor man at his gate." The essential England of 1912, the England of the great cities is only glimpsed in the two short poems, one by W.W.Gibson and one by W.H.Davies. The England of the machines and the factories and the England of the suburbs are wholly absent. It is a very insular collection... There is, of course, no need for poets to comment directly or indirectly on contemporary politics or social life (though most of the great ones have done so), but poetry which grows out of a fully developed and integrated sensibility necessarily reflects in its rhythms and imagery the quality of contemporary life." (2)

De Sola Pinto's criticism is mostly negative. Not surprisingly, perhaps, there is no indication of what sort of poems would be suitable for a "Europe...preparing for the First World War", nor is there any proof that the poets knew of this preparation or were aware that England's stability was being rocked. It seems likely that the poets, like the majority of the English people in 1912 were unaware that, half a century later, they would be seen as standing near to a precipice over which society was in two years time to fall headlong into the twentieth century. De Sola Pinto while criticising the Georgians for ignoring the life of their times is romanticising and simplifying his picture of the period. The world of machines and factories and suburbs was not then the feature of life that it has become. Then there were servants and very few motor-cars so that social and geographical stability
were still maintained. The suburbs were there, of course, but they were not the force in social life which they have since become. Most of the Georgians were in fact countrymen and of those who were not the majority lived in the centre of London. John Freeman it is true was a commuter and daily travelled from Anerley, where he lived near Walter De la Mare, to Southampton Row where he worked in an insurance office, but it is difficult to see how Freeman was supposed to know in those days that he was one of the first of a fast developing section of the community and, if he did know, how was it to be embodied in poetry?

In fact the Georgian poet often reflects in his subject matter an awareness of the erosion of rural life. W.H. Davies clearly points the moral in his lyric "The House Builder":

"Where this oak stood a house must be,
Not half so fair as a green tree;
The crash that made my last hope fall,
Was music to the builder's soul...
...What is this life if we forget
To fill our ears when Nature sings,
Our eyes search for her lovely things." (3)

The emphasis is on the natural. Davies's concern is for the loss of the tree, he is little interested in the houses, except in so far as he pictures them without benefit of natural beauty. In other poems, though, Davies does concern himself with the urban situation. In the slums, he writes:

"We see no more
Green lanes, but alleys dark instead;
Where none can walk but fear to tread
On babes that crawl in dirt and slime
And from tiny windows at this time,
Thou canst not see ten yards beyond,
For the high blocks that stand around;
Buildings that oftimes only give
One room in which five souls must live,
With but one window for their air." (4)

This is not one of Davies's more successful poems but it
faces squarely the deprivation of the slum dweller, his loss of beauty, cleanliness, space and air. It is difficult to see how de Sola Pinto's charge of irrelevance relates to this work, except in that Marsh chose few of these urban poems for his anthologies. In fact "The Heap of Rags" in the first volume is the only poem of this sort by Davies; this reflects the Georgian feeling that the country was a better place and more worthy of the attention of readers.

Harold Monro in his poems reveals an acute awareness of the town dweller's relation to the country which helps to make the Georgian emphasis on the rural more understandable. Like Davies, Monro was well aware of the city's encroachment on the countryside:

"The ploughboy, he could never understand -
While he was carried dozing in the cart,
Or strolling with the plough across the land,
He never knew he had a separate heart.

Had someone told him, had he understood,
It would have been like tearing up the ground.
He slowly moves and slowly grows like wood,
And does not turn his head for any sound.

So they mistook him for a clod of land,
And round him, while he dreamed, they built a town.
He rubs his eyes; he cannot understand,
But like a captive wanders up and down." (5)

If this seems to sentimentalise the country people with their simplicity and close ties to the soil the harsh note of the final line adequately expresses the quality of urban life which must have made it most painful to the uprooted countryman.

Monro's best poems on urban life are those which have for their setting the suburbs, which de Sola Pinto thought the Georgians ignored. In a poem simply called "Suburb" Monro suggests the false relation of suburban gardens and
plants to nature, using this contrast to suggest the emotional poverty of the inhabitants. It is a cruel poem but it illustrates quite clearly why the Georgian poet thought the country so important.

"Dull and hard the low wind creaks
Among the rustling pampa plumes.
Drearly the year consumes
Its fifty-two insipid weeks.

Most of the grey-green meadow land
Was sold in parsimonious lots;
The dingy houses stand
Pressed by some stout contractors hand
Tightly together in their plots. ...

...He in the uncomfortable breach
Between her trilling laughter,
Promises, in halting speech,
Hopeless immense Hereafters.

She trembles like the pampas plumes.
Her strained eyes haggle. He assumes
The serious quest...
It's done. She blushes at his side
Across the lawn - a bride, a bride.

The stout contractor will design
The lazy labourers will prepare,
Another villa on the line;
In the little garden-square
Pampas grass will rustle there." (6)

In this poem Monro is depicting the self-perpetuating loss of natural strength which for him the suburbs embody. In another poem "Aspidistra Street" he lists the deadly attributes of the suburbs:

"There will be heaven on earth, but first
We must banish from the parlour
Flush and poker-work and paper flowers,
Brackets, staring photographs and what-nots,
Serviettes, frills and étagères,
Anti-macassars, vases, chiffoniers;
"And the gloomy aspidistra
  Glowering through the window-pane,
  Meditating heavy maxims,
  Moralising to the rain." (7)

It is a picture which in its accurately portrayed
minutiæ looks forward to Orwell's equally damning view
of the London suburbs. Like Orwell, Monro chooses the
aspidistra for his symbol (is it possible that the novelist
borrowed the idea from the poet?) and does not despair. In
Orwell's novel *Keep the Aspidistra Flying* the hero and
heroine escape from the dreariness of their daily life to
spend a day in the country beyond Slough. Monro, too, saw
a partial cure for the ills of city-dwelling in an escape
to the country. His sonnet sequence "Week-end", published
in *Georgian Poetry 1916-1917*, traces the history of such
an escape. The sequence begins:

"The train! The twelve o'clock for paradise.
Hurry, or it will try to creep away.
Out in the country every one is wise:
We can only be wise on Saturday"

and the middle sonnets enumerate in loving (even sentimental)
detail the attractions of this country retreat:

"The fresh air moves like water round a boat.
The white clouds wander. Let us wander too.
The whining, wavering plover flap and float.
That crow is flying after that cuckoo.
Look! Look!... They're gone. What are the great
trees calling?
Just come a little farther, by that edge
Of green, to where the stormy ploughland, falling
Wave upon wave is lapping to the hedge.
Oh, what a lovely bank! Give me your hand.
Lie down and press your heart against the ground.
Let us both listen till we understand,
Each through the other, every natural sound...
I can't hear anything to-day, can you,
But, far and near, 'Cuckoo! Cuckoo! Cuckoo!'?

but the closing sonnets make clear how temporary the break,
how, in the critics' terms, irrelevant this break in the
in the country has been:

"Be staid; be careful; and be not too free.
Temptation to enjoy your liberty
May rise against you, break into a crime,
And smash the habit of employing Time....

...Week-end is very well on Saturday:
On Monday it's a different affair -
A little episode, a trivial stay
In some oblivious spot somehow, somewhere."

The final lines depict the "real" world and without
sentimentality emphasise the importance of the country:

"It is over. Now we sit
Reading the morning paper in the sound
Of the debilitating heavy train.
London again, again. London again." (8)

The sequence is important, I think, for the clues it
offers as to the true Georgian attitude to the country.
It is useless to look in the Georgian volume for nature
as Wordsworth understood it. It has been to the damage of
later poets' attitudes to nature that Wordsworth has had
so great an influence on the poetry reading public that
"nature" has come to be an accepted subject, while
Wordsworth's influence on the critics has at the same
time led to a belittlement of any treatment of rural
subjects less comprehensive in its philosophy than
Wordsworth's own. If, however, Wordsworthian preconceptions
are discarded, the Georgian's interest in nature can be
seen more clearly, not as failed grandeur but carefully
considered reaction to the problems of the time. Monro's
week-end in the country typifies the Georgian belief in
the value of nature as restorative. Monro in the full
sonnet quoted above demonstrates clearly his appreciation
of nature's values. The freshness of the air, the freedom,
the multitude of attractions, closeness to the natural
order of things. The sonnet ends with a realistic note
which acts as an immediate antidote to any suspicion that Monro is distorting his picture. The poet is quite clearly content with what nature offers, even if this is merely the monotonous repetition of the cuckoo. It is hypocritical of the reader to despise Monro for turning to the countryside, in his poetry, when a great number of people in their lives similarly turn away from urban toil to rural pleasures. It might be retorted that it is very well for Monro who could escape for the week-end to revel in the refreshment of spirit which this offers while others could not so escape. However, if criticism is to descend to sociological issues of this sort (and it is an odd reflection of so-called Georgian irrelevance that their poetry invites such acritical readings) then Monro's escape can be and is mirrored in the great use of the parks and open spaces of cities. It is interesting that painters of this period, and a little earlier (Renoir and Seurat, for instance) often depicted the Sunday escape to park and suburbs. Moreover, Monro's escape is never quite total, it is in the sonnet-sequence as in life encapsulated by the cares of his five days working life. He is quite aware how his enjoyment of the country must be tempered by restraint, that he is still tied to the demands of his London office life, and he faces squarely the harsh fact that there is no permanent escape from the "debilitating heavy train".

It is against this background that Georgian nature poetry should, I think, be criticised. Davies acknowledged in several of his poems that he preferred the country to the town because the town brought to his notice too many painful subjects. Yet poverty is often depicted in his poems, sometimes as in the following with a harsh reminder of the ill-distributed wealth which caused the suffering:

"I do not know his Lady fair,  
Who in a bath of milk doth lie;  
More milk than could feed fifty babes,  
That for the want of it must die.  

But well I know the mother poor,  
Three pounds of flesh wrapped in her shawl:  
A puny babe that, stripped at home,  
Looks like a rabbit skinned, so small." (9)

This sort of observation Davies himself refers to in his poem, "Return to Nature":

"My song is of that city which  
Has men too poor and men too rich;  
Where some are sick too richly fed  
While others take the sparrows' bread:  
Where some have beds to warm their bones,  
While others sleep on hard cold stones  
That suck away their bodies' heat."

and he chronicles his reaction to the city in a complex, not very clearly expressed poem, where Davies tries to express his horror at the corruption of city desires, both of the flesh and for property. Gradually he replaces in the poem the sensualities of the city with the sensuality of nature:

"No more I'll walk those crowded places  
And take hot dreams from harlots' faces;  
I'll know no more those passion's dreams,  
While musing near these quiet streams;  
That biting state of savage lust  
Which, true love absent, burns to dust."

Instead, he writes:

"I hear the Cuckoo when first he  
Makes this green world's discovery,  
And recreates it in my mind,  
Proving my eyes were growing blind.  
I see the rainbow come forth clear  
And wave her coloured scarf to cheer  
The sun long swallowed by a flood -  
So do I live in lane and wood."

The poem ends,

"Go white my hair and skin go dry -  
But let my heart a dewdrop lie  
Inside those leaves when they go wrong,  
As fresh as when my heart was young" (10)
Here the evasion is openly discussed. Unlike Monro, Davies here contemplates total withdrawal from the city. It is, perhaps, worth remarking that Davies was perfectly happy in London for a long period, during which this poem was written. The justification for this withdrawal from city life is quite selfish; Davies makes it clear that he is running away from painful issues to keep his heart young and pure. There is, it seems to me, no reason why this should seem inadequate or in de Sola Pinto's term "surprising" in view of contemporary conditions, unless poetry is required to be useful in society. Both Monro and Davies are writing about escapes, but especially in the case of these two poets who so openly discuss why they must escape, this does not, I think, produce what can properly be called "escapist poetry".

Other Georgian poets escaped from the towns and the ties of commerce and industry entirely. Some like Blunden, Sassoon and Bottomley were used to the country from early years, others knowingly left the towns. Lascelles Abercrombie tells how:

"It was from the office of a Liverpool newspaper that I bolted. For a twelvemonth, every night except Saturday, the Sabbath of journalists and Jews, I had been writing leaders of a most forgettable kind. And now I could write what I liked. Or very nearly. At any rate, now, when I had finished writing for the night, I could step out of doors and smell country air, and hear the stream sounding or the owls calling. What great things I meant to do, now I was my own man, and at last living in the country! — yes, and to crown all, living in that country which is the best part of the most English part of England" (11)

This brings in another aspect of the Georgian attitude to the country, their love of the Englishness of the rural scene. This is a recurrent theme in the prose of the Georgians. A letter of Rupert Brooke's written just before
the War reveals the same feelings as Abercrombie displays above:

"It's the sort of country I adore. I'm a Warwickshire man. Don't talk to me of Dartmoor or Snowdon or the Thames or the Lakes. I know the heart of England. It has a hedgy, warm, bountiful dimpled air. Baby fields run up and down the little hills, and all the roads wriggle with pleasure. There's a spirit of rare homeliness about the houses and the countryside, earthy, uneccentric, fresh, meadowy, gaily gentle. It is perpetually June, in Warwickshire, and always six o'clock of a warm afternoon." (12)

Drinkwater, like Brooke a native of this region, also wrote of his love of this type of countryside. He admits to being uninterested in the sea and mountains:

"But the hedges, the lanes, the pastures, the spinneys, and the streams that Shakespeare knew are another matter. If I am away from these for long I grow restless. And, among them, no season or weather comes amiss. Snow or halcyon, floods or drought, noon or twilight, winter or summer, that quiet reticent landscape never becomes either tedious or importunate. It is a comfortable (Oh, comfortable friar), sustaining friend, unexciting and infinitely fertile to those who are patient. I find that I have lived with all its moods in my poetry; with the sea and mountains hardly at all." (13)

For other poets other regions provided the same sort of inspiration: Gordon Bottomley, confined by ill-health to the Southern Lake District, Blunden, a native of Kent, James Stephens, the Irishman. On most Georgian rural verse is the mark of some particular region. Generally speaking it is the same type of region as the three poets quoted above describe. Very English, gentle and civilised. Only Wilfred Gibson can be associated with the wilder
landscapes of his native Northumberland and here, as elsewhere in Georgian poetry it is a natural world seen as a background for its inhabitants. This is equally true of such poets as Davies and De la Mare who cannot be ascribed to any region; the overall impression of Georgian poetry is of a countryside inhabited by the widest range of people and in the most diverse circumstances. Robert Graves' "Fox's Dingle" from Georgian Poetry 1920-1922 epitomises the Georgian poet's country scene:

"Take now a country mood,
Resolve, distil it: -
Nine acre swaying alive,
June flowers that fill it,

Spicy sweet briar bush,
The uneasy wren
Fluttering from ash to birch
And back again.

Milkwort on its low stem,
Spread hawthorn tree,
Sunlight patching the wood,
A hive-bound bee....

Girls riding nim-nim-nim,
Ladies, trot-trot,
Gentlemen hard at gallop,
Shouting, steam-hot.

Now over the rough turf
Bridles go jingle,
And there's a well-loved pool,
By Fox's Dingle,

Where sweetheart, my brown mare,
Old Glory's daughter,
May loll her leathern tongue
In snow-cool water." (14)

Not all Georgian rural scenes are so prettily nor so complacently described. Gibson's descriptions of rural pursuits are just as typical and in his country, the
landscape is harsh, the people striving against the odds. Seldom in Georgian poetry can be found Nature as opposed to countryside; the civilised even cosy element so marked in the three prose extracts extends to much of the poetry. In fact, although Georgian poetry is often rural in its setting there is little if any Nature poetry, if by that we understand poetry which has as its theme some philosophy of Nature. W.H. Davies is perhaps the only exception to this and as was seen at the beginning of this chapter, he viewed Nature in juxtaposition to the town.

The Georgian love of the English country means that quite a number of poems have patriotic themes. The most well-known of these is, of course, Brooke's "The Old Vicarage, Grantchester" which was written well before the outbreak of war. Many more patriotic poems were prompted by the war and the Georgian volumes include several, notably John Freeman's "Happy is England Now" and James Elroy Flecker's "The Dying Patriot". This last sees the call to arms against a historic background and begins, looking back to England's early days:

"Day breaks on England down the Kentish hills,
Singing in the silence of the meadow-footing rills,
Day of my dreams, O day!
I saw them march from Dover, long ago,
With a silver cross before them, singing low,
Monks of Rome from their home where the blue seas break in foam,
Augustine with his feet of snow." (15)

This patriotism, especially in the form of war poems must be seen in its proper relation to the poems of protest about the war. Sassoon, Graves, Blunden were all patriots in the sense that they went to fight for their country, their patriotism was however modified considerably by the experience of warfare. The Georgian love of
England survived the war because it was so closely related to the Georgian love of the English countryside. Not for the Georgian was patriotism an expression of imperialistic war-mongering, instead it was a genuine and deep seated love for his own land. This affected their attitude to life in general and also to literature. An interesting commentary on Georgian poems of the English countryside is provided by John Drinkwater in his book *Patriotism in Literature* published in 1924. In a chapter entitled "Patriotism of Place" he expressed the belief that:

"The only hope of a world of men respecting each other's claims and privileges lies in an ever-growing ardour of the individual citizen for his own home-land. The ardour must not be blind or bigoted, when, indeed, it is no ardour at all. It must increase always in understanding of itself, delightedly aware of the joy, and the gentle daily comfort that it inspires. Then, and then only can he realise the same devotion in his fellowmen, and respect it. In a literal sense, the man who most intelligently loves the corner of earth that is his own, is on the best way to becoming a citizen of the world." (16)

Here again can be seen the belief in the value of nature for twentieth-century man. Not mere evasion of the brutalities and conflicts of life sends Drinkwater and his fellows to their own native country, but a belief in the value of understanding the ties which bind men to their own land, a belief best strengthened by communion with the nature of one's own region. Here as in the case of the Georgian choice in poetry, at least, of the country rather than the town, careful study reveals that the Georgian attitude is not one of escape or blindness to any alternative, but a reflection of a
carefully considered appreciation of the values of the English country.

This has had an unfortunate effect on the Georgian position in the history of twentieth-century literature. In a period which, under the guidance of Pound and Eliot, turned for its inspiration to European literature both ancient and contemporary, the Georgians remained faithful to their native forms and predecessors. Gordon Bottomley expressed the point neatly in a letter to Paul Nash:

"I am a free-trader in politics and quite willing to let Germany sell me chemicals and France wines, but in art my Motto is "England for the English""(17)

In Bottomley's own case this meant an almost total reliance on English inspiration. His plays Gruach and King Lear's Wife explores the Shakespearian stories of Macbeth and King Lear, relying on the native literary tradition rather than on Classical Themes. Where he does look for inspiration beyond native English stories he often chooses a Norse or ancient Scottish background, and his poems include as well as topographical verses, works which rely on the ancient history of Britain for their theme. Avelingas published in An Annual of New Poetry 1917 is not untypical. Written in ballad style it strongly evokes the setting and emotion, while merely hinting at the narrative:

"The sea grew, the sky sank;
Streets made the long waves fret;
The river ran without a bank;
The housewives' knees were wet.

Tower and town, pinewood and willow
Melted as though by rain;
And once the trough of a piling billow
Was paved with a golden mane."
"King Avelin, King Avelin
Won to no kingly bier
Ah, where is now King Avelin
Who built his palace here?" (18)

Nor was Bottomley the only Georgian who showed a preference for old English themes. The sole contribution from G.K. Chesterton is an excerpt from his Ballad of the White Horse, "The Song of Elf".

Other Georgian poets drew on the folk-loreic tales, Gibson and Masefield often use stories which show all the signs of popular tales. In fact in his book "So Long to Learn. Masefield sets out a conscious aim:

"listening to Synge's plays... made me feel what a wealth of fable lay in the lonely places in England. No one had touched this wealth so far as I know" (19)

Davies, too, often drew on local gossip for his poems and The Bird of Paradise, the title poem of a volume published in 1914 was included in Georgian Poetry 1913-1915:

"For all her cry but came to this -
'Not for the world! Take care:
Don't touch that bird of paradise,
Perched on the bed-post there!'

I asked her would she like some grapes,
Some damsons ripe and sweet;
A custard made with new laid eggs,
Or tender fowl to eat.

I promised I would follow her,
To see her in her grave;
And buy a wreath with borrowed pence,
If nothing I could save.

Yet still her cry but came to this -
'Not for the world! Take care:
Don't touch that bird of paradise,
Perched on the bed-post there!'" (20)

Edmund Blunden's poetry, although not dependant
on moral stories, relies in a very similar fashion on country pursuits. Of the six poems which represent him in the final Georgian volume, three "The Poor Man's Pig", "Almswomen" and "Perch-fishing" describe the usual doings of country people, relying in fact, on the very normal aspects of the proceedings to lend the poems stability and weight. His two early published volumes, The Waggoner and The Shepherd have other poems of this type mingled with war poems. This juxtaposition throws an interesting sidelight on the Georgian attitude to the stable English rural scene as Blunden provides the exception to the common rural development. In the beginning poems of rural occupation represented a conscious but not a defensive choice of one aspect of life which was felt to be of value. In order to emphasise this the poems, benefiting from the Georgian plainness of technique presented country life as simply as possible, often indeed, as in the case of Gibson it was seen to be harsh and unyielding. During, and especially after the war, the attitude changed and became more sentimental.

The final Georgian volume makes this very plain. Perhaps the most nostalgic of the poems is William Kerr's "Past and Present":

"Daisies are over Nyren, and Hambledon
Hardly remembers any summers gone:
And never again the Kentish elms shall see
Mynn, or Fuller Pilch or Colin Blythe.
- Nor shall I see them, unless perhaps a ghost
Watching the elder ghosts beyond the moon.
But here in common sunshine I have seen
George Hirst, not yet a ghost, substantial,
His off drives mellow as brown ale, and crisp
Merry late cuts, and brave Chaucerian pulls;
Waddington's fury and the patience of Dipper;
And twenty-easy artful overs of Rhodes,
So many stanzas of the Faerie Queen." (21)
This type of subject brought the Georgian movement into speedy disrepute and Harold Monro's Monthly Chapbook for September 1922 printed a satire by Osbert Sitwell "The Jolly Old Squire or Way Down in Georgia" which neatly underlines the weaknesses of this pseudo-bucolic subject matter:

"The charabanc waits in Trafalgar Square
To waft a Georgian eleven, where
They'll find in pleasure-grounds, impartial praise
Bestowed on cricket or poetic phrase;
Bohemian Ladies; an artistic Peer
To hand round currant-buns and ginger beer
Shxxks (no real cricketer) still rides, or dreams,
Narcissus-like beside the singing streams.
The others play at what they practise - all
In one, they're umpire, bowler, bat and ball!
These critic-poet-cricketers catch,
Return the ball as in the poetry-match" (22)

There is more to Sitwell's satire, as even this short extract suggests, than a jibe at Georgian subject matter. Sitwell's main objection is contained in the phrase "all In one they're umpire, bowler, bat and ball". The Georgians by 1922 represented the literary establishment and to the younger poets this seemed all too exclusive; a point which Sitwell made again in the fifth volume of his autobiography:

"the younger writers possessed no journal in which to vent their opinions or publish the writings of those whom they admired. Poetry, in those days, especially was a Closed Shop, to which admission was only gained through friendship with the leaders or secretary, and, of course, by an absolute adherence to the bird-loving tenets of the day. The mention of a blackbird or thrush in a poem meant you were a safe man, unlikely to give trouble to the Union. It was necessary also to take an interest in cricket..." (23)

Of this type of poetry, William Kerr's lines provide
a perfect example. Sitwell was writing of course from his own point of view as a rising writer, finding publication difficult. However his remarks raise a pertinent aspect of the development in Georgian subject matter. When Gibson, Bottomley and Davies were first writing, their work was new, a reaction against the accepted over-literary sophisticated verse of the period; this spirit of revolution informed their poetry with vitality and freshness which the years and the success of the Georgian volumes made increasingly difficult. While these poets continued to write freshly, even if on the same subjects as before, new younger poets writing in this way were not able to see the subjects in the same unclouded way.

In fact, what happened, as is quite clear in the Kerr poem, is that belonging to the establishment became part of the subject matter. The camaraderie of the cricket pitch commentary, the shorthand accepted epithets for the players, these are what the poem is about, the cosy sense of belonging to a stable world. It was, of course, not a real world and Kerr's poem refers to this in his title; Hirst, Waddington, Dipper, Rhodes representing the present are supposed to depict some line of continuity from Nyren, Mynn, Pilch and Blythe; but the poem's tone is defensive, the present is all too soon to become past and the establishment dissolved.

The Georgians were perhaps unlucky that the natural graph of rise and fall which is found in any poetic movement was in their case accelerated by the war. Many of the poems in the final Georgian volume are trivial, often this is simply due to inferior poetry but often also it is as a result of the reader's memory of other poems written with a closer relation to major events. To have read
Sassoon's indictment of the war, in the third and fourth volumes, cannot fail to affect one's reading of, for example Martin Armstrong's contributions "Honey-Harvest" and "Miss Thompson Goes Shopping" to the fifth. This may, strictly speaking, not be a truly critical attitude; on the other hand, the strictures of de Sola Pinto quoted at the beginning of this chapter seem to have more relevance to the post-war Georgians than to the initial pre-war volumes. Edmund Blunden wrote in a sonnet called "The Unchangeable" and dated 1917 of the effect which the war had on his attitude to his poetry's subject matter:

"Though I within these last two years of grace Have seen bright Ancre scourged to brackish mire, And meagre Belgian beck's by dale and chase Stamped with sloughs of death with battering fire, Spite of all this, I sing you high and low, My old loves, waters, be you shoal or deep, Waters whose lazy and continual flow Learns at the drizzling weir the tongue of sleep."

(24)

Even as expressed here this raises doubts in the reader's mind; in fact, it seems to have raised them for the poet. There is defiance in "Spite of all this, I sing you high and low" which suggests that the poet is not altogether at ease with his old subject matter. As he himself says, waters can no longer be thought of as quiet, drowsy and unalterable; the war had shown water to be a powerful enemy of man and a frequent grave. The poem is saved by the overt discussion of Blunden's unchanged attitude (The Unchangeable, must, surely, refer to the poet); what mars many contemporary Georgian poems is a seeming unawareness of the cataclysm of the war. "Miss Thompson Goes Shopping" is a bold retreat into the insignificant, understandable perhaps as a recoil from recent horrors, but finally, for all its loving detail, empty of any real meaning:
"Outside, Miss Thompson, small and staid,
Felt, as she always felt, afraid
Of this huge man who laughed so loud
And drew the notice of the crowd.
Awhile she paused in timid thought,
Then promptly hurried in and bought
'Two kippers, please. Yes, lovely weather.'
'Two kippers? Sixpence altogether:'
And in her basket laid the pair
Wrapped face to face in newspaper." (25)

This is self-consciously written, with marginal notes,
in a jocular tone, but despite these defences, the hollow­ness within is all too apparent.

The war finally finished the process of which Davies
and Monro wrote in poems quoted at the beginning of this
chapter. The post-war period was one which the nation
had to come to terms with a national situation almost
totally changed from that which existed before the war.
In these circumstances, even Monro and Davies seem to
have little of real importance to offer; the countryside,
one seen, as the perfect cure for all ills, is now no
longer the stable readily available panacea it once was.
The Georgian emphasis on the rural life made them
especially vulnerable to the changes brought about by
the war. Other subjects, less clearly related in the
first place to the real world would not have been so
easily outdated.

Of course, not all Georgian poems with rural themes
are of the type explored above. Other Georgians use
natural backgrounds to reflect personal moods and ideas;
this, in fact, is a fairly common type of Georgian poem.
W.H.Davies frequently wrote of his attitudes to life
in a country setting but of this type of work Abercrombie's
"Ryton Firs" provides the best example. He describes the
daffodils among the trees:
"But here's the happiest light can lie on ground,
Grass sloping under trees
Alive with yellow shine of daffodils!"

and then philosophising, in a vein which inevitably
recalls Wordsworth:

"It was as if the world had just begun;
And in a mind new-made
Of shadowless delight
My spirit drank my flashing senses in,
And gloried to be made
Of young mortality." (26)

This poem, still relies heavily for its interest on
natural description as do many by Davies; later Georgians
were less prone to this and their philosophising nature
poems are often more abstract. John Freeman's "From Wear
to Thames" provides an example of this more introspective
use of nature:

"Is it because Spring now is come
That my heart leaps in its bed of dust?...
...Not that the new found Spring is sour...
The blossom sprigs on the cherry branch,
From Wear to Thames I have seen this greeness
Cover the six-months-winter meanness.

There is in blossom bud and grass
Something that's neither sorrow nor joy,
Something that sighs like autumn sighing
And in each living thing is dying.

It is myself that whispers and stares
Down from the hill and in the wood,
And in the untended orchard's shining
Sees the light through their leaves declining.

Let me forget that I have been
What I can never be again.
Let me forget my writer's meanness
In this fond, flushing world of greenness.

Let me forget the world that is
The changing image of my thought,
Nor see in thicket and hedge and meadow
Myself a grave perplexed shadow."
"And, 0, forget that gloomy shade
That breathes his cloud 'twixt earth and light...
And, all forget but sun and blossom,
And the bird that bears heaven in his bosom."

The philosophical content of this, as of "Ryton Firs" is commonplace if not banal and generally speaking these poems, when successful, as indeed "Ryton Firs" read whole can be seen to be, depend for their effect on the realisation of the scene which prompted the thought.

