

THE WARTON BROTHERS:
THEIR RELATION TO ROMANTICISM AND MILTON

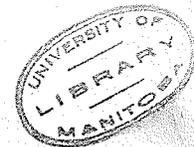
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C O N T E N T S

	<u>Page</u>
Introduction	1
Chapter I. Lives and Works.	6
Chapter II. Pioneers of Romanticism.	18
Chapter III. Influence of Milton on Joseph Warton.	24
Chapter IV. Influence of Milton on Thomas Warton.	34
Conclusion.	46
Bibliography.	53

Introduction

"Conspicuous among the men of letters who flourished under George III were the two Wartons, Joseph and Thomas, - both men of high culture and critics of no little erudition and influence; both poets, and both alike, to a great extent forgotten or indistinguishably confused."¹

"The Wartons are best known for their criticism. If their poetry is rather too imitative, its historical importance is great and its intrinsic charm considerable."²

From 1822, when the last of the Collections of British Poets appeared, until 1893, when Professor Phelps did something to reinstate him, Joseph Warton as a poet was pretty thoroughly neglected. As a writer, he attracted attention chiefly as a critic and a translator. Even in 1872 Mark Pattison³ could say: 'Though Warton's Pope was published in 1797, and though it has been superseded in the market, it has never yet been improved upon;' and again: 'With the rare combination of just principles of criticism to guide him, poetical sensibility, classical correctness, a wide range of literature, ancient and modern, and a fair acquaintance with the personal history of the previous generation of our writers, Joseph Warton was well equipped to be the editor of Pope.'⁴

In spite of John Dennis's exaggerated outburst⁵ in 1874,

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1. Thomas Seccombe, *The Age of Johnson*, Handbooks of English Literature, ed. by Professor Hales, pub. London, George Bell & Sons, 1900.
 2. Eric Partridge, *The Three Wartons*, London, The Scholartis Press, New Oxford St., W.C., 1, 1927, p.9.
 3. *Essays*, ed. by H. Nettleship, 2 vols., 1889, at ii.372, 373.
 4. *Ibid.*
 5. *The Cornhill*, vol. 30, *The Wartons*.

Joseph Warton's poetry deserves to be remembered. An eminent American scholar has claimed that he was the first Romantic with a programme, 'perhaps the first consciously Romantic in the eighteenth century.'¹ He wrote little verse, and that mostly in the seventeenth forties. In one of Gray's letters² is the following passage: "Have you seen the works of two young authors, a Mr. Warton (J.W.) and a Mr. Collins....? It is odd enough, but each is the half of a considerable man, and one the counterpart of the other. The first has but little invention, very poetical choice of expression, and a good ear They both deserve to last some years, but will not." Although Joseph wrote an Ode to Evening³ which should be compared with that by Collins, and which, in its opening stanza, anticipates the beginning of Gray's Elogy; although he was one of the many poets of the time to celebrate Solitude in an ode; although he composed an exquisite trifle founded on the Shakespearian words, 'If music be the food of love, play on'⁴:- yet he is intrinsically at his best and historically most significant in The Enthusiast⁵ and the Ode to Fancy⁶. Of the former, written in 1740 and published first in 1844, Sir Edmund Gosse has said: 'Here, for the first time, we find unwaveringly emphasized what was entirely new in literature, the essence of romantic hysteria. The Enthusiast is the earliest

1. The Cornhill, vol. 30, The Wartons.

2. Letters of Thomas Gray, ed. by D.C. Tovey, 3 vols., 1900-1912, Letter of 27 Dec., 1746.

3. Joseph Warton, The Works of the English Poets, ed. by Alexander Chalmers, printed by C. Whittingham, London, 1810, p. 167.

4. Shakespeare, Twelfth Night, Act. I, Sc. 1, L. 1.

5. Joseph Warton, op. cit., p. 159.

6. Ibid, p. 163.

expression of complete revolt against the classical attitude.¹

Joseph Warton was a genial, pleasant man, and a great favourite with 'the Blues', who speak of him as 'the enthusiast'. Fanny Burney says this of him in 1778: "Dr. Warton of Winchester, the greatest clod I ever saw, and so vulgar a figure with his clunch wig that I took him for a shoemaker at first."²

"Not the best of introductions to 'honest Tom'! But the scholar who, in 1754, became Professor of Poetry at Oxford on his merits and at the youthful age of twenty-six or so, will survive all the hard knocks that were given him, quite rightly for the most part, on account of his inattention to dress and the finer points of deportment; he did not improve one whit when he was made Poet Laureate in 1785. His slovenliness and his apparent laziness (for actually he worked with patient and sagacious industry), his regard for good fellowship, and his love of ease and ale, all these characteristics may be connected with, several may be attributed to, his boyishness: and, in the words of Robert Southey, "it is delightful to hear how all Wykehamists speak of this happy-natured man, who carried with him a boy's heart to the grave." On Thomas Warton's pranks at Winchester with his brother's pupils one could write an amusing paper."³

As a critic, he has a most honourable reputation, for he

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1. Edward Gosse, *Two Pioneers of Romanticism: Joseph and Thomas Warton*, 1915, pub. for the British Academy by Humphrey Milford, Oxford University Press, Amen Corner, London, E.C.
 2. *The Early Diary of Frances Burney*, 2 vols., 1889, at ii.301.
 3. Eric Partridge, *op. cit.*, p. 15.

ranks next to Johnson in the eighteenth century; far more academic, he has 'worn' much worse than Johnson. "But if the Doctor did more than Warton for the permanent improvement of criticism, Tom Warton did far more than the Doctor for the study of English poetry. In the wake of Leigh Hunt, Austin Dobson recognizes his edition of Milton's early poems as the perfection of 'the old, learned, leisurely comment' on a writer and his work."¹ And T. J. Mathias,² who was extremely difficult to please, went so far as to say: 'I always regret the loss of Thomas Warton; in his various writings he is amusing, instructive, pleasant, learned and poetical. I never received information more agreeably from any modern writer than from Mr. Warton.'³

But he attracted attention first as a poet. His first poem - Pleasures of Melancholy⁴ - owes much to Milton. His satires and humorous pieces have no little merit, yet many of his odes are stiff and several of the official odes distinctly boring. The Pleasures, the sonnets, several narrative poems, and the Ode on Sir J. Reynold's Painted Window⁵ have not only considerable historical interest but much charm; the basis of his poetry is lyrical.

"Through their extension of human interest, their precise description of Nature, their antagonism to a 'mechanical' view of literature, and their vivid plea for the rights as well as the pleasures

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1. Eric Partridge: op. cit., p. 15.
 2. T.J. Mathias: Pursuits of Literature (1794-7), 16th ed., p. 101, note 88.
 3. Eric Partridge: op. cit. p. 16.
 4. Thomas Warton: The Works of the English Poets, op. cit., p. 95.
 5. Ibid, p. 94.

of imagination, Joseph and Thomas Warton are regarded as pioneers of Romanticism."¹

1. Eric Partridge, *op. cit.*, p. 18.

Chapter I
Lives and Works

"Joseph and Thomas Warton were the sons of Thomas Warton, vicar of Basingstoke, who had been a fellow of Magdalen and Professor of Poetry at Oxford, which latter position was afterward filled by the younger of his two sons."¹ The Romantic leanings of the Warton brothers seem to be an instance of heredity.

Joseph Warton, the elder of the two, was born in 1722 at Dunsford, Surrey. Except for the very short time that he was at New College School, he was educated by his father until he reached the age of fourteen. He was then admitted on the foundation of Winchester College. He had not been long at this excellent seminary before he exhibited considerable intellectual power, and a laudable ambition to outstrip the common process of education. William Collins was already there, and the two formed a friendship which was maintained through their Oxford career. They read Milton and Spenser together, and wrote verses which, published in the "Gentleman's Magazine", attracted the attention of Dr. Johnson. In 1740 Warton went to Oriel College, Oxford. Here, during his leisure hours he completed several of his poems, among them The Enthusiast, or the Lover of Nature², and the Dying Indian³. On taking his bachelor's degree in 1744, he was ordained to his father's curacy at Basingstoke. He then went to Chelsea, London, but eventually

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1. Henry A. Beers: A History of English Romanticism in the Eighteenth Century, publ. Henry Holt & Co., 1910.
 2. Joseph Warton, op. cit., p. 159.
 3. Ibid, p. 170.

returned to Basingstoke. In 1747-48 he was presented by the Duke of Bolton to the rectory of Winslade and as this was probably considered by him the earnest of more valuable preferment, he immediately married Miss Daman of that neighbourhood. In 1747, according to Mr. Wooll's account,¹ he had published a volume of odes, in conjunction with Collins.

In 1751, his patron, the Duke of Bolton, invited him to be his companion on a tour to the south of France. Soon after his return to England, he published his edition of Virgil in English and Latin. His share in the translation, his notes, and especially his Essays (on Pastoral, Didactic and Epic poetry) raised him to a very high position among the scholars and critics of his age. During the year 1753 he was invited to assist in the Adventurer.² Among his twenty-four contributions was a critical paper on the blemishes in the Paradise Lost - a paper which is an example of delicate and impartial criticism.

