adjust tone or further his other intentions. If his success in these other aims justify him, no reader (of the kind at least to take his meaning as it should be taken) can validly say anything against him.

But these indirect devices for expressing feeling through logical irrelevance and nonsense, through statements not to be taken strictly, literally or seriously, though pre-eminently apparent in poetry, are not peculiar to it. A great part of what passes for criticism comes under this head. It is much harder to obtain statements about poetry, than expressions of feelings towards it and towards the author. Very many apparent statements turn out on examination to be only these disguised forms, indirect expressions, of Feeling, Tone and Intention. Dr Bradley's remark that *Poetry is a spirit*, and Dr Mackail's that it is *a continuous substance or energy whose progress is immortal* are eminent examples that I have made use of elsewhere, so curious that I need no apology for referring to them again. Remembering them, we may be more ready to apply to the protocols every instrument of interpretation we possess. May we avoid if possible in our own reading of the protocols those errors of misunderstanding which we are about to watch being committed towards the poems.

CHAPTER II

FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE

Que fait-il ici? s'y plairait-il? penserait-il y plaire?
RONSARD.

THE possibilities of misunderstanding being fourfold, we shall have four main exits from true interpretation to watch, and we shall have to keep an eye open, too, upon those underground or overhead cross-connections by which a mistake in one function may lead to erratic behaviour in another.

We cannot reasonably expect diagnosis here to be simpler than it is with a troublesome wireless set, or, to take an even closer parallel, than it is in a psychological clinic. Simple cases do occur, but they are rare. To take aberrations in apprehending Sense first: those who misread 'a cool, green house' in *Poem II*, the victims of 'the King of all our hearts to-day' in *Poem IX*, the rain-maker (10·64), and the writer (5·2) who took *Poem V* to be 'quite an ingenious way of saying that the artist has made a cast of a beautiful woman' (if we interpret 'cast' charitably), are almost the simplest examples we shall find of unqualified, immediate misunderstanding of the sense. Even these, however, are not perfectly simple. Grudges felt on other grounds against the poem, misunderstandings of its feeling and tone, certainly helped 2·2 and 2·21 to their mistakes, just as the stock emotive power of 'King' was the strong contributing factor, mastering for 9·111 all historical probabilities and every indication through style.

Mere inattention, or sheer carelessness, may some-

times be the source of a misreading ; but carelessness in reading is the result of distraction, and we can hardly note too firmly that for many readers the metre and the verse-form of poetry is itself a powerful distraction. Thus 9·16, who understands that it is the King that is being toasted *on the peak*, and 5·3 and his fellows, no less than 5·2, may be regarded with the commiseration we extend to those trying to do sums in the neighbourhood of a barrel-organ or a brass band.

There is one difference however. All will agree that while delicate intellectual operations are in progress brass bands should be silent. But the band more often than not is an essential part of the poetry. It can, however, be silenced, if we wish, while we disentangle and master the sense, and afterwards its co-operation will no longer confuse us. A practical ' moral ' emerges from this which deserves more prominence than it usually receives. It is that most poetry needs several readings—in which its varied factors may fit themselves together—before it can be grasped. Readers who claim to dispense with this preliminary study, who think that all good poetry should come home to them in entirety at a first reading, hardly realise how clever they must be.

But there is a subtler point and a fine distinction to be noted. We have allowed above that a good poet—to express feeling, to adjust tone and to further his other aims[1]—may play all manner of tricks with his sense. He may dissolve its coherence altogether, if he sees fit. He does so, of course, at

[1] For simplicity's sake, I write as though the poet were conscious of his aims and methods. But very often, of course, he is not. He may be quite unable to explain what he is doing, and I do not intend to imply that he necessarily knows anything about it. This disclaimer, which may be repeated, will, I hope, defend me from the charge of so crude a conception of poetic composition. Poets vary immensely in their awareness both of their inner technique and of the precise result they are endeavouring to achieve.

his peril ; his other aims must be really worth while, and he must win a certain renunciation from the reader ; but the liberty is certainly his, and no close reader will doubt or deny it. This liberty is the careless reader's excuse and the bad poet's opportunity. An obscure notion is engendered in the reader that syntax is somehow less significant in poetry than in prose, and that a kind of guess-work—likely enough to be christened ' intuition '—is the proper mode of apprehending what a poet may have to say. The modicum of truth in the notion makes this danger very hard to deal with. In most poetry the sense is as important as anything else ; it is quite as subtle, and as dependent on the syntax, as in prose ; it is the poet's chief instrument to other aims when it is not itself his aim. His control of our thoughts is ordinarily his chief means to the control of our feelings, and in the immense majority of instances we miss nearly everything of value if we misread his sense.

