

AN ILLUSTRATED
Cultural History of England

Vol. III

F. E. Halliday

Edited with Notes

by

Yasuo Nakamura



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from

An Illustrated Cultural History of England

by F. E. Halliday

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はしがき

本書はイギリスの博学な文筆家であり、シェイクスピア研究家としてもその名を広く知られている Frank Ernest Halliday (1903–) の著書である *An Illustrated Cultural History of England* (1967) の中から、先に第一巻として出版したブリテン島の先史時代からチューダー朝のエリザベス時代まで、及び第二巻として既に出版したジェームズ 1 世の時代に始まる 17 世紀とそれに続く 18 世紀の 1789 年までの約 200 年間に続いて、今回は第三巻として 19 世紀及び 20 世紀の 1960 年代までの部分について、テキスト版として編纂したものである。Halliday の原著が出版されたのが 1967 年であるため 20 世紀といっても世紀の半ばで終わっていて、その後については本書には取り扱われていない。また本書の性質上、紙数に制限があり、本文及び図版の一部を割愛していることをお断りしておきたい。

歴史には大きく分けて三つの分野があると言える。即ち、人間の愚かな破壊的な活動の歴史である「政治史」、人間の物質的な面での生活をより良いものにするための建設的な活動の歴史である「経済史」、そしてある固有の社会の中から生まれ育まれてきた宗教、文学、音楽、演劇、絵画、建築、学問、思想などで表現できるような、それぞれの時代が生み出した、人間のより高度な精神的な活動の歴史である「文化史」である。

原著者 Halliday は、その「まえがき」で述べているように、人間の物質的な目的にはほとんど役に立たないが、その精神的な必要を満たすのに役に立つ働きをする「建設的な活動」を越えた、人間の「真に創造的な活動」が生み出した “the most creative achievements of man” を「文化」(culture) と解している。ある民族の「文化史」は、いわゆる「社会史」とはひと味違ったものであり、強調点が大いに違っているのである。Halliday の言葉を借りれば、次のように表現できるものである。

it is little concerned with their ‘general conditions of life’, but is almost a spiritual Odyssey, a history of their art and thought, with some account of the forces, political, religious, economic, and social, that have determined or modified them.

原著者 Halliday は、人間は本質的には創造的な活動をする存在であり、人間の最も高度な活動は秩序の創造であると信じており、この本質的な潜在的能力を発揮させることによって、人間はその壮大な歴史を前進させ続けていくことができると楽観的に信じている。イギリスの宝であるその素晴らしい「文化」の歴史を辿ることによって、原著者は、不安と暴力と無秩序と破壊が存在し続ける時代の中であって、ほのかな期待と希望を抱いて、いわば「光」を高く掲げる目的で、この著書を著していると言える。

Halliday 氏は 1903 年に Yorkshire 東部 (East Riding) の港町で、その名を “The Sound of Silence” の中に歌われている Scarborough Fair で有名な、美しい海浜の町 Scarborough に生まれ、Cambridge 大学で学び、1927 年から 1948 年まで Cheltenham College で教え、Assistant Master を勤めていた。それ以後は景色が大変美しい海辺の保養地であり、芸術家が好んで住む静かな町である Cornwall の西北端に位置する St. Ives に住んで、文筆活動が続けてきた。彼の著作には Geoffrey Chaucer や William Shakespeare に関するものを中心

に詳しいものがあるが、主なものに次のようなものがある。

- Shakespeare and His Critics* (1949)
- A Shakespeare Companion* (1952)
- The Poetry of Shakespeare's Plays* (1954)
- The Legend of the Rood* (1955)
- Shakespeare in His Age* (1956)
- The Cult of Shakespeare* (1957)
- A History of Cornwall* (1959)
- The Life of Shakespeare* (1961)
- Unfamiliar Shakespeare* (1962)
- A Concise History of England* (1964)
- An Illustrated Cultural History of England* (1967)
- Dr Johnson and His World* (1968)
- Chaucer and His World* (1968)
- Wordsworth and His World* (1969)
- Thomas Hardy: His Life and World* (1972)
- Robert Browning* (1976)

イギリスの歴史と文化を考えるうえで最も重要なことの一つは、その多様な人種の複雑な混淆・融合であり、それぞれの人種や民族がイギリスにもたらした文化である。イギリスは海に囲まれた島国であるが、海はイギリスを孤立させるように働いたというより、海路を通して人々を移動させ、交流・交易する道を広く開いてきたのである。古くはイベリア人の渡来に始まり、ビーカー人やピクト人の渡来、それに続いて三波に分かれてのケルト人の移住・定着、ローマ人による遠征と征服、それに続くアングロ・サクソン人の侵入と征服・定住、北欧人であるデーン人の来寇・征服・移住、そしてノルマン人の征服・支配へと続いたのである。それぞれ人種・民族は、それぞれ独自の文化をイギリスにもたらし、多種多様な文化の融合を通じて、イギリスはその文化を開花させてきたのである。イギリスの文化の特徴を考える場合に重要なことは、大まかに言えば北方のゲルマン文化（ノルマン・フランス文化をその中に含む）の影響と、南方から流入してきた地中海・ラテン文化（ヘブライ・キリスト教文化をその中に含む）の影響であり、その長年にわたる熟成・融合によってキリスト教的な香り高いイギリス独特の文化を形成してきたことである。

Halliday 氏の手になるこの書物は、このような多岐にわたる複雑で華麗なイギリスの文化の遺産を、簡潔要を得た筆致で記述してくれており、また豊富な図版を通して目で理解し楽しめるようにしてくれている。本書を読む学生諸君や読者の皆さんが、今後イギリスの文学のみならず、イギリスの文化と歴史に広く目を向けるようになってくれることを心から希望している。

