

**AN ANALYSIS OF
"THE WRECK OF THE DEUTSCHLAND"
BY GERARD MANLEY HOPKINS**

A Thesis
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by
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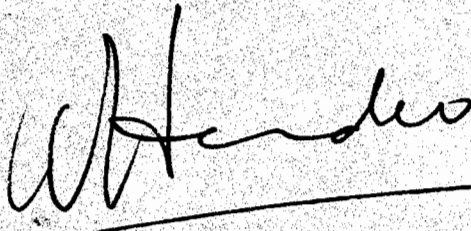
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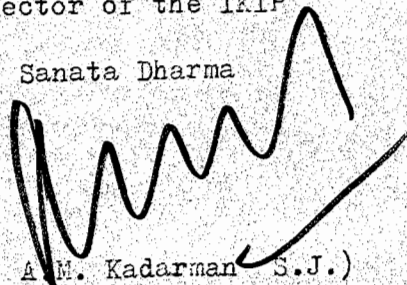


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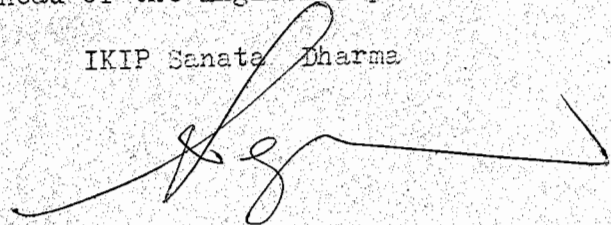
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Chapter One

I N T R O D U C T I O N

The Wreck of the Deutschland is the most famous poem written by Gerard Manley Hopkins. Some background knowledge about the poet is necessary for the study of his poem.

Gerard Manley Hopkins was born in Stratford, Essex, on July 28, 1844. His father was once a British consul general in Hawaii. His family was Anglican.¹

As a boy, he studied in Cholmondeley grammar school, Highgate. Being a very good student, he was sent to Balliol College, Oxford, in 1863. Again in this institution he showed his genius and won a double first when he left it.

Hopkins was received into the Roman Catholic Church in 1866 and two years later, in 1868, he joined the Society of Jesus. At the time when he decided to become a priest, he burned all his verses for he thought writing poems was not fit for his vocation.²

In spite of that, in 1875, two years before he was ordained priest, he was told by his rector to write a poem in commemoration of five Franciscan nuns who had become casualties in a ship accident in the mouth of the Thames. Those nuns had been exiled from Germany by the Falks Laws, and were on their way to America in a ship named the Deutschland.³

Subsequently Hopkins worked as a parish priest in several places, i.e. in London, Oxford, Liverpool, and Glasgow. Later he also taught classics in Stonyhurst College, Lancashire, and in 1844 became a professor in University College, Dublin.

He spent the last years of his life in Ireland. On June 8, 1889, he died of typhoid fever, and was buried in the Glasnevin cemetery.

Besides being famous for his very original thoughts, Hopkins is also famous for his Sprung Rhythm, which was revolutionary in terms of the prosody of the Victorian age.

Though, to my mind, modern readers are more concerned with the meaning or ideas in a poem than with the scanning of it, there is a risk of being considered odd when we say that we are studying Hopkins but are ignorant of Sprung Rhythm. A short discussion of Sprung Rhythm, therefore, is necessary.

¹Note: Biographical information are mostly taken from the Encyclopaedia Britannica Vol.VIII, pp.682-683, except for those other footnoted.

²Geoffrey Grigson, Gerard Manley Hopkins (London, 1955), p.9.

³W.H.Gardner, Gerard Manley Hopkins: A study of Poetic Idiosyncrasy in relation to Poetic Tradition (London: 1949), p.38.

SPRUNG RHYTHM

Background

English literature in Hopkins' time had the tradition in the prosody of the 'Running Rhythm'. The principle of measurement in it is 'feet'. A foot may be of two or three syllables with one stressed syllable. The stressed syllable is called the 'stress' and the unstressed ones the 'slacks'. When the stress is on the first syllable, the foot is called a 'falling foot'; when on the last a 'rising foot'; and when in between two slacks a 'rocking foot'.

To ease the scanning, the stress was always to be put on the first syllable of a foot. Thus there are only two variations in the kinds of foot, i.e. the 'accentual trochee' and 'accentual dactyl'. These two are often mixed, of which the result is the 'logaoedic rhythm'.⁴

To clarify these technical terms, let us take some words and the names of the foot in each of them as examples.

Sún day	trochee
at táck	iamb
béau ti ful	dactyl
un der go	anapest

Thus we can conclude that when the foot has two syllables, we may have a trochee or an iamb; and when it has three syllables, we may have a dactyl or an anapest. But because the stress is always to be put on the first syllable, we will only have a trochee or a dactyl in the variations of the kinds of foot.

These rules were strongly held in writing English verse, but Hopkins felt them to be restricting his original expression. So he experimented in using new principles in writing his verse. Those principles form a scanning system which has become famous as the 'Sprung Rhythm'. The 'Deutschland' was written in it.

Principles

The principle of Sprung Rhythm is the putting of a stress or a slack on unexpected places in a foot, where we would have expected to hear (reversely) a slack or a stress if we judge them by the rest of the measure. By thus taking the readers by surprise, the poet wishes to awaken them from the dull continuous rhythm of the rest, and get the desired strength of effects.

⁴W.H.Gardner, Poems and Prose of Gerard Manley Hopkins (London, 1953), pp.7-8.

The above explanation reflects Gardner's view about Sprung Rhythm. He says that

Sprung Rhythm is, in effect, a syncopated rhythm, and stands in the same relation to the regular syllabic metres as the prevalent syncopation of modern music dance stands to the regular music rhythm.⁵

Further he found that the main rule of Sprung Rhythm is "one stress makes one foot, no matter how many or how few the syllables"⁶ are in that foot.

Practical Application

One should not worry too much about the trouble of finding out by himself the distribution of stresses through the entire poem. In the Editor's Notes following the poem, Professor Claude Collier Abbott and Mr. Humphry House have taken the trouble for us, and come out with these following helpful hints.⁷

1. In the ten stanzas of Part the First, the first line of each stanza has two strong stresses, e.g.

The frown of his face (st.3)

I am soft sift (st.4)

2. In Part the Second, the first line of each stanza has three strong stresses, e.g.

Into the snow she sweeps, (st.13)

One stirred from the rigging to save (st.16)

3. The distribution of stresses in lines 2 to 8 of each stanza throughout the whole poem is the same, namely

3 - 4 - 3 - 5 - 5 - 4 - 6

4. In the 'Deutschland' there are no outriding feet.⁸

We have already learned how many stresses there should be in each line of the stanzas of the poem, but we still have the problem of where to put those stresses in the line ; which syllables should become the stresses, and which ones should become the slacks.

Again, Gardner has done the trouble of searching the rules and as a result, had come out with a good principle. He says that

... stressed syllables are usually long, either by nature or by position⁹

⁵W.H.Gardner, A Study of Poetic Idiosyncrasy, p.100.

⁶Ibid., p.43.

⁷W.H.Gardner, Poems and Prose, p.216.

⁸An outriding foot, or a Hanger, is one, two or three slack syllables added to a foot but not included into the counting of nominal sanction (W.H.Gardner, Poems and Prose, p.10)

⁹W.H.Gardner, Poems and Prose, p.xxxii

His simple rule can show us the way to recognize the stressed syllables, which at the same time means showing the unstressed ones. Let us take some lines of the poem as an example.

I am soft sift
In an hourglass - at the wall
Fast, but ... (st.4, ll.1-3)

Explanation: - the stress on 'I' and 'sift' in line 1 are given by considering their positions. The reason is that in Part the First the stresses of the first line of each stanza are always on the first and the last syllables.

- 'hourglass' and 'wall' get their stresses by nature because the rest of the words in line 2 are prepositions, i.e. in and at, and indefinite article, i.e. an, which normally are not stressed.
- 'Fast' gets its stress by its position. It is the first word and behind a comma, so it must be stressed.

If we are doubtful which of any two syllables that seem to be of similar importance, or to have the same possibilities of having a stress each, we may give one of them a half stress ('). Another solution is to give quick, equal stresses to them and indicates the case with the mark —, as Hopkins himself had noted.

An example of half stress is in

One stirred from the rigging to save
The wild woman-kind below (st.16, ll.1-2)
and that of the quick, equal stresses is in

Wiry and white-fiery and whirlwind-swivelled snow
(st.13, l.7)

Encouraging is the fact that the editor of Hopkins' poems, Mr. Robert Bridges, has left the original half stresses that Hopkins himself had put in his manuscript, for example in

And five-lived and leaved favour and pride,
(st.23, l.6)

Finally, it will be better if we see the concrete use of the rules above in one stanza of the 'Deutschland'.¹⁰

Hope had grown grey hairs,	3
Hope had mourning on,	3
Trenched with tears, carved with cares,	4
Hope was twelve hours gone;	3

¹⁰ Note: the numbers on the right show the number of stresses there should be in each line. The stanza is stanza 15, Part the Second.

And frightful a nightfall folded rueful a day 5
Nor rescue, only rocket and lightship, shone, 5
And lives at last were washing away: 4
To the shrouds they took, - they shook in the hurling and
horrible airs. 6

That is all the information about Sprung Rhythm that we can
give. Let us now start studying the contents of the Wreck of the
Deutschland by making a paraphrase.

Chapter TwoP A R A P H R A S ETHE WRECK OF THE DEUTSCHLAND

To the
Happy memory of five Franciscan Nuns
exiles by the Falk Laws
drowned between midnight and morning of
Dec. 7th, 1875

PART THE FIRST

1

Thou mastering me
God! giver of breath and bread;
World's strand, sway of the sea;
Lord of living and dead;
Thou hast bound bones and veins in me, fastened me flesh,
And after it almost unmade, what with dread,
Thy doing: and dost thou touch me afresh?
Over again I feel thy finger and find thee.

Difficult Words

1.3 strand = sandy shore of a lake, sea, or river

sway = rule, control

1.6 dread = anxiety, great fear

Paraphrase

You master me, God. You give me life and food; you have power over the earth and the sea. You are the master of all human beings, both living and dead.

You have created me, and after that shaken me with great fear; and, are you now touching me again? I feel your touch again and find that it is you.

I did say yes
 O at lightning and lashed rod;
 Thou heardst me truer than tongue confess
 Thy terror, O Christ, O God;
 Thou knowest the walls, altar and hour and night
 The swoon of a heart that the sweep and the hurl of thee trod
 Hard down with a horror of height
 And the midriff astrain with leaning of, laced with fire of stress.

Difficult Words

1.2 lash = strike violently

rod = stick used for punishment

1.6 swoon = faint

hurl = violent throw

trod = pp. of 'to tread', which means to put the feet down on ..

1.8 midriff = diaphragm, abdomen

laced = string or cord put through small holes in shoes, etc.
 put two things together with a rope

Paraphrase

I surrender to any suffering that comes to me. You know better what I mean with your frightening power that I can confess, O Christ, O God.

You know the walls (of this room), and the time I have spent in prayer. You know the weakness of the (human) heart that cannot bear your frightening power.

And I feel my body like being knitted with strings made of fire when I am aware of your power.

The frown of his face
 Before me, the hurtle of hell
 Behind, where, where was a, where was a place?
 I whirled out wings that spell
 And fled with a fling of the heart to the heart of the Host.
 My heart, but you were dovewinged, I can tell,
 Carrier-witted, I am bold to boast,
 To flash from the flame to the flame then, tower from the grace
 to the grace.