During 1754 and 1755 various honours were bestowed on Mr. Warton, among them the position of second-master of Winchester School. Amidst his honours and employments, he now found leisure to complete the first volume of his celebrated Essay on The Writings and Genius of Pope.³ In 1766 he was advanced to the head mastership of Winchester School, a situation in which his shining abilities, urbanity of manners, and eminent success in producing scholars of distinguished talents, will be long and affectionately remembered. In consequence of this promotion he once

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1. Alexander Chalmers, The Works of the English Poets, Vol. 18, Introduction to the poems of Dr. Joseph Warton, vol. xviii, p. 146, C. Whittingham, Printer, London, 1810.
 2. Chalmers, op. cit., p. 146.
 3. Joseph Warton; Essay on the Writings and Genius of Pope, printed for J. Dodsley, in Pall-Mall, London, 1772.

more visited Oxford, and proceeded to the degree of Bachelor and Doctor in Divinity. During his periods of leisure, he visited his friends in London, among whom were the whole of that class who composed Dr. Johnson's literary club. In 1788 he obtained a prebend in Winchester cathedral and the rectory of Upham. He was sixty years of age before he had any benefice, except the small livings of Winslade and Tunworth. In 1793 he resolved to resign the mastership of Winchester. During his retirement at Wickham, he was induced to superintend a new edition of Pope's Works. After the publication of Pope¹, he entered on an edition of Dryden, and about the year 1799 had completed two volumes with notes. At this time he was attacked by an incurable disease which terminated his useful and honourable life on February 23, 1800.

"His biographer, the Rev. John Wooll, has considered his literary character under the three heads of poet, critic and instructor; but it is as a critic principally that he will be known to posterity, and as one who, in the language of Johnson,² has taught 'how the brow of criticism may be smoothed, and how she may be enabled, with all her severity, to attract and to delight'".³

Thomas Warton, the younger and more worthily remembered of the Warton brothers, was born at Basingstoke in 1728. As a child he showed many signs of precocity - a fondness for study, a passion for reading, and an early bent for poetry. He was no doubt greatly

1. Joseph Warton, The Works of Pope, 9 vols., 1797.

2. Chalmers, op. cit., p. 151.

3. Ibid, p. 151.

encouraged in these pursuits by his father, certainly a man of ready sympathy, who, without in any way losing the respect of his sons, made himself their close friend and confidant. He had naturally assumed the task of their education, and Thomas, at least, had no other master until he went up to Oxford, a lad of sixteen. His education was, of course, largely classical, and the elder Warton was able to communicate to his sons not only a substantial Latin style, but a genuine enthusiasm for classical studies which neither of them ever lost. "It is possible that Thomas was more fortunate than otherwise in remaining so long under his father's instruction; Joseph, writing to his father from Winchester School, expressed the fear that the Latin style of composition which was there permitted to be used would not meet with his father's approval."¹

No doubt a very valuable part of Thomas Warton's early education consisted of browsing in his father's library, which must have been a fairly well-stocked one, and probably contained more curious old books than were usually included in the libraries of the country clergymen. "Milton was a favourite; perhaps the early edition of the Poems on Several Occasions,² was part of the father's library which passed into the son's hands."³

Warton's first poetical attempt was in the nature of a voluntary school-exercise, a translation from Martial, On Leander's

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1. Clarissa Rinaker, University of Illinois Studies in Language and Literature, By the University of Illinois, 1916, p. 12.
 2. Thomas Warton, Milton's Poems Upon Several Occasions, printed by James Dodsley, London, 1785.
 3. Clarissa Rinaker, op. cit., p. 13.

Swimming over the Hellespont to Hero, which he sent in a letter to his sister. Fortunately this evidence of the precocity of a boy of nine was preserved, though it is probably no great misfortune that other early poetical attempts have been lost. The lines, not bad for a child, are in the prevailing stilted diction of the day:-

"When bold Leander sought his distant Fair,
(Nor could the sea a braver burthen bear)
Thus to the swelling waves he spoke his woe,
Drown me on my return, - but spare me, as I go."¹

Warton's boyhood days seem not to have been entirely filled, however, with study. There is every reason to believe that his romantic interest in the past, his fondness for the scenes of stirring events and the varied life of earlier days was kindled at a very early age by familiarity with historic places, not only in the immediate vicinity of Basingstoke - the ruined Chapel of the Holy Ghost in the village itself - but also by excursions with his father and brother to more distant places of interest. In a reflection upon Milton he possibly described his own youthful experience; "Impressions made in earliest youth are ever afterwards most sensibly felt. Milton was probably first affected with, and often indulged in the pensive pleasure which the awful solemnity of a Gothic church conveys to the mind - while he was a school-boy at St. Paul's."²

In March 1744, Thomas was sent to Oxford, the city of 'dreaming spires and droning dons,'³ where he spent the remainder of his life. At Oxford Thomas Warton found a place at once congenial to his

1. Clarissa Rinaker, op. cit., p. 13.
2. Ibid, p. 13.
3. Ibid, p. 14.

aesthetic and poetical tastes and an atmosphere conducive to the classical and antiquarian studies of which he was already fond. He found at Oxford many other charms besides a favourable place to study, with ample leisure, and in an atmosphere permeated with the spirit of centuries of learning. It was to him the source of keen aesthetic pleasure. With appreciative eyes he viewed the Thames and Cherwell with their 'willow-fringed banks,'¹ the charming water-walks bordered with fine old trees whose protruding roots and mossy trunks afforded many a delightful place to read, while the gentle-rolling meadows beyond invited to morning ramble when the fields were purpling under the rising sun and the birds were beginning their songs. The fine old Gothic buildings of the University delighted even more. His Triumph of Isis contains a tribute to the beauties of Oxford:-

"Ye fretted pinnacles, ye fanes sublime,
Ye towers that wear the mossy vest of time;
Ye mossy piles of old munifence,
At once the pride of learning and defence;
Ye cloisters pale, that lengthening to the sight,
To contemplation, step by step, invite;
Ye high-arch'd walks, where oft the whispers clear
Of harps unseen have swept the poet's ear;
Ye temples dim, where quiet duty pays
Her holy hymns of ever-echoing praise;
Lo! your lov'd Isis, from the bordering vale,
With all a mother's fondness bids you hail!"²

In this atmosphere of mingled gaiety and work, in this environment of obvious pleasure and obscure study, Warton spent an active but uneventful life. Shortly after he had taken his Master of Arts degree, he succeeded to a fellowship and he remained a tutor and fellow

1. Clarissa Rinaker, op. cit., p. 14.

2. Thomas Warton, The Works of the English Poets, op. cit., p. 89.

of Trinity all his life. Here he found abundant leisure for literary work. With an enthusiastic interest in a wide range of subjects, he drifted from one subject to another, from poetry to criticism, from antiquarian to classical research, from literary history to the editing of his favourite poet. "And his work has all the merits of a labour of love: enthusiasm, appreciative criticism, sympathetic interpretation and thoroughness in purpose; it is distinguished in every field."¹

"Warton attempted to express his genius in poetry. His early verse imitates new models, the poet's favourites, Spenser and Milton, more than the pseudo-classical models, and shows a real originality in its introduction of the Gothic or mediaeval subjects in which the poet was always deeply interested, in its genuine interest in nature, and in its attempts of the sonnet form. Besides this, his verse illustrates more completely than that of any one of his contemporaries the whole change that was taking place in English poetry; it includes practically every tendency of the new movement: the repudiation of the pseudo-classical models, the Spenserian and Miltonic revivals, the return to nature, the cult of solitude, the melancholy of the 'grave-yard school', the interest in the supernatural, and the Gothic revival."²

Warton's first published poem To a Fountain,³ printed in 1746, was a classical imitation. In the previous year he had written his first long poem, The Pleasures of Melancholy,⁴ a poem which showed

1. Clarissa Rinaker, op. cit., p. 24.

2. Ibid, p. 24.

3. Thomas Warton, To a Fountain, from collection in Chalmers' Works of the English Poets, p. 99.

4. Ibid, p. 95.

how devoted a student of Milton the young poet was. Warton's devotion to his Alma Mater inspired The Triumph of Isis¹ in 1749, the first poem to attract the attention of the academic world.

In 1750 Warton became A.M. and in 1751 succeeded to a fellowship, and was made independent and comfortable for life.

In 1753 (after having, in the interim, printed some small pieces, such as Newmarket,² a satire, The Oxford Sausage, etc.), these appeared, in Edinburgh, The Union, or, Select Scotch and English Pieces,³ all of which were selected, and some of them written, by Warton, who assumes for the time the alias of "A Gentleman from Aberdeen".⁴

The eighteenth century - an age of prose - was not the age to encourage such a poet as Thomas Warton. Thus Warton turned his gifts to better account and made for himself a much larger place in the history of English criticism and scholarship. The result was his Observations on the Fairy Queen⁵ - the first important piece of modern historical criticism in the field of English literature, the beginning of a new school of revolt against the pseudo-classical criticism. He assisted Percy in the publication of a collection of old ballads. Later he prepared a life of Sir Thomas Pope, for the Biographic Britannica.

From 1747 Warton was tutor in Trinity College and from

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1. Chalmers, Works of the English Poets, p.90.
 2. Thomas Warton, The Works of the Poets, op. cit., p. 120.
 3. Rev. George Gilfillan, Poetical Works of Goldsmith, Collins & T. Warton, pub. James Nichol, Edinburgh, 1854, p. 146.
 4. Ibid, p. 146.
 5. Thomas Warton, Observations on The Fairy Queen of Spenser, printed by C. Stower, Pater-noster Row, London, 1807.

1757 Professor of Poetry. The great work of his professorship was the edition of Theocritus. Before the expiration of his term, Warton began working on his magnum opus, - The History of English Poetry.¹ In nothing is his 'romanticism' more evident than in his History. In the first volume he had shown how Chaucer was influenced by his age; and in the second how certain of the influences upon him becoming dominant had suppressed poetry, how Chaucer's genius could combine romance and learning. In the third - he was to show that the conjunction of learning and romance was really a period of fertilization, of which the English Renaissance was the fruit.