終わりに当たり、本書出版のために協力して下さった英宝社編集部の方々、とりわけ宇治正夫氏のご尽力に心から感謝するものである。

1999年11月4日

中村保夫

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Cultural History of England

1 *The Romantics 1789–1837*

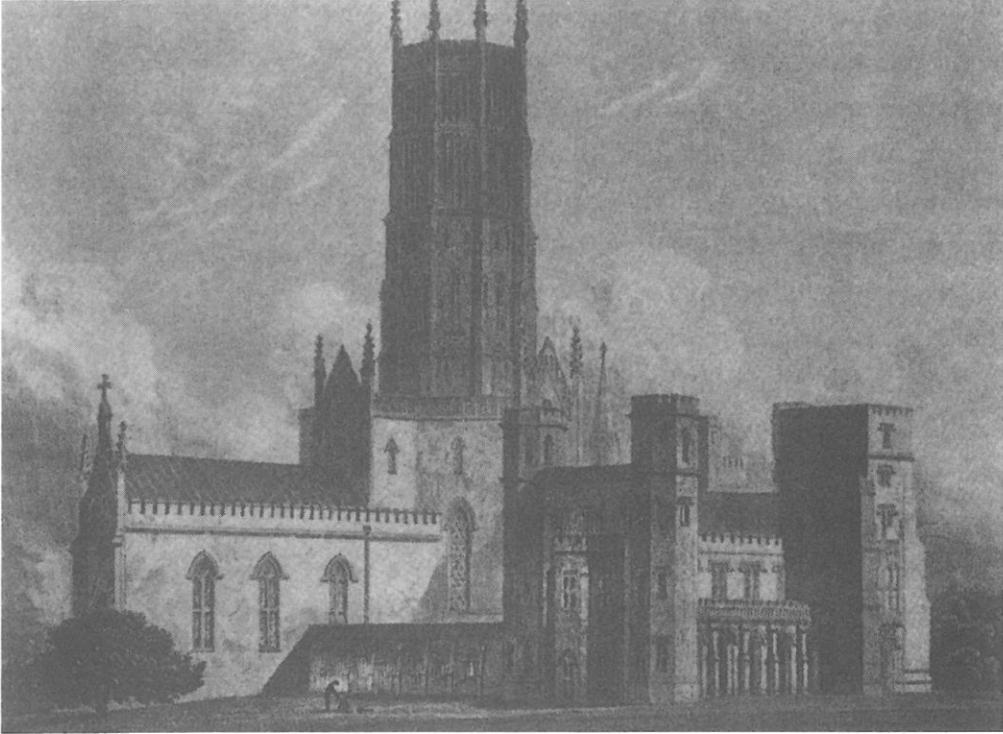
William Blake was born in 1757, though no man could have been less characteristic of the eighteenth century. An individualist, he belonged to no school and, rejecting the cult of reason, pursued the visions of his own mythology in both poetry and painting. Much of his later *Prophetic Books* is written almost in a private language, and his best work is in short and simple poems like the matchless *Sunflower* and *The Tiger*, a poem that nobody but he could have written. In his painting he revolted against the Royal Academy, Reynolds, and realism, and, as oil-colours were symbolic of all three, he used water-colour to depict the visions inspired by the Bible, Milton, Dante, and the Middle Ages, and was of his own age only in the neoclassical clarity of his contour. Robert Burns, two years younger than Blake, was another poet out of sympathy with his century, though for different reasons. A liberal thinker, liver, and lover, he satirized hypocrisy in poems such as *Holy Willie's Prayer* and wrote a century of lyrics in Scottish dialect and a number of racy, humorously improper stories like *Tam O' Shanter*.

Burns died in 1796, by which time England had been at war with Revolutionary France for three years and, apart from one short break, the war was to last until the final victory of Waterloo in 1815: two decades that were also those of the first phase of the Romantic Movement. This was a revolt precipitated by the French Revolution, against the rule of reason and the restraints of Classicism, for the glorification of freedom, imagination, and emotion, the rediscovery of wonder, a retreat from the town to the country, to medieval romance, the mysterious, irrational, and supernatural. The movement had been foreshadowed in the nature poetry of Thomson and Cowper, the landscapes of Gainsborough, rustic scenes of George Morland, and architectural cult of the Picturesque, the kind of building that might have come out of a picture, from

a landscape painting by Claude or Poussin. Strawberry Hill was picturesque in its irregularity, but it was also Gothick, and it was a short step from the picturesque to the mediievally romantic. In 1795 John Carter published his *Ancient Architecture of England*, and in the same year Wyatt began the building of Fonthill Abbey, a vast Gothick mansion in Wiltshire resembling a cathedral, with a soaring central octagonal tower.

Fonthill was built for the wealthy William Beckford, who emulated not only Walpole's Strawberry Hill but also his *Castle of Otranto*, and wrote *Vathek*, a fantastic oriental story of black magic. This return to fourteenth-century romance produced a crop of similar novels of mystery and terror in the 1790s, the most famous being Mrs Radcliffe's *Mysteries of Udolpho* and Matthew Lewis's *The Monk*. Then in 1798 came *The Rime of the Ancient Marinere*.

This was Coleridge's main contribution to the *Lyrical Ballads*, the remainder of the poems being by his friend, the twenty-eight-year-old Wordsworth. In his *Biographia Literaria* Coleridge was to write that it was his object to make the supernatural appear credible, whereas Wordsworth's was 'to give the charm of novelty to things of every day, and to excite a feeling analogous to the supernatural, by awakening the mind's attention from the lethargy of custom, and directing it to the loveliness and the wonders of the world before us.' Wordsworth said much the same thing in a second edition of the *Lyrical Ballads*, a Preface that was the manifesto of the Romantic Movement. And so, at the very end of the eighteenth century, English poetry escaped from the restraints and conventions, the metrical forms and poetic diction of the classical age, into a new freedom of matter and manner, 'a selection of language really used by men', as Wordsworth claimed. Coleridge was a romantic in his return to the ballad form and supernatural in *The Ancient Mariner*, to the medieval in *Christabel*, and he anticipated the extreme romanticism of the Surrealists in the dream-poem of *Kubla Khan*. But Wordsworth proved the more influential poet, and today, when industry and uninformed town-dwellers in motor-cars are destroying both countryside and coast, the message of *The Prelude*, *Tintern Abbey*, and his lyrics has never been more important: the benign influence of nature on man, its formative, consolatory and healing power. Like Coleridge's, most of Wordsworth's finest poetry, the work that makes him one of the greatest of English poets, was written by 1815, as were the immensely popular verse romances, *The Lay of the Last Minstrel* and *Marmion*, of their contemporary Sir



Fonthill Abbey, Wiltshire: the Gothick house built, 1795–1807, by James Wyatt for the romantic millionaire William Beckford, author of the oriental fantasy *Vathek*.

