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ENGLISH LITERATURE

VOLUME VI
1880-1950

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CONTEMPORARY LITERATURE
1880-1950

by
PETER WESTLAND

VOLUME VI



THE ENGLISH UNIVERSITIES PRESS **LTD.**
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First printed 1950

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CORRIGENDA

Page 189, line 16.

For DAVID GASCOIGNE read DAVID GASCOYNE.

Page 243, line 20.

For X—O: read X = O:

Page 253, line 22.

For RICHARD CHURCH read RICHARD HUGHES.

Page 253, last line, to page 254, line 2.

For *The Shadow Play*, etc., read *The Shadow Play* by Ann Ridler, and *This Way to the Tomb* by Ronald Duncan (music by Benjamin Britten), are remarkable poetry dramas.

Page 254, line 4.

For *The Cocktail 'Bar* read *The Cocktail Party*.

FOREWORD

THE six volumes of *The Teach Yourself History of English Literature* are planned so that they may form one complete work, with each volume complete in itself and yet connecting up with the lines of thought which begin in the first volume and are illustrated all the way through to the end of the series. Thus it is possible for a reader to concentrate on a single volume, for his own purposes, or to read the books in almost any order. The reader who wishes, however, to study the full course should begin with the first volume, since this lays down essential principles of literary appreciation and has been written as the key volume to this account of English literature.

The author of the first and last volumes has prepared the other volumes by condensing the excellent *A. History of English Literature* by Dr. Arthur Compton-Rickett, to which summary he has added, both within the text and additionally to it, his own material and comment. In doing this he has tried to preserve as much of the author's style of narrative as possible, with its skilful sketching in of background, lively interest in biographical detail, and that remarkable faculty by which Dr. Compton-Rickett unfailingly interested his readers in the books and authors he discussed. In this last gift he was outstanding among really valuable critics of this century.

This, the final volume (which is planned so that it is as comprehensive as possible), strikes a balance between

critical selection of contemporary literature and the recording of works which the reading public and its critics have found notable. By writing it in this way it has been possible to give as much valuation of contemporary work as may be sensibly made, while at the same time indicating to readers books and movements and aspirations which, at this point, each of us must appraise for himself. Its division into sections to give the reader a general picture of contemporary fiction, non-fiction, poetry, and drama, necessitates the splitting up of material relative to many authors, movements, and elements of Contemporary Literature. The use of the Index is therefore most important to a reader who wishes to have the full information about a movement or author contained in the volume.

For permission to use Dr. Compton-Rickett's work the kindness of his publishers, Messrs. Thos. Nelson & Sons, is gratefully acknowledged.

The following authors and their publishers are warmly thanked for permission to quote as follows :

Geoffrey Cumberlege, Oxford University Press, The Loss of the Eurydice by Gerard Manley Hopkins (Poems); Mr. Norman Nicolson and Messrs. Faber and Faber, Rock Face; Mr. John Betjeman and Messrs. John Murray, A Subaltern's Love-song (Selected Poems) ; Mr. T. S. Eliot and Messrs. Faber and Faber, Morning at the Window, and What the Thunder Said (The Waste Land, Part V) ; Mr. Stephen Spender and Messrs. Faber and Faber, The Prisoners and The Express (Poems, 1933).

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Chapter One

The Contemporary Novel

(i) Characteristics

OPINIONS about the novel of the twentieth century are divided between the extremes which consider it as about to enter on a period of unprecedented perfection and those which suggest that it is becoming a worked-out literary form which will shortly be replaced by a new discovery. The argument is not energetically pursued, however, since the evidence for either extreme is slight, and the reading public disregards it by accepting the novel as its main literature. Consequently we shall do no more here than notice a few of the more obvious characteristics of the novel by which it is distinguished from the Victorian novel up to 1880.

The first mark of the contemporary novel, taken on the whole, is its want of genius. Instead of being a work of genius—by which I mean compulsive creative power—it is the product of purpose plus technical ability. To take an example from notable satirists, we see the point by comparing Thackeray with Aldous Huxley, who, in so far as they both recoil from certain aspects of their society, are comparable. Both men would in any case have written something, because they have literary and creative minds; both men, in

fact, have written fiction and non-fiction. The difference between them is that Thackeray's genius compelled him to fiction, while not confining him to it, whereas Huxley's genius could have found a wholly satisfactory medium outside novel-writing. Thackeray had to create characters in order to express himself; Huxley composes characters which adequately express his views or illustrate them. His message is important, but his messengers are not. By contrast, Thackeray's characters are more important than the satirical reports they bear.