During his career as Poetry Professor, he had also produced a number of small works in prose and verse - such as a Life of Sir Thomas Pope,² the founder and benefactor of his college; verses for the Oxford Collections, On the Death of George II, etc;³ the preface to, and some of the poems in "The Oxford Sausage for 1764";⁴ besides an edition of the poems of Sir William Browne.⁴

In 1777 he collected a few of his published poetical pieces, along with a good many others which had never before seen the light, and printed them in one volume. The third edition of this work contained seven miscellaneous poems, including his Triumph of Isis,⁵

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1. Thomas Warton, The History of English Poetry from the eleventh to the commencement of the eighteenth century, 4 vols., printed for Thomas Tegg, London, 1824.
 2. Thomas Warton, Life of Sir Thomas Pope, pub. in Biographic Britannia.
 3. Thomas Warton, Works of the English Poets, op. cit., p. 91.
 4. Gilfillan, op. cit., p. 149.
 5. Thomas Warton, Works of the English Poets, op. cit., p. 90.

ten odes, and nine sonnets. He passed his term time generally at Oxford, and his vacations at Winchester, where his brother, Joseph, was headmaster. There he wrote much of his history, and some of his finest poems. His attachment to Joseph was great, and was warmly returned. In 1781 he wrote, for private circulation, a history of his parish, Kiddington. He wrote also some highly-finished and poetical Verses on Sir Joshua Reynold's Painted Window¹ at New College, which elicited a letter of lively gratitude from the painter.

In the year 1785, two honours were conferred on him. He was elected Camden Professor of History; and, on the death of William Whitehead, was created Laureate. This office he filled, on the whole, as well as any who had preceded him. His Odes are, many of them, good; and, according to Mant, "he has shewn how a poet may celebrate his sovereign, not with the fulsome adoration of an Augustan courtier, or the base prostration of an Oriental slave, but with the genuine spirit and erect front of an Englishman."²

One of the most important among the varied interests that distracted Warton from his purpose of completing the History of English Poetry, was the final expression of his life-long devotion to Milton. The constancy of this interest had been repeatedly shown, - by digressions on Milton's poetry in his first critical work, by the obvious influence of Milton on his History of Poetry. The result of this long study was that in 1785 Warton published one of his best works - an edition

1. Thomas Warton, Works of the English Poets, p. 94.

2. Quotation from Gilfillan, *op. cit.*, p. 151.

of Milton's shorter poems.¹ The success of the edition of Milton's shorter poems encouraged Warton to continue and complete it with a second volume containing a similar study of Samson Agonistes and Paradise Regained.

In 1789 the Laureate odes, a short inscription, one humorous poem and a number of Latin poems were added to the fourth edition of Warton's poems. "His later poems are less imitative, - though the Inscription in a Hermitage² is most Miltonic in its praise of studious solitude."³

Warton's principal interest of a strictly antiquarian character was, however, in mediaeval architecture. His Observations, Critical and Historical, on Churches, Monasteries, Castles and Other Monuments of Antiquity⁴ - was left unfinished at his death.

Although his literary achievement is his only claim upon posterity, Warton did not regard himself as primarily a man of letters. During the whole of his busy and fruitful literary career he did not neglect what he always considered his first duties, as fellow and tutor of Trinity College, as Professor of the University of Oxford, and as Clergyman of the Church of England.

The relinquishment of his pastoral charge in 1787 was the only sign Warton gave of decreasing vigor, if, indeed, this is to be

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1. Milton's Poems upon Several Occasions, English, Italian and Latin,... with notes critical, explanatory and other illustration by Thomas Warton.... London, 1785.
 2. Thomas Warton, Works of the English Poets, op. cit., p. 97.
 3. Gilfillan, op. cit., p. 152.
 4. Thomas Warton.

regarded as a concession to waning strength rather than to increasing interests. Warton died in 1790 and was buried in the antechapel of his college with the highest academic honours.

"The great passions of Thomas Warton's life were his enthusiastic love of the past, his loyalty to Oxford, his love of nature, and his regard for Spenser and Milton. Though these show that he belonged to the early nineteenth century, yet he had the characteristic temper of his own time, - its composure and restraint. In his poetry, he frequently revealed the penseroso mood, but it was always serene and contemplative, as in Milton, rather than subjective and gloomy, as in many of his imitators."¹

The dawn of what is now called Romanticism is heralded by the Wartons.

1. Gilfillan, op. cit., p. 152.

Chapter II

As Pioneers of Romanticism

From childhood, Joseph and Thomas Warton had been surrounded with an atmosphere of the study of verse. They read the poets who were out of fashion, and no doubt the library of their father, the Professor of Poetry, was at their disposal from a very early hour. "The result of their studies was a remarkable discovery, unquestionably first made by Joseph. He was, so far as we can gather, the earliest person in the modern world of Europe to observe what vain sacrifices had been made by the Classicists, and in particular by the English Classicists; and as he walked enthusiastically in the forest, he formed a determination to reconquer the realm of lost beauty. From this instinct, the Romantic Movement took its start."¹ The Wartons were not men of creative genius, and their works, whether in prose or verse, have not taken hold of the national memory. They were the prophets of an advance which was nearly fifty years delayed.

Joseph Warton was in fact the active force in this remarkable revolt against existing conventions in the world of imaginative art. The most remarkable of his poems, The Enthusiast² was written

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1. Edmund Gosse, Two Pioneers of Romanticism: Joseph and Thomas Warton, 1915, publ as one of the Warton lecture series.
 2. Joseph Warton, op. cit., p. 159.

in 1740. Here we find unwaveringly emphasized and repeated what was entirely new in Literature, the essence of romantic hysteria. The Enthusiast is the earliest expression of full revolt against the classical attitude which had been sovereign in all European literature for nearly a century. The most important innovation suggested by Joseph Warton was an outspoken assertion that didactic and ethical considerations were by no means the exclusive object of poetry. The lawlessness of the Romantic movement, or rather its instinct for insisting that genius is a law unto itself, is first foreshadowed in The Enthusiast. Not less remarkable or less characteristic, was the revolt against the quietism of the classical school. "Avoid extremes", Pope had said. Joseph Warton's very title, The Enthusiast, was a challenge, - for enthusiasm was a term of reproach¹. He was himself a scandal to classical reserve. Mant, in the course of some excellent lines addressed to Joseph Warton, remarks

"Thou didst seek
Ecstatic vision by the haunted stream
Or grove of fairy: then thy nightly ear,
As from the wild notes of some airy harp,
Thrilled with strange music."²

The same excess of sensibility is still more clearly revealed in Joseph's own earliest verses:-

"All beauteous Nature! by thy boundless charms
Oppress'd, O where shall I begin thy praise,
Where turn the ecstatic eye, how ease my breast
That pants with wild astonishment and love?"³

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1. Edmund Gosse, op. cit., p. 2. Quotation from R. Mant: Verses to the Memory of Joseph Warton, 1800.
 2. Ibid, p. 3.
 3. Joseph Warton, The Enthusiast, op. cit., p. 160.

A passion for solitude always precedes the romantic obsession, and in examining the claim of the Wartons to be pioneers, we naturally look for this element. We find it abundantly in their early verse. When Thomas was only seventeen he wrote Pleasures of Melancholy¹ in which he expresses his wish to retire to "solemn blooms, congenial to the soul." In the early odes of his brother Joseph we find still more clearly indicated the intention to withdraw from the world, in order to indulge the susceptibilities of the spirit in solitary reflection.

"Another point in which the recommendations of the Wartons far outran the mediocrity of their execution was their theory of description. 'Description', Warton says, 'should be uncommonly exact, not symbolic and allusive, but referring to objects clearly, by their real names.' A specimen of Joseph Warton's descriptive poetry may here be given, not for its great inherent excellence, but because it shows his resistance to the obstinate classic mannerism."²

"Tell me the path, sweet wanderer, tell,
To thy unknown sequestered cell,
Where woodbines cluster round the door,
Where shells and moss o'erlay the floor,
And on whose top an hawthorn blows,
Amid whose thickly-woven boughs
Some nightingale still builds her nest,
Each evening warbling thee to rest;
Then lay me by the haunted stream,
Rapt in some wild poetic dream,
In converse while methinks I rove
With Spenser through a fairy grove."³

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1. Thomas Warton, op. cit., p. 95.
 2. Edmund Gosse, op. cit., p. 4.
 3. Joseph Warton, op. cit., p. 163, Ode to Fancy.

To show how identical were the methods of the two brothers we may compare the foregoing lines with the following from Thomas

Warton's Ode on the Approach of Summer¹:-

"His wattled cotes the shepherd plants;
Beneath her elm the milkmaid chants;
The woodman, speeding home, awhile
Rests him at a shady stile;
Nor wants there fragrance to dispense
Refreshment o'er my soothed sense;
Nor tangled woodbine's balmy bloom,
Nor grass besprent to breathe perfume,
Nor lurking wild-thyme's spicy sweet
To bathe in dew my roving feet;
Nor wants there notes of Philomel,
Nor sound of distant-tinkling bell,
Nor lowings faint of herds remote,
Nor mastiff's bark from bosom'd cot;
Rustle the breezes lightly borne
O'er deep embattled ears of corn;
Round ancient elms, with humming noise,
Full loud the chaffer-swarms rejoice."