Walter Scott.

The second phase of the Romantic Movement may be said to have begun after Waterloo, though it was during the last years of the war that young Lord Byron recorded his Mediterranean travels in *Childe Harold*, the first two cantos of which appeared in 1812. A supreme egotist, he was the hero of all his poems, and his strength lies in description, satire, mockery, ingenious rhyming, and humorous bathos, above all in *Don Juan*, though some of his lyrics are among the best of his age. He created the image of the romantic ‘Byronic’ figure, and the romance of Greece, yet he disliked the poetry of Wordsworth as much as he admired Pope, as well as George Crabbe, who went on writing, in classical couplets, grim realistic stories like *Peter Grimes* into the age of Shelley and Keats. Like Byron, Shelley was the champion of liberty, but he had none of Byron’s cynicism, levity, and worldliness; an idealist, he wrote of man’s liberation in the lyrical allegory *Prometheus Unbound*, though man is little more than a spirit in his poetry of air and ocean, he himself little more than a prophetic voice in the wind with which he identified himself: ‘Be thou me,

impetuous one!' He was the ethereal poet of night and the moon, of shadows and the intangible, but Keats was the poet of earth and the sun, of autumnal richness and sensu-
 5 ous beauty, identifying himself not with the wind but with the sparrow pecking among the gravel outside his window. He is the arch-romantic, for whom the rule-bound school of Pope 'blasphemed the bright Lyrist in his
 10 face', and for whom 'poetry should surprise by a fine excess'. That is certainly true of his own work, and though it is sometimes over-lush for modern taste, he is the nearest to Shakespeare in the haunting beauty of his
 15 phrase and remote reverberations of his imagery. He died of consumption in Rome in 1821, aged twenty-five, and Shelley wrote his elegy, *Adonais*, concluding:

20 The breath whose might I have invoked
 in song
 Descends on me; my spirit's bark is driven
 Far from the shore, far from the trem-
 bling throng
 25 Whose sails were never to the tempest
 given;
 The massy earth and sphered skies are riven!
 I am borne darkly, fearfully, afar;
 30 Whilst burning through the inmost veil
 of Heaven,
 The soul of *Adonais*, like a star,
 Beacons from the abode where the eter-
 nal are.

35 It was prophetic as well as valedictory, for in the following year Shelley, aged thirty, was



The first generation of romantic poets: Coleridge, 1772–1834.



The first generation of romantic poets: Wordsworth, 1770–1850.



The first generation of romantic poets: Scott, 1771–1834.



The second generation: Byron, 1788–1824.



The second generation: Shelley, 1792–1822.



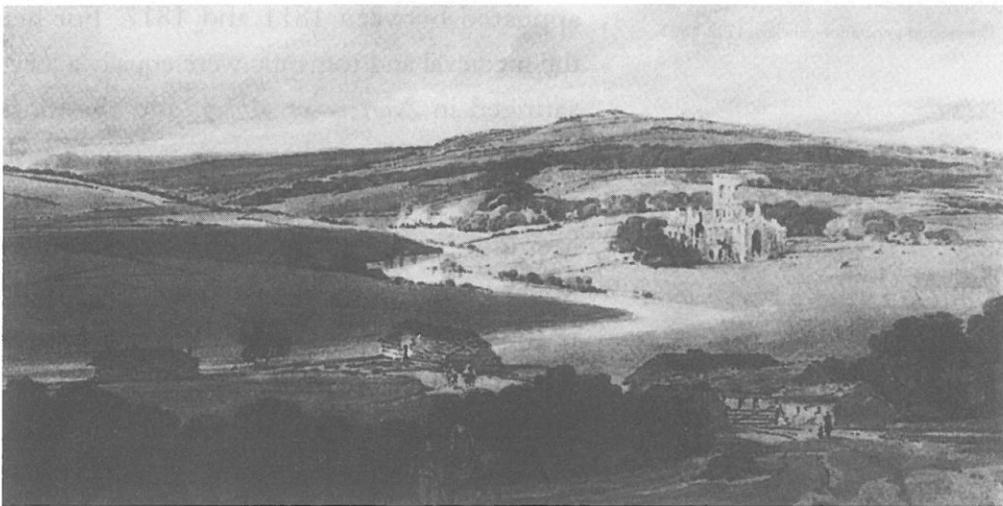
The second generation: Keats, 1795–1821.

drowned while sailing in the Gulf of Spezia. Byron was the longest lived of the three, dying in Greece in 1824, aged thirty-six.

The first quarter of the nineteenth century rivals the age of Shakespeare in the splendour 5 of its poetry, and all five of the great romantic poets tried to revive the Elizabethan poetic drama, but their tragedies remain plays for the study rather than the stage, though Shelley's *Cenci* might have been successful had 10 it not been for the theme of incest. Scott proved a greater dramatist than any of them, though he chose the form of the novel, and from *Waverley* in 1814 to *Woodstock* in 1827 created characters with almost Shakespearean 15 ease and prodigality. Few people read his novels now; they are too prolix and their medievalism is as false as Fonthill Abbey, yet *Guy Mannering*, *The Antiquary*, and *The Heart of Midlothian* are among the great things in the 20 literature of Britain. Very different were the novels of Jane Austen, all six of which appeared between 1811 and 1817. For her the medieval and romantic were equally a joke, satirized in *Northanger Abbey*, and the most 25 sensational event in her work is a mild case of concussion at Lyme Regis; yet a trivial incident in these perfectly constructed domestic comedies — whether it will snow or the carriage be late — may be more fraught 30 with suspense than the horrors of Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* which appeared in 1818, the year after Jane Austen's death. It was also the year of the *Nightmare Abbey* of Shelley's friend, Thomas Love Peacock, and fully to 35

savour the Romantic period Peacock's novels, or at least *Nightmare Abbey* and *Crotchet Castle*, are essential reading. Both Abbey and Castle are 'castellated' Regency houses, in which forgather a number of men who talk, like Ben Jonson's characters, each 'in his humour'. Here we meet gentle caricatures of
 5 Shelley, Byron, Malthus, and Coleridge, 'the transcendental philosopher', with Mr Chainmail the medievalist, Mr Trillo the opera-goer, the Hon. Mr Listless and his valet, apparently the originals of Bertie Wooster and Jeeves. And Peacock, as the Rev. Dr Folliott, humorously mocks the fashionable foibles: the March of Mind, Political Economy, the Picturesque, Romanticism, Neo-
 10 classicism, and Benthamism.