Freeman's poem quoted above comes from a volume entitled Memories of Childhood, itself the name of the opening sequence of poems. The strain of nostalgia and the sense of the fleeting nature of life hinted at in "From Wear to Thames" find more overt expression in these poems and both Time and childhood were common Georgian themes. The opening poem of Freeman's sequence illustrates the connection between the two themes:

"Come, come back to the everlasting garden.
To that green heaven and the blue heaven above
Come back to the time when time brought no burden,
And love was unconscious knowing not love." (28)

Here, too, there is retreat from the everyday world of an adult's life. The "everlasting garden" reveals an idealisation of childhood, rather than a sentimental memory but even this is corrected in the subsequent poems which tell anecdotes of a childhood which emerges, despite the legitimate softening of the retrospective view, as unsentimental and very much alive to everyday events. Here are two extracts from "The Kite":

"The fields were aged, bare
Shut between houses everywhere.
All the way there
The wind tugged at the kite to take it
Untethered, toss and break it."

This commonplace beginning leads to more fanciful
conclusions, still not out of keeping with a sensitive child's vision. Here again too, the influence of Wordsworth is prominent:

"And I lay down, looking up at the sky,  
The clouds and birds that floated  
By others still unnoted,  
And that swaying kite  
Specking the light:  
Looking up at the sky,  
The birds and clouds that drew  
Nearer, erasing the blue,  
Stooping and then brushing me,  
With such tenderness touching me,  
That I had still lain there  
In those fields bare,  
Forgetting the kite;  
For every cloud was now a kite  
Streaming with light." (29)

Other Georgian poets reminisced about their childhood, the first Georgian volume contains Davies' autobiographical "The Child and the Mariner" and even more wrote poems about children, Davies and De la Mare offer many examples and so does Graves whose "The Boy in Church" published in Georgian Poetry 1916-1917 illustrates some of the Georgian attitudes to youth. The poem describes the child's mind wandering over the various objects he sees and closes:

"I add the hymns up over and over  
Until there's not the least mistake.  
Seven-seventy one. (Look! there's a plover!  
It's gone!) Who's that Saint by the Lake?  
The red light from his mantle passes  
Across the broad memorial brasses.

......

It's pleasant here for dreams and thinking,  
Lolling and letting reason nod,  
With ugly, serious people linking  
Prayer chains for a forgiving God.  
But a dumb blast sets the trees swaying  
With furious zeal like madmen praying." (30)

Here as in many of the Georgian childhood poems there is
a carefully preserved childish voice, which none the less does not totally conceal an adult's vision. The addition of the hymn numbers, the puzzle over the stained-glass window, and the menace of the wind in the trees outside are all part of a child's vision, and the combination, apparently owes nothing to artifice, as the child's straying mind provides a superficial link. What is alien to the child's view is the supposed pleasure in "letting reason nod", the condemnation of the praying congregation as "ugly, serious people." The boy might well have appreciated the peace of his time in church when thought was free, but the desire to let "reason nod" is an adult one; similarly the child might have felt some precocious superiority at the sight of his elders at prayer, but "ugly" or "serious" do not seem to me to be the aspects which a child's mind would single out for notice. However, when this has been said, it must be added that this intermingling of the adult view does not destroy the sense of a boy's thoughts which the poem sets out to give.

The same combination of the childish and the adult vision occurs in many of De la Mare's poems for children. Often, too, there is the same sense of menace; in De la Mare this constitutes a more pervasive element. Whereas "The Boy in Church" gives a feeling of refuge from life's storms and perplexities, De la Mare's poems, conversely, show even a child's dreams and fantasies affected by mysterious evil:

"Won't you look out of your window, Mrs. Gill? Quoth the Fairy, nidding, nodding in the garden; Can't you look out of your window, Mrs. Gill? Quoth the Fairy, laughing softly in the garden; But the air was still, the cherry boughs were still,
"And the ivy-tod 'neath the empty sill,
And never from her window looked out Mrs. Gill
On the Fairy shrilly mocking in the garden.

'What have they done with you, you poor Mrs. Gill?'
Quoth the Fairy brightly glancing in the garden;
'Where have they hidden you, you poor old Mrs. Gill?'
Quoth the Fairy dancing lightly in the garden;
But night's faint veil now wrapped the hill,
Stark 'neath the stars stood the dead-still Mill,
And out of her cold cottage never answered Mrs. Gill
The fairy mimbling mambling in the garden." (31)

Reading this poem what one notices first of all, I think, is the quality of the poetry, so that it is no longer easy to say that this is a child's view here and an adult's view there because the whole is fused by the poet's view. It is testimony to this that Marsh chose as many as six poems from De la Mare's book of verses for children, Peacock Pie and this in turn illustrates how real a source of poetic inspiration childhood was to the best of the Georgians. Nor was it for them, properly considered, a means of escape from harsh twentieth-century realities. For De la Mare, undoubtedly, and also for Davies, childhood's vision was simply a more poetic vision of reality than adulthood's view of life. Davies, yet again demonstrating the Georgian echo of Wordsworth in this attitude of childhood was explicit about this in his book A Poet's Pilgrimage. At Tintern Abbey he reflects:

"As I compared that young boy's experience with my present lukewarm feelings, I was not very well satisfied with myself. For instance, at that time I would sacrifice both food and sleep in my travels to see anything wonderful; but now, in my prime, I did not go seeking things of beauty, and only sang of things that came my way by chance. Thinking of this, I came to the conclusion that the boy of fourteen,
"who came seventeen miles to see a ruin
by moonlight, was as a poet the father
of the one that stood there in his prime.
Judging myself by that wonderful feeling
in boyhood, I felt sure that I was only
a shadow of what I should have been." (32)

So far all the Georgian subjects reviewed have shown
the Wordsworthian influence, and it cannot be denied, I
think, that in their revolt from the over-sophisticated
Cheshire Cheese poets, the Georgians did turn too often
to Wordsworth. Even so Georgian themes do not parallel
exactly the Wordsworthian. Love poems can be found among
the contributions of most Georgians. Often these show
the influence of Donne (though I do not mean to suggest
that the Georgians were incapable of inspiration without
literary dependence). Rupert Brooke's "Dust" which de­
scribes a time :

"When your swift hair is quiet in death,
And through the lips corruption thrust
Has stilled the labour of my breath -
When we are dust, when we are dust! - " (33)
do es display an excessive reliance on metaphysical ideas
and the poem, therefore, reads merely as an interesting
exercise. John Freeman's poems too often show an excess­
ive debt to "my admired Donne".

Other Georgians, however, wrote love poems which have
a personal quality, removed from literary influence.
John Drinkwater's sonnet sequence "Persuasion" in the
fifth volume, although in form it owes a debt to Eliz­
abethan precedents, traces a personal love story not
necessarily autobiographical but clearly the product of
the poet's situation. Speaking of the tension between
his love for the woman (probably his wife Kathleen) and
his work the poet concludes:

"Not love of you is most that I can bring,
Since what I am to love you is the test,
"And should I love you more than any thing
You would but be of idle love possessed,
A mere love wandering in appetite,
Counting your glories and yet bringing none,
Finding in you occasions of delight,
A thief of payment for no service done.
But when of labouring life I make a song
And bring it you, as that were my reward,
To let what most is me to you belong,
Then do I come of high possessions lord,
And loving life more than my love of you
I give you love more excellently true." (35)

The sequence of twelve sonnets examines other aspects of this dual relationship and although it is possible to over-estimate the success of the sequence, it is none the less true that the poems do explore love meaningfully.

Not all Georgian love poetry is so philosophical. Some of Davies' wittiest and most charming poems are love poems like this one:

"That day she seized me like a bee,
To make me her weak blossom,
I felt her arms so strong that I
Lay helpless on her bosom.
But cunning I, by artful moves,
Soon had her in my power:
'Ah Molly, who's the strong bee now —
And who's the poor weak flower?'

That time she thought I was a fly,
And she a great big spider,
She held me fast, my breath was gone,
As I lay bound beside her.
But cunning I, by artful moves,
Could laugh at last and cry:
'Ah, Molly, who's the spider now —
And who's the weak fly?'" (36)

Here the Georgian dependence on a rural or natural background, the plainness of language and Davies' own sensuality of expression combine to make a poem which is typical of Davies' work at its best and also illustrates that Georgian poetry can succeed and still be "Georgian".

Another common Georgian theme which seems to have
little to do with the close relation of Georgian poets to rural England is the description of faraway places. Often though, this is connected with homesickness and nearly always relates the foreign place to a home background. Some Georgians, notably Rupert Brooke in "The Old Vicarage, Grantchester" dwelt more on the England for which they were homesick than on the foreign parts which also form part of their poem's material. At the other extreme, a poem like Walter De la Mare's "Arabia" gives the impression of a mind quite content to stay at home luxuriating in a romanticized dream of exotic lands. In both these poems, properly read, there is a strong feeling of traditional England. W.H. Davies in "England" published in Georgian Poetry 1918-1919 describes the extremes and excitements of foreign parts:

"We have no wilds to harbour men that tell
More murders than they can remember well.
No woman here shall wake from her night's rest,
To find a snake is sucking at her breast.
Though I have travelled many and many a mile,
And had a man to clean my boots and smile
With teeth that had less bone in them than gold -
Give me this England now for all my world." (37)

This seems to be the common conclusion of the Georgian poets, but like Davies in life, they in their poetry did not turn from exploration of remote and exciting lands. Many, some because of the war, did travel abroad. James Elroy Flecker, spent most of his poetry writing years either abroad or studying foreign languages in order to travel with the Diplomatic Corps and wrote many of his finest poems using the Middle East for his material, but he, in prose, echoes Davies' sentiments. A story called "The 'Bus in Stamboul" describes Flecker's reaction to seeing a second-hand London 'bus complete
with old notices and advertisements, serving in the public transport system of Constantinople:

"Cricklewood, where clerks, returning from toil, eat their suppers and kiss their young wives, and sleep at peace with God and all the world, you are worth all the Golden East, obscure and lovely Cricklewood, whatever those literary men say — and forget it not. Within your walls, brave Cricklewood, had you but walls, would be found more enlightenment and knowledge, more humanity than in all this bright imperial city, age-worn, battered, bedecked, prostitute of East and West, which you now supply, O wealthy Cricklewood, with your superfluous means of transport." (38)

Francis Brett Young, who cannot quite be cleared from suspicion that Flecker influenced his verse, wrote from Africa, where he served in the War:

"High on the tufted baobab-tree
To-night a rain-bird sang to me
A simple song, of three notes only,
That made the wilderness more lonely;

For in my brain it echoed nearly,
Old village church bells chiming clearly:
The sweet cracked bells, just out of tune,
Over the mowing grass in June — " (39)

This is merely a more literary form of "It's a long way to Tipperary" and the war must account for the popularity of these poems with readers and in the case of later writers, poets. However, Brooke and Flecker were both writing before war broke out and Davies' sentiments, although the war may have prompted the poet to write of them are not directly linked to war experience.

The Georgians enjoyed mixed success in their portrayal of foreign countries. W.J. Turner wrote many poems on this theme including "Romance" which opened the third Georgian volume with the lines:
"When I was but thirteen or so
I went into a golden land,
Chimborazo, Cotopaxi
Took me by the hand." (40)

In fact, he created a land of his own by subduing all the foreign landscapes which he described beneath his own highly fanciful description. This is Spain:

"The flowers float up in the dim darkness,
The shadows fill with her hair;
She has escaped into the palpitating night
Leaving a heap of scented garments —
In her dark room weeps the moonlight."

and this India:

"The grass is flaming and the trees are growing
The very mind is gurgling in the pools,
Green toads watching, crimson parrots flying,
Two pairs of eyes meet one another glowing —
They hunt, the velvet tigers in the jungle."

There is a difference between the two descriptions but hardly enough to identify the two countries. Turner's foreign lands could be anywhere.

It is not essential that a poem of exotic background should resemble any particular country (though as Turner called his poems "Spain" and "India" the reader is, perhaps, entitled to expect a fairly close relationship between country and poem) and one of the most successful of all Georgian poems on this theme is Squire's "The Lily of Malud" (42) where it is impossible and unnecessary to identify any specific background. In fact such detail as the poem yields only confuses. There are "black small-breasted naiads", moon and grass, a village, a forest, "phantom fauns" and "giant trees" "the icy shape of a hunched and hairy ape", a sunken vale and expanses of mud. It is obviously tropical and peopled by negroes but beyond that it is difficult to find any precise bearing, and this is as it should be. "The Lily of Malud" is a poem which depends for its success on the creation
of an atmosphere of secret rites and uncomprehended mysteries. In fact what is true about this poem is to a certain extent true of all Georgian poems with an exotic background. Although the poems of the Georgians can nearly always be placed somewhere, it is only when the background is English that the topography is precise or important. A foreign locale, even in the poems of Flecker who knew his countries well, is used only to create a mood, an impression. In the end, all these exotic poems only confirm the essential Englishness of the Georgian inspiration.

Finally, in this list of Georgian subjects, comes the moon. Like the foreign countries, it is often invoked only to give a tinge of mystery to an otherwise familiar scene. If anything the moon occurs more often than foreign parts and certainly the frequency of its appearances seems to increase as the movement progressed. One of the first signs is in Rupert Brooke's early "Sleeping Out: Full Moon" which was published in his 1911 volume in the section 1905-1908. In fact this moon is not really fully Georgianised and the description perhaps belongs more correctly with the nineties and post-nineties poems. It is an almost laughable poem with its hectic ecstasy:

   "And radiant bands,
   The gracious presence of friendly hands,
   Help the blind one, the glad one, who stumbles and strays,
   Stretching wavering hands up, up, through the praise
   Of a myriad silver trumpets, through cries,
   To all glory, to all gladness, to the infinite height,
   To the gracious, the unmoving, the mother eyes,
   And the laughter, and the lips of light." (43)

By the time **Georgian Poetry 1913-1915** was published
the Georgian poet's moon was an object of more measured admiration. W.H. Davies wrote:

"Thy beauty haunts me heart and soul,
On thou fair Moon, so close and bright;
Thy beauty makes me like the child
That cries aloud to own thy light:"

and De la Mare describes the moon's appearance to a drowsy child:

"A great still light began to creep
From out the silent skies.
It was the lovely moon's, for when
He raised his dreamy head,
Her surge of silver filled the pane
And streamed across his bed." (44)

The final volume reveals a return of ecstasy in John Freeman's "Moon-Bathers":

"They were all things of light
Tossed from the sea to dance under the Moon -
Her nuns, dancing within her dying round,
Clear limbs and breasts silvered with Moon and waves"

Richard Hughes describes albeit with an air of surprise the effect of the moon on a moonstruck idiot:

"See, see the patient moon;
How she her course keeps
Through cloudy shallows and across black deeps,
Now gone, now shines soon.
Where's cause for fear?"

and Victoria Sackville-West uses the moon more artistically to help create the mood of convention-flouting gaiety in her poem "Full Moon":

"She was wearing the coral taffeta trousers
Someone had brought her from Ispahan,
And the little gold coat with pomegranate blossoms,
And the coral-nafted feather fan;
But she ran down a Kentish lane in the moonlight,
And skipped in the pool of the moon as she ran."
"She cared not a rap for all the big planets,
For Betelgeuse or Aldebaran,
And all the big planets cared nothing for her,
That small impertinent charlatan;
But she climbed on a Kentish stilte in the
moonlight,
And laughed at the sky through the sticks of
her fan." (46)

It is not possible without creating a miniature anthology to give a true picture of how frequently the moon appears in Georgian poetry. Sometimes as in De la Mare's and V. Sackville-West's poem, the moon has something positive to offer. More often, though, what happens is that a banal verse is bathed in what William Kerr revealingly called "vague silver moonlight". (47)

It is difficult to see exactly why this should be so pervasive a colouring to Georgian poems. At first sight it seems contrary to their love of plain speech and outdoor rural pursuits, but, I think, that here as in the poems set in faraway places, the Georgian is merely enlivening his familiar scene with a spice of romance.

Other Georgian themes there are in plenty of which Stephen's Irish poems, De la Mare's fairy tales are only two. Most obviously the war has not been touched on. This is not because it was not an important Georgian theme, it was. Although the first wartime volume only has Brooke's "The Soldier" and Gibson's elegy on Brooke (which is only incidentally connected with the war) the three following volumes have a very generous allowance of war poems. The 1916-1917 book has Turner's "The Sky-sent Death", Squires' "To a Bull-Dog" (an elegy for a friend killed in action), Sassoon's "A Letter Home", "The Kiss", "The Dragon and the Undying", "To Victory", "They", "In the Pink", and "The Death Bed" Robert Nichol's "The Assault" and "Fulfilment", Graves's
"It's a Queer Time", "Goliath and David", Gibson's "Battle" and "Lament", Freeman's "Happy is England Now" Maurice Baring's "In Memoriam, A.H." and Herbert Asquith's "The Volunteer". This list in itself should provide an answer to those who wish to oppose reality-facing war poets with evasive fanciful Georgians. Very often Georgian poets were war poets, and it is not because the war was not an important Georgian theme that it has not been treated in full here.

The first reason is that the war poems (by Georgians and others) have received plenty of attention elsewhere. The second is that the war was a subject which happened to the Georgians and not one which they chose themselves. It is the choice of theme which helps to define poetry; although it must be stated that Georgian so-called evasion did not enable the Georgians to ignore the war, the most interesting aspect of Georgian war-poetry lies in its manner and not its matter (which is very varied), and this has been discussed elsewhere.

In one way, however, the Georgian war poems do cast an interesting light on other Georgian subjects, and that is by their over-all success as poems. Only, or almost only, in the war poems does one find a mind fully engaged with its subject. Elsewhere the poet is writing about whatever it is, without any inner sense of compulsion, or any genuine intellectual, emotional involvement. The war provided Georgian poetry with a subject to which essentially Georgian methods were best suited. Other Georgian themes, treated to a concentration of the reader's attention by the deliberate avoidance of distracting poetic technique, reveal themselves all too often as uninteresting, threadbare and too easily forgotten. The war on the other hand,
was such a thing in itself that the Georgian could best make use of it in poetry; the war needed the Georgian treatment, or lack of poetic treatment to make it a viable poetic subject; and the Georgians needed the war to supply the worthy poetic subject which they had all trained themselves to concentrate upon with unclouded clarity of vision and unencumbered poetic technique.

It is the contrast between Georgians other poems and their war poems which has led later critics to denigrate "Georgian poetry" in favour of "war-poetry", and yet the Georgian methods were the same in both types of poem just as, very often, the poets were the same. The Georgian poet by this technique concentrated the reader's attention with undistracted force upon this subject but until the war, he never or seldom found a subject which, in the reader's view, warranted this concentration of scrutiny. When the war did break upon England, however, the Georgian poet was in a position to use his poetic technique to the full and write poems which refute once and for all any criticism that their poetry was unrelated to twentieth-century life. An escapist poet concerned to screen his own and his reader's eyes from harsh reality, would have been unprepared to write of the war in the way in which Sassoon, Graves and Nichols (all Georgians) did.
CHAPTER 6. NOTES.


(2) V. de Sola Pinto: Crisis in English Poetry, 1880-1940. pp. 130-1. The poems referred to are presumably "The Heap of Rags" and "Geraniums".

(3) W.H.Davies: Farewell to Poesy 1910. p. 29.


(8) G.P. 1916-1917 pp. 82, 85 and 86, respectively.


(10) ibid. pp. 52, 53, 57 and 58 respectively.


(14) G.P. 1920-1922. p. 91.


(20) G.P. 1913-1915. p. 73.


CHAPTER 6. NOTES (continued)

(26) ibid. pp. 5 and 7.
(28) ibid. p. 12.
(29) ibid. pp. 16-18.
(33) G.P. 1911-1912 p. 38.
(37) G.P. 1918-1919 p. 35.
(40) G.P. 1916-1917. p. 3.
(41) W.J.Turner: The Hunter and other poems 1916. pp. 15 and 30 respectively.
(44) G.P. 1913-1915. pp. 67, 82 respectively.
(45) G.P. 1920-1922. pp. 69, 99 and 161 respectively.
"Thinking that short poems would stand a better prospect of being accepted, I set to work on a hundred sonnets, writing five and sometimes six a day, but when this number had been accomplished and submitted, this work met with the same failure. After this I wrote another tragedy, a comedy, a volume of humorous essays, and hundreds, I believe, of shorter poems." (1)

This is almost a caricature of the appearance which many a Georgian's output gives both of quantity and quality. It does not do to take Davies at face value, of course. He was quite capable of writing in an exaggerated way if it suited his purpose, and he probably never was as naive as he here makes himself out to have been at the outset of his poetical career. However, if it is an exaggeration it does contain seeds of truth. No other Georgian (and this is unsurprising) expresses in print such a crude desire for publication, nor so willing a surrender to the demands of the market. Nevertheless, the Georgians as a group did undoubtedly pay more attention to their readership than is usual. This does not mean that we find evidence of their altering poems to make them more popular. On the contrary, in the case of Brooke's "Libido" (originally called "Lust") and the Body-washers' song at the end of King Lear's Wife there was a conscious resistance to what was thought to be public taste. What it does mean is that the unquestioned beginning of the Georgian Poetry volumes in a marketing venture had an inevitable effect on the contents of the volumes.

In an earlier chapter it was seen that Marsh deliberately included in that first volume poets who he thought
would attract the public's attention and so help his newer contributors. Nor was Marsh the only Georgian fired with enthusiasm for salesmanship. John Drinkwater in his autobiography *Discovery* described how:

"The scheme for the anthology of contemporary poetry which was laid before us had been conceived by Marsh in consultation with Brooke, who declared that England must be bombarded with the claims of the new poets. He was then the most noted young man in London, and his influence upon potential purchasers would be invaluable. He was prepared to use it as brazenly as a commercial traveller. We were all caught up by his ardour, not that we needed any incitement." (2)

Robert Ross fills out the picture:

"Marsh's most enthusiastic lieutenant in the campaign was Brooke. Feeling a strong sense of proprietorship, Brooke set out to push the volume by almost any means which came to hand. Few persons in London were better fitted both by position and temperament to succeed at such a task. Much as he disliked reading his poetry aloud, Brooke readily agreed to give public readings at the Poetry Bookshop if such a course were necessary to increase interest in the anthology. His letters to Marsh in November and December 1912 were full of the subject. He was lying awake nights, he wrote Marsh from Germany, trying to think of novel ways to 'advertise' - the word is Brooke's own - Georgian Poetry. And he sent Marsh several pages of detailed instructions as to which journals and which reviewers should be approached to write critical notices in Germany, France, and Italy. If all his schemes were put into effect, he predicted to Marsh, "You'll be able to found a hostel for poor Georgians on the proceeds" of the anthology. Perhaps the most impressive result of Brooke's strategy was to be seen in the fact that, as John Drinkwater reported, 'the Prime Minister's car was waiting outside Bumpus's shop in Oxford Street at opening-time on the day of publication'" (3)
As this passage makes clear it was enthusiasm for poetry and not mere lust for money which prompted this energetic promotion of their book by the Georgians. Reviews, too brought in other Georgians to the service. Lawrence himself reviewed the first anthology for Rhythm, Drinkwater assured a good review by the Birmingham Post, Harold Monro as editor of Poetry and Drama gave the review to Henry Newbolt who was suitably laudatory. Marsh himself, of course, used his society connections wherever possible to procure prominent reviews. Bruce Richmond, editor of The Times Literary Supplement was approached as more surprisingly was A.A. Milne, then editor of Punch. The effect of all this advertisement among prominent people which Marsh significantly began as soon as the volume had been planned, was twofold. Firstly, of course, such reviews as Marsh did secure (not surprisingly Milne did not feel that Georgian Poetry was suitable for inclusion in Punch) did create a wider public interest in the volume, the more so as Marsh did what he could to ensure that the reviews were favourable. Secondly, the friends and society acquaintances whom Marsh approached were often in a position to influence taste among those who in their turn could create public popularity for literary works.

It is, of course, but a small step from working hard to sell a commodity to improving that commodity so as to make it more saleable. What would have happened to the Georgian movement had the first volume been a failure or enjoyed only a moderate success is difficult to predict. Probably Brooke, Marsh and the others would have shrugged their shoulders and gone their separate ways. Without any evidence it is difficult to say categorically but it seems
unlikely that even their editor much less the poets themselves would have adapted their work for a potential market. In fact the first Georgian volume was an immediate and outstanding success. Ross provides the figures:

"Only seven months after publication, Georgian Poetry had reached a sixth edition. By the end of 1913 the volume had gone into a ninth edition, and by 1st May 1914 into a tenth." (4)

And by the beginning of 1914 Marsh had already decided to publish a second collection at the end of that year. The war prevented this, but it did not affect the sales of Georgian Poetry. The reasons why Georgian Poetry was so popular are diverse, Massfield's "The Everlasting Mercy" had attracted a larger public to poetry than it had enjoyed for many years. Marsh's selection of poets was undoubtedly a factor, providing the right blend of known and unknown works in easily digestible quantities, and of course, the publicity so energetically sought must have had an effect. The results of this success are more difficult to estimate and more important for a study of the nature of Georgian poetry.

Firstly of course, it meant that after the first volume Georgian poetry was, and knew itself to be, popular poetry (though 'popular poetry' cannot be understood in the same way as 'popular fiction' or 'popular newspaper'). Marsh estimated total sales of Georgian Poetry 1911-1912 at 15,000, (5) and this number it must be remembered was spread over several years, probably upwards of twenty. It does not mean that every educated house in the country owned a copy, or even, while allowing for the copies sold to libraries, that every educated house saw one. The 'poetry boom' of this time about which so much is written means only a relatively large audience
for poetry; this fact must not be lost sight of when Georgian work is called popular. Nonetheless it was successful, extraordinarily so, for a collection of poetry. Marsh was able to prepare his second volume confident that he had the public's ear.

It is this second volume which best refutes any suspicion that the Georgians consciously wrote for their audience. *Georgian Poetry 1913-1915* contains more controversial work than the first. Bottomley's "King Lear's Wife" and Abercrombie's "The End of the World" are both more ambitious and 'revolutionary' than anything which the first volume contained. It is, as if the recognition as well as the financial rewards which had come from the first volume encouraged the Georgians to educate the public whose attention they had captured. However as Chapter 2 made clear this second volume met with some adverse criticism which considered the two plays, especially, too offensive in their inclusion of naturalistic details.

The third volume, therefore, represents a genuine adjustment, at least by Marsh to public reaction. This is the "war" volume; its outstanding new contributor was Siegfried Sassoon, although Nichols and Graves were also new and represented by war poems. The other newcomers were Turner, Squire, Rosenberg, Freeman and two single items each from Maurice Baring and Herbert Asquith. These, along with the usual names, represent the strongest line-up of poets which Marsh produced. Despite this Ross sees this third volume as a foretaste of the decline of the movement in its final two volumes. Here, he thinks, begins the take-over of the Neo-Georgians (Squire, Turner, Freeman), although he makes
much of the fact that the significance of this volume was not seen at the time. This as he points out (6) is because contemporaries lacked the historical perspective which later commentators may and perhaps must use to place the poetry of the past.

If, instead this third volume is looked at as nearly as possible through the eyes of a potential buyer of the volume perhaps looking for a Christmas present (all the Georgian volumes were published to take advantage of this particular market, so this is not mere whimsy), the picture is very different. This is surely a valid viewpoint and when the poets' relation to the public is at issue a more important one than the wisdom of fifty of sixty years hindsight. In front of such a buyer in December 1917 are such poems as Sassoon's "They" and "In the Pink," three verses from Gibson's "Battle" and Graves's "Its a Queer Time". These are not poems for escapists and it seems difficult to imagine these original works (for such poems about war were not common before the First World War) making less impact than for example, Stephen's "The Fifteen Acres" which begins:

"I cling and swing
On a branch, or sing
Through the cool, clear hush of
Morning, O:
Or fling my wing
On the air, and bring
To sleeper birds a warning, O:" (7)

and continues in similar un alarming fashion to sing of country life.

Nor does the volume depend for its weight solely on the war poems. Nichol's "The Philosopher's Oration", which was examined in an earlier chapter, must have challenged the principles of any idle browser who picked a volume called "Georgian" from the bookshop.
shelves, and made him think at least once, what the
retreat to country side vers$meant. Hodgson, Davies,
De la Mare all contribute their own idiosyncratic poems
and in this volume alone Isaac Rosenberg is represented.
Rosenberg, who was killed in action, was a protegé of
Marsh to whom he sent many of his trench poems as he
wrote them. He, alone of the poets represented in the
Georgian volumes survived to a greater reputation in
the anti-Georgian thirties. Oddly Marsh does not choose
any of Rosenberg's war poems for inclusion in this war
dominated volume. Possibly this is because as sent to
Marsh they were often unfinished and raw and when the
volume was planned Marsh could not know that Rosenberg
would not live to prepare his work for publication or
even that, before there was another Georgian Poetry,
war would be over. It cannot fairly be called "evasion"
on Marsh's part to have chosen a different work of
Rosenberg's. In fact the "Ah Koelue" which he did choose
is an extract from the dramatic poem "Moses" and was
the only poem of Rosenberg's to be published in a book
during his life-time (there were occasional poems in
periodicals and three pamphlets published at Rosenberg's
own expense). The lines themselves reflect Marsh's taste
in that they are smoother and more finished than much of
Rosenberg's work; however there is no easy empty lyricism
about the following:

"Ah, Koelue!
Had you embalmed your beauty, so
It could not backward go,
Or change in any way,
What were the use, if on my eyes
The embalming spices were not laid
To keep us fixed,
Two amorous sculptures passioned endlessly?"
"What were the use, if my sight grew,
And its far branches were cloud-hung,
You smell at the roots, like grass,
While the new lips my spirit would kiss
Were not red lips of flesh,
But the huge kiss of power?
Where yesterday soft hair through my fingers fell,
A shaggy mane would entwine,
And no slim form work fire in my thighs,
But human Life's inarticulate mass
Throb the pulse of a thing
Whose mountain flanks awry
Bag my mastery - mine!
Ah, I will ride the dizzy beast of the world.
My road - my way!" (8)

In many ways these lines represent a very Georgian streak in Rosenberg. The dramatic form and the closeness to conversational rhythms are both reminiscent of several other Georgian poets; at the same time the speed at which the lines move, the vitality and complexity of the imagery are distinctively Rosenberg's own. In this poem I think we have an example of Marsh's aim for Georgian poetry working at its best. By publishing Rosenberg he, at the very least, gave proof of his confidence in the poet's ability, the more so since Georgian Poetry was by this time an established success. Not only that but he gave him an opportunity of fame and recognition (meaning perhaps the chance of publication of the poems) and financial benefit (Rosenberg had joined the army so that his family would profit from his soldier's pay). In the event neither of these did Rosenberg much good because he was killed in April 1918. Marsh also by this inclusion was keeping up his avowed intention to "help the lovers of poetry" recognise the new poetic talents of the age which they might otherwise have missed, unless they eagerly scanned every periodical and
new poetry volume.

