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Some Phases of Poetical Ornament-
ation in the "De Rerum Natura" of
Lucretius.

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SOME PHASES OF POETICAL ORNAMENTATION

IN THE

"DE RERUM NATURA" OF LUCRETIIUS.

I. MYTHOLOGICAL ALLUSIONS.

II. FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE.

A. Metaphors.

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The life of Titus Lucretius Carus, the Roman poet-philosopher has ever been shrouded in mystery and uncertainty. From the annals of history we learn only that he was a Roman noble of culture and leisure, a contemporary of Cicerone and Caesar. The entire energy of his life was concentrated in the production of a system of philosophy written in verse, from between the lines of which we must glean the circumstances which formed the character and the influences which moulded the life of this philosophical and satirical poet, this lover of nature and man. However, only within comparatively recent times has his wonderful work and sole literary masterpiece, "De Rerum Natura", attracted adequate comment or general study.

The subject matter as told by its title and the forbidding length of seven thousand lines may in part account for its lack of wider and earlier popularity; yet to the student of science and of literature an examination of this work is both profitable and helpful.

It is not the intention of this paper to indicate the startling facts and brilliant truths which the earnestness of purpose and marvelous foresight and wisdom of Lucretius deduced for the emancipation of man, "guided not by the rays of the sun nor the glittering shafts of day but by the aspect and law of nature", but to catch as far as possible the rainbow tints illuminating this dry and prosaic matter, and to give some glimpses of the fierce storm of his mighty genius as he hurls "the huge lances quivering to the mark."

However scant and uncertain the knowledge of Lucretius' life and circumstances may be, we hope to prove by observation

of his poem only that there should be no doubt or hesitancy in attributing to him great artistic power and true literary merit as a poet.

Our view of Lucretius must be of the man who has pondered on human life, its interests, passions and ambitions, as well as on the material world in which this life is passed and formed his philosophy but his soul is too great to pass unheeded the vain struggle of mankind against manifold woes and sorrows, and he voices his desire to share with them his stronghold of philosophical security in a mighty poem.

Thoroughly equipped with knowledge, intrenched in mental quiet against the conditions of life, and ready to proclaim a helpful message it was not a surprising fact that he should herald his scorn of death and superstition, his visions of peace and beauty in magnificent lines of rhyme and metre.

In spite of material unsuited to poetical diction and the need of prosaic expression to convey the calm insight and logical thought of the philosopher, Lucretius' wonderful imagination and irrepressible poetical genius forced him to release the "divine spark" and won for him the title "chief poet on the Tiber side."

In its close association with truth and fact Lucretius' poetry is the workshop song sung by the imagination; Heaven's gift to the artisan to relieve life of its prose monotony and to shed sunshine upon the problems which reason may explore but which reason cannot fully survey. His imagination pierces the veil and ponders the Infinite, but it is not for us to drink deeply at this fountain of his ambition but only

to sip quietly from the rippling rills of beauty and power
which proceed from it.

I. MYTHOLOGICAL ALLUSIONS

This divine gift of imagination finds a rich field in Lucretius' religious views. An avowed foe to the ancient beliefs and superstitions in the gods, it is with some surprise as well as with true poetic joy we read his terse striking illustrations drawn from mythology. They are, however, merely poetical tools of illustration carrying with them no trace of reality in the author's mind.

A charming portrait of Mars conquered by Venus may serve as an introduction.

I-32-36.

belli fera moenera Mavors
armipotens regit, in gremium qui saepe tum se
reicit aeterno devictus vulnere amoris,
atque ita suspiciens tereti cervice reposta
pascit amore avidos inhians in te, dea, visus,
eque tuo pendet resupini spiritus ore.

"Mavors, lord of battle, controls the savage works of war, Mavors, who often flings himself into thy lap quite vanquished by the never-healing wound of love; and then with upturned face and shapely neck thrown back feeds with love his greedy sight, gazing, goddess, open mouthed on thee, and as backward he reclines his breath stays hanging on thy lips".

From the literary standpoint the story of Iphigenia is an exceeding touching instance of pathetic portrayal, yet it closes with the remark,

"to so much of evil Superstition is able to persuade."

"Aulide quo pacto Triviai virginis aram
Iphianassai turparunt sanguine foede
ductores Danaum delecti, prima virorum.
cui simul infula virgineos circumdata comptus
ex utraque pari malarum parte profusaast,
et maestum simul ante aras adstare parentem
sensit et hunc propter ferrum celare ministros
aspectuque suo lacrimas effundere civis,
mita metu terram genibus summissa petebat.
nec miserae prodesse in tali tempore quibat
quod patrio princeps donarat nomine regem;
nam sublata virum manibus tremibundaque ad aras
deductast, non ut sollemni more sacrorum
perfecto posset claro comitari Hymenaeo,
sed casta incestu nubendi tempore in ipso
hostia concideret mactatu maesta parentis,
exitus ut classi felix faustusque daretur.
tantum religio potuit suadere malorum."