Jeremy Bentham died in 1832, the year of the Reform Act, but the effect of his teaching on the nineteenth century was almost incalculable. His basic concept was 'Utility': if a thing is useless, sweep it away, for it contributes nothing to human happiness, and 'the greatest happiness of the greatest number is the
 15 foundation of morals and legislation'. Unhappily, this led him to conclude that 'the game of push-pin is of equal value with the arts and sciences of music and poetry. If the game of push-pin furnishes more pleasure, it is more valuable than either.' Yet, in spite of such absurdities, his Utilitarianism was mainly responsible for the reform of an antiquated legal system, and the force behind
 20 much of the political and social legislation of Victoria's reign. Utilitarianism meant radical democracy, for 'every man is to count for one, and no man for



The Romantic Movement in painting: nature and medieval ruins. *Kirkstall Abbey*: a water-colour by Thomas Girtin, c. 1800.

more than one', and for John Stuart Mill and the other Philosophic Radicals of the middle of the century it meant liberty, free trade, enlightened self-interest, *laissez-faire*, restriction of State action. *Laissez-faire* was an idealistic philosophy meant to promote happiness, but when its abuse led to the greatest misery of the greatest number, it was Utilitarianism that inspired their protection by the State. It was not the success of his teaching, however, that most delighted Bentham, but his Panopticon, a model prison in which one man could see all that was going on, an invention that amused Peacock as much as it roused the derision of Pugin.

In the years between Waterloo and the accession of Queen Victoria, Charles Lamb was writing his whimsical essays 'for antiquity', de Quincey the dream prose of *An English Opium Eater*, Cobbett his breezy, indignant survey of a changing England, *Rural Rides*, and Hazlitt his penetrating criticism of the works of his contemporaries and Shakespeare. Coleridge too, most inspired of critics, was demolishing the classical conception of Shakespeare as 'a wild irregular genius' and substituting that of a poet whose judgement was equal to his genius. Somewhat apart from these was Walter Savage Landor, whose chiselled verse and marmoreal prose of the *Imaginary Conversations* were the equivalent of Flaxman's neoclassical reliefs.

Like Wordsworth, John Flaxman was full of high moral purpose: the business of sculpture, and of all the arts, was to elevate the mind, and he set



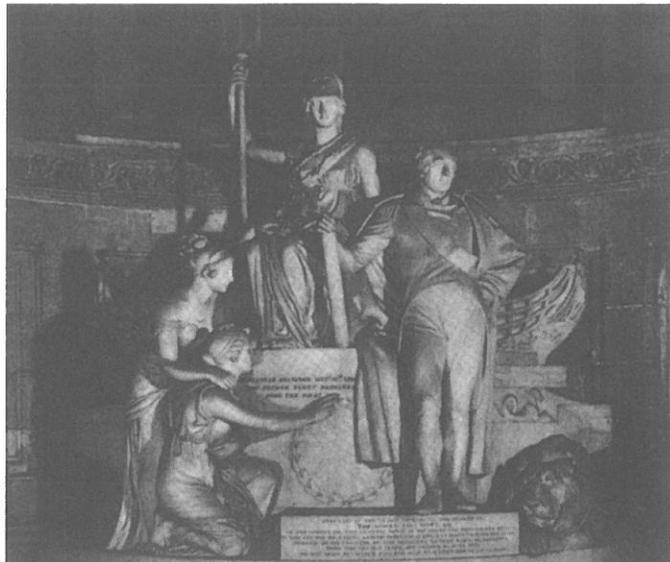
Jeremy Bentham, Utilitarian, 1748–1832.

himself to do for the Protestant Church what Michelangelo and the other Italians had done for the Catholic. It was the age of Bowdler, whose expurgated *Family Shakespeare* appeared in 1818, and the decencies were preserved: although naked gentlemen were allowable, there are no naked ladies in his work, most of his females being heavily draped and mourning over funerary urns or, like his men, improving their minds, or those of others, with a book Patriotism was one of the higher virtues, which he tried to instil in monuments such as his *Lord Howe* and *Nelson* in St Paul's. 'He had', as his friend Allan Cunningham mildly remarked, 'a serious leaning towards allegory, and dealt largely in British

Lions, Victories and Britannias.' Freed from these encumbrances, his reliefs are better, for his talent was for line rather than form.

Flaxman's *Howe* was one of the first monuments to be erected in St Paul's, to commemorate the heroes of the French war. The State was beginning to take over the patronage of sculpture, and a Committee of National Monuments, formed in 1802, was empowered to commission memorials according to a sliding scale: the higher the rank of the subject the higher the reward. Thus Richard Westmacott would receive six thousand guineas for his *General Abercromby*, a not very subtle exercise in diagonals, the central feature of which is a horse's head, the expiring general being half hidden by the back view of a supporting Highlander. Westmacott was fond of backs, and even more remarkable is his *Pitt* over the west door of Westminster Abbey, with History at his feet recording his oration. Statues of public men were overflowing into public places: Westmacott's *Canning* was erected in Parliament Square, and *Nelsons* were soon to be seen in the squares of many provincial cities, though not yet in London.