But to say this—and here is the distinction we have to note—is not to say that we can wrench the sense free from the poem, screw it down in a prose paraphrase, and then take the doctrine of our prose passage, and the feelings this doctrine excites in us, as the burden of the poem. (See p. 216.) These twin dangers—careless, ' intuitive ' reading and prosaic, ' over-literal ' reading—are the Symplegades, the ' justling rocks ', between which too many ventures into poetry are wrecked.

Samples of both disasters are frequent enough in the protocols, though *Poem I*, for example, gave little chance to the ' intuitive ', the difference there between a ' poetic ' and a ' prosaic ' reading being hardly marked enough to appear. *Poem V*, on the other hand, only allowed intuitive readings. In 2·22, 10·22 and 10·48, however, the effect of a prosaic reading is clear ; in 6·3, intuition has all its own

way, and the effect of its incursions in 11·32 and 11·33, is as striking as the triumph of the opposite tendency is in 12·41.[1]

Still keeping to the reader's traffic with the sense as little complicated as may be with other meanings, mention may perhaps be expected of *ignorance*, lack of acquaintance with the sense of unfamiliar words, the absence of the necessary intellectual contexts, defective scholarship, in short, as a source of error. Possibly through my choice of poems (*Poem III* did, however, bring out some odd examples) and perhaps through the advanced educational standing of the protocol-writers, this obstacle to understanding did not much appear. Far more serious were certain misconceptions as to how the sense of words in poetry is to be taken. (12·41 may have struck the reader as an example.) Obstacles to understanding, these, much less combated by teachers and much more troublesome than any mere deficiency of information. For, after all, dictionaries and encyclopædias stand ready to fill up most gaps in our knowledge, but an inability to seize the poetical sense of words is not so easily remedied.

Some further instances of these misconceptions will make their nature plainer. Compare the chemistry of 12·41 with the 'literalism' of 12·4, 10·6, 8·15 and 7·38. Not many metaphors will survive for readers who make such a deadly demand for scientific precision as do these. Less acute manifestations of the same attitude to language appear frequently elsewhere, and the prevalence of this literalism, under present-day conditions of education, is greater than the cultivated reader will

[1] I must apologise for the manual labour such references impose. I have tried to space these bouts of leaf-turning as conveniently as may be, with long intervals of repose. The alternative of reprinting all the protocols referred to proved to have counter-disadvantages. To mention one only — the cost of the book would have been considerably increased.

imagine. How are we to explain—to those who see nothing in poetical language but a tissue of ridiculous exaggerations, childish 'fancies', ignorant conceits and absurd symbolisations—in what way its sense is to be read?

It would be easy to expound a grammatical theory of metaphor, hyperbole and figurative language, pointing out the suppressed 'as if's, 'is like's, and the rest of the locutions that may be introduced to turn poetry into logically respectable prose. But we should (as textbooks enough have shown us) be very little advanced towards persuading one of these hard-headed fellows that poets are worth reading. A better plan, perhaps, will be to set over against these examples of literalism some specimens of the opposing fault—5·3 and 5·32 will do as well as any others—and then consider, in the frame supplied by this contrast, some instances of a middle kind when both a legitimate demand for accuracy and precision and a recognition of the proper liberties and powers of figurative language are combined. It may then be possible to make clearer what the really interesting and difficult problems of figurative language are.

Let us therefore examine the hyperbole of the seaharp in *Poem IX* in the light of comments 9·71 to 9·77. We shall, I hope, agree that these comments rightly point out a number of irremediable incoherences in the thought of the passage. The sense has at least four glaring flaws, if we subject it to a logical analysis. Moreover, these flaws or internal inconsistencies are unconnected with one another; they do not derive from some one central liberty taken by the poet, but each is a separate crack in the fabric of the sense. Setting aside for a while the question of the suitability and fittingness of the figure as a whole, let us survey its internal structure, trying the while to find every justification we can.

Taking the objections in the order in which they

appear in the protocols, we have first the difficulty that ' the sea may sound like an organ, but it never has the sound of a harp '. I think we shall be forced to admit that the more closely we compare these sounds the less justification shall we find in their similarity. But this, by itself, is not a very heavy objection. A very slight similarity might be sufficient as a means of transition to something valuable. We ought never to forget, though we constantly do, that in poetry the means *are* justified by the end. It is when the end disappoints us that we can usefully turn to look into the means to see whether or not *the kind of use* the poet has made of them helps to explain why his end is unsatisfactory.