Difficult Words

- 1.2 hurtle = cause to rush or fly violently
 1.4 spel = period of stress¹¹
 to whirl = to move round and round
 1.5 fled = pp. of 'flee' = hurry/run away from ...-
 fling = rush
 1.7 carrier = carrier pigeon - pigeon used to carry message, for
 it can find its way home from a distant place

Paraphrase

The hard way I have to go through if I want to follow Christ
 and the threat of hell for those who do not follow Him have put
 me in such a state, that I am like one who stands on a narrow path
 where a high mountain wall is in front of him and a deep ravine
 behind, so that I almost do not know where to place myself.

But it is as if I stretch my wings during that time to fly
 away rushing to the heart of the Lord.

I can tell you that my heart has as it were the wings of a
 dove. I dare say that having a heart like a dove, it then jumps
 out from within my spirit to the spirit of God; rises from human
 grace to God's grace.

¹¹ W.H.Gardner, Poems and Prose of Gerard Manley Hopkins
 (London, 1954), p.217.

I am soft sift

In an hourglass - at the wall

Fast, but mined with a motion, a drift,

And it crowds and it combs to the fall;

I steady as a water in a well, to a poise, to a pane,

But roped with, always, all the way down from the tall

Fells of flanks of the voel, a vein

Of the gospel proffer, a pressure, a principle, Christ's gift.

Difficult Words

1.1 sift = very fine grain of sand

1.3 fast = firmly fixed

1.4 comb = curl ... (for wave)

1.5 poise = balance, equilibrium

pane = single sheet of glass in a window

1.6 roped = twisted, made to become like a rope¹²

1.7 voel = bare hill (Welsh)¹³

fell = a piece of land on a mountain

flank = side of a mountain

1.8 proffer = offer, gift

Paraphrase

My body is like the sand in an hourglass, which seems to be firm, because it does not move near the edge of the glass, but, which, in fact, always runs down in its centre. My body decays towards death.

At the same time, my faith is building itself up to become steady and calm as the water surface in a well, which looks like a window pane. My faith is always refilled, - like water in a mountain well is refilled through underground channels by rain water from the land on top of it and from the side -, by the gift of the Gospel.

That gift from Christ is a pressure or moving power, a principle for me.

^{12,13} Ibid., p.217.

I kiss my hand
 To the stars, lovely-asunder
 Starlight, wafting him out of it; and
 Glow, glory in thunder;
 Kiss my hand to the dappled-with-damson west:
 Since, tho' he is under the world's splendour and wonder,
 His mystery must be instressed, stressed;
 For I greet him the days I meet him, and bless when I understand.

Difficult Words

- 1.2 asunder = two things apart ... into pieces
 1.3 to waft = carry lightly or smoothly through the air or over water ...
 1.5 dappled = marked with rounded patches of different colours
 damson = small dark-purple plum
 1.6 splendour = glory
 1.7 instressed, stressed = God's power though lying under nature cannot but enter our being either by illumination or an act of faith. The 'stress' of the influencing power of God must be kept alive (i.e. instressed) by our readiness to respond to further grace. And the truth of this process should be emphasized (stressed).¹⁴

Paraphrase

I am awed by the stars, their beautifully scattered lights, which reveal God's nature. This glory of God is so powerful that, in some way or other, it thunders out of the stars, as it were. The same kind of awe also rises when I see the purple-spotted sunset.

However, though God's glory reveals itself in natural phenomena, it will finally penetrate into our souls. And when this glory lives in our souls, we must respond to it so that we will be ready to respond to the further glory of God which we will meet in our lives.

¹⁴Ibid., p.217.

Not out of his bliss
 Springs the stress felt
 Nor first from heaven (and few know this)
 Swings the stroke dealt -
 Stroke and a stress that stars and storms deliver,
 That guilt is hushed by, hearts are flushed by and melt -
 But it rides time like riding a river
 (And here the faithful waver, the faithless fable and miss).

Difficult Words

- 1.6 hushed by = quieted, made silent
 flushed by = 1) washed away, 2) become red
 1.8 fable = false statement or account
 waver = people who wave their hands to cheer

Paraphrase

The moving power that we feel when we see stars or storms;
 the power that wipes out guilt (created by other people in us),
 that conquers the human heart, does not come mainly from beautiful
 things, as is commonly thought by man, nor does it come down
 directly from heaven.

But starting from Christ's life, it takes time to reach us.

At this paradoxical point, the faithful cheer but the faith-
 less tell false tales and miss Christ's message.

It dates from day
 Of his going in Galilee;
 Warm-laid grave of a womb-life grey;
 Manger, maiden's knee;
 The dense and the driven Passion, and frightful sweat;
 Thence the discharge of it, there its swelling to be,
 Though felt before, though in high flood yet -
 What none would have known of it, only the heart, being hard at bay,

Difficult Words

- 1.2 Galilee = the place where Christ started teaching people
- 1.3 womb = organ in a woman where a baby is carried before birth
- 1.4 manger = a box from which horses and cattle feed
- 1.5 the Passion = the suffering and death of Jesus
- 1.8 at bay = (of an animal) forced to face its attackers and show defiance; (fig) in a desperate position, compelled to struggle fiercely

Paraphrase

The power discussed in the former stanza started to influence man from the time Christ became man; it came from his submission to the condition of human life in the womb of the virgin, and in the manger.

Above all Christ felt the power of God during his passion when He prayed in Gethsemane.

From there the power goes out over the world, even though it has been felt before. Nobody would be able to acknowledge it, but the heart is driven to do so.

Is out with it! Oh,
 We lash with the best or worst
 Word last! How a lush-kept plush-capped sloe
 Will, mouthed to flesh-burst,
 Gush! - flush the man, the being with it, sour or sweet,
 Brim, in a flash, full! - Hither then, last or first,
 To hero of Calvary, Christ, 's feet -
 Never ask if meaning it, wanting it, warned of it - men go.

Difficult Words

- 1.2 lash = bound; part of a whip with which strokes are given
 1.3 plush = kind of silk or cotton cloth with a soft surface
 sloe = small, bluish-black wild plum, fruit of the backthorn
 1.5 flush = away with ...
 1.6 brimful(1) = full to the brim

Paraphrase

We always keep the best or the worst till the last moment.

The contact with God's mystery is like the eating of a plum, full of juice, which only in man's mouth is broken and then tasted fully; it fills the whole man's being completely with its sweet or sour taste. In such a brief instance our heart will fully be in contact with Him, full of Him.

Just like this man will be driven to seek Christ, the Hero of Calvary, without any further backward or forward considerations. He will just go.

Be adored among men,
God, three-numbered from;
Wring thy rebel, dogged in den,
Man's malice, with wrecking and storm.
Beyond saying sweet, past telling of tongue,
Thou art lightning and love, I found it, a winter and warm;
Father and fondler of heart thou hast wrung:
Hast thy dark descending and most art merciful then.

Difficult Words

- 1.3 to wring = to twist and squeeze tightly
dogged = obstinate, stubborn
den = animal's hidden lying place
1.4 malice = active ill will, desire to harm others
wrecking = destruction
1.7 fondler = somebody who touches lovingly

Paraphrase

(Here starts a prayer to God)

Be adored King, oh, God; Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

Destroy man's stubbornness, which dwells in his prison-like heart.

You are more beautiful than words can tell. You are fierce and, at the same time, kind. You are bitterly cold and hotly warm.

You are the loving father of the heart that you put to trial; you come in darkness but show your mercy then.

With an anvil-ding
 And with fire in him force thy will
 Or rather, rather then, stealing as Spring
 Through him, melt him but master him still:
 Whether at once, as once at a crash Paul,
 Or as Austin, a lingering-out sweet skill,
 Make mercy in all of us, out of us all
 Mastery, but be adored, but be adored King.

Difficult Words

- 1.1 anvil = large, heavy block of iron on which heated metal
 is formed into shape
 ding = the sound of two bells striking alternately
 1.2 to forge = to shape by heating and hammering
 1.5 crash Paul, i.e. the conversion of Saul, which happened in
 a moment
 1.6 Austin, i.e. St. Augustine of Hippo, whose conversion was
 gradual ¹⁵

Paraphrase

Sometimes God enters the soul with an exciting or terrible
 blow, like a smith who shape iron with fire and hammering. In
 other instances He enters the soul like Spring that slowly and
 subtly creeps into nature. He melts man's heart like snow and at
 the same time masters him.

The example of the former case is that of St. Paul whose con-
 version happened in a moment, whereas the latter is that of
 St. Augustine of Hippo (354-430) whose conversion was gradual.

Which ever way you will take, God, please, be merciful and
 master us all. Be our King!

¹⁵ Ibid., p.217.

PART THE SECOND

11

'Some find me a sword; some
The flange and the rail; flame,
Fang, or flood' goes Death on drum,
And stroms bugle his fame.

But we dream we are rooted in earth - Dust!
Flesh falls within sight of us, we, though our flower the same,
Wave with the meadow, forget that there must
The sour scythe oringe, and the blear share come.

Difficult Words

1.2 flange = outside rim of a wheel to keep it in position

rail = railway

1.3 fang = canine = long, sharp tooth of dogs
snake's poison teeth

1.4 to bugle = to blow musical wind instrument (like a small trumpet)
used for military sign

1.7 meadow = grassland, esp. kept for hay

1.8 scythe = slightly curved blade to cut grass

cringe = to move the body back or down in fear
or fall, cause to cringe¹⁶

blear = dim-sighted, filmy

share = blade of a plough

Paraphrase

Some people find me (death) at the tip of a sword. Some others find me on the rails, knocked down by a train. Still others find me in a fire, or are killed by wild animals, or are drowned.

In any of those ways can death overcome man.

Ironically, we think we are eternal, though we are dust. We see around us people dying, yet though our nature is the same we are still happy, like the waving meadow that forgets someday a scythe or the filmy blade of a plough must cut off the grass.

¹⁶ Ibid., p.218.

On Saturday sailed from Bremen,
 American-outward-bound,
 Take settler and seamen, tell men with women,
 Two hundred souls in the round -
 O Father, not under thy feathers nor ever as guessing
 The goal was a shoal, of a fourth the doom to be drowned;
 Yet did the dark side of the bay of thy blessing
 Not vault them, the millions of rounds of thy mercy not reeve even
 them in ?

Difficult Words

1.5 a shoal = shallow place in the sea, especially where there are
 sand banks; (fig.) hidden dangers

1.6 vault = to cover

to reeve = to rope together¹⁷

Paraphrase

On Saturday a ship called the 'Deutschland' sailed from Bremen bound for America. It carried two hundred men and women, consisting of the ship's crew and people who wanted to settle in America.

Who would have known or guessed, O God, that the end of this trip was to be only a sandbank near the shore? One fourth of the passengers were to be killed.

Yet is it not true that the mysterious side of your power guarded them, that you roped them together with your infinite mercy?

¹⁷ Ibid., p.218.

Into the snows she sweeps,
 Hurling the haven behind,
 The Deutschland, on Sunday; and so the sky keeps,
 For the infinite air is unkind,
 And the sea flint-flake, black-backed in the regular blow,
 Sitting Eastnortheast, in cursed quarter, the wind;
 Wiry and white-fiery and whirlwind-swivelled snow
 Spins to the widow-making unchilding unfathering deeps.

Difficult Words

1.5 flint = a very hard kind of stone

flake = small, light, leaf-like piece

1.7 wiry = like wire

fiery = flaming; looking like fire

whirl wind-swivelled = whirl = move quickly round and round

swivel = turn round as on swivel

Paraphrase

On Sunday, the 'Deutschland' went to sea in a snowstorm, leaving the port behind her. The sky remain cloudy and the wind did not turn. The small waves looked like small pieces of stones, black on top, forming a regular pattern (because of the blowing wind).

From East-north-east blew the threatening wind. The snow looked like wire and white flame, spinning round, making its way to the sea which would be the killer of husbands, children, and fathers.

She drove in the dark to leeward,
 She struck - not a reef or a rock
 But the combs of a smother of sand: night drew her
 Dead to the Kentish Knock;
 And she beat the bank down with her bows and the ride of her keel:
 The breakers rolled on her beam with ruinous shock;
 And canvas and compass, the whorl and the wheel
 Idle for ever to waft her or wind her with, these she endured.