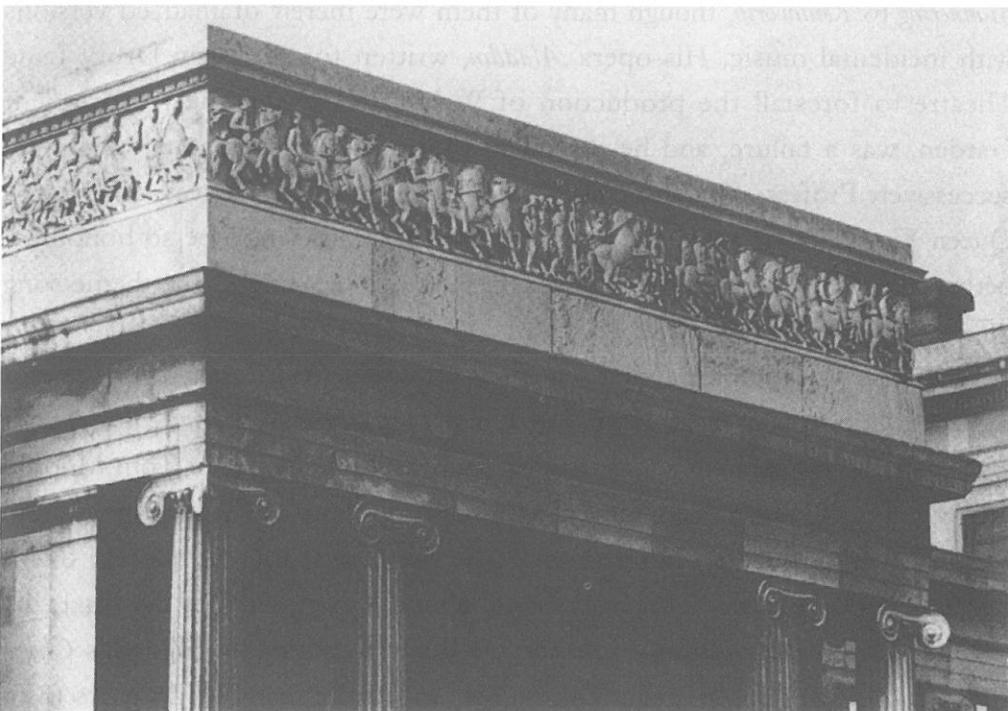
With the end of the war and renewal of contact with continental Europe, the 'voluptuous' work of the Italian Canova was much admired in Britain, though more important was the revelation of the Elgin Marbles, the Parthenon sculptures, which were bought for the nation in 1816. Their influence is most obvious in John Henning's friezes on Decimus Burton's Arch at Hyde Park Corner and the Athenaeum Club, but it can also be seen in the reliefs of Westmacott and his slightly younger contemporary, Francis Chantrey. Chantrey, however,



Neoclassicism in St Paul's Cathedral: Lord Howe's monument, by John Flaxman, 1803–11. 'He had a serious leaning towards allegory, and dealt largely in British Lions, Victories and Britannias.'

was primarily a sculptor in the round, and, impatient of fashionable allegory, carved realistic statues like the seated figure of James Watt at Birmingham, and busts, of which the best known is that of Scott, made in 1820 when the novelist was writing *Kenilworth*. Chantrey was a better sculptor than Flaxman and Westmacott, but he was over-fond of death-bed scenes and mothers and 5 children, and his new naturalism was the beginning of Victorian sentimentality.

The Romantic Age produced no British sculpture comparable to its literature, nor did it inspire any new music worthy of that great period of poetry. In this it differed from the Elizabethan Age, when music was the peer of poetry, and the descent from Tallis, Byrd, Morley, and Dowland to the Romantic 10 composers is mere bathos. Among the pupils of the Italian-born Clementi was the German-born pianist Johann Cramer, an infant prodigy who began to play in public in 1781 at the age of ten, and like his master combined the writing of sonatas, long forgotten, with piano manufacture. John Field, an Irishman, was another prodigy pupil of Clementi, for whom he sold pianos and with whom 15 he travelled abroad giving recitals. His piano compositions are of some historical importance, for he devised the nocturne, a form that was soon to be



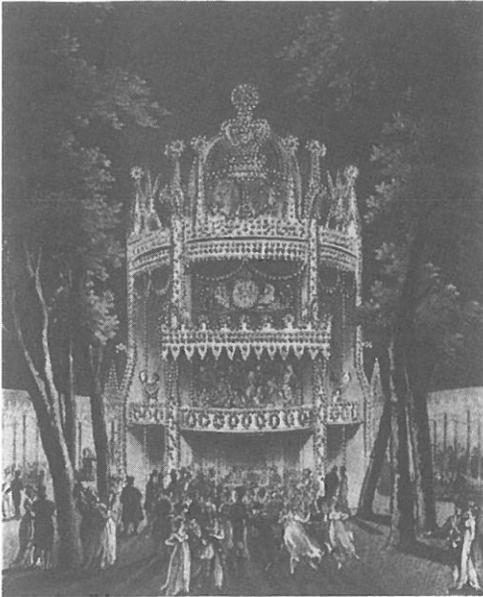
Idealism and the Elgin Marbles: The frieze at Hyde Park Corner, London: by John Henning, 1828.

developed by Chopin. It is some measure of the decline of English music that the most famous musician of the period was Henry Bishop, composer of forgotten operas and incidental music for the trivialities of the stage. In 1806, when only twenty, he wrote the music for *Tamerlan et Bajazet*, a ballet, and had the distinction of being the first Englishman to write for this form of art imported from France, where it had been developed from the masque, and was to have a great vogue in London after the arrival of the dancer Marie Taglioni in the 1820s. Bishop made his name with the opera *The Maniac*, and when the Philharmonic Society was formed in 1813 he was appointed one of the directors, sometimes taking the place of the aging Clementi as conductor. The Waverley Novels were a godsend to a composer in search of librettos, and there followed what can only be called the Waverley Operas, from *Guy Mannering* to *Kenilworth*, though many of them were merely dramatized versions with incidental music. His opera *Aladdin*, written for the New Drury Lane Theatre to forestall the production of Weber's *Oberon* at the rival Covent Garden, was a failure, and he turned to more academic pursuits, becoming successively Professor of Music at Edinburgh and Oxford. He was knighted by Queen Victoria soon after her accession, the first musician to be so honoured, perhaps because he was the composer of 'Home, sweet home', the theme-song of his *Clari: the Maid of Milan*.