Thus in Aulis, the chosen chieftains of the Danaï, foremost of men, foully polluted with Iphianassa's blood the altar of the Trivian maid. Soon as the fillet encircling her maiden tresses shed itself in equal lengths adown each cheek and soon as her father standing sorrowful before the altars and beside him the ministering priests, hiding the knife, and her countrymen at sight of her shedding tears, speechless in terror she dropped down on her knees and sank to the ground. Nor aught in a moment could it avail the luckless girl that

she had first bestowed the name of father on the king. For lifted up in the hands of men she was carried shivering to the altars not after due performance of the customary rites to be escorted by the clear-ringing bridal song, but in the very season of marriage, stainless maid amid the stain of blood, to fall a sad victim by the sacrificing stroke of a father, that thus a happy and prosperous departure might be granted to the fleet.

In vividness and force, the description of Phaeton probably surpasses three hundred lines of Ovid, but it is modestly preceeded by the words "as the story goes", and is simply illustrative in the context.

V,396-404. Ignis enim superat et lambens multa perussit,
avia cum Phaethonta rapax vis solis equorum
aethere raptavit toto terrasque per omnis.
at pater omnipotens ira tum percitus acri
magnanimum Phaethonta repenti fulminis ictu
deturbavit equis in terram, solque cadenti
obvius aeternam suscepit lampada mundi
disiectosque redegit equos iunxitque trementis,
inde suum per iter recreavit cuncta gubernans!

Fire gained the mastery and licked and burnt up many things when the headstrong might of the horses of the sun dashed from the course and hurried Phaethon through the whole sky and over all lands. But the almighty father, stirred then to fierce wrath, with a thunderbolt dashed Phaethon down from his horses to the earth, and the Sun meeting him as he fell

caught from him the ever-burning lamp of the world and got in hand the scattered steeds and yoked them shaking all over; then guided them on their proper course and gave fresh life to all things.

V, 587. The picture of Pan nodding the piny covering of his
 III, 38, head, of Tantalus, of the serpent which guards the bright
 843. golden apples of Hesperides, "fierce, dangerous of aspect,
 V, 31-33. girding the tree's stem with his enormous body", are as
 striking pictures as can be paralleled in any literature.

Other references are:

I, 120; III, 35; IV, 37, 170; VI, 251.	Acheron.
II, 412; V, 5; VI, 93.	Muses.
IV, 732-45; V, 891.	Centaur.
IV, 1278.	Venus.
V, 14.	Ceres and Liber.
V, 11.	Pythian.
V, 154.	Phoebus.
V, 24-35.	Nemean lion, etc.

In all of which one may note the strength and beauty of the poet's fancy.



METAPHORS.

The power and brilliancy of imagery used in a poem are the common tests of an author's skill and a detailed consideration of the figures of Lucretius will amply repay our efforts.

In classifying the metaphors and similes of Lucretius we find illustrations drawn from the most common and homely sources on the one hand, and from the loftiest heights of imagination on the other. In conjunction with the solemnity of thought there is a distinctive boldness in his figurative treatment of subjects and mental attributes.

- V, 1435. "Billows of war", "melancholy billows of care",
VI, 34. "great billows of wrath" on one hand and "the quivering beam
VI, 74. of fire" or "beamy badge of day" on the other are slight
V, 697. indications of his skill, while the representation of "chang-
V, 785. ing seasons as a cross-sea" and the "clouds as forgers of
lightning" within one sentence aids us to comprehend more
distinctly the writer's skill.

VI, 364. *nam fretus ipse anni permiscet frigus et aestum,
quorum utrumque opus est fabricanda ad fulmina nubi.*

"For the cross sea mixes up both cold and heat,
both of which are needed for forging thunder-bolts."

Other metaphors of force are:

- V, 102-3. Belief, a highway leading into human breast and
quarters of the mind.
V, 160-5. Work of gods, a citadel assailed by speech.
V, 375. Death, a gate standing open to the universe with wide-
gaping maw.

VI, 16, etc. Heart, a vessel foul, leaky and full of holes, corrupt-
ing everything placed within it.

VI, 123. Heaven, a walled city yielding to attack of the storm.

VI, 173. Clouds as dyers, dyeing places with winged light.

in his poetical passages we observe the same limitations and
and innumerable objects, and constantly novel and
ness of vision with which the poet's imagination
nature and man. His power of observation rather than his
knowledge of literature was the chief interpreter of the
visions which he expressed in his poetry.

V, 338. With sympathy and tenderness he pictured the

IX, 19. Dark is its helplessness, lying in a shroud

III, 433-Grailor; and then again, seeking the path of nature, he re-

VI, 64-65 calls in kind the same. There are many as typical of
man and his mental and physical conditions.

IX, 78. The picture of the nation compared to a torch

IX, 397. passed on by numbers, the torch to a ship and another of other

passages show the poetical elements of the nation to

beauty and nobleness. After observing the nation

and the great power of the nation as a whole, the nation

and the nation as a whole, he next states in his poetry

the nation as a whole, and the nation as a whole

the nation as a whole, and the nation as a whole

the nation as a whole, and the nation as a whole

the nation as a whole, and the nation as a whole

SIMILES.

The similes of "De Rerum Natura" impress one particularly with the wonderful versatility of the poet; for as in philosophy he confines himself to no particular sphere, in his poetical passages we explore with him limitless space and innumerable objects, and constantly marvel at the keenness of vision with which this poet-philosopher perceives nature and man. His power of observation rather than his knowledge of literature was the keen interpreter of the meditations which he expresses in this form.