Here we notice at once, as we do in similar early effusions of both the Wartons, the direct influence of Milton's lyrics. L'Allegro² and Il Penseroso³ had been entirely neglected, and practically unknown, until a date long after the rehabilitation of Paradise Lost⁴. "The date at which Handel set them to music, 1740, is that of the revived or discovered popularity of these two odes. They formed a bridge, which linked the new writers with the early seventeenth century, across the Augustan Age, and their versification as well as their method of description were as much resisted by the traditional Classicists as they were attractive, and directly preferred above those of Pope, by the

1. Thomas Warton, op. cit., p. 106.

2. John Milton, Complete Works of, ed. by David Masson, pub. by Thomas Y. Crowell Co., 1892, copyright by Nathan Haskell Dole, 1920, p. 494.

3. Ibid, p. 497.

4. Ibid, p. 43.

innovators."¹ Joseph Warton, who attributed many of the faults of modern lyrical writing to the example of Petrarch, sets Milton vehemently over against him, and entreats the poets, "to accustom themselves to contemplate fully every object before they attempt to describe it."²

Joseph Warton's Essay on Pope³ is an extraordinary production for the time at which it was produced. Though written with studied moderation, the Essay was so shocking to the prejudice of the hour, that it was received with universal disfavour. He dedicated it to Young, who, alone of the Augustans, had admitted that charm in a melancholy solitude, that beauty of funereal and mysterious effects, which was to be one of the leading characteristics of the Romantic School, and who dimly perceived the sublime and the pathetic to be "the two chief nerves of all genuine poetry."⁴ The young author of the Essay made the earliest attempt to put Pope in his right place - that is to say, to insist that, by the very nature of his gifts, his was genius of a lower rank than that of the supreme poets. Warton admitted as three supreme English poets - Spenser, Shakespeare, Milton. He protests that no other part of the writings of Pope approaches "Eloisa to Abelard" in the quality of being "truly poetical."⁵ He was no doubt led to some indulgence by the fact that this is the one composition in which Pope appears to be indebted to Milton's lyrics.

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1. Edmund Gosse, op. cit., p. 8.
 2. Quotation by Edmund Gosse, op. cit., p. 8.
 3. Essay on Pope by Joseph Warton, 1756.
 4. Edmund Gosse, op. cit., p. 9.
 5. Ibid, p. 9.

Thomas Warton said, "I have rejected the ideas of men who are the most distinguished ornaments of the history of English poetry."¹ He appealed against a "mechanical" attitude towards the art of poetry. The brothers did more in rebelling against the Classic formulas than in starting new poetic methods. "There was an absence in them of 'the pomps and prodigality' of genius of which Gray spoke. They began with enthusiasm, but they had no native richness of expression, no store of energy."²

"The fact remains, that between 1740 and 1750, while even the voice of Rousseau had not begun to make itself heard in Europe, the Wartons had discovered the fallacy of the poetic theories admitted in their day, and had formed some faint conception of a mode of escape from them. The Abbé du Bos had laid down in his celebrated Reflexions³ (1719) that the poet's art consists of making a general moral representation of incidents and scenes, and embellishing it with elegant images. This had been accepted and acted upon by Pope and by all his followers. To have been the first to perceive the inadequacy and the falsity of a law which excluded all imagination, all enthusiasm, and all mystery, is to demand respectful attention from the historian of Romanticism, and this attention is due to Joseph and Thomas Warton."⁴

1. Thomas Warton, History of English Poetry from the close of the eleventh to the commencement of the eighteenth century, pub. for Thomas Tegg, London, 1824, intro. p. 6.

2. Edmund Gosse, op. cit., p. 9.

3. Reference by Edmund Gosse, op. cit., p. 10.

4. Edmund Gosse, op. cit., p. 10.

Chapter III

Influence of Milton on Joseph Warton

"Thou didst seek
Ecstatic vision by the haunted stream
Or grove of fairy: then thy nightly ear,
As from the wild notes of some airy harp,
Thrilled with strange music."¹

Today we do not think of Milton primarily as a Romantic poet; his great epic would more naturally place him in the ranks of the classicists; and his remarkable devotion to the study of Greek and Latin authors, with the powerful influence they had upon him, would seem to separate him widely from Romanticism. To the man of the eighteenth century, however, his message was Romantic. The young Romanticists claimed Milton for their own; his name was a rallying cry; and they followed him in thought, language and versification. "In thought rather than in form Milton affected the Romantic movement, and although Paradise Lost² was always reverentially considered his greatest work, it was not at this time nearly so effective as his minor poetry; and in the latter it was Il Penseroso - the love of meditative comfortable melancholy - that penetrated most deeply into the Romantic soul."³

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1. R. Mant, Verses to the Memory of Joseph Warton, Quotation by Edmund Gosse, op. cit., p. 2.
 2. John Milton, ed. by Masson, op. cit., p. 43.
 3. William Lyon Phelps, The Beginnings of the English Romantic Movement, Ginn & Co., 1893, p. 87.

Among the well-known men who show the influence of Milton most clearly are the Warton brothers. "Joseph Warton, one of the most important names in the history of English Romanticism, was indeed a follower of Milton, and his poetry is in the *Il Penseroso* mood."¹ Writing in 1756, after quoting copiously from the Nativity Ode,² which, he says, is "not sufficiently read nor admired," he continues as follows: "I have dwelt chiefly on this ode as much less celebrated than '*L'Allegro*' and '*Il Penseroso*' which are now universally known; but which, by a strange fatality, lay in a sort of obscurity, the private enjoyment of a few curious readers, till they were set to admirable music by Mr. Handel. And indeed this volume of Milton's miscellaneous poems has not till very lately met with suitable regard. Shall I offend any rational admirer of Pope, by remarking that these juvenile descriptive poems of Milton, as well as his Latin elegies, are of a strain far more exalted than any the former author can boast?"³

In 1740, when only eighteen Joseph Warton wrote The Enthusiast; or the Lover of Nature,⁴ a poem in blank verse. It is in the minor key, full of Romantic feeling, and vibrating with Miltonic echoes:

"What are the lays of artful Addison,
Coldly correct, to Shakespear's warblings wild?
Whom on the winding Avon's willow'd banks
Fair Fancy found, and bore the smiling babe
To a close cavern."⁵

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1. William Lyon Phelps, The Beginnings of the English Romantic Movement, Ginn & Co., 1893.
 2. John Milton, op. cit., p. 480.
 3. Warton, Essay on Pope, Vol. I, pp. 36-38, 5th ed.
 4. Joseph Warton, op. cit., p. 159.
 5. Joseph Warton, op. cit., p. 161. The Enthusiast, Reminiscent of course of Milton's calling Shakespeare "*Fancy's Child*", and "*Warble his native wood-notes wild*" in L'Allegro by John Milton, op. cit., p. 497.

asks the young enthusiast, in Milton's own phrase. And again,-

"Can Kent design like Nature?...
Though he, by rules unfettered, boldly scorns
Formality and method, round and square
Disdaining, plans irregularly great?..."

Versailles

May boast a thousand fountains, that can cast
The tortur'd waters to the distant Heavens,
Yet let me choose some pine-topt precipice
Abrupt and shaggy, whence a foamy stream,
Like Anio, tumbling roars; or some black heath,
Where straggling stands the mournful juniper,
Or yew-tree scathed."¹

the enthusiast haunts "dark forests", "pine-topt precipices," and
delights to hear

"Love-sick Philomel, whose luscious lays
Sooth lone night-wanderers, the moaning dove
Pitied by list'ning milk-maid."²

He envies

"Yon Shepherd idly stretched on the rude rock,
List'ning to dashing waves,"

and

"The first of men, ere yet confin'd
To smoky cities; who in sheltering groves
Warm caves, and deep-sunk vallies liv'd and lov'd,
By cares unwounded."²

Thus he reasons,

"Yet why should men, mistaken, deem it nobler
To dwell in palaces,....
Than in God's forests, architect supreme!"²

The poem concludes with a passionate cry for solitude and wild nature.

Milton appears at every turn, not only in single epithets
like "Lydian airs," "the level brine," "low-thoughted cares," "the
light fantastic dance," but in the entire spirit, imagery and diction

1. Joseph Warton, The Enthusiast, op. cit., p. 160.

2. Joseph Warton, op. cit., p. 160, Cf. Il Penseroso by John Milton,
op. cit., p. 499.

of the poem.¹ A few lines will illustrate this better than any description.

"Ye green-robed Dryads, oft at dusky eve
By wondering shepherds seen, to forests brown,
To unfrequented meads, and pathless wilds,
Lead me from gardens deck'd with art's vain pomps.

.....
But let me never fail in cloudless nights,
When silent Cynthia in her silver car
Through the blue concave slides,....
To seek some level mead, and there invoke
Old Midnight's sister, Contemplation sage,
(Queen of the rugged brow and stern-fixt eye)
To lift my soul above this little earth,
This folly-fettered world; to purge my ears,
That I may hear the rolling planet's song
And tuneful turning spheres."²

With which compare the following lines from Milton's Il Penseroso³

"But let my due feet never fail....
But, first and chiefest, with thee bring
Him that yon soars on golden wing,
Guiding the fiery-wheeled throne,
The Cherub Contemplation;
And the mute silence hist along,
'less Philomel will deign a song.....
While Cynthia checks her dragon yoke
Gently o'er the accustomed oak."

The lines

"Then famine, want and pain
Sunk to the grave their fainting limbs; but us,
Diseaseful dainties, riot, and excess,
And feverish luxury destroy,"⁴

reflect the words of Michael to Adam in Paradise Lost⁵, Book XI, l. 470 -

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1. Henry A. Beers, A History of English Romanticism in the Eighteenth Century, Henry Holt & Co., 1910, p. 153.
 2. Joseph Warton, The Enthusiast, op. cit., co. 159-161.
 3. Milton, op. cit., p. 501.
 4. Joseph Warton, op. cit., p. 160.
 5. John Milton, op. cit., p. 255.