Difficult Words

- 1.1 leeward = on or to the sheltered side
- 1.4 the Kentish Knock = sandbank in the Thames estuary
- 1.5 keel = timber or steel structure on which the frame work of a ship is built up
- 1.6 beam = horizontal cross-timber in a ship, joining the sides and supporting the deck
- bow = curved parts of the ship's body
- 1.7 the whorl = the screw-propeller (which was lost)¹⁸
- 1.8 wind = steer (nautical uses)

Paraphrase

The 'Deutschland' sailed in the darkness too far from its course and struck, not a reef or a rock, but a smooth sandbank.

In the night she was pulled right on to the Kentish Knock. The front part of the ship struck the bank, and the bottom part hit it again and again. The waves rolled on to the ship's beam and ruined it with their shocks. Then the sail and compass, the screw-propeller and the wheel did not function anymore. These part of the ship could no longer move or steer it.

All of this the 'Deutschland' underwent during the night.

¹⁸ Ibid., p.218.

Hope had grown grey hairs,
 Hope had mourning on,
 Trenched with tears, carved with cares,
 Hope was twelve hours gone;
 And frightful a nightfall folded rueful a day
 Nor rescue, only rocket and lightship, shone,
 And lives at last were washing away:
 To the shrouds they took, - they shook in the hurling and horrible airs.

Difficult Words

1.3 trench = a word play on 'drench'

drench with tears = full of tears

carve = to make or form (usually a statue) by cutting wood, or stone, or brass, etc.

1.5 rueful = expressing regret

1.8 shrouds = ropes supporting a ship's masts

1.6 rocket = rocket sent up by a ship to ask for help

Paraphrase

The passengers' hope was almost gone, as a man's life has almost ended when he becomes old (grey haired). Hope, cut up with tears and carved with sorrows as it were, was gone during twelve hours of daylight.

Then the frightful night closed the mournful day. There came no help; only the light of a lightship and of their own rockets shone.

They died one by one as they held the ship's ropes and shook in the twisting winds.

One stirred from the rigging to save
 The wild woman-kind below,
 With a rope's end round the man, handy and brave -
 He was pitched to his death at a blow,
 For all his dreadnought breast and braids of thew:
 They could tell him for hours, dandled the to and fro
 Through the cobbled foam-fleece, what could he do
 With the burl fo the fountains of air, buck and the flood of the wave?

Difficult Words

1.1 rigging = all the ropes which support a ship's masts and sails

1.4 pitched = sent to

1.5 dreadnought = type of heavily armed battleship in the early
 part of the twentieth century

braids = hair woven together

thew = muscles, bodily strength

1.6 dandle = move a child up and down in one's knee or arm

1.7 cobbled = put together roughly

fleece = wooly covering of a sheep or similar animal

1.8 burl = burly, adj. big and strong

buck = to jump with the four feet together and with the back
 arched, eg. a horse that throws the rider to the ground.

Paraphrase

From among the ropes of the ship, a man moved to save the
 terrified women below him, in the wild sea. With a rope's end
 put around his body, he tried to go down bravely.

But in spite of his broad-chested body, and all his physical
 strength, he was put to death at one stroke by the waves.

People could see his body for hours moving up and down in the
 boiling waves, which looked like a rough sheep's fleece because of
 the foam.

What could he do, in fact, against the strong burst of wind
 and the flood of water, which was like a wild horse trying to
 throw its rider to the ground?

They fought with God's cold -
 And they could not and fell to the deck
 (Crushed them) or water (and drowned them) or rolled
 With the sea-romp over the wreck.
 Night roared, with the heart-break hearing a heart-broke rabble,
 The woman's wailing, the crying of a child without check -
 Till a lioness arose breasting the babble,
 A prophetess towered in the tumult, a virginal tongue told.

Difficult Words

- 1.4 sea-romp = ... to romp = (of a child) to play about; running,
 jumping, etc., rather roughly
 - to win something easily
- 1.5 rabble = disorderly crowd
- 1.6 babble = 1) confused talk, 2) gentle sound of water flowing
 over stones

Paraphrase

The passengers fought against the coldness of the night (which is supposed to be God's, for He owns nature). And they could not win, so they fell to the deck which crushed them. Some others fell into the water which drowned them. Still others were rolled over the ship's wreck by the sea water, that jumped joyfully as if it knew that it had won the battle already.

The wind produced a loud clamouring sound while the noise of the heart-broken crowd was heard; the women's wailing, and the crying of the children out-of-control: till suddenly a new spirit arose, which was like a lioness, a prophetess, a voice out of heaven, overcoming all the noise.

Ah, touched in your bower of bone
 Are you! turned for an exquisite smart,
 Have you! make words break from me here all alone,
 Do you! - mother of being in me, heart.
 O unteachably after evil, but uttering truth,
 Why tears! is it? tears; such a melting, a madrigal start!
 Never-eldering revel and river of youth,
 What can it be, this glee? the good you have there of your own?

Difficult Words

- 1.1 bower = private sitting room of a woman
 1.2 exquisite = of great excellence; keenly felt
 smart = sharp pain, bodily or mental
 1.5 after = in pursuit of¹⁹
 1.6 madrigal = 1) short love poem
 2) part-song for several voices without instrumental
 accompaniment
 revel = (occassion of) merry making; joyous festivity
 1.8 this glee = though sad, the poet's heart feels joy too, because
 of the nun's fortitude and faith²⁰

Paraphrase

The poet speaks to himself: O, heart, in your dwelling (chest) you are touched, aren't you? You keenly feel a sharp pain, don't you? And that is why you make the words (the poem) come out of me, don't you?

Heart, the essence of my being in me, you can no more be taught in thinking out evil, but you can utter truth. Are you really crying (as if the poet himself could hardly believe what had really happened with him)? Why do you cry for such a beautiful start (eternal life), the beginning as it were of a love story?

You, heart, that is always young and joyful, what do you feel now? what good is hown to you?

^{19,20} Ibid., p.218.

Sister, a sister calling
 A master, her master and mine! -
 And the inboard seas run swirling and hawling;
 The rash smart slogging brine
 Blinds her; but she that weather sees one thing, one;
 Has one fetch in her: she rears herself to divine
 Ears, and the call of the tall nun
 To the men in the tops and the tackle rode over the storm's brawling.

Difficult Words

- 1.3 to swirl = move or flow at varying speeds, with twists and turns
 to hawl = homophone of 'to haul' = to pull with great effort
 1.4 rash = too hasty, too bold
 slogging = to slog = hit hard and wildly
 brine = salt water
 1.6 fetch = stratagem, device
 1.8 tackle = set of ropes and pulleys for working a ship's sail
 brawling = to brawl = noisy quarrelling

Paraphrase

Listen! A sister was calling a master, who is also my master.
 The sea water crushed the ship noisily, and blinded her.

But in that tumult she could still see, as always in her life,
 one thing (i.e. her master, Christ), which lifted her up above all
 suffering.

Thus motivated, her voice reached the men on board and on the
 ship's ropes and sails and overcame the noise of the boiling waves.

She was first of a five and came
Of a coifed sisterhood.

(O Deutschland, double a desperate name!
O world wide of its good!

But Gertrude, lily, and Luther, are two of a town,
Christ's lily and beast of the waste wood:

From life's dawn it is drawn down,
Abel is Cain's brother and breast they have sucked the same.)

Difficult Words

1.2 coif = close fitting cap covering the top, back and sides of
the head

1.5 Gertrude = Catholic saint and mystic (1256-1302) of Eisleben,
birth place of Luther²¹

Paraphrase

She (the nun) was the first of the five nuns, all coming from
a certain convent.

'Deutschland' was a doubly bad name; first it is the name of
the country that made the Falk Laws (which forced those nuns to
leave the country), and secondly it is the name of the ship on which
they became casualties.

But there are also saints born in that country, for example
Gertrude. On the other hand, Martin Luther, a protestant, was
also born in that land, even in the same town with Gertrude.
The former is compared to a lily, the symbol of virginity, and
the latter to a wild animal from the wood. (Note: at that time
Catholics and Protestants were enemies.)

Gertrude and Luther are further paralleled with Abel and
Cain (the sons of Adam and Eve) who sucked the same breasts
(that of Eve) but who had different characters; one was good and
the other was bad.

²¹ Ibid., p.218.



Loathed for a love men knew in them,
 Banned by the land of their birth,
 Rhine refused them. Thames would ruin them;
 Surf, snow, river and earth
 Gnashed: but thou art above, thou Orion of light;
 Thy unchallenging poising palms were weighing the worth,
 Thou martyr-master: in thy sight
 Storm flakes were scroll-leaved flowers, lily showers - sweet
 heaven was astrew in them.

Difficult Words

- 1.1 to loathe = to feel disgust, dislike
 1.2 ban = order with authority that something must not be done
 1.5 to gnash = (of the teeth) strike together (in rage)
 Orion = the constellation named after the giant hunter
 1.6 unchallenging = steady, unwavering - a coinage from France
 word 'chancellor' meaning 'unsteady',²²
 poising = making balance
 1.8 scroll-leaved = roll of paper for writing on ...
 astrew = to strew = to scatter something over a place

Paraphrase

Hated for the love (Christian Love) people knew the nuns had,
 and forced by their country's laws, the nuns were banned from
 Germany, symbolized by the Rhine. The Thames (symbolizing England)
 would be the place of their death.

It was as if the surf, snow, river, and earth were teeth,
 crushing them. But you (Christ), the giant of light, were not like
 them. Your steady judgement knew the truth. You are the master
 of the martyrs. In your sight (in front of you) stormy snow flakes
 became like flowers with folded leaves or like showers of lilies.
 And the sweet heaven was promised in them.

Note

Father F.J. Van Beeck S.J. in his analysis of this poem has
 stated that the Rhine is the symbol of human opposition whereas
 the Thames is the symbol of nature's enmity.²³

²² Ibid., p.218.

²³ Frans Josef van Beeck S.J., The Wreck of the Deutschland:
An Analytic Commentary on the first Major Poem by Gerard Manley
Hopkins, S.J. (Amsterdam, 1958), p.35. Unpublished.

Five! the finding and sake
 And cipher of suffering Christ.
 Mark, the mark is of man's make
 And the word of it Sacrificed.
 But he scores it in scarlet himself on his own bespoken,
 Before-time-taken, dearest prized and priced -
 Stigma, signal, cinquefoil token
 For lettering of the lamb's fleece, ruddying of the rose-flake.

Difficult Words

- 1.2 cipher = number
 1.5 bespoken = order in advance; be evidence of ...
 1.7 stigma = marks resembling those made by the nails on the body
 of Jesus at the crucifixion
 cinquefoil = plant with leaves divided into five parts and
 with small yellow flowers.
 1.8 fleece = woolly covering of a sheep
 ruddy = red, as showing good health
 red rose is the traditional symbol of martyrdom²⁴

Paraphrase

Five is the number of wounds Christ received on the cross.
 The 'five' nuns are the symbol of Christ's salvation and through
 those five wounds in His body Christ fulfilled God's plan to save
 human beings.

Those wounds are marks made by man, but, actually God himself
 planned it. He himself drew this number in blood, right after the
 first sin committed, in His dearest son, as a stigma, like a five-
 fold sign on the fleece of the lamb (Christ), or of the martyrs.

²⁴W.H.Gardner, Poems and Prose, p.218.

Joy fall to thee, father Francis,
 Drawn to the Life that died;
 With the gnarls of the nails in thee, niche of the lance, his
 Lovescape crucified
 And seal of his seraph-arrival! and these thy daughters
 And five-lived and leaved favour and pride,
 Are sisterly sealed in wild waters,
 To bathe in his fall-gold mercies, to breathe in his all-fire glances.

