

been in portraiture, which once again is associated with the personal and domestic life.

In 1531 the Convocation of Canterbury recognized Henry VIII as Supreme Head of the Church in England and with Protestantism the painter was no longer welcome to exercise his art among the legends of the Church. There was unhappily no public in England, as there was in Italy, for painting based on classical mythology. Henry VIII's arbitrary nationalism did seem to develop in literature an increased strength which was enhanced, particularly in Elizabeth's reign, by the convictions and sense of power of a newly nascent nationalism, but whatever literature might have been gaining indirectly from these political and other movements, the other arts and particularly the visual arts were losing in their separation from European traditions. Henry VIII did much to discourage and even to destroy in England the tradition of ecclesiastical architecture by his secularization of the monasteries and in the visual arts he wasted the magnificent opportunity offered by Holbein's residence from 1532. The only encouragement he gave to Holbein was in the art of portraiture. Holbein was a German humanist, a friend of Erasmus, whose *Praise of Folly* he illustrated. He had been driven from the Continent by the bleak dissensions of the Reformation. His range was much wider than the portraits he executed at the bidding of Henry and his friends. Even in Stuart times the visual arts were not of native development. One of the glories of Charles I's reign was his great collection of pictures and of other works of art, which were so wantonly dispersed under Cromwell's rule. Again most of his treasures were not of native but of foreign origin. Again though Charles I had a wide and noble taste his patronage in painting through Sir Anthony van Dyck of Antwerp went mainly but not exclusively into portraiture.

The English failed thus in the sixteenth and seventeenth



centuries in the production of outstanding work in the arts, they did not lack, particularly in courtly circles, desire for colour and pageantry. Queen Elizabeth went on her frequent visitations to her noblemen, which so costly to their purse, set herself into scenes of such decoration that they would have made admirable conversation. The great tapestries which decorated Tudor mansions were only one of the ways in which this desire for splendour was satisfied and the elaborate costumes of the nobles and of their ladies were, similarly, a manifestation of taste. Francis Bacon cannot discuss even abstract and philosophical matters without importing images from a sensory world: 'Truth may perhaps come to the price of a diamond or carbuncle, that showeth best in varied mixture of a lie doth ever add pleasure.' The miniaturist Elizabethan artist Nicholas Hilliard (1547-1619) the 'limner and goldsmith' catch some of this passion for display as if all the longing for the visual arts of the Elizabethans had been concentrated into their elaborate garments and all the embellishments of the Italianate tradition.

This longing for colour and pattern and form was unsatisfied, not only through tapestries and garments and masques, but by a concentration upon words both in prose and in verse but supremely in verse. Indeed, it seems as if the Elizabethans were compensating for the meanness of their resources in the pictorial arts by their concentration of interest in language and in all the multiple devices and intricacies which it could produce. Fortunately at that time there were in England the men of genius, Spenser, Shakespeare, and many men of talent to use the language in a supremely effective way.