Sir Henry Bishop (1786–1855), composer of 'Home, sweet home', and the first musician to be knighted.

Scott was not the only writer whose work was set to music. In this age of romantic love-lyrics, Isaac Nathan made Byron's *Hebrew Melodies* into songs with piano accompaniment, and John Stevenson did the same for Tom Moore's *Irish Melodies*. It was, indeed, Stevenson's settings, many of them adapted from national airs, that led to Moore's immense popularity and the success of his oriental verse romance of *Lalla Rookh*, which was made into an opera by Charles Horn, better known as the composer of the setting for Herrick's *Cherry Ripe*. Moore was himself a charming singer, and wrote many of his lyrics to fit old Irish tunes, 'The harp that once through Tara's halls', for example, and



'Vanity Fair': Vauxhall Gardens in 1809.

UNDER THE IMMEDIATE PATRONAGE OF
His Royal Highness the Prince Regent.

PHILHARMONIC SOCIETY.

First Concert, MONDAY, March 8th, 1813.

PART I.

Overture to <i>Andreas</i>	<i>Cherubini.</i>
Quartetto, two Violins, Viola and Violoncello, Messrs. F. CRAMES, MORALT, SHERRINGTON, and LINDLEY	<i>Mozart.</i>
Quartetto & Chorus, Nell' orror, Mrs. MORALT, Messrs. HAWES, P. A. CORRI, and KELLNER	<i>Sacchini.</i>
Serenade, Wind Instruments, Messrs. MAHON, OLIVER, HOLMES, TOLLY, and the PETRIDES	<i>Mozart.</i>
Symphony	<i>Beethoven.</i>

PART II.

Symphony	<i>Haydn.</i>
Chorus, <i>Placido e' il mar</i> , Mrs. MORALT, Miss HUGHES, Messrs. P. A. CORRI, C. SUTU, &c.	<i>Mozart.</i>
Quintetto, two Violins, Viola, and two Violon- cellos, Messrs. SALOMON, CUDMORE, SHER- RINGTON, LINDLEY, and C. ASHLEY	<i>Boccherini.</i>
Chaconne, <i>Jomelle</i> , and March	<i>Haydn.</i>

Leader, Mr. SALOMON.—Piano-Forte, Mr. CLEMENTI.

The Second will take place on Monday next, the 15th March.

Reynell, Printer, 21, Piccadilly, London.

The inaugural concert of the Philharmonic Society, 1813.

Burns did a similar service for Scot-
land. In this they were encouraged
by George Thomson, who in 1793
published a collection of Scottish,
Irish, and Welsh folk-music — 5
though not English, for England
was then thought to have no folk-
music. In fact, apart from old folk-
tunes, new ones were even then
being created by sailors as they 10
worked at the capstan or halliards,
the shanty man singing the solo part
and the others joining in the cho-
rus. 'Blow the man down' and 'Low-
lands away' are good examples of 15
the sea-shanty, which died out when
steam replaced sail about 1870.

Opera was confined to London,
but not concerts, and when Haydn
visited England in 1791 his Sym- 20
phony in G major was christened
the 'Oxford' when performed in the
Sheldonian Theatre on the occasion
of his receiving an honorary degree.
It was Salomon, the German vio- 25
linist, who persuaded him to visit
England and compose the last twelve
of his century of symphonies for
performance there, Haydn himself
conducting at the keyboard, as the 30
fashion then was, while Salomon led
the violins. While German literature
and philosophy were influencing
Coleridge and Carlyle, German
music was beginning to compete 35

with Italian and French, particularly after the formation of the Philharmonic Society, who, in their new quarters in Regent Street, played the strange music of the new man, Beethoven. In 1826 Weber, composer of the romantic German (not Italian) opera, *Der Freischütz*, arrived in England to conduct his
 5 *Oberon*, commissioned by Kemble for Covent Garden, where scenery such as a 'Perforated Cavern on the Beach' was more of an attraction than music. The venture proved too much for Weber, who died in London soon after conducting twelve performances. Three years later the young Mendelssohn paid the first of his many visits to London, where his *Midsummer Night's Dream* overture
 10 was given its first English performance, while a journey to Scotland inspired his *Scottish Symphony* and the overture *Fingal's Cave*.

Thus, though there was good music to be heard in England during the Romantic period, it was mainly composed and performed by foreigners. English Church music, too, was still in the doldrums, though Samuel Wesley
 15 — another prodigy, who composed an oratorio at the age of eight — was a brilliant organist who wrote a memorable eight-part motet, *In Exitu Israel*, and was largely responsible for introducing the work of Bach to English organists before his death in 1837.

Not music but painting was the peer of poetry in the Romantic Age; never
 20 before had Britain had such a wealth of great painters, and most of them, whether consciously or not, did for their art what Wordsworth and Coleridge set out to do for theirs: give the charm of novelty to things of every day, and a semblance of truth to 'shadows of imagination'. The visionary art of Blake came nearest to Coleridge's ideal and that of Fuseli illustrates the grotesque
 25 and supernatural element in romanticism. Henry Fuseli was a German-Swiss who settled in England about 1780, where he first attracted attention with his *Nightmare*, a more disturbing revelation of the unconscious mind than the dream-poem *Kubla Khan*, as were his Surrealistic interpretations of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* exhibited in the Shakespeare Gallery. The clear-cut neoclas-
 30 sical contour of Fuseli was partly responsible for Blake's flowing linear style and muscular but boneless bodies, and Blake himself influenced the young, idealistic Samuel Palmer, who saw and painted nature with an almost apocalyptic intensity.