V, 222. With sympathy and tenderness he pictures the tiny
III, 12. babe in its helplessness, likening it to a shipwrecked
III, 445-6 sailor; and then again, seeking the realm of nature, he re-
VI, 55-6. calls to mind bees and honey, flowers and wind as typical of
man and his mental and physical conditions.

II, 79. The passing of the nations compared to a torch
IV, 897. passed on by runners, the body to a ship and scores of other
passages show the poetical cleverness of the author to
beautify the commonplace. After overlaying his verses with
the sweet honey of the Muses as physicians smear the medicine
cup for children, he next startles us by hurling at us daz-
zling similes of might and force where the "primordia of all
the universe" in dire confusion resemble a shipwreck where
II, 552-3. "the great sea tumbles about banks, rudders, yards, prows,
masts and swimming oars" and again the very human thought.

V, 1125.

et tamen e summo, quasi fulmen, deicit ictos
invidia interdum contemptim in Tartara taetra.

"Envy, like a thunderbolt, dashes men down from the
highest point with ignominy into noisome Tartarus."

ANTITHESIS.

In striking contrast to his use of simile Lucretius has ingeniously interwoven expressions which are almost epigrammatic. Phrases there are whose Latin form is more expressive than the English, such as in speaking of Iphigenia led to the altar the phrase "caste inoeste"--stainless mid stains, is used, and in other reference "mors immatura"--untimely death; "mors immortalis"--immortal death. Also such phrases and clauses as:

V, 121. immortalia mortali sermone notantes.

"branding immortal things in mortal speech."

III, 869. mortalem vitam mors cum immortalis ademit.

(dies."

"The death that dies not takes away the life that

II, 78: augescunt aliae gentes, aliae minuntur."

"Some nations wax, others wane."

And antithetical thoughts of such length as:

V, 832-3. namque aliut putrescit et aevo debile languet,
porro aliut clarescit et e contemptibus exit.

"One thing crumbles away and is worn and enfeebled by age, then another comes into honour and issues out of its state of contempt."

V, 10-12. quique per artem

fluctibus e tantis vitam tantisque tenebris

in tam tranquillo et tam clara luce locavit,

"He rescued life from such great billows and such thick darkness, and moored it in so perfect a calm and in so brilliant a light."

PERSONIFICATION.

The most abundant use of rhetorical language in Lucretius takes the form of Personification. As we survey the animation of tree and shore and river, and the separate attributes of mind and matter there is a feeling that this poet has equalled his antecedents in vivid and powerful portrayal, and that he became an impetus to his successors. As a test of merit in this respect comparative personifications with other authors will speak for themselves.

The illusive and indirect suggestiveness of the incomplete personification leaves a feeling of vastness and obscurity which is appalling. His personification of superstition as given in only a few examples is perhaps the best example, though it has many echoes.

I, 62-5.

Humana ante oculos foede cum vita iaceret
in terris oppressa gravi sub religione
quae caput a caeli regionibus ostendebat
horribili super aspectu mortalibus instans.

"Human life lay foully prostrate upon the earth, crushed down under the weight of Superstition, who shewed her head from the quarters of heaven with hideous aspect, lowering upon mortals."

Of similar grimness is the peopling of a sudden storm.

IV, 172-3.

taetra nimborum nocte coorta
inpendent atrae formidinis ora superne.

"Faces of black horror rise up from amid the frightful night of storm-cloud and hang over us on high."

And again,

V, 40-1. et trepido terrore repleta est
per nemora ac montes magnos silvasque profundas.

The earth is filled with troublous terror thro' woods and great mountains and deep forests.

V, 1152-3. circumretit enim vis atque iniuria quemque
atque, unde exortast, ad eum plerumque revertit.

"Violence and wrong inclose all who commit them in their meshes and do most recoil on him from whom they began."

In vein more light and pleasing is the animation of Nature including the entire realm from "Father Ether to Mother Earth."

A number of such references have been transfered to the division of Metaphors and Similes. Of these we have such touches as,

I. Heaven and Stars.

I, 231. Unde aether sidera pascit?

"Out of what does ether feed the stars?" which is paralleled in Milton's "Hither as to their fountains other

364. starsRepairing, in their golden urns draw light."

and again we have a dainty suggestion of personification in the "mansions of heaven."

VI, 357-8. stellis fulgentibus apta

concutitur caeli domus

"The mansion of heaven studded with glistening stars." This also recalls the "spangled heavens" of many

authors, as well as,

Moir-The "Stars are the Daisies that begem the blue fields of
Daisy. the sky." and,
Shak. M. "Look how the floor of heaven
of V. V.1. Is thick inlaid with patines of bright gold."

II. Sun.

II, 210-11. sol etiam caeli de vertice dissipat omnis
ardorem in partis et lumine conserit arva.

"The sun also from the height of heaven sheds its
head on all sides and sows the earth with light," finds an
echo in ,

Shak.King "The glorious sun
John, III, 1. Stays in his course and plays the alchemist,
Turning with splendour in his precious eye
The meagre cloudy earth to glittering gold."
and also in,

J. Taylor, "Lo, he comes in heaven's array
Rising Sun. And scatters wide the blaze of day."

V, 976. dum rosea face sol inferrit lumina caelo
"The sun with rosy torch carried light into
the heavens.

V, 461-2. aurea cum primum gemmantis rore per herbas
matutina rubent radiati lumina solis

"The morning light of the beaming sun blushes
golden over the grass jewelled with dew" represent a common
figurative use.