The potential buyer then would come across work such as Rosenberg's (Graves was at the same time an equally new name) and it seems doubtful if such a reader would think that Marsh's anthology had become an echo of its former self. Marsh was still as well attuned to the public as ever, it is true. After the criticism which the two plays attracted to the second volume, there are none here - not Rosenberg's whole dramatic poem but part of one speech is included. As the editor's job was to create a collection which would attract readers for poetry, this quality in his choice is a reflection of how well suited Marsh was to the job. The poetry, too, had to be suitable. First of all Marsh had to like it, secondly the public (or at least some of them) had to like it or to be interested sufficiently to want to like it and thirdly it had to come in anthology sizes (though Marsh in the earlier volumes devoted over a dozen pages to several poems the later volumes have more shorter poems by a greater number of poets). Then when these qualifications had been satisfied it had to be good poetry. When all these conditions were met Georgian Poetry was an excellent volume; when as happened towards the end of the series, the poetry which Marsh liked and the best work of the period no longer coincided, Marsh not unnaturally perhaps chose the former and the volume suffered. But then had Marsh changed his tastes and standards with the fashions there would not be any hope of defining Georgian poetry. Having set out to prove that the period was a Georgian era, comparable with the Elizabethan and Augustan ages, Marsh no doubt felt that he was in a position to decide what it was in the
period's poetic production which would make it great.

As the above survey shows, the Georgian movement was sensitive to public reaction. Other groups of the period were not so sensitive. The Imagists, especially when associated with Blast and the Imagist's Manifesto sought to alienate the larger public and attract by defiance the few. The Sitwells, as it appears from their various writings had an ambivalent attitude to poetry readers. Although their work was decidedly not popular in style, they nonetheless resented the fact that the public did not like their work. Seeing a booming market for poetry, created largely by Marsh and his fellow Georgians, they thought that they too should reap the benefit although they did not wish to abandon their antagonising poetic attitudes.

In many ways, Marsh's sensitivity, as editor of the Georgians' work, to public opinion reflected the poets' individual attitudes. One of the surest signs that the Georgians needed the stimulus of an audience is the quite considerable Georgian dramatic output. Not all of this is poetic, Flecker's Hassan has only incidental verses and Brooke's Lithuania is entirely in prose. John Drinkwater, too, abandoned poetry but not before he produced several poetic dramas. He wrote in the introduction to a volume of four of these plays of the conditions he thought necessary for poetry on the stage:

"A theatre audience can be the most exhilarating crowd-intelligence in the world, once it has been given the chance of caring for good drama on the stage, but the appetite of a theatre audience will inevitably grow to what it is given. And only in a theatre where the audience has been nourished on fine fare can poetry live, or the poet decently exercise his dramatic instinct. The rarity
"of such theatres is the measure of the rarity of poetic drama. These plays had the great good fortune of being shaped in a theatre in which, of a hundred plays produced in four years, not five would fail to satisfy a jury composed, let us say, of Shakespeare and Congreve and Synge, not of course, as to their greatness, but at least as to their artistic integrity. Barry Jackson's Repertory Theatre has created an audience in Birmingham which in the decision as to the worth of a play has not, I believe, its peer in England. To be associated with such a theatre is in itself a delight; to have helped to bring poetry to its stage is a privilege which I cannot measure." (9)

This is not the place for a discussion of the contribution of poetic drama to the stage history of the period nor for an account of such theatres as Barry Jackson's at Birmingham. What is of interest is the Georgian enthusiasm for the stage, individually and indeed collectively. This enthusiasm is best illustrated by excerpts from a section of Drinkwater's Discovery where he talks of his own days with the Birmingham Repertory Theatre and his crusading for the poetic drama:

"Between Wilfrid Wilson Gibson, Lascelles Abercrombie, and myself there was from the first a bond of affectionate understanding. We really liked each other's work, and took pleasure in saying so. I thought that they were among the best poets of their time, as I still do, and I hoped to see them adding power to the revival of poetic drama in the theatre which I then thought was coming."

Drinkwater then quotes a letter from Gibson, which refers to a not very successful production of Gibson's play "The Garret":
"I am not much drawn to the theatre as a medium of expression. I know this is heresy nowadays; but I feel I want to make a much more intimate appeal than is possible from the stage. I suppose if I had any real dramatic gift I should feel otherwise."

and from a second letter written two days later he quotes Gibson:

"I am intensely interested in the new movement; and I feel confident that poetic drama is the art of the future — only I feel that whatever gift I have is more suited to make its appeal from the intimate pages of a book than from the boards of a theatre." (10)

This reluctance to work for the theatre combined with an interest in the dramatic poem as form is illustrated elsewhere in Gibson's published words. His introduction to his play Krindlesyke for example, includes the following ambiguous note:

"Though the work was not conceived with a view to stage-production, the author reserves the acting rights." (11)

Drinkwater finishes his remarks on his Georgian friends and the theatre with the following on Abercrombie (who like Gibson produced several dramatic poems as well as plays):

"Lascelles Abercrombie's interest in the theatre was much more practical than Gibson's. As things turned out, he was not to bring any sustained service to the stage that he loved. Circumstances did not play into his hands, he refused to become a dilettante in a medium for which he had a profound respect, and so he just drifted out of an activity in which at one time he promised to become a leader. For he had a real passion for drama, and desired nothing more than to spend it on the stage. Also he had great natural gifts for the theatre — mastery of vehement and beautiful speech, sense of dramatic character, a delight in
"conflict. The heady texture of his poetry asked too much of audiences that had forgotten how to listen to poetry at all, but the fault would have been cured by the experience of regular work in a theatre. There was no theatre where he could gain this...If he had come into the theatre crusading with the rest of us at that time, I believe that he would soon have decided with me that verse could not be the staple of a modern drama that meant to come out into the open and challenge the opinion of the people. He stayed out of the theatre, and I think that when I tried to employ a prose on the stage that would give modern audiences something of the satisfaction that verse gave to the Elizabethans, he regarded me in some sense as a deserter, although throughout my life I have owed more to the inspiration of his praise than to that of any man." (12)

This passage reveals more than it states. The circumstances which acted against Abercrombie were probably the difficulty of finding theatres to put the plays into production and the lack of response to such Georgian plays as were produced. In the earlier chapter we saw how King Lear's Wife, produced at Birmingham with great enthusiasm on all sides was not favourably received either by the audience or the critics. This event probably helped Abercrombie's drift away from the theatre to gain momentum, whether because Abercrombie feared such a reception for his own work or because he could see from the play's reception that such drama was not really suited to the contemporary stage.

The reluctance of Gibson and Abercrombie when the plays came to leave the printed page for the hurly-burly of the theatre is countered by their undoubted enthusiasm for the principle of poetic drama. In 1912,
that is at the beginning of the 'Georgian' era, Monro devoted an issue of his *Poetry Review* to the drama. Gibson and Abercrombie both contributed and it will be worthwhile to look at their articles. Gibson's "Some Thoughts on the Future of Poetic Drama" contains brave and hopeful words:

"A play can only be poetry if it have the stuff of life in it; and the very fact that dreary imitations of Greek and Elizabethan drama fail to attract the public, even when tricked out in the most sumptuous apparel, and produced, regardless of expense, by energetic and well-meaning actor-managers is a hopeful omen that there is a future for poetic drama. Indifference to sham art is, at least, an indication that the public retains some sense of the real thing—a sense only apparently atrophied or, at the worst, drugged by the anaesthetics of academical art; and I have but little doubt of the response, when the man comes who can touch that sense to the quick. Poetry must stand the test of life. It may, and indeed, must excel life, but it may never fall short of it."

He bravely adds the following advice and recommendations:

"in writing, either of the present or the past, the dramatist must beware of becoming either a painful "realist" or a peddling archaeologist, concerning himself merely with the temporary and parochial. Though, in reality, for the poet, there is no past, no present, no future, but only life, everlasting life; and he may find himself unable to express the universal and ever-living, save in terms of universal and everliving myth; still, it seems to me that the greatest poets have been those who have lifted the local on to the universal plane, and have given the temporary eternal life. The poet of today is mythmaker to eternity... The poet of all time is he who gives expression to the subconscious spirit of his own time"

Despite his final avowal that, "in the future, dramatic
verse will be the medium which the energy of life will shape into its most effectual means of expression." (13) this easily explains why Gibson did not himself choose to work for the theatre. The enthusiasm is too general and vague, what is missing is the smell of grease-paint and all that cliché conveys. The mechanics of the theatre, the actual means of conveying a play by words and action to an audience is altogether missing from this article.

Nor does Abercrombie have much more to say about the actual theatre. His article, in fact a paper given earlier to the English Association in Manchester, was called "The Function of Poetry in the Drama" but it is just as heady as Gibson's high flown prophecy. Abercrombie describes what he means by poetic drama:

"the kind of play I mean is one in which you feel that the characters themselves are poetry, and were poetry before they began to speak poetry; it would be a wrench for them not so to utter themselves. They are characters which, compared with ours, have undergone a certain powerful simplification and exaggeration, so that the primary impulses of being are infinitely more evident in what they do and say than in the speech and action of actuality's affairs. This does not prevent them, of course, from being studies of deep and individual psychology (if the poet's preferences in dramatic method lie that way); but as the confusion of forces which make up the impulsion of ordinary life has in these characters been simplified to a firm arrangement of conflict, an orderly disorder, and as every force which moves in them is made thereby to be of intense unobstructed significance, - so also the language which is in their mouths has been simplified out of the grey complexity of ordinary speech into an ordered medley of colour, and every word they use is required to have the intense unobstructed significance which words only have in poetry; the half-felt allusiveness, the dulled metaphor
"of common talking, becoming image, metaphor, and simile unashamed and rejoicing. So, again, with the exaggeration; characters are put before us which are much more vehement and impressive than the persons we know in everyday life, and this is because they have, compared with the blunt outlines known from actual acquaintance, an exaggerated shapeliness of personality; their natures have a precision and definiteness of design; and this exaggeration of character-form draws on a corresponding exaggeration in the shape of the speech they utter; wherein the shifting rhythms of common talking become formalized into a regular metre-fall into metre, in fact, as naturally as blood-flow goes in beats. That, at least, is one reason why metrical speech is seemly in a genuinely poetical play." (14)

If this has little to say about the practical aspects of play production, it does, at least, throw useful light on the poetic side. Here Abercrombie sets out, perhaps more vividly than elsewhere, the very nature of Georgian poetry (at least as practised by the founder poets). While doing this he also illustrates the subtle way in which thought for his reader (or audience) has affected the poet. What Abercrombie is describing is immediacy of effect and he all but admits that he is prepared to sacrifice subtlety and depth of content for this end. As he is talking of dramatic poetry then, naturally, the effect on the audience is a major issue but it is not too far fetched to see in this how attention to his readers has affected the poet even when he is not writing drama. Often, of course, the discipline of the audience is not the only influence from the drama; many Georgian poems are dialogue or monologue.

In the last chapter the Georgian debt to Synge by
by way of Masefield was seen to affect the choice of subject; in this dramatic style of writing the same influences can be seen. In Masefield's case there were plays (both prose and verse) and narrative poems; these latter carrying on a tale-telling tradition which relies on the unseen audience for part of its effect. The narrative pull which holds the attention of the reader also shapes the poem. Here are the opening lines of Masefield's *Dauber*, first published in the autumn of 1912. The story begins in the best classical way "in medias res":

"Four bells were struck, the watch was called
on deck
All work aboard was over for the hour,
And some men sang and others played at check
Or mended clothes or watched the sunset glower.
The bursting west was like an opening flower,
And one man watched it till the light was dim,
But no one went across to talk to him."

and having raised the curtain on a scene and situation full of potential drama then Masefield introduces the reader to his hero:

"He was the painter in that swift ship's crew -
Lampman and painter - tall, a slight-built man,
Young for his years, and not yet twenty-two;
Sickly, and not yet brown with the seas' tan." (15)

The same combination of dramatic and narrative techniques is found in many Georgian narratives, the balance between the two varying with each poet. Some like Gibson in "Hoops" following the dramatic form so closely that the poem was staged (on the same bill as King Lear's *Wife* and *Lithuania*) some like Lawrence's *Snake* have absorbed the dramatic influence so thoroughly that it appears only on close scrutiny to affect the shape and presentation of the conflict. In fact this is poetry which, while fulfilling Abercrombie's requirements for poetry in drama, still conveys all the complexity of the situation.
Notice how Lawrence portrays his two protagonists in the opening lines:

"A snake came to my water-trough
On a hot, hot day, and I in pyjamas for the heat,
To drink there."

As the poem develops Lawrence's preoccupation with his own reactions modifies the narrative-dramatic tension and his self-questionings seem more like a soliloquy (there is a definite echo of Hamlet in the repeating questions):

"Was it cowardice, that I dared not kill him?
Was it perversity that I longed to talk to him?
Was it humility, to feel honoured?
I felt so honoured.

And yet those voices:
If you were not afraid you would kill him" (16)

The poem as a whole illustrates, I think how beneficial was the interest in dramatic form to the Georgian poet. Though it also shows how each individual poet had to adapt the interest in the drama to his own particular type of poetry.

Abercrombie also writes eloquently of the effect of dramatic poetry and its relation to life:

"If, now, I want to find a metaphor that will most clearly suggest this capital function of drama I find I am compelled to choose - intoxication...And what is the kind of drama that does best as an intoxicant; which is the most efficient cause of that state of consciousness in which life is felt, for all its malices, as an admirable astonishing power, and we are made to exult in the part we have in life? It is surely that kind of drama which most daringly handles its materials: drama which is only for exigencies of technique concerned with imitation of life's materials into a symbol charged with satisfaction of our profoundest desires - the aesthetic desire for rhythm and order
"even in the midst of conflict, the moral desire for courage and exultation resisting the irresistible destiny of things: in a word poetic drama wherein the speech used can be the most uncompromising kind of poetry. Dramatic poetry is to experience as wine is to the grape: this is true both of the conception and of the speech which is the bodily vehicle of the conception." (17)

The word 'intoxicant' is significant especially as combined with Abercrombie's analogy "Dramatic poetry is to experience as wine is to the grape": the whole process contained in this metaphor suggests that the mutation of experience into poetry is governed by a regard for its final effect on the reader. The passage suggests well the pervasive influence of the reader or audience on Georgian poetry. Sales and fame are as this quotation shows quite irrelevant; what Abercrombie is discussing is the essence of the poetic art as he sees it. This is, and he repeats himself on this issue in many other works, the change of experience into poetry having a profound and exhilarating effect.

It is no accident that this statement of poetry's effect comes in an article on the drama for in this concern for the impression which poetry has on its audience lies the reason for the Georgian preoccupation with the theatre. Although Marsh was a great playgoer he could not do for dramatic poetry what he did for the written word.

His natural taste in the theatre was better reflected in his later espousal of the cause of Ivor Novello. Although he enthused over Bottomley's King Lear's Wife and did arrange for it to be staged once in London it is difficult to imagine his relishing a diet of such 'unpleasant' first nights. Beside this difficulty about
Marsh's preferences in the theatre, the financial aspect was quite different in the case of an edition of 500 poetry anthologies than it would have been had Marsh tried to sponsor or even insure a series of theatrical productions. The initial outlay and possible losses are much greater even for relatively simple dramas than they are for published books. Because of this there was no "Georgian drama" to accompany Georgian Poetry.

This is not because there was not sufficient material. Flecker's Hassan and D.H.Lawrence's plays, both in prose, have been the only Georgian dramas to enjoy even a limited success in the theatre lasting beyond the first enthusiasm of the period. John Drinkwater's various plays earned production in his friend's Birmingham Repertory Theatre but significantly the first really popular play of his, Abraham Lincoln, was in prose with only a sprinkling of verse choruses. But despite the failure of the poetic plays to capture an audience the Georgians continued to write quite a number of verse plays. Gordon Bottomley never abandoned the form and continued writing plays, many of which were performed by Scottish Verse speaking societies, until just before his death in 1948. Masefield, Abercrombie and Gibson all wrote poetic drama and although the later Georgians were not interested in the drama in the same way as these earlier poets, Edward Shanks did write a verse play The Queen of China which although meaningfully subtitled 'a poem' is technically quite capable of performance. Poems in dramatic form are even more common than actual plays. Abercrombie's The Sale of St. Thomas is but one example from many which could be found in his published volumes. Many of the poems in his 1912 volume Emblems of Love are in dramatic form. Rosenberg's
Moses discussed above is another example as is the same poet's *The Unkown* a more adventurous if unfinished work.

Sturge Moore's *Sicilian Idyll*, most of which is included in *Georgian Poetry 1911-1912* is a further example of the dramatic poem. Not really impossible to stage the work is nevertheless much better suited to the printed page. In many ways although Sturge Moore was not, as even Marsh admitted, a true Georgian, this work illustrates typical features. It is rural in setting and also set in ancient times and therefore much of the scene is outdoors or even when indoors influenced by the weather and natural events. Like many Georgian dramatic poems, too, it has only a small number of speakers and deals with domestic or family issues. This is a common pattern and with the variation of the use of a rural folk background instead of an historical setting accounts for many Georgian plays and dramatic poems. Large scale works like *King Lear's Wife* and *Gruach* by Bottomley although using Shakespearian characters fit the mould as do shorter plays even those in prose like Rupert Brooke's *Lithuania*.

Later Georgians were not so interested in the drama, either as actual playwrights or playgoers or as poets benefiting from the dramatic form or influence. The only vestige of this early Georgian concern with dramatic experience is in the conversational style of poems, mainly war poems by Sassoon but also some others. However, despite its form Robert Graves' "The Cupboard" although its country family setting shows a general likeness to the backgrounds typical in the earlier plays, is a long way from being dramatic in any meaningful sense. Here are the final stanzas:
"Mother: What's in that cupboard, Mary?
Mary: Which cupboard, mother mine?
Mother: That cupboard stands in your sunny chamber,
       The silver corners shine...

Mary: There's nothing there inside, mother,
       But wool and thread and flax,
       And bits of faded silk and velvet
       And candles of white wax.

Mother: What's in that cupboard, Mary?
       And this time tell me true.

Mary: White clothes for an unborn baby, mother...
       But what's the truth to you?" (18)

Although such a poem bears no real relation to dramatic experience it does reveal a decided suitability for recitation, and this, too, was a Georgian preoccupation, as yet another means of getting the poetry over to the public. The best known of the recitals were those held by Harold Monro above his Poetry Bookshop. This was not strictly speaking a Georgian venue but was the scene of many recitals of their poetry. Intended by Monro as a meeting place for the writers and readers of poetry, The Poetry Bookshop did succeed in attracting them to Devonshire Street, which was quite a distance from the fashionable areas of London. The shop itself was confined to the sale of poetry books (another reflection on the Georgian determination to take poetry to the public) but above the shop and the flat where Monro himself lived were rooms which he let out to poets in London. Robert Frost and his family stayed there when they came to London and Wilfrid Gibson lived there for a time. Thus to a certain extent Devonshire Street acted in the same way as Marsh's own flat at Raymond Buildings, not very far away. There was a difference in emphasis. Monro's was
a higher minded atmosphere, more dedicated to the propagation of poetry, Marsh's flat enjoyed the company of more glittering figures and more spectacular entertainments.

At Devonshire Street there was a large loft and this was where Monro's readings were held twice weekly. Tickets were enclosed in copies of Monro's magazine Poetry and Drama and the meetings were open, for a contribution of threepence, to anyone who cared to attend. It is difficult to imagine the readings drawing a large attendance and there is some evidence that they were not altogether popular with the poets who took part. Ross prints extracts from several of Abercrombie's letters to Marsh in which he refers to his 'stunt' at the Bookshop as a "dreary affair", begs for Marsh's moral support and says he hopes to leave as soon as he has done his recitation. (19)

The probable reasons for Abercrombie's reluctance was his feeling of inadequacy for the task of reading aloud his own poems. Monro himself passionately believed in the reading aloud of poetry, he wrote in Poetry and Drama that poetry:

"is the supreme form of verbal expression, and, as such, is of no signification in the dusty shelves of libraries, of no specific value until brought out into the active ways of life." (20)

Not all the poets who were prevailed upon to read their work shared his ideals and it seems more than likely that for many the reading was more like a sophisticated form of publicity. Either way it reflects on the close Georgian interaction of poetry and reader. For Monro the reading was a way of keeping poetry in touch with the people, for the majority of the poets who read the emphasis was on keeping people in touch with poetry.
Unfortunately the readings are not well documented. Marsh's biographer makes no reference to his visits to the Bookshop, although he did attend at least occasionally. In his biography of Brooke the only reference is:

"He gave a reading of his poems at the Poetry Bookshop (to about seventy people this time, as against six on the former occasion)." (21)

It seems odd that there is nothing more; one would be interested to know the reasons for this fluctuation in attendance. Moreover Ross's account of one of Brooke's readings hints that there would be considerable interest in knowing more. In Ross's words:

"Incongruously, the formidable Amy Lowell came to hear Rupert Brooke read his poems. Sitting towards the back of the room and being unable to hear Brooke, whose voice had small carrying power, she rose imperiously and shouted at the young poet, 'Speak up! Speak up!' " (22)

This tells us little except that Brooke was not a gifted poetry reader, although it can be inferred that there were present a number of people sufficient to make Brooke's inaudibility a serious issue.

Joy Grant in her book about Monro gives a greater insight into the personalities who read but there is still little about the size and character of the audiences. She tells us that Drinkwater as an actor was always prepared to read, that Gibson's reading voice was an unvaried monotone; that Ralph Hodgson would never read at all, that W.H. Davies' stage fright was only overcome by a promise of whisky afterwards. The following quotation which begins with an extract from a letter Monro wrote to Drinkwater in 1924 illustrates well Monro's difficulties as public champion of poetry and poets, and how he succeeded in representing all
kinds of poets at his Bookshop:

"Personally, I have always endeavoured in my capacity of Proprietor of the Poetry Bookshop to represent it as a public institution independent of my private views and judgments... The question has been brought rather forcibly before me several times as to whether my various remarks in writing about my contemporaries were compatible with my activities in the shop, but I have decided that the two capacities should remain independent... Many people, with whom I am not entirely in sympathy, have given readings and lectures here. Alfred Noyes, who certainly has much cause for grievance against me, is reading his own poems this Thursday. People so far apart as Marinetti and J.C. Squire have both participated, though the latter I admit not lately. Robert Bridges has read and De la Mare and Davies and Yeats and Newbolt and Abercrombie. Gibson is coming again next month and Gosse has read two or three times, but then I have also had Ford Madox Hueffer several times. If, in issuing invitations to read, I allowed my own private judgements to influence me, I should be doing an injustice to the shop, to the audience, and to the poets. The general standard, of course, has to be kept as high as possible, but that is another thing."

Among others who came to read were T.S. Eliot, Ezra Pound, Edith Sitwell, Robert Graves, Roy Campbell, Harriet Monroe, Francis Meynell, Margaret L. Woods, Emile Verhaeren, Humbert Wolfe and Anna Wickham." (23)

Poetry readings, mostly in society drawing rooms and before invited guests only, were not uncommon at the period and frequently there is record of Georgians taking part. Osbert Sitwell gives a useful list of an undated reading, which was given by Edmund Gosse at Onslow Square probably in 1919:
"Gosse was in the chair, and the poets who were invited to read their own poetry were, so far as I can remember, Robert Graves, the late Robert Nichols, Siegfried Sassoon, Irene Rutherford McLeod, Sherard Vines, T.S. Eliot, Aldous Huxley, Edith Sitwell, Sacheverall Sitwell and myself." (24)

This was not really a Georgian gathering at all, the three poets in the list who did contribute to Georgian Poetry were by no means exclusively Georgian in their affiliations. What this quotation illustrates is how common these gatherings were, and not only in the Bohemian atmosphere of the Bookshop; how in effect they were confined in their influence to confirmed readers and writers of poetry and the wide assortment of poets who, for one reason or another were prepared to perform in this way. As poetry readings have during the last decade or thereabouts become popular again, the relationship between reader and writer of poetry has been reaffirmed. In this more recent bout of readings a truer popularity has been attained in that the people, who are thus introduced to poetry, would otherwise perhaps not consider themselves as poetry-readers. What has happened, also, is that poetry suitable for reading is now being written, that is, poetry which makes an immediate impact. To a certain extent the Georgian interest in poetry readings produced or emphasised the production of the same type of work. Inevitably poetry which looks outward to its readers must be conditioned by its audience; it cannot be the same as poetry written from within without regard to possible readers. This is not to say that all Georgian poets wrote in this way. Several poets, and De la Mare seems an obvious example, were writing about private dreams and obsessions, and in others the mingling of the outward and the inward looking is unevenly balanced.
Monro himself wrote several true recitation pieces, "Overheard on a Saltmarsh" and "Milk for the Cat" (both in *Georgian Poetry 1913-1915*) but his later poems are more truly personal (though none of these is represented in *Georgian Poetry* some were written at this time).

Not only spoken poetry but also many published poems reflect the Georgian devotion to the task of bringing poetry before a wider audience. If the Georgian poetry readings succeeded in preaching only to the converted the same cannot be said of published books and magazines. The sales of *Georgian Poetry* itself indicate that some of its readers must not have been habitual readers or purchasers of poetry volumes. *Georgian Poetry* was not however the only publication for which Georgian poets were responsible.

In 1914, Gibson, Brooke, Abercrombie and Drinkwater together began the joint poetry venture which starting out as *The Gallows Garland* became the less flamboyantly and more revealingly named *New Numbers* (here the genuine Georgian combination of the new and the traditional is well balanced). The venture was short lived, probably on account of the war and there is some confusion about its history. Ross states that Robert Frost was represented (25) but none of the British Museum volumes has any contributor other than the four above named. The British Museum has only copies of the four quarterlies for 1914, and it seems likely that this is all that were published, although Hassall hints that the first volume went out as *The Gallows Garland* there is no evidence to support this. However his report of the founding of the magazine illustrates well the enthusiastic and unprofessional way in which these poets worked to bring their poems to public notice:
"You are, of course, too young to remember "The Shilling Garland," " wrote Gibson [to Brooke in Ottawa]. It was a series of ten little books of verse edited by Laurence Binyon. There was now a scheme to start a "New Shilling Garland." Gibson had got the idea while talking with Lascelles Abercrombie in his cottage called The Gallons at Dymock in Gloucestershire. If three or four of them stood together, his argument ran, they might fare better on the market. The Georgian anthology had already shown this to be a sound principle. Meanwhile Brooke must keep it to himself, 'I don't want the rotters to hear of it,' wrote Gibson, 'until it's too late to include them.' Brooke regarded this proposal as a great compliment... to Gibson he [Brooke] declared he was:

"all for amalgamating our four publics...
the more that mine is the smallest! I'm afraid I shall be outwritten by you fluent giants...I foresee the average number will read as follows —"

There was gentle and nicely aimed satire in his imaginary Table of Contents:

"1. Lascelles Abercrombie: Haman and Mordecai.
5. Lascelles Abercrombie: Asshur-Bani-Pal and Og King of Bashan.

And of the actual production Hassall gives this picture:

"While Brooke was in Toronto Lascelles and Catherine Abercrombie called on a printer in Gloucester, chose the format and arranged for all the copies of each edition of their quarterly...to be sent to their cottage. A
"business-like writing desk was presented to Catherine for her keeping of the accounts, and by now the inaugural number had been posted to the two hundred subscribers, Catherine jogging the cradle with her foot while she copied out the addresses, and Gibson, suddenly turning a ghastly white from licking so many stamps." (26)

The actual volumes, in view of this, are surprisingly well produced. Their layout and general presentation is simple and business-like (Monro's later chapbooks often had a folksy craft look which makes them now look very old-fashioned and detracts attention from the contents). The blue paper covers are quite unadorned and the whole of each number is devoted to poetry with the addition, in one issue of a list of each poet's published books and in another of details of the subscription rate, either seven shillings and sixpence a year or half-a-crown a copy.

The poems are surprisingly similar to those in Brooke's satirical forecast, and many of them also appeared in Georgian Poetry. The second volume for instance contained Abercrombie's "The End of the World" later to appear in Georgian Poetry 1913-1915 as were also Brooke's "Heaven" and Gibson's "The Gorse", this accounts for over half the volume, the rest of which contained Drinkwater's "Love's House" and Gibson's "A Catch for Singing", "The Tram", "The Greeting", "On Hampstead Heath" and "The Ice".

As can be seen from this the mixture of poets is somewhat uneven but the four issues for 1914 even this out by concentrating attention on one poet especially in each issue. In the second issue, for example, Abercrombie's verse drama occupied thirty five pages out of a total of forty seven; other poets in other issues had a majority of the pages devoted to their work.

