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A Study of The Revolt In Modern American Literature As Seen In The Novel, Poetry, And Prose Fiction

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A STUDY OF THE HERO IN MODERN AMERICAN LITERATURE
As Seen In
THE NOVEL, POETRY, AND PROSE FICTION

Thesis presented to the Graduate Faculty of the
Fort Hays Kansas State College in partial fulfillment of the re-
quirements for the degree of Master of Science, by

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Jan 29, 1932

A STUDY OF THE REVOLT IN MODERN AMERICAN LITERATURE
As Seen In
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by

Devie Viola Ross

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INTRODUCTION

Since the earliest time that the human mind has been known to function it has played with two opposite conceptions---all is fixed---all is changing. These two conceptions, affording the bases for opposing schools in philosophy and politics and supplying direction for the social forces of conservatism and radicalism, have naturally influenced our interpretation and theories of literature.

To the historian or the empiricist literature must appear as a form of human activity which is indeed continuous but ever changing. He traces it back to the earliest days of human intercourse, and finds its beginnings in the songs and rituals of primitive tribes. All through the silent centuries of the middle ages, there had been, here and there, in monasteries and Cathedral Schools, isolated studies of pre-Christian books. Being in the realm of the Roman Church, they studied mainly Latin writers, and Virgil in particular enjoyed a singular immortality. The Greeks, too, were never quite forgotten. There was an active center of Greek ideas in the capital of the Eastern Empire. But the most vigorous intellectual life in the West, until the thirteenth century, was unmistakably that sustained by the Mohammedan power in Spain, which cultivated all the arts and sciences, and restored to Europe something of the Greek philosophy which it had forgotten. We must not neglect to mention the fact that to the Arabs of that period we owe not only several advances in mathematics and medical science, but the knowledge of Aristotle which was to play a very large part in the development of the scholastic philosophy and all that it involved.

Toward the close of the Middle Ages, even before Dante's life at the opening of the fourteenth century, two great movements had taken place which did much to quicken smouldering fires and incite bolder thinking and arouse further study. These were the Crusades and the Universities. Each of these great movements in a different way made Europe a debtor to the East, the Universities for a large part of their science, the Crusaders for half their chivalry. Each movement, while from one point of view a culmination of the Catholic Feudal spirit, was in another sense the beginning of a new age, for each brought with it the seeds both of decay and of new growth.

The first step necessary for the Western Mind, about to enter on the period of its great expansion was to realize that there was a world in space, outside the area which the church had guarded and cultivated for a thousand years. The study of the ancients, which the universities encouraged, revealed the world of history: the Crusades were the first general step towards the discovery of New Worlds, east and west. These were the turning points of the Renaissance. One was the method of study, the other the method of travel, then, as now, the two unequalled agents for widening the mind.

Thus the craving for learning was spread to Europe----Germany, France, and England----and from England, our mother country, this new learning was carried to America.

It has been necessary to go back to the dark ages for the beginning of this study to point out the fact that change is not necessarily a modern thing. With every political and economic change there has come a corresponding change in literature.

At the close of the War for Independence America was too busy to devote much time to literature for a while, but after the close of

the War of 1812 America made her complete break with England and began the production of literature distinctly her own. American literature has been an outgrowth of the incoming into America of certain old-world ideals and institutions, and the subjection of those ideals and institutions to the pressure of a new environment, from which resulted the overthrow of the principles of monarchy and aristocracy, and the setting up of principles of republicanism. "Our literature has not been at all like that of most other nations: it has not been a steady growth from within outward; it has been rather the reverse. Our literature is a thing of shreds and patches."¹

The America that came into being after the War of 1812 was new, full of youthful optimism, shifting, restless, eager to better itself, bent on finding easier roads to wealth than the plodding path of natural increase. Human nature was thought of as being acquisitive, and thinking acquisitiveness a cardinal virtue, it set out to inquire what opportunities awaited it in the unexploited resources of the continent. The cautious ways of the earlier generations were no longer up to date. Things were changing; an immigration was pouring in from war-torn Europe; wild lands were daily coming on the market. The days of realism were swiftly passing and the spirit of romance was dawning. Indeed economic romance at that time was more imperious in its demands than literary romance. Dreams followed objective desires, and in the America of those days of new beginnings the desires of diverse economic groups conducted straight to antagonistic imperialism.

But this new life ushered in by economic change was eco-

¹-Norman Foerster, et al. "The Reinterpretation of American Literature," page 22.

ductive to the production of literature. And we shall see that American literature has had its periods of Humanism, Realism, Romanticism and Socio-Humanism. And what the future holds we can only predict.

PART I

Historical Background

I. A Revolt from Romanism to Classicism.

The Renaissance, a period from about the eighth century to the fifteenth century was a period of revival of art, of literature, of philosophy, of language, of theology, of science, of politics and of law. It was a period of the quickening of the mind, of the rise of intellectual liberty, of the movement of humanity forward. This constitutes the renaissance, the rediscovery of the human mind.

The Renaissance had its beginning in Italy. Here the memory of classical antiquity had never died out. The mediæval mind of Florentine Dante (1265-1321), though thoroughly scholastic and Catholic, was at the same time steeped in the culture of ancient Rome. From Dante to Petrarch is a natural transition that cannot be called a rebirth of ancient ideas and ideals.

The revival of learning in Italy is generally assigned to Petrarch. He is sometimes depicted as an out and out humanist, who ignored a future life and made over toward to a godless expression and gratification of self. However, history tells us that Petrarch was ever devoted to the church and its doctrines, even in the days of wildest enthusiasm for the humanistic culture of Rome and Greece.

It is obvious that Italian literature owed little at the outset to the Revival of Learning. Dante's "Divine Comedy," Petrarch's "Canzoniere," and Boccaccio's "Decameron," were works of monumental art, deriving neither form nor inspiration immediately from the classics but applying the originality of Italian genius to matter drawn from previous mediæval sources. Dante showed both in his epic poem and his lyrics that he had not abandoned the sphere of contemporary thought. These three works of art proved that,

though Italy came late into the realm of literature, her action was destined to be decisive and alternative by the introduction of a new spirit, a finer and more positive grasp on life and art. Petrarch and Boccaccio, though they both held the mediæval doctrine that literature should teach some obscure truth beneath a veil of fiction, differed from Dante in this, that their poetry and prose in the vernacular abandoned both allegory and symbol. In their practice they ignored their theory. "The Canzoniere" and the "Decameron" distinguished themselves from mediæval literature, not by any return to classical precedents, but by free self-conscious handling of human nature. So much had to be promised in order to make it clear in what relation humanism stood to the Renaissance since the Italian work of Dante, Petrarch and Boccaccio is sufficient to indicate the re-birth of the spirit after ages of apparent deadness. Had the Revival of Learning not intervened, it is probable that the vigorous efforts of these writers alone would have inaugurated a new age of European culture. Yet, while noting this reservation of judgment, it must also be remarked that all three felt themselves under some peculiar obligation to the classics. Giovanni Villani, the first chronicler, who used Italian for the compilation of a methodical history, tells us how he was compelled to write by gazing on the ruins of Rome, and thinking of the vanished greatness of the Latin race. We have, therefore, to recognize that the four greatest writers of the period, when the Revival of Learning and the idea of Humanism was yet in its cradle, each after his own fashion acknowledged the vivifying touch upon his spirit of the antique genius.

The fascination of pure study was so powerful that during the fifteenth century we have before our eyes the spectacle of this great nation deviating from the course of development begun in poetry by Dante and

Petrarch, in prose by Boccaccio and Villani, into channels of scholarship and antiquarian research. At the close of the century the knowledge of Greece and Rome had been re-appropriated and placed beyond the possibility of destruction; the chasm between the old and the new world had been bridged; mediæval modes of thinking and discussing had been superseded; the staple of education, the common culture which had brought all Europe into intellectual agreement, was already in existence. Humanism was now an actuality.

Perhaps the most important branch of the Revival of Learning is that which is called humanism or the revival of the study of the masterpieces of Greek and Latin literature. The promoters of this movement held that the study of the classics or "litteræ humaniores," is the best humanising agent. Among the important leaders of this movement we find the names of Roger Bacon, Albert Magus, and Pope Sylvester, these men lent their influence to the development of learning in Europe.

Dante was not a humanist, but he may be said to have been the forerunner of the Italian humanists, for he furnished the inspiration to Petrarch, the so-called founder of humanism. His masterpiece, "Divine Comedy," was well received throughout all Italy, and gave an impulse to learning in many ways.

Petrarch was the natural successor of Dante. The latter immortalized the past; the former invoked the spirit of the future. Petrarch was a sentimentalist. But he was bold in his expression of the full and free play of the intellect, in his denunciation of formalism and slavery to tradition. While he was inconsistent in many ways, his life may be summed up as a bold remonstrance against the binding influences of tradi-

tion and an enthusiasm for something new. His influence was especially felt by those who followed him, and his enthusiasm was felt throughout the entire revival.

But it remained for Boccaccio, who was a more practical turn of mind than Petrarch, to systematize the classical knowledge of antiquity. If Petrarch was an enthusiastic collector, Boccaccio was a practical worker. His contributions to learning were great, and his turn towards naturalism was of immense value in the foundation of modern literature.

The spirit of free inquiry that inspired the revival of classical learning found brilliant expression in the person of Erasmus, who was, if not the greatest scholar, at all events the greatest man of letters of the Renaissance.

From Italy the new learning had already spread northwest beyond the Alps, borne to Paris by the French invaders of Italy, and to Germany and Flanders along commercial highways of the Rhine. It struck root in Britain and when, in 1499, Erasmus's English friends brought him on his visit to that country he was welcomed by a distinguished circle of kindred minds. In the reign of Henry VII Grocyne, Linaere, and Colet had journeyed to Italy to drink at the headwaters of humanism. The new spirit had taken root among the traders of London, the home of Colet and More, where Grocyne held a living, and classical studies were a fashionable pastime at the court. The Humanism of Erasmus was ever free from formalism. He lived at the height of the crisis, on the high dividing land from which the waters were flowing rapidly into the ocean of modern life; he could not discern all the channels which that flood would take, though he knew the main current and faced the future.

In 1516 Sir Thomas More published his "Utopia," which was the spirit of the literary Renaissance at its best, critical and awake, stimulated by new discoveries but rather looking back to Plato, as Bacon's "Utopia" of a hundred years later looks forward to the future and triumph of modern science.

By 1600 we have ushered in an age of new life and promise for the future. The greatness of the old world had been discovered, and new wealth, new continents, new ideas were crowding in, which raised high hopes and pointed forward to a modern world which might equal, and in power and size must surpass, the glory of the old.