Closing these references to the sun we quote:

V, 650-3.

At nox obruit ingenti caligine terras,
aut ubi de longo cursu sol ultima caeli
impulit atque suos efflavit languidus ignis
concussos itere et labefactos aere multo,

"But night buries the earth in thick darkness when the sun, after his long course, has struck upon the utmost parts of heaven and now, exhausted, has blown forth all his fires, shaken by their journey and weakened by passing through much air", which is the same thought as,

Moore.

"Now in his palace of the West,
Sinking to slumber, the bright Day,
Like a tired monarch fated to rest,
'Mid the cool of evening lay."

Sunrise and Sunset are frequently portrayed in brilliant verses, as,

V, 656-7.

Tempore item certo roseam Matuta per oras
aetheris auroram differt et lumina pandit.

Mantua spreads rosy morning over the borders of ether and opens up her light!

IV, 404-5.

iamque rubrum tremulis iubar ignibus erigere alte
cum coeptat natura supraque extollere montes,

"Nature begins to raise on high the sun's beams ruddy with bickering fires, and to lift it up above the mountains," to which compare:

Mulock.

"See now that radiant bow of pillared fires
Spanning the hills like dawn until they lie
In soft tranquillity."

T. Taylor, "See! led by morn with dewy feet,
Ode to Rising Sun. Apollo mounts his golden seat,
Replete with seven-fold fire,
While dazzled by his conquering light
Heaven's glittering host and awful nights
Submissively retire."

Cervantes. "Now had Aurora displayed her mantle over the blushing sky."

The peopling of the clouds is a rare touch in Lucretius, revealing his kinship with Aristophanes, Wordsworth and Shakespeare.

IV, 136-42. ut nubes facile interdum concreescere in alto
cernimus et mundi speciem violare serenam
aera mulcentes motu. Nam saepe Gigantum
ora volare videntur et umbram ducere late,
interdum magni montes avolsaque saxa
montibus anteire et solem succedere praeter,
inde alios trahere atque inducere belua nimbos.

"Clouds sometimes gather into masses on high and blot the calm, clear face of heaven, fanning the air with their motion. Thus often the faces of giants are seen to fly along and draw after them a far-spreading shadow; sometimes great mountains and rocks are seen to go in advance and pass across the sun; and then some huge beast is observed to draw with it and bring on the other storm clouds."

Of the seasons we have some particularly clever passages, such as,

II, 32-8. praesertim cum tempestas adridet et anni
tempora conspergunt viridantis floribus herbas.

"The weather smiles and the seasons of the year
besprinkle the green grass with flowers."

And the often quoted passage:

V, 737-47. it ver et Venus, et Veneris praenuntius ante
pennatus graditur, zephyri vestigia propter
Flora quibus mater praespargens ante viai
cuncta coloribus egregiis et odoribus opplet.
inde loci sequitur calor aridus et comes una
pulverulenta Ceres et etesia flabra aquilonum.
inde autumnus adit, graditur simul Euius Euan.
inde aliae tempestates ventique secuntur,
altitonans Voltumnus et Auster fulmine pollens.
tandem bruma nives adfert pigrumque rigorem
reddit: hiemps sequitur crepitans hanc dentibus algu.

Spring and summer go their way and the winged
harbinger of Venus steps on before, and close on zephyr's
footprints Mother Flora straws all the way before them and
covers it over with the choicest colours and odours. Next
in order comes parching heat and in its company dusty Ceres
and the etesian blasts of the north winds. Next autumn ad-
vances and Euius Euan steps on together. Then other seasons
and winds follow, loud-warning Voltumnus and the south wind
stored with lightning. At last midwinter brings its snows

and gives back benumbing cold; after it follows winter with teeth chattering with cold",

which I will attempt to parallel with only one reference to each of the seasons.

Heber. "Spring unlocks the flowers to paint the laughing soil."

Susan Cole- "All green and fair the summer lies,

Rirge-- Just budded from the bud of spring,

Menace. With tender blue of wistful skies

And winds which softly sing.

Spenser's "Lastly comes Winter

Legend of Cloathed all in frize

Constancie. Chattering his teeth

Canto VII. For cold did him chill

Whilst on his hoary beard

His breath did freeze."

Other references may be found in:

V, 256. ripas radentia flumina rodunt.

"Rivers graze against and eat into the banks."

V, 272. qua via secta semel liquido pede detulit undas.

"The channel once scooped out has carried down the waters with liquid foot."

V, 386-7. Rivers threaten to turn aggressors.

V, 201. avidei montes--greedy mountains.

V, 1005. ridentis undis--laughing waters.

II, 11. refrenata aura--unbarred breezes.

V, 945,

167.

IV, 3.

Pilot earth and pilot fortune are two vivid per-

sonifications which recall the lines in Cymbeline,

"Fortune brings in boats that are not steered."

The ease with which Lucretius breathes life into his abstract creations entitles him to respect in this form of literary genius. His bold words on Superstition take him as a calm visitor to the bedside of the dying. He loved life yet breathed for peace to the despairing quite in keeping with the faith of the 19th century. Fondness for nature marks him as a child of spring and harvest, a fit companion for Agassiz, led by his wonderful nurse.

APOSTROPHE.

Another excursion into the beauties of Lucretius cannot fail to make prominent his use of Apostrophe. He is perfectly at home with this form of rhetoric and his skill invites scrutiny.