"Some, as thou saw'st by violent stroke shall die,
By fire, flood, famine, by intemp'rance more
In meats and drinks, which on the earth shall bring
Diseases dire, of which a monstrous crew
Before thee shall appear, that thou mayst know
What misery th' inabstinence of Eve
Shall bring on men."¹

and again,-

"Creation started from the gloomy vault
Of dreary Chaos,"²

echoes the thought of the following:

"And Chaos, ancestors of Nature."³

Milton was Warton's master in this poem.

In December, 1746, Joseph Warton published a thin volume of Odes. In his advertisements occur the following significant remarks. "The Public has been so much accustomed of late to didactic poetry alone, and essays on moral subjects, that any work where the imagination is much indulged, will perhaps not be relished or regarded. The author therefore of these pieces is in some pain lest certain austere critics should think them too fanciful or descriptive. But as he is convinced that the fashion of moralizing in verse has been carried too far, and as he looks upon Invention and Imagination to be the chief faculties of a poet, so he will be happy if the following Odes may be looked upon as an attempt to bring back Poetry into its right channel."⁴ In a crude and rough way Warton here articulated the Romantic doctrine.

1. John Milton, op. cit., p. 255.

2. Joseph Warton, op. cit., p. 161.

3. John Milton, Paradise Lost, Bk. 2, l.895, p. 80, op. cit.

4. Phelps, op. cit., p. 90.

This small volume contained fourteen odes, in various metres. Some of the subjects will give an idea of the nature of the collection - Fancy, Liberty, Health, Superstition, Evening, The Nightingale, Solitude, etc. Of these, the odes To Fancy, To Solitude and To the Nightingale, all in the eight-syllabled complot, closely resemble Milton.

"Me, Goddess, by the right hand lead
Sometimes through the yellow mead,
Where Joy and white-robed Peace resort
And Venus keeps her festive court:
Where Mirth and Youth each evening meet,
And lightly trip with nimble feet,
Nodding their lily-crown'd heads;
Where Laughter rose-lip'd Hebe leads;" etc.¹

This passage from the Ode to Fancy is distinctly reminiscent of L'Allegro:²

"Haste thee, Nymph, and bring with thee
Jest, and youthful Jollity,
Quips and Cranks and wanton Wiles,
Nods and Becks and wreathed Smiles,
Such as hang on Hebe's cheek,
And love to live in dimple sleek;
Sport that wrinkled Care derides,
And Laughter holding both his sides.
Come, and trip it, as you go,
On the light fantastic toe;
And in thy right hand lead with thee
The mountain-nymph, sweet Liberty;"

and the following:

"Till, suddenly awak'd, I hear
Strange whisper'd music in my ear,
And my glad soul in bliss is drown'd
By the sweetly-soothing sound!"³

is imitative of Il Penseroso:

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1. Joseph Warton, Ode to Fancy, op. cit., p. 164.
 2. John Milton, op. cit., p. 495.
 3. Joseph Warton, Ode to Fancy, op. cit., p. 164.

"And as I wake, sweet music breathe
Above, about, or underneath,
Sent by some spirit to mortals good,
Or th' unseen genius of the wood."¹

An excellent example of what is meant by the "literature of Melancholy"
is contained in the ensuing passage. "Its original inspiration from
Il Penseroso is indisputable."²

"Haste Fancy from the scenes of folly,
To meet the matron Melancholy,
Goddess of the tearful eye,
That loves to fold her arms and sigh;
Let us with silent footsteps go
To charnels and the house of woe,
To Gothic churches, vaults and tombs,
Where each sad night some virgin comes,
With throbbing breast, and faded cheek,
Her promis'd bridegroom's urn to seek."³

In the same Ode appears an allusion to Shakespeare, where Warton is
again thinking of Milton's expression, "Fancy's child"⁴

"O hear our prayer, O hither come
From thy lamented Shakespeare's tomb,
On which thou lov'st to sit at eve,
Musing o'er thy darling's grave."⁵

The same expression occurs in the Ode To a Gentleman on his Travels:⁶

"She breath'd once more in Milton's lyre,
And warm'd the soul divine of Shakespear, Fancy's son."

The Ode to Health,⁷ written on his recovery from the
small-pox, is noteworthy for the opinion expressed of Milton in the
last stanza:-

1. Milton, op. cit., Il Penseroso, l. 151, p. 501.

2. Phelps, op. cit., p. 91.

3. Joseph Warton, op. cit., To Fancy, p. 164.

4. John Milton, op. cit., L'Allegro, l. 133, p. 497.

5. Joseph Warton, op. cit., To Fancy, p. 164.

6. Ibid, p. 165.

7. Ibid, p. 164.

"Where Maro and Musaeus sit
Listening to Milton's loftier song,
With sacred silent wonder smit,
While, monarch of the tuneful throng,
Homer in rapture throws his trumpet down,
And to the Briton gives his amaranthine crown."

The Ode to Superstition¹ opens in the Il Penseroso

mood:

"Hence to some convent's gloomy isles,
Where cheerful daylight never smiles,"

and this mood is continued in the Ode To a Gentleman on his Travels:²

"Oft to those mossy mould'ring walls,
Those caverns dark and silent halls
Let me repair by midnight's paly faires;"

and in the beginning of the Ode against Despair:³

"Farewell, thou dimpled cherub, Joy,.....
No more, bereft of happy hours,
I seek thy lute - resounding bow'rs,
But to you ruin'd tow'r repair,
To meet the god of groans, Despair;
Who, on that ivy-darken'd ground,
Still takes at eve his silent round,
Or sits yon new-made grave beside,
Where lies a frantic suicide."

"Philomel" beloved of Il Penseroso⁴ moves Warton to song

in the Ode to the Nightingale:

"O thou, that to the moonlight vale
Warblest oft thy plaintive tale,
What time the village murmurs cease,
And the still eve is hushed to peace,
When now no busy sound is heard,
Contemplation's favourite bird!
Chauntress of night,.....
O fail not then, sweet Philomel."⁵

-
1. Joseph Warton, op. cit., p. 165.
 2. Ibid, p. 165.
 3. Ibid, p. 166.
 4. Milton, op. cit., p. 499.
 5. Chalmers, op. cit., p. 168.

The Ode to Solitude¹ fitly closes this remarkable collection of poetry. It is full of echoes of Milton:

"Thou, that at deep dead of night
Walk'st forth beneath the pale moon's light.
In robe of flowing black array'd,
While cypress-leaves thy brown o'ershade;
Listening to the crowing cock,
And the distant sounding clock;
Or, sitting in thy cavern low,
Does hear the bleak winds loudly blow,
Or the hoarse death-boding owl,
Or village mastiff's wakeful howl,
While through thy melancholy room
A dim lamp casts an awful gloom;
Thou, that on the meadow green
Or daisy'd upland art not seen,
But wand'ring by the dusky nooks,
And the pensive falling brooks,
Or near some rugged, herbless rock,
Where no shepherd keeps his flock!
Musing maid, to thee I come,
Hating the tradeful city's hum:
O let me calmly dwell with thee,
From noisy mirth and bus'ness free,
With meditation seek the skies,
This folly-fetter'd world despise!"

"Lycidas" also seems to have inspired the imagination of the poets:

"Where were ye, nymph, when the remorseless deep
Closed o'er the head of your loved Lycidas?
For neither were ye playing on the steep
Where your old bard, the famous Druids lie,
Nor on the shaggy top of Mona high,
Nor yet where Deva spreads her wizard stream."¹

Joseph Warton quotes this passage twice in his Essay on Pope (Vol. I, pp. 7 and 356, 5th edition), - once, to assert its superiority to a passage in Pope's Pastorals: "The mention of places remarkably romantic, the supposed habitation of Druids, bards and wizards, is far more pleasing to the imagination than the obvious introduction of Cam and Isis."

1. Chalmers, op. cit., pp. 168-169.

Another time, to illustrate the following suggestion: "I have frequently wondered that our modern writers have made so little use of the druidical times and the traditions of the old bards..... Milton, we see, was sensible of the force of such imagery, as we may gather from this short but exquisite passage."¹

Warton lauds Milton, when, commenting upon Pope's well-known triplet,²

"Waller was smooth, but Dryden taught to join
The varying verse, the full-resounding line,
The long majestic march and energy divine!"

he exclaims: "What! Did Milton contribute nothing to the harmony and extent of our language?..... Surely his verses vary and resound as much, and display as much majesty and energy, as any that can be found in Dryden. And we will venture to say that he that studies Milton attentively, will gain a truer taste for genuine poetry than he that forms himself on French writers."³

1. Beers, op. cit., p. 193.

2. Pope, Second Book of the Epistles of Horace, l. 267. Quoted by J. Warton in Essay on the Writings of Pope, Vol. II, p. 420, pub. 1782.

3. J. Warton, Essay on Pope, Vol. II, p. 421.

Chapter IV

Thomas Warton as a Disciple of Milton.