This comparison might be widely extended, but we must be content here to look at its meaning from another point of view and so to pass on. We may do this by noting that we have ten able novelists now for every one writing seventy years ago. Of these ten, possibly one has a purpose in writing other than the purpose of putting his mind on paper to provide interest and entertainment for himself and his readers. The other nine write because they enjoy doing so, are asked by the public to do so, and thereby live what they find to be an integrating part of their lives. Until well towards the close of the Victorian era the few novelists mostly wrote either because creative writing was all that mattered in life or because they had a motive of almost equal importance, such as the redressing of a social evil. In other words, we notice that the creative power which was overwhelmingly great in Dickens and Thackeray and Charlotte Bronte slowly spent itself; as the nineteenth century declined

novel-writing was left more and more to two classes of authors—the realist reformers and the writers for entertainment only.

In the present century that primal source of fiction has not increased its flow, and the secondary force, which derives from zeal to reform, has been dried up by the reformation of social evils which has taken place. Incidentally, this is why so many contemporary novels are unexciting—there is little to become excited about. It is easy to wring the hearts of the public by an account of a squalid pauper ward, but almost impossible to move it by eulogising a white-tiled Poor Law Institution.

Consequently writing for entertainment only would have been the sole purpose of novel-writing—and those who write for this purpose are the almost innumerable, reliable, and popular purveyors of stories, but not of literature—had not new sources of inspiration opened. It is the nature of these sources which determines the character of the contemporary novel. We shall look at a few of them. In the meantime we record the fact that the main purposes of the earlier novel have gone.

Fiction-writers consequently find themselves writing for definite personal purposes, not because they must write or choke, so to speak, nor because something in the world demands the aid of their pens. This situation has occurred at a time when the technique of the novel has been wonderfully explored and mapped. We know the theory of the novel, of plot structure,

methods of characterisation, devices for presentment, and so on. In one sense, we know far more about the writing of a novel than did Dickens or Thackeray. Since, however, the creative power has lessened, the interest of both authors and readers has fastened on the technique of writing rather than on the fiction itself. We are most anxious to read the latest novel by H. E. Bates because, in form and language, it will be intellectually delightful, and it will be emotionally satisfying. We do not buy our copy in the trembling hope that there will be a new person to meet, as our forefathers eagerly anticipated the men and women their authors were confidently expected to introduce to them. In brief, a mark of the contemporary novel is the combination of personal purpose and excellent craftsmanship as a literary motive.

A second mark of the novel is its intellectuality. Hundreds, perhaps thousands, of readers are now so educated as to be able to tell a story in novel form. Inevitably the impact of life results in many of them wishing to explain its significance or their reaction to it. They therefore write one or more novels for this purpose. The result may be literature. In most cases it will be a book of high value in technical merit and almost no value in any other way (except as entertainment) because the creative act is wanting. And creation is the first act of a novelist, whose art is not based on moralising or explaining or expatiating about life. We may say that such books are comparable to pictures in which, by a series of whorls and angles and

a blend of colours, a painter expresses his mood. If it is art (I am speaking generally, and not with reference to some notable and definitely artistic work of this kind), it is so restricted in its power of communication as to be indistinguishable from mere self-expression. It is less a work of art than an exercise of the faculties, primarily of the intellect.

Turning from the inspirational sources of fiction towards the occasions, which are yet to some extent means of inspiration, we must remark the changed psychology which gives the contemporary novel a third characteristic. The sciences of psychology and psychiatry have opened a new world for man's exploration. At a time when the outer world failed to offer any more subjects of the "reform" kind, the inner world was made accessible and novelists hurried in to use it. They did so for the reasons which impelled others also to be interested in it—because it was intensely interesting. Incidentally they found in it a new source of inspiration, or at least occasions which made inspiration possible. An increasing knowledge of the mind called sub-conscious, unconscious, subliminal, and so on, has enabled us to examine in detail motives, predetermining factors, pathological conditions, and neurotic states, which were previously unknown subjects. Indeed, the possibility has been taken to extremes, as in a novel in which the explanation of conduct was found to be the nature of the striped tissue of the central character's abdomen. Fortunately we have passed that stage of inept subject-matter.