In keeping with the custom of his day he opens his poem with a direct address to Venus and in poetic force and descriptive beauty it is one of his rarest gems.

I, 1-28.

Aeneadum genetrix, hominum divomque voluptas,
alma Venus, caeli subter labentia signa
quae mare navigerum, quae terras frugiferentis
concelebras, per te quoniam genus omne animantum
concipitur visitque exortum lumina solis:
te, dea, te fugiunt venti, te nubila caeli
adventumque tuum, sibi suavis daedala tellus
summittit flores, tibi rident aequora ponti
placatumque nitet diffuse lumine caelum.
nam simul ac species patefactast verna diei
et reserata viget genetabilis aura favoni,
aeriae primum volucres te, diva, tuumque
significant initum percussae corda tua vi.
inde ferae pecudes persultant pabula laeta
et rapidos tranant amnis: ita capta lepore
te sequitur cupide quo quamque inducere pergis.
denique per maria ac montis fluviosque rapacis
frondiferasque domos avium camposque virentis
omnibus incutiens blandum per pectora amorem
efficis ut cupide generatim saecula propagent.

quae quoniam rerum naturam sola gubernas.
nec sine te quicquam dias in luminis oras
exoritur neque fir laetum neque amabile quicquam,
te sociam studeo scribendis versibus esse
quos ego de rerum natura pangere conor
Memmiadae nostro, quem tu, dea, tempore in omni
omnibus ornatum voluisti excellere rebus.
quo magis aeternum da diotis, diva, leporem.

Oh, mother of the Romans, the darling of men and of
gods, bountiful Venus, thou who fillest with life, ship-
bearing seas and fruit-bearing lands underneath the gliding
stars; since through thee every kind of living thing is con-
ceived and, rising up, beholds the light of the sun. Before
thee, goddess, flee the winds, the clouds of heaven; before
thee and thy advent; for thee, earth, manifold in works,
puts forth sweet-smelling flowers; for thee the levels of the
sea do laugh and heaven, propitiated, shines with outspread
light. For, soon as the vernal aspect of the day is dis-
closed, and the birth-favouring breeze of Favonius unbarred
is blowing fresh, first the fowls of the air, O lady, shew
signs of thee and thy entering in, thoroughly smitten in
heart by thy power.

Next the wild herds bound over the glad pastures
and swim the rapid rivers, in such wise each made prisoner
by thy charms follows thee with desire, whither thou goest
to lead it on. Yea, throughout seas and mountains and sweep-
ing rivers and leafy homes of birds and grassy plains,
striking fond love into the breasts of all, thou constrainest

them each after its kind to continue their race with desire. Since thou then art sole mistress of the nature of things and without thee nothing rises up into the divine borders of light, nothing grows to be glad or lovely, fain would I have thee for a helpmate in writing the verses which I essay to pen on the nature of things for our own son of the Memmii, whom thou, goddess, hast willed to have no peer, rich as he ever is in grace. Wherefore, all the more, O lady, lend my lays an everlasting charm."

This invocation has been closely imitated by Spenser in the Fairie Queen.

Of similar value are the opening lines of the third book, forming a panegyric to Epicurus.

III, 1-18.

E tenebris tantis tam clarum extollere lumen
qui primus portuisti inlustrans commoda vitae,
te sequor, o Graiae gentis decus, inque tuis nunc
fiota pedum pono pressis vestigia signis,
non ita certandi cupidus quam propter amorem
quod te imitari aveo; quid enim contendat hirundo
cyenis, aut quidnam tremulis facere artibus haedi
consimile in cursu possint et fortis equi vis?
tu, pater, es rerum inventor, tu patria nobis
suppeditas praecepta, tuisque ex, inclute, chartis,
floriferis ut apes in saltibus omnia libant,
omnia nos itidem depascimur aurea diota,
aurea, perpetua semper dignissima vita.

"Thee, who first wast able amid such thick darkness to raise on high so bright a beacon and shed a light on the true interests of life, thee I follow, glory of the Greek race, and plant now my footsteps firmly in thy imprinted marks, not so much from a desire to rival thee as that from the love I bear thee I yearn to imitate thee. For why need the swallow contend with swans? What likeness is there between the feats of racing performed by kids with tottering limbs and by the powerful strength of the horse? Thou, father, art discoverer of things, thou furnishest us with fatherly precepts, and like as bees sip all things in the flowery lawn, we, O glorious being, in like manner feed from thy golden maxims, golden, I say, most worthy ever of endless life.

- V, 7-10. Epicurus is again eulogized.
50-53.
- I, 25-27. In other panegyrics to Memnus, to whom the book is
V, 94. dedicated, to Heraclitus, to Ennius, to Empedocles and to
I, 121. Democritus, Lucretius daintily expresses his personal estim-
V, 622. ate, regard and esteem.

POETIC EXPRESSIONS.

These partial inroads with Lucretius into his fields of figurative language dispel all fears that may have existed to the effect that perhaps in his companionship we should be traveling with a novice. An excursion into his poetic expressions will create wonder and glad surprise at a genius so original and brilliant. There is phrase-making for musical effect, and beyond this there stands in bold relief the power of producing phrases of gigantic force, of portraying the fierce, the active, the strong. Of these one author says:

Paul Shor-
ey. "His single mighty lines, weighted with sonorous, archaic diction and possessed with alliteration, assonance and antithesis possess an incomparable energy".