"The Gods had made him poetical, but not a poet," said Christopher North of Thomas Warton.¹

"The love of nature, of Milton and of Spenser, which the father of the Wartons handed on to his son Joseph, was shared, and expressed with greater energy by the younger son Thomas. The poetry of Thomas Warton, the younger, is indeed the place in which the wandering fires of nascent romance unite in a clear and steady, though by no means hot, flame."²

Thomas Warton was a more direct follower of Milton than his older brother; his poems are "patched with Miltonic phrases"³. While still a boy he wrote The Pleasures of Melancholy,⁴ a companion piece to the Enthusiast⁵. This blank-verse poem of three hundred and fifteen lines is made up in equal parts of Milton and Akenside. The following extract will suffice to show how well Warton knew the poetry of Milton:

"O lead me, queen sublime, to solemn glooms
Congenial with my soul; to cheerless shades,
To ruin'd seats, to twilight cells and bow'r,
Where thoughtful Melancholy loves to muse,
Her fav'rite midnight haunts.....

-
1. Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine, Sept. 1831, Vol. XXX, p. 483.
 2. Oswald Doughty, English Lyric in the Age of Reason, 1922, p. 209.
 3. Phelps, op. cit., p. 93.
 4. Chalmers, op. cit., p. 95.
 5. Ibid, p. 159.

Beneath yon ruin'd abbey's moss-grown piles
Oft let me sit, at twilight hour of eve,
When through some western window the pale moon
Pours her long-levelled rule of streaming light:
While sullen sacred silence reigns around,
Save the lone screech-owl's note, who builds his bower
Amid the moldering caverns dark and damp;
Or the calm breeze, that rustles in the leaves
Of flaunting ivy, that with mantle green
Invests some wasted tower
Then when the sullen shades of evening close,
Where through the room a blindly-glimmering gloom
The dying embers scatter, far remote
From mirth's mad shouts, that through the illumined roof
Resound with festive echo, let me sit
Blessed with the lowly cricket's drowsy dirge.....
This sober hour of silence will unmask
False Folly's smile, that like the dazzling spells
Of wily Comus cheat the unweeting eye
With blear illusion, and persuade to drink
That charm'd cup which Reason's mintage fair
Unmoulds, and stamps the monster on the man"¹

The poem follows the general plan of Il Penseroso, being a description of the various pleasures which the man devoted to melancholy contemplation may enjoy,² - "solemn glooms," "ruin'd seats," "twilight cells where the thoughtful Melancholy loves to muse," "the ruin'd abbey," "lowly cricket's drowsy dirge," "the tapered choir," "tragedies," etc.

Compare the invocation from the Pleasures of Melancholy:

"Mother of musings, Contemplation sage,
Whose grotto stands upon the top-most rock
Of Teneriff;"³

with the opening lines of Il Penseroso:

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1. T. Warton, (Chalmers Edition), op. cit., p. 95.
 2. Clarissa Rinaker, op. cit., p. 25.
 3. T. Warton, op. cit., p. 95.

"Hail! thou Goddess sage and holy!
Hail, divinest Melancholy!"¹

or, "Pale Cynthia rolls her silver-axled car,"² with, - "While
Cynthia checks her dragon yoke."³

Of the many parallel passages, the following are a few:

'to cheerless shades' ⁴	'in secret shades' ⁵
'midnight haunts'	'midnight hour'
'abbey's moss-grown piles'	'mossy cell'
'raven colour'd robe'	'o'er-laid with black'
'Thus, Night,-'	'Hail, sacred Night!'
'blooming Morn's approach'	'civil-suited Morn appear'
'clad in clouds'	'kerchieft in a comely cloud'
'Attic page'	'Attic boy'
'by darksome brook to muse'	'in close covert, by some brook'
'taper'd choir'	'full-voiced quire'
'many-sounding organ peals'	'let the pealing organ blow'
'my soul is bath'd in ecstasies'	'dissolve me into ecstasies'
'lapp'd in paradise'	'bring all Heaven before mine eyes'
'swinging slow with sweepy sway'	'swinging slow with sullen roar'
'tragic muse'	'gorgeous Tragedy'
'flowing pall'	'in sceptred pall' ⁵
'saintly look'	'saintly visage'

1. Milton, Il Penseroso, op. cit., p. 499.

2. T. Warton, op. cit., p. 95.

3. Milton, Il Penseroso, op. cit., p. 499.

4. T. Warton, Pleasures of Melancholy, op. cit., p. 95.

5. Milton, Il Penseroso, op. cit., p. 499.

'Euphrosyne beguile with toys 'Euphrosyne yclept heart-easing Mirth'¹
of wanton mirth'

'Venus, mother of the smiles "Venus (mother of) Mirth"¹
and loves'

'Bacchus, ivy-crowned' 'ivy-crowned Bacchus'¹

these joys ., Melancholy gives' 'these pleasures, Melancholy give'²

'Hail, queen divine'³ 'Hail, divinest Melancholy'

Warton has borrowed too from Paradise Lost, -

"Upon the rocks of Teneriff"⁴

and, -

"..... or Milton knew,
When in abstracted thought he first conceiv'd
All Heav'n in tumult, and the seraphim
Come tow'ring, arm'd in adamant and gold."⁵

In this same poem reference is made to Comus

"whose dazzling spells
..... cheat th' unweeting eye
With blear illusion, and persuade to drink
That charmed cup,

Eager we taste, but in the luscious draught
Forget the poisonous dregs that lurk beneath."⁶

In imitation of Milton, and without rhyme, according to
the Latin measure, Warton has translated the eighteenth Ode of Horace
(Bk. III).⁷

1. Milton, L'Allegro, op. cit., p. 495.

2. Milton, Il Penseroso, op. cit., p. 499.

3. T. Warton, Pleasures of Melancholy, op. cit., p. 95.

4. T. Warton, Ibid, p. 95, Cf. Milton, Paradise Lost, Bk. IV, l. 987.

5. T. Warton, Ibid, p. 95, Cf. Milton, Paradise Lost, Bk. I, l. 665.

"War in Heaven.....

Of mighty Cherubim; the sudden blaze
Far round illumined Hell. Highly they raged
Against the Highest, and fierce with grasped arms
Clashed on their sounding shields the din of war,
Hurling defiance toward the vault of Heaven."

6. T. Warton, Ibid, p. 96., Cf. Milton, Comus, l. 810, op. cit., p. 526.

"But this will cure all straight; one sip of this
Will bathe the drooping spirits in delight
Beyond the bliss of dreams."

7. T. Warton, op. cit., p. 99.

"Faunus, who lov'st to chase the light-foot nymph,
Propitious guard my fields and sunny farm,
And nurse with kindly care
The promise of my flock....."¹

Warton's devotion to his Alma Mater inspired the Triumph of Isis² in 1749. "It is full of Miltonic personifications of abstractions and places mingled with the deities and heroes of classical myth and history;"³ we meet with Freedom and Gratulation, Cam and Isis, Muse and Naiad, Tully, Cato and Eurus, Vengeance and Prosecution, Freedom and Reason.

Among poems contributed to the Oxford and Cambridge Monthly Miscellany was an Ode entitled Morning. The Author confined to College⁴, a poem in six-line stanzas, showing some influence of Milton and a personal enjoyment of natural scenes. The Il Penseroso mood is echoed in the phrase "the pensive poet thro' the greenwood stealing", of this poem;⁴

in the opening line of the Ode Complaint of Cherwell⁵, -

"All pensive from her osier-woven bow'r",
in Ode X on The First of April⁶, -

"Midst her pensive solitude
Fancy, with prophetic glance";
in the Ode To Sleep⁷, -

1. With which compare as to form Milton's The Fifth Ode to Horace, Bk. I, op. cit., p. 548.

"What slender youth, bedewed with liquid odours,
Courts thee on roses in some pleasant cave,
Pyrrha? For whom bind'st thou
In wreaths thy golden hair...."

2. T. Warton, op. cit., o. 89.

3. Clarissa Rinaker, op. cit., p. 28.

4. T. Warton, op. cit., p. 103.

5. Ibid, p. 104.

6. Ibid, p. 104.

7. Ibid, p. 100.

"On this my pensive pillow";
and again in the Ode The Hamlet¹, where

"Midst gloomy glades, in warbles clear
Wild nature's sweetest notes they hear:
Each native charm their steps explore
Of Solitude's sequestered store."

The Panegyric on Oxford Ale, probably the best of Warton's humorous academic pieces, is a burlesque of Milton's epic style after the manner of Phillips's Splendid Shilling². The models are unmistakable; there are direct allusions to both, and the poem concludes with a comparison of the unhappiness of the poet whose supply of ale is cut off, with that of Adam shut out from Paradise,-

"Thus Adam, exil'd from the beauteous scenes
Of Eden, griev'd, no more in fragrant bow'r
On fruits divine to feast, fresh shade and vale
No more to visit, or vine-mantled grot;

.....

Thus to the matchless bard, whose lay resounds
The Splendid Shilling's praise, in nightly gloom
Of lonesome garret, pin'd for cheerful Ale;
Whose steps in verse Miltonic I pursue,
Mean follower: like him with honest love
Of Ale divine inspir'd, and love of song.
But long may bounteous Heav'n with watchful care,
Avert his hapless lot! Enough for me
That burning with congenial flame I dar'd
His guiding steps at distance to pursue,
And sing his favorite theme in kindred strains."³

Warton's Ode on the Approach of Summer is a close imitation

1. T. Warton, op. cit., p. 100.

2. Clarissa Rinaker, op. cit., p. 29.

3. Thomas Warton, op. cit., p. 122, Cf. Milton, Paradise Lost, Bk. XI,
l. 250 -

"Adam,.....