The year 1600 is a landmark in Shakespeare's life, nearer to his maturity than to his youth, but midway in his richest harvest time. He, more than any one, reflects all that was best in that age of ardent feelings, vigorous life, and agitating thought; and he transmutes all into pure gold of immortal and universal art. He gives us the enthusiasm without the party strife, movement and action without destruction, a mind open to the new advance, but with fullest sympathy for all the past. Shakespeare summed up for us the spirit of the Renaissance at its height. Shakespeare's greatest contemporary is the best herald of the coming age. For Bacon, too, stands exactly on the dividing line between the centuries, and while he shares to the full the enthusiasm and the sense of power which the age of discovery had inspired in western Europe, he adds to these the fundamental traits which distinguish the great founders of modern science in the seventeenth century.

Humanism was slow in establishing itself in England. The national language was yet immature. Prose lacked a strong tradition and glorious precedents, the best humanists, More and Bacon, both wrote in Latin. But

from 1490 to about 1580, when a number of religious quarrels began, there was in England an efflorescence of humanism which was pure, serene, and full of hope.

Humanism was not to remain long without other admixture. Hardly had it begun to influence literature when it was crossed and opposed by the religious Reformation, the Renaissance reached England and in 1578 begins the period known in English literature as the Elizabethan Age. The rich soil of literature was fertilized by a deep layer of translations. Many of these translations formed current reading and some became as popular as the best writings of English authors. Many of the writers of this period followed the beaten tracks; but there was one, at least, who might be called a pioneer. Perhaps there was no one author whose influence was felt by so great a number of his countrymen down to the Restoration as Ben Jonson. The learned Ben Jonson translated more than he invented. He was deeply steeped in the humanism of his generation; yet it was through his influence that Neo-classicism was introduced into English poetry of the seventeenth century. Many times Jonson makes his readers feel that they are on the road to Dryden.

The period from 1688-1689 is filled with political and religious strife of the reign of Charles I and the triumph of Puritanism. The Restoration marks a decisive birth of the new world. From a moral and literary point of view the date of development of English literature is from 1689. The Restoration coincides with one of the most notable changes in the inner being of the English soul. At this period, the political and social life, and the manners are undergoing a process of transformation.

From the earliest time of the Elizabethan period, English literature had depended for its sustenance on the passionate life of imagination.

It represented a rich flowering of romantic inspiration. From 1600 to 1660 there is a gradual change in the tone of the literature as well as in the temperament of writers. On the one hand, thought becomes more exacting, more labored, on the other, the search for emotion is now more complicated or overstrained.

The literature of the Elizabethan period died because the inner resources that had fed it became exhausted; and in its decadence there is recognizable the embryo of the literature of reason which must necessarily replace it. In Dryden we recognize the last and greatest of the transitional poets, who link up the Renaissance with the classical age. In his temperament, Nature had laid the safest seeds of the literature of reason and order which is slowly developing: the need for clarity, proportion and definite rule, the architectural instinct, the mind of logic, the demand for a definite rhythm, for a symmetrical and distant cadence; he is of his time, and yet we must say that he outpaces it, guiding it towards the future. In the school of the ancient and modern literary artists he catches the desire and adopts the habit of refinement in taste; and under the influence of them his verse, his lyricism and his dramatic art tend towards an orthodox classicism.

The reign of William III (1688-1702) forms the complete transition in literature from Humanism to Classicism.

II. Revolt from Classicism to Romanticism.

There can be no definite line of demarcation drawn for the different periods of literature because of the fact that as one type of literature ceases to meet the demands of readers and authors a new type of literature begins to develop. This is usually due to changing political, social and economic situations, and the old period gradually gives way to the new.

The age of classicism we usually think of as extending over a period from 1660 to the latter part of the eighteenth century. However, some critics say that classicism does not really begin until the death of Dryden in 1700, and lasted until the publication of Wordsworth's "Lyrical Ballads" (1790).

The general traits of classicism originated out of those of the Restoration. People were seeking balance and stability, and writers especially were seeking fixed standards---rules and laws to guide them and as a result we have classicism.

The classicists held that a study of the best works of the ancients would disclose the necessary guiding rules. No style that did not conform closely to these rules was considered good. Horace, seen through the French spectacles, was the classical author most copied by this school. His "Epistles" and "Satires" were considered models. The motto of the Classicists was polished regularity. Pope struck the keynote of the age when he said:

"True wit is nature to advantage dress'd
What oft was thought, but ne'er so well express'd." 2.

These two lines show the form of the "riming couplet" which the classical poets adopted. The classicists taught the saving grace of style, the need of restraint, balance, clearness, common sense. Classicism in England

2. "Essay on Criticism" lines 297, 298.

rarely shows itself in a state of absolute purity.

The thing that permitted classicism to develop freely was the sobered atmosphere of the time of Queen Anne, with its partial and as yet timid resumption of middle-class culture and emotional life, yet on the other hand, it also permitted the bold negative spirit in thought or in manners to go just as far through other domains as in the reckless days of the Restoration. It might be said that it is in this sense that the work of Addison and Steele is at the very center of the final advent of classicism; with them, a rational artistic impulse, and the desire for a benevolent, slightly sentimental correctness in behavior, approach so closely to each other as to enter into intimate contact.

Classicism reassured the vital instincts of the middle-classes who were in positions of control, because it stood for a hierarchy, an equilibrium; these classes were reassured in accepting it, because at the same time it succeeded in introducing a provisional and superficial, but more becoming decency and fitness, into the life and feelings of society.

One of the outstanding writers of this period is Alexander Pope, whose writings were satirical, critical, and often become of a polemical or argumentative nature. It is Pope who establishes in England the social prestige of the man of letters and in his work we find a shining example of what care for perfection and style can be. He is the poet who best expresses the classical spirit of the eighteenth century. He expresses his ideas in perfect form, and embodies them in classical couplets, sometimes styled "rocking horse meter"; but he shows no power of fathoming the emotional depths of the soul.

In his "Essay on Criticism" we find the crowning efforts of

Pope's early poems. Here one feels that he has found his new manner. The search and expression of rules and laws, the intellectual activity which judges, values or legislates, which combines principles or distinguishes shades, such is the kind of poetry best adapted to the thought and creative impulse of the classicism of 1710. The gem of this work is in a theory of criticism, of its maxims and canons.

If we study the best passages in Pope's "Essay on Man," "Epistles and Satires" and "Dunciad" we will find the summit of his art in the fullness of its maturity; they are the summit of English classical poetry.

Classical poetry, viewed as a whole, is rational in its inspiration. The themes it treats, are, as a result, most often of an abstract nature; or at least, the development which is given them inclines to abstraction. The age of classicism broadens and intensifies the practice of free rational enquiry, which the Restoration was able to apply only in a rather incomplete way. The effort of critical thought is at the very heart of this age.

Passing from the field of poetry to that of prose, there stretches a vast domain in which polemical intelligence gives itself fuller scope. As we pass from the poets to the polemicists of Reason, we have the impression of remaining in the same literary and moral plane; from the first to the second, there is continuity and imperceptible change. With prose, of course, the care of the form is no longer paramount, nor is it reinforced by the strict laws of regular measure. The thought is centered on the discussion and solution of the problem; art is a superadded need. Among the most noted prose writers of this age we find the names of Swift, DeFoe, Addison and Steele. So far as point of time is concerned DeFoe,

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Addison and Steele belong to the very first years of the classical period, but the moral and social tendencies which they represent enter into the very constitution of classicism. The movement of which they are the heralds appears to adapt itself quite serenely to the existing frame, and prepares a vast development which will go on broadening out through the second half of the century. In fact these three writers are much more solidly connected with Richardson psychologically than with Pope and Swift. And after Richardson, middle-class literature, of which they mark the advent, will gradually become one of the indirect causes of Romanticism.

The middle-class people in England are getting more and more in power and, for the most part, the writers of this particular period belong to that class, therefore, we find a tendency toward a change in literature, the onward movement is toward Romanticism, the object of which was to free men from oppression by the aristocracy and to restore to them their natural rights.

Swift is classed as the greatest writer of the classical age by the force of his genius; the concern for art and the care of form are not in his case the essential motive of creation. Swift is also one of the great masters of English prose. His main object was to be a polemist. He is said to have carried the rational criticism of values to a point where it menaced and impaired the very reasons to live.

Addison and Steele, two names that are inseparable in literature, played an important part in the social life of the middle-class which will be gradually altered through their influence. The task of these two men is to reconcile two opposite tendencies---the aristocratic temper and the Puritan spirit---to moralize refinement and refine morality.

Dr. Samuel Johnson represents the intellectualized, superior type of the middle-class citizens who are claiming and are already conquering the moral control of society. Johnson's influence is social and moral just as much as literary. Some critics say that he may have retarded somewhat the evolution of literature. He represents eminently the persistence of classical dogma, he is a temporary fusion, which seems decisive and final, of morality with the taste for solid and regular artistic scales. Belief in rules with him comes so near to the religious conscience as to be indistinguishable from it any more. He is the central figure in an age of bourgeois classicism. The poets which belong to the age of Johnson, however, are the poets of the transition.

The period from 1770-1798 is known as the period of "the awakening of the imagination," or the Pre-Romantic period. These years are naturally linked with those which have just preceded them; the course of the long transition which is finally to lead to Romanticism, they form, as it were, a second stage, and thus a continuation of the first.

Among the writers of the transition period are Blake, Burns, Gray, Goldsmith and many others, but the two whose names stand at the threshold and really usher in the new literature are Coleridge and Wordsworth. After the great upheaval caused by the transformation of industry, after the religious awakening of Methodism and evangelism, the decisive shock to thought comes with the French Revolution. It is legitimate enough to date the beginning of this new type of literature from the publication of the anonymous work (1798) which united the young talents of Wordsworth and Coleridge. It marked very distinctly the two new streams of influence which were to enrich English poetry throughout the nineteenth century, and it came to be regarded as one of the most impor-

tant events in the history of literature, although it attracted little attention at the time.

The Romantic spirit can be defined as an accentuated predominance of life, provoked or directed by the exercise of the imagination. Intense emotion together with an intense display of imagination, such is the frame of mind which supports and feeds the new literature.

We find best examples of true Romanticism in Wordsworth's "Lyrical Ballads," in which Coleridge published "The Ancient Mariner," "The Prelude" and Coleridge's "Biographia Literaria."

Wordsworth's most obvious service to English poetry was to free it from the bondage of the artificial diction which the school of Pope received as a tradition and hardened into a debt for opening their minds to truer and deeper relations with Nature, and their hearts to sympathy with simple things and simple people. But his greatest gift was neither a theory of diction nor a system of philosophy, but the union of high imaginative powers with rare faculty of expression, which enabled him to enrich English poetry with priceless treasures.

The production of Lyrical Ballads by Wordsworth and Coleridge was somewhat of an experiment. They had agreed that the poetry of Pope and his followers could not be called poetry. They objected to its theme, its "rules" and its diction. They decided that their production should have two themes, which they thought to be the source of all true poetry: the poetry of simple objects and aspects of nature, and the poetry of the supernatural. Wordsworth was to give something of the mystery and charm of the unseen world to his treatment of nature; Coleridge was to make the supernatural seem natural. Examples of their method are "Tintern Abbey,"

by Wordsworth, and Coleridge's "Ancient Mariner."