Neither Fuseli nor Blake was a Wordsworthian: 'Damn Nature! She always
 35 puts me out,' Fuseli would say; and Blake: 'Painting, as well as poetry and



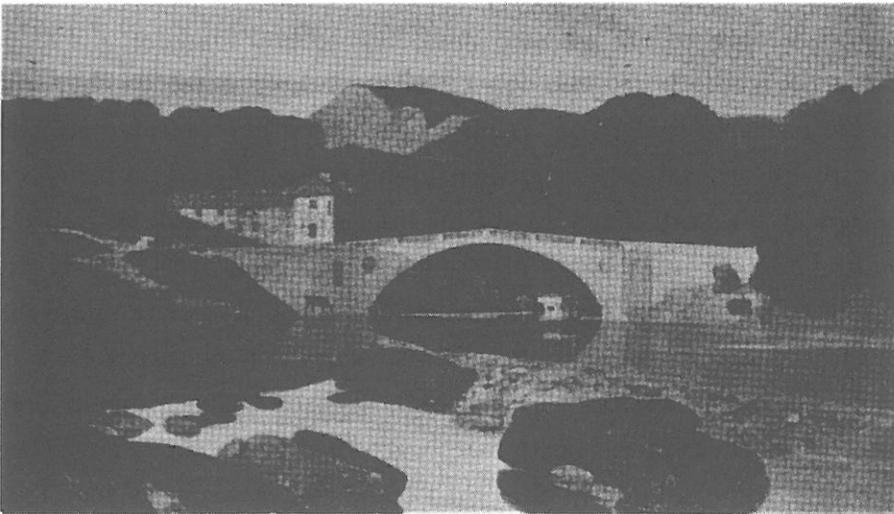
Nightmare, by Henry Fuseli, 1782: the visual equivalent of the horrific romantic novel, and an anticipation of Surrealism.

music, exists and exults in immortal thoughts,' which is not far from Coleridge's 'Painting is the intermediate somewhat between a thought and a thing.' Most of the other Romantic painters, however, wished to represent nature as they saw it, and as water-colour is the medium with which fleeting and 'picturesque' effects can most easily be captured, this was a great period of watercolour painting. Moreover, as the French war virtually precluded foreign travel until 1815, their pictures of the first half of the period are mainly of the British scene. Thus Girtin, although a

Londoner, was attracted by the hills and ruined abbeys of the north, and by the suppression of irrelevant detail gave a new breadth to landscape painting. 'Had Tom Girtin lived, I should have starved,' said his friend Turner. He died aged twenty-six in 1802, the year in which the equally short-lived Richard Bonington was born. Bonington painted mainly in France, where his work, both in water-colour and oils, was better known and appreciated than in England, the luminosity and richness of his colour gaining him a Gold Medal at the Salon of 1824. David Cox, born in 1783, was a Midlander who found his chief inspiration in the romantic scenery of Wales, and delighted in representing the effect of atmosphere on landscape, almost painting the wind, and with his broken touches giving his work something of the brilliance and sparkle of Impressionist painting. On the other hand, his contemporary John Sell Cotman, like his friend Girtin, worked in a broader manner, achieving a serenity that is almost abstract in the interplay of simplified forms, as in the magnificent *Greta Bridge*.

Although Cotman was born in Norwich, his early training was in London, and it was only after Girtin's death that he returned to his native city. There he found John Crome, a humbly born man some twelve years his senior, at the centre of a group of painters who in 1805, Trafalgar year, formed themselves into the Norwich Society of Artists, the beginning of the 'Norwich school', the first provincial school of art since medieval times. There had always been a

close cultural and commercial relationship between East Anglia and the Netherlands, the flat landscapes of which are similar, and Crome was much influenced by the Dutch landscape painters of the seventeenth century, notably Hobbema. So while Wordsworth at Grasmere was composing *The Excursion*, Byron making fun of it — ‘a drowsy frowsy poem’ — in *Don Juan*, and Keats writing his *Odes* at Hampstead, Crome was painting his beloved Norfolk countryside, its heaths, slow rivers, boats, and trees, as simplified forms under wide luminous skies.



Water-colour had been practised by a few painters of the eighteenth century, notably by Paul Sandby, Alexander Cozens and his son John Robert Cozens, and it became a favourite medium when the Romantics rediscovered nature. (Below) *Rhyl Sands*, ‘painting the wind’, by David Cox (1783–1859). *Greta Bridge*, a study in serenity, by John Sell Cotman (1782–1842).

The greatest and most original of these East Anglian painters, however, was a Suffolk man, John Constable, who did for the region of his birthplace on the River Stour what Crome did for the neighbourhood of Norwich. His early patron, Sir George Beaumont, an amateur painter of the old school, assured him that ‘a good picture, like a good fiddle, should be brown’, but Constable 5 had other ideas, for, like Wordsworth, he really looked at nature, saw nature with his own eyes, not through those of other painters, however much he admired them. ‘When I sit down to make a sketch from nature,’ he said, ‘the first thing I try to do is to forget that I have ever seen a picture.’ And this was why the French Romantic painter, Delacroix, wrote that ‘The Englishmen’ — 10 particularly ‘that admirable man, Constable’ — ‘seem to be pursuing nature, while we are merely occupied in imitating pictures.’ It was the new brilliance, greenness, freshness, instead of conventional colouring, that was so revolutionary in his art, best seen in the preliminary studies made from nature, like those for *The Hay Wain* and *Leaping Horse*, and the exhilarating sketch of 15 *Brighton Beach with Colliers*, all painted in the early 1820s. Although Constable



Mousehold Heath, by John Crome (1769–1821). John Crome, often called ‘Old’ Grome, to distinguish him from his son, was born at Norwich, where he was a house-painter before becoming a drawing-master and founder of the Norwich School. Asked why he painted this picture, he replied, ‘For air and space.’

did not copy, but represented, interpreted nature, no other painter has so faithfully reproduced the atmosphere, the feeling of the English countryside.

Yet, even after half a century of Romantic art, England was not ready to accept pure landscape. Richard Wilson had been neglected, Gainsborough was
 5 compelled to abandon landscape for portrait painting, Cotman had to support himself by teaching, and Constable's genius was unrecognized in England until after his death in 1837. The English are an incurably literary people: they like their art to tell a story or point a moral, and all that these East Anglian painters offered was views of their unsensational countryside. Yet the greatest of all
 10 English landscape painters, J.M.W. Turner, was more fortunate in every sense of the word, and for a number of reasons. Born in 1775, the year before Constable, he made a name for himself in the acceptable art of topographical water-colour, and early oil-paintings, such as *Calais Pier*, are in the highest degree dramatic: a torn white sail against louring clouds, a heaving sea and
 15 groups of straining men. Then, to the elemental drama of his later paintings he would often add a nominal human one, calling a mountain snowstorm *Hannibal*



The Hay Wain, by John Constable, c. 1821. Constable's work was much admired by his contemporary Delacroix, the French romantic painter: 'That admirable man, Constable, is one of the glories of England. He and Turner are real reformers. They have got clear of the rut of the old landscape painters.'