This communistic division of space and responsibility
(the New Numbers have no editorial name and only the Abercrombie address without their name is given for subscriptions) is reflected in a later Georgian collection of poems, An Annual of New Poetry 1917. This too has no named editor and the contributors are therefore shown as presenting their own work, rather than as being the selection of a third party. Not all the contributors were Georgians. Edward Thomas's poems were published here under the pseudonym Edward Eastaway and though he was killed having seen only proofs this was the only hard-back publication of his work planned in his lifetime. Robert Frost, too, was represented in the Annual when he was still a young and unknown poet. The other poets, Gordon Bottomley, W.H.Davies, John Drinkwater, W.W.Gibson, T.Sturge Moore and R.C.Trevelyan were all represented in Georgian Poetry. The alphabetical order, too, might well have been copied from the other anthologies and as far as can be told from letters Bottomley, although in no sense an editor was responsible for collecting contributions. This book was not a rival to Marsh's anthologies and Marsh freely advertised the book in the Bibliography to Georgian Poetry 1916-1917, and as with New Numbers, some poems appear also in Georgian Poetry. Bottomley's New Year's Eve, 1913 and In Memoriam A.M.W. were in the third volume almost contemporary with the Annual. Davies' The Bell and In England appeared two years later in the fourth volume. Like New Numbers and Georgian Poetry this collection represents the Georgian interest in drama, including Trevelyan's "The Pearl Tree" a play in seven scenes.

Harold Monro both as editor of Poetry Review and then the significantly named Poetry and Drama, and as a publisher from the Poetry Bookshop was an important
figure in the propagation of published poetry. He began at the Poetry Review under the auspices of the Poetry Society, whose organ the periodical was, but Edward Thomas wrote to Gordon Bottomley of the magazine:

"Have you heard of the Poetry Review edited by Harold Monro - a nice fellow, in sympathy with advanced thought and has published a book of verse? They are asking for an article by me on Davies gratis. The usual thing. It will die at the 5th or 6th number unregretted by Poets whose circulation was guaranteed by the Poetry Society to reach a 1,000. A home for incurables, I feel sure, but it gives Monro employment, a sense of usefulness, the use of a typewriter and possibly some pocket money, but I should think not." (27)

The 'advanced' editor failed to satisfy the Society and Monro broke away and formed Poetry and Drama along his own lines and without restraint.

Monro was not a mouthpiece for the Georgian movement and the issue for September 1913 was devoted to the Futurists. The magazine contained original poems, of which a fair proportion were by Georgian poets, reviews of poetry books and articles about the condition of poetry. There was also in the first issue March 1913, the announcement of a prize awarded to Rupert Brooke, for the best poem contributed to Poetry Review, writer of "Grantchester". The whole thing operated like a sort of printed club for poetry, and looking through its pages it is difficult to avoid the feeling that if it was poetry or even verse it had a place in Poetry and Drama.

However, it operated as a showplace for poetry and the Georgians availed themselves of its facilities. Edward Marsh reviewed Georgian volumes in its pages.
Oddly the review of Bottomley's *Chambers of Imagery* is rather unfavourable than otherwise. Having raised several objections to the wording of Bottomley's "Hymn to the Imagination" Marsh added this revealing comment:

"Most of the short lyrics have a slight beauty and an elusive grace; if they were perfect they would be charming; but they want the last touch which would give them value. Here again rhyme is a weak point."

Despite this harsh criticism Marsh found in this same volume two poems to include in his first *Georgian Poetry*. As the review was published three months before the anthology was conceived Marsh's comments provide an interesting light on his selection and at the same time illustrate that the Georgian desire to publicise poetry did not mean that they were prepared to puff just any poetry in print. In the whole volume of Bottomley's poetry Marsh only found two poems to praise:

""Babel" has the picturesque and vivid movement, the rendering of depth and height, and the grotesque yet grandiose humanity of a Rembrandt etching. Finer still is the last poem in the volume, "The End of the World", which describes a long, cataclysmic fall of snow, going on for days, perhaps for weeks, perhaps really till the end of the world. For his blank verse here Mr. Bottomley has found a movement - light, soft, swift, and capricious, the sound of it always muted and muffled - which brings to the mind that unique quality of the terror of snow, that as its cruelty grows so does its gentleness, and as its violence, its quiet. Dim figures pass now and then, faint sounds are heard, behind the veil, and are lost; little sad' incidents stand out but for a moment. The end comes abruptly, as if the writer himself had finally been overwhelmed." (28)

This cannot claim to be a representative sample from
either of Monro's periodicals. Generally the reviewers were more professional (often one poet reviewed the work of another, Brooke, for example, wrote the review of his friend Gibson's Fires in the first Poetry and Drama). At the time that this review was published Marsh's only qualification as a reviewer was his earlier notice of Poems by his friend and protégé, Rupert Brooke. The review is untypical, moreover, in the harshness of its judgment. Usually the only way in which these two periodicals sought to discriminate among poets was by omission. When occasion offered, however, Monro was not one to pull his punches. Although a man of notoriously catholic taste, he was nevertheless capable of the following downright statement about the Laureateship:

"How appalling if the choice had fallen on Kipling! Robert Bridges is a true representative of poetry, of beauty as revealed in poetry." (29)

These few quotations are given to illustrate the way in which this periodical worked for poetry. It was not rigidly confined to poetry, and drama as the name of the second periodical indicates had its place. The illustrative arts were given some place but this was increased when, after the war, which cut short Poetry and Drama, Monro issued instead his Monthly Chapbooks. In these illustration played a larger part and incône issue poems (three of them by De la Mare) were set to music which was printed also. By this time the venture was even less Georgian than it had been at the beginning. One Chapbook indeed published Osbert Sitwell's satire, "The Jolly Old Squire or Way-Down in Georgia" (30)

By this time, however, the Georgians had another periodical in which to publicise each others work, The London Mercury. This was founded and edited by
J.C. Squire, who to a certain extent stands in the same relation to the later Georgians as Monro to the earlier. Both were powerful figures in the literary world, whose own circles were not confined to the Georgians but who worked with the Georgian movement for the advancement of poetry among the reading public. The differences between the two men and their positions in literary circles illustrate the development of the Georgian movement. Monro when *Georgian Poetry* began was really just a fellow revolutionary seeking to jolt the poetry reading establishment by the publication of the work of his young contemporaries. Squire, in 1919, was working from within the establishment of which, by this time, the Georgians had become a successful part. It would have been impossible for anyone to write of Monro as Sherard Vines did of Squire:

"For a long time, his periodical, *The London Mercury*, has represented all that is 'sweet and sane' in the Georgian mood of English poetry. Today the number of those who speak ill of it seems to have grown; but we must not allow mere numbers to dictate to us. Now, as much as yesterday, the upper middle class, when it feels disposed to read poetry, cannot do better than purchase *The London Mercury*... the Mercury is little more than a party magazine." (31)

Squire's assistant editor Edward Shanks, was also a Georgian and John Freeman and W.J. Turner were closely associated with the magazine. Although not confined to the Georgians or to poetry, there is a remarkable coincidence of poets represented both in *Georgian Poetry* and in the *Mercury*. Only Ralph Hodgson, Francis Ledwidge, Robert Ross, Edmund Beale Sargent and Fredegond Shove are in the former and not the latter. Not all the Georgians are represented by poems, many are merely reviewed, some like Stephens and Lawrence have stories in the magazine.
and some wrote articles themselves. As in Poetry Review and Poetry and Drama there are several articles on one Georgian by another. Shanks wrote on John Freeman in the second volume, on De la Mare in the third and on Flecker in the tenth.

The tone of the magazine was established at the beginning as these extracts from the third issue show. Of literature the editorial notes report:

"The department - it is difficult in making such a summary to avoid the language of the catalogue - in which life has been healthiest has certainly been poetry. Several of the best and most promising of our living poets published no book in 1919, but what is incontestably a revival has continued. Several poets of established reputation have done better work than ever before."

Even the editor's apology for his language seems to belong to the attitude of a well-satisfied headmaster on Speech Day. The judgments on individual work is given in the same manner:

"The most notable volumes by young poets have been...Mr. Brett Young's Poems and Mr. John Freeman's Memories of Childhood. But in periodicals and anthologies there has appeared much new and genuine work. A great deal is to be found in the fourth volume of Georgian Poetry;...Mr. De la Mare's latest poems show that his thought is steadily deepening whilst he is losing none of that delicacy of music and beauty of phrase that made his early lyrics as lovely as any in the language; and both Mr. Sassoon and Mr. Nichols have done work which makes their future a matter for profound curiosity. Scattered about in other volumes there have been other good poems: and it is the characteristic of a prolific lyrical age that a few good things are written by many men."

The attitude, both to poets and readers and the style
of this show a marked development from that of, for example, Marsh's first Georgian Prefatory Note. It is unfair to say that the change is a sign of what had happened to the movement for Squire was not Marsh, nor London Mercury Georgian Poetry. On the other hand, the Mercury's commended poets are all Georgians and the fourth volume, in which Shanks appeared for the first time and Squire for the second, is singled out for especial praise, all other work is merely referred to as "scattered about in other volumes." What the Mercury's attitude does illustrate, I think, is what happens to a poetry movement designed to capture its audience's attention. Whereas in Poetry Review in 1912, the reviews by one Georgian of another are symptomatic of a general enthusiasm to display the work of colleagues for the attention of the widest possible readership, such reviews in the Mercury merely appear to be inbred, the result of a desire to propagate one's own type of poetry. The schoolmasterly tone, moreover, surely symbolises what happens to a poetic movement which has captured its audience. The poet having found a public now thinks he has the right to take their approval as a basis from which to dogmatise about which is the best poetry. From seeking to make poetry more popular the poet seems to turn to the eulogy of popular poetry.

The Mercury in fact did Marsh and the earlier Georgians no good with the discriminating reader and critic. The 'Squirearchy' as the London Mercury poets were known with a certain amount of well-aimed malice, attracted a great deal of scorn from the newer poets, the Sitwells, in particular and this to a certain extent was transferred to the Georgians. This too is a
reflection on Marsh's success at popularising the work of new poets. Having brought the unknown names of 1911 to the public's attention, he should have and perhaps did realise that by doing so he had created another wave of new and unknown poets to follow. Marsh could not put himself forward as their editor and opted out. Squire, on the other hand, sought to perpetuate the popularity of those who had been unknown, but who were by 1919 in no real need of the promotion which Squire gave them.

As with the poetry readings, the publication of periodicals was not confined to the Georgians. In this field however the Georgians did set the pace. In fact Robert Frost's biographer depicts a certain amount of unseemly haste as poets sought to imitate the Georgian success. He tells of Amy Lowell at a dinner party:

"That evening she had announced to the Imagist poets H.D. and Richard Aldington that she liked the way the editor of Georgian Poetry brought out a volume annually, and she was going to edit the next annual volume of poems written by Imagists. Ezra had been furious with her for butting in. "He accused me of trying to make myself editor instead of him, and finally tried a little blackmail." " (33)

Osbert Sitwell's Art and Letters was started in an attempt to provide a forum for un-Georgian poets. Blast (1914) the work of Pound and Wyndham Lewis, too, was to a certain extent an attempt to provide an alternative to Georgianism. Murry's Rhythm and Blue Review were not so closely related to the Georgian movement, although Marsh did provide financial aid and paid for the salary of an assistant, Wilfrid Wilson Gibson (thus providing for two literary lame ducks with one gesture).

The Georgian's influence in the business of presenting
poetry to the public was undoubtedly reflected in the many anthologies which followed Georgian Poetry. The most famous of these is Edith Sitwell's Wheels (1916-1920) and the two Poundian ventures Des Imagistes (1913) and Catholic Anthology (1915) but there were many others of all sorts, especially during the war, of sentimental and patriotic verses. The Georgians themselves were inspired by the anthologising vogue and J.C. Squire in 1921 published a collection Selections from Modern Poets of mostly Georgian poetry and a Second Selection followed in 1926 and even as late as 1929 Harold Monro published his anthology Twentieth Century Poetry.

The production of poetry books in general, fine editions, illustrated editions, collected poems, is an indication of how important to the Georgian poet it was to present his work to the public. The cynic might say that this represented simply a desire for financial gain, but many of the Georgians did not rely on poetry for their sole income; more often it reflects the Georgian desire to bring poetry to the widest possible audience. If Georgian poetry is escapist in content in that it cannot and therefore does not pretend to find answers to contemporary problems, it is united to the real life of its times by its involvement with its readers. This desire to speak to the widest possible audience is the expression of the Georgian's concern for his own times. Poetry, they felt, was the greatest good they could offer; unfortunately their preoccupation with the presentation of poetry was all too often a reflection of a basic weakness of the work itself.
CHAPTER 7. NOTES.


(2) J.Drinkwater: Discovery 1932 pp. 228-9.


(4) ibid. p. 127.

(5) E.Marsh: A Number of People 1939. p. 329.


(8) ibid. p. 53.


(18) G.P. 1918-1919. p. 87.


(22) Ross: p. 97.


(32) "Editorial Notes" L.M. I. 3. Jan. 1920. pp. 257-262. Both quotations from p. 259. The editor was of course, Squire but the notes were possibly produced in conjunction with Shanks.
CHAPTER 8. THE GEORGIANS AND TRADITION.

The period before and just after the First World War was in poetry one of change, and as a result one when poets thought a good deal about their relation to tradition. Eliot's important article "Tradition and the Individual Talent" published in 1917 is perhaps the most obvious manifestation of this dual concern but it is by no means a solitary example. In 1919 John Livingston Lowes published his book Convention and Revolt in Poetry and as much as ten years later, similar works were still being compiled. There was a collection of lectures given at the City Literary Institute on the subject published in 1929 as Tradition and Experiment in Present-Day Literature, which opposed one lecture on tradition with one on experiment in various literary fields. In poetry, Edmund Blunden spoke for tradition and Edith Sitwell for experiment.

As early as 1912 John Drinkwater noticed two divergent camps and wrote of them in the Poetry Review under the title, "Tradition and Technique". In the first group were:

"men who, seeing nothing but danger in models that were being so woefully imitated, determined to find, or at least to spare no pains in seeking, some new beginnings. All example was suspect. With perfect understanding they saw that formlessness, anything was better than the damned jingle of a form that had no more life in it than wax flowers under a bell."

and in the second:

"[they] have chosen their way with as much deliberation as their fellows. The danger of their choice is certainly greater. Worthily to continue a tradition is at least as difficult as to invent one. And
"whilst the more extreme revolutionaries are in peril of the grief that comes of inability to find expression, these others are in peril of the scorn that would inevitably follow any weakening of the power of selection into mere acceptance of any tradition that happened to impose itself upon them." (1)

As his poetry makes clear, Drinkwater favours following in the traditional paths, modifying them as the individual finds necessary. This was a common conclusion, Livingston Lowes concluded even more forcefully;

"poetry becomes original by breaking with tradition at its peril. Cut the connection with the great reservoir of past achievement, and the stream runs shallow, and the substance of poetry becomes tenuous and thin." (2)

And this is in line with the whole argument of Eliot's article, although as there is no reference to Eliot in Lowes' book, his conclusion seems to be an independent one.

Certainly then it cannot be thought of as an essentially Georgian feature that the poets saw themselves as working within a tradition. The difference between the Georgians and, for example, Eliot lies in the definition of tradition. Drinkwater's article is specifically about technique and he says:

"The influence transmitted from one generation to another in poetry is primarily to be traced in that aspect of the art which we call technique. We inherit the thought, the impulse, the spirit of our forerunners only as a part of a cumulative experience which goes to make up the world that we contemplate. But the technique, the expression, the body of poetry, in so far as it is fashioned by example and not as a result of unaided discovery comes from the poets alone." (3)

Here Drinkwater merely mentions en passant the very
tradition of which Eliot wrote when he said of the poet that:

"he must be aware that the mind of Europe — the mind of his own country — a mind which he learns in time to be much more important than his own private mind — is a mind which changes, and that this change is a development which abandons nothing en route, which does not superannuate either Shakespeare, or Homer, or the rock drawing of the Magdalenian draughtsmen." (4)

In fact the Georgian respect for tradition was not confined to technical matters and is reflected in their subjects, but in relation to material they were not self-consciously aware of the tradition as defined by Eliot in his article and amplified by Leavis's criticism later. Ironically it is this conception of a continuing tradition in literature which has consigned the Georgians to a backwater, where condemned for not belonging to the "great tradition" they are further scorned for their reliance on traditional metre and form. This, however, is an oversimplification of their position for they were working at a time when as Drinkwater said poetry was divided into two sorts, that which overthrew all rules and example and that which adhered to conventional styles. This division created an awareness of the importance of tradition which in itself affected the poetry of the period. It is an attitude which shapes much of the criticism of the early twentieth century. Robert Graves' and Laura Riding's A Survey of Modernist Poetry (1927) is centred on the problems of the new poet in relation first to his own time and readers and also to past literature. In this work Graves and Ridings, while defending the more advanced modern poets from the criticism of the reading public, gradually move to a position which
illust"rates a dissatisfaction with modernity for its own sake. The best modernist poetry they say:

"would derive its excellence neither from its reacting against civilization, by satiric or actual primitivism; nor from its proved ability to keep up with or keep ahead of civilization. It would not, however, ignore its contemporaneous universe, for the reason that it would not be stupid, and that it would have a sense of humour - the most intelligent attitude toward history is not to take one's own date too seriously." (5)

In fact Graves's attitude towards tradition changes during his poetic career, though, characteristically, he is outspoken about his stance, whatever it might be. In 1922, in On English Poetry as in the later survey, Graves expressed moderate respect for the past combined with a desire to find a new form and expression for his own age. Having allowed that there are advantages in the traditional forms he says:

"that is no reason for following tradition blindly; it should be possible for a master of words to improvise a new convention whenever he wishes, that will give his readers just the same notion of centuried authority and smoothness without any feeling of contempt." (6)

This position is amplified in an article "The Future of Poetry" of 1926:

"As a well-dyed traditionalist once myself, I can recall my anger and impatience when reading advanced verse which seemed to me utterly unlovely and meaningless; anger and impatience still occasionally arise in me when I read, but for a different reason; I dislike poetry which, while discarding the old usages, does not make effective use of the new methods at its disposal." (7)
By 1962, however, Graves was writing of the "foul tidal basin of modernism" (8) and affirming his belief in a tradition of English poetry (albeit one different from that of Eliot and Leavis). He writes of:

"the hard core of our English poetic inheritance, namely poems inspired by the Muse rather than commissioned by Apollo, God of reason. At Oxford a good many of the younger University members agreed with me that such poems are alone likely to survive concentrated pressure from commercialized or politically slanted literature and entertainment. The ornate academic Victorian tradition and the more recent but no less artificial Franco-American modernism, seemed to them equally bankrupt." (9)

This is an interesting survey of what is, despite a time-lag of some forty years, the Georgian attitude to the poetic tradition. Of the two rejected modes of poetry, one was frequently castigated by the Georgians, the other, founded as a school in opposition to Georgian poetics in their own time was seen as a potent influence only after the wane of Georgianism. Muse poetry is a peculiarly Gravesian concept, as is the abhorrence of its opposite, Appolonian poetry but Graves's two definitions of the term make it clear that his "hard core" of English poets not only includes many of the poets who were the most significant influence on the Georgians but organises this "core" on peculiarly Georgian lines. The Appolonian poetry is:

"composed in the forepart of the mind: wittily should the occasion serve, always reasonably, always on a pre-conceived plan, and derived from a close knowledge of rhetoric, prosody, Classical example, and contemporary fashion"

while:

"Muse poetry is composed at the back of
"the mind: an unaccountable product of a trance in which the emotions of love, fear, anger, or grief are profoundly engaged, though at the same time powerfully disciplined; in which intuitive thought reigns supralogically, and personal rhythm subdues metre to its purpose." (10)

This latter bears a close resemblance to the Georgian definitions of poetry examined in earlier chapters, Lascelles Abercrombie in his _Romanticism_ at one point explores the relation of tradition and form and his conclusions, although couched in very different language bear a general family likeness to Graves's remarks. Talking of romanticism he notices:

"the notion...that romanticism is a rejection of artistic etiquette in favour of unconditional sincerity of expression. For if expression is to be perfectly sincere, it must derive its law solely from the particular emergency of each individual case and not from some habit or inertia of tradition"

and then goes on:

"is there anything specifically romantic here?...As for sincerity, how can art succeed if it is insincere? For art must be expression; and insincere expression is a contradiction in terms - expression which is not expression. When art accepts traditional form merely because it is traditional form art does not live very long: and literary history is strewn with its corpses. But artistic expression can only occur within the limits of a certain medium; the tradition of an art is nothing but the accumulated knowledge of the use of a medium within its limits. Owing to the limits naturally arising from the kind of medium employed, many varieties of imagination will find themselves using a similar form of expression: it is the form, however similar, suitable within the medium to certain varieties of the living
"imagination. Romanticism, insisting on its own peculiar life, likes to be sure that it is as exactly suited as the nature of its medium will allow. But this need not prescribe, within the medium, one kind of form more than another." (11)

Although Abercrombie's ostensible subject is the Romantic, Wordsworth, what he says here is true in general of the Georgian movement. The likeness between this summary and Graves's remarks illustrates this. Flecker, although in temperament and circumstances as well as in poetry quite as different from these two as they from each other, echoed their views in a letter to Monro:

"I'm not a reactionary, but I believe in building on tradition and in the novelty coming from the inspiration not as with the futurists from an exterior formlessness which is damned easy to achieve." (12)

Even where a Georgian seems to be less equivocally confirming suspicions that he is an unthinking traditionalist, there is still the same sense of moving experimentally within the tradition, rather than merely adhering to every rule and precedent. Robert Nichols writing of himself in a short note affirmed:

"I stick to tradition for two reasons - first, because I believe tradition indicates what has been proved convenient in a given medium; second, because, holding that not the greatest talent can create anything substantial and lasting without stiff study, and obstinate work, I believe that the old means are capable of developments which cannot but remain unguessed at by the lazy and fumblers." (13)

This desire to explore the developments possible with the traditional conventions unites the Georgian poets, throughout the period of their development. It is one of the factors which unites them all without
exception and with little variation. As these quotations make clear this is first and foremost reflected in technique, and of each and every Georgian it can be said that however unconventional his technique in one respect, in others he shows the influences of the English tradition. D.H.Lawrence's "Snake", whose form is very nearly free verse, uses traditional even Biblical, speech patterns, Abercrombie's "The Sale of St. Thomas", revolutionary in the force of its realism, is written in conventional blank verse. The total overthrow of respected traditions had no place in the Georgian scheme for a revolution in poetry.

To a certain extent this is reflected in, or is a reflection of the many literary influences upon the Georgian poets. As they were always working consciously within a tradition, the poets who had contributed to that tradition were of importance to them. To a certain extent there is a crude circumstantial explanation for this interest. Literary men have to supplement the income from their genuinely creative work by other writings. Hence, collections of essays on various literary topics as well as monographs about individual poets and on general subjects. Some works like Abercrombie's *The Epic* (1914) and Drinkwater's *The Lyric* (1915) (both in Martin Secker's series *The Art and Craft of Letters*) seem merely to have been written because commissioned and reveal little of a poet's natural preferences in literature. Letters, on the other hand, do provide a reliable guide to the writer's enthusiasms, though some letter writers are more prone to revelations of this kind than others. John Freeman's letters yield:
"my admired Donne"

and of Meredith:

"I admire his poems immeasurably"

also:

"I'm grateful to Blake, as much as to most English poets,"

two outbursts in defence of Swinburne of which this is one:

"We ought to have talked more of Swinburne: fools think him a small poet, or a merely extravagant figure, without sense or meaning, not having in themselves the wit to understand the "masculine persuasive force" beneath the fluency of movement"

and a condemnation of his contemporaries for slighting

the obsequies of C.M.Doughty:

"The greatest man, the greatest writer of our time, was to be cremated, and not one of his contemporaries thought it proper to stand or kneel while his coffin passed out of sight." (14)

Such a profusion of declarations of literary admiration is bewildering and although interesting in terms of Freeman's own life and writings is not really relevant to a study of the Georgian group as a whole. Certain of the Georgians did owe a debt to individual poets which shaped their work, and not that of other Georgians without making their work totally unGeorgian. Dante Gabriel Rossetti's influence on Gordon Bottomley is an unusual feature; Bottomley's interest in Rossetti and the Pre-Raphaelites was lifelong and in his notes to the poet's correspondence with Paul Nash, the painter, Claude Colleer Abbott wrote:

"Gordon Bottomley probably knew more about the Pre-Raphaelites even to their remote ramifications in literature as well as in art, than anyone else in his day. But he could not be persuaded to set it down." (15)
How this seemingly unlikely interest still produces a poet, with the same general characteristics as other Georgians is made clear in Bottomley's letter to Nash where he writes:

"there is a mystic of a fine order in you (which is why you clove to Blake and discarded Rossetti); a quality in you which I can only regard enviously, as I need it and lack it ("This warm kind earth is all I know" - which is why I clove to Rossetti more than Blake)" (16)

Other avowed influences help to explain the divergence in practice between one Georgian and the majority, while confirming an essential unity. Flecker's Preface to The Golden Journey to Samarkand is a good example of this. Flecker confessed in a letter to his friend Frank Savery:

"The Preface written when I was pretty ill - like all the later poems - is not quite sincere. My chief desire was to say what I thought was wanted to shake up the critics: not to expound the essence of poetry, which would take 800 pages. The beginning is ugly enough with "theory" repeated so often - but I re-read the end with pleasure." (17)

The provocative beginning stated that "both our poetic criticism and our poetry are in chaos" (18) and suggested that a lesson be taken from the Continent, and in particular the French Parnassians of whom he wrote:

"The Parnassian School was a classical reaction against the perfervid sentimentality and extravagance of some French Romantics. The Romantics...had done their powerful work, and infinitely widened the scope and enriched the language of poetry. It remained for the Parnassians to raise the technique of their art to a height which should enable them to express the subtlest ideas in powerful and simple
verse. But the real meaning of the term Parnassian may be best understood from considering what is definitely not Parnassian. To be didactic, like Wordsworth, to write dull poems of unwieldy length, to bring, like Tennyson or Browning, poetry of exquisite beauty in monstrous realms of vulgar, feeble, or obscure versifying, to overlay fine work with gross or irrelevant egoism like Victor Hugo, would be abhorrent, and rightly so, to members of this school." (19)

So, it would seem would be a good deal of Georgian poetry. However as the Preface continues the points of contact between the Parnassians, Flecker and the Georgians emerge. I am not suggesting that Flecker was in any way a bridge between two schools equally rigidly defined. What is a more accurate interpretation of the case is that what Flecker found in the Parnassian School of French poets resembles what many other Georgians, embodied into their writing and theory albeit without its coming from the same source. The following quotations illustrate clearly the parallels to Georgian practice, which the foregoing chapters have attempted to define:

"The French Parnassian has a tendency to use traditional forms, and even to employ classical subjects. His desire in writing poetry is to create beauty; his inclination is towards a beauty somewhat statuesque. He is apt to be dramatic and objective rather than intimate."

and:

"It is not the poet's business to save man's soul, but to make it worth saving. It is not his business to make wise reflections about the social and moral problems of the day, but whether inspired by a slum window in Camden Town or by an old volume picked up for a soldo in the streets of Florence, to make beautiful the tragedy, and tragic the beauty, of man's life."
and, finally:

"Those who are forever seeking what they call profundity of inspiration are welcome to burrow in my verse and extract something, if they will, as barren as the few cheap copy-book headings, to which they once reduced the genius of Browning; in the attitude to life expressed in these pages, in the Poet's appreciation of this transient world, the flowers and men and mountains that decorate it so superbly, they will probably find but little edification." (20)

Here, somewhat surprisingly is the same refusal to pontificate on life, the same desire merely to observe and set down the natural phenomena which is characteristic of Georgian theory. Where Flecker's theory and more noticeably his practice is different from that common to most Georgians is his inclusion of literary inspiration, the 'old volume picked up for a soldo in the streets of Florence', and exotic themes, also, often literary in inspiration. While this means that Flecker's work is a variation from the norm, it is not in any true sense, unGeorgian.

The other great influence on Flecker was John Davidson, a more appropriate forbear for a Georgian to acknowledge and yet, one singularly unrecognised elsewhere in Georgian prose. Here, too the connection between the admired poetry and the writer's own work is closely linked to Georgian principles. For Flecker, Davidson was "the greatest poet of his age" of whom he further wrote:

"I have only had the privilege of talking to one great poet in my life and that was John Davidson." (21)

Significantly it is in his essay "John Davidson: Realist. A Point of View" that the following truly Georgian remark is made:
"Poetry has no greater foe than a gaudy
veil of romance, which easily obscures
the import of fact." (22)

In view of the nature of Davidson's work it is
surprising that there is so little trace of his influence
on the group as a whole. It is rather odd that Flecker,
perhaps least like him of all Georgians, should have
been so enthusiastic, when his fellow Georgians hardly
even mentioned him in their prose, although their
poetry seems to develop along the same lines as David-
son's. The reasons for this are difficult to define. It
may be only that the occasion never prompted other
Georgians to praise Davidson but it seems more likely
that as they were not primarily members of a literary
movement they overlooked their debts to their immediate
forebears.