Wordsworth was more realistic than Coleridge. His influence upon nineteenth century literature is incalculably widespread: he revealed and exemplified new ways of observing nature and human life, making both more fascinating; and scores of authors followed his example. The short tales of Wordsworth tend to stir up emotions of the soul which open itself freely to the mysterious reverberating echo of the simplest lessons of life. Suggestion is the real aim of his poetry, and the means it employs are at bottom of the same order as those which symbolism will utilize at a later date. In appearance, his poetry is summed up in an exact faithfulness to reality. With uncompromising bluntness in the "Lyrical Ballads" it throws up in a full light the meaner traits of a suffering humanity. The poetry of Wordsworth is based upon an effort to convey by simple means the impression of intensity. In 1800 Wordsworth published a second edition of "Lyrical Ballads" containing two volumes and including a "Preface to Later Issues of 'Lyrical Ballads'." In the "Preface" Wordsworth wrote: "All good poetry is the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings." This statement alone is the opposite of the classical school.

At the peak of Romanticism as a prose writer stands Matthew Arnold. While his mission was that of criticism, he has exercised a very wide influence on the literature of his age and that which follows. He has been in the broadest sense the preacher of the doctrine of intellectual culture, to a civilization mainly satisfied with the success of empirical ambitions. His poetry belongs to the middle of the century, that season of doubt, perplexity, and unrest, when the strife between the church and science was bitterest and each tried to overthrow the other. The impres-

sion that Arnold has left upon literature is mainly that of a keen, brilliant intellect. In his poetry there is more emotion than in his prose.

Again we find writers on the search for balance. The age of Romanticism has reached its zenith, and we have a reaction of idealism. In this group we find Carlyle. He believes that he is, in his main purpose and effort, the enemy and destroyer of Romanticism. The writers that fall in the period from 1798-1837 really are known as idealistic writers, belonging to the Victorian age. Carlyle belonged in this group. His views were those of one who was educated in the Puritan tradition of conscientiousness of conduct, sincerity of speech, and literal acceptance of Biblical Christianity. His "Essays" were written in a style of his own invention. He believed in simplicity yet he possessed the traits of a true Romanticist. His works are *Essays and Criticisms*.

As Romanticism now is on the decline in Europe we shall turn to the Romanticists in America and study the various changes and revolts in the literature of the United States.

III. Transition to America

We have seen that all down through time man has constantly struggled with the different forces to keep himself in a state of equilibrium with things about him. And as a result of many such struggles there has been established in the United States a literature which is distinctly her own. It is true our literature has had many influences, many of which may still be felt today, but that does not make it any the less true that our literature is just as much American as English, French, or German literature is English, French, or German.

American literature has had its own special conditions of development and its own special tendencies arising from these conditions. We shall conceive of our literature as having developed in terms of the frontier spirit, the Puritan tradition, romanticism, and realism.

As in England, the great development of literature during the middle years of the nineteenth century was closely connected with the national life. Chartism, the distresses caused by the Industrial Revolution, the enormous growth of cities and the development of wage-slavery, the stimulus supplied by the advance of science, presented in England problems that seemingly differed from such American problems as the relations of the states to the national government, the menace of slavery, and the pains incident to tremendous growth in population and territory. In America, as in England, however, the presence of acute problems of everyday life brought the intellectual activity that is one prerequisite to literature. In one respect, indeed, America had an immense advantage. Little remained for exploration in England, except the perennial changes in human life, but in the United States all was new. Thoreau could explore the waters and

shores of Walden Pond and discover a new world. In rural New England Whittier found materials for American idyls like the Scottish idyls of Burns, while in his poems of slavery there is the passionate indignation that we find in Burns' poems on democracy and the rights of man. And a little later the theme suggested by Bryant's "The Prairies" and by Cooper's epic of frontier life, gained fuller interpretation in the poetry and prose of Walt Whitman.

For our study of the revolt in modern American literature we shall briefly review, beginning with the American Romancers. Fortunately, when America was free enough from ax and rifle to sit down to the desk, the time in England was one of high tide. The foundations of the American nation were built on the idealism concerning the rights of man to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness that we have already noted as one aspect of English romanticism. In early American poetry and prose we find other characteristics of the movement. The romances of Charles Brockden Brown, such as "Wieland" and "Arthur Mervyn," which were written in Philadelphia between 1798 and 1801, unite realism with certain "Gothic" elements. These romances show a striking change from the American fiction which had preceded them. They are no longer didactic and sentimental, but Gothic or romantic. Working under English influence, Brown gave to America her first great Gothic romances. He gave his romances a definite, American flavor by using "the incidents of Indian hostility and the perils of the Western wilderness," so states Brown in his prefatory note "To the Public" in "Edgar Huntley." Brown's place in the history of fiction is due to the fact that he introduced the Gothic romance to American literature. He loved to subject the weird, the morbid, the terrible, to a psychological analysis. In this respect he suggests Hawthorne, although

there are more points of difference than of likeness between him and the great New England romancer. In weird subject matter, but not in artistic ability, he reminds us of Poe.

The work of Washington Irving is even more definitely romantic, for although much has been made of his resemblance to Addison in style, his true genius was not that of the period of Addison and Pope. He loved mediæval legend, ballads, and romances. He was a master of the personal essay and the short narrative, with a style distinguished for its grace, its beauty, and its variety. His romantic love of the mediæval comes out in his desire to supply the beautiful regions of Westchester and the Hudson River country with such traditions as increased the charm of English scenes.

These writers are only the beginners of really American literature. The great period of American literature in the nineteenth century dates from 1830-1840, when Emerson's "Nature" and "The American Scholar," Hawthorne's "Twice-told Tales," the first poems of Whittier, Longfellow, and Holmes, and the first tales of Poe were published.

One of the outstanding writers among the romances whose themes dealt with the supernatural is Edgar Allan Poe. His Romanticism was that of Coleridge, and DeQuincy, manifested in poetry that was of the very essence of the supernatural, filled with elfin melodies, and in a prose that was, like DeQuincy's, magical in cadence, and for its subject matter drawing upon that imaginary world in which horror has become not only probable but natural. Poe, the great literary artist, thought that the creation of beauty was the object of every form of the highest art. His aim in both prose and poetry was to produce a pronounced effect by artistic

means. His poetry is of narrower range than his prose, but his greatest poems hold a unique position for an unusual combination of beauty, melody, and sadness. It has been said that the French have never ceased to wonder at the unusual combination of Poe's analytical reasoning power with his genius for imaginative presentation of romantic materials---at the realism of his touch and the romanticism of his thought.

Nathaniel Hawthorne was preeminently a writer of romances. He was always powerfully influenced by such romantic materials as may be found in the world of witchcraft and supernatural, or such as are suggested by dim foreshadowing of evil and by the mysteries for which human philosophy does not account. For this reason, his works are removed from the commonplace and enveloped in an imaginative atmosphere. He subjects his use of these romantic materials---the unusual, the improbable, and the supernatural---to only one touchstone. He is willing to avail himself of these, so long as he does not, in his own phrase, "swerve aside from the truth of the human heart."

Hawthorne and Poe, two of the world's great short-story writers, were remarkably unlike in their aims. Hawthorne saw everything in the light of moral consequences. Poe cared nothing for moral issues, except in so far as the immoral was ugly. Hawthorne appreciated beauty, only as a true revelation of the inner life. Poe loved beauty and the melody of sound for their own attractiveness. His effects, unlike Hawthorne's were more physical than moral. Poe exalted the merely technical and formal side of literary excellence more than Hawthorne. He has no long elaborate romances to his credit, while Hawthorne has four---"The Scarlet Letter," "The House of Seven Gables," "The Marble Faun," and "The Blithedale Romance."

As time passes on and the people become absorbed in political questions, especially the question of slavery, the attitude toward literature as a profession, the poverty of public education, the Civil War, and the period of reconstruction, literature is much retarded in its development. But in spite of all this there is an under current carrying it on toward a new and changed ideal. The tendency is toward Realism.

We cannot fail to note that it was many years after the publication of Hawthorne's romances before fiction comparable to his in penetration and artistic skill again appeared in America. During the latter part of the nineteenth century William Dean Howells wrote a series of novels in which he applied to American themes some of the methods used by great continental realists. His characters are average men and women, not heroes of romance. In "The Rise of Silas Lapham" we find a typical example of his work. His other novels likewise avoid romantic material. Thus we see Romanticism in American literature has had its day and has given way to the new age of Realism.

PART II

Underlying Causes for Realistic Literature

I. Economic, Political, and Social.

To understand the development of Realism in America we must first study the various economic, political and social conditions that arise together with their corresponding definite influence on literature.

Our great Declaration of Independence and the Constitution of the United States were founded on the principles of equality and of freedom. The national question that kept the minds of our prominent thinkers in a state of turmoil until well past the middle of the nineteenth century was that of slavery. They were of the opinion that slavery was a stain upon the character of the country. They said that slavery was at war with the fundamental principles of our government and at variance with the imprescriptible rights of man. The mind of America was being subjected to a play of forces that brought into question the validity and excellence of the ideals hitherto predominant. And as a result our nation was plunged into a great Civil War.

When the last shots had been fired at Appomattox, the cannon at last had ceased their destruction and peace had been established many obstacles had been cleared away---North, as well as South, the traditional domestic economy, was now a thing of the past and a subject to be forgotten. An easier way to wealth, and one enormously more profitable, had been discovered. The future lay in the hands of the machine that was already dispossessing the tool. In the hurry of the war years the potentialities of the factory system had been explored and the ready resources of liquid capital had been greatly augmented. From the smoke of America's greatest conflict---the Civil War---our nation had emerged unlike any the earlier generations had known. Industrialism, enthusiastic and ambitious, stood on the threshold of a continental ex-

pansion that was to transfer sovereignty in America from a landed and mercantile aristocracy to the capable hands of a new race of captains of industry. The age of aristocracy came to an end and the age of the middle-class was established with the substitution of the captains of industry for the plantation master as a custodian of society.

Other changes impended and greater. The enthronement of the machine was only the outward and visible sign of the revolution in thought that came with the rise of science. As a new cosmos opened up before the inquisitive eyes of the scientists the old metaphysical speculations became as obsolete as the old household economy. "Back of every changing technique lies a changing philosophy, and back of a changing philosophy, lie changing social ideals that in the end determine the national culture."³ A new spirit of realism was abroad, probing and questioning the material world, pushing the realm of exact knowledge into earlier regions of faith. A new culture, created by the machine and answering the needs of capitalism, was to dispossess the old culture with its lingering concern for distinction and its love of standards---a culture that should eventually suffice the needs of a brisk city world of machine activities. But this new culture was not to come in a few days, or a few months. It would take time, and in this time---in the confused interregnum between reigns---America would be little more than a welter of crude energy, a raw unlovely society where the strife of competition with its prodigal waste testified to the shortcomings of an age in the process of transition.

³Norman Foerster, et al, "The Reinterpretation of American Literature," p. 139.

