

Marvell as a poet

Andrew Marvell belonged to the school of metaphysical poets. He worked under the tradition of John Donne. Like Donne, he was a poet of love. He expressed his complex experiences in his poems. "To his coy mistress" is a beautiful love lyric in which he says:

"My vegetable love shall grow
vaster than Empires"

Here, he has compared his love to a vegetable. This shows that his imagery is homely and common-place like that of Herbert. In this respect he differs from John Donne. The image of John Donne are highly intellectual and startling.

Like Donne, he has spoken with many voices in his poems. Now, he jokes, now he becomes serious. For example:—

"The grave is a fine and private place,
But none I think do there embrace"

The poet, who has written in a mood of joke, has also written with great seriousness:

"But at my back I always hear
Time's winged chariot hurrying near."

This shows that like all metaphysical poets Marvell was also in the habit of playing with ideas. Just as the Elizabethans were in the habit of playing with words.

In the tender years of life, Marvell chased human beauty. He felt and thought that human beauty could give peace and happiness for all time. But soon after in his life, he realised that human beauty was fleeting and deceptive. So, he gave up his race after human beauty and took retreat in the world of natural beauty. In this respect, he differs from Donne.

Donne did love human beauty in his vulgar youth. But after having frustration in love, he turned to God for peace and

and happiness. It is equally true of Herbert. No human beauty competed with Herbert. But he found lasting peace and happiness in the company of God. But Marvell is alone among the Metaphysicals who receives peace and innocence in the realm of Nature. In his words:

"Fair quiet, have I found thee here
And innocence thy sister dear."

Marvell said that he had been a fool because he tried to get peace and happiness in the company of men. He realised that Nature was the abode of peace and beauty, happiness and content. In the poem entitled "Thoughts in The Garden" he writes:

"When we have won our passion's heat
Love hither makes his best retreat."

So long we remain young, we do not realise that natural beauty is far more beautiful than human beauty. It is only after the decline of our youth that we want to take shelter in the world of Nature. Even Gods who have won after mortal beauty have ended their race in a tree. In the words of Andrew Marvell:

"Appalo haunted Daphne ~~to~~ so
only that she might Laurel grow"

That is why, Marvell began to worship Nature. In this respect, he anticipated Wordsworth and other Romantics.

Marvell was a Nature-mystic long before William Wordsworth. He had got mystical experiences in the world of Nature. That is why, he exclaimed with coyness:

"Annihilating all that is made
To a green thought in a green shade"

He wished to glide into the branches and sit by the side of "nightingale long before John Keats:

"There, like a bird, it sits and sings;
when whets and plucks its silver wings
and still prepared for a longer flight"