Difficult Words

- 1.1 Father Francis = St. Francis of Assisi, the founder of the Franciscans.
- 1.3 niche = weapon with a long wooden shaft and pointed steel head used by a horseman
- gnarl(ed) nails = deformed hands
- 1.5 seal = something attached to a document to show that it is genuine
- seraph = angel
- leaved = like leaves

Paraphrase

May you be happy, Fr. Francis, because you were attracted by the Cross, and with the stigmata you received at the end of your life, you were almost like Christ himself. Your stigma would assure you the happiness at the end of your life.

And these five nuns of your order, who had lived and been like leaves of pride to you, are also assured of their happiness because through their sufferings they made themselves one with Christ.

Therefore the suffering is in fact God's mercy.

Away in the loveable west,
 On a pastoral forehead of Wales,
 I was under a roof here, I was at rest,
 And they the prey of the gales;
 She to the black-about air, to the breaker, the thickly
 Falling flakes, to the throng that catches and quails
 Was calling 'O Christ, Christ, come quickly':
 The cross to her she calls Christ to her, christens her wild-worst Best.

Difficult Words

- 1.2 pastoral = of shepherds and country life.
 1.5 gale = strong wind
 1.6 throng = crowd
 quail = to feel or show fear

Paraphrase

Far away in the beautiful west, on a rural hill in Wales,
 I was staying peacefully at home.

On the contrary, the nuns on the 'Deutschland' were falling
 victim to the strong winds. In the darkness, among the waves and
 the snow that was falling thickly, and amidst the wild and terri-
 fied crowd, the nun was heard calling out 'O Christ, O Christ, come
 quickly!'

She invited Christ's cross to her, and therefore she brings
 out the best in her.

25

The majesty! what did she mean?

Breathe, arch and original Breath.

Is it love in her of the being as her lover had been?

Breathe, body of lovely Death.

They were else-minded then, altogether, the men

Woke thee with a We are perishing in the weather of Gennesareth.

Or is it that she cried for the crown then,

The keener to come at the comfort for feeling the combating keen?

Difficult Words

1.2 arch = innocent, pure

arch & combating, i.e. the Holy Spirit²⁵

1.5 the men, see Matt 8:25²⁶

1.8 to combat = to be ready to fight

keen = eagerness, strong feeling towards something

Paraphrase

O, God, what did she mean by calling Christ?

Holy Ghost, tell me the meaning of it.

Is it because she wanted to be similar to Christ, her lover?

Inspire me, o, Spirit of Christ's death.

The men who were with you were quite different when the storm attacked them on the lake of Gennesareth because they cried for help.

Or did the nun long for the glory which she was sure to meet after death; the more longing for heaven as she felt the forces of nature beating her down?

^{25,26} Ibid., p.218.

For how to the heart's cheering
 The down-dugged ground-hugged grey
 Hovers off, the jay-blue heavens appearing
 Of pied and peeled May!
 Blue-beating and hoary-glow height; or night, still higher,
 With belled fire and the moth-soft Milky Way,
 What by your measure is the heaven of desire,
 The treasure never eyesight got, nor was ever guessed what for
 the hearing?

Difficult Words

- 1.2 down-dugged = dug = a bag-like part of an animal body from
 which milk is exerted
 So the cloud is hanging in the sky like the shape
 of a dug
 to hug = (of a ship) to keep close to shore
 ground-hugged = describing the cloud which kept close to the
 horizon
 1.3 to hover = to remain at one place in the air
 jay = a kind of European bird whose feathers have a beautiful
 blue colour
 1.4 pied, peeled = patterned with strips
 1.5 hoary = grey or white with age
 1.6 belled-fire = small fire shaped like a bell
 moth-soft = soft in looking because the great number of similar
 grain

Paraphrase

The sky which first was cloudy almost to the ground; or the
 beautiful blue colored sky like the feathers of a jay, with blue
 and white patches, and united colors; or the night with the light
 of the stars and the Milky Way, are asked to reveal the beauty of
 heaven to the heart.

What is in fact 'your heaven', which is never seen by eyes
 or heard by ears?

No, but it was not these.
 The jading and jar of the cart,
 Time's tasking, it is fathers that asking for ease
 Of the sodden-with-its-sorrowing heart,
 Not danger, electrical horror; then further it finds
 The appealing of the Passion is tenderer in prayer apart:
 Other, I gather, in measure her mind's
 Burden, in wind's burly and beat of endragoned seas.

Difficult Words

- 1.2 jade = worn out, exhausted
 jar = shock, thrill, unpleasant sound
 1.4 sodden = soaked through
 1.8 burly = big, strong, solidly built
 endragoned = like a dragon

Paraphrase

Apparently, these (stanza 26) were not the motives of the sister's call.

It is decay and tiredness in old age which calls for a relief from the burden of life, of the heart full of pain and sadness; not danger, or sudden fear.

Moreover it appears that to be conform to Christ in his passion is the fruit of a meditation in solitude.

I think that her mind is motivated by other reasons (that she has a different frame of mind) amidst the tumult and beat of the waves.

But how shall I ... make me room there
 Reach me a ... Fancy, come faster -
 Strike you the sight of it? look at it loom there,
 Thing that she ... there then! the Master,
Ipsse, the only one, Christ, King, Head:
 He was to cure the extremity where he had cast her;
 Do, deal, lord it with living and dead;
 Let him ride, her pride, in his triumph, despatch and have done
 with his doom there.

Difficult Words

- 1.3 to loom = (fig.) appear great and fill the main
 appear distinctly and in a threatening way
 1.6 cast = to throw, or to shape
 1.8 doom = ruin, death
 despatch = send off, finish, get through quickly

Paraphrase

But how shall I describe what she sees? Oh, imagination, be quicker. Do you see that? look at the scene, the thing she sees.

That was the thing she longed for: Christ himself. He appeared like a King, the Head. He came to silence the storms and all sorrows in which he had put her.

Please, Lord, overcome the suffering and be master of living and dead. Let the nun's pride have its triumph and let her overcome death (meaning: to become one with Christ's glory after his resurrection).

Ah! there was a heart right!
 There was single eye!
 Read the unshapeable shock night
 And knew the who and the why;
 Wording it how but by him that present and past,
 Heaven and earth are word of, worded by? -
 The Simon Peter of a soul! to the blast
 Tarpeian-fast, but a blown beacon of light.

Difficult Words

1.2 single-eye = an application of the sentence "When the eye is
 single, thy whole body is full of light"
 Luke 11, 34²⁷

1.3 unshapeable = confused, inexplicable

1.7 Simon Peter = one of apostles to whom Christ said that
 He would build His church upon 'this rock'
 (= Peter).

blast = explosion, strong and sudden rush of wind

1.8 Tarpeian = the name of a rock in Rome

beacon = fire lit on a hill top as a signal

Paraphrase

The nun really could see things with a simple heart and a
 strong belief. Therefore she could see the suffering in the right
 way, identifying it with Christ himself because she believes that
 the "word of God outside God is the created world"²⁸, hence
 including the wild sea/nature. Christ, who is present all the time,
 lived in her.

Such a relationship between a human being and Christ is
 similar to that of Simon Peter. Thus, she, to the world is like a
 beacon of light on the Tarpeian rock. She shows Christ to the
 world.

²⁷ Ibid., p.219.

²⁸ F.J.van Beeck S.J., The Wreck, p.50

Jesu, heart's light,
 Jesu, maid's son,
 What was the feast followed the night
 Thou hadst glory or this nun? -
 Feast of the one woman without stain.
 For so conceived, so to conceive thee is done;
 But here was heart-three, birth of a brain,
 Word, that heard and kept thee and uttered thee outright.

Difficult Words

- 1.3 feast = religious anniversary or festival
- 1.5 stain = dirty mark, or patch of colour.
- 1.6 conceive = from the idea in the mind
- 1.7 heart-three = sharp pain, esp. of child birth, therefore the pain of birth which brings forth joy

Paraphrase

Jesus, the light of the heart, the son of Mary, what kind of feast was held to glorify the nun's soul? The feast of the woman without sin, i.e. Our Lady.

For while Mary conceived you in her womb, this nun conceived you in her mind. She also had the pain, as did Mary when she brought you in the world, when she bore you in her soul. There, in the nun's life, you were kept alive and shining all the time.

Well, she has thee for the pain, for the
 Patience; but pity of the rest of them!
 Heart, go and bleed at a bitterer vein for the
 Comfortless unconfessed of them -

No not uncomfited: lovely-felicitous Providence
 Finger of a tender of, O of a feathery delicacy, the breast of the
 Maiden could obey so, be a bell to, ring of it, and
 Startle the poor sheep back! is the shipwrack then a harvest,
 does tempest carry the grain for thee?

Difficult Words

1.5 felicitous = well chosen

Providence = God; God's care for human beings and all he has
 created

1.8 wrack = seaweed thrown up on the shore by the waves

tempest = violent storm; (fig.) violent agitation

1.3 vein = blood vessel

1.6 tender = loving

feathery = full of feather

delicacy = subtlety

1.8 startle = cause to move or jump

Paraphrase

Christ is the reward for the nun's suffering and patience.
 Please, Christ, take pity on the others. My heart (the author
 says) should become bitter at the thought of the people who could
 get no comfort from confessing their sins - but no, I am wrong,
 they are not uncomfited: May Providence, which is the token of
 a tenderness and delicacy like the feathers of a bird, and which
 the nun accepted in such a way, be like a bell to bring these
 poor people back.

In that way, is this shipwreck then not like a harvest; doesn't
 the wind bring the grain back to you?

I admire thee, master of the tides
 Of the Yere-flood, of the year's fall;
 The recurb and the recovery of the gulf's sides,
 The girth of it and the wharf of it and the wall;
 Stanching, quenching ocean of a metionable mind;
 Ground of being, and granite of it: past all
 Grasp Ged, threned behind
 Death with a sovereignty that heeds but hides, bodes but abides;

Difficult Words

- 1.2 Yere-flood ²⁹ = the Deluge = the great flood at the time of
 Noah (Old Testament, Gen.VII)
 or the primal water (Gen.I;2)
- 1.3 recurb = curb back = to hold a horse so that it cannot move
 forward
- 1.4 girth = leather or cloth band tightened round the body of a
 horse to keep the saddle in place
- wharf = wooden or stone structure at which ships are moored
 for loading or unloading cargo
- 1.5 to stanch = stop the flow of
 to quench = to satisfy (thirst)
 to put an end to (hope)
- 1.8 sovereignty = power without limit
 to heed = pay attention to
 to bode = foretell
 to abide = rest, remain, stay, wait for

Paraphrase

I adore you, God, the master of the tides, of the Deluge of
 life, of the seasons of the year. You are the power that controls
 and checks the waves, like a wall. By so doing, you are like the
 sea that checks the motion of the waves, only here the waves are
 our restless minds.

Overpowering all powers, you are the ground of man's being.
 Your power grasps everything, even death. You are the King, the
 unlimited power that takes care but stays in the background, that
 knows the future but let things be themselves.

²⁹W.H. Gardner, Poems and Prose, p.219.

With a mercy that outrides
 The all of water, an ark
 For the listener; for the lingerer with a love glides
 Lower than death and the dark;
 A vein for the visiting of the past-prayer, pent in prison,
 The-last-breath penitent spirits - the uttermost mark
 Our passion-plunged giant risen,
 The Christ of the Father compassionate, fetched in the storm of his
 strides.

Difficult Words

- 1.1 to outride = to ride better or faster than
- 1.2 ark = covered ship in which Noah and his family were saved
 from the Flood
- 1.3 to linger = to continue something though weak and perhaps
 useless
- to glide = move along smoothly or continually
- 1.5 pent = shut up in
- 1.6 penitent = showing regret, feeling regret
- 1.8 compassionate = showing pity or tolerance for others'
 sufferings

Paraphrase

You have a mercy that is superior to the waves. You (God)
 are the protection for those who listen to you. Your love
 penetrates even to the hesitant and to those who are in purgatory.