The spirit of the frontier was yet to be conquered. "Having swept across the continent to the Pacific coast like a visitation of locusts, the frontier spirit turned back upon its course to conquer the East, infecting the new industrialism with a crude individualism, fouling the halls of Congress, despoiling a public domain, and indulging in a huge national barbecue. It submerged the arts and created a new literature."⁴ America had definitely entered upon its freedom and was settling its disordered household to suit its democratic taste. On every hand new ways were feverishly at work transforming the countryside. We find an entirely new order rising uncertainly on the ruins of the plantation system in the South; and in the East an expanding factory economy was weaving a different pattern of industrial life; in the so-called Middle Border a recrudescent agriculture was arising from the application of the machine to the fertile prairie soil. All over this vast land a spider web of iron rails were being spun that was to draw the farthest outposts into the common whole and to bind the nation together with steel bands. The urgent business of the times was the subduing of a wild region---this immense and seemingly almost boundless territory of the Mississippi Valley and the region beyond the Rockies---wrestling it from the Indians and buffalo and wilderness; and the forty years that lay between the California Gold Rush of '49, and the Oklahoma Land Rush of '89, saw the greatest wave of pioneer expansion---the swiftest and most reckless---in all our pioneer experience. Expansion on so large a scale necessitated building, and the seventies became known as the railway age, bonding the future to break down present barriers of isolation, and opening up new territories

⁴Vernon Louis Parrington, "The Beginnings of Critical Realism in America, 1860-1920. P. 4.

for later exploitation. The reflux of the great movement swept back upon the Atlantic coast and gave to life there a fresh note of spontaneous vigor to which Mark Twain dubbed "The Gilded Age." This energetic bustling America of the seventies accounted itself a democratic world. A free people had put away all aristocratic privileges and conscious of its own power went forth to possess the last frontier. Its social philosophy, which it found adequate to its needs, was summed up in three words---presumption, exploitation, progress. Presumption meant exploitation, and exploitation meant progress. It was a simple philosophy and it suited the simple individualism of the times. Society of a sudden became fluid. With the sweeping-away of the last aristocratic restraints the potentialities of the common man found release for self-assertion. From obscure regions sprang strange figures and thrust themselves everywhere upon the scene. In the reaction from the mean and skimpy, a passionate will to power was issuing from unexpected sources, undisciplined, confused in ethical values, but endowed with immense vitality. Industrialism was being simplified to the inquisitive instinct. These new Americans were primitive souls, ruthless, predatory, capable; single-minded men; rogues and rascals often, but never feeble, never hindered by petty scruple, never given to puling or whining---the raw materials of a race of capitalistic buccaneers. Out of this drab mass of common plebian life had come this vital energy that erupted in amazing abundance of strange forms. The new freedom meant diverse things to different men and each, like Jurgen, followed after his own wishes and his own desires. Pirate and priest issued from the common source and played their parts with the same picturesqueness.

During the last twenty-five years of the nineteenth century the American frontier was pushed to the Pacific coast and is now only a memory. But the frontier as a factor in developing realistic literature is very important. In fact, the frontier is explicitly an American product, Europe had no frontier. It is all implicit in Whitman's "Pioneers! O Pioneers!" Emerson very wisely expressed the fact that the frontier belongs to America alone when he said, "Europe extends to the Alleghanies, America lies beyond." Turner, in his "The Frontier in American History" says that ".....the advance of the frontier has meant a steady movement away from the influence of Europe, a steady growth of independence on American lines."

Perhaps some critics would say that the literature of the frontier was Romantic. At first this is true, but the frontier was a rapidly changing thing; as it gradually receded westward, it continually took on new colors from the changing environment. It was less a definite area than a form of society or a complex of habits of thought, feeling, and action. Our early nineteenth century authors, it is true, fell heir to a new and varied natural background, which appealed strongly to the Romantic imagination. There we find the hunter, the trapper, the trader, the scout, the missionary, the frontier soldier, the cowboy, the sheepherder, the miner, the ranger, the gambler, the squatter, the Mormon, the circuit-rider, the lumberjack, the Hoosier, the poor white, the southern mountaineer, and to these we must not forget to add the frontier woman, perhaps less numerous but none the less interesting than the men. Back of all these types of characters belonging to the frontier was the buffalo, the deer, the wild turkey, and the Indian. But by 1890 practically all of these were gone. They are found in their natural

state now only in stories: "The Last of the Mohicans," "The Outcasts of Poker Flat," Emerson's "The American Scholar," Whitman's "Song of the Open Road," and a few others that live today.

The Civil War stimulated progress of the economic or industrial revolution, which, more than any other influence besides the frontier, has made the whole country an economic and cultural unit. In the days before the War American literature was little more than an aggregation of sectional literatures; after the War it became national in a sense of the word not applicable before that time, and the movement of literary men and women was away from Romanticism towards Realism. The West, however, played a leading part. Bret Harte and other young men were trying to create a realistic California literature. A more widely known spokesman of the West was Mark Twain. "What Isben and Tolstoy were to nineteenth century Europe, that or something like it Mark Twain was to the United States; a new region had found a spokesman and what he had to say did not resemble the work of Hawthorne and Longfellow."⁵ But with the early seventies came the first stirrings of change. The gorgeous romantic soap-bubbles were bursting on every hand. Disillusioned farmers and proletarians were beginning to question the ways of capitalism, and from that questioning was eventually to emerge a more realistic attitude towards life and letters. Realism in America, it would appear, rose out of the ashes of romantic faith. But, in reality, it sprang from social discontent, and it came to maturity when that discontent was clarified in the light of Old World thought. European science

⁵Norman Foerster, et al. The Reinterpretation of American Literature, p. 54.

and European technique completed the realistic revolution begun by the first disillusionment with middle-class economics. There is suggestion in the fact that the progressive phase of realism in America has synchronized closely with the recurrent periods of economic depression that marked the development of an industrial order. We note that the realism of Howells followed the panic of 1873, and grew more serious with the labor disturbances of the late eighties; the realism of Garland emerged from the economic maladjustments that bred Populism. Theodore Dreiser also stands at the head of the realistic movement in American fiction. He, as its pioneer, has endured obloquy and even persecution for the Cause. He should have mention on account of his seriousness and singleness of purpose, his depth of keen feeling, and his earnest reflectiveness. The realism of Crane and Norris came with the depression of the nineties; the realism of Herrick and Jack London coincided with the revolt of the Muckrakers that was strengthened by the depression of 1907; then the realism of Sinclair Lewis and Sherwood Anderson synchronized with the depression of the days before the War.

Literature, especially the novel, has always been a source of throwing off the inhibitions of the gaitzel and considering the state of the country. So, after each political and economic upheaval, the novelist has found a source of material for his work. A changing social order would not fail of reflection in the pages of fiction; and as the novelist fell to scrutinizing the familiar scene, comparing the reality with the patriotic professions, it was certain that the workings of democracy would come in for sharp criticism. In the last decades of the nineteenth century the problem novel spread swiftly, expanding the field

of its inquiry, and seeking to understand the new ways. Making its first essays in the familiar field of the political, it soon turned to consider the economic problems arising out of the new industrialism, espousing either capitalism or labor as the social sympathies of the author might determine. The class passions of the times found a reflection in its pages, and in consequence the sociological novel became increasingly a repository of the social ideas of a perplexed and troubled generation.

Of the early political novels three are of sufficient interest to reward attention. "The Gilded Age" written by Mark Twain in collaboration with Charles Dudley Warner, is a satire of Gilded Age ways with the particular attention to the political corruption of General Grant's administration. "Democracy" written seven years later (1881) by Henry Adams, is an inferior book in every way, less penetrating, less amusing, and less creative. The attitude is that of the kid-glove reformer who goes in for civil service reform, and who views the uncultivated West as a source of all political corruption. "An American Politician" by Marion Crawford is even less consequential as a political study than "Democracy." The theme of these earlier novels was politics as revealed by the Gilded Age; on the other hand "The Bread-Winners" was one of the early economic novels. It was an outcome of the discussion of the vivacious trio, John Hay, Clarence King, and Henry Adams, written in 1882 by Hay. The motive of "The Bread-Winners" is the defense of property against the "dangerous classes," its immediate theme is a satire of labor unions.

It was in the nineties that the sociological novel expanded into a great movement that in the next decade and a half was to engulf pretty much all American fiction and bring it into service to the social

conscience. Such a development was in the nature of things. The artist would not sit forever in his ivory tower, content to carve his statuettes while the country without was turmoiled with revolution. Sooner or later he would venture forth and once he had been caught up in the swirl his art would take new forms and serve other purposes than the traditional genteel. Realism was in the air, the realism of Zola and the Russians, and from such realism would come in America more critical attitudes towards the social revolution at work in the land. The sociological novelist, however, was a reformer, seeking particular ends, rather than a critical analyst of life; and not until the appearance of a generation familiar with the teachings of the laboratory did realism in America come of age.

As the years drew nearer the twentieth century, the business man usurped an even larger place in American fiction; the romance which had been sought in the deeds of 1776 was now discovered in the achievements of enterprise. It was the unconscious testimony of literature to the hold which business had got on the imagination of Americans. In the golden days of the "fall dinner-pail" following the great victory of '98, the Captain of Industry reached the apogee of his fame. The voice of dis-traction had not yet been lifted against him; the muckrakers had not yet set forth on his devastating career. To young reporters on city papers looking ambitiously towards fiction as a goal of success, what could offer greater appeal than the unwritten romance of Wall Street and the Stock Exchange? They had described it for the daily news columns, they had seen it extolled on the editorial page, why not dramatize it in fiction? Here was the real interest of America---the only reality that signified; yet the novelist had stupidly overlooked it, because he lacked

the journalist's sense of news values, his "flair."

Of the abundant crop of fiction which resulted from this discovery, no more characteristic example can be cited than "The Short Line War" published in 1899, and "Calumet 'K'" published in 1901, written by Samuel Merwin and Henry K. Webster in collaboration. They became at once a popular success and maintained their success for a surprisingly long time. They are brisk stories, all action stripped of descriptive superlatives, with plenty of newspaper punch: dramatization of hustle and bluff and tricks of a cut-throat game.

The broad movement toward a realistic portrayal of the economic city produced its eddies and minor currents, which at times brought such a commotion of the waters as to appear like the main current. Such was the flood of political novels which came with the new century and lasted well upwards of a decade. These were a by-product of the muck-raking movement---a part of the propaganda of the group of young insurgents within the Republican party who were bent on rescuing the party from the control of old bosses, and who prepared the way for more significant movement of Progressivism which followed. Examples of this type of literature is found in Winston Churchill's "Coniston" and "Mr. Crewe's Career." These are journalistic for the most part exposing the "Boss" and the evils of the political machine. Broadly speaking, the political novelist, writers like Winston Churchill, William Allen White, and Booth Tarkington, were romantics of the old school of the Enlightenment who wore the garb of realism somewhat awkwardly; on the other hand the economic writers like Robert Herrick, Upton Sinclair, Jack London, and Ernest Poole, were Marxians who had learned their realism in the school of economic rather than scientific determinism.