One of the most obvious differences between Flecker
and the majority of the Georgians is made clear by the
critical attitude he displays toward both the Parnass-
ians and John Davidson. This contrasts with the more
personal enthusiasm which coloured Freeman's statements,
for instance. In general the Georgian was often subject
to quite irrational and acritical literary interests.
In this it could be said that he truly belonged to the
tradition of his time to the extent that he often shared
the enthusiasms which contemporary poetry readers dis-
played in their book-buying habits. The following extract
from John Drinkwater's autobiography is quoted at length
because it exemplifies so well this particular limitation
of the Georgian's relation to his immediate forebears:

"I first read Stephen Phillips Poems. It
was an experience never to be forgotten.
It may be that the circumstances of my
young delight have a little affected my
later critical judgment, but with all
"allowances made, I am sure, and on a recent re-reading, that Marpessa is one of the most beautiful poems of the last forty years. Phillips was extravagantly praised by his contemporaries. However good he might be, it was no service to speak of the elder Dumas speaking with the voice of Milton, but even such terms are less irresponsible than the contemptuous disregard of Phillips by critics who hail the publication of a six-page pamphlet by some eminently constipated poet as an event of high literary importance. Alfred Noyes himself has in some measure been a victim of the same kind of caprice. The sparkle and gusto of his early work swept the critics off their feet, and insufficient notice, perhaps, was taken of the dangers inherent in the youthful facility of his verse. But to-day it is not uncommon to find his name omitted altogether from discussions of modern poetry, which is absurd. Waste tissue or not, he remains the poet of some of the most spontaneous lyrics of our time, and he remains the poet of The Torchbearers...These poets, like others similarly tested, will come safely across the quicksands of fashion, having cast the rubbish from their impedimenta. For myself, I have never been in doubt as to the merit of their best work since the days when I first found poetry still walking in our midst. My debt to them is one of lasting gratitude, and it is gladly acknowledged. I can never forget the exaltation with which I read Marpessa on that June evening at Trentham thirty years ago. Certainly, a university could not have augmented that." (23)

Drinkwater's choice of poets is seen here as one made in youthful enthusiasm but preserved into maturity without much critical re-thinking. If these two poets are to survive "the quicksands of fashion" this has not yet been made apparent. In fact, it can safely be assumed that after sixty or seventy years these poets are unlikely ever again to assume the importance they seemed to have for poetry readers at the turn of the century.
The tone of the passage, its whole attitude as revealed in its final sentence illustrate how for Drinkwater these poets were idols for adulation, not masters who helped him learn his craft, examples who helped form his own poetic technique. In fact as his own poetry makes clear there is little in Phillips or Noyes which could be of use to an aspiring poet.

While other Georgians do not always show the same relation to their literary influences it is true that their attitude to literature is one of enthusiasm rather than criticism. Even in cases where there was an important influence exercised over more than one Georgian this was not necessarily the result of critical scrutiny, more often it was caused by a strongly felt but largely unexamined admiration.

The influence of John Donne is a case in point. He was a recognised influence among the Georgian poets many of whom professed great admiration for his work and there is a certain obvious reason why the colloquial style of the earlier poet should have attracted the notice of Georgian poets. The limitations of their critical interest in Donne are, however, illustrated by the wide differences between their style and his. This is not, I think, a case of a genuine deeply significant divergence of poetic method, but an illustration of an innate inability among Georgians to learn from their predecessors in anything but a vaguely imitative way. Hence Freeman's "my admired Donne" which is reflected in the prose of other Georgians.

De la Mare's review of Grierson's edition published in the Edinburgh Review is one of the highest praise:

"Reading him, we do not throw off the world; we are not, as by a miracle, made innocent and happy. 'Witty depravity',
"the sharpest actuality, extremes of exultation and despair, passion and disillusionment, love, death, the grave, corruption - all this is the material of his verse - a verse that breaks into beauty and music the moment feeling and thought are clear and free. Everything that we have - mind, body, soul - he invites to his intimacy." (24)

But there is little evidence here of De la Mare examining the work he admires for valuable examples to sharpen his own poetic technique. The contrast with Eliot's review is inevitable and reflects accurately the different attitudes of the two poets and their colleagues, to the poetic tradition. Despite this there is a considerable distortion in the later view that it was Eliot and his followers who revitalised Donne for the twentieth century, the Georgian admiration seems to indicate that Metaphysical poetry had inherent qualities which naturally appealed to this generation of poets and poetry readers.

Having said this, it is still true that the influence which De la Mare remarked upon in his Edinburgh Review notice of the first Georgian anthology:

"There are many influences perceptible in this volume; but that of Donne - Donne in his headlong rebellious youth - is traceable only in the work of Mr. Rupert Brooke." (25)

and which is borne out by the fact that Brooke himself reviewed Donne's poems in the Nation shows itself in Brooke's poems to be a less important impulse for poetry than it does in Eliot's work. The influence is not so well mastered critically nor so well absorbed creatively. Here is Brooke's poem Song from his 1911 volume.

"Oh! Love "they said," is King of Kings, And Triumph is his crown"...
"Oh! Love" they said, and "Love" they said,
The gift of Love is this;
A crown of thorns about thy head,
and vinegar to thy kiss!"

For what they'd never told me of,
And what I never knew;
It was that all the time, my love,
Love would be merely you." (26)

This shows an obvious relation to Donne's dialogue poems but Brooke's leaning to Donne produces poorer not richer poetry. Elsewhere where the influence is superficially less apparent, the true value of Donne's example can be seen. Not many of the Georgians wrote love poems of the same type as Brooke, though John Freeman, another avowed admirer of Donne was one of the others and it is the dissimilarity in subject matter which conceals the likeness of technique. The Brooke poem is as conversational as any of Donne, if not as boldly so; several Georgian poems are written in this form. De la Mare, Sassoon and Graves all have works in this style in the various Georgian volumes. Furthermore, Donne's conversational style reflects the same use of language as is found in the Georgians, following normal speech rhythm, reacting against 'poetic' diction and decoration. The differences are still enormous and these similarities do not, I think, give evidence of any deep understanding of the great pressure of thought in Donne's poems which makes his colloquial style more vital and immediate than it ever appears in any Georgian poem.

As with Donne so with the majority of the writers who influenced the Georgians. It is, as Drinkwater said, nearly always upon the poem's technique that the influence is felt, and more than that, it is usually at least, in part, a return to plain language and unobtrusive rhythms.
and forms that attracts the Georgian to the work of any particular predecessor. The most obvious example of this is not John Donne but William Wordsworth. Throughout earlier chapters, the likeness of Georgian principles to both precept and practice of Wordsworth has been constantly apparent. Although here, there is a similarity, perhaps more superficial than real, in subject matter.

It is this obvious likeness of Georgian subjects and settings to those of Wordsworth which has forced this particular influence on public attention. As early as the third Georgian Poetry this was being noticed. In T.S. Eliot's review of this volume, he significantly contrasts the Georgians with Donne, while likening them to Wordsworth. His remarks are interesting, not least for the way in which Eliot, in a not wholly favourable review, speaks of the Georgians as though there were grounds for thinking their achievement comparable with that of Wordsworth:

"contemporary English verse has borrowed little from foreign sources; it is almost politically English; the Georgian poets insist upon English countryside and are even positively patriotic."

He emphasises the contrast between Donne:

"where the feeling and the material symbol preserve exactly their proper proportions"

and Wordsworth:

"His daffodil emphasises the importance of the flower for its own sake, not because of association with passions specifically human. In the Georgian poets we observe the same attitude, the emotion is derived from the object and such emotion must either be vague (as in Wordsworth) or, if more definite, pleasing... The Georgian love of nature
"is on the whole less vague than Wordsworth's and has less philosophy behind it: for Wordsworth had a philosophy, thought ill-apprehended from foreign teachers; the Georgian plays more delicately with his subject, and in his style, has often more in common with Stevenson. On the other hand, not having abstractions to fall back upon the modern poet, when he diverts his attention from birds, fields, and villages is subject to lapses of rhetoric from which Wordsworth, with his complete innocence of other emotions than those in which he specialized is comparatively free." (27)

This criticism, although marred in places by special pleading throws interesting light on the Georgians and their period. The contrast with Donne illuminates the special Georgian relationship to the subject, while Eliot's comparison of the Georgian concentration of attention on the object itself with Wordsworth does an injustice to the essence of Wordsworthian inspiration and is not even true to the quoted poem "Daffodils". Why the inaccurate comparison with Wordsworth is difficult to say, the true likeness is in the broad range of setting and ostensible subject and in the style, where according to Eliot the Georgian more resembles Robert Louis Stevenson. It is hard to suppress a suspicion that the review is part of a belittling—Wordsworth campaign; even so it reflects the attitude of the non-Georgian poets of the times and casts light on how the Georgian struck a contemporary poet.

Despite this likeness to Wordsworth not many of the Georgians wrote about him or gave any hint in their prose of a conscious debt. The notable exception to this is Abercrombie and even so, his book, The Art
of Wordsworth was only published posthumously from lectures delivered in 1931. This work is one of avowed enthusiasm for Wordsworth's work:

"I am what is called a Wordsworthian. I will not deny it: I am, Crabb Robinson, that faithful friend, said in 1815: "Wordsworth in answer to the common reproach that his sensibility is excited by objects which produce no effect on others, admits the fact, and is proud of it." The remark exactly fits the sect to which I belong. We Wordsworthians, too, are excited by objects which produce no effect on others; we too are proud of it." (28)

This in itself throws light on the relation of the Georgians to Wordsworth and other passages, too, illustrate clearly how close was the Georgian, and especially the early Georgian theory to that of Wordsworth. The three following extracts from the chapter on construction reveal how much Abercrombie and other Georgians owed to Wordsworth's theory of poetic diction. First of all Abercrombie summarises Wordsworth's Preface to the Lyrical Ballads:

"It is not the business of poets to invent modes of expression, but to take them over from the real language of men, since, provided it is spoken under the all-important condition of excitement, this is not merely the material of poetry, this is poetry"

and then comments:

"In poetic diction so understood, he must even be allowed to have made out his special case in favour of ordinary language. That is to say, words become poetic by being poetically used; and the words most capable of being poetically used are the common words. The general importance of this to critical theory can hardly be over-estimated;"

and:

"Obviously, the richness of poetic possibility
"in the common words does not exclude - as Wordsworth himself showed by his practice - words and turns of language which would scarcely occur anywhere but in poetry. There will always be, to some extent, a language peculiar to poetry; but its validity must depend, of course, on its not being used as a 'mechanical device of style'" (29)

Apart from this full length study it is difficult to find any avowal of the debt to Wordsworth. Davies' list of schoolboy literary favourites adds an interesting note:

"Dave [a young friend who introduced him to Byron] soon got tired of these doings, but the influence of Byron was more lasting on me. It was the first time for me to read verse with enjoyment. I read Shelley, Marlowe, and Shakespeare, indifferent to Wordsworth, but giving him since the attention of wiser days." (30)

This is an unusual instance of a Georgian acknowledgment of Wordsworth (the other favourites are perhaps best treated as they are by Davies as the choice of childhood, though the influence of Byron and Shakespeare is found in some of the mature lyrics).

Edmund Blunden has two interesting references to Wordsworth in his pamphlet, War Poets 1914-18, in the section devoted to Sassoon. Before that, while writing of Brooke, Blunden has shown himself acutely aware of Wordsworth, comparing his war poems with those of Brooke:

"If a broad statement is allowable, Brooke as a war poet belongs to the Wordsworth class. It is true that he tumbled into war's realities briefly...and yet his war poems are abstract. The appeal that his sonnets and those of Wordsworth in this direction make is unconnected with the particulars of war experience." (31)

This is an unlikely situation in which to find Wordsworth, his war poems are by no means a major part
of his work nor are they such that they alone would justify the fame of Wordsworth's name. The use of Wordsworth here is a sign of Blunden's intimate knowledge of his work.

Nonetheless it is the two references which occur in the section in Sassoon which are of greater interest. Here Blunden refers to more generally known aspects of Wordsworth's work and theory:

"if "the eye on the object" is as ample a provision for the result, poetry, as Wordsworth has told us, no soldier poet of that period was more likely to triumph than this one." (32).

Here is the use of Wordsworth as standard which one would expect of a Georgian critic. However, it is not precisely the use one would have forecast. Wordsworth's relevance in the matter of the poet's relationship to his subject is not the aspect which most casual critics of the Georgians consider when they talk of Romantic's influence on the group. Instead they rely on the broad similarity of the rural settings to prove that the Georgians are merely Wordsworth-and-water. In fact, the most important debts to Wordsworth, are, as the Abercrombie quotations showed, to his theory of poetic language and his attitude to subject matter which Eliot remarked upon and which this Blunden passage further proves.

Like Eliot too, Blunden sees Wordsworth surpassed in his own field by the later poets:

"the realism speaks for an ever remarkable truthfulness, incisive in its selected even though common language. Wordsworth has his ideas about this, we know; but he did not see them embodied in such powerful plainness." (33)

The later twentieth century reader has become so
accustomed to considering the Georgians as inferior poets, pale imitations of the Romantics that it is difficult to allow the idea of their surpassing anyone in any field. Nevertheless the claim made here by Blunden for Sassoon, and made in 1959 a full forty years after the end of the war when there is little likelihood of Blunden's critical faculties being dulled by the magnitude of the experience shared by both poets, is worth examining. Nor need it be confined to the work of Sassoon alone.

Wordsworth often lapsed from poetic plainness and the concentration of his 'eye on the object', into the usual eighteenth century poeticalisms and, more often into the world of his 'inward eye' which saw more mystical reality than his outer eye could have conveyed to him. Three stanzas from Lines written in early Spring, a poem which appeared in Lyrical Ballads and can therefore be thought to be not only contemporary with but closely related to Wordworth's own theory of poetry, will serve as an example of how far Wordsworth could retreat from the plain simple expression of observed nature:

"To her fair works did nature link
The human soul that through me ran;
And much it griev'd my heart to think
What man has made of man.

Through primrose-tufts, in that sweet bower,
The periwinkle trail'd its wreathes;
And 'tis my faith that every flower
Enjoys the air it breathes.

The birds around me hopp'd and play'd;
Their thoughts I cannot measure,
But the least motion which they made,
It seem'd a thrill of pleasure." (34)

Of course there are Georgian poems which surpass this in its weaker aspects; the over-obviously poetic term 'wreathes', the too obtrusive rhyme and rhythm, the
inverted sentence structure find their counterparts in many Georgian verses. This poem by Fredegond Shove in the fourth anthology is but one example. There is a curious resemblance between the sentiments of Mrs. Shove's poem and those expressed by Wordsworth. This I would suggest does not represent a debt to Wordsworth in any genuine sense, merely a reliance on a 'poetic' habit of thought which became popular after Wordsworth:

"I sat in heaven like the sun
Above a storm when winter was
I took the snowflakes one by one
And turned their fragile shapes to glass:
I washed the rivers blue with rain
And made the meadows green again.

I took the birds and touched their springs,
Until they sang unearthly joys:
They flew about on golden wings
And glittered like an angel's toys:
I filled the fields with flowers' eyes,
As white as stars in Paradise.

And then I looked on man and knew
Him still intent on death — still proud;
Whereat into a rage I flew
And turned my body to a cloud:
In the dark shower of my soul
The star of earth was swallowed whole." (35)

There is more than Wordsworth's influence here. The image of the creator, the 'metaphysical' atmosphere of the whole, owes its obvious debt to Donne and his contemporaries. It is what the poet has done with her influence that is of interest here. Wordsworth and Donne are here stronger than the poet's own self, because the influence has not become part of a genuine all-round conception of poetic art. The shortcomings of both poets are represented all too clearly, Mrs. Shove lapses in almost exactly the same way as Wordsworth into mere poeticisms, and like Donne at his worst only obscures
her thought (which is not comparable in quality with
that of either Wordsworth or Donne) by her imagery.

However as Blunden remarks the war poets and
notably Sassoon surpassed Wordsworth in the practice
of his principles. Here, also from the fourth volume
are three stanzas of Sassoons which never abandon the
genuine inflection of conversation. Grammar, vocabulary,
and rhythm are indistinguishable from those found in
every day conversation, and yet are so perfectly suited
to the theme by Sassoon's clever choice of the right
conversational tone that they become poetry. So accurate
is the reproduction of the situation that there is no
need for more than 'the eye on the object':

"Does it matter? – losing your legs?...
For people will always be kind,
And you need not show that you mind
When the others come in after hunting
To gobble their muffins and eggs.

Does it matter? – losing your sight?...
There's such splendid work for the blind;
And people will always be kind,
As you sit on the terrace remembering
And turning your face to the light.

Do they matter? – those dreams from the pit?...
You can drink and forget and be glad,
And people won't say that you're mad;
For they'll know that you've fought for your
country,
And no one will worry a bit." (36)

It must not be thought, however, that Wordsworth's
influence did not also work in more obvious ways.
Gibson's many narratives of country people's tragedies
bear an obvious resemblance to such works of Wordsworth
as "The Idiot Boy". Similarly Davies' observation of
local natural detail owes something to that of Wordsworth,
as shown in such poems as those "To the Daisy" and
"To a Small Celandine". To later readers and critics it is easy to think of the Georgians as uncritically writing in a rather weary tradition begun by Wordsworth and by the beginning of this century ready for a rest. This is not really at all true. Of the nineteenth century poets only Arnold consistently defended Wordsworth in his prose and wrote poems within the same tradition, though even these are few in relation to Arnold's total output. Most of the Georgians' immediate predecessors looked to Tennyson rather than Wordsworth and the nineties poets beyond them to the Elizabethan and Caroline poets. It is difficult to find a poet before the Georgian who understood Wordsworth's contribution to the development of poetic technique, especially in the field of language, as intelligently as Abercrombie. Nor are there before the Georgians any poets of comparable stature working positively in a Wordsworthian tradition. This is not to overlook Tennyson, for, although he was an undoubted admirer of Wordsworth, his own stature and character was such that Wordsworth was not so important an influence. Tennyson uses Wordsworth by picking up the Tennysonian in the earlier poet. Moreover he then passed on to the late nineteenth century a Tennyson-modified form of Wordsworth. It is precisely because the Georgians reacted against Tennyson that they were in a position to see afresh the true contribution of Wordsworth to the development of poetry and to use these contributions meaningfully in their work. It is a contribution, which despite the French-American schools, has been of lasting importance to twentieth-century poetry writers, sanctioning the almost complete abandonment of such concepts as poetic diction. This success in finally abandoning eighteenth-century classical standards has made the
Georgian achievement in this respect look less significant than it really was.

One other poet writing just before the Georgians although not strictly a Wordsworthian was working on the same lines. This was Thomas Hardy, and his influence on the Georgians is more general and more direct than their admiration of him made plain in their prose. Hardy was, of course, still alive when the Georgian anthologies were published and several of the poets were introduced to him. Edmund Blunden wrote a pamphlet on the subject of his two visits to Max Gate, (37) where he visited with an introduction from Sassoon who tells of his meetings in his autobiography The Weald of Youth. (38) Marsh had met Hardy, of course, for instance at Edmund Gosse's literary gatherings (39) and the fourth Georgian Poetry was dedicated "Thomas Hardy". All this, of course, does not add up to a literary influence, though Hardy's character was not such that he would have attracted the attention of poets had they not had a regard for his work.

Abercrombie's only other critical work besides The Art of Wordsworth entirely devoted to one writer is his Thomas Hardy: A Critical Study of 1912. The book is written with this intention stated at the outset:

"I have simply attempted to criticize my private belief that Thomas Hardy's books are among the greatest things in our modern literature; and, more generally, to discuss not so much their exact "place", as the way they utter certain characteristics of modern consciousness." (40)

The whole of Hardy's work is discussed but the following comment on Hardy's best poems can be taken to indicate what it was the Georgians so admired in his poetry and how this admiration shaped their own writing:
"[The poems] are momentary dramas of passionate or ironical human event, in which the ardent emotional essence of character or conduct is so fined down and intensified, that it needs but to be stated in some undecorated vigour of language, masterfully controlled into pattern, to become unquestionable poetry." (41)

The longest section of the book is devoted to The Dynasts for Abercrombie expressed the belief that:
"It may well turn out that, in absolute value, his greatest work is The Dynasts."
and also that:
"It is the most characteristic poem of our age; and characteristic in a profound fashion that has not lately been achieved by poetry among us - in the fashion of philosophy." (42)

These are interesting statements, the first because it has not been sanctioned by the later twentieth century critics who, although they have turned attention from the novels to the poems, have not placed much emphasis on this dramatic poem. The second is interesting because it does not mention what would seem to be the most obvious reason for any Georgian's interest in The Dynasts, that is its dramatic form. This, I take to be significant as it indicates how completely Abercrombie accepted the form of the work, seeing no need to draw special attention to it or spring to its defence. Such is the Georgian's interest in the dramatic form in poetry that he is not hampered by this in his appreciation of The Dynasts. It may well be that the failure of the poem to attract the attention which it deserves stems from the decline of acceptance of this peculiar form. Undoubtedly the work had an influence on the Georgians
because of its form. As practitioners of poetic drama they could hardly fail to be interested in this gigantic work, and Abercrombie's emphasis on The Dynasts is echoed by other Georgians.

John Freeman in his book The Moderns has a chapter on Hardy and here too The Dynasts is singled out:

"Whether viewed simply as drama, or simply as philosophy The Dynasts is of profoundest importance." (43)

But there is praise also for Hardy's gifts as lyricist and in this, interestingly Freeman couples Hardy's work with Wordsworth's:

"Whatever high station he may ultimately hold among English poets, he will hold it equally by reason of his pure lyrical gift touching an immense number of themes, and by reason of his moral earnestness of his work, as notable in this as Wordsworth's own. That is to say, he has laid the surest foundations of enduringness. Like Wordsworth, he has avoided the merely pretty, the merely easy, and sought in the lives of obscure men some feature of the eternal. Take from these poems their occasional slyness, and you have much that Wordsworth might have written in moods of misgiving. Each poet has that sense of the meaning and value of common life which we are apt to think an exclusive characteristic of our own day." (44)

This is truly a poet's criticism. Freeman finds in Hardy the things which interest him in the practice of poetry writing. In this the connection of the two poets, not really as similar as Freeman makes out, reveals exactly what it was in each that the Georgian found important; and to confirm this, Freeman states as much in the closing sentence. Not only Hardy's subjects interested Freeman, however, but also his technique and this too reveals the Georgian poet's bias in reading
as well as writing poetry:

"I think he is as finely dowered as any poet of our time. Music reigns in his verse." (45)

This is a surprising judgment and in general critics of Hardy have remarked on the difficulties of his rhymes, and considered his technical achievements uneven. Even those critics who have defended Hardy's technique could hardly be said to find music in his poems. And yet Freeman does. This reflects the true Georgian attitude to poetic style: the very prosaic nature of Hardy's vocabulary and grammar attracts the Georgian, where it sets an obstacle between other readers and the poetry, and the Georgian, therefore, has no difficulty in hearing music in the lyrics.

So subdued is Freeman's criticism to his own standards in poetry writing that it tells the reader far more about the writer than about Hardy. This is not always the case and De la Mare whose own poetry is in many ways very different from Hardy's is correspondingly revealing about the older poet. At the same time his review, first published in the Times Literary Supplement of 1919, shows what it was in Hardy's work which made him such an influence on the Georgians: Freeman in his review conferred this accolade on Hardy:

"The praise that an imaginative writer of our own race might chiefly covet falls securely upon him - he is an English poet." (46)

and De la Mare echoes this:

"No other poetry is richer in scene, within doors or without; in landscape, - its times and lights and seasons; in Englishness. (47)

De la Mare writes interestingly too of Hardy's
realism:

"It may be convenient to call him a realist - though what poet, if reality is the habitation of the spirit as well as of the body, can be anything else is a nice question. A more precise term would be realizationist." (48)

This remark helps to relate De la Mare's own fantasies to the more general Georgian outward looking reporting of nature. For De la Mare, reality was something, as he says, of "the spirit as well as of the body" and for this reason, doubtless he had no difficulty in seeing his work published alongside that of, for example, Gibson and Davies, whose realism is, like Hardy's, more a matter of the material world.

When it comes to The Dynasts, there is reprinted in Private View his original review from the Saturday Westminster Gazette with De la Mare's outspoken verdict:

"Here is a book, if ever there was one, concerning which we feel we can predict with assurance that it will survive far beyond our own transitory generation." (49)

In these two reviews are two statements about Hardy's use of language which further emphasise both how important was this aspect of poetry writing to the Georgians, and how influential was Hardy in this connection. From The Dynasts review:

"As for Mr. Hardy's words, they are wraiths of reality, a kind of phantom presentment of things themselves in all their most peculiar significance; but things, let it be said, always and ever in relation to Humanity - in all its guises and complexities the true protagonist of this drama."

and from the later article:

"The style is often crustacean...The thought, too, may be as densely burdened in its expression as the scar of a tree
"by the healing saps that have enwarted
its surface. But what rare and wondrous
clumps of mistletoe bedeck the branches.
Stubborn the medium may be, but with
what mastery is it compelled to do this
craftsmen's bidding." (50)

This, I think is an expression of the Georgian ideal
for style, and language. The admiration for Hardy is for
a poet who approached more nearly to this ideal than
any of the Georgians could.

It is this which makes Hardy such an important figure
and at the same time accounts for the relative unimport-
ance as influence of Housman. Not that Housman's work was
overlooked, but formally and especially stylistically he
had little to offer. Even so he was not altogether ignored
and Shanks in his article "The 'New' Poetry, 1914-1925:
A Survey" in the Quarterly Review of January, 1926 couples
the two poets:

"They were, rather, premature Georgians
themselves, like guns secretly established
and waiting for the course of events to
unmask them...both Mr. Hardy and Mr.
Housman, in their different ways, turned
from the exhausted and etiolated Tennysonian
manner, from that Swinburnian manner which
was so fatally easy for any imitator to
acquire and so impossible for any imitator
to put to the smallest living use. Poetry
goes down the hill when poets mechanically
look at things as their predecessors have
looked at them. The change that occurs when
they rub their eyes and look for themselves
is generally slight, or appears slight, when
criticism attempts to describe it. But it
implies a return to reality and the novelty,
whatever it may be is priceless. Mr. Hardy
and Mr. Housman achieved this return, and
each contributed a new method of using
language...Neither, however, has at any time
been considered a revolutionary and yet this
epithet, odd as it may now seem to recall it,
was freely applied to the Georgians of 1912,
who attempted the same return with less success." (51)
This is going further than the Georgians themselves would have done ten years before the article was written, though it is a view which posterity has echoed unfailingly since.

Another figure from the immediate literary past who would seem to have sufficient in common with the Georgians to have been a powerful influence is Kipling, but Georgian attitudes to Kipling were very varied. Edward Shanks wrote a full length study, but its title *Rudyard Kipling: A Study in Literature and Political Ideas*, reveals the unGeorgian nature of its content. It does not seem either that Shanks was writing the book from a position of genuine enthusiasm, and the following quotation, ostensibly a defence of Kipling, makes it clear why he was an un congenial figure to the Georgians:

"Kipling is still read, and read widely and with pleasure, and therefore, since he is essentially a man with a doctrine to preach, has a formidable effect on innumerable minds. He is a great artist. He is a political philosopher with a passionate belief in his own conclusions and an unsurpassed power in recommending them to the minds of others. Because he is both these things he is an historical force which we ought to endeavour to evaluate in all its aspects." (52)

The Georgians, almost without exception, had a mistrust of the didactic in art, as they had of any attempt to impose a philosophy on experience, and this must be the main reason why Kipling, whose verse technique might be thought to have taught the Georgians much, is seldom quoted with admiration. Monro's outburst on the possibility of Kipling's being made laureate:

"How appalling if the choice had fallen on Kipling!" (53)
is unequalled for directness elsewhere. There is occasional recorded admiration, for instance, a footnote in Hassall's biography of Marsh quotes the following:

"In Flecker's last letter (June 5th) he had said:
"I wish they would make Rudyard Kipling Poet Laureate like sensible people..."
And Brooke writing in a Canadian railway train exclaimed:
"I say, do just see that the Laureateship is kept. It would be a frightful scandal if it were abolished. Why not Bridges? I hope Violet'll see that it's all right. Kipling'd be fine too." (54)

This hardly amounts to a critical attitude of relevance to Georgian creative writing. The tone of Brooke's letter, especially is very light-hearted and as Hassall refers in his biography to a schoolboy paper by Brooke on modern poetry where Kipling is criticised for his materialism and Brooke is said to have:

"agreed with the critic who said that turning over the pages of Kipling 'one feels as if one is sitting under a palm tree, reading life by flashes of superb vulgarity!'" (55)

it seems not to reflect any genuine admiration. The quotation by Brooke possibly reveals another reason why Kipling did not have a more profound influence on the Georgians. That is because of his so-called vulgarity; not the vulgarity of some of his characters, which is surpassed by Sassoon among others, but the vulgarity of his sentiments. The very Englishness of the Georgians made them more reticent about their emotions, and, as a consequence, unenthusiastic about Kipling's seeming brashness.

The influences which affected the Georgians have not been exhausted, and indeed it ought to be emphasised
that in so far as there never were any Georgian rules binding a coterie of poets there could be no avowed father figure. The range of poets to whom the various volumes of *Georgian Poetry* were dedicated is a witness to the general eclecticism of both editor and contributor. The first volume was:

"Dedicated to Robert Bridges by the writers and the editor"

The second simply:

"In Memoriam R.B. J.E.F."

The third to Edmund Gosse, the fourth to Thomas Hardy and the final volume to Alice Meynell. What all these writers had in common was acquaintance and sometimes friendship with Marsh, but there is also some reflection of literary taste as well. No movement which published dedications to Bridges and to Hardy can be summed up simply in terms of a single uncomplicated influence or tradition. There is, however, one poet whose work did have a shaping influence on the Georgian movement, and that, of course, is Masefield.