Next comes the objection that each string of this harp ' is made up of the lightning of Spring nights '. Here the poet has undoubtedly abrogated both fact and possibility. He has broken the coherence of his sense. But to say this, of course, settles nothing about the value of the passage. I have urged above that nonsense is admissible in poetry, if the effect justifies it. We have to consider what the effect is. The effect the poet *proposed* is clear—an exhilarating awakening of wonder and a fusion of the sea, lightning and spring, those three ' most moving manifestations of Nature ', as some of the other protocols pointed out. But an external influence so compelling that it may fairly be supposed to have overridden both thought and intention in the poet is unmistakable, and we shall not fully understand this passage unless we consider it. As 9·94 pointed out, ' the style is Swinburne-cum-water ', a sadly too appropriate admixture. Not only the diction (sea, harp, mirthful, string, woven, lightning, nights, Spring, Dawn, glad, grave . . .), and the subject-matter, but the peculiar elastic springy bound of the movement, and the exalted tone, are so much Swinburne's that they amount less to an echo than

to a momentary obsession. A poet so dominated for an instant by his devotion to another, submitting himself, as it were, to an inspiration from without, may well be likely to overlook what is happening to his sense.

The general problem of all responses made to indirect influences may here be considered. A reader's liking for this passage might often be affected by his acquaintance with Swinburne's descriptions and sea-metaphors. ' Who fished the murex up ? ' is a pertinent question. The point constantly recurs when we are estimating the enthusiasm of readers whose knowledge of poetry is not wide. Have they, or have they not, undergone the original influence ? It would be interesting to compare, by means of such a passage as this, a group of readers before and after they had first spent an evening over *Songs of the Springtides*, or *Atalanta in Calydon*.

But however widely they read in Swinburne I do not believe they would ever find him turning his sea into lightning—not even in the interests of Victor Hugo or Shelley. He is full of slight abrogations of sense. He is indeed a very suitable poet in whom to study the subordination, distortion and occultation of sense through the domination of verbal feeling. But the lapses of sense are very rarely so flagrant, so undisguised, that the reader, swept by on the swift and splendid roundabout of the verse, is forced to notice them. And, more often than not, when the reader thinks he has detected some nonsense, or some inconsequent distortion of sense, he will, if he examines it, be troubled to find it is he who is at fault. The celebrated opening of the Second Chorus of *Atalanta in Calydon* is a very representative example :

> Before the beginning of years
> There came to the making of man
> Time, with a gift of tears ;
> Grief, with a glass that ran.

We may think, at first, that the tears should belong to Grief and the hour-glass to Time, and that the emblems are exchanged only for formal reasons, or to avoid a possible triteness; but a little reflection will show that several things are added by the transposition. With the third line compare the verse in *A Forsaken Garden*, which begins

Heart handfast in heart

and with the fourth line compare

We are not sure of sorrow

from *The Garden of Prosperine*. Some connection, though it may be tenuous or extravagant, can almost always be found in Swinburne, perhaps because of his predilection for the abstract and the vague. Vague thoughts articulate one with another more readily than precise thoughts.

We have still to decide about the effect of the too audacious physics of *Poem IX*. Do they not destroy the imaginative reality—that is to say, the proper power over our feelings—of both the sea and the lightning, to say nothing of the harp and (presumably) the harper[1] that are in the background of our consciousness? We can perhaps here extract another moral for our general critical guidance. It might take this form. Mixtures in metaphors (and in other figures) may work well enough when the ingredients that are mixed preserve their efficacy, but not when such a fusion is invited that the several parts cancel one another. That a metaphor is mixed is nothing against it; the mind is ambidextrous enough to handle the most extraordinary combinations if the inducement is sufficient. But the mixture must not be of the fire and water type—which unfortunately is exactly what we have here.

[1] It is not unfair, I think, to list this missing harper among the blemishes of the passage, for the sea here has somehow to play itself. Cf. Swinburne, *The Garden of Cymodoce*, Str. 8, l. 3:

Yea surely the sea as a harper laid hand on the shore as a lyre.