You are ever a source of inspiration to those who are past
 prayer, whose mind seems to be languishing in the prison of their
 mind; those who show repentance only at the last moment - the last
 beacon, which the giant of suffering, death and resurrection,
 Christ, reached in his stormy way through life.

Now burn, new born to the world,
 Double-natured name,
 The heaven-flung, heart-fleshed, maiden-furled
 Miracle-in-Mary-of-flame,
 Mid-numbered He in three of the thunder-throne,
 Not a dooms-day dazzle in his coming nor dark as he came;
 Kind, but royally reclaiming his own;
 A released shower, let flash to the shire, not a lightning of
 fire hard-hurled.

Difficult Words

- 1.1 to burn = be alight, be on fire
 1.3 to furl = (of sails, flags, etc.) roll up
 1.6 dazzle = make somebody unable to see clearly or act normally
 because of too much light
 doomsday = the Day of Judgement; the end of the world
 1.8 released = free moving
 hurled = thrown violently
 flash = send out a sudden bright light
 shire = country

Paraphrase

Please, be a beacon of light coming back to the world, Christ;
 and shine for us all, you who have double nature, i.e. God and Man,
 who were sent from heaven, the Spirit who was made flesh (man),
 the one who was born to the world through the womb of the Virgin.
 He is the second of the three distinct figures.

In the event of the wreck of the 'Deutschland', Christ came
 without sign of dooms-day or frightening terror, or great fire.
 Instead He came royally like a shower that came down upon the land,
 not like a stroke of lightning.

Difficult Words

- ### Paraphrase

Let these happen while the kingdom of God spreads. Let Him be a prince, a rose, a high priest, the fire of love in our hearts, the Lord of our people's minds.

Chapter Three ANALYSIS OF THE POEM

Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to study what the poem is about. That means we will have to answer such questions as "What does Hopkins tell us in this poem?", "How is the story going on?", and "What is Hopkins' purpose in presenting the poem to us?".

The next point that will be helpful in reading this chapter is an explanation of the method of analysis used in it. There are three steps we will take. The first step is to have an overall view of the poem, the next one is to analyse the stanzas one by one and connecting the ideas in them into one string of thought, and the last step is trying to make up our minds about what we will have to say after studying the poem so far, which will be the fourth chapter.

Let us now begin with the overall view of the poem.

Overall view of the poem

The whole poem tells us about Hopkins's experience in his growing relationship with God. His great interest in observing the relationship between God and man in general has led him into deep thought about his own relationship with Christ, which was initiated by the event of the wreck of a ship named "Deutschland" in which five Franciscan nuns were killed.

The poem has 35 stanzas which are divided into two parts, i.e. stanzas 1 - 10, which the poet calls 'Part the First', and stanzas 11 - 35, which he calls 'Part the Second'.

In Part the First, Hopkins explains the relationship between himself and God in a more general way (than he does in Part the Second).

In Part the Second, he starts with an observation of the relationship between man in general with God, then he goes on with an observation of the relationship between the nuns and Christ during their fight against death, and based on this observation, he meditates upon his own personal relationship with Christ.

This overall view of the poem will not be clear unless we start analysing each stanza of the poem carefully; which we will do now.

Analysis of the Poem

Stanza 1

Hopkins opens the poem with declaring that God rules his life

Thou mastering me
God!

Then he continues to describe 'the one' who rules his life. He says that God is the

... giver of breath and bread;

The use of the word 'breath' reminds us of a passage in Genesis 2.7 which runs

And the Lord God took some soil from the ground and
formed a man out of it; he breathed life-giving breath
into his nostrils and the man began to live.

Thus by calling God as the 'giver of breath', Hopkins means that God is the giver of life.

A man needs food to live on. That need of life is compressed into one word by Hopkins, i.e. 'bread'. Moreover the use of this word brings an association with the famous prayer Our Father, one of whose lines runs

Give us this day our daily bread.

So the complete meaning of the line is that God is the giver of life and besides that He provides the need of life. God takes care of what He has created.

In the next two lines, 11.3-4, Hopkins continues to talk about mastery. He says that God is

World's strand, sway of the sea;
Lord of living and dead;

A strand is the shore of a lake or sea. It is the border of a (big) piece of land. So, the phrase 'World's strand' connotes that God includes in himself all that earth contains.

'Sway of the sea' or the power of the sea is also identified with God. So the line means that God controls both earth and sea, i.e. all power in nature, and that He at the same time stays behind all that power.

Besides nature, God has also power over man. That is what Hopkins means by calling Him the 'Lord of living and dead'.

The first four lines of stanza 1 describe God's mastery over his creation in a general way. Even so, starting from line 5, Hopkins applies this truth to his personal life. His realization of the truth makes him declare that

Thou (God) hast bound bones and veins in me, fastened
me flesh,
And after it almost unmade, what with dread
Thy doing and dost thou touch me afresh?

Here Hopkins repeats what he has said in the former lines, i.e. that God creates nature and that He has mastery over his creation, and applies this to his personal life.

God has 'bound bones and veins' in him. This means that God has created him as an individual, and when he is almost 'unmade', meaning when he has almost lost control over himself, God will come again with His unexpected action to save him.

The phrase "What with dread, / thy doing: and dost thou touch me afresh?" expresses the unexpectedness of God's saving action upon him and the question mark at the end of it especially stresses the surprise of the person receiving the saving action.

All through the poem Hopkins tries to describe the process of God's 'touching' action to save man's soul.

Unfortunately he fails to understand the saving process, but succeeds in recognising the final result of the saving action in himself, in his heart.

In the last line the success bursts out of him

Over again I feel thy finger and find thee.

Stanza 2

In this stanza, Hopkins explains how his belief in Christ has built in him an acceptance of salutary suffering. He says

I did say yes
O at lightning and lashed rod

'lightning' together with 'lashed rod' have a very strong image of frightening terror which he faces with a bold acceptance expressed in just one word, i.e. 'yes'.

In the following lines Hopkins gives us the reason why he has come to such an 'inhuman' attitude. Normally a human being says 'no' to every unpleasantness that comes to him, but since Hopkins believes that Christ knows better about these dreadful powers than Hopkins can tell, and because he is sure that Christ will not give him more than what he can bear³⁰, he respectfully says 'yes' to the frightening power of God that materializes in human life as suffering.

The above idea is described in lines 3 & 4

Thou heardst me truer than tongue confess
Thy terror, O Christ, O God;

³⁰ 1 Corinthians 10,13.

..., and he will not allow you to be tested beyond your power to remain firm; ...

The rest of the stanza is only a restatement of his reasoning. He says to Christ

Thou knowest the walls, altar and hour and night
The swoon of a heart that the sweep and the hurl of
thee tread

Hard down with a horror of height:

meaning that Christ knows exactly how hard a human heart will be hit when facing his dreadful power, in the agony of lonely prayer day and night.

Hopkins cannot explain this knowledge of Christ, as he formerly said that Christ always knows 'truer than (his) tongue (can) confess', nevertheless he reports what his body feels. He says that

And the midriff astrain with leaning of, laced with fire
of stress

This tension is just what he feels about his relationship with Christ through his belief.

Stanza 3

A man cannot depend only upon himself to go through the hard things he has to face. Should he does so, he will come to an agony similar to that expressed in these lines by Hopkins.

The frown of his face
Before me, the hurtle of hell
Behind, where, where was a, where was a place?

Hopkins knows that he has to follow Christ, but the way is very difficult. The frown of God's face symbolizes the difficulties, yet if he does not face them, there is behind him 'the hurtle of hell'.

So what should he do? Hopkins is under a terrible stress when he comes to this point. From the tone of those lines one can clearly sense the tension, especially from his repeating the word 'where' in line 3. Doesn't a person become almost unable to utter words when he is under such pressure?

But Hopkins does not stop in his agony. He develops himself further, not with his mind, but in his heart. Fortunately, Hopkins' heart knows where to fly. It flies to Christ, symbolized in the Holy Bread. That is what he means when he says

I whirled out wings that spell
And fled with a fling of the heart to the heart of the
Host.

In lines 4 to 6, Hopkins investigates his heart because, as we shall know in the later stanzas, the human heart plays a vital role in the acceptance or refusal of God.

Here is Hopkins' appreciation of his own heart.

My heart, but you were dovewinged, I can tell,
Carrier witted, I am bold to boast,
To flash from the flame to the flame then, from the
grace to the grace.

One thing to be noted here is that 'dove' is the symbol of the Holy Ghost. Thus when Hopkins speaks about his 'dovewinged' heart, we can take it to mean his heart that has already been filled with the Holy Spirit, which brings him to Christ (the Host, the flame, the grace).

Stanza 4

The natural being of a man contrasted to the being of a man that has been filled with Christ's spirit is the subject of discussion in this stanza.

In the first four lines, he describes his human being.

I am soft sift
In an hourglass - at the wall
Fast, but mined with a motion, a drift,
And it crowds and it combs to the fall;

The meaning is that if in one's life, one depends solely upon oneself, one will not be able to stand life. However steady one might seem to be, one's inner being will be eroded by one's age or, in general by one's life.

It is worth noting that in those lines Hopkins is successful in making an inner contrast between the sound of the poem and its meaning. What I mean is that it is impossible to read those lines in the way a sick man groans. The beats of the rhythm and the alliterations of some words (see the example) will make us read it very strongly, like a marching soldier, caused by the strength of the recurrent consonants.

For example 'soft' and 'sift' each has a stress; again in 'mined' and 'motion'; and, 'crowds' and 'combs'. Lastly, the consonant 't' in 'sift' and 'drift' has a very strong determined effect. All of them make the tone of the lines strong.

In spite of all those sound effects, when we think of the meaning of the words, we will find out that all of them have a similar tone of inner self destruction. That is what I mean by saying that Hopkins is successful in making so subtle a contrast between the meaning and sound of the poem.

Now let us continue examining the second part of the stanza.

I steady as a water in a well, to a poise, to a pane,
But roped with, always, all the way down from the tall
Fells or flanks of the voel, a vein
Of the gospel proffer, a pressure, a principle, Christ's
gift.

In those lines, Hopkins explains his being that has been united with Christ's spirit. In contrast with the explanation of his former being, his being at present is very steady. It does not 'crowd and comb' to death, but steady to a 'poise' because it has been connected with the vein of the Gospel or Christ's spirit.

Stanza 5

If we see nature's beauty, we can always refer to its creator. Nature is the expression of God; that is what he means by saying 'wafting him out of it'.

The first five lines of stanza 5

I kiss my hand
To the stars, lovely - asunder
Starlight, wafting him out of it; and
Glow, glory in thunder:
Kiss my hand to the dapple-with-damson west:

Hopkins admires nature's beauty which indirectly shows the greatness of God's creating power.

But for Hopkins, contact with God only through appreciation of nature's beauty is insufficient. He says

Since, tho' he is under the world's splendour and wonder,
His mystery must be instressed, stressed;

meaning that though man can reach God through His creation, a real dialogue with Him will need something special.

That 'something' is an acceptance of his mystery within our being; which acceptance, in its turn, needs the humility of our heart. Hopkins directly shows his humility in the last line of stanza 5. He says

For I greet him the days I meet him, and bless when I
understand.

By saying that he will be blessed when he understands, Hopkins indicates that he, though definitely a devotee, does not feel that he has a fair knowledge of God. He admits that there is still much to be understood and lived through. In this humble statement lies his humility.

In fact, only by having such a spiritual attitude man will get God's grace.

Stanza 6

The real source of God's influence upon man lies nowhere but in Christ. This is the point Hopkins makes in stanza 6.

Not out of his bliss
Springs the stress felt
Nor first from heaven (and few know this)
Swings the stroke dealt -

People often think that God's influence shines out from his perfect-

ion

er from heaven. Only some of them knew the real source of God's spirit.