Because he contributed to the volumes it is easy to overlook the importance of the debt which the Georgians owed to this poet. Moreover it is not exclusively on account of his poetry that Masefield plays such an important part in the history of Georgianism. As was seen in an earlier chapter, the popularity of *The Everlasting Mercy* created a new market for poetry, and awakened both public and poets to the possibilities in this field of literature. Frank Swinnerton, working in a publishers at this period as well as embarking on his own career as novelist was in a good position to judge the importance of literary events and he tells us:

"from a historical point of view it is necessary that the importance of Masefield
"in the Georgian panorama should be emphasised. He, among the Georgians, first made a new poetry a rage. Whatever the cause, and whatever one may think of the poetry, he did this before Edward Marsh schemed with his fellow-enthusiasts to produce an anthology; and "The Everlasting Mercy" was the work that started all the excitement." (56)

It is the popularity of Masefield's work that makes it so important in the literary history of the period; and it is this aspect, too, which was an important factor in the Georgian development. As the Georgians were intent on bringing poetry to the attention of the reading public, it is not surprising that the work of this poet who had effortlessly succeeded in making poetry a best-seller, should have influenced them. It was on account of his popularity that Marsh insisted that Masefield contributed to the first volume, although Masefield himself, with some justification, was reluctant because he felt that as an established poet he had no rightful place among the Georgians. What Masefield gave the younger poets was ground for hope. Now writer of poetry at that period could have resisted the thought that if Masefield could be popular so could he; provided, of course, that the poet in the first place was concerned with his readership.

More precisely he offered ground for hope that the very sort of poetry the Georgians were writing could be as popular as Masefield's. It will not do to attribute to the desire to emulate Masefield's success, the Georgian's choice of poetic style, matter and form. Already before 1911, the Georgians or at least some of them were writing in what later could be seen to be a typically Georgian way. W.H.Davies' *Farewell to Poesy*.
from which poems were chosen for the first Georgian anthology was published in 1910. A surprising number of volumes by Georgians were published in 1911. Brooke's Poems, Davies' The Soul of Joy, Flecker's Forty-two poems, Monro's Before Dawn are a few from which Marsh selected poems. It would be impossible for all these poems to have been written with an eye to Masefield's success in the market, nor could the publishers have fully realised the importance of Masefield's book when these other books were planned. What Masefield's book did was to encourage the writing and publication of poetry, to cause it.

Masefield, although not a popular writer before the publication of The Everlasting Mercy was a recognised poet and to a certain extent it is through him that the Georgian movement is linked to the other recognised poets of the period. Masefield knew Yeats, frequented "The Cheshire Cheese" and was intimate with Synge and this inevitably affected his work and thus that of the Georgians. The influence of Synge was evidently most important and Masefield has recorded (57) how he sought to find English themes and to use English dialects for drama in the way in which Synge did. This in turn influenced the Georgians. In fact, it is perhaps not too much to state that the "Celtic Twilight", through Masefield, gave momentum to the desire among the Georgians to exploit England poetically. Because England seems a more or less obvious theme for writers in English, this curious parallel between the Irish writers of the early twentieth century and the English writers of a decade or so later, has been overlooked. But no other group of poets has been quite so self-conscious about
their Englishness as were the Georgians. When Wordsworth writes of the Lake District, for example, we do not feel that he is writing of England and yet this feeling of England is behind much Georgian topographical and rural poetry. If Masefield was conscious of the influence of Synge in directing his work to unexplored native English backgrounds and subjects, the Georgians in their turn show no sign of consciously following in the path indicated by the Irish poets, probably because it was Masefield who directed them in this way.

What The Everlasting Mercy did for poets, besides giving them a basis from which to work for public recognition of poetry, was to open up and make acceptable a new range of subjects for poetry. It was Masefield who pioneered the rural setting for drama narrative, and Masefield's countryside was not gentle, decorative and tame; it was a fit setting for the stories he had to tell, of jealousy, aspirations foiled, hopes dashed, with sudden death, and murder a not infrequent conclusion. The stories, too, were new to poetry and must have helped Gibson, for instance, to develop his own narrative technique. Finally the language of Masefield's poetry prepared the way for the greater freedom which the Georgians enjoyed, to use an everyday vocabulary and a natural grammatical rhythm.

Not that there is much evidence in the Georgian's prose of a great admiration for Masefield. Unlike Hardy he did not symbolise an ideal success, but seemed more, to be a fellow worker. Perhaps because he was represented in the Georgian volumes, and more than probably because he was represent of the unevenness of his work, Masefield as poet, is not accorded the place he deserves in the
Georgian's criticism of poetry. Siegfried Sassoon went so far as to publish a parody of Masefield's "The Daffodil Fields" called "The Daffodil Murderer" (58) which exposes all the crudities of Masefield's style, and the melodrama of his narrative events. Monro in his Some Contemporary Poets was lukewarm even grudging about Masefield's achievement:

"Neither his philosophy nor his science takes us very far beyond Tennyson"

"he has written too carelessly and printed too often. He is the opposite of A.E.Housman. His best filters through long passages of the mediocre, and, on account of too little patience in himself he has sorely tried the patience of an expectant and enthusiastic public." (59)

Nor did Edward Shanks award Masefield more than good marks for trying:

"There is no subject which is unfit for poetry; all depends on what the poet makes of his subject. And, though it is no innovation to treat of contemporary life in verse, yet Mr. Masefield should have been commended for his effort to achieve an always useful and difficult thing. It was not from the conception that his errors sprang but from the treatment." (60)

It begins to seem like the old story of the prophet lacking honour in his own country. Undoubtedly what Masefield had achieved made the Georgians' innovations possible, and also no doubt his success made the Georgians overlook how much they owed to their elder contemporary.

Masefield was not the only Georgian to have an influence on the movement. Lascelles Abercrombie although much more a part of the Georgian movement, was greatly admired and undoubtedly had a considerable influence on the other Georgians. Gibson's article on Abercrombie is full of the highest praise:
"first, and foremost, he was a great poet"

"Few poets have at their command a richer and more various vocabulary, or a more flexible and resourceful control of rhythmical incantation."

"But it is in its range and diversity that Abercrombie's genius is most astonishing - his skill in transmuting realism, his faculty for expressing ecstasy in images of a vital and telling precision." (61)

While this is more extravagant praise than is found elsewhere it reflects a belief in Abercrombie shared by the Georgians, if not by succeeding generations. It is this which makes Abercrombie's statements about his beliefs so important to a study of the Georgian movement. His home at Ryton acted as a country centre for the Georgian movement, and from there Abercrombie played an important part in shaping it, especially in the early days.

Whereas Marsh had the personal magnetism and organisational ability which implemented the idea of Georgian Poetry, it was Abercrombie who, on account of his much admired poetry and poetic theory, moulded into a unified group the few Georgians, Brooke, Drinkwater, Bottomley, Gibson and Davies, who really gave the movement its early character. The only significant contributor who does not belong in this list is De la Mare, who to a certain extent always remained aloof from the group. In this connection it is interesting to note the way in which Pound singled out Abercrombie as his chief enemy in the field of poetry - mainly on account of his influence: the following defence which Pound wrote of his ill-timed satirical poem on Rupert Brooke which appeared in Blast just after Brooke's death
illustrates this:

"The verse contains nothing derogatory. It is a complaint against a literary method. Brooke got perhaps a certain amount of vivid poetry in life and then went off to associate with literary hen-coops like Abercrombie in his writings." (62)

Furthermore Abercrombie's plea for a return to Wordsworth so enraged Pound that he wrote to him in the following terms:

"Stupidity carried beyond a certain point becomes a public menace. I hereby challenge you to a duel, to be fought at the earliest moment that is suited to your convenience." (63)

The duel was avoided by Abercrombie's cleverly outwitting Pound over the weapons; Abercrombie's choice being the unsold copies of the author's own books which caught Pound neatly either way and he withdrew the challenge.

In this chapter I have tried to show both the Georgian attitudes to tradition and individual predecessors and at the same time examine some of the poets whom they acknowledged as influences upon their work. This chapter does not set out to be an exhaustive study of the formative influences on Georgian poetry because although this would be interesting it is not so valuable as in the case of greater poets, nor, I think, so relevant to the present study as a consideration of the subject from a more Georgian viewpoint.

Here is a selection of the poets whom they themselves recognised (a selection which omits the influence of Crabbe and Clare on Blunden and of Skelton on Graves) as being important in their poetic development. In this way it becomes clear, I think that the Georgians belonged to a continuous tradition which has often in the twentieth century been eclipsed by the "line of wit".
This tradition, which has always preferred colloquial to poetic language and rhythms and common to grandiose themes has, however, run steadily through English poetry, though sometimes as in the case of the Georgians, it has only been visible in minor poetry.
CHAPTER 8. NOTES.


(3) J. Drinkwater: op. cit. p. 296.


(9) ibid. Foreword pp. ix-x.

(10) ibid. p. 10.


(16) ibid. p. 230.


(18) J. E. Flecker. Preface to The Golden Journey to Samarkand (1913) reprinted in Collected Frose (1920) pp. 237-41. It is interesting that Flecker should have turned to the Parnassians while Pound and the Imagists looked to the late Symbolists who modified the Parnassian creed by rejecting their objective reporting in favour of the portrayal of moods, and by a more violent abandonment of conventional forms.
CHAPTER 8. NOTES (continued)

(19) ibid. p. 239.
(20) ibid. pp. 239, 240-1 and 241 respectively.
(22) ibid. p. 192.
(23) J.Drinkwater: Discovery pp. 92-3.
(24) W.De la Mare: Private View 1953. p. 160.
(25) W.De la Mare: "Georgian Poetry" in Private View 1953. p. 131. The review was originally published in the Edinburgh Review April 1913.
(29) ibid. pp. 83, 90, and 90-1 respectively.
(33) ibid. p. 29.
(34) W.J.B.Owen ed: Wordsworth and Coleridge: Lyrical Ballads 1798. 1967. p. 66. not without interest are the opening remarks of Owen's Preface: "This edition...replaces that by Harold Littledale first published in 1911" (p. iii).
(36) ibid. p. 133.
(37) E.Blunden: Quest of Thomas Hardy Beaumaris 1964.
(38) S.Sassoon. Siegfried's Journey 1945 pp. 147ff.
(41) ibid. pp. 129-30.
(42) ibid. pp. 17 and 138.
CHAPTER 8. NOTES continued.


(45) ibid. p. 140.

(46) ibid. p. 142.

(47) W. De la Mare: Private View 1953. p. 101.

(48) ibid. p. 97.

(49) ibid. p. 23.

(50) ibid. pp. 27 and 102 respectively.


(52) E. Shanks: Rudyard Kipling A Study in Literature and Political Ideas. 1940. p. 16.


CHAPTER 9. CONCLUSION.

In the preceding chapters I have tried to define Georgianism, both by critical and historical methods. What emerges is a picture of the movement superficially not unlike that pictured by the average twentieth century poetry reader. The poets were, as suspected, fond of natural themes, unadventurous in matters of form and style, influenced by Wordsworth and largely cut off from modern developments in both society and poetry. What makes this picture inaccurate is not so much its factual content as the overall critical bias which shapes the whole. What is missing from this picture is the vitality which the Georgians gave to their poetic theory because it was always held with convinced belief and often as a result of careful thought and conscious choice as well. This conviction of the Georgians has puzzled some later critics who have noticed a discrepancy between Edward Marsh's first Prefatory Note and the poetry which he selected for his anthologies. As David Daiches says:

"these poets had nothing new to say; neither their subject matter nor their technique was in any degree original. They...produced what was on the whole a quiet, unambitious verse, restrained in mood and low in temperature. The prevailing form was somewhat undisciplined blank verse, though lyrical stanzas of various kinds were also common. It was a simple poetry, easy to understand, written on a single level, posing no problems and solving none. Why then, the pretentious introduction, the fanfare of trumpets hailing a new era?" (1)

The answer to Daiches' question lies in the tone in which he, although adopting to a certain extent the defence of the Georgians, speaks of their achievement.
A whole chapter is devoted to Georgian poetry because:

"The Georgian poets, sitting in their quiet gardens in the twilight of Europe, deserve a chapter to themselves; they have often been too lightly dismissed, too easily misjudged, and some clarification of their position and their contribution is necessary." (2)

Despite this Daiches later writes so scathingly of their poetry; 'low in temperature', 'undisciplined blank verse' and such phrases are scarcely calculated to help a reassessment of the Georgian contribution. It is small wonder that he was so surprised at Marsh's totally different tone proclaiming his "belief that English poetry is now once again putting on a new strength and beauty". (3) What Daiches seems unable to realise is that no poet consciously writes "undisciplined blank verse" and he is therefore unprepared to discover in, for example, Georgian blank verse what the Georgians themselves considered they were making of the form. What seems to the critic undisciplined, seems to the poet, free, exploratory, unhampered by convention, well adapted to subject, author and tone. So it was with poetry 'low in temperature' though this term is rather vague. John Freeman has recorded his own views of deliberately low-keyed poetry. Writing to Gibson about a recent edition of his earlier book Daily Bread Freeman discusses the question with a thoroughness which Daiches' phrase scarcely prepares the reader to expect:

"The book triumphs by its avoidances, though that's a negative tribute and involves of course an admission, viz: that the interest of the stories is necessarily restricted and does not reach intensity except rarely. This really is the question for the author to answer,...Is the sacrifice of intensity, salience, extravagant beauty,
"really essential, and is it really so little as to be easily made? These low-toned narratives can be consummate, as Crabbe is often consummate; but are they not sometimes too dull, in their time and motion, to stir one's heart and mind very sharply? I'm not asking for artificial stimulation for mere sensation-alism in verse; but does poetry breathe quite easily and purely in a heavy, damp air, in a dull damp city?" (4)

The 'triumph by avoidances' is characteristic of much Georgian poetry and it was in the negative aspect of poetry that the Georgians most distinctively justified Marsh's claim that theirs was a new poetry. It is not easy to see this poetry now in a more positive light than Daiches sees it without making a continual effort to see Georgian poetry as a conscious refusal to write elaborate, intellectually demanding and emotionally intense poetry. The poetry of simple language and emotion is too easily mistaken for the work of a simple poet, writing what came naturally to his too fluent pen. This picture is reinforced by a contrast with younger contemporary poets working hard amassing 'disparate experience' and other Eliot-prescribed qualifications for poetry. A better contrast to the Georgians' poetic methods is provided by their predecessors. It is easier to see their deliberately anti-poetic language and themes as a bold attempt to innovate against a background of such work as Symon's translation from the French of Mallarme published in 1899 in a book, typically entitled Images of Good and Evil. The poem is called Sea-Wind:

"The flesh is sad, alas! and all the books are read.

Flight, only flight! I feel that birds are wild to tread
"The floor of unknown foam, and to attain the skies!
Nought, neither ancient gardens mirrored in the eyes,
Shall hold this heart that bathes in waters its delight,
O nights! nor yet my waking lamp, whose lonely light
Shadows the vacant paper, whiteless profits best,
Nor the young wife who rocks her baby on her breast.
I will depart! O steamer, swaying rope and spar,
Lift anchor for exotic lands that lie afar!
A weariness, outworn by cruel hopes, still clings
To the last farewell handkerchief's last beckonings!
And are not these, the masts inviting storms, not these
That an awakening wind bends over the wrecking seas,
Lost, not a sail, a sail, a flowering isle, ere long?
But, O my heart, hear thou, hear thou, the sailor's song!" (5)

Only when the Georgians had successfully shifted poetry away from such literary elaborations could Freeman enjoy the luxury of doubts as to the total abandonment of extravagance. But only now as the Nineties like the Georgians themselves are emerging from the more obscure shelves of libraries can the element of revolt in Georgian poetry be properly understood. For the Georgians, however, there is the ironic consolation that their language and themes are assumed to be natural and undemanding (if uninterestingly so), which was exactly what they hoped to achieve for poetry.

It is because of their peculiar historical position, reacting against now obscure Tennysonian poetry and flourishing briefly just before fame and success crowned the totally different modern work of Pound and Eliot that the Georgians suffer from this refusal, even by
critics, like Daiches, who set out to be fair to their achievement, to see their work as other than mechanically conceived and framed in forms enfeebled by use. This is why it is important when looking at their poetry to look at the prose which they also wrote in considerable quantity. Their statements nowhere constitute a manifesto or even anything approaching such an utterance, nor can the student, however diligent, unearth a formula which will automatically distinguish Georgian poetry from other work. Simply this is because their attitudes to their work did not form the right basis for a well-defined coherent group working in accordance with a published creed. The contrast with the Imagists is obvious and usefully reinforces the point that this vagueness about the definition of Georgianism (a word which the Georgians themselves scarcely used) is related precisely to the sort of poetry which they were writing.

Having said this, is it still possible to consider 'The Georgians' as a meaningful entity in literary history? It is, provided the Georgians are seen as a more or less definite group of poets, working at a particular time and under particular conditions. The term 'Georgian' has little meaning if it is stretched to cover all the literary output of the reign of George V nor is it very helpful to consider as 'Georgian' a certain type of pastoral lyric verse of any period after about 1880. There is certain to be disagreement about the actual limits of Georgianism. Whereas hardly anyone could quarrel with the Georgianism of Ralph Hodgson, John Drinkwater and W.H. Davies, the case of D.H. Lawrence, Robert Graves, Edward Thomas or even
Robert Frost is not so easily decided. However to arrive at a position where such cases can be argued critically means a genuine awareness of the essence of Georgianism. It is hoped that the foregoing chapters have contributed to such an awareness.

In these earlier chapters an attempt has been made to look at Georgian poetry as nearly as possible with Georgian eyes. To see their work without the prejudice built up by succeeding decades, beginning with the twenties while their work still flourished. This has meant that there has been at times an uncritical adoption of Georgian criteria in the discussion of individual poems. Following on from this the treatment of the Georgians as poets has included little discrimination between the stature and achievement of the various members of the group. To adopt this attitude is necessary, I think, because it allows the Georgians to speak for themselves in a manner more closely related to the way in which they thought themselves to be speaking, and reflects at the same time their effect on a contemporary audience, which without the fifty years of literary history which have followed, could not so readily have sorted out major minor poets from minor and downright insignificant poets.

The nature and size of the gap which exists between what the Georgians considered themselves to be writing as poets and what later audiences have discerned to be their true achievement is especially revealing of the quality of Georgian verse. Often such a remark as that in the last sentence prefaces a claim that posterity has failed to see in the poet his essential quality or genius. In the case of the Georgians this is not quite true — while it is true that Georgian poetry has
been unjustly neglected there is no doubt that posterity has a more truthful view of their achievement than they did themselves.

An article by Alan Pryce-Jones on Sir J.C. Squire, whom he knew well professionally illustrates this point. It is easy to assume that what Pryce-Jones says about Squire is equally true of the Georgians as a whole but certain qualifications are necessary. First of all Squire as a person cannot fairly be said to represent a poetic movement, secondly his position and opinions were far more extreme and at the same time more fully realised than those of other Georgians, some of whom must be exempted from any suspicion that they shared in the delusion which Pryce-Jones so sensitively isolates as central to Squire's literary personality. It is necessary to quote at length from the article in order to preserve the balanced way in which Pryce-Jones represents Squire:

"Looking back, it is easy to see, from a distance, that Squire was an extremely complex man, underneath his apparent simplicity. At the time, and in a less complex society than our own to-day, it was easy to miss the point.

He thought of himself as a kind of super-yeoman, a West Country descendant of Elizabethan virtue: "It is a terrible thing", he once said to me in the doorway of the Cheshire Cheese, "to carry on one's shoulders the whole weight of English poetry." There was nothing vain about this; he made far fewer claims for himself in the privacy of his heart than even his friends supposed. But he knew, rather perhaps as Elgar knew, that his West Country, and his England generally, were already as remote as Glastonbury and Avalon. He knew that the cricket-playing, pheasant-shooting, man's world he aspired to was no longer there.

Only he didn't admit it. Squire at
"that time saw himself as the guardian of classic English merit. He saw himself with an adored wife and delightful children, sunk in generous and public-spirited meditation on some village green bathed in perpetual summer... The trouble with these dreams is that they were unanchored in reality. Certainly he did the things he dreamed of, but, unknown to himself, there was a farcical element in all his activities. He might see himself as a potential Sir Philip Sidney. Others saw him as Mr. Punch."

Later speaking more personally Pryce-Jones illuminates the sacrifice of peace of mind which this delusion cost Squire:

"the inner Jack was all darkness, all hurt. For he knew perfectly well who Jack Squire was...Could he have become overtly neurotic - in other words had he been born a decade or two later - he might have been a far happier man. To let go,...could have been an infinite relief to him. But no; he saw himself as Sir John Squire from the West Country, guardian of all things English, his defences up against foreign interlopers like T.S.Eliot, and all the time agonizingly misunderstood even by those he held dearest." (6)

In all this Pryce-Jones remains objective even to the point of cruelty and yet he states quite firmly:

"He was what he knew himself to be, a genuine poet: not a large one, but true." (6)

and this is a necessary corollary to the discussion of Squire's feelings about England and English poetry, which might well be carried over into any discussion of the Georgian movement. Although it might be true of other Georgians, John Drinkwater springs to mind, that they were working hard to sustain a state of poetry and of England long dead, this is really ultimately irrelevant. What counts is the quality of their poetry.
Before discussing this, however, a comment upon the contribution of Pryce-Jones's two observations seems necessary. I am not qualified to speak of the accuracy of his portrait of Squire's character, though it does not seem inconsistent with his autobiography, (7) his critical prose or indeed his verse, but if it is assumed to be accurate then it must, I think qualify the statement about his stature as poet. Pryce-Jones readily admits that Squire's achievement was not always what it promised to be, but I think that in the matter of his poetry he fails to make the obvious conclusion, that his work is vitiated by the delusions which he so carefully preserved about life, England, art and his own rôle. Finally the quality of Squire's intellect and personality takes from his poetry that seriousness and integrity which seem in some ways even more essential in minor than major poetry.

So it is with many of the Georgians. The quality of their prose reveals something of the limitations of the poetry — this is seen simply in a contrast between the critical works of John Freeman, for example, and T.S. Eliot. It is hard, perhaps, to say that none of the Georgians produced anything of the same order as Eliot's Selected Essays, which like most of their published works, was a collation of magazine articles and lectures, when there is little in twentieth-century criticism to equal the importance of Eliot's work. It is nonetheless true and this, despite the fact that Abercrombie, for instance, took himself very seriously as a theorizer on poetry and was so regarded by his fellow Georgians. Almost the only Georgian critic of any standing is Graves and here again the comparison with the work of
Eliot or indeed Pound clearly places Graves as a minor critic.

It is not always true that the relative unimportance of Georgian criticism stems from the self-delusion which undermines the work of Squire. Abercrombie and Graves both look more clearly at the nature of poetry, with a critical eye unclouded by any desire to preserve status quo in poetry and much wider fields. However even the best of these critics is shown up for second-rate when placed beside Eliot. Their work simply does not display the same depth of reading, the same absorption of literature, or the same acute discrimination of what is central to an argument. And yet this is not because they were not genuinely concerned about poetry, which they felt, in fact to be the highest art. It is not their feeling for poetry that is at fault; it is the intellectual pressure which shapes that feeling which is not as strong, as uniform as it should be.

The same is true of their poetry. This intellectual weakness, perhaps caused in some cases by the blinkered vision which perpetuated delusions of the same type as Squire's, and certainly helping to perpetuate such delusions, is evident in most of Georgian verse. This is not to say that the Georgians en masse were unintelligent, but that their intellect was not fully engaged in their poetry; there is seldom in their work the strength which comes from the "union of thought and feeling". Of course, the feeling suffers. While not doubting that the Georgian emotions were genuine it is difficult to remain fully convinced that they were strong enough as impulses for poetry. This, I think, is because of the insufficient engagement of intellect in the emotion, which results in a rather sloppy attitude
to emotion itself. Squire's remark in an essay on "Subject in Poetry" is typical of this vagueness:

"In so far as it is true that the emotion of the poet is, as it were, the principal subject of any poem, to that extent innovation is not possible. The chief emotions of mankind are the same in all parts of the world where man exists, and they have been the same, so far as we are able to discover in all ages where man, capable of composition, has composed." (8)

This is one of the criteria which distinguishes among the Georgian poets. For instance, the above remarks do not apply to Rupert Brooke, not because there is any greater intelligence evident in his work but because in his poetry, as a rule, the intellect is always more apparent than the emotion. The possible exception to this is his group of sonnets 1914 but even here a certain self-consciousness, an intellectual aloofness intrudes between the poet's emotion and the reader's reaction to the poem. This quality is remarked upon by his fellow Georgians. John Drinkwater writing in the Contemporary Review after Brooke's death comments upon an "intellectual coldness" and expands this:

"he would often substitute for the natural emotions which most young poets experience and cannot shape, an intellectual fancy that he cannot have felt with passion, and shaped it with astonishing skill and attractiveness." (9)

The disapproval in Drinkwater's comment is evident in his choice of words. All is weighted against the intellect and this disapproval of a too unemotional strand in Brooke's poetry is even more significant as the article in which it appears was published only eight months after Brooke's death, while adulation of the dead poet-hero was at its height. This same reverence
for Brooke's memory clouds the argument of Walter De la Mare's tribute to Brooke given at the unveiling of a memorial in the Rugby School chapel. The paper is called "Rupert Brooke and the Intellectual Imagination" and although De la Mare does not phrase the argument so crudely, nor in front of Brooke's hypersensitive mother could he have been so outspokenly critical, clearly he considers this to be the lesser type of inspiration.

He draws the following distinction:

"poetical imagination...is of two distinct kinds or types. The one divines, the other discovers. The one is intuitive, inductive; the other logical, deductive. The one visionary, the other intellectual. The one knows that beauty is truth, the other proves that truth is beauty. And the poet inherits it it seems to me, the one kind from the child in him, the other from the boy in him." (10)

To illustrate this point he divides the poets between the two, allowing that Shakespeare, Goethe and Dante manifest both types and that Keats Wordsworth and Coventry Patmore fluctuate between the two, he attributes the childlike vision to Plato, the poet of Job, Henry Vaughan, William Blake, Coleridge and Shelley and the second boyish intellect to Lucretius, Donne, Dryden, Byron, Browning and, of course, Rupert Brooke. For the occasion De la Mare succeeds in turning this quality of Brooke's into a rare asset:

"His surely was the intellectual imagination possessed in a rare degree. Nothing in his work is more conspicuous than its preoccupation with actual experience, its adventurousness, its clarity, its keen curiosity, and interest in ideas, its life-giving youthfulness." (11)

This does not altogether counteract the impression that De la Mare's natural preference was for poetry
of the former sort, that his feeling was that the child's vision was the greater inspiration in poetry. In this De la Mare was more like his fellow-Georgians than Brooke ever was. And yet De la Mare himself provides an exception to the general statement that the Georgians' chief failings were caused by too little intellectual involvement in feeling. Why this is, is neatly illustrated by the criticism of Brooke. De la Mare was, in fact, no vague emotional poet and was well aware of the critical background to the sort of poetry he wrote. He, unlike many Georgian poets, is reticent in prose about his beliefs and technique in poetry. His collected prose Private View contains only reviews of other men's work and this, like good criticism should, concentrates the reader's attention on the book under scrutiny, and tells little, directly about De la Mare. And yet the quality and range of the criticism do add a knowledge of De la Mare's mind to a reading of the poems.

Everywhere, De la Mare makes apparent his loathing of "wallowing in the pigsty of what is falsely called 'realism' " (12) and equally he demonstrates how vital to him was literature:

"Every story we read, indeed, if it be an escape, or a homecoming, into the imagined...is...an adventure - at second hand." (12)

His range of authors although wide is not so wide as to obscure his own preferences. Some like Vaughan and Davies are not surprising, others, like Defoe seem less likely. Everywhere he shows that he has found in reading something essential to the particular work under discussion. In some places what he says throws oblique light on De la Mare's own position. The article on Henry Vaughan opens revealingly:
"A great national crisis, though it draws men together into a mutual brotherhood, isolates the individual. It drives inward every mind that is capable of thought to the discovery of what it holds most dear, to the discernment of what is of lasting value as compared with what is fleeting or makeshift. Imaginative genius, by its very nature solitary and aloof, is at such times made still more solitary. Its possessor may give his all, and we know how noble and complete such a sacrifice may be to the common cause. But to give that genius itself is not always within his power. It may for a while be overwhelmed, or it may follow its own impulse the more strongly by reason of the conflict and opposition of circumstance. And though a comprehensive mind here and there may be capable of lifting itself above the tumult and of surveying the present with as equal and tranquil a scrutiny as mortals in general can bestow upon the past, the man of a rare but less universal consciousness, while remaining true to his ideals which he shares with his fellows, goes his own way. And not until the hurly-burly and the strife are over can the world realize what strange flowers may grow on stony ground." (13)

This, written in 1915, is obviously closely related to De la Mare's own reaction to the Great War, and yet at the same time it is revealing of Vaughan's retreat from the Civil War into mysticism. As it is De la Mare's work and not Vaughan's which is of interest here, what emerges most clearly from the passage is the self-conscious way in which De la Mare acknowledges his own retreat from the national crisis. Indeed, it is of little use to look in De la Mare's published volumes for war poems but it is I think true as he says that his genius followed "its own impulse the more strongly by reason of the conflict and opposition of circumstance." And yet as this statement makes clear this was not a
blind escape and certainly not an emotional, unthinking burrowing into a private emotional world. On the other hand, the child's vision which characterises much of De la Mare's work (and not merely his children's poems) is clearly not a matter for intellectual cultivation, nor is this being suggested. But the quality of mind which his critical prose displays is always apparent in the best of his poems, however, and it is when there is a lapse into mere emotional writing that the poems are less successful, often in the same vein as these lines from his 1921 volume *The Veil*:

"Love of its muted music breathes no sigh,  
Thought in her ivory tower gropes in her spinning,  
Toss on in vain the whispering trees of Eden,  
Last of all last words spoken is, Good-bye." (14)

This contrasts sharply with almost any of De la Mare's portraits. For instance, here is "Mrs. Grundy", made extra forceful by speaking in her own voice:

"High-coifed, broad-bowed, aged, suave yet grim,  
A large flat face, eyes keenly dim,  
Staring at nothing — that's me! — and yet,  
With a hate one could never, no, never forget..." (15)

Here is acute perception, a controlling sense of humour as well as the general love of human kind which provides the inspiration for these poems.