These poetic expressions indicate the rugged power of his masculine mind to grasp subject matter, and the feminine refinement of taste through which he passes his conceptions, ere giving them to his reader.

ALLITERATION.

Note the musical alliteration in:

- I, 14. unde ferae pecudes percultant pabulae laeta.
- I, 202. multa vivendo vincere saecula.
- IV, 165. multa modis multis in cunctas undique partis.
- IV, 578. ita colles collibus ipsi.
- IV, 980-1. mollia membra moventis
et cithaerae liquidum carmen cordasque loquentis.
- V, 500-2. et levior aliis alia, et liquidissimus aether
atque levissimus aeris super influit auras,
nec liquidum corpus turbantibus aeris auris
- V, 1400. floribus et foliis lascivia laeta monebat.
- V, 993. viva videns vivo sepeliri viscera.
- III, 446. altis aeris auras.
- V, 1357. vitio vetere severi.
- VI, 284. luminibus lustrans loca.
- III, 898. misero misere.
- V, 1004. placidi pellacia ponti.
- I, 276. minaci murmure.
- V, 1193. murmura magna minarum.

ONOMATAPOEIA.

Onomatapoeia would seem to be a quality hard to attribute to the Latin language; yet there seems to be a very close accordance of sound and sense in many of the lines in the "Natura".

There is a rhythmical smoothness that is well suited to the idea in:

- I, 9. placatum nitet diffusa lumine caelum.
"Heaven propitiated shines with an outspread light!"
And a short heavy weight to lines of dark import, as:
V, 1237. concussaeque cadunt urbes dubiaeque minantur.
VI, 221. signa notaeque gravis halantis sulphuris auras.
VI, 155. terribili sonitu flamma crepitante crematur.
VI, 159. concreti montes nimborum et grandine mixti,

While Lucretius heaps up nouns in a manner suggesting Milton's use of proper names, producing a combination of sound which resembles the sharp, quick blows of a hammer.

- I, 277. quae mare, quae terras, quae denique nubila caeli.
III, 155-6. infringi linguam vocemque aboriri,
caligare oculos, sonere auris, succidere artus.
I, 456. libertas, bellum, concordia.
I, 692-3. varios conexus pondera plagas
concursum motus,

fana, laeus, lucos, aras, simulacraque divom,
terras et solem et caelum, mare sidera lunem.

SUGGESTIVENESS.

Suggestiveness is the one word constantly recurring to the mind of the reader as the many dainty adjectives, laden with meaning and beauty, come to his notice.

A list of some length is given, for they seem to be an integral part of the "aeternum leporem" for which Lucretius was constantly striving. These, too, are more effective in the original.

Of gentle thought and import we have:

- | | |
|----------|--|
| I, 2. | alma Venus--increase-giving Venus. |
| 7. | daedala tellus--earth manifold in works. |
| 11. | genetabilis aura--birth-favouring breeze. |
| 40. | placidem pacem--gentle peace. |
| 142. | serenas noctes--clear nights. |
| 147. | lucida tela diei--glittering shafts of day. |
| 207. | teneras auras aeris--buxom fields of air. |
| 252. | nitidae fruges--goodly crops. |
| 900. | flore flammal--flower of flame. |
| II, 145. | avia nemora--pathless wood. |
| III, 21. | innubilis aether--cloudless ether. |
| VI, 173. | volucris lumine--winged light! |
| IV, 22. | dulci melle musaeo--pleasant honey of the Muses. |
| IV, 589. | silvestrem musam--woodland song. |

With more vigor are the expressions:

- | | |
|----------|---|
| I, 276. | minaci murmure--threatening roar. |
| I, 494. | penetrabile frigus--piercing cold. |
| III, 21. | cana cadens--hoary fall. |
| VI, 182. | nectantia fulgura flammae--golden color of clear, bright (fire. |
| I, 65. | horribili aspectu--hideous aspect. |

VIVIDNESS.

The pervading shadow of gloom and almost of hopelessness which weighs upon the student of Lucretius finds a delicious relief as he reads the vivid descriptions of natural life and beauty so frequently used by Lucretius and in which he seems to reach the highest acme of his descriptive power.

What charming pictures are contained in:

I, 7-8.

suavis daedala tellus

summittit flores.

"Earth, manifold in works, puts forth sweet-smelling flowers."

I, 256.

frondiferasque novis avibus canere undique silvas.

"Leafy forests ring on all sides with the song of new birds."

V, 911-12.

aurea tum dicat per terras flumina vulgo

fluxisse et gemmis florere arbusta suesse.

"Rivers ran with gold over all the parts of the earth, and trees were wont to blossom out with precious stones."

A dainty pastoral description is,

II, 317-20.

nam saepe in colli tondentes pabula laeta

lanigeræ reptant pecudes quo quamque vocantes

invitant herbae gemmantès rore recenti,

et satiati agni ludunt blandeque coruscant.

"Thus often the woolly flocks as they crop the glad pastures on a hill, creep on whither the grass, jewelled with fresh dew, summons and invites each, and playfully butt."

II, 362-3.

Which has a sad counterpart in the description in the description of the cow searching for the calf that has been slaughtered.