In the following lines Hopkins seems to interrupt his main discourse by explaining what kind of influence or spirit he means. He continues with

Stoke and a stress that stars and sterms deliver,
That guilt is hushed by, hearts are flushed by and melt.

This means that the influence of the spirit is what we feel when seeing stars or stern, or that which can wipe our guilty feeling, which can freshen ('flushed') and soften ('melt') our heart.

By saying

But it rides time like riding a river
(And here the faithful waver,
the faithless fable and miss).

Hopkins continues with explaining the source of the spirit.

Nevertheless here he actually only prepares the readers for his real explanation of that source, which he gives in stanza 7.

He says that the influence or spirit is expressed in the slow progress of time. This statement implies that there must be a concrete source of influence; and it is clear, if we read the following stanza, that what he means by the starting point of the influence is Christ's life, though he does not state it in this stanza.

Yet, first Hopkins explains the possible reaction of man after acknowledging that reality, i.e. God's spirit reaches human beings through Christ.

When the mystery of redemption is presented to man, some of them, those who believe, will welcome the news and some others, the unbelievers, will reject it.

Stanza 7

It dates from day
Of his going in Galilee;

This is the real answer to the question of the source of God's spirit that reaches us. The influence comes to us through Christ's life; his holy mission to redeem human beings from sin.

The life of Christ is explained as

Warm-laid grave of a womb-life grey;

Which means that Christ is already destined to die for the sake of mankind from the time he entered his mother's womb.

The next two lines

Manger, maiden's knee
The dense and the driven Passion, and frightful sweat;

are references to some important events in Christ's life. 'Manger' and 'maiden's knee' refer to Christ's birth in the manger and Mary's obedience to God's plan of giving the Saviour to the world through her. The next line, especially the phrase 'frightful sweat', refers to the last moments of Christ's life when he prayed in Gethsemane.

In the last three lines of this stanza

Thence the discharge of it, there its swelling to be,
Though felt before, though in high flood yet -
What none would have known of it, only the heart,
being hard at bay,

Hopkins points to a very important idea in this poem. In the first line of the lines quoted above, he once again stresses the truth that God's influence upon man started from Christ's life. In the second line, he argues that what really man has felt are the touches of God's influence because they are abundant. Then in the third line he says that in spite of all that nobody is able to accept the truth that the real relationship between man and God is possible only through Christ except through the heart which is driven towards this truth.

Stanza 8

This stanza is a direct continuation of the former one and detailed description of the process of getting in touch with God.

Is out with it! Oh,
We lash with the best or worst
Word last! ...

The heart has reasons which the mind has not, and the best (or worst) word is spoken through it.

In the rest of the stanza, Hopkins compares the meeting of God and man through the heart with the process of the breaking of a plum in a man's mouth. He says

... How a lush-kept plush-capped sloe
Will, mouthed to flesh-burst,
Gush! - flush the man, the being with it, sour or sweet
Brim, in a flash, full! - ...

When a fresh wild plum is taken into a man's mouth and bitten, its sour and sweet taste will suddenly and in no time fill the man. The important thing Hopkins wants to stress here is the overall suddenness of the plum's taste fulfilling the man. It is very fast, even it seems that the process happens just in a flash.

The process of contact between man and God's spirit is exactly like that. It also happens in a flash. After that moment, the man's soul will sense the power of God, and

... - Hither then, last or first,
 To Here of Calvary, Christ, 's feet -
 Never ask if meaning it, wanting it, warned of it - men go.

That means that the moment after the illumination by the spirit man will follow Christ, unite himself with Him. Maybe his intellect has not been able yet to grasp the meaning of the new life, still he will simply listen to the voice of his heart and follow Christ.

Stanza 9

Once the finger of God has touched a man's heart, he will feel His Spirit and will automatically admire Him. Stanza 9 is the voice of a man who has God living within him.

Be adored among man,
 God, three-numbered form;
 Wring thy rebel, degged in den,
 Man's malice, with wrecking and storm,

Now the man, having accepted God in him, prays for himself and for his fellow human beings. He wishes that God's spirit enters his own and his fellow human beings' stubborn hearts; if necessary, by giving them a shock.

In the following lines the man expresses his new perception of God. He says that

Beyond saying sweet, past telling of tongue,
 Thou art lightning and love, I found it, a winter and
 warm;

meaning that now he feels God to be a real living spirit in him; a spirit which gives both pleasant and yet unpleasant feelings. In short, the nature of the spirit can never be described. It is more than anything he can tell.

Nevertheless the relationship between such a man and God can be compared to the relationship between a father and son. Here it is very clear that Hopkins takes the teaching of Christ, for He always refers to God as His Father who is in heaven.

That is what this line means

Father and fondler of heart ...

The end of this stanza is again a prayer for human beings.

... thou hast wrung:

Hast thy dark descending and most are merciful then.

The meaning is that because God has been willing to save human beings by giving His spirit, the man wishes that many people will also find Him and become merciful.

Before closing the discussion of this stanza, I would like to comment on my using the word 'man' instead of using 'Hopkins' as I did in the previous stanzas.

Though Hopkins does use 'I' in line 6 (I found it, ...) the whole stanza has a general tone, meaning that anybody who has felt the presence of God in him will say what Hopkins says in this stanza. So 'I' here does not refer particularly to Hopkins but to man in general.

The next stanza is also the wish of such a man, a man who has God living in him.

Stanza 10

With an anvil-ding
And with fire in him forge thy will

God may enter a man's soul with a violent shock ('anvil-ding' and 'fire'), but the entrance might happen in another way, i.e.

Or rather, rather than, stealing as Spring
Through him, ...

meaning in a smooth way as the soft coming of Spring; this would be much preferred.

The smoothness of the entrance of God's spirit in man's soul does not mean weakness of the influence, for even in such a smooth way God shall

..., melt him but master him still:

meaning that by smoothly uniting His Spirit with man's soul, He is still mastering him.

The lines

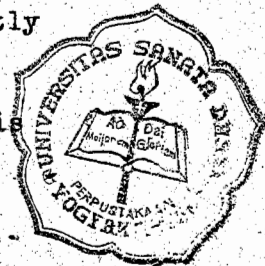
Whether at once, as once at a crash Paul,
Or as Austin, a lingering out sweet skill,
Make mercy in all of us, out of us all
Mastery, but be adored, but be adored King.

means that in spite of the wish that God will master man smoothly, the way He will take does not really matter. He might touch man's heart suddenly as He did with Saint Paul, or gradually as He did with Saint Augustine; but Hopkins hopes that God will be merciful towards mankind, will master us, and will be considered King.

Preface to 'Part the Second'

In the first stanza Hopkins puts forward the theme of the poem, namely that besides being the creator of the universe and man, God also takes care of individual human beings. He 'touches' them in critical moments to freshen the withering of their souls.

In stanzas 2 to 9, Hopkins develops the idea by explaining that God is always giving him mercy, and that the starting point or the source of the flowing Spirit of God is Christ, and lastly that the most important thing is the process of uniting man's life and God's spirit in man's heart. Only man's heart that is



often 'hard at bay' can say 'yes' or 'no'.

In Part the Second the awareness of the process of the working Spirit of God in man is given illustrations. Hopkins explains how he is able to perceive God's active influence by meditating upon the event of the wreck of the 'Deutschland'.

Now let us enjoy how artistically Hopkins presents his experience to his readers.

Stanza 11

Hopkins begins with pointing exactly at the weakness of human beings. Normally men will not think about death, especially when they are young and healthy, though they always see their fellow men dying.

'Some find me a sword; some
The flange and the rail; flame,
Fang, or flood' goes death on drum,
And storms bugle his fame

A man may find his death in thousands of ways. In spite of all that, the horror of death does not seem to threaten everybody. Most men seem to forget that they are similarly mortal. That is what these following lines mean.

But we dream we are rooted in earth - Dust!
Flesh falls within sight of us, we, though our flower
the same,
Wave with the meadow, forget that there must
The sour scythe cringe, and the bleak share come.

This stanza actually is a preparation for the next one, because just after saying that men often forget that they can die, Hopkins gives an example of how the passengers of the 'Deutschland' who were on their way to America found their death off the shore of England.

So we can say that this stanza functions as a comparison; it helps show more plainly to us how death can catch us beyond our expectation.

Stanza 12

In this stanza the story of the 'Deutschland' begins. Lines 1 to 4 are a plain story, telling us about the setting of place and time.

On Saturday sailed from Bremen,
American-outward-bound,
Take settler and seamen, tell men with women
Two hundred souls in the round -

The poem continues with

O Father, not under thy feathers nor ever as guessing
The goal was a shoal, of a fourth the doom to be drowned,

Here in a state of excitement because of being suddenly reminded of the fact that the Deutschland had a fatal accident, Hopkins remembers God. He wonders how such an accident can possibly happen; doesn't God take care of His creatures? This wonder is the theme of these following last lines

Yet did the dark side of the bay of thy blessing
Not vault them, the millions of rounds of thy mercy not
reeve even them in?

That question should not be judged as a sign of Hopkins' doubt in God, explained in Part the first. Instead the question is a starting point for him to make a deep appreciation of the meaning of the accident and of the mysterious way God works His salvation.

Stanza 13

There is nothing important as to the development of thought in this stanza. What it contains is the story of the Deutschland, still we must accept that this stanza is a beautiful and poetic description of the frightening weather at the time of the disaster.

Because it is not necessary to repeat what we have said in the paraphrase, let us go on examining the next stanza.

Stanza 14

This stanza continues the story about the ship. It describes the process how the ship suddenly struck the sandbank and how all of its equipment was put out of order.

There is no important development of thought in this stanza. What need be explained about it is all in the paraphrase.

Stanza 15

After describing the physical aspect of the wreck in the two previous stanzas, Hopkins now tackles the psychological aspect of the shipwreck.

Hope had grown grey hairs
Hope had mourning on,
Trenched with tears, carved with cares,
Hope was twelve hours gone;

Hopkins personifies the hope of the passengers by saying that it is like an old man ('grey hair'), meaning that it is approaching its death. Whatever they did, their hopes simply slipped out of their hearts.

It seems that the suffering those people had to endure is not yet enough, for after that there is still to come

And frightful a nightfall folded roeful a day
Nor rescue, only rocket and lightship, shone,

So there is still one long frightful night for them to spend before

they died. During that terrible night there was no rescue, they could only see the light of their own rocket, which they fired to ask for help, and the sign of a lightship.

The merciless death at last came to kill the passengers. In the last line Hopkins illustrates the lifeless scenery after the coming of death to the ship. There are many corpses dandling to and fro around it.

And lives at last were washing away:
To the shrouds they teek, - they shook in the hurling
and horrible airs.

Stanza 16

Beginning with this stanza, Hopkins directs his attention to the passengers who are struggling against the destructive powers of nature. First he observes a man, who is trying to help the women, was killed by the waves.

One stirred from the rigging to save
The wild woman-kind below,
With a rope's end round the man, handy and brave -
He was pitched to his death at a blow,
For all his dreadnought breast and braids of thew:

Hopkins makes a good comparison between the power of nature and human strength by saying that the man was killed 'at a blow' in spite of his 'dreadnought breast and braids of thew'.

Following are the lines that dramatically illustrates the terrible scene after the man's failure to help his fellow passengers.

They could tell him for hours, dandled the to and fro
Through the cobbled foam-fleece,

The meaning is that the other passengers could see his corpse being swept in all directions by the waves for a long time.

Lastly Hopkins ends this stanza with a reflection of

..., what could he do
With the burl of the fountain of air, buck and the flood
of the wave?

meaning that he is made to realize that in fact man's strength cannot be compared to nature's power. Or we can also say that these lines express his realization of the physical weakness of man.