The great movement of liberalism---the greatest since the golden forties---was brought to a rude end by the War, and when that fruitless adventure was over, the sociological novel, was as old-fashioned as faith in Jacksonian democracy. The realist had become a psychologist, a neo-Freudian, concerned with inner drives and the furtive subconscious life. Sherwood Anderson in his self-obsession is as sturdy a rebel against industrialism as Dreiser, but he has discovered the great obstacle to human happiness in the mechanism of man. "Life is a trap, but the trap is planted deep in human instincts, and the search for the 'white wonder' brings the jaws together. 'The Triumph of the Egg' is a very different sort of realism from the realism practiced by Mr. Howells, and it serves to measure the distance American experience has traveled in a single generation. The prude and blue-stocking have been consigned to the garret. The last shred of Victorian reticence has been stripped away, and the animal called man stands before us naked and unashamed--- in poetry and the drama, as well as in fiction. America, we like to say, is coming of age."⁶

⁶ *ibid.*, p. 159.

II. Science and Democracy.

Between science on one hand and literature on the other there has always existed a certain antinomy. Science does not directly concern itself with the sentiments, emotions and sympathies, which are peculiar to literature. But with the prodigious advance of science, however, it has forced its attitude and method upon the interests that literature held most dear and has played an important part in the development of realistic literature. We may recall that the poetry devoted to the Nature of Wordsworth found difficulty in accepting the Nature of Darwin. It did not like to have its rainbow analysed, its cataracts harnessed, and its moods of aspiration and disillusion re-stated in terms of stomach and intestines. The sentiments and sympathies which found beauty in the placid harmonies of Nature or the ruined monuments of antiquity turned with horror from the amazing mechanisms of steel with which man was refashioning the earth. This development and beginning intrusion of science was during the Romantic period and literature under the sway of romanticism was peculiarly unready for such innovations. The romantic movement had led literature to glorify past times, external nature, the freedom of the individual, and the guidance of emotions. These interests faced a present that was re-exploring and remaking nature, that viewed society as well as nature as a solidarity in which law and process seemed of more consequence than the individual, and that insisted on precision and exactness in its methods and disregarded intuition and moods. When the inheritance of Wordsworth and Byron and Shelley and Scott was most potent, men became conscious of their environment interpreted by science and recon-

strusted by invention. In no other respects did the environment of literature seem more hostile to its heredity than when it attempted to read that environment in terms of science, and we might add to science invention and machinery for at that time they moved hand in hand.

From the time of Watt to the time of Darwin it is of especial interest to examine the course of English literature as it slowly modified its inherited tendencies to meet the surprising changes in its environment. The process has been a slow one, for the environment has changed with a rapidity which has, we might say, left literature bewilderingly carrying its inheritance through a never ceasing process of change. It has, of course, become used to the factory as the home of machines--when it discovers its loved countryside also transformed by reapers and tractors. It has learned to accept the marvels of steam, and it is amazed by those of electricity. It fights through a compromise with political economy, and it is confronted with a new sociology, a new psychology, and anthropology in rapid succession. It readjusts its prepossessions and suits its images and vocabulary to evolution, and the scientists discover radium.

Some critics may yet ask the question "Why connect science with literature?" The answer is that they cannot be entirely separate from each other. The term science may be viewed as containing all organized knowledge or at least all the sciences, physical, mental and social. It has many contacts with history, religion, and philosophy as well as with literature. The long continued warfare between literature and political economy, the debate between science and religion aroused by the discoveries in geology and biology, the revolutionary

bearing of the evolutionary theory in biology as it was enlarged into a general philosophy, and the significance of the new knowledge of heredity and environment upon the novel and the drama, have specifically received our attention as we look at some of the more striking changes at work in literature. But the progress of science is clearly not a matter merely of this or that discovery or this or that new formulation of knowledge. It has made itself felt as an enormous revolution in ideas, in the very attitude of every thinking man toward the world in which he lives. It has given us not only a new knowledge of nature but a new knowledge of man.

There is a contrast between literary and scientific method of which we must not fail to take note. Science proceeds by experiment, induction and reason; it examines facts and arranges them under law. Literature proceeds by suggestion, by image, by rhythm, and appeals to the emotions and sympathies. It examines facts in order to produce an illusion of them before the imagination. Science employs symbols for expressing its facts and relations, and cannot accomplish this by words and sentences. In electricity, the conceptions which govern the present theory are scarcely expressible in ordinary sentences. Though dealing with ideas and ideas calling upon the imagination, science cannot always secure the assistance of literary expression. Since the development of realistic literature and the twentieth century science, the atom and the molecule, the waves of light and sound, the cell, the bacteria, and the Mendelian unit, are all familiar enough for conversation or for use by the poet. The laboratory has become just as much a place for human interest as a church or a stock exchange, and equally the con-

cern of literature. There is, after all, no very sharp division between imagination and reason. The sciences cannot advance very far without imagination, and literature is a feeble thing if it loses hold on the reason. Scientists, such as Darwin and Huxley, have written very good literature about a piece of chalk and earth-worms. Literary men, such as Jefferies and Hudson, have written also as naturalists and scientists. The contrast in method which is marked between lyric and a mathematical demonstration disappears as we compare the ever-changing contents of both literature and science.

Science has indeed been one of the great factors in developing the change from literature of the romantic type to that of realism in both England and America. Literature and science have made great progress in harmonizing their views. The eighteenth century saw everything fixed in space, the nineteenth century saw everything moving in time. Certainly the idea of a moving, changing, developing universe was as familiar in philosophy, literature, and history as early as in natural science; and the great discoveries of Darwin only established a general view already welcomed by thought and imagination. Carlyle clung to a belief in a transcendent world though he found it revealed chiefly in the developing course of human history; but after Darwin, scientific theory has a varied but frank acceptance in the poetry and fiction of George Eliot, George Meredith, and Thomas Hardy. Indeed, from Tennyson on, we find efforts to make the imagery, ideas, and ideals of poetry conformable to the new knowledge. Some of the most interesting literary productions of the latter part of the nineteenth century were very realistic pieces and along scientific lines. Robert Chambers, an English author, produced a book called "Vestiges of Cre-

ation" which was one of the most talked of books of the century. The controversy over Darwinism soon increased the demand for propaganda, and Huxley's essays and lectures displayed admirable literary qualities. Scientific exposition and description did not confine themselves to limited technical methods, and some scientific works---as Darwin's "The Formation of Vegetable Mould"---were written with great literary charm. Since George Eliot, no serious novelist has written without some consideration of modern science. Heredity, environment, eugenics, have played their part in almost every drama since Ibsen. The last of the Victorians, Meredith and Hardy, are responsive to the implications of the "Origin of Species" though each creates his own philosophy on the basis of science.

A little later in the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century we have felt the influence of science in the American novel Mrs. Frances Hodgson Burnett gives us, "The Shuttle," in which she deals in a realistic way with the growing inter-relation between England and America, especially through marriage and the problems of eugenics. Miss May Sinclair produced "The Helpmate" dealing with a delicate marital problem, the relation of a somewhat coarse but devoted husband to a wife of rigid ideals and austere virtue. Miss Edith Wharton, in a brief novel "Madame de Treymes," studies the complicated reaction between the American and the French views on family and social relations. But modern science has not as yet found as great a poet or novelist as theology found one in Dante or Milton, or as ancient science found one in Lucretius. Neither the universe of Newton nor the universe of Darwin has yet been set forth in poetry. Electricity, matter, energy, motion ---these are words that excite some imaginative response today in the

dullest, and suggest the possibilities for imaginative excursions by the most gifted; but they have no songs, no epics, no trilogies. It is only natural that with an ever widening reading public, an ever more specialized literature, rapidly developing and highly diversified science should make its way into literature. The greatest contributions to the literature of science are doubtless still in the future. The influence of science is still having its influence on literature. A changing literature must respond to these essential changes which are not merely of iron and steel, of steam and electricity, but of man's mode of life, his conquest of the universe, and his march toward perfection.

Democracy as a factor in the development of realistic literature has played its part. Democratic principles---freedom of the individual---are conducive to the production of realistic literature. We might profitably take a glance backward to one of our earliest pieces of literature---not a novel, not a poem, not a short story, but a monumental production that possesses literary qualities---the Declaration of Independence written by Thomas Jefferson, a firm believer in democracy. This document was the new message of liberty, uttered to the world in no unmistakable phrase. Coming down a little later in the eighteenth century we have "The Federalist Papers" of the essay type, political productions true, but were they not outgrowths of democracy? Madison and Hamilton both statesmen and politicians, yet they possessed literary ability. As we come on down to the nineteenth century we find the tone of literature changing and realism developing out of the ideals that have grown from our democratic principles.

Walt Whitman's "Democratic Vistas" produced in 1870 is

a striking example of this type of literature in which he sets forth his broadly optimistic views of democracy. The United States, they point out, are professedly the most democratic country in the world; Whitman is undoubtedly the most democratic of American writers; consequently he must be the most typical.

The abstract ideal of democracy has never been better summed up than in the well-known watchwords of republican France: Liberty, Equality, Fraternity. Disguised and distorted though these words may have been by a century of French Revolutionary excess, there is no denying that they stand for ideals essentially noble and inspiring. What is more, these ideals, which everywhere underlie the revolutionary spirit, have consciously influenced the nineteenth century on both sides of the Atlantic. In the progress of American democracy, however, one of these ideals has been more strenuously kept in mind than the other two. American democracy did not spring from abstract philosophizing; it had its origin in the old conception of liberty and rights as maintained by the Common Law of England. Though no commonplace, there has been more familiar to American ears than the glittering generality which maintains all men to be born equal, the practical enthusiasm of American democracy has been chiefly excited by the ideal of liberty. In Walt Whitman's idea of democracy the ideal that appealed to him was that of equality.

Mark Twain, one of America's early realistic writers, was thoroughly democratic in his ideals. Provincialism restricted his outlook but heightened his intensity and made him the first clear-throated herald of American democracy in fiction. "Innocence Abroad" was a novel in which for the first time American democracy became plan-

gent in fiction.

If we interpret the political history of America since 1790 we must think of it as largely a struggle between the spirit of the Declaration of Independence and the spirit of the Constitution, the one primarily concerned with the rights of man, the other more practically concerned with the rights of property---both principles of democracy. The humanitarian idealism of the Declaration of Independence has always echoed as a battle-ory in the hearts of those who dreamed of an America dedicated to democratic ends. It cannot be long disregarded or repudiated, for sooner or later it returns to plague the councils of practical politics. It is constantly breaking out in fresh revolt. When major parties grow indifferent and ignore the wishes of the common people, it has reformulated its principles in third-party platforms. Since the Civil War, discontent has been endemic in the Middle Border, and it has broken out in three great political upheavels: the greenback movement of the seventies; the Populist movement of the eighties and nineties; and the Non-partisan League movement of the second decade of the present century. Issuing from a profound resentment at the exploitation from which the farmer suffered, they mark a persistent movement away from the old Jacksonian individualism and an advance toward a socialized conception of the political state. The farmers being disciplined by hard times were learning their lessons from capitalistic Whiggery; if the political state had proved serviceable to the business man and business it should also prove serviceable to the producer, but it had not done so. Why should not a democratic state consider the producer as well as the business man?