Objection number three, given in 9·75, that strings are not woven, will illustrate this moral. The 'higher potency in releasing vague emotion', that *woven* in a proper context certainly possesses, is damped and cancelled as it blends with the sea and lightning ingredients, nor is there anything else in the passage that it can seek help from in preserving an independent existence.

The fourth objection, the time difficulty, is less serious. Personification, as we shall shortly see in connection with another passage, is a device which allows a poet to do almost anything he pleases with impunity provided, of course, as usual, he has anything worth doing in hand. The protocol writers, 9·76 and 9·77, rely too confidently upon common sense, a useful servant to the critic but not to be entrusted with much responsibility. Surely we need not fly very high in imagination, not so high as an aeroplane may fly, to see night and dawn very plainly present contemporaneously in the cosmic scene. Or, with less imaginative effort, we may reasonably urge that in Spring the usual separation of night and day may be said to lapse. But will these justifications really help the poem? Dawn, we may still feel, has really no sufficient business in the poem. She is there as a pictorial adjunct—whether deserving of the opinion of 9·44 or of 9·421, I must leave it to the reader to decide, for the defect of syntax upon which 9·421 relies would be allowed, if the result were a sufficient compensation. But in her capacity as a listener she adds nothing. Dawn has certainly to listen to plenty of queer noises, and her presence does not necessarily glorify the song that the poet has in his mind.

This has brought us to the larger question of the suitability of the whole figure, how well it serves the intention of the sonnet; upon which some very simple remarks may suffice. This intention is neither

recondite nor subtle—being the expression of a rather vague and generalised enthusiasm, the creation of an exalted feeling. Nor is any great precision necessary in the feeling evoked. Any lofty, expansive and 'appreciative' feeling will do. This being so, a certain negligence about the means employed is not unfitting. '*Qu'importe la boisson pourvu qu'on ait l'ivresse*', might be our conclusion but for one consideration. The enjoyment and understanding *of the best poetry* requires a sensitiveness and discrimination with words, a nicety, imaginativeness and deftness in taking their sense which will prevent *Poem IX*, in its original form, from receiving the approval of the most attentive readers. To set aside this fine capacity too often may be a damaging indulgence.

We have been watching a group of readers, with, on the whole, a well-balanced tendency to literalism, making their points against a passage of figurative language whose liberties and inconsistencies were of a kind that might excuse the dislike which less well-balanced literalists sometimes feel for all the figurative language of poetry. Let us turn now to another group of exhibits, where rationality is rather more in danger of tripping itself up. Can the metaphors of the first two lines of *Poem X*, and those of the last two verses, defend themselves from the attacks of 10·61 and 10·62? Is their literalism of the kind exemplified in the chemistry of 12·41 (which would be fatal to nearly all poetry); or is it the legitimate variety, aimed at the abuse, not at the use, of figurative language? And if the latter, is it rightly aimed, does the poem deserve it, or have we here only instances of misreading?

First we may reconsider 10·6, with a view to agreeing, if we can, that the objection there lodged would really condemn a great deal of good poetry, if it could be sustained. It is a general objection to Personification and, as such, worth examining irrespective of the merits of *Poem X*. 'Animism', as this writer calls it, the projection of human activity into inanimate objects of thought, has been expressly pointed to by innumerable critics as one of the most frequent resources of poetry. Coleridge, for example, declared that 'images' (by which he meant figurative language) 'become a proof of original genius . . . when a human and intellectual life is transferred to them from the poet's own spirit'. And he instanced it as 'that particular excellence . . . in which Shakespeare even in his earliest, as in his latest, works surpasses all other poets. It is by this, that he still gives a dignity and a passion to the objects which he presents. Unaided by any previous excitement, they burst upon us at once in life and power.' (*Biographia Literaria*, Ch. XV). There are indeed very good reasons why poetry should personify. The structure of language and the pronouns, verbs and adjectives that come most naturally to us, constantly invite us to personify. And, to go deeper, our attitudes, feelings, and ways of thought about inanimate things are moulded upon and grow out of our ways of thinking and feeling about one another. Our minds have developed with other human beings always in the foreground of our consciousness; we are shaped, mentally, by and through our dealings with other people. It is so in the history of the race and in the individual biography.[1] No wonder then if what we

[1] Compare Wordsworth on the effects of the tie between the infant Babe and his Mother.

> For him, in one dear Presence, there exists
> A virtue which irradiates and exalts
> Objects through widest intercourse of sense
> No outcast he, bewildered and depressed
> Along his infant veins are interfused
> The gravitation and the filial bond
> Of nature that connect him with the world.
>
> *The Prelude*, Bk. II.