But longer in this Paradise to dwell
Permits not. To remove thee I am come,
And send thee from the garden forth,...."

of Milton. "Some passages of the Ode are little more than rearrangements of Milton's thought and even diction. It is noticeable that Warton was somewhat truer to the spirit of his model than many of Milton's imitators; his melancholy is not so obtrusive as theirs, and he retains much of Milton's genuine classicism, with which he was in close sympathy. All of these points are illustrated by the following passage¹,--"

"Or bear me to yon antique wood,
Dim temple of sage solitude!
There within a nook most dark,
Where none my musing mood may mark,
Let me in many a whisper'd rite
The Genius old of Greece invite,
With that fair wreath my brows to bind,
Which for his chosen imps he twin'd,
Well nurtur'd in Pierian lore,
On clear Illissus' laureate shore."²

The following are parallel passages from the Ode to Summer and Il Penseroso,--

'Hence, iron-scepter'd
Winter, haste'

'Hence, loathed Melancholy'

'Haste thee, nymph! and hand
in hand!
With thee lead a buxom band.
Bring fantastic-footed joy,
With Sport, that yellow-tressed

'Haste thee, Nymph and bring with thee
Jest, and youthful Jollity,
Quips and cranks and wanton wiles,
Nods and becks and wreathed smiles

Boy:
Leisure, that through the
balmy sky
Chases a crimson butterfly.
Bring Health, that loves in
early dawn
To meet the milk-maid on the
lawn,
Bring pleasures, rural nymphs and
Peace,
Meek, cottage-loving shepherdess!'³

Mirth, admit me of thy crew,
In unreprieved pleasures free.'⁴

1. Clarissa Rinaker, op. cit., p. 31.
2. T. Warton, Ode on the Approach of Summer, op. cit., p. 107.
3. Ibid, pp. 106-108.
4. Milton, L'Allegro, op. cit., p. 495.

'Beneath her elm the
milk-maid chants',¹

'To the tann'd haycock in
the mead:
To mix in rural mood among
The nymphs and swains, a busy
throng',¹

'And all the landscape fair I
view'

'In saffron stole',¹

'Let not my due feet fail to
climb'

'O, ever to sweet poesy
Let me live true votary!
She shall be my blooming bride',⁴

'And the milk-maid singeth blithe'

'To the tanned haycock in the mead
And the jocund rebecks sound
To many a youth and many a maid'

'While the landskip round it measures',²

'In saffron robe',²

'But let my due feet never fail',³

'Married to immortal verse',³

The Sonnets⁵ of Thomas Warton, nine in number, are all Miltonic in form. "The Sonnet Written at Winslade in Hampshire 'about 1750',⁶ shows the influence of Miltonic diction - though not the diction of the sonnets; it is distinctly personal and reflective in tone, and further it indicates Warton's feeling that in their poetical inspiration the native charms of the village were peculiarly adapted to his genius. It shows that his interest in natural scenes as the source of poetic emotion was as conscious and deliberate in his early verse as his interest in the past for the same purpose"⁷, -

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1. T. Warton, Ode on the Approach of Summer, pp. 106-108.
 2. Milton, L'Allegro, op. cit., p. 495.
 3. Milton, Il Penseroso, op. cit., p. 501.
 4. T. Warton, Ode to Summer, op. cit., pp. 106-108.
 5. T. Warton, Sonnets, op. cit., pp. 118-119.
 6. *Ibid*, p. 118.
 7. Clarissa Rinaker, op. cit., p. 33.



"Her fairest landskips whence my Muse has drawn,
Too free with servile courtly praise to fawn,
Too weak to try the buskin's stately strain."¹

The Sonnet on Bathing is likewise Miltonic in diction, but it wholly lacks the personal note that distinguishes the former sonnet. It is also imitative of Milton in the personification of abstractions - Winter, Health and Summer. In two sonnets - Sonnet VII and IX To the River Lodon, Warton shows an ability to use the sonnet for a combination of observation of nature and personal reflection. The second nature sonnet is in the Miltonic mood of melancholy reflection upon a natural scene:²

"Ah! what a weary race my feet have run,
Since first I trod thy banks with alders crown'd,
And thought my way was all thro' fairy ground.
.....
While pensive memory traces back the round."³

Closely akin to these nature poems are those that celebrate the joys of rustic life - poems that still echo Milton. The Sonnet written after seeing Wilton House belongs in this group. Here Warton celebrates the "pleasure of imagination," the "power of fancy" to

"Bid the green landskip's vernal beauty bloom
And in bright trophies clothe the twilight wall."⁴

In the Ode to a Grizzle Wig Warton while comparing the relative merits of 'bob' and 'grizzle', frequently burlesques with relish the manner of Milton's shorter poems:

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1. T. Warton, op. cit., p. 118.
 2. Clarissa Rinaker, op. cit., p. 136.
 3. T. Warton, op. cit., p. 119.
 4. Ibid, p. 119.

"But thou, farewell, my Bob! whose thin-wove thatch
Was stor'd with quips and cranks, and wanton wiles,
That love to live within the one-curl'd scratch,
With Fun, and all the family of Smiles."¹

In two of Warton's best and most characteristic odes, he concerned himself wholly with the past. These very romantic poems - The Crusade² and The Grave of King Arthur,³ are Miltonic in form:

"When eve has hush'd the buzzing camp,
Amid the moonlight vapours damp."⁴

The same note of interest in the past is struck rather frequently in the laureate odes.

The poem Inscription in a Hermitage⁵ is Miltonic in its praise of studious solitude.

"Beneath this stony roof reclin'd
I soothe to peace my pensive mind."⁵

Quite similar in mood is the beginning of the Ode to Solitude at an Inn⁶

"Out upon the twilight plain
.....
Have I met thee, Solitude."

The Five Pastoral Eclogues⁷ are slightly imitative of Milton's one pastoral poem Lycidas⁸, in the general atmosphere, in the

1. T. Warton, op. cit., p. 125. Compare Milton's L'Allegro, l. 27, op. cit., p. 495.

"Quips and Cranks and wanton Wiles,
Nods and Becks and wreathed Smiles."

2. T. Warton, op. cit., p. 108.

3. Ibid, op. cit., p. 109.

4. T. Warton, The Crusade, op. cit., p. 108. Cf. with Milton, Il Penseroso, l. 60., op. cit., p. 499.

"While Cynthia checks her dragon yoke
Gently'er the accustomed oak."

5. T. Warton, op. cit., p. 97. Cf. Milton, L'Allegro, op. cit., p. 501.

"And may at last my weary age
Find out the peaceful hermitage."

6. T. Warton, op. cit., p. 101.

7. T. Warton, op. cit., p. 136.

8. Milton, op. cit., p. 532,

similarity of the names Lycas (Arise my Lycas: I, 136) and Lycidas, and in the form:

"To distant fields, and pastures will I go".¹

"Tomorrow to fresh fields, and pastures new."²

The constancy of Warton's devotion to Milton has been shown in the obvious influence of Milton on his own poetry and by frequent references to him in the History of Poetry³. The result of his life-long study was an edition of Milton's Shorter Poems⁴. Like his father, the editor was eager to establish the great poet's reputation. On the basis of his own sound scholarship he compelled recognition of Milton's importance in the eighteenth century by describing the rise of a 'school of Milton' in emulation of the 'school of Pope',⁵ and secured a fuller appreciation of his poetry by a modern interpretation of it, especially by applying to its study the new historical method.

Warton had previously recognized the need for the historical study of Milton when he pointed out in the "Observations"⁶ that an acquaintance with that very mediaeval literature which had been mistakenly overlooked even in the study of Spenser was also important for the study of Milton. "He realized that since Milton was at least partly 'an old English poet', he required that illustration without

1. T. Warton, Eclogue I, op. cit., p. 137.

2. Milton, Lycidas, op. cit., p. 536.

3. T. Warton, History of Poetry, op. cit. Vol. I.v. cxxxiii, xxxvi, cclii, 132. Vol. II, 303, 304, 317. Vol. III, 117, 129, 130, 131, 228, 443. Vol. IV, 64, 69, 70. 268.

4. T. Warton, Milton's Poems upon Several Occasions, op. cit.

5. Ibid, Preface, p. 8.

6. T. Warton, Observation on the Fairy Queen of Spenser, op. cit

which no old English poet can be well illustrated,"¹ which is to be found in 'Gothic' literature. The great merits, therefore, of Warton's edition of Milton, arise from his ripe scholarship and his excellent poetical taste. His acquaintance with many of the poets with whom Milton must have been familiar enabled him correctly to interpret his poetry; his taste and sympathy helped him to point out Milton's chief beauties."²

The result was an edition of Milton that has been described by a modern editor of Milton as 'one of the best books of comment in the English language.'³ It is generally recognized as an important source for the study of Milton.

Warton's estimate of Milton's minor poems is expressed as follows:

"An editor of Milton's juvenile poems cannot but express his concern, in which, however, he may have been anticipated by his reader, that their number is so inconsiderable. With Milton's mellow hangings, delicious as they are, we reasonably rest contented: but we are justified in regretting that he has left so few of his early blossoms, not only because they are so exquisitely sweet, but because so many more might have naturally been expected."⁴

1. Quoted by Clarissa Rinaker, op. cit., 154.

2. Ibid, p. 154.

3. David Masson, The Poetical Works of John Milton, 3 vols., London, 1874, III, p. 341.

4. T. Warton, Preface to Milton's Minor Poems, op. cit., p. 8.

Conclusion

"The importance of the Wartons is due to their influence in a time of transition. In them the vague dissatisfaction which led to a search for new poetic ideals and ideas becomes a definite, conscious acceptance of the less intangible aspects of romance. History and antiquities, chivalry, "Gothic" art, - the glamour these gave to mediaeval civilisation, a certain restricted, but, within its narrow limits, real play of imagination - these things appealed to the Wartons; inspired by them they laid the rough, solid foundations of a poetic fabric to which others who followed were to give a beauty their own minds never pictured, their own eyes never saw. They took the spirit of their age and lead it a step forward, if only a step. Their work is not without a rough-and-ready merit, but their greatest claim to remembrance lies in this, that 'they builded better than they knew.'¹

"The opinions of the two Wartons, "the learned brothers", as they have been justly styled, were congenial on most topics of literature, but perhaps in nothing more than in their ideas of poetry, which both endeavoured to exemplify in their own productions, although with different effect."² "They were remarkably harmonious in their tastes and intellectual pursuits, eager students of old English poetry,

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1. Oswald Doughty, The English Lyric in the Age of Reason, pub. in London by Daniel O'Connor, 1922, p. 218.
 2. Chalmers, The Works of the English Poets, op. cit., The Life of Dr. Warton, p. 152 .