Many sentences descriptive of the sea and of rivers contain the brilliancy of Lucretius' painting.

V, 945-7.

at sedare sitim fluvii fontesque vocabant,
ut nunc montibus e magnis decursus aquarum
clarum citat late sitientia saecula ferarum.

"But rivers and springs invited to slake their thirst even then as now a rush of water down from the great hills summons with clear splash far and wide the thirsty race of wild beasts.

V, 950-2.

lubrica proluvie larga lavere umida saxa,
umida saxa, super viridi stillantia musco,
et partim plano scatere atque erumpere campo.

"Smooth gliding streams of water with copious gush bathed the dripping rocks, the dripping rocks, trickling over green moss, and in parts welled and bubbled out over the level plain", is such a vivid picture we can almost hear the murmur of the stream.

II, 374-8.

concharumque genus parili ratione vilem
pingere telluris gremium, qua mollibus undis
litoris incurvi bibulam pavit aequor harenam.

"We see the class of shells paint the lap of earth when the sea with gentle waves beats on the thirsty sand of the winding shore."

This intellectual frolic of Lucretius with natural life indicates a serene temperament, the bursting forth of a great soul that seeks a larger realm of activity than the kingdom of self. Thus he is never alone though perhaps, isolated in his greatness, at his feet is the throbbing mass of men which affords multiplied companionship, even while he challenges converse with the great Unknown.

POWER.

The effect of a writing upon a reader is the proof of its power. The force of a cause is measured in terms of the effects produced. The power of "De Rerum Natura" is unquestionable when judged by the mental response of the student.

How student and scholar rejoice to see this giant dash, with prodigal hand, adjectives pregnant with speech, nouns nodding with harvest and verbs weighted with action, all struggling for rhetorical supremacy but trained into happy harmony by the muse.

This joyous juxtaposition of parts of speech becomes a masterly union of strength and beauty.

The examples speak for themselves.

A. Expressions.

I, 29. fera moenera militum--savage works of war.

I, 65. horribili aspectu--with hideous aspect.

I, 276. minaci murmure--threatening roar.

V, 995. tremulas super ulcera taetra tenentes--

"Holding quivering palms over noisome sores."

V, 745. altitonans Volturnus et auster fulmine pollens.

"Loud-roaring Volturnus and the south-wing stores with lightning."

VI, 461. furvae nubis caligine crassa

"Shedding the shadow of murky gloom."

B. Sentences.

V, 95-6.

multosque per annos
sustentata ruet moles et machina mundi.

"And the mass and fabric of the world upheld for
many years shall tumble to ruin."

I, 722-5.

hic est vasta Charybdis et hic Aetnaea minantur
murmura flammarum rursus se colligere iras,
faucibus eruptos iterum vis ut vomat ignis
ad caelumque ferat flammam fulgura rursus.

"Here is the wasteful Charybis and here the rumblings of Aetna threaten anew to gather up such fury of flames as again with force to belch forth the fires bursting from its throat and carry up to heaven once more the lightning of flame."

C. The concluding sentences of certain passages are particularly strong.

V, 174.

in tenebris vita ac maerore jacebat?

"Did life lie grovelling in the darkness & sorrow?"

I, 101.

tantum religio potuit suadere malorum.

"So great are the evils to which religion could persuade."

II, 181.

tanta stat praedita culpa.

"So great are the defects with which it stands encumbered."

V, 1188-93.

in caeloque deum sedes et templa locarunt,
per caelum volvi quia nox et luna videtur,
luna dies et nox et noctis signa severa
noctivagaeque faces caeli flammaeque volantes,
nubila, sol imbres nix venti fulmina grando
et rapidi fremitus et murmura magna minarum.

"And they placed in heaven the abodes and realms
of the gods, because night and moon are seen and roll through
heaven, moon, day and night and night's constellations and
night-wandering meteors of sky and flying bodies of flame,
clouds, sun, rains, snow, winds, lightnings, hail, and rapid
rumblings and loud threatful thunder-claps."

Labouring under the difficulty of unfinished diction, Lucretius was obliged to have recourse to his genius for new words and combinations. The decided poetic tone of his compounds is one of the most interesting characteristics of his style.

The compound with "fero" is the most common, and we occasionally find an Homeric echo as "armipotens". Complete ideas are conveyed by such adjectives as navigerum--ship-bearing, silvifragis--forest-rending, nocti-vago--night wandering, glandiferas--acorn bearing.

The list is:

- | | |
|---------|--|
| I, 3. | navigerum mare--ship-bearing sea. |
| 3. | frugiferentis terras--fruit-bearing lands. |
| 18. | frondiferas domos--leaf-bearing homes. |
| 33. | armipotens Mavors--Mars, powerful in arms. |
| 103. | terriloquis dictis--terror-speaking tales. |
| 162. | squamigerum genus--scale-bearing race. |
| 275. | silvifragis flabris--forest-rending blasts. |
| 404. | montivagae ferae--mountain-roaming beast. |
| 717. | triquetris oris--three-cornered shores. |
| 926. | avia loca--pathless places. |
| 945. | suaviloquenti carmine--sweet-toned verse. |
| II, 25. | igniferas lampadas--flaming lamps. |
| 263. | patefactis carceribus--barriers thrown open. |
| 318. | lanigeræ pecudes--wool-bearing flocks. |
| 346. | avia nemora--pathless woods |