These are the phases of democracy that attracted such writers as Theodore Dreiser and William Dean Howells, who in "Criticism and Fiction" published in 1894, ascribes the rise of modern realism to the twin sources of science and democracy. From science it derives its passion for truth, for "realism," he asserts, "is nothing more and nothing less than the truthful treatment of material." To these two should be added the names of Frank Norris and Stephen Crane. The works of these two men are characterized as naturalistic; they picture the rough, the sordid and brutal, and consider the existence of a fact or a condition as sufficient justification for portraying it. Perhaps the best example of this type of literature is Norris's "The Octopus" the theme of which is ostensibly the wheat. The producer and his problems are discussed.

Among the democratic factors in America just before 1914 was the status of women. The "rights of man" reappeared as the rights of women. Women were winning political and legal privileges in many states, and were already pushing their way into new occupations, before the war so greatly increased their opportunities. The "bachelor woman" came to be recognized, and a question arose as to the extent which a bachelor woman might claim freedoms of conduct that had been more or less openly conceded to a bachelor man. These were all matters that the essayist and the novelist were bound to consider and that the poet might not wholly ignore. All of these were to a great extent outgrowths of our newer American democratic ideals and each had its effect upon the literature produced during that time. Another phenomenon,

partly a consequence and partly a motivating force in the development of the new ideas, was the growing recognition of Whitman, both as an exponent of American democracy and as an innovator in literary form.

Just where the influence of economics, politics and society ceases and where the influence of democracy begins is a difficult question to answer, but each is a vital force working and influencing the production of the vast amount of realistic literature that has been produced in America by American authors.

P A R T I I I

Examples of realism in the novel, the essay, and prose
fiction.

I. Realism in the novel, the essay, and prose fiction.

In many instances in early realistic writings it was difficult to separate it entirely from romantic elements. But in the late nineties and early part of the twentieth century the works of the realistic authors lost the greater part of its romantic taste and took on the new realistic garb in its purity. I do not mean to convey the idea that realism was entirely new; several of its aspects were as old as the Elizabethans. It was its manner that was new. Much of this manner had been acquired from foreign sources. The influence of the realism of Balzac and Zola was felt in both England and America. Balzac not only saw his people, physically, and morally, in their habits as they lived with all their individual hobbies and infirmities, and made his readers see them; he also drew his dramatic action as much from the relation of his characters to their houses, streets, towns, professions, inherited habits and opinions, as from their fortuitous contacts with each other. Zola gave a naturalistic or scientific panorama of French society in all its scordiness, incompetence, and glory. A few other Frenchmen might be mentioned: Flaubert, with his passion for perfection of style, de Maupassant with his lessons of economy and objectivity, and the poet Baudelaire, who turned his back upon conventional beauty and tried to make ugliness beautiful. These writers took the exact opposite of romanticism. They thought the mean and lowly was more interesting, more worthy of investigation, than was the prince or beggar of fancy.

Among the early realists the influence of Thomas Hardy, an English Victorian novelist, is greatly felt in America. While Hardy's

novels are classed as Romances he really belonged to the realistic period, his work was very realistic and pictured life as it really was. He demonstrated conclusively in his novels how environment may dominate the lives of men and women. His work was a revolt against Victorianism especially in "The Return of the Native." This novel is a heart-disturbing tragedy. Hardy is possessed with a philosophy of pessimism which he is not able to totally obscure in any of his works. The same type of novel is his "Tess of the D'Urbervilles" published in 1891. Hardy pictures life as being as much or more pain than pleasure; at least that is his interpretation of life. Belonging to this same school is Sir James Matthew Barrie, author of "The Little Minister," and Israel Zangwill, who wrote "The Melting Pot" in 1908, a story of the immigration problem.

"Before these foreign writers had established anything like an ascendancy in the United States, Americans were treated even in the Victorian Period to a realism as authoritative as it was unmistakable, a realism which owed nothing to European sources. It was, instead, the direct outcome of the American frontier. Indeed Mark Twain vehemently rejected European culture, when he came in touch with it, and made the art galleries, the religious shrines, the monuments, the respect for institutions, the traditions of the Middle Ages, the learning of the old world, even the landscapes of that old world, subjects for contemptuous comparisons which made his countrymen's pulses beat proudly. He ranged democracy against monarchy, as Cooper had once done, and laughed the latter to scorn. The refinement of aristocrats were not for him."⁷

⁷ Knight, "The Novel in English" p. 262-263.

Perhaps the best example of realism left by Mark Twain is "Huckleberry Finn." Knight says in "The Novel in English," if this novel is not one of the greatest in the world, it is at least one of the American classics and is likely to remain one. It is in "Huckleberry Finn"---the one great picaresque tale of the frontier---that the western philosophy of Mark Twain, a philosophy that derives straight from the old naturalistic school, crops out most sharply. It is a picture of the struggle between the individual and the village "mores." It is a triumph over the sacred tribal law of conformity---the assertion of the individual will in opposition to society---and it reveals the heart of Mark Twain's philosophy.

Another pioneer in realistic writing in America is William Dean Howells whose writings were limited strictly to experience. When one reads Howells' work he does not get a picture of life greatly exaggerated. The reader is not outraged by being called upon to wink at strange improbable phenomena in events and minds, in fact, the people are such as one would likely have known thirty or forty years ago and the situations are such as one should have noted had he lived part of his time in Europe and part in Boston and New York. Howells always corned the disagreeable, the violent, and politics, religion he touched passingly and superficially. He pictured the lives of ordinary people and proved that these uneventful lives may enlist the interest otherwise subscribed to the exceptional. His novels have action; important things happen, but not the things that easily catch the eye or startle the ear. He shows us that mere conversation can keep us in suspense without accompanying circumstances of two men teetering upon the edge of a cliff, and that the motives which change a superior young man's feelings towards a girl may be of as much signifi-

icance as a tale of revenge. "In the 'Rise of Silas Lapham' Howells popularized his theory. In this novel he gave us what to him is the image of the typical American business man. He performed for American fiction a service somewhat like Wordsworth's for English poetry; the transformation of a new grotesque romanticism, couched in forced terminology phrases, but in the refined and placid idiom of a keen and thoughtful native."⁸

The current school of realism is inclined to deal rather harshly with Mr. Howells. His obtrusive morality, his quiet reticences, his genial optimisms, his dislike of facing ugly facts squarely, are too old-fashioned today to please the professional purveyors of our current disgusts. They offer the criticism that they find his writings tedious as the gossip of old ladies. Even though Howells is classed by modern critics of realistic literature as being tedious and old-fashioned, no one can deny the fact that for twenty years he was a prophet of realism to his generation, the leader of a movement which was to turn American literature from the path of romanticism and bring it face to face with the real and the actual.

Henry James, whose name has long been coupled with that of Mr. Howells as a writer of the same school, had lived so constantly in England since 1869 that his title to be regarded as an American author is rather slight. However, America lays claim to him since this was his birthplace. Mr. James, with his knowledge of American character and also of European life and society, largely occupied himself with portraying Americans in a European environment, so that the name "international"

⁸. Ibid, p. 276.

is sometimes applied to his novels. In his realistic method he has gone a step beyond Howells, being utterly tireless in reporting trivial conversations and depicting the minutiae of actions and manners. His style, like Mr. Howells, is polished, witty, in a way brilliant. Life, with him, was largely a matter of nerves. In this world of sprawling energy it was impossible to barricade himself securely against the intrusion of the unpleasant. Distinguished though he was as a theorist in the art of the novel, possessed of the highest technical skill, and a master of psychological analysis, James allowed himself to carry to an extremity his idea that fiction should be a cross-section of life, full of raw edges and loose ends. Besides various sketches and travel, biography, and criticism, his realistic novels are "The American," "The Europeans," "The Portrait of a Lady," "The Bostonians," and "The Princess Casanovissa."

Of the younger realists, who have so increasingly confined their attention to the provincial, or local novel, Mary E. Wilkins (Mrs. Freeman) is perhaps the foremost representative. The stories by which she established her reputation were collected under the titles of "A Humble Romance, and Other Stories," and "A New England Nun." Miss Wilkins has the primary requisites of her school---intimate knowledge of her environment, powers of patient and acute observation, lively sympathy, and abundant humor. She presents unmistakably real people and scenes---farmers, peddlers, district school teachers, afternoon teas, quilting-bees, New England door-yards with cinnamon rose-bushes, cemeteries with evergreen fences and weeping-willow. But she does not content herself with description and with conversation in rustic dialect.

She never forgets that it is her business to tell a story; and just when the reader begins to feel stifled by the narrowness and dreariness of this homely life---to grow weary of the eternal old ladies knitting or demure young women in old-fashioned muslin gowns---she heightens the tale with a touch of the dramatic or throws in a sudden glint of romance. Human hearts are shown beating in the humblest of bosoms, and heroism itself is allowed not to be incompatible with life's daily round. This is undoubtedly the highest triumph of realism, and there are few of Miss Wilkins' stories that do not leave one with a sense of "more than meets the eye."

Belonging to this particular type of realistic literature, the works of Frank R. Stockton should have mention. He possesses a great deal of humor, but his characters are delightful, and with all their whimsicality they are quite human and very likable. With "Rudder Grange," in 1879, he attracted the attention of older readers as a humorous writer of unusual gifts, and the short story of "The Lady or the Tiger" published in 1884 fixed his reputation. Stockton delights in getting his characters, in themselves essentially modern and commonplace, into the most absurd, impossible situations, treating them all the time with an assumption of the utmost gravity.

In the South at this particular period there was produced a great deal of prose fiction which was written largely in negro dialect. The characters created were real and true to life. Prominent among these writers are to be named Joel Chandler Harris, who, in his creation of Uncle Remus, has given the plantation negro a permanent place in fiction; Thomas Nelson Page, who has reflected through the negro

character, and with a faithful record of the negro dialect of the peculiar Virginian variety, the aristocratic society of Old Dominion; and Miss Mary N. Murfree of Tennessee, a writer of the descriptive or landscape school, who has wrought into the tapestry of her work the endless panorama of the hours and the seasons in the Great Smoky Mountains of eastern Tennessee.

But the leading spirit of this later activity, especially in its more romantic aspects, is to be sought in the person of George W. Cable, a native of New Orleans. His sketches of the essay type were very realistic. The foundation of his earliest essays in literature was based on his first hand knowledge of the life and character of the Louisiana Creoles, both in the city and among the bayous of the lower Mississippi. In 1880 he produced "The Grandissimes" and in 1894 appeared his "John March, Southerner," a novel of the reconstruction period.