Gothic architecture, and British antiquities. So far as enthusiasm, fine critical taste, and elegant scholarship can make men poets, the Wartons were poets."¹ Their work was quite lacking in originality. As has been shown, many of their poems can be taken to pieces and assigned, almost line by line and phrase by phrase, to Milton. There are echoes of Thomson, Spenser, Shakespeare and Gray in many of their poems. "They had all of the romantic poet Longfellow's dangerous gifts of sympathy and receptivity, without a tenth part of his technical skill, or any of his real originality as an artist."²

"Joseph Warton is one of the most important names in the history of English Romanticism," writes Professor Phelps.³ In his prose writings he showed himself to be what few men were at that time - a Romanticist, not by accident, but with malice aforethought. We are concerned not so much with his prose as with his poetry, which sounded some of the earliest and most distinct Romantic tones. The Odes The Enthusiast⁴ and To Fancy⁵ offer his main contributions to early English Romanticism and reveal most clearly the influence of Milton in this Romantic revival. Significant also in the development of the lyric is the poem The Enthusiast with its exquisite phrasing such as "the liquid lapse of murmuring waters"⁶ and "bladed grass, perfum'd with dew-dropt flow'rs"⁷ as well as Romantic passages like the following:

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1. Beers, op. cit., p. 198.
 2. Ibid, p. 198.
 3. Phelps, op. cit., p. 89.
 4. J. Warton, op. cit., p. 159.
 5. Ibid, p. 163.
 6. Ibid, p. 160.
 7. Ibid, p. 160.

"Creative Titian, can thy vivid strokes,
Or thine, O graceful Raphael, dare to vie
With the rich tints that paint the breathing mead?
The thousand-colour'd tulip, violet's bell
Snow-clad and meek, the vermil-tinctur'd rose,
And golden crocus."

In summing up Joseph Warton's significance in the history of early Romantic poetry, no better criticism can be quoted than that of Edmund Gosse who notes his love of solitude, desire to extend the human element, and resolve to describe Nature in precise terms, and says: "both brothers urged that more liberty of imagination was what English poetry needed."¹ The Il Penseroso mood of his poetry, the fondness for solitude, twilight, and for personal subjective communion with Nature - these common Romantic qualities which are strikingly characteristic of Warton's poetry, reveal him as a follower of Milton.

In point of invention, powers of description, and variety, the poet-laureate Thomas Warton was much superior to Joseph Warton. An even more direct follower of Milton than his older brother, Thomas Warton produced poems "so patched with Miltonic phrases, that when the quotations are removed, scarcely anything remains. He came out positively for Romanticism; the very word 'romantic' was a favorite with him, used in both poetry and prose."² Warton's love of the past, this revival of mediaeval glories, - connects him most closely with the Romantic movement and constitutes his most original contribution to it. Other characteristics of Warton's poetry are: his interest in natural scenes (which shows the influence of Milton), his quite

1. Eric Partridge, Eighteenth Century English Romantic Poetry, pub. by Edouard Champion, Paris, 1924, p. 83; quotation from Edmund Gosse, op. cit.

2. Phelps, op. cit., p. 94.

modern interest in the rustic delights of simple life (still echoing Milton), and his use of the sonnet for a study of nature and mood.

"The immediate and later reception of Warton's poetry indicates that it belongs much more to the new (Romantic) than to the old (Classical) school. Johnson and Hazlitt may be taken as typical critics of the two schools: the former could see no merit in the performance of his friend; the latter could not praise it too highly. Dr. Johnson was repelled by Warton's enthusiasm for the past; he saw in his poetry only strangeness of language and form. Hazlitt on the other hand, although disposed to blame Warton for the defects of his age in scholarly method, repeatedly acclaimed him as a 'man of taste and genius,'¹ 'a poet and a scholar, studious with ease, learned without affectation,'² and 'the author of some of the finest sonnets in the language,'³ - praise which accords well with Warton's vogue among the poets who were Hazlitt's contemporaries."⁴ Three of the sonnets are included (by Hazlitt), as "treating pleasing subjects in a pleasing and philosophical way."⁵ For its "personal and poetic interest,"⁶ the Sonnet To the River Lodon is quoted, concluding as follows:

"Yet still one joy remains, that not obscure
Nor useless, all my vacant days have flow'd
From youth's gay dawn to manhood's prime mature,
Nor with the Muse's laurel unbestow'd."⁷

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1. Critical List of Authors, from Select British Poets, London, 1924, p. Xii.
 2. Lectures on the English Poets, Lecture VI, Hazlitt's Works, ed. by P.P. Howe; after the edition of A.R. Waller and Arnold Glover; pub. J.M. Dent & Sons, Ltd., Lond. & Toronto, 1930, Vol. V, p. 120.
 3. Ibid, p. 120.
 4. Clarissa Rinaker, op. cit., pp. 139,140.
 5. Hazlitt, op. cit., p. 120.
 6. Ibid, p. 121.
 7. T. Warton, op. cit., p. 119.

The influence of the romantic poetry of this laureate poet can scarcely be, and certainly has not been, overestimated, though it has not been altogether overlooked. "If any man may be called the father of the present race," wrote Southey in the *Quarterly* in 1824, "it is Thomas Warton, a scholar by profession, an antiquary and a poet by choice,"¹ Southey mentioned Bampfylde and Russell as belonging to the school of Warton, the 'true English School';² "to them he should have added also Headley and Bowles. This little group of young poets who, if they were not drawn into poetry by the 'magnetism of Tom Warton'³ were at least strongly influenced by him to write nature poetry of the new type. They form the slender thread that connects him with the major romantic poets, especially with Coleridge and Wordsworth."⁴ Warton's influence upon the later poets was not confined however to poems of nature and reflection; "his chief contribution to the romantic movement was the revival of the spirit of the past, a spirit which found its fullest poetical expression in the poetry of Walter Scott. Even Bowles and Wordsworth, who are most nearly in the other line of romantic development that passed through Warton, had also an interest in mediaeval subjects that

1. *Quarterly*, Vol. XXXI, p. 289.

2. *Ibid*, p. 289.

3. Herbert Croft complained to Nichols, May 15, 1786, (*Lit. Illus.* V, p. 210) that 'the magnetism of Tom Warton draws many a youth into rhymes and loose stockings, who had better be thinking of prose and propriety; and so it is with his brother Joe. At school I remember we thought we must necessarily be fine fellows if we were but as absent and as dirty as the Adelpi of poetry'. (Quoted from Clarissa Rinaker, *op. cit.*, p. 141.)

4. Clarissa Rinaker, *op. cit.*, p. 141.

must be attributed, at least indirectly to his influence."¹

Therefore, while it would be too much to claim for Warton the whole credit for inspiring in Scott the enthusiasm for the past which characterizes his stirring mediaeval poems; for beginning and passing on to Wordsworth by way of Bowles the meditative description of simple natural objects; for beginning the sonnet revival; or for bringing Milton into public notice, it is only just to say that he both represented and furthered to an important extent these tendencies incipient in eighteenth century poetry and dominant in the poetry of the next century, in the romantic triumph."²

Of the Warton brothers, Joseph and Thomas, it may be said, that "whatever their failings as poets, by virtue of their poetry, criticism and history,³ by virtue of their revelation of the extent to which Milton affected the Romantic movement, by reason of the time of poetic transition in which they lived, we see them as mere silhouettes, standing out dark against the horizon, yet pointing the future path of poetry in the grey of the romantic dawn."⁴ Equally applicable to the brothers is Mant's *Encomium on Joseph Warton*:

1. Clarissa Rinaker, op. cit., p. 142. Among Bowles's poems of mediaeval interest are his sonnet on Woodspring Abbey, 1836, and The Harp of Hoel. Wordsworth's mediaeval poems include The Monastery of Old Bangor and one that inevitably recalls Warton, Lines Written in a Blank Leaf of Macpherson's Ossian.

2. Ibid, p. 143.

3. Oswald Doughty, op. cit., p. 209.

4. Ibid, p. 209.

"Happy old man! for therefore didst thou seek
Ecstatic vision by the haunted stream,
Or grove of fairy; then thy nightly ear

.....
Thrill'd with strange music; if the tragic plaints
And sounding lyre of those Athenians old,

.....
Rous'd thee enraptur'd;....
Or Milton's muse of fire.
Happy old man!....

Be it thy praise, that thou
Didst bathe the youthful lip in the fresh spring,
'The pure well-head of Poesy,' didst point,
Like think own lov'd Longinus, to the steep
Parnassian crag, and led'st thyself the way."¹

1. Mant, Encomium on Joseph Warton, included in Chalmers' English Poets,
op. cit., p. 157.

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