Because they do not represent the primarily emotional inspiration which is commonly found in Georgian poetry, De la Mare and Brooke, stand aloof from the group as a whole. Nor are they the only poets who differ from the norm in this way. W.H.Davies, and to a lesser extent Ralph Hodgson are almost exempt from this criticism because their poetry succeeds almost by a denial of intellect. Of
course, this reflects a very strict intellectual control and it is only when this control is missing or weakened that the poems seem not simple and natural but naive and mawkish. Because of this seeming absence of mental activity in the poems, W.H.Davies, at his best, exemplifies what the Georgian poetic could produce, even if it did so rarely. "The Hawk", published in *Georgian Poetry 1913-1915*, illustrates this:

"Thou does not fly, thou art not perched,
The air is all around:\nWhat is that can keep thee set,\nFrom falling to the ground?\nThe concentration of thy mind\nSupports thee in the air;\nAs thou dost watch the small young birds,\nWith such a deadly care.\n
My mind has such a hawk as thou,\nIt is an evil mood;\nIt comes when there's no cause for grief,\nAnd on my joys doth brood.\nThen do I see my life in parts;\nThe earth receives my bones,\nThe common air absorbs my mind -\nIt knows not flowers from stones." (16)

In the face of such poems, the whole discussion about the intellectual quality of Georgian poetry becomes almost irrelevant. The inspiration of such works has nothing to do with the production of critical prose, and true enough W.H.Davies published no criticism and his views on poetry are found in his poems. The control of the poem is not, however, purely emotional - there can be few Georgian poems where "feeling" is of so little importance: what Davies has achieved here is perception, controlled by an unselfconscious recognition of the qualities in the observer which shape the observation. This is the quality of Georgian poetry at its best, and such work, it seems to me, defends the whole of Georgian poetry,
much of it unsuccessfully attempting the same thing, from any charge that it has nothing to offer the canon of English literature, as a whole. In the production of lyrics of this type the Georgians were unique; it requires a technique which attempts transparency of medium and inspiration unclouded by precept, philosophy or even personal viewpoint. At its best as here the poet is able to record both object seen and seeing poet in the same unemotional matter-of-fact way.

In a different type of poem the Georgian also acted as self-effacing recorders and here too their general lack of intellectual strength is not so important. This is the narrative. At its best, as practised by Gibson (who, interestingly like Davies published little literary criticism), this, though nothing like so unique as the lyric of natural observation, still, I think, makes a definite contribution to the corpus of English poetry. In Gibson's work, for instance, there is a concentration of attention on areas otherwise not much noticed in English verse. First of all and most obviously geographically, by setting many of his poems in North Eastern England, Gibson is adding a new territory to literary England. This would not be so, of course, despite the poem's settings if Gibson did not communicate the character of the country in such a way that it becomes a real place in his poetry. The bare, even barren moors, with the elements responsible for almost the only features are well captured in this short poem, "The Cheviot":

"Hedgehope Hill stands high,
The Cheviot higher still:
The Cheviot's wreathed with snow
When green is Hedgehope Hill."
"But at break of day,
Or coming on of night,
Hedgehope Hill is dark
While Cheviot's wreathed with light." (17)

In other ways, too, Gibson explored new areas of existence in his poems. Many of his narratives explore the dissatisfactions and limitations of an existence where a man or a woman is unable to fulfil himself. Sometimes a wrong marriage, sometimes a lack of ability to pursue a chosen craft is the cause of this dissatisfaction but it is not the cause that Gibson emphasises in his poem but the effect. In "Andrew and Ann Featherstone" a young wife talks to an old husband:

"I'm older far than you.
Your heart's a boy's heart still: but mine's as old as any woman's heart whose tale is told.
Though you were forty years of age, a man
Halfway through life before my life began,
I have outstripped you in a single year,
And have nought left to hope or to fear." (18)

Here the wife still has the fire and life in the spirit to rebel but Gibson portrays also those for whom the burden of daily tasks has become a substitute for life itself:

"She never even stops to think
What she is doing here -
But scrubs potatoes at the sink
Or fetches William's beer,...
And she'll be much too tired to heed
In the grave's secure retreat,
When there's no longer any need
Of making both ends meet." (19)

The setting of many of these poems in rural communities among the shepherds and small farmers, has obscured this originality in focus. 'Wordsworthian' poems may be written against the same background but the concentration on the human degradation of continual labour against the odds is Gibson's own.

The form of these poems, too, is original I think,
in its combination of narrative technique with lyrical shape. Many of Gibson's narratives are short and therefore necessarily compressed. Often, too, instead of compression there is omission of the actual history of the subject, merely the oblique implication of it in the moment which Gibson portrays. The poems are really not quite narrative, not quite lyric. The two poems quoted do not 'tell a story' except if we use the term, as it is often used in painting, to signify that the details observed do reveal a good deal of the subject's past.

These things are true of the best of Gibson's work but unfortunately he, like many other Georgians wrote much that falls well below his best. So many of the short narratives display the grim, boring nature of existence that the reader becomes bored by the reading of them. The poet loses his point in the reiteration. Nor is Gibson's instinct for meaningful situations always sure, so that sometimes the reader is confronted by trivia which seem quite unworthy poet's or reader's attention. These lapses illustrate, I think, the importance of the lack of intellectual control in Georgian poetry. Sometimes, as in the quoted poem by Davies and Gibson this lack of intellectual involvement produces fine poetry but at the same time it allows the poet to slip too easily into verse-writing on repetitious themes.

This does not, unless we are to be very harsh, mean that Davies, Gibson and others were not poets well worthy a reader's attention. They are, in fact, worth a good deal closer scrutiny than they have received since their work was first published. The same is true, too, of Monro, Bottomley, Freeman, Hodgson and more in whose
work the proportion of genuine poetry is lower; as minor poets they still deserve more attention than they are allowed by a readership still prejudiced by the greater éclat of Pound and Eliot. This cannot be said however of all the Georgians, and these writers, many of whom found their way into the final volume, illustrate most clearly of all how the Georgian preference for poems of feeling allowed them to write lyrics of almost astounding banality. In some poems, for instance, Thomas Moult's "Lover's Lane" which follows, it almost seems as though the poet recognising his lack of originality in theme is striving to add a little novelty. What results of course only emphasises the real barrenness of the poet's inspiration, his lack of poetic tact:

"This cool quiet of trees
In the grey dusk of the north,
In the green half-dusk of the west,
Where fires still glow;
These glimmering fantasies
Of foliage branching forth
And drooping into rest;
Ye lovers, know
That in your wanderings
Beneath this arching brake
Ye must attune your love
To hushed words.
For here is the dreaming wisdom of
The unmovable things...
And more: - walk softly, lest ye wake
A thousand sleeping birds." (20)

In its pretentious mystery, complete with archaisms and poetic inversions, this is really not Georgian poetry at all, although it found its way into the fourth anthology. It is an example of what happens to poetry of feeling, when the emotion fails and where there is too little intellectual involvement. It happened too often with Georgian poetry especially when in the later volumes Georgianism had become fashionable and other
writers sought to join the group. It is not possible to imitate emotion of a quality to inspire poetry and where there is almost a cult of no rhetoric, no intellectual framework, the verse has virtually nothing to save it from sloppy expression of vague, outworn sentiments. Most literary movements die when writers start using the most typical manifestations as guidelines to writing fashionable works; in the case of the Georgians this effect was heightened by the nature of the movement's ideals. A more intellectual verse, Caroline lyric, for example, is more capable of imitation because conscious processes are not, in any way, foreign to its inspiration. Georgian poetry required the highest original emotional impulse and therefore numbers far more failures than successes, and as time went on and the writing of 'Georgian poetry' had too many examples to copy the successes were finally overwhelmed in the public's mind, by its failures.

The second major intrinsic weakness of Georgian poetry stems from the nature of the movement rather than the character of the member poets. At the same time it has a direct bearing on the points made about intellectual weakness. As Marsh openly admitted from the first, Georgian Poetry was planned to publicize poetry, the movement was organized solely as a marketing venture. It was not and indeed strove hard not to become a band of like-minded poets enjoying each other's company for the stimulus they received from the interchange of ideas. The fear of being thought 'coterie' was so great to poets of that period that even now it is difficult to dissociate criticism and the defence of poets from any suspicion that they had become a tightly-organized group. Yet there is a negative point raised by the
success which the Georgians achieved in avoiding such labels and often overlooked. They did not form a 'coterie' in the accepted sense because their views about poetry were seldom so strongly held that they could not or would not associate with poets whose work was quite different from their own. It is significant that Pound was invited for the first volume, the Georgians clearly would not have felt any unease at the thought of combining their work with his very different poetic. Later on, it is true, some of the Georgians did express dissatisfaction at appearing in the same book as some others of Marsh's choice, but even then this was usually a reflection on the quality of their poetry not on the nature of their poetic creed.

Although in this thesis I have tried to point out what the Georgians had in common and, I hope, have indicated that fundamentally this is sufficient for critics to use the term 'Georgian' precisely, it was still possible to be a Georgian writing to almost any poetic creed or none at all.

Generally speaking the Georgian poets reflecting the movement's aim to popularize poetry, were more interested in the act of communication than in the origin of the poetry within the poet. There are exceptions to this and Robert Graves provides the most obvious example of a poet with a peculiarly high regard for his Muse. It is in his Oxford Addresses on Poetry that his adherence to the Muse is most clearly seen and in this work his various utterances on the subject illustrate how even fifty years after the first Georgian volume, this poet, unlike other Georgians in his obsession with the Muse is still conditioned by similar attitudes. (21) Although writing ostensibly of the inner world of the
poet, Graves cannot resist the comparison with others:

"Civilized man notices a gilded cloud, and, at best, mutters 'cumulus' or 'cirrus' or 'marte's tail', speculating on the weather it portends; notices a flower and dismisses it with a casual recognition of the variety. To gaze at a wild rose or buttercup for even a minute and find illumination in the sight, would never occur to him; if only because all his senses are blunted by a persistent disregard of the ugly smells, ugly sounds, ugly sights and unpalatable tastes which the struggle for existence entails. His spirit, also, has lost touch with the ideas of mystery, grace and love that originally informed it; intellect and habit starve the imagination." (22)

This is, despite the long lapse of time a truly Georgian attitude to the poet's outlook on life and it explains why the poets felt poetry was so important. It was a means of restoring to others the same heightened awareness of the world. It is easy to oversimplify the statement that the Georgian poet looked primarily outward to his audience rather than inward to his own soul, into a condemnation that the Georgian was only concerned with making a reputation. This is not true. The feeling that the poet had something worthwhile to communicate is an important corollary to the Georgian's desire to make his poetry as widely available as possible.

What is true is that the Georgians in decline display all the faults to which this type of poetry is prone. Where an inward-looking writer, more concerned in mastering a vehicle for the truths he perceives than in perfecting a means of mass communication, tends to lapse into obscurantist complexity, an outward-looking poet on the other hand tends to lose sight of what it is that makes his communication so worthwhile. Their
success in creating a medium, as transparent a window as possible attracting the attention of the reader on one side to the nature of the world on the other, only emphasises any weakness in the poem's inspiration. And as the Georgian reliance on emotional impulses rather than intellectual control caused them to lapse rather too frequently into the trivial and unimportant, the desire to communicate exposes them ruthlessly in their weaker moments. A more artificial style, a desire to please by decoration would have covered the eventual impoverishment of their inspiration.

Again there are exceptions to this. James Elroy Flecker, although many of his poems do not add much to the reader's appreciation of life, seldom fails altogether because his poems are written in such a way that pleasure is derived from a reading. More self-conscious stylists, too, escape the worst effects of weakening inspiration; Robert Graves and De la Mare both please by their manner of writing when it is difficult to discover the precise value of their matter. In this way these writers are to a certain extent atypical. More truly representative of the effect of this desire to popularize is such a poem as the following "Counting Sheep" which could well be accused of being Blake-made-easy were it not that the poet seems almost deliberately to be avoiding anything so spiritual in his sure choice of the sentimental and precious. The poet falls asleep counting the sheep, but not before he has received proper comfort:

"I lingered at a gate and talked
A little with a lonely lamb.
He told me of the great still night,
Of calm starlight,
And of the lady moon, who'd stoop
For a kiss sometimes;
Of grass as soft as sleep of rhymes
"The tired flowers sang:
The ageless April tales
Of how, when sheep grew old,
As their faith told,
They went without a pang
To far green fields, where fall
Perpetual streams that call
To deathless nightingales." (23)

As the Davies poem typified the Georgian virtues at their strongest, this, by William Kerr, displays the typical weaknesses of the movement. No one would read the poem for its style which far from being either open in its simplicity or interesting in its novelty is merely a faded compendium of literary ideas, 'April tales,' is an echo of Chaucer, the 'lonely lamb' (occurring in the same line) of Blake, the deathless nightingale, recalls Keats, the perpetual streams, Tennyson. Anyone who really wanted to read a poem, for its content would surely be wise to avoid one which took as its avowed theme, the age-old aid to sleep, especially if it threw in such an unrealistic view of the sheep's life as one complete with ovine heaven. It is impossible to criticise the poem, closely, because it vanishes beneath close scrutiny. It is an embodiment of what happens to poetry which shows itself too concerned with being easy to read. It has to be no more than half-read if it is to maintain even an appearance of being a poem at all.

Unfortunately for the accuracy of literary history as well as for the standing of the Georgian poets, such poems obscure the virtues of better but no less Georgian work. It is necessary to defend the work of the whole group from charges which really only apply to the very poorest work, most of which was written when the group was declining. The standard charges against Georgianism stick all too easily to these inferior Georgians but it is hardly accurate to sum up a movement by its
weakest members. The true Georgians were seldom facile; 'easy to read' in their case, does not mean undemanding of concentration. On the contrary, the poems demand a state of receptiveness which makes the exercise of the intellect seem, if more laborious also sometimes easier to achieve.

Walter De la Mare made the point in his review of the first Georgian volume:

"There is, at any rate, no attempt to say pretty and acceptable things: no bait to tickle and catch small fry. 'Muse' and 'lyre' are left hushed and unevoked. The love that rhymes with grove nowhere wastes its sweetness...Page after page of this volume will prove that it is not an unexact standard of thought and feeling and technique which these writers share. In a word, unquestionable seriousness, as distinguished from what another generation rather solemnly and chillingly called 'high seriousness', is the sincere mark and claim of this anthology." (24)

That this is not true of the whole of the two final volumes should not be allowed to obscure its undoubted accuracy as a description of the first three.

Other charges require a more complicated defence. One of the most commonly made is that the poetry is escapist, evading the issues which concerned everybody as the century moved into social turmoil accelerated by international strife. There are broadly two lines of defence possible here. One is to defend 'escapist' verse, and this Sir Edward Marsh himself does admirably:

"There is [a] protest I want to make - against the use of the ill-joined word 'escapist' to belabour all works of art which are not directly concerned with the present discontents. The idea seems to be that having got ourselves into a mess we are in honour bound to wallow in it, and that only a coward or a milksop would
"wish to shirk his responsibilities by rising into a calmer and serener air. One might answer, "Who would not, finding way, break loose from Hell?" but that (though I own it appeals to me) would be thought a selfish attitude, and there may be a better chance for the argument that art has throughout the ages offered an 'escape' from the material to the spiritual world, from whence the fugitive may return with a clearer eye and a braver heart to the earthly turmoil?" (25)

The urbanity of Marsh's tone conceals two important points especially applicable to the Georgians. The first that no good comes of reiterating the problems of society and that if that is all that can be done the poet might as well 'escape'. Over and over again W.H.Davies makes this point in his poems. He addresses a country vale:

"Thou hast not felt the shivering backs Of homeless children lying down And sleeping in the cold night air - Like doors and walls in London town.

Knowing thou hast not known such shame And only storms have come thy way, Methinks I could in comfort spend My summer with thee, day by day." (26)

Although few other Georgians are so explicit it is a fair description of the work of many, from John Drinkwater to Victoria Sackville-West, that it deliberately provides an escape, an alternative for those only too aware of society's horrors.

The other point Marsh raises, about Art providing an escape from the material into the spiritual, is scarcely applicable to the Georgian movement as a whole. In fact, generally speaking they deliberately confined their reader's attention to the material world. There is one interesting exception to this in Walter De la Mare, almost the only Georgian who bears witness to Marsh's
defence. De la Mare in his prose constantly affirms his belief in the reality of the spiritual world, but it is in his poetry that he most convincingly describes the spiritual refuge of the imagination. Often this is expressed in a short narrative as here in "The Wanderers":

"Within my mind two spirits strayed
From out their still and purer air,
And there a moment's sojourn made;
As lovers will in woodlands bare.
Nought heeded they where now they stood,
Since theirs its alien solitude
Beyond imagination fair.

The light an earthly candle gives,
When it is quenched leaves only dark;
Theirs yet in clear remembrance lives
And, still within, I whispered, 'Hark!'
As one who faintly on high has heard
The call note of a hidden bird
Even sweeter than the lark.

Yet, 'twas their silence breathed only this -
'I love you.' As if flowers might say,
'Such is our natural fragrantness';
Or dewdrops at the break of day
Cry, 'Thus I beam.' Each turned a head,
But each its own clear radiance shed
With joy and peace at play.

So in a gloomy London street
Princes from Eastern realms might pause
In secret converse, then retreat.
Yet without haste passed these from sight;
As if a human mind were not
Wholly a dark and dismal spot -
At least in their own light." (27)

This description, deliberately matter-of-fact terms of a spiritual moment in a conventionally occupied life, demonstrates De la Mare's attitude to the spiritual escape and Marsh's point about the legitimacy of spiritual solace for the cares of a troubled world. But it is not Georgian, except in its expression, and because of this, I think, De la Mare is perhaps the most unGeorgian
of the poets whose work appeared in several anthologies in his attitude to reality. It is true that he does not despise the natural world and he has written some fine poems of observation but even in these there is always the feeling for the spirituality of the real, a complement to De la Mare's belief in the reality of the spiritual. Other Georgians, too, do not confine themselves to the material world but their second level is usually psychological not spiritual, as in the case of Lawrence and the later Monro, and this seems to fit better into the original Georgian interest in the drama.

The second line of defence against the charge of 'escapism' is simply that it is not true. In Chapter 6, it was seen that the urban and even the suburban side of life were not ignored. Equally it is not true that the countryside was romanticised so as to provide a refuge from the cares of society in the throes of change. Gibson's rural workers enjoy none of the so-called perpetual sunshine of Georgian poetry and they have little time for beer-swilling and cricket. On the contrary the picture is almost too bleak, too much wind, rain and snow, too little comfort and jollity so that his created world eventually becomes as monotonous as the existence he is depicting.

The second and most neglected way in which the Georgians faced up to reality is in the writing of their war poems. The reasons for this are quite simply stated. It is not usual to consider the war poems as Georgian at all. In fact for many critics the two seem to provide a natural antithesis. J.H. Johnson provides an extreme case. His condemnation of the Georgian is outspoken if vague:

"the characteristic qualities of Georgian poetry - its blandness, its decorum, its
"homogeneity, its simplicity of attitude, its preoccupation with rural themes... all reflect the decline of a once powerful imaginative vision."

After this, his descriptions of the relationship between Georgian work and the war poems come as no surprise. First phase war poets are excused:

"[their] deficiencies may be traced to the immediate lyric tradition as practised by the Georgians, for most of the young war poets shared the Georgian outlook & modelled their early verse upon established Georgian techniques."

Of the hard core of fashionable writers, on the other hand, Johnson writes:

"The deliberately shocking techniques of the new realism may be seen, in part, as a frequently exaggerated reaction to Georgian blandness and decorum." (28)

To Johnson and indeed equally to most critics and readers of war poetry, the Georgians represent the opposition. In fact Georgian poetry, for them is defined by its opposition to war poetry. The realism, the colloquialism and the social involvement of war poetry are taken almost automatically to be a reaction against the literary evasions of outmoded Georgianism. I.M. Parsons, in the introduction to his selection of poetry of the First World War, illustrates the attitude:

"I could not... find a single poem by Lascelles Abercrombie, Gordon Bottomley, Robert Bridges, John Masefield, John Drinkwater, Alfred Noyes or Edward Shanks - to name only a few of the better-known practitioners of the period - that seemed to me worth including. I didn't really expect to. For most of these writers were more or less closely involved with what Cyril Connolly has wittily called 'the explosion of Georgian Marsh-gas'. They belonged to a generation, I mean a poetic
"generation, whose inherited tradition and technique were utterly at odds with the material which they suddenly found themselves trying to handle. So that whether they wrote in the over-simplified lyric vein now commonly associated with 'Georgian' poetry, or in the prosaic academic mode that was almost equally popular with pre-1914 poets, they were quite unable to adjust themselves, as many critics have pointed out, to the grim realities of modern war. What men and women were experiencing and feeling, after the holocaust of the Somme if not before, could no longer be given poetic expression by writers whose sensibilities had been conditioned in Edwardian days or earlier, and whose poetic conventions were out-worn even before the war started." (29)

The tone of this betrays its prejudice as well as the sweeping dismissal of the poets at the head of this quotation. The reader is not informed as to how many, if any, war poems were written by these poets and he is hoodwinked into seeing an essential opposition of Georgianism to war poetry by the inclusion of Alfred Noyes who had nothing to do with the Georgian volumes and Robert Bridges who was connected to the movement only by a single dedication in his strictures against the Georgians. Not only his groupings but his divisions are suspect. No poet of the period could more truthfully be said to have sensibilities conditioned by the Edwardian era than the Sassoon of Memoirs of a Fox-Hunting Man and yet he is par excellence the poet responding to the new situation of trench war with the right technique and the right awareness.

Such distortion is the result of the vicissitudes of fashion obscuring the facts. Not only literary fashion but also a changed social consciousness is at work here. This critical point reflects a post-war attitude to war
itself. Forgetful that it was the Great War of 1914-1918, which brought home to society the inevitable and widespread horrors of modern war-fare, other critics of recent decades have blamed those, who wrote before that war, for a failure to comprehend an experience which was not only in the future but also beyond the understanding of a society whose only recent wars had been fought in then remote Africa and presented to the British public in a suitably patriotic edition. This inability to understand the attitude of the nineteenth century to war distorts the criticism of the Georgian era. In the case of Jon Silkin's book Out of Battle (1972) the whole survey of war poetry from Wordsworth to David Jones is conducted with the help of a sliding scale of patriotism. Rupert Brooke comes out bottom and Rosenberg and Owen vie for top place.

It requires an effort of the imagination to sympathise with those who were so carefree on the brink of disaster, but the evidence exists in letters and autobiographies to prove that the euphoria which went with the fine Georgian summers was a common experience. It may have been morally reprehensible but this surely should not have the effect of substituting among readers social criticism for literary judgements. The inaccuracy to which these attitudes have led is apparent in the separation of war poets from Georgian poets. Historically quite a number of war poets were Georgians; Sassoon, Graves, Nichols, Rosenberg, Blunden, Gibson, of the soldier poets, and others besides, Davies, Turner and Freeman who did not fight wrote war poetry. Stylistically, too, I hope foregoing chapters have made clear how war poetry represents the exercise of Georgian techniques on rather 'unGeorgian' themes. Even the idea of 'unGeorgian themes' is misleading. The Georgian
poet thought of all subjects as worthy for poetry. If, before the war, they wrote little on such violent topics, this is more truthfully seen as a reflection of the times as well as of their poetic inclinations. Not all the Georgian poets wrote 'war poems', however broadly defined, though if elegies on friends killed are included the number of exceptions is slight indeed, but this does not mean that even in their cases it is true that Georgian poetry is antithetical to war poetry. And in fact, the 'realism' of the early Georgians, in "The Sale of St. Thomas" and KingLear's Wife for example, is just as unflinching as that of Sassoon's or Graves' later war poems.

Criticism has been inaccurate as well as unjust in separating war poetry from Georgian poetry. That Marsh saw no real dichotomy is well indicated by his selection of work for the third anthology. In this book a quarter of the poems are on the subject of war, the remainder representing a fairly typical Georgian variety. The war poems themselves moreover, demonstrate how for Marsh these were not an entity apart, because of their subject, but, like the other work, included, poetry which he admired and thought worthy the attention of the reading public. Freeman's "Happy is England now", traditional in form, proudly patriotic in attitude is included:

"Happy is England in the brave that die
For wrongs not hers and wrongs so sternly hers;
Happy in those that give, give, and endure
The pain that never the new years may cure;" (29)

And so is Nichol's "The Assault":

"I hear my whistle shriek,
Between teeth set;
I fling an arm up,
Scramble up the grime
Over the parapet!
I'm up. Go on."
"Something meets us.
Head down into the storm that greets us.
A wail.
Lights. Blurr.
Gone.
On, on. Lead. Lead. Hail.
Spatter. Whirr! Whirr!
Toward that patch of brown;
Direction left. Bullets a stream.
Devouring thought crying in a dream.
Men, crumpled, going down...
Go on. Go.
Bullets. Mud. Stumbling and skating.
My voice's strangled shout:
'Steady pace, boys!'
The still light: gladness.
'Look, in. Look out!'
Ha! Ha! Bunched figures waiting.
Revolver levelled quick!
Flick! Flick!
Red as blood.
Germans. Germans.
Good! O good!
Cool madness." (30)

This is as different from Freeman's poem as it is possible to imagine. Written by a soldier poet of the actual experience of fighting, it is far from the evasive abstractions of the clerk-poet, Freeman. The easy answer to the range of the war poems, covering ground between these two extremes is to say that Nichol's verse is atypical and that Freeman represents yet another truly Georgian failure to come to terms with reality. But this ignores the true quality of Georgian poetry, which is really more accurately reflected in Nichol's poem, with its colloquial diction and rhythms, its innovative form, eye and ear kept close on the subject with the minimum of distancing commentary. A more accurate response to the variety of war poems is to recognise the debt which the realism of Sassoon and others owed to the early Georgians, to see, even, in
the war poetry of 1915 onwards as the culmination of the Georgian technique. Freeman's poem, and others like it really represent a denial of the Georgian poetic. This becomes more obvious if the series of anthologies is seen as a whole. After the war the less demanding poems; repetitious in theme and traditional in form occupy an increasing proportion of the volumes. This, I think, is easily accounted for by Marsh's reaction to the war, and above all to the war poets whom he sheltered in his anthology.

Although he admired the poems of his proteges greatly and published a fair representation of poems like Nichol's and Sassoon's which vividly portrayed the horrors of the war, Marsh was throughout the war secretary to Churchill who began the war at the Admiralty and ended it at the Ministry of Munitions and was in the interval only frustrated by politics from taking a more positive part in the British war effort. His own attitude to the war was basically similar to Churchill's and to Freeman's as it had earlier been to Brooke's and is well reflected in the closing sentence of one of his letters to Dennis Browne, another friend who sailed with Brooke to Gallipoli:

"With all my power of wishing I wish you all glory and honour and a whole skin for a week hence and onwards." (31)

The death of Brooke, to whom he was so close and later of Rosenberg and other proteges and friends must have taken the soldierly jocularity away from this civilian's attitude to war, but Marsh never ceased to be totally committed to the British Government war effort, with all the restriction of vision which that implied. This, of course, made it difficult for him not to identify with the more evasive poems of the late Georgians.
That he did publish war poetry by Graves, Nichols, Sasson and Gibson (though not Rosenberg — only because he had been killed before the poem he sent to Marsh direct from the trenches could be included in a Georgian volume) is a tribute to his disinterested discernment of true poetry. It was not a sustained support however and the fourth volume contains far fewer war poems, and those only by Sasson and Turner; Graves and Nichols are represented by other poems. It is in this personal way, I think that the war did prove the failure of the Georgian movement. The war poetry of the realistic sort, that by Owen, Thomas, Sorley and others as well as that which Marsh chose for his anthologies, represents the culmination of the Georgian movement — the war provided the subject for which so to speak the earlier Georgians had been training. At the same time, it proved too great an event for the movement to survive, many of the finest poets were killed, and the editor himself was left no longer hopefully supporting new talent but supporting what he recognises in his fifth Prefatory note to be a more conservative element in poetry. When the war was over, furthermore, the Georgians' one worthwhile subject was removed and while it was defensible to write of rural England before that war, after it the return to the countryside ignoring the war's far-reaching effects, did not provide a sufficiently stimulating inspiration for the majority of Georgian poets. The notable exceptions to this are Blunden, whose country verse after the war often reflects the devastation of Northern France and is underlaid with the sadness left by the cataclysm and Davies and De la Mare whose poetry is too complex in its relation to contemporary actualities to be justly thought evasive.
I have dealt with the war poets at length here because it seems to me that before any accurate assessment of the Georgian achievement can be made the group has to be restored to its rightful complement by stressing the inclusion of these so much more fashionable writers of the period. Their position is central to any accurate criticism or history of the movement; to remove them is to leave the remainder without an essential focus. Their relation to Georgian technique as examined in an earlier chapter and their contradiction of the criticism that Georgian poetry was essentially evasive of contemporary situation, both demonstrate how truly they complete the development of the Georgian group.