Realistic literature was not so conducive to the essay and poetry, however, mention might be made here of the essayist and naturalist, John Burroughs. His writings, largely the fruits of his studies of nature, whether of the habits of birds or of the habits of berries, which he loved to cultivate, inevitably reminds us of Thoreau, of whom in his naturalist's ardor he is fully the equal. The literary quality of his many books and papers on animal life and other natural subjects placed him in the front rank of American writers of his time. He began the writing of essays in his boyhood, deriving suggestion from reading the work of Samuel Johnson, Emerson, and others, and especially influenced by Emerson, Walt Whitman, and Matthew Arnold. His two realistic essays that stand out as his best are "Wake Robin" and "Signs

and Seasons."

In the middle of the nineties and the first decade of the present century literature became more naturalistic and we have the work of such writers as Stephen Crane, Frank Norris, and Harold Frederick.

Stephen Crane was the genius of his generation. He is said to have begun American naturalism with "Maggie: A Girl of the Streets." It is the unprettified tale of a girl who is forced by brutal treatment at home into the arms of a lover to self-destruction. It is detached, objective, amoral, dealing with a world without virtues but tyrannized by taboos; a bit of life, beginning and ending casually. The story was an attack on everything that was respectable in American literature---a notable achievement in a world of shoddy romanticism.

In 1896 he produced a realistic novel, "George's Mother." The story of a boy dragged down by association with a gang of toughs and the consequent breaking of his mother's heart. Crane's maturest work, however, is found in "The Red Badge of Courage" written in 1895, the first great American novel to treat battle unromantically. From the very beginning it is descriptive of the soldier's impatient ignorance at what is going on and his anger at his superiors, to the last pages in which the hero approves himself. H. G. Wells said of Crane, "the opening mind of a new period."

Frank Norris was greatly influenced by his reading of Zola's realistic works. He wrote six full length novels but his fame rests on two---"The Octopus," written in 1901 and "The Pit" written in 1903.

"The Octopus" is a story of the raising of wheat in California and of the struggle between those who grew the grain and of

the railroad which marketed it and attempted to control the destinies of the growers while it crushed and fed upon all. It is a book of stirring events and people: assassinations, a pitched battle, a hair-raising race between two locomotives, the magic of the dazzling desert and the intoxication of aromatic breezes, wealth transformed into poverty and honor becomes dishonor, poets seeking the soul of California, political warfare, struggling immigrants, college men turned revolutionary, corporation tyrants, bad men with careless revolvers, drunkards, and one of the most moving love stories in fiction. Some critics class this novel as being as much romance as realism. But life in those days possessed a certain amount of romance, so it was necessary in realistic writing to include a little of the romantic element.

In "The Pit" the scene is laid in Chicago, where the wheat is marketed, and here we see Curtis Jadwin's daring attempt to control the exchange. It is less interesting than "The Octopus." Norris planned to write a third novel but death prevented his carrying out his plans. His purpose in the trilogy was to write a parallel of grain's mastery over man; to show how an inanimate commodity could control the long chart of human miseries and joys, could read a summons to life and death, love and hate; how it controlled not only his physical growth but also his spiritual development. It was to be in part an allegory of American political life of the period. It was not intended to be sectional but true to all the states.

With the entry of America into the war came a sharp change in literary development. Regimentation, due to the war psychology, destroyed the movement of social criticism which dominated fiction in

the period from 1903 to 1917. The liberal movement in economics and politics came to an end very suddenly, and the problem novel ceased to be written. It became old-fashioned almost over-night.

PART IV

Some Interpretations as to the Future of Literature

I. Literature Since 1914.

When a student makes an intensive study of the literary development of any nation he gets the idea that there seems never to be a complete break with the past. American literature since the World War differs so greatly from that remembered from a generation ago that it seems natural to assume that the world cataclysm is entirely responsible for the change; yet a closer study shows that the most of the tendencies which have developed during the last twelve years had made themselves manifest before 1918 and some of them even before 1914. There is no doubt that the war helped to determine just what tendencies should develop most strongly, and, no doubt, hastened their development to a considerable degree, and it probably added a few impulses of its own; but no study of post-war literature can safely ignore what has immediately preceded.

A student making a study of literature from a historical point of view is constantly reminded of similarities between the intellectual life of America in the early twentieth century and that of England a hundred years before. We note that in the earlier period Wordsworth and Coleridge were oppressed by the formalism of poetry. Byron was indignant at the hypocrisy of society regarding matters of conduct. Many perplexities arose over the difficulties that grew out of changes in the industrial system and, finally, there were the calamitous Napoleonic wars, foreign fighting alliances, and victory that in the end did not mean all that had in the first flush been hoped. It must be remembered that there is danger at every step of pushing such parallel-

isms too far, but such resemblance is not to be denied.

A number of forces, that were acting in America about the time the World War started in Europe, might be cited---the reaction against "Victorianism," a protest against mannish reticence which was, at bottom and at best, a protest against hypocrisy; the Freudian psychology, which as popularly conceived not only stressed the importance of sex in human thought, but questioned the wisdom of sex repressions that had long been demanded by conventional morality. The status of women in the political and business world was also a factor which had its influence.

The striking changes in poetry that have taken place during the last generation were, no doubt, mostly encouraged rather than created by the war. In the early years of the century poetry was not very important. There were few poets who really spoke to or for the people. For the most part readers considered a poem something to fill in the otherwise blank space of a page in a magazine. There were, however, attempts to make poetry mean more and early in the second decade these became stronger and more important. Some of the poets and poetesses that came into prominence at this time were Miss Harriet Monroe, who in 1912 began to publish her magazine, "Poetry," and made popular the phrase "New Poetry." In 1915 the late Amy Lowell, Robert Frost and Vachel Lindsay each issued two volumes of original work. "The Spoon River Anthology," by Edgar Lee Masters, compiled from poems published earlier in a St. Louis newspaper, was published in 1915. In these works are to be found implicit almost all the qualities of the "New Poetry."

It is not likely that the war had any influence on the works of the above mentioned writers, but the unrest and bewilderment with which America watched a struggle in which it was not yet actively engaged doubtless had something to do with the way in which they were received, and with the poetry which was produced immediately afterward. The war in its magnitude and intensity had come almost as a thief in the night to America and seemed to threaten the very foundations of civilization and encouraged a questioning of all standards. It was natural that the novel and the revolutionary in imaginative literature should receive a more favorable hearing than in settled times. The phrase "New Poetry" was a popular phrase heard everywhere. Small magazines in large numbers, each with its own fad or its own locality to serve sprang up after the founding of Miss Monroe's "Poetry." Numerous schools and "isms" arose expounding some new theory of poetry.

These poets together with Ezra Pound, Miss Amy Lowell and John Gould Fletcher wrote during the war period, as did Carl Sandburg, the most important of the obvious followers of Whitman, whose first volume appeared in 1916. We find in our study that the second decade of the present century was the period of the most radical experimentation and innovation in American poetry. It is indeed hard to say how far this was due to the fact that four years of this period were years of the trials of war, since all the important tendencies had made themselves manifest before 1914; but it is doubtless certain that the emotional reaction and disillusionment that followed the signing of the armistice had something to do with the later trend of verse. Yet poetry did not take on any sudden change.

It might be well to note here that the day of new fads and cults came pretty definitely to an end by 1920, and the novelties introduced a few years previously came to be of a less attractive nature. Critics of English poetry say that English poetry can never be the same that it was before the free verse movement came, but there has been a growing tendency to work in older forms, with only the degree of freedom that makes their verse more effective without destroying the structure. There is a growing tendency at the same time to the recognition of poets who had been quietly working in their own way through the years of turmoil. In this list we might place Frost, though he has much in common with the innovators. A more typical figure is Edwin Arlington Robinson, who is by many critics named as the greatest living American poet. This rank was ascribed to him by Miss Amy Lowell in 1922.

Though poetry has been more popular in the last two decades than ever before, its vogue has been slight compared with that of prose fiction. In comparing the production of the types of literature, if there has been hundreds of volumes of verse published there has been thousands of novels, and almost innumerable numbers of short stories. There are, of course, all kinds, but the most representative of the age are of the naturalistic sort. Yet it has been stated before that the beginnings of naturalism in America date back further than those of the "New Poetry."

Naturalism in its earliest form has been discussed but there has been in the past decade a resurgence of naturalism. Against this background of eager ferment and various propaganda stands Theodore Dreiser, who is of this changing world and yet apart from it: the most

detached and keenly observant of all our American writers, a huge figure of ungainly proportions---a heavy-footed peasant with unquenched curiosity and a boundless pity, who is determined to examine critically "this animal called man" and portray him truthfully. He marches across fields straight to his objective, mashing sadly the cosy little beds of American convention, looking into the secret places which the most people find marked "Not Open To The Public," keeping nothing hidden, ashamed of nothing, apologizing for nothing. America has not produced such a frank and dejected projection of reality, such insistence that the world shall stop and consider those facts which convention has politely agreed to ignore since the Walt Whitman. Dreiser possesses a vast and terrifying imagination. He broods over the plight of man in the universe. But he does not seek refuge in the ideal. He will confront things as they are. The very chemistry of decaying flesh fascinates him. It is to him a phenomenon of this impersonal and relentless universe.

Dreiser has given to the world of literature full-length portraits of two women---Sister Carrie and Jennie Gerhardt---and two of men---Eugene Witsa and Frank Cowperwood. These constitute his major contributions and on them his reputation rests. In addition to these there is "Hay Rab-a-Dub-Dub," a book of essays in which his philosophy is set forth, a naturalistic play, "The Hand of the Potter"---a study in pathology where the hand of the potter slipped---a book of travel, and some short stories.

Sinclair Lewis falls in with this group of writers. But I should like to call him a realistic satirist of the "third degree." His satire knows no compunctions. An irreverent soul, he

dares the wrath not only of one of America's greatest humanists, George F. Babbitt, and the innumerable clubs to which Babbitt belongs. He is a bouyant scoffer, he does not permit even the organized wrath of the Chamber of Commerce to disturb his equanimity. And the interesting thing about Mr. Lewis's work is that he takes the pains to gather his material at their sources. Perhaps it is safe to say that it is in this fact that Lewis's popularity lies. No field of American experience has escaped his minute investigation, no authority has eluded his catechizing. In the course of his studies he has come to master the lusty American language in its subtlest shades and the manliest "nuances," from the comic supplement to Dunn and Bradstreet, and he talks easily with Main Street in its vernacular. His rich and copious vocabulary fills a commonplace scholar with envy, and his ebullient slang, his easy slovenliness of enunciation, inflict on the simple-minded user of the King's English a hopeless inferiority complex.

Whether we like Mr. Lewis's technique or not, whether we agree with his satirical indictments of middle-class ideals or dissent from it, his writings are suggestive symptomatic of a dissatisfied generation given over to disillusion. The optimistic dreams of middle-class capitalism are not so golden as they seemed to us before the war; and these pudgy novels are slashing attacks on a world that in mouthing empty shibboleths is only whistling to keep up its courage. It would seem that the faith of America is dead. The brisk pages of his writings are filled with the doings of automata---not living men but the simulacra of men, done with astonishing verisimilitude, speaking an amazing realistic language, professing a surprising lifelike-

ness; yet nevertheless only shells from which life has departed, without faith or hope or creative energy, not even aware that they are dead.