Stanza 17

This stanza has a similar theme to the previous one, namely Hopkins's realization that physical strength is nothing compared to the power of nature.

They fought with God's cold -
And they could not and fell to the deck
(Crushed them) or water (and drowned them) or rolled
With the sea-romp over the wreck.

The difference is in the subject of observation. If in the previous stanza 'the man' is the object of observation, here the passengers as a whole are the object.

In the second part of this stanza, Hopkins puts forward a new and important idea, i.e. the existence of a 'lieness' and 'a prophetess'.

Night roared, with the heart-break hearing a heart-broke
rabble,
The woman's wailing, the crying of child without check -
Till a lioness arose breasting the babble,
A prophetess towered in the tumult, a virginal tongue told.

The meaning of these lines is that the destructive process of nature went on hammering upon the helpless passengers until something new came, that changed the situation. Yet Hopkins does not explain what is exactly that 'lioness' or 'prophetess', instead he talks about quite a different thing in the following stanza.

Stanza 18

This is an important stanza because it opens a new term of relationship between Hopkins and God.

Ah, touched in your bower of bone
Are you! turned for an exquisite smart,
Have you! make words break from me here all alone,
Do you! - mother of being in me, heart.

After having a deep meditation about how weak man's power is compared to nature's power, and how unexpectedly death can overcome life, Hopkins's heart is shaken.

He feels some new reaction growing in his heart which did not exist before he made the reflection based on the shipwreck.

In this stanza, Hopkins moved as it were out of himself and examines closely the reactions of his heart towards the tragedy. That is why he personifies his own heart and calls it 'you'.

Another important thing to note is that Hopkins considers his heart as his 'mother of being'. Obviously the heart plays the most important role in one's being, in one's life, according to him.

Now what is the reaction of Hopkins's heart after its being touched by the horror of the wreck?. In the following lines he explains these reactions.

O unteachably after evil, but uttering truth,
Why tears! is it? tears; such a melting, a madrigal start!
Never-eldering revel and river of youth,
What can it be, this glee? the good you have there of
your own?

By saying 'O unteachably after evil, but uttering truth', Hopkins clarifies that within the human heart, that is basically sinful, there is a good characteristic, namely that it also always sees the truth. So beside having a tendency towards evil, it also has the seed of goodness.

The first reaction of Hopkins's heart is crying, that is why he asks it 'why tears? is it?', meaning to say "Is crying the proper reaction to the event?", "Have you thought more deeply about your reaction?", or "Shall you cry, or give another reaction?".

The question in the last line forces the heart (which is personified) to make an even deeper reflection about the spiritual aspect of the event, which will give a sense of the intimate relationship between man and God. The study of the meaning of the wreck will be dealt with in the following stanza, which we will analyse.

Stanza 19

Sister, a sister calling
A master, her master and mine! -

Hopkins directs his attention to a sister, one of the passengers. The sister called the name of Christ, who is her God and also Hopkins's.

And the inboard seas run swirling and howling;
The rash smart slogging brine
Blinds her; ...

Her calling of Christ was cut short by the wild wave that ran over her; the salt water blinded her. But in spite of her physical inability to see things around her, her spiritual eye still functions.

...; but she that weather sees one thing, one;
Has one fetch in her : ...

So in that tumult the nun's heart sees one thing, that thing which is her last strength.

...: she rears herself to divine
Ears, and the call of the tall nun
To the men in the tops and and tackle rode over the
storms brawling.

What she did, in fact, was lifting herself up to divine heights. Her awareness that she has Christ in her has added a new meaning towards her human life, towards her physical destruction. And that spirit made her voice loud enough to overcome the noise of the sea so that she could be heard by the other people on the ship.

As we see, Hopkins studies the behaviour of a nun (the tall nun) and based on that reflection he tries to explain the personal relationship between man and God. In the following stanzas, he makes even deeper reflections upon the nun and her sufferings,

trying to know and explain how God works in man, using the language of the intellect.

Stanza 20

Sometimes we can see two opposite aspects from a single thing. This is the theme of Hopkins's monologue in this stanza.

She was first of a five and came
Of a coifed sisterhood.

These lines are a description of the nun. She is one among the five nuns who were drowned in the event of the wreck. They came from a certain convent in Deutschland.

Then Hopkins soon makes a reflection on the word 'Deutschland'. He says

(O, Deutschland, double a desperate name!
O world wide of its good!

meaning that the word 'Deutschland' at the same time may bring forth good and bad associations. The reason why it is so is explained in these lines

But Gertrude, Lily, and Luther, are two of a town,
Christ's lily and beast of the waste wood!

The word 'Deutschland' brings about a good association in the mind if we remember Gertrude who is a Catholic saint; on the contrary it will bring about a bad association if we remember Luther, the founder of the Protestant Church. It will also bring a good association if we remember the nun, and a bad one if we remember the unfortunate ship.

In the last two lines he comes to another pair of contrasting associations; now it concerns the story of the Creation.

From life's dawn it is drawn down,
Abel is Cain's brother and breast they have sucked the
same.

This means that such a contrast can be traced to the beginning of the world; since the first family lived on this planet.

Abel and Cain were Adam's sons who had opposite characters; one was good and the other was bad. The fact that they have drunk the same milk from their mother, Eve, does not necessarily cause them to have similar characters.

This is all about this stanza. Let's continue examining the next one.

Stanza 21

A comparison between God's judgement and human judgement is the subject of discussion in this stanza.

Loathed for a love men knew in them,
Banned by the land of their birth,
Rhine refused them, Thames would ruin them;

Surf, snow, river and earth
Gnashed: ...

Because of their Christianity the nuns had to leave their country. Their people did not like their religion. On their way abroad, they met with the accident, which killed them.

So it is as if all the world (nature and man) were hunters and they were the prey. Have they really done anything wrong to human beings? The positive or negative answer to that question will reflect on man's judgement, which actually is always bound to something. Man's judgement is never absolute, it is always relative, but God's judgement is different in its essence.

...: but thou art above, thou orion of light;
Thy unchallenging poising palms were weighing the worth,
God will judge things in His own way; He will always see the truth ('weighing the worth').

Thou martyr-master: in thy sight
Storm flakes were scroll-leaved flowers, lily showers -
sweet heaven was astrew in them.

In God's sight, suffering ('storm flakes') may mean something which has almost an opposite meaning, for 'scroll-leaved flowers' symbolizes a happy thing. It is clear that in His eyes the suffering will function as a way toward heaven or happiness.

Stanza 22

Five! the finding and sake
And cipher of suffering Christ.

Here Hopkins' meditation has reached a quite subtle degree. He meditates on the similarity between the number of the nuns, i.e. five, and the number of wounds Christ received on the cross.

So, if Christ through his suffering, symbolized by his five wounds, has saved human beings, the nuns' suffering might also be a kind of sacrifice for the achievement of a more valuable goal.

It seems that Hopkins will not judge or say what God means by allowing the suffering to the nuns. He dare not pretend to know God's plan with the nuns. Therefore in the rest of the stanza, he just makes a reflection upon the meaning of Christ's sacrifice for human beings, which has been described in the scriptures

Mark, the mark is of man's make
And the word of it sacrificed.

'Mark' is the mark of the wounds on Christ's body. Thus it is the symbol of Christ suffering. So the meaning of these lines is that Christ's sufferings were caused by man, and the whole event of the crucifixion was called a sacrifice.

But all of the happenings in Christ's life were ultimately planned by God. This is the message of these following lines.

But he scores it in scarlet himself on his own bespoken,
 Before-time-taken, dearest prize and priced-
 Stigma, signal, cinquefoil token
 For lettering of the lamb's fleece, ruddying of the rose-
 flakes.

God himself has planned the salvation in the beginning of the world
 ('Before-time-taken'); the salvation that has a culmination in
 Christ's sufferings on the cross ('stigma').

Stanza 23

The martyrdom of the nuns, members of the Franciscan congregation,
 adds to the greatness of St. Francis, the founder of the order.

Joy fall to thee, Father Francis,
 Drawn to the life that died;
 With the gnarls of the nails in thee, niche of the lance,
 his
 Lovescape crucified
 And seal of his seraph-arrival: ...

Father Francis also received wounds in his hands, feet, and heart;
 five altogether like Christ himself. This suffering widens the
 spread of Christianity and brings happiness to him. Therefore
 Hopkins greets him with saying "Joy fall to thee, Fr. Francis";
 meaning that he wishes happiness will come to the saint.

... and these thy daughters
 And five-lived and leaved favour and pride,
 Are sisterly sealed in wild waters,
 To bathe in his fall-gold mercies, to breathe in his all-
 fire glances.

Similarly these five nuns are the pride of the Franciscans,
 because they got their martyrdom in the wild sea, and are thus more
 similar to St. Francis and to Christ. In this way can they receive
 God's mercy and be happy in heaven.

Stanza 24

The awareness of his physical existence comes back to Hopkins
 when he says:

Away in the loveable west,
 On a pastoral forehead of Wales,
 I was under a roof here, I was at rest,

Hopkins suddenly becomes aware of the reality that he was safe in
 his room, in the middle of a beautiful pastoral scene.

His comfortable condition is in sharp contrast with the con-
 dition at the time of the wreck. He expresses it with

And they the prey of the gales;

This flash of awareness doesnot stay very long in Hopkins's
 mind, for in the following lines he goes on meditating about the
 meaning of the tall nun's reaction to her sufferings.

She to the black-about air, to the breaker, the thickly
Falling flakes, to the throng that catches and quails
Was calling 'O Christ, Christ, come quickly'

Confronted with the dreadful anger of the wind and sea that crushed her, the nun did not lose hope. Her belief in Christ went on living in her, in spite of the fact that physically she was approaching her end. That is what makes her call to Christ in that tumult.

Hopkins ends the stanza with the line

The cross to her she calls Christ to her, Christens her
wild-worst best.

meaning that her belief in Christ really saves her and lifts up her suffering to become a holy sacrifice for the Kingdom of God. She has been successful in bearing her cross by uniting her suffering with Christ's.

Stanza 25

Stanza 25, 26, and 27, are closely related. They express the most personal preparation of Hopkins's heart towards the realization of "God's touch", which is described in stanza 28.

The majesty! what did she mean?
Breathe, arch and original Breath.
Is it love in her of the being as her lover had been?
Breathe, body of lovely Death.

The question in the first and third lines expresses one possible motive for the nun to call to Christ. Is it true that the motive of her calling to Christ is her eagerness to become as holy as Christ; to conform her being to Christ's being?

If it is so,

They were else-minded then, altogether, the men
Woke thee with a we are perishing in the weather of
Gennesareth.

The men whom Hopkins refers to are the apostles in the Bible story of Matthew 8:2. Their motive of calling Christ during the storm on the lake of Gennesareth was fright. They were afraid of physical death, therefore they asked help from Christ.

The nun's motive of calling Christ is not fright of physical death, because the apostles were 'else-minded'.

Or is it that she cried for the crown then,
The keener to come at the comfort for feeling the
combating keen?

The message of those last lines is that second alternative. The alternative is that maybe the nun was eager to get the prize ('the crown') for martyrdom.

We have skipped the second and fourth lines of this stanza for the sake of continuity of the thought. Now it is time to note that those seemingly loosely connected phrases are an expression of

Hopkins's serious manner of asking those questions.

By saying "Breathe, ... etc.", Hopkins is trying to make contact with the Holy Spirit so that the Spirit might help him to find out the real motive of the nun's calling.

Thus these lines are very important in colouring the tone of the stanza. It gives a serious tone to the questions so that they cannot be considered as purely rhetorical.

Stanza 26

This stanza continues the reasoning of the former stanza. When in stanza 25, Hopkins guesses two alternatives, which in general mean that maybe the nun is eager to get the bliss of heaven by her becoming a martyr, here he puts forward the reason why he has come to such a conclusion:

For how to the heart's cheering
The down-dugged ground-hugged grey
Hovers off, the jay-blue heavens appearing
Of pied and peeled May!