Undoubtedly, if lasting popularity is an accurate measure of poetic achievement the war poets are the single most successful group of Georgians. Compared with even Davies and De la Mare, the continued interest of academics and poetry readers alike in these poets overshadows the rest of the group. Only Lawrence has received comparable attention as a poet, and this is usually accompanied, as it is in the case of the war poets, by the firm assertion that he was not truly a Georgian. Again this is to evade the true problem of defining Georgian, if all the more difficult work, all the atypical poets are avoided then what is left is only a definition of Georgianism. Of course if Lawrence is thought not to be a Georgian, Georgianism being defined without including his work, the two seem to be mutually exclusive. The same is true of the war poets. But if "Georgian" is taken to describe best those poets who appear in *Georgian Poetry*, then Lawrence, Sassoon,
nichols, Graves belong to the group just as surely as Freeman, Hodgson, De la Mare and Brooke.

Any estimate of Marsh's success as editor of the anthology must include these names in a record of the good work he did in bringing contemporary poets to the public attention they so much needed. It is a considerable achievement to have published the work of Davies, De la Mare, Flecker, Brooke, Gibson, Lawrence, Hodgson, Nichols, Graves, Sassoon and Blunden when these poets were young and unknown and by so doing to ensure for them an audience, against which to sharpen their poetic skills. This is a list to set against those of other anthologists. Wheels which published the three Sitwells and Aldous Huxley and no-one else of lasting interest, Monro's Chapbooks and later anthologies in which the poets of genuine interest are easily outnumbered by the Susan Hills, Margaret Woods and such of the period. Only The Catholic Anthology outshines Marsh's collection and this is largely because of the subsequent fame of Pound and Eliot.

Marsh's efforts on behalf of poetry were of more mixed success. It is true that he boosted the demand for poetry, long before the war and soldier heroes roused every patriotic reader's interest in the many volumes of verse published. However, he did not provide the initial impetus, but followed up that given by Masefield, nor is it certain that the war would not have had the same effect on the market without Marsh's efforts. This is perhaps an ungenerous quibble since Marsh did undoubtedly work hard and successfully to stimulate public interest in contemporary poetry. A more serious point is that by making popular the poetry of his choice, he harmed the cause of poetry in general. There is some truth in this. Marsh made poetry acceptable to the middle-class reader and by
so doing he made poetry middle-class. At the same time, Pound and later, Eliot were working on a poetry more esoteric, more demanding and undeniably more vital. There are two possible views of this, one, that Marsh was flogging a dead horse or two, that the opposition had all the best poets. The former view is the more commonly accepted but the latter, I think, needs more attention. As the twentieth century has progressed poetry has moved away from the highly sophisticated and intellectual verse which Pound and Eliot propagated and is once more concerned to make itself available to a larger number of readers. As long as poetry is written there will be two schools of thought, those who like Drinkwater, feel that 'poetry' "must sit at the world's fire or perish" and those who like Eliot believe that the art of poetry requires a singular dedication which only a few readers can offer. Because of the greater talent of Eliot and Pound their view has been accepted for this period, and the Georgians discarded. Had the same talent been in the Georgian group, a different critical view would now be accepted. Obviously Marsh with his views and Pound with his, could not, despite the tentative overtures at the time of the first volume, have combined to produce a truly catholic anthology. This does not, I think, mean that Marsh did a disservice to poetry - literary history has done that by forgetting what any truly critical reading would show, that, there are dozens of poets in Georgian Poetry who wrote far finer poetry than H. D., Richard Aldington and company.

Finally, the question, was the Georgian movement a success? This cannot be answered except in the narrowest way by saying that yes it did draw public attention to poetry. It did not prove to represent the new era which
Marsh forecasted and so has been ridiculed for its presumption. It did not revolutionize poetry along the lines Georgians planned, the revolution instead, made Georgianism look like Wordsworth-and-water. It did draw public attention to much mediocre verse. On the other hand the anthologies published some exceptionally fine poems, some of them by poets who have not even yet had their due. To have collected a group of poets like Davies, De la Mare, Gibson, Lawrence, Sassoon, Graves and Blunden is an achievement any editor and any anthology could well envy. If Marsh has not quite earned the 'place beside Tottel' which Gosse foretold for him, it is not because his anthology is in any way inferior as poetry to the earlier Miscellany; it is simply that history has been more favourable to Tottel than it has to Marsh.
CHAPTER 9. NOTES.

(2) ibid. p. 23.
(3) G.P. 1911-1912. Prefatory Note.
(7) Sir J. Squire: Solo and Duet 1943 contains two volumes of reminiscences The Honeysuckle and the Bee and Water Music. There is little in either about the arts, and both books concerned themselves with travels in southern England. The following comment however, illustrates Pryce-Jones' point: "The new composers may be better, as good, or worse than those who were new (Ravel, and Max Reger, the pattern-maker, who seems to have faded out, were among them) before the war; or it may be that music has been gradually dwindling since Brahms; but can it be doubted that the great performers were better then than now?" p. 161.
(10) W. De la Mare: Rupert Brooke and the Intellectual Imagination. 1919. The paper was originally delivered at Rugby School, March 27th, 1919. pp. 12-13.
(11) ibid. p. 15.
(12) W. De la Mare: Private View 1953. p. 255.
(13) ibid. p. 146.
(14) W. De la Mare: The Veil 1921. p. 34.
(15) W. De la Mare: Motley 1918. p. 10.
(16) G.P. 1913-1915 p. 70.
CHAPTER 9 NOTES (continued)

(19) ibid. p. 45.
(20) G.P. 1918-1919. p. 112.
(23) G.P. 1920-1922. p. 112.
(24) W. de la Mare: Private View 1953. p. 128.
(25) E. Marsh: A Number of People 1939. p. 358.
(27) W. de la Mare: The Veil 1921. pp. 50-1.
(31) ibid. pp. 60-1.
APPENDIX A

The poets whose work was originally published in *Georgian Poetry* are listed below in the order that their works first appeared in these anthologies. The date after the name in each case indicates the first volume in which they appeared. The poems of each author are listed in a similar way, and the date of the anthology in which the poems appeared follows the title.

**LASCELLES ABERCROMBIE** (1911-12)
The Sale of Saint Thomas *GP*. 1911-12.
Ryton Firs *GP*. 1920-22.

**GORDON BOTTOMLEY** (1911-12)
The End of the World *GP*. 1911-12.
Babel: The Gate of God *GP*. 1911-12.
Atlantis *GP*. 1916-17.
New Year's Eve, 1913 *GP*. 1916-17.
Littleholme *GP*. 1918-19.

**RUPERT BROOKE** (1911-12)
The Old Vicarage, Grantchester *GP* 1911-12.
Dust *GP* 1911-12.
The Fish *GP* 1911-12.
Town and Country *GP* 1911-12.
Dining Room Tea *GP* 1911-12.
Tiare Tahiti *GP* 1913-15.
The Great Lover *GP* 1913-15.
Beauty and Beauty *GP* 1913-15.
RUPERT BROOKE (continued)

Heaven GP 1913-15.
Sonnet (suggested by some of the proceedings of the Society for Psychical Research) GP 1913-15.
The Soldier GP 1913-15.

GILBERT K. CHESTERTON (1911-12)

The Song of the Elf GP 1911-12.

WILLIAM H. DAVIES (1911-12)

The Child and the Mariner GP 1911-12.
Days too Short GP 1911-12.
In May GP 1911-12.
The Heap of Rags GP 1911-12.
The Kingfisher GP 1911-12.
Thunderstorms GP 1913-15.
When of a Summer's Morn GP 1913-15.
The Hawk GP 1913-15.
The White Cascade GP 1916-17.
Easter GP 1916-17.
Raptures GP 1916-17.
Cowslips and Larks GP 1916-17.
Lovely Dames GP 1918-19.
When Yon Full Moon GP 1918-19.
On Hearing Mrs. Woodhouse Play the Harpsichord GP 1918-19.
WILLIAM H. DAVIES (continued)

Birds GP 1918-19.
Oh, Sweet Content GP 1918-19.
England GP 1918-19.
The Bell GP 1918-19.
The Captive Lion GP 1920-22.
A Bird's Anger GP 1920-22.
The Villain GP 1920-22.
Love's Caution GP 1920-22.
Wasted Hours GP 1920-22.
The Truth GP 1920-22.

WALTER DE LA MARE (1911-12)

Arabia GP 1911-12.
The Sleeper GP 1911-12.
Winter Dusk GP 1911-12.
Miss Loo GP 1911-12.
The Listeners GP 1911-12.
Wanderers GP 1913-15.
Melmillo GP 1913-15.
Full Moon GP 1913-15.
The Scribe GP 1916-17.
The Remonstrance GP 1916-17.
The Ghost GP 1916-17.
The Fool rings his Bells GP 1916-17.
The Sunken Garden GP 1918-19.
Moonlight GP 1918-19.
The Tryst GP 1918-19.
WALTER DE LA MARE (continued)

The Linnet GP 1918-19.
The Veil GP 1918-19.
The Three Strangers GP 1918-19.
The Old Men GP 1918-19.
Fare Well GP 1918-19.
The Moth GP 1920-22.
Sotto Voce GP 1920-22.
Sephina GP 1920-22.
Titmouse GP 1920-22.
Suppose GP 1920-22.
The Corner Stone GP 1920-22.

JOHN DRINKWATER (1911-12)

The Fires of God GP 1911-12.
A Town Window GP 1913-15.
May Garden GP 1916-17.
The Midlands GP 1916-17.
The Cotswold Farmers GP 1916-17.
Reciprocity GP 1916-17.
Birthright GP 1916-17.
Olton Pools GP 1916-17.
Deer GP 1918-19.
Moonlit Apples GP 1918-19.
Southampton Bells GP 1918-19.
Chorus GP 1918-19.
Habitation GP 1918-19.
Passage GP 1918-19.
Persuasion GP 1920-22.
JAMES ELROY FLECK (1911-12)

Joseph and Mary GP 1911-12.
The Queen's Song GP 1911-12.
The Old Ships GP 1913-15.
A Fragment GP 1913-15.
Santorin GP 1913-15.
Yasmin GP 1913-15.
The Dying Patriot GP 1913-15.

WILFRID WILSON GIBSON (1911-12)

The Hare GP 1911-12.
Geraniums GP 1911-12.
Devil's Edge GP 1911-12.
The Gorse GP 1913-15.
Hoops GP 1913-15.
Rupert Brooke GP 1916-17.
Tenants GP 1916-17.
For G. GP 1916-17.
Sea-change GP 1916-17.
II. The Dancers
III. Hit
Lament GP 1916-17.
Wings GP 1918-19.
The Parrots GP 1918-19.
The Cakewalk GP 1918-19.
Driftwood GP 1918-19.
Quiet GP 1918-19.
Reveille GP 1918-19.
Fire GP 1920-22.
WILFRID WILSON GIBSON  (continued)

Barbara Fell  GP  1920-22.
Philip and Phoebe Ware  GP  1920-22.
By the Weir  GP  1920-22.
Worlds  GP  1920-22.

D. H. LAWRENCE  (1911-12.)

The Snapdragon  GP  1911-12.
Service of all the Dead  GP  1913-15.
Meeting among the Mountains   GP  1913-15.
Seven Seals  GP  1918-19.
Snake  GP  1920-22.
Humming-Bird  PGT  1954.

JOHN MASEFIELD  (1911-12)

Biography  GP  1911-12.
Seven Poems:  
I. Here in the self is all that man can know  GP  1916-17.
III. If I could get within this changing I.  GP  1916-17.
IV. Ah, we are neither heaven nor earth, but men  GP  1916-17.
V. Roses are beauty, but I never see  GP  1916-17.
VI. I went into the fields, but you were there  GP  1916-17.
VII. Death lies in wait for you, you wild thing in the wood  GP  1916-17.

HAROLD MONRO  (1911-12)
Child of Dawn  GP  1911-12.
Lake Leman  GP  1911-12.
HAROLD MONRO (continued)

Milk for the Cat GP 1913-15.
Overheard on a Saltmarsh GP 1913-15.
Children of Love GP 1913-15.
Two Poems GP 1916-17.
Everything GP 1916-17.
Solitude GP 1916-17.
Week-end GP 1916-17.
The Bird at Dawn GP 1916-17
Gravity GP 1918-19.
Goldfish GP 1918-19.
Dog GP 1918-19.
The Nightingale near the House GP 1918-19.
Man Carrying Bale GP 1918-19.
Thistledown GP 1920-22.
Real Property GP 1920-22.
Unknown Country GP 1920-22.

T. STURGE MOORE (1911-12)
A Sycilian Idyll GP 1911-12.

RONALD ROSS (1911-12)
Hesperus GP 1911-12.

EDMUND BEALE SARGANT (1911-12)
The Cuckoo Wood GP 1911-12.

JAMES STEPHENS (1911-12)
In the Poppy Field GP 1911-12.
In the Cool of the Evening GP 1911-12.
The Lonely God GP 1911-12.
The Rivals GP 1913-15.
JAMES STEPHENS. (continued)

In Woods and Meadows GP 1913-15.
Deirdre GP 1913-15.
The Fifteen Acres GP 1916-17.
Check GP 1916-17.
Westland Row GP 1916-17.
The Turn of the Road GP 1916-17.
A Visit from Abroad GP 1916-17.

ROBERT CALVERLEY TREVELYAN (1911-12)

Dirge GP 1911-12.

RALPH HODGSON (1913-15).

The Song of Honour GP 1913-15.
The Gipsy Girl GP 1916-17.
The Bells of Heaven GP 1916-17.
Babylon GP 1916-17.

FRANCIS LEDWIDGE (1913-15)

A Rainy Day in April GP 1913-15.
The Lost Ones GP 1913-15.

W. J. TURNER (1916-17.)

Romance GP 1916-17.
Ecstasy GP 1916-17.
Magic GP 1916-17.
The Hunter GP 1916-17.
The Sky-sent Death GP 1916-17.
W. J. TURNER (continued)
The Caves of Auvergne GP 1916-17.
Silence GP 1918-19.
Kent in War GP 1918-19.
Talking with Soldiers GP 1918-19.
Song GP 1918-19.
The Princess GP 1918-19.
Peace GP 1918-19.
Death GP 1918-19.

J.C. SQUIRE (1916-17)
A House GP 1916-17.
To a Bulldog GP 1916-17.
The Lily of Malud GP 1916-17.
Rivers GP 1918-19.
Epitaph in the Old Mode GP 1918-19.
Sonnet GP 1918-19.
The Birds GP 1918-19.
Elegy GP 1920-22.
Meditation in Lamplight GP 1920-22.
Late Snow GP 1920-22.

SIEGFRIED SASSOON (1916-17)
A Letter Home GP 1916-17.
The Kiss GP 1916-17.
The Dragon and the Undying GP 1916-17.
To Victory GP 1916-17.
'They' GP 1916-17.
'In the Pink' GP 1916-17.
Haunted GP 1916-17.
The Death*Bed GP 1916-17.
Sick Leave GP 1918-19.
Banishment GP 1918-19.
SIEGFRIED SASSOON (continued)

Repression of War Experience GP 1918-19.
Concert Party GP 1918-19.
Songbooks of the War GP 1918-19.
The Portrait GP 1918-19.
Thrushes GP 1918-19.
Everyone Sang GP 1918-19.

I. ROSENBERG (1916-17)

'Ah, Koelu...' GP 1916-17.

ROBERT NICHOLS (1916-17)

To --- GP 1916-17.
The Assault GP 1916-17.
Fulfilment GP 1916-17.
The Philosopher's Oration GP 1916-17.
The Prophetic Bard's Oration GP 1916-17.
The Tower GP 1916-17.
The Sprig of Lime GP 1918-19.
Seventeen GP 1918-19.
The Stranger GP 1918-19.
'O Nightingale my Heart' GP 1918-19.
The Pilgrim GP 1918-19.
Night Rhapsody GP 1920-22.
November GP 1920-22.

ROBERT GRAVES (1916-17)

It's a Queer Time GP 1916-17.
David and Goliath GP 1916-17.
A Pinch of Salt GP 1916-17.
ROBERT GRAVES (continued)

Star Talk  GP 1916-17.
In the Wilderness  GP 1916-17.
The Boy in Church  GP 1916-17.
The Lady Visitor  GP 1916-17.
Not Dead  GP 1916-17.
A Ballad of Nursery Rhyme  GP 1918-19.
A Frosty Night  GP 1918-19.
True Johnny  GP 1918-19.
The Cupboard  GP 1918-19.
The Voice of Beauty Drowned  GP 1918-19.
Rocky Battle  GP 1918-19.
Lost Love  GP 1920-22.
Morning Phoenix  GP 1920-22.
A Lover Since Childhood  GP 1920-22.
Sullen Moods  GP 1920-22.
The Pier-Glass  GP 1920-22.
The Troll's Nosegay  GP 1920-22.
Fox's Dingle  GP 1920-22.
The General Elliott  GP 1920-22.
The Patchwork Bonnet  GP 1920-22.

JOHN FREEMAN (1916-17)

Music Comes  GP 1916-17.
November Skies  GP 1916-17.
Discovery  GP 1916-17.
'It was the Lovely Noon'  GP 1916-17.
Stone Trees  GP 1916-17.
The Pigeons  GP 1916-17.
Happy is England Now  GP 1916-17.
O Muse Divine  GP 1916-17.
The Wakers  GP 1918-19.
The Body  GP 1918-19.
Ten O'clock No More  GP 1918-19.
JOHN FREEMAN (continued)
The Fugitive GP 1918-19.
The Alde GP 1918-19.
Nearness GP 1918-19.
Night and Night GP 1918-19.
The Herd GP 1918-19.
I Will Ask GP 1920-22.
The Evening Sky GP 1920-22.
The Caves GP 1920-22.
Moon-Bathers GP 1920-22.
In Those Old Days GP 1920-22.
Caterpillars GP 1920-22.
Change GP 1920-22.

MAURICE BARING (1916-17)
In Memoriam, A.H. GP 1916-17.

HERBERT ASQUITH (1916-17)
The Volunteer GP 1916-17.

FRANCIS BRETT YOUNG (1918-19)
Invocation GP 1918-19.
Prothalamion GP 1918-19.
February GP 1918-19.
Lochanilaun GP 1918-19.
Lettermore GP 1918-19.
Song GP 1918-19.
The Leaning Elm GP 1918-19.
Seascape GP 1920-22.
Scirocco GP 1920-22.
The Quails GP 1920-22.
Song at Santa Cruz GP 1920-22.
THOMAS MOULT (1918-19)
To Bessie in the Garden GP 1918-19.
'Truly he hath a Sweet Bed' GP 1918-19.
Lover's Lane GP 1918-19.

J.D.C.PELLOW (1918-19)
The Temple GP 1918-19.
After London GP 1920-22.
On a Friend who died suddenly upon
the seashore GP 1920-22.
Tenebrae GP 1920-22.
When All is Said GP 1920-22.

EDWARD SHANKS (1918-19)
A Night-Piece GP 1918-19.
In Absence GP 1918-19.
The Glow-worm GP 1918-19.
The Cataclysm GP 1918-19.
A Hollow Elm GP 1918-19.
Fete Galante GP 1918-19.
Song GP 1918-19.
The Rock Pool GP 1920-22.
The Glade GP 1920-22.
Memory GP 1920-22.
Woman's Song GP 1920-22.
The Wind GP 1920-22.
A Lonely Place GP 1920-22.

FREDERICK SHOVE (1918-19)
A Dream in Early Spring GP 1918-19.
The World GP 1918-19.
A Man Dreams that he is the Creator GP 1918-19.
MARTIN ARMSTRONG (1920-22)
The Buzzards GP 1920-22.
Honey Harvest GP 1920-22.
Miss Thompson Goes Shopping GP 1920-22.

EDMUND BLUNDEEN (1920-22)
The Poor Man's Pig GP 1920-22.
Almswomen GP 1920-22.
Perch-fishing GP 1920-22.
The Giant Puffball GP 1920-22.
April Byeway GP 1920-22.

RICHARD HUGHES (1920-22)
The Singing Furies GP 1920-22.
Moonstruck GP 1920-22.
Vagrancy GP 1920-22.
Poets, Painters, Puddings GP 1920-22.

WILLIAM KERR (1920-22)
In Memoriam D.O.M. GP 1920-22.
Past and Present GP 1920-22.
The Audit GP 1920-22.
The Apple Tree GP 1920-22.
Her New-Year Posy GP 1920-22.
Counting Sheep GP 1920-22.
The Trees at Night GP 1920-22.
The Dead GP 1920-22.

FRANK PREWETT (1920-22)
To My Mother in Canada GP 1920-22.
Voices of Women GP 1920-22.
FRANK PREWETT (continued)

The Somme Valley  GP  1920-22.
Burial Stones  GP  1920-22.
Snow-Bunting  GP  1920-22.
The Kelso Road  GP  1920-22.
Baldon Lane  GP  1920-22.
Come Girl and Embrace  GP  1920-22.

PETER QUENNELL (1920-22)

Procne  GP  1920-22.
A Man to a Sunflower  GP  1920-22.
Perception  GP  1920-22.
Pursuit  GP  1920-22.

V. SACKVILLE-WEST (1920-22)

A Saxon Song  GP  1920-22.
Mariana in the North  GP  1920-22.
Full Moon  GP  1920-22.
Sailing Ships  GP  1920-22.
Trio  GP  1920-22.
Bitterness  GP  1920-22.
Evening  GP  1920-22.
The Greater Cats  GP  1920-22.
### APPENDIX B (Publishers)

Poetry volumes from which selections were made for the five anthologies *Georgian Poetry*.

#### I. 1911-12.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title (Series)</th>
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<th>Publisher</th>
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<tr>
<td><em>Chambers of Imagery</em> (Second Series)</td>
<td>G. Bottomley</td>
<td>Elkin Matthews</td>
<td>1912</td>
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<tr>
<td>The Ballad of the White Horse</td>
<td>G.K. Chesterton</td>
<td>Methuen</td>
<td>1911</td>
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<td><em>Songs of Joy</em></td>
<td>W.H. Davies</td>
<td>A.C. Fifield</td>
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<tr>
<td><em>Farewell to Poesy</em></td>
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<td><em>&quot;</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>The Listeners</td>
<td>W.de la Mare</td>
<td>Constable</td>
<td>1912</td>
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<tr>
<td><em>Poems of Love and Earth</em></td>
<td>J.Drinkwater</td>
<td>David Nutt</td>
<td>1912</td>
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<tr>
<td><em>Forty-two Poems</em></td>
<td>J.E. Flecker</td>
<td>J.M. Dent &amp; Sons</td>
<td>1911</td>
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<td><em>Fires Book III</em></td>
<td>W.W. Gibson</td>
<td>Elkin Matthews</td>
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<tr>
<td>Before Dawn</td>
<td>H.Monro</td>
<td>Constable</td>
<td>1911</td>
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<td><em>A Sicilian Idyll and Judith</em></td>
<td>T.S. Moore</td>
<td>Duckworth</td>
<td>1911</td>
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<tr>
<td><em>Lyra Modulata</em> (Privately Printed)</td>
<td>R.Ross</td>
<td>(Privately)</td>
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<td><em>The Casket Songs</em></td>
<td>E.B. Sargant</td>
<td>Longmans</td>
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<td><em>The Hill of Vision</em></td>
<td>J.Stephans</td>
<td>Maunsell &amp; Co. Dublin</td>
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#### II. 1913-15.

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<td>R. Brooke</td>
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<td><em>Foliage</em></td>
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<td>The Bird of Paradise</td>
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<td><em>&quot;</em></td>
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<td><em>Peacock Pie</em></td>
<td>W.de la Mare</td>
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<td><em>Swords and Ploughshares</em></td>
<td>J.Drinkwater</td>
<td>Sidgwick &amp; Jackson</td>
<td>1915</td>
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<tr>
<td><em>The Golden Journey to Samarkand</em></td>
<td>J.E. Flecker</td>
<td>Goschen</td>
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### II 1913-15 (continued)

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<td>W.W. Gibson</td>
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<td>Love Poems, and others</td>
<td>D.H. Lawrence</td>
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<td>F.Ledwidge</td>
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<td>J. Masefield</td>
<td>Heinemann</td>
<td>1914</td>
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<td>Children of Love</td>
<td>H. Monro</td>
<td>Poetry Bookshop</td>
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<td>Songs from the Clay</td>
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<td>W.J. Turner</td>
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<td>Adventures of Seumas Beg</td>
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<td>Ardours and Endurances</td>
<td>R.Nichols</td>
<td>Chatto &amp; Windus</td>
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<td>Over the Brazier</td>
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<td>Stone Trees and Other Poems</td>
<td>J. Freeman</td>
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<td>Olton Pools</td>
<td>J. Drinkwater</td>
<td>Sidgwick &amp; Jackson</td>
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<td>Tides</td>
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<td>Poems</td>
<td>W. de la Mare</td>
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<td>W.H. Davies</td>
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<td>An Annual of New Poetry</td>
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### IV. 1918-19

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<td>Motley</td>
<td>W.de la Mare</td>
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<td>J.Drinkwater</td>
<td>Sidgwick &amp; Jackson</td>
<td>1918</td>
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<td>Loyalties and with additions</td>
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<td>Beaumont Press</td>
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<td>Lincoln</td>
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<td>Sidgwick &amp; Jackson</td>
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<td>Memories of Childhood and other poems</td>
<td>J. Freeman</td>
<td>Selwyn and Blount</td>
<td>1919</td>
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<td>Home</td>
<td>W.W. Gibson</td>
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<td>New Poems</td>
<td>D.H. Lawrence</td>
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<td>War Poems</td>
<td>S. Sassoon</td>
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<td>E. Shanks</td>
<td>Martin Secker</td>
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<td>F. Shove</td>
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<td>J.C. Squire</td>
<td>Martin Secker</td>
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<td>The Birds and other Poems</td>
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<td>W.J. Turner</td>
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<td>1918</td>
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<td>E. Blunden</td>
<td>Sidgwick &amp; Jackson</td>
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<td>R. Cobden-Sanderson</td>
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<td>W. H. Davies</td>
<td>Jonathan Cape</td>
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<td>Heinemann</td>
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<td>1921</td>
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<td>R. Hughes</td>
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The use of abbreviations has been kept to a minimum. The following is a list of those which do occur.

L.M.  London Mercury

P.&D.  Poetry and Drama.

P.R.  Poetry Review.

T.L.S.  Times Literary Supplement.
BIBLIOGRAPHY.

I. Works by Georgian Poets.

ANTHOLOGIES.

This does not include works which published Georgian poetry alongside work by other contemporary poets. Some of these will be included in the second section.


Edited anonymously by Edward Marsh who used only his initials in the introductory matter these five volumes were all published by the Poetry Bookshop.

New Numbers Published at Ryton, Dymock, Gloucester Feb., April, Aug., and Dec. 1914.

This published the work of Gibson, Brooke, Abercrombie and Drinkwater.
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"Tradition in Poetry" in Tradition and Experiment in Present-Day Literature. Addresses delivered at the City Literary Institute. 1929.
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Leigh Hunt A Biography 1930.
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The Veil and other poems. 1921.

Memoirs of a Midget. 1921.


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"Tradition & Technique" P.R. VII July 1912. pp. 296-300.

Swords and Ploughshares 1915.


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Also the following anthologies of verse.

As this list of contributors suggests the proportion of interesting verse was very small. One poem relevant to this thesis concluded the last volume. It is by Augustine Rivers and entitled "The Death of Mercury" and contains some shrewd thrusts at the later Georgians:

"From stately London home or Cotswold Cottage,
Wherever poet meets a poet brother.
(Or makes an income by reviewing each other).
The echo alters to "We never tire
Of hearing Squire on Shanks and Shanks on Squire."

Also Blast No. 1. 1914. and No. 2. 1915. ed. Wyndham Lewis.

RHYTHM 1911-1913. ed. J. Middleton Murry. Several Georgian poets appeared in this periodical before their work was published in Georgian Poetry 1911-1912. They were W.H. Davies, Thomas Moult, Harold Monro, James Stephens and, Wilfrid Wilson Gibson who was for a time paid by Edward Marsh to assist with the editing of the periodical. A poem by Walter de la Mare and a short story by Lascelles Abercrombie appeared in 1913.

The Blue Review May, June, July. 1913. Also edited by J. Middleton Murry, a continuation of Rhythm. More Georgian poets appeared in these issues: J.E. Flecker, John Drinkwater, Rupert Brooke and D.H. Lawrence was represented by a short story.

Poetry Review 1912. This was edited by Harold Monro for the Poetry Society and contained much of the society's doings as well as original articles, often by Georgians about Georgians.

Poetry and Drama 1913-1914. This quarterly was edited by Harold Monro after he decided to divide his own editorial selections from the Poetry Society's committee.
decisions. This included poetry, reviews and original articles - again often by Georgians. It also had a poetry prize which was awarded to Rupert Brooke for "The Old Vicarage, Grantchester." Monro demonstrated his catholic taste by the wide range of poetry his magazine covered. September, 1913 for example, was a futurist issue and June 1914 announced quarterly summaries of poetry in France, Germany and America. The war prevented these from ever appearing as the periodical's final issue was in December 1914.

The Monthly Chapbook. In 1919 this was edited by Monro to replace his Poetry and Drama. It was much wider in its fields and original music as well as woodcuts were often included. At the same time there was less criticism and an even more diverse collection of artists.

The London Mercury 1919-1937 Edited by J.C. Squire with help from Edward Shanks and John Freeman. This magazine which published criticism mainly was associated with the Georgians but in fact Squire was always more extreme than Marsh in his preference for traditionally composed poetry.

In addition to these, volumes of the Times Literary Supplement of the period have been scanned to give the establishment view of contemporary developments.