- II, 353. turiores aras--incense-burning altars.
 359. frondiferum nemus--leaf-bearing wood.
 363. cornigeras matres--horned mothers.
 537. anguimanus elephantos--snake-handed elephants.
 609. horrifice insigni--awe-inspiring state.
 619. raucisono cantu--hoarse-sounding music.
 632. terrificas oristas--frightful crests.
 706. omniparentis terras--all-bearing lands.
 942. omnituentes sensus--all-discerning senses.
 1106. primigerum diem--first day of being.
- III, 11. floriferis saltibus--flowery lawns.
 757. cornigeri cervi--horn-bearing stag.
 924. sensiferis motibus--sense-producing motions.
 1012. horriferas aestus--hideous fires.
- IV, 190. protelo fulgere--on-moving team.
 580. capri-pedes satyros--goat-footed nymphs.
 582. noctivago strepitu--night-pervading noise.
 587. semiferi capitis--head which is half a beast's.
 908. suavidicis versibus--sweetly-worded verse.
- V, 15. vitigeni liquoris--vine-born juice.
 218. horrifera gens--frightful race.
 399. omnipotens pater--almighty father.
 864. levisomna canum--light-sleeping dogs.
 932. volgivago more--roaming fashion.
 939. glandiferus quercus--acorn-bearing oak.
 985. spumigeri suis--foaming boar.

- V, 997. horriferis vocibus--appalling cries.
 1075. pennigeri amoris--pinion-bearing love.
 1084. raucisonos cantus--harsh-sounding croakings.
 1142. velivolvis puppibus--ships scudding with sails.

- VI, 1. frugiparos fetus--corn-producing crops.
 129. perterriorepu sonitu--frightful-hurtling noise.
 152. lauricomos montes--laurel-tressed mountains.
 168. ancipiti ferro--double-edged sword.
 264. inaedificata nubila--clouds, heap upon heap.
 379. igniferi fulminis--fire-bearing bolt.
 389. terrifico sonitu--appalling crash.
 481. signiferi aetheris--star-bearing ether.
 721. aestifera parti--heat-fraught country.
 722. percocto colore--sun-baked complexion.
 765. alipedes cervi--winged-footed stags.
 819. mortiferam vim--death-bearing power.
 864. roriferis umbris--dew-bringing shades.
 1091. mortiferam cladem--death-dealing destruction.
 1138. mortifer aestus--death-bearing atmosphere.
 1237. lanigenas pecudes--wool-bearing flocks.

Even in a consideration of the technical genius only of Lucretius we cannot entirely lose sight of the subject matter which he advances, and when we compare the sombre content of his philosophy with the tone of his discourse and note the prevailing healthfulness of his mood we cannot but be impressed by the superb sanity and the perfect balance of his mind. Although Lucretius is looked upon by modern rationalism as their fore-runner in matters of faith even his persuasions from the fear of death are much less like a chill November day than is the requiem of lost faith so overwhelming in its sadness, which the poet of modern scepticism sings.

Mathew "Wandering between two worlds, one dead,
Arnold, The other to be born
"Grande With nowhere yet to rest my head
Chatreuse." Like this, on earth I rest forlorn
 Their Faith--my tears would deride
 I come to shed them at their side."

Mathew Arnold and Lucretius both thought and felt on the problems of life. The pessimism advanced by both was similar, but their words present a striking contrast. Of the two Lucretius seems to have succeeded far better, and his poetry is a soothing evening hymn compared to the wail of Arnold's despair. Our impression of Arnold is of the man, sad, gloomy and hopeless in his human kindness; of Lucretius, cheerful and hopeful in his human kindness, affirming a positive calm even while supporting a negative faith.

The modesty of this paper precludes any charge of extravagance. Enough has been said, however, to indicate the two claims of our contention, namely that the "De Rerum Natura" is a poem truly great and that the author was a poet of magnitude.

Some write to instruct, and some to please, Lucretius avowedly did both and principally because any other course would have been intellectual suicide. As a spring bubbles forth from the bosom of the earth because the earth refuses longer to contain it, so the mental effusions of Lucretius fled forth because of his swelling soul within.

In response to this spontaneous adaptation Lucretius flies with the feathered songster of the sky, gambols with the tiny lamb, toils with the laborer, or weeps with the wailing. Into the variegated processes of religion, science, literature and philosophy, through windings of rugged despair and hopelessness, adown the depths of emotion and up the summits of imagination--no time, nowhere did adaptation fail this Kipling of Romulus and Remus.

Goethe has been called the poet of the Universe, Byron, the poet of the individual, Poe, the poet of the soul, and Lucretius, the poet of student and scholar; yet by the charm of his verbal music, under the influence of modern enthusiasm, "De Rerum Natura" shall reach not only pulpit, pew and college, but through these leaders of thought and of the masses, the lowly multitudes, endowing their finer sensibilities, broadening their sympathies and

aspirations; for feelings are the comrades of Lucretius and thoughts the age in which he lived.

Though locked be the door of Lucretius' biography, yet we have peeped through the window of his work, whence we discover a soul too great for oblivion; and "De Rerum Natura" may yet prove that the "first shall be last and the last first." It is with genuine gratitude to this Athenian bard, intoxicated with verbal beauty and imbued with lofty thought, that we acknowledge the heritage which he has left for the enrichment of the literature of to-day.