The beautiful scenery of the sky in the morning, spotted here and there with clouds can contribute so much to the cheerfulness of the heart.

Blue-beating and hoary glow height; or night, still higher,
With belled fire and the moth-soft Milky Way,

The night's beauty also exerts power that makes the heart cheerful.

If the beauty of the morning and night, both of which are God's creations, can create happiness in the heart; it is inexpressible what the power of heaven itself can do to it. That is what Hopkins means by

What by your measure is the heaven of desire,
The treasure never eyesight got, nor was ever guessed
what for the hearing?

So the above reasoning is the foundation for the guess that maybe the nun is eager to obtain heaven's joy. Yet in the following stanza the opinion is changed.

Stanza 27

No, but it was not these
The jading and jar of the cart,
Time's tasking, it is fathers that asking for ease
Of the sodden-with-its sorrowing hearts,
Not danger, electrical horror; ...

After deeper consideration, Hopkins comes to a new conclusion, i.e. "no, but it was not these", meaning that the supposition that the nun is eager to get heavenly happiness is wrong.

The conclusion is based on his reflection that such a motive of searching for heaven's joy is more likely to arise from tiredness in old age (The jading and jar of the cart, / Time's tasking).

Her motive for calling to Christ is neither to run from danger nor sufferings.

...; then further it finds
The appealing of Passion is tenderer in prayer apart,
Moreover the supposition that her calling to Christ is because of her eagerness to become similar to Christ in her martyrdom is not very true, for man can simply get in touch with Christ's passion in prayer.

Other, I gather, in measure her mind's
Burden, in wind's burly and beat of endragon'd seas.

There is a certain motive, a certain drive, in her mind which Hopkins cannot express. In the midst of these storms and wild waves, there is something else touching her mind. This is inexpressible in the language of the intellect.

Stanza 28

This is also a very important stanza for here Hopkins expresses the feel of the 'touching finger of God' to the human heart. The language is not clear but in this stanza he has put all his effort to show to the readers his deepest feeling in the best way he can.

But how shall I ... make me room there
Reach me a ... Fancy, come faster -
Strike you the sight of it? look at it loom there,
Thing that she ... there then!

After saying that there must be a unique motive in the nun's mind at the end of stanza 27 ("Other, I gather, in her mind's burden") Hopkins feels that he will not be able to express what he knows about the motive of the nun, yet his heart feels it. The lines above are incomplete sentences, all of which express the difficulties Hopkins is trying to overcome in telling his readers exactly what the nun sees with her heart's eye; the thing that has possessed her, and that Hopkins, at last, also sees.

All of the subtle forces giving the nun spiritual strength in her physical destruction, finally are summed up in

... there then! The Master
Ipse, the only one, Christ, King, Head:

It can be sensed that Hopkins's concluding expression: "Christ, King, Head" has a tone of generalization. What I mean is that those three words clearly do not express completely all that Hopkins wants to tell us. They are symbols, representing deep spiritual meanings. Hopkins's heart is full of the spiritual image of Christ, but these words are the only simple words he can utter. They are the top of the intellectual expression.

So we should forego our intellectual devices in catching what he means, and start using our heart's ear, or spiritual eyes, to grasp the content of his discourse in those lines. But for the sake of simplicity, let us just refer to that very subtle spirit as 'Christ', as Hopkins does.

In the rest of the stanza, Hopkins tells us what Christ will do to her, i.e.

He was to cure the extremity where he had cast her;
meaning that Christ will end her suffering. This is not to say that Christ will save her, or put an end to the storm, or organize other kinds of physical rescue, but it means that He will enter her heart and give new spirit to her so that she can overcome the physical sufferings with her spiritual strength.

In the last two lines are Hopkins's wishes towards the coming of Christ.

Do deal, lord it with living and dead;
Let him ride, her pride, in his triumph, despatch and
have done with his doom there

Hopkins wishes that Christ will come over the spirit of the nun, become her master, stop her sufferings, and give her what she wants.

Stanza 29

Here Hopkins describes the condition of the nun after Christ's entranced into her soul.

Ah! there was a heart right!
There was single eye.

This means that the nun now is full of Christ's spirit; or, like the description in Luke 11:34 (... when your eye is single, your whole body is also full of light; ...).

Read the unshapeable shock night
And knew the who and the why
Wording it how but by him that present and past,
Heaven and earth are word of, worded by? -

Those lines mean that having Christ's spirit in her, the nun can see the world in a different way from the way she saw it before; thus the world (meaning the people, the suffering, etc.) has a new meaning to her.

How did she see the world then? Of course she saw it as the expression of God as Christ did because she had been united with him.

The Simon Peter of a soul! to the blast
Tarpeian-fast, but a blow beacon of light.

Thus the soul of the nun, which has been united to Christ's spirit, will shine out Christ's love to all human beings, like the Church itself, built on the rock, symbolized by Simon Peter.

Stanza 30

In this stanza, Hopkins tries to imagine how Christ will accept the nun's willingness to submit herself to the 'gospel proffer', to the 'principle' of Christianity, i.e. Christ himself

Jesu, heart's light
 Jesu, maid's son,
 What was the feast followed the night
 Thou hadst glory of this nun? -
 Feast of the one woman without stain.

In the first line, Hopkins calls Jesus the 'heart's light' referring to what He will do to human soul, i.e. giving light or happiness. Then in the second line, he calls Him the 'maid's son'. The emphasis here is on the fact that He was born from a woman without sin; a woman who had an open-heartedness towards God like the nun's attitude.

Moreover the wreck of the 'Deutschland' happened on December 7, one day before the feast of the Immaculate Conception of Our Lady. This fact seems to have arisen an association between those two events.

He asks Jesus whether He will also glorify the nun as He once glorified Our Lady. The tone of the stanza will give us a sense that Hopkins has a strong expectation that the nun will receive such glory from God for he says in these following lines

For so conceive; so to conceive thee is done;
 But here was a heart-throe, birth of a brain,
 Word, that heard and kept thee and uttered thee outright.

meaning that Hopkins sees a similarity between the relationship of God with Our Lady and of God with the nun, namely whereas Mary bore Christ through physical suffering, the nun bore Christ through mental suffering ('heart-throe'). Her strong belief in Christ, proved by her willingness to unite herself with Christ in times of suffering, is like words said to human beings, witnessing Christ's salvation for all men.

Stanza 31

When in the previous stanzas Hopkins concentrates on the nun, here he begins to spread his attention towards the other passengers. The shift of attention from personal scope (the nun) to general scope (other passengers) also signifies the meaning of the salvation. Christ's salvation is not for certain people only but for all human beings.

Well, she has thee for the pain, for the
 Patience; but pity of the rest of them!
 Heart, go and bleed at a bitterer vein for the
 Comfortless unconfessed of them
 No not un comforted: ...

The meaning is that while the nun can unite herself to Christ through her pain and patience, which thus makes her able to enjoy God's bliss, the other passengers are not like her.

They did not unite themselves with Christ in their sufferings. They did not change their minds from the human way of thinking into Christ's way of thinking.

Therefore they must be the more pitied, especially not for their physical sufferings but for their mental sufferings. The biggest suffering they must bear actually is their own stubborn hearts, which remain so even till the time of their death.

The rest of the stanza, which runs

....: lovely-felicitous Providence
Finger of a tender of, O of a feathery delicacy, the
breast of the
Maiden could obey so, be a bell to, ring of it, and
Startle the poor sheep bag! is the ship wrack then
a harvest, does tempest carry the grain for thee?

means that Hopkins wishes that God's care will save those other passengers. The sufferings of the nuns, Hopkins wishes, will be like a bell calling them back to Christ. He hopes that by witnessing how the nun faced her suffering, how she called Christ in her critical moment, the other people will also remember Christ, unite themselves with him, and by so doing, will also get heavenly joy like the nuns.

If things happened in that way, the shipwreck would be like a harvest for the Kingdom of God.

Stanza 32

Though it seems long, this stanza has only one discourse namely that the poet approaching the end of the poem realizes the power of God as immanent in nature.

In the first half of the stanza

I admire thee, master of the tides,
Of the Yore-flood, of the year's fall;
The recurb and the recovery of the gulf's sides,
The girth of it and the wharf of it and the wall;

the power of God is said to be behind the wildness of the sea.

And in the second half,

Stanching and quenching ocean of a motionable mind;
Ground of being, and granite of it: past all
Grasp God, throned behind
Death with a sovereignty that heeds but hides, bodes but
abides:

the power of God is said to embrace men's life, death, and his being.

The important point expressed in this stanza is the explanation of the relationship between God's power and man's free will.

God's power is much superior to human power ('heed') but it does not force its way through ('hides'). It knows all about the future of a man ('bodes') but it holds itself from interference ('abides') unless man himself freely open his heart to Him.³¹

This kind of relationship is unique, and in sharp contrast with the relationship between God and nature described in the first half of the stanza. There in the nature-God relationship, God's power simply works behind it, leaving out the question of nature's willingness to accept it or not, which in fact nature does not have.

Stanza 33

Christ's love for human beings is the subject of discussion in this stanza. Hopkins says that

With a mercy that outrides
The all of water

Christ is

..., an ark
For the listener; ...

meaning the one who gives protection to those who follow him.

By saying that Christ is also an 'ark'

...; for the lingerer with a love glides
Lower than death and the dark;

Hopkins means that Christ's love also reaches those who are in purgatory.³²

Christ is also a source of inspiration for those who recognize him at the very moment of their death. That is what Hopkins means by saying that Christ is

A vein for the visiting of the past prayer, pent in prison
The last breath penitent spirits

The last line of

... - the uttermost mark
Our passion-plunged giant risen
The Christ of the Father compassionate, fetched in the
storm of his strides.

are expressing that Christ also met sufferings in his life.

Stanza 34

The physical and spiritual coming of Christ to this world is the subject discussed in this stanza.

³¹W.H.Gardner, Poems and Prose of Gerard Manley Hopkins (Harmondsworth, 1954), p.219.

³²W.H.Gardner, Poems and Prose, p.219

New burn, new born to the world,
 Double-nature name,
 The heaven-flung, heart-fleshed, maiden-furled
 Miracle-in-Mary-of-flame,
 Mid numbered He in three of the thunder-throne:

Those lines tell us about how Christ came into Mary's body through the miracle of the Holy Ghost and how He is now burning in the soul of the Christians.

Not a dooms-day dazzle in his coming nor dark as he came;
 Kind, but royally reclaiming his own;
 A released shower, let flash to the shire, not a lightning
 of fire hard-hurled.

These lines illustrate the way Christ comes into someone's life. His influence is not frightening nor does it bring about the air of violence.

Instead, his influence comes like a King who graciously steps into the heart of a man; or like a shower coming down upon the land.

Stanza 35

This very last stanza is the pure expression of Hopkins's wish an invocation to the nun.

Dame, at our deer
 Drowned, and among our sheals,
 Remember us in the reards, the heaven-haven of the Reward:

He wishes that the nun, who is supposed to have achieved heaven's joy, will pray for her fellow Christians in England so that they can also have such joy.

Our King back, oh, upon English souls!

Hopkins also wishes that Christianity, especially Catholicism, will grow more prosperously on English soil.

The rest of the stanza contains a salute towards Christ but when in the former part it is general, here the salute is given personally.

Let him easter in us, be a dayspring to the dimness of us,
 be a crimson-cresseted east,
 More brightening her, rare-dear Britain, as his reign rolls,
 Pride, rose, prince, here of us, high-priest,
 Our hearts' charity's hearth's fire, our thoughts'
 chivalry's throng's Lord.

Hopkins wishes that Christ's spirit will be in the human heart so that it will cheer the heart whenever it is gloomy ('a dayspring to the dimness of us;'). Christ spirit should be mastering both the mind and body of man (cf. the last line).