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The result of this development has been threefold. One effect is that the novel has become much more restricted in subject and limited in range. For instance, a novel which seeks to show why a miser is a miser cannot stray far from its main character nor allow many other characters to intrude. Again, it will be necessarily so complete in its analysis of the man that any deviation from him will destroy the book's unity. This restriction leads to specialisation, and here the novelist is extremely painstaking. His facts are reliable. He consults lawyers, doctors, business men, anyone who can give him authoritatively the information he requires. Thus we find that authors give us their own types of novel rather more than they used to do. As we noticed in the preceding volume, the stream of fiction has widened until it includes everything we know, but this has been effected by splitting up the currents and running them in narrowly limited channels. The third effect is that the author is better able to enter into the conscious and unconscious minds of his characters. From within the hidden shrine his voice, at times too oracularly, comes out to us, explaining and commenting on the people and incidents of his narrative. It will be readily seen how a novel which combines the last two of these results must be of the mind rather than of the Heart. Such a novel is highly suited to intelligence and does not require creative genius. This is to say that it is also not of the highest standard as an art form or work.

A further mark of the novel in the twentieth century

is its " fidelity to life ". Under more than one name Naturalism has often influenced the novel, but what is referred to here, as a feature to be noticed, is the new idea of unity. Formerly unity required that every character in a novel should be accounted for by the time the author laid down his pen. This convention led to the custom of the happy ending. If everyone has to appear, then public sentiment requires that the ending should not be sad. The happy ending was not a convention in itself so much as a concession to the reader's reaction to the law of unity. Now that law has been held to be untrue to life in itself and in its implications, of which this concession was one. Nor has it been successfully argued that, because this is the only way to preserve the framework of a novel intact, every character must appear at the end or by the end. The answer was that life has no framework, therefore the novel does not require it.

At this point one may digress slightly to remark that such a statement could not have been made in an era when a culture was accepted by most readers and writers, in spite of wide divergences of view about its nature. For instance, as long as people believe in an omniscient and benevolent Deity, however much they may quarrel about His nature or attributes, they will see the necessity for admitting design in life and consequently for having a similar design in the novel. Culture in the twentieth century, in the sense of the possession of fundamental beliefs about religion or art or politics, has been quickly disappearing. Belief in

design has been largely discarded in practice, although much less in theory, and a result of this is the absence of a framework in the novel. Before going into this matter, we may notice that the novels whose want of unity and whose endings most often displease us are generally found to be by authors who have given up culture in its real sense. On the other hand, authors who do not occasion in us this feeling of distress (its nature varies) are found to base their works on a culture. It is immaterial to the point whether we accept that particular culture ourselves.

This statement we cannot develop here, although it is noted several times in the pages following. But an example may be given by comparing the novels of Ford Madox Ford and F. L. Green. Let us say, *Some Do Not with Odd Man Out*. Both are novels of frustration, yet neither is despairing because the reasons for the frustration are clear. Yet the one makes us feel that life is all wrong, while the other makes us realise that it can be painful and difficult. The reason for the difference is that Madox Ford had no system of belief by which his conflicts could be resolved, whereas Green has. The one had no real significance; the other has a meaning which familiarity with the author reveals. We may take this want of culture to be another characteristic of the contemporary novel, although the exceptions to it are many.

Reverting to the canon of unity, we do not find that the discarding of this law, because it is untrue to life, has resulted in chaos. Instead a set of new "unities"

has been adopted. Here we find political or social unity; there we have psychological unity. In both cases the interest lies in the circumstances by which a character is conditioned rather than in the character. Some novelists rely on the unity which most lives have, what we may call biographical unity, so that we see the emergence of many books dealing with one character from birth to death or even with many generations. Some of the best novels of the century have been based on this kind of unity, enclosed within this rather artless framework. It at least has the advantage of offering scope to creative power. Moreover, it enables the author to bring in people and events which are highly interesting to the reader, although really irrelevant to the story. For example, at its best it gave us the *Forsyte Saga*, with references to topical events, and the *Herries* series, with their historical interest. The method of supplying unity in this way was introduced by Zola, whose example has been readily followed. At best the new unities are a good device; even so we may wonder whether they are all valid.

Of course, the abandonment of the old unity was not made without experiments to ascertain whether the novel required any unity other than the mind of one character. Here again we find French influence at work, chiefly that of the Naturalists. The experiments have been interesting, in the method of James Joyce or of the "stream of consciousness" writers. They have not been successful. Among others,

Arnold Bennett saw the weakness of the Naturalist theory—that the incidents of life reveal their significance during the periods when there are no incidents at all. To introduce uneventful pages into a novel is disastrous. Thus the theory has been found impractical. This is not to say that it will remain so. The difficulties are formidable but, as will be noticed later, may not be insuperable. What does appear certain is that its application cannot be found by relying on the unity of one mind, whether in a stream of consciousness or not. That method induces monotony, is highly dangerous to characterisation, and often causes obscurity.

Thus briefly we have enumerated the most striking features of the twentieth-century novel. Their causