

I am sure, is the answer. It is the mental attitude that matters and the knowledge of what the human frame can stand. There is one school of thought—that of the six British soldiers of whom I have already spoken—who see the jungle full of innumerable visible and invisible horrors—scorpions, snakes, and centipedes, deadly fevers, ferocious wild animals, and hostile natives. Then there is another, who think that the jungle is teeming with game, fish, and edible roots and fungi, and that bunches of bananas and pineapples drop into one's lap. Both these viewpoints are equally false ; but the jungle does provide unlimited fresh water and cover where Englishmen as well as Japs may hide. It is the attitude of mind that is all important : the jungle itself is neutral—though admittedly it is an armed neutrality.

GIBBON'S APPRECIATION OF MOUNTAINS

BY G. R. DE BEER, F.R.S.

IN that remarkable reconstitution of the catalogue¹ of Gibbon's library which Mr. Geoffrey Keynes has so successfully made, there is a plate reproducing a facsimile of a note in Gibbon's handwriting in which my eye alighted on the words ' mont Blanc '. In the whole of Gibbon's work, I was aware of only one other reference to the mountain, which is to be found in his *Journal*² when at Lausanne for April 3, 1764, where he commented on de La Condamine's estimate of the height of Mont Blanc, published in the *Mémoires de l'Académie des Sciences* for 1757.

On my asking Mr. Keynes if he knew when Gibbon had written the note reproduced in his book, he immediately lent me the original manuscript with characteristic generosity. The transcription of this manuscript note forms the subject of the present study, which is published by Mr. Keynes' kind permission.

The manuscript was purchased by Mr. Henry Long at Lausanne in June 1831 at the time of the sale of Dr. Frédéric Scholl's portion of Gibbon's library. It may have been inserted in a book.

As to the date at which it was written, all that can be said is that the latest of the works to which it refers, Christian Gottlieb Heyne's *P. Virgilius Maro varietate Lectionis et perpetua adnotatione illustrata*, Lipsiae, was first published in 1787. The other work referred to in the note, the French edition of William Coxe's Letters : *Lettres sur*

¹ *Edward Gibbon's Library*. A catalogue of his books. Jonathan Cape, London, 1940.

² *Journal de Gibbon à Lausanne*, publié par Georges Bonnard. Lausanne, 1945.

la Suisse, Paris, was published in 1782. This is the book which is shown by Mr. Geoffrey Keyne's catalogue to have been in Gibbon's library.

It is clear, therefore, that Gibbon wrote the note at some date later than 1787. That was the year in which he finished writing his *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* at Lausanne, and left for London on July 29, with his precious manuscript. It seems unlikely that he would have written this note in French while he was in England, which was until July 1788, when he returned to Lausanne. It can only be supposed that he wrote it soon after he returned thither, probably on reading Heyne's work which had appeared in the preceding year.

The text of the note is as follows :

' Pindar. p. 168-169. Edit. Oxon.³

' Je pense avec le Philosophe Favorin que le Mont Etna de Pindare est fort audessus de celui de Virgile (*Æneid*, iii, 571-77) qui a mis des exagerations de Rhetorique (Liquefacta saxa, avolsa viscera ; sidera lambit &c⁴) à la place de la force et de la verité (Aul. Gell. *Noctes Atticae*,⁵ xvii, 10). Le tableau majestueux de Pindare (*Pythia*, A. 30-55) etonne l'imagination et satisfait à l'esprit. J'y vois la hauteur de cette colonne du ciel (qui ne va cependant qu'aux deux tiers du mont Blanc. *Lettres de Coxe sur la Suisse*, Tom ii, p. 76⁶), ce sommet, *nourrice*⁷ des neiges éternelles, le noir ombrage des forêts, ces fontaines d'un feu pur et inaccessible qui jaillissent de son sein, et qui serpentent en rivières de fumée et flamme : j'entens la chute des rochers brulans elancés dans la mer σὺν πατάγῳ⁸ je partage l'effroi du spectateur de ces prodige[s] τέρας μὲν θαυμασιον προσιδεαδαι θαῦμα δε χαλὶ παριόντων ἀκουσαι.⁹ La Mythologie de Pindare est sublime. Je tremble au nom de ce Typhon (Ἀφροισιο έρπετον¹⁰). Ce monstre à sept têtes dont la poitrine chevelue est pressée sous les fondemens de l'Etna et dont les membres s'étendent au loin jusqu'aux racines du Vésuve. L'Encelade de Virgile est froid et petit, et le *fama est*¹¹ me semble indigne d'un

³ Pindar, *Olympia, Nemea, Pythia, Isthmia*. Oxford, 1697.

⁴ Reference to the 'molten crags,' 'the mountain's entrails torn,' and the dusky cloud which 'licks the stars.'

⁵ Aulus Gellius, *Noctes Atticae*. Amsterdam, 1651.

⁶ Reference to Coxe's letter XXII, in which the altitude of Mont Blanc and Etna as determined by Sir George Shuckborough is given as 15,662 and 10,954 English feet respectively.

⁷ Reference to Pindar, *Pythian*, I, line 20 : 'Even snowy Etna, foster-nurse of snow. . . .'

⁸ Pindar, *Pythian*, I, line 24 : 'in the darkness of the night the ruddy flame hurls rocks into the deep plain of the sea. . . .'

⁹ Pindar, *Pythian*, I, line 26 : 'A portent marvellous to gaze upon and a wonder even to hearken to. . . .'

¹⁰ Pindar, *Pythian*, I, line 25 : 'that worm below that sendeth up these most fearful streams of the Fire-God.'

¹¹ Virgil, *Aeneid*, Book III, line 578 : 'it is said.'

Poète instruit par les Muses. Je suis surpris que le gout de M. Heyne n'ait pas senti cette enorme difference (*Virgil*, Tom ii, p. 363¹²).

In his first sentence, Gibbon is repeating and echoing Book XVII, Chapter 10, of Aulus Gellius's *Attic Nights*, in which that author describes Favorinus's preference for Pindar's description of an eruption of Etna to that of Virgil. The exaggerations by Virgil to which Gibbon refers are precisely those to which Favorinus took exception: the molten crags, the mountain's entrails torn, and the dark cloud that licks the stars. Conversely, the passages in Pindar which appealed to Gibbon are those which Aulus Gellius praised: the rocks crashing down to the deep sea, a portent marvellous to behold and a wonder even to hear.

There is a reason why it is especially interesting to find Gibbon referring to Aulus Gellius, and that is because that author gives Favorinus's account of Virgil's description of his own method of working. Virgil 'used to declare that he produced verses after the manner and fashion of a bear. For he said that as that beast brought forth her young formless and misshapen, and afterwards by licking the young cub gave it form and shape, just so the fresh products of his mind were rude in form and imperfect, but afterwards by working over them and polishing them he gave them a definite form and expression.'¹³ This notion of the amorphous nature of the new-born bear is an old fallacy, to be found in Pliny,¹⁴ and probably based on an observation of the mother bear licking the embryonic membranes off her cub. But Gibbon refers to it in the manuscript account of his journey through Switzerland¹⁵ in 1755 and considers it to be disproved by a specimen of a well-formed new-born bear which he saw in the Museum at Berne. It is possible, therefore, that Gibbon had had Favorinus's criticism in mind for over thirty years. There is another feature of this note that reflects Gibbon's long memory. My friend Professor J. F. Lockwood has drawn my attention to the fact that the manner in which Gibbon develops his analysis of the difference between the treatment accorded to the subject by Pindar and Virgil is reminiscent of his notes on the enjoyment of reading. In his *Journal* for October 3, 1762, Gibbon states¹⁶:—'Till now, I was acquainted with only two ways of criticising a beautiful passage: the one, to shew, by an exact anatomy of it, the

¹² Christian Gottlieb Heyne, *P. Virgilius Maro varietate Lectionis et perpetua adnotatione illustrata*. Lipsiae, 1787. The note on Aeneid, Book III, lines 571–577, is as follows: 'The philosopher Favorinus (as related by Gellius, xvii, 10) has already heavily censured this passage relating to Etna in comparison with that of Pindar (*Pythia*, I), but, you will agree, more as a philosopher than as a critic imbued with appreciation for poetic beauty.'

¹³ Quoted from *The Attic Nights of Gellius*. With an English translation by John C. Rolfe. London, 1928.

¹⁴ Pliny, *Natural History*, Book VIII, Chapter 54 (36).

¹⁵ Gibbon, *Journal de mon voyage dans quelques endroits de la Suisse*. Publié par G. R. de Beer. (In the press).

¹⁶ *Miscellaneous Works*, London, 1814, vol. 5, page 263. Also Gibbon's *Journal to January 28, 1763*. Published by D. M. Low, London, 1929.

distinct beauties of it, and whence they sprung ; the other, an idle exclamation, or a general encomium, which leaves nothing behind it. Longinus has shewn me that there is a third. He tells me his own feelings upon reading it ; and tells them with such energy, that he communicates them.'

This is precisely the criterion by which Gibbon, in the note quoted above, judges Pindar to be Virgil's superior : he *sees* the height of the mountain which Pindar describes, and he *hears* the terrible din of the fall of the rocks.