The writers immediately preceding Sinclair Lewis---Robert Herrick, Jack London and Upton Sinclair classed as realists---dealt with causes of which they could only forecast the ultimate consequences, whereas Mr. Lewis, in his writing is dealing with effects. Before the war there was still life and hope in western civilization, it was not yet reduced to being a common Babbit Warren, with its Billy Sundays and Almus Pickerbaughs, its artists and editors and scientists, on the Plugeon payroll. What emerges from the drab pages of Sinclair Lewis that is suggestive is the authoritative pronouncement that the effects forecast by the earlier critics have become in our day the regnant order of things.

Because Sinclair Lewis's writings are so extremely satirical he is the target for severe criticism but his writings no doubt stir up the minds of the reading and thinking public to open their eyes and try to see what is really going on about them; and many times it takes a great thunderbolt from Heaven or an earthquake to awaken a placid, peace loving people such as the Americans are. Among Lewis's novels we list "Main Street," "Babbit," "Arrowsmith," and "Elmer Gantry."

The third writer of the new naturalistic literature is Sherwood Anderson, a psychological naturalist, who is very much unlike our earlier naturalists in handling of material and dramatic interests, concerned with inner life rather than outer, with hidden drives rather than environment. He accepts the main criteria of

naturalism: determinism, distortion, pessimism. Anderson is a lean and sparing writer whose symbolisms are obscure and puzzling.

Some of his works are: "The Triumph of the Egg" (1921). A strange and difficult book with its subtle symbolisms. The theme is the common hunger for romance and fellowship that confuses itself with sex and is unsatisfied. In a prefatory poem Mr. Anderson suggests this feeling: "I have a wonderful story to tell but know not how to tell it."

In 1924 "A Story Teller's Story" appeared. This novel is an attempt to lay bare the emotional life of one seeking to be an artist in America; to plumb his own consciousness, to escape from the world he hates. Such escape comes from reaching down "through all the broken surface distractions of modern life to that old craft out of which culture springs." He must pull himself free from a deadening and devastating routine of an industrial society with its empty ambitions. And having found his craft he finds a recompense in life.

Anderson is one of the three or four most important men now writing fiction in America.

With the entry of America into the war came a decided, and definitely sharp change in the literary development. The year 1918 was almost sterile so far as literary production was concerned. But with the year 1919 began a new literary period. We find three major movements underway. A resurgence of naturalism, inspired by psychology rather than by economics, with a tendency to impressionism in handling: represented by Sherwood Anderson, who has just been discussed. A new romanticism, seeking ideal beauty as a defense against reality and emerging in irony: represented by James Branch Cabell.

A new criticism: a revolt of the young intellectuals against the dominant middle-class---its Puritanisms, its Victorianisms, its acquisitive ideals: represented by Sinclair Lewis.

About this time---1917-1924---a new element began to figure in literature known as "The Small Town in Fiction." It was chiefly a middle-western development---and a late phase of the literature of the local. A reaction from the "economic city," with its centralizing economics, which dominated the problem novel. Some of the middle-western writers that stand out are: William Allen White, a son of the Middle Border, whose plots resemble Thackeray's---leisurely, gossipy, confidential asides, a large canvas, many figures, and a long period of time; Dorothy Canfield (Fisher), a clever dramatizer of the obvious: believes in the Woman Triumphant, and discovers in the right education of children the solution of all problems.

The list of writers could be extended almost indefinitely but I shall close the scene of fiction here by saying that so much writing is being done that it is impossible to know whose works will live and whose will soon be in the realm of the forgotten.

II. The New Revolt and Future in Literature.

The age in which we are living is so full of revolts and rapid changes that one hesitates to make predictions as to the future even in the literary world. There is such a vast and enormous amount of literature produced that it is impossible for one individual to review even a very large percent of it. But keeping this thought in mind there is no hesitancy in saying that our literature is in a transitory stage. We must remember that it is always hard to interpret the immediate signs of the times, and it is still more difficult to prophesy.

There are numerous minor revolts in the literary field but only the major one shall be discussed. The rise of a neo-humanistic philosophy in America seems to be creating quite a bit of interest and controversy at the present time. From my study I gather that the point of conflict between the extreme naturalists and the modern humanists is at bottom due to the lack of a definite understanding of the meaning of the term "humanism." Irving Babbitt, the principal leader in this movement, says that "the boundaries of humanism are broad and flexible." He then points the reader to the ancient meaning of the term which applied, first in the Italy of the fifteenth century and later in European countries, to the type of scholar who was not only proficient in the Greek and Latin, but who at the same time inclined to prefer the humanity of the great classical writers to what seemed to him the excess of divinity, in the mediaevals. These were not content with opposing a somewhat external imitation of the Ciceronian or Virgilian elegance to the scholastic

carelessness of form. They actually caught a glimpse of the fine proportionateness of the ancients at their best. They were thus encouraged to aim at a harmonious development of their faculties in this world rather than at an other-worldly felicity. They held that each faculty should be cultivated in due measure without one-sidedness or over-emphasis, whether that of the ascetic or that of the specialist. "Nothing too much" is indeed the central maxim of all genuine humanists, both ancient and modern. The final appeal of the humanist is not to any historical convention but to intuition.

It must be observed that humanism has two main meanings---an historical meaning in its application to the scholars who turned away from the Middle Ages to the Greeks and Romans, and a psychological meaning that derives directly from the historical one: humanists in this latter sense are those who, in any age, aim at proportionateness through a cultivation of measure.

"The reason for the radical clash between the humanist and the purely naturalistic philosopher is that the humanist requires a centre to which he may refer the manifold of experience; and this the phenomenal world does not supply. In getting his centre the humanist may appeal primarily to tradition, or as I have said, to intuition."⁹ It is well that a man should adjust himself to the reality of the natural order and, as a preliminary, should strive to be objective in the scientific sense; but humanism calls for an adjustment to a very different order that there is a "law for man" as well as a "law for things" and is in this sense dualistic.

⁹Norman Foerster, et al. "Humanism and America" p. 32.

In this clash between the humanists, with Mr. Irving Babbit as the principal leader and the naturalists with Mr. Sinclair Lewis as their spokesman. It seems that the peak in their revolt has just been reached but it is so close to us that just what the outcome will be and what influence it will have cannot yet be told.

Another group of critics or satirists are at work in our literary field. Mr. H. L. Menken is a prolific writer and satirical critic. The net effect of his writings are, however, to produce self-satisfaction and a feeling of false superiority, and this naturally enough makes for personal passivity.

Just what will be the effect of this torrent of satire and criticism is the big question today. Where are we, and where are we going? This question may profitably be asked by every person interested in the future of literature. But who is to answer the question? We, of today, can only make a guess.

Whatever else one may say about novels, there are two statements that are not likely to be disputed. One is that many people are writing them, and the other is that many people read them. Every publishing season brings its crops of masterpieces. A student who watches the weekly or monthly book reviews reads over and over the same expression, "the greatest novel of the year," until his mind is in such a whirl wondering which one is really the greatest of the year, that he must turn away with a sigh, saying, "I do not know." Bewildered, harried, deafened, we are forced to the conclusion that we must be living in the greatest age of literature the world has ever known.

And the truth is that in fiction the standard is astonishingly high. One could reel off without a moment's hesitation the names of at least thirty writers of fiction whose works are thoroughly competent, decent, sincere, ingenious, readable. That is the heart-breaking thing about it. The standard is as level as the top of a newly-trimmed hedge.

It is a well established fact that there is a passionate rebellion against a realism which seeks to make us walk sedately in a world where nothing but facts and common sense matters. Science may teach us to make existence so much easier that we can endure it with more equanimity, and the realistic temper may toughen our minds to accept our lowly place in the universe. But if we are born with a hankering for hyacinths we are likely sometimes to sicken of bread.

It would almost seem sometimes that the world is demanding a return to romantic literature. The cry is "Escape!" To get out of the dreary or, at best, commonplace here and now "into the land where I am not;" to be free from routine and galling frustrations imposed by the bit of time and space in which one finds himself, to exchange dullness for glamorous excitement; to transcend the baseness and cruelty inhering in what we know as facts; to be loosed from the necessity of trimming the sails; to have play for the untamed center of the being, which can never be reconciled to its bondage---that is the romantic impulse. For the rest of us it is a deep nostalgic longing which expresses itself as best it can in a world where prudence and the safe middle-of-the-road are necessary if one is even to limp along.

The same things that apply to actual life will also be

applicable to literature. We hear on every hand that the youth of today enjoys more freedom than any generation preceding it. We will agree that he has more opportunities than ever before, but does he have more freedom? Indeed, I believe we are never before so tightly bottled up and never so thoroughly impressed with our gnat-like insignificance in the general scheme of things, our position is actually harder. For every advance in learning to make ourselves physically comfortable we have paid with an illusion that from time immemorial has served to veil our quivering smallness. This terrific conflict between the relentless force of the age pushing us into the realistic attitude and our aversion for the fact is at heart of much of the modern unrest and weariness. We miss the friendly doors that have always stood open and the veils that softened the bleakness of what we could not escape. The youth of today does not want reality; they want romance, they live in an imaginative world.

There are other signs that might lead one to think that the pendulum in literature might even swing back to classicism. Students of literature in high schools and colleges of America are showing a particular interest in the study of the ancient classics. And it is very probable that our future writers will be people who have been educated in literature in the schools of today. The literary productions of today, however, do not as yet possess classical touch.

As America enters the fourth decade of the century, it appears that the time of experimentation in verse has passed and that the tendency is to employ established forms, modified, but not radically modified by the adoption of the best that the "New Poetry" had to offer.

In fiction while the sensational is still common enough, there are indications that taste is changing, that sex and psychology play a less essential part and that the reading public is ready to welcome a different type of novel when excellent work appears. Biographies which sacrifice accuracy and fairness are still produced, though not quite so freely as a few years ago. Prose essays are so varied that generalization is impossible.

While it would be absurd to predict the course of any one of these forms, there seems reason to believe that the next twenty years will be a period of increasing conservatism, in which American literature will again find itself, and in which the innovations that deserve to be permanent will be sorted out from the vagaries of recent years.

H. L. Menken in an article in the Kansas City Star gives his views on the future of literature in which he says that "for ten years no literary debutant of any real importance has appeared in the United States, but I know plenty of youngsters of large promise, and next month or next year one of them may turn out to be a new Dreiser." He goes further to say that the present depression will have a tendency to produce better work by discouraging such large amounts of writing and demanding better writing. "The present depression," he says, "has made it harder for the beginner to market his wares, thus discouraging half-baked work and encouraging young writers to learn their business." Our new literature is to rise from quality, not from quantity, according to Mr. Menken, an editor and critic.

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