One result is that for some seven years all objects are regarded more as though they were alive than otherwise. The concept of 'the inanimate' develops late. Cf. Piaget, *The Language and Thought of the Child*.

have to say about inanimate objects constantly presents itself in a form only appropriate, if strict sense is our sole consideration, to persons and human relations.

Often, of course, there is no necessity for personification so far as sense is concerned, and we use it only to express feelings towards whatever we are speaking about (Function 2). But sometimes personification allows us to say compendiously and clearly what would be extraordinarily difficult to say without it. *Poem X* in its third verse provides a good example:

> On wall and window *slant* your hand
> And *sidle* up the garden stair.

Both ' slant ' and ' sidle ' were occasion for divided opinions, as the protocols show; those readers who took their sense accurately being pleased. To get this sense into a prose paraphrase with the personification cut out is not an easy matter. In fact the task almost calls for geometrical diagrams and illustrative sketches. But the bending of the cloud shadow as it passes from the surface of the earth to the upright plane of ' wall and window ' is given at once by ' slant your hand'. The changed angle of incidence thus noted adds a solidness and particularity to the effect described, and since vividness is a large part of the intention of the poem at this point, the means employed should not be overlooked. Of course, if ' hand ' be read to mean a part of the cloud itself and not as the extremity of a limb of the cloud's shadow, the image becomes merely silly, and some of the condemnations in the protocols are explained if not excused.

So, too, with ' sidle '; it gives the accidental, oblique quality of the movement of the shadow, and gives it in a single word by means of a single particularising scene. Condensation and economy are so often

necessary in poetry—*in order that emotional impulses shall not dissipate themselves*—that all means to it are worth study. Personification, for the reasons suggested above, is perhaps the most important of them.

But there are degrees of personification; it can range from a mere momentary loan of a single human attribute or impulse to the projection of a complete spiritual being. Nothing recoils more heavily upon a poet than a too ample unjustified projection. As with some other over-facile means of creating an immediate effect, it destroys the poetic sanction, and seems to empty the poet in the measure that the poem is overloaded. In *Poem XII* the dreams, the desires, the prognostications, the brooding and the wise imaginations of the clouds' mantles may seem in the end to have just this defect. Yet to decide whether a personification is or is not ' overdone ' is a matter of very delicate reading. In 10·62, however, we have a complaint that the personification is not carried far enough and a useful peg for some further critical ' morals '.

In the first place, what another poet (here Shelley) did in another poem is never in itself a good ground for deciding that this poet by doing differently has done wrong. This over-simple form of ' comparative criticism ' is far too common; in fact we hardly ever see any other kind. Shelley's intent and this poet's intent differ, the means they use inevitably differ too. It is hardly possible to find instances so closely parallel that divergence of *method* will prove one poem better or worse than another. We have always to undertake a more subtle inquiry into the ends sought or attained. It would be an excellent thing if this type of critical argument could be labelled and recognised as fallacious. It is really only one of the more pretentious forms of recipe-hunting. This is not to say that comparisons are not invaluable in

criticism, but we must know what it is we are comparing and how the relevant conditions are also to be compared.

To come closer to this example, 10·62 has not asked himself whether so shifting and various a thing as this cloud can be given a definite character, whether a changeful tricksiness is not all the personality it can bear. A ' clear conception ' of the personality of the cloud would have hopelessly overburdened the poem. The poet indeed has been careful of this very danger. When after five verses of ' antics ', chiefly concerned with the cloud-shadows, he turns to the cloud itself in its afternoon dissolution, he cuts the personification down, mixing his metaphors to reflect its incoherence, and finally, ' O frail steel tissue of the sun ', depersonifying it altogether in mockery of its total loss of character. This recognition that the personification was originally an extravagance makes the poem definitely one of Fancy rather than Imagination—to use the Wordsworthian division—but it rather increases than diminishes the descriptive effects gained by the device. And its peculiar felicity in exactly expressing a certain shade of feeling towards the cloud deserves to be remarked.