Another feature of Gibbon's note which is of considerable interest from the present point of view is his underlining of the word 'nourrice.' Gibbon hereby shows that he has appreciated that aspect of descriptive technique to which Ruskin¹⁷ gave the term 'pathetic fallacy' : the attribution of human emotions and sentiments to inanimate objects. It plays a part of outstanding importance in the history of alpine literature, not least in the works of Ruskin himself who was never so appealing in his writing as when he disregarded his self-imposed renunciation of this very practice.

I have elsewhere¹⁸ drawn attention to other examples of the pathetic fallacy in Greek literature. Here it will suffice to mention the fact that this example is not unique : Euripides¹⁹ also speaks of

Χιονοτρόφος Κιθαίων

Cithaeron nurse of snows. (*Phoen.* 803).

Nevertheless, examples of the employment of the pathetic fallacy are not common in classical literature, and it is all the more interesting to find an example of it in the writings of a man like Gibbon whose appreciation of nature was in no sense highly developed.

During the time when all persons of quality made their way at least once either to Chamonix or Grindelwald, Gibbon spent four years, as he said, 'during which I had never moved ten miles from Lausanne.'²⁰ A compelling reason for this immobility is now known to have been the hernia from which he suffered, long neglect of which was eventually to be conducive of his death. But even in his younger days, he appears to have had little regard for natural scenery. During his journey through Switzerland in 1755 the only occasions on which he felt it necessary to refer to the countryside were when travelling by the sides of the lakes of Neuchatel and of Zurich, and this was because of the pleasant prospect presented by the numerous houses of the well-to-do inhabi-

¹⁷ *Modern Painters*, vol. 3, Chapter XII : 'Of the Pathetic Fallacy.' In this chapter Ruskin referred to 'something pleasurable in written poetry, which is nevertheless *untrue*. And what is more, if we think over our favourite poetry, we shall find it full of this kind of fallacy and that we like it all the more for being so . . . a falseness in all our impressions of external things, which I would generally characterize as the "pathetic fallacy."'

¹⁸ G. R. de Beer : 'Oromancy,' *Life and Letters*, vol. 54, No. 119, 1947.

¹⁹ I am grateful to Professor Webster for this reference.

²⁰ *The Autobiographies of Edward Gibbon*. Edited by John Murray, London, 1897, page 334.

tants of those parts. In 1763 he found excuses for not accompanying his friend John Baker Holroyd on his tour of Switzerland. It is therefore interesting to find Sainte-Beuve²¹ writing that 'Le sentiment de la nature champêtre n'est pas étranger à Gibbon.' It is true that he delighted in the view from his house : 'open on the south to a beautiful and boundless [?] horizon. A garden of four acres had been laid out by the taste of Mr. Deyverdun ; from the garden a rich scenery of meadows and vineyards descends to the Lemman lake, and the prospect far beyond the lake is crowned by the stupendous mountains of Savoy.' And the description of the scene when he had just finished writing the *Decline and Fall*, late at night on June 27, 1787, is a masterpiece of charm : 'The air was temperate, the sky was serene, the silver orb of the moon was reflected from the waters, and all Nature was silent.'

But on reading Sainte-Beuve a little further, it becomes clear that he had placed an unerring finger on the nature of Gibbon's powers of appreciation : 'dans tous ces passages, c'est encore le studieux chez Gibbon qui goûte la nature, et, soit qu'il parle en son nom, soit qu'il se souvienne de son digne précepteur, c'est toujours entre une lecture et une autre, et ayant, pour ainsi dire, le livre entr'ouvert sur sa table, qu'il aime à donner accès à la distraction champêtre, à s'accorder les perspectives naturelles, et à en savourer le sentiment tout à fait sobre, sincère pourtant chez lui et très-doux.'

With this judgment we can only agree, for the two books, *Pindar* and *Virgil*, are open before us, and Mont Blanc serves as a standard of height with which to measure that of Etna.

THE LIVRET DE GUIDE OF JOSEPH VIANIN

By D. F. O. DANGAR

TWO pages from the *Livret de Guide* of Joseph Vianin (or Viennin) of Ayer have been sent to the Alpine Club by Monsieur Charles Gos. The first consists of copies of three of the early entries in Vianin's book, and the other contains four original entries, including that of Lord Francis Douglas, written after the second ascent of the Obergabelhorn.

Monsieur Gos informs me that he has ascertained that Joseph Baptiste Isidore Vianin was born on November 12, 1821, and died on February 27, 1896.

Vianin must have had a fair acquaintance with the peaks and passes of his own valley, and took part in several new expeditions. He was a member of the party which made the first recorded crossing of the Col Durand in 1859 (*A. J.* 54. 419) and by 1863 he was sufficiently well known to be mentioned in Murray's *Handbook to Switzerland*,

²¹ C.-A. Sainte-Beuve : *Causeries du Lundi*, Paris, 1854, vol. 8, page 356.