Turner's Painting, *Petworth Park*, in his later style, c. 1830, when his palette became much brighter. A sketch for the paintings at Petworth House, Sussex, where he was a frequent visitor.

and his *Army Crossing the Alps*. Again, his travels in France, Germany, Switzerland, and Italy gave him an enormous range of subjects, and finally, he was a Romantic poet whose medium was paint. It was of his first sketching tour of the southern English coast that his great apologist, Ruskin, was to write how he discovered the real nature of the sea: 'now striking like a steel gauntlet, and now becoming a cloud, and vanishing, no eye could tell whither; one moment a flint cave, the next a marble pillar, the next a mere white fleece thickening the thundery rain. He never forgot those facts; never afterwards was able to recover the idea of positive distinction between sea and sky, or sea and land.' His later paintings are an interpenetration of the elements: land, sea, air, and fire, substance dissolving into light in swirling near-abstract patterns of grey, blue, white, lemon, and crimson. Never before had nature in all its moods been painted with such passionate intensity and understanding, and when Ruskin claimed him as the greatest of all painters he may well have been right.

Despite the Romantic revolution, the classical tradition of British portraiture in the manner of Reynolds survived, and while Scott was writing at Abbotsford, Henry Raeburn was happily painting in Edinburgh his vigorous full-length portraits of its citizens. In London the boy prodigy from Bath, Thomas Lawrence, was the darling of society, in preference to Hoppner and Opie, 'the Cornish wonder', and in 1792, at the age of twenty-three, he succeeded Reynolds as Principal Portrait Painter to George III. Successful as he was agreeable, he

painted the royalty and nobility of Europe as well as of England, but success corrupted his genius, and his natural liveliness too often descended

 5 into a flattering artificiality. Lawrence's prosperity must have been gall to Benjamin Robert Haydon, whose megalomania was to paint more 'sublime', bigger and better 'history pictures' than Benjamin West,

 10 the new President of the Royal Academy and unhappy butt of 'Peter Pindar'. Keats admired his work and wrote him a sonnet, but his humble scenes of contemporary life mean far more than such grandiose work as the *Entry of Christ into Jerusalem*. Poor Haydon shot himself, but his less aspiring contemporaries, David

 15 Wilkie, William Etty, and William Mulready were honoured among Academicians. Etty was also a 'history' painter on the scale of canvases a hundred feet square, but with a fine Venetian feeling for colour, which he applied to his popular paintings of the nude. The vogue of the huge 'history' picture was almost over, though revived by David Wilkie

 20 in his frescoes for the Palace of Westminster, and Wilkie might almost be said to be the complement of Constable, an observer, not of nature, but of human nature, a recorder of scenes of ordinary life,

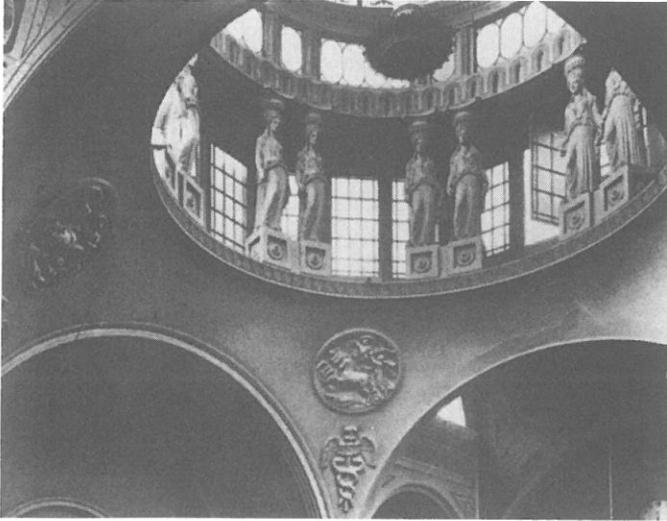
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Classical dignity and romantic prettiness: (*Above*) Sir John Sinclair, by Sir Henry Raeburn (1756–1823). (*Below*) Lady Blessington, by Sir Thomas Lawrence (1769–1830).



Arch, dome and medallion: the unmistakable style of Sir John Soane. Bank of England, Dividend Office, 1818–23.

its humour and pathos, as were William Frith and so many other Victorian painters. 5

When in 1797 Wordsworth described how a thrush's song transformed Cheapside and 10 Lothbury into river valleys of his native Westmorland, this area of the City was

being less lyrically transformed by John Soane, Surveyor of the Bank of 15 England, which in the course of the next thirty years he rebuilt. It was a difficult task, for the long low walls had to be proof against possible mob violence, but he relieved a compulsory austerity by converting the acute, yet principal corner of the building into a segmental temple of Vesta, surmounted by a Greek sarcophagus, a good example of his eclecticism. His real originality, 20 however, was in his interiors. The Bank, with windowless walls, had to be lighted from above, its Roman arches and groined vaults pierced by lunettes and domes of glass, but similar overhead lighting is characteristic of all his work, of the Dulwich Picture Gallery, where it is also functional, and of his own house, No. 13 Lincoln's Inn Fields, where it is not. Shelley must have 25 known the house when staying with his cousins, the Groves, in Lincoln's Inn Fields, and remembered it when writing *Adonais*:

Life, like a dome of many-coloured glass,
Stains the white radiance of Eternity.

Scholarly and fastidious, Soane selected what he wanted from the whole range 30 of architecture, from Greek to the Picturesque, combining and modifying their elements to form his wholly personal and unmistakable style, epitomized in the house that is now the Soane Museum.

His exact contemporary, John Nash, was also his exact contrary. Unschol-



III COUNTESS HOWE, painted by Gainsborough *c.* 1765, while he was living at Bath. The portraits of Reynolds are solid, architectural; those of Gainsborough more akin to music, as in the delicate harmony of this symphony in pink and grey.