Probably 10·62 expected some different feeling to be expressed. But 10·61, who also quarrels with the opening metaphor, seems to miss the descriptive sense of the poem for some other reason. In view of the effect of ' miraculous stockade ', no less than of ' limn ', ' puzzle ', ' paint ', ' shoot ' and ' sidle ' upon other readers, one is tempted to suspect some incapacity of visual memory.[1] Or perhaps he was one of those who supposed that a cloud rather than its shadow was being described. ' Pencil ', if we take it to mean ' produce the effects of pencilling ' (such are the exigences of paraphrasing) hardly mixes the metaphor in any serious fashion. Its

[1] Not of visualisation, however. See Ch. V and Appendix A.

suggestion both of the hard, clear outline of the cloud's edge and of the shadowy variations in the lighting of its inner recesses, is not in the least cancelled by ' climb ' or by the sky-scraper hoist of ' miraculous stockade '. Incidentally, would it be capricious to meet the many objections to the sounds in these words (10·42 and 10·43) with the remark that they reflect the astonishment that a realisation of the height of some clouds does evoke ? ' Miraculous stockade ' seems, at least, to have clear advantages over ' the tremendous triumph of tall towers ' in point of economy and vividness. ' Puzzle ' has accuracy also on its side against these cavillers. Anyone who watches the restless shift of cattle as the shadow suddenly darkens their world for them will endorse the poet's observation. But if the cows never noticed any change of light the word would still be justified through its evocative effect upon men. Similarly with ' paint ' and ' shoot ' ; they work as a rapid and fresh notation of not very unfamiliar effects, and there is no reason to suppose that those readers for whom they are successful are in any way damaging or relaxing their sensibility.

With this we come back to the point at which we left *Poem IX*. We can sum up this discussion of some instances of figurative language as follows : All respectable poetry invites close reading. It encourages attention to its literal sense up to the point, to be detected by the reader's discretion, at which liberty can serve the aim of the poem better than fidelity to fact or strict coherence among fictions. It asks the reader to remember that its aims are varied and not always what he unreflectingly expects. He has to refrain from applying his own external standards. The chemist must not require that the poet write like a chemist, nor the moralist, nor the man of affairs, nor the logician, nor the professor,

that he write as they would. The whole trouble of literalism is that the reader forgets that the aim[1] of the poem comes first, and is the sole justification of its means. We may quarrel, frequently we must, with the aim of the poem, but we have first to ascertain what it is. We cannot legitimately judge its means by external standards[2] (such as accuracy of fact or logical coherence) which may have no relevance to its success in doing what it set out to do, or, if we like, in becoming what in the end it has become.

[1] I hope to be understood to mean by this the whole state of mind, the mental condition, which in another sense *is* the poem. Roughly the collection of impulses which shaped the poem originally, to which it gave expression, and to which, in an ideally susceptible reader it would again give rise. Qualifications to this definition would, of course, be needed, if strict precision were needed, but here this may suffice. I do not mean by its 'aim' any sociological, æsthetic, commercial or propagandist intentions or hopes of the poet.

[2] This was Ruskin's calamitous though noble mistake. See his remarks on the Pathetic Fallacy (*Modern Painters*, Vol. III, pt. 4). He is unjust, for example, to Pope, because he does not see tha poetry may have other aims besides clear thinking and strong feeling.

CHAPTER III

SENSE AND FEELING

My belief is that there every one is under the sway of preferences deeply rooted within, into the hands of which he unwittingly plays as he pursues his speculation. When there are such good grounds for distrust, only a tepid feeling of indulgence is possible towards the results of one's own mental labours. But I hasten to add that such self-criticism does not render obligatory any special tolerance of divergent opinions. One may inexorably reject theories that are contradicted by the very first steps in the analysis of observation, and yet at the same time be aware that those one holds oneself have only a tentative validity. FREUD, *Beyond the Pleasure Principle.*

So far we have been concerned with some of the snares that waylay the apprehension and judgment of the *sense* of poetry, treated more or less in isolation from its other kinds of meaning. But the *interferences* with one another of these various meanings give rise to more formidable difficulties. A mistake as to the general intention of a passage can obviously twist its sense for us, and its tone and feeling, almost out of recognition. If we supposed, for example, that *Poem I* should be read, not as a passage from an Epic, but as a piece of dramatic verse put in the mouth either of a prosing bore, or of a juvenile enthusiast, our apprehension of its tone and feeling would obviously be changed, and our judgment of it, though still perhaps adverse, would be based upon different considerations. The different intentions attributed to *Poem II* by readers who take it to express on the one hand ' a deep passion for real life ' (2·61) and on the other ' an atmosphere of quietness and uninterrupted peace ' (2·71) reflect themselves in the different descriptions they give of its tone (' breathless tumultuous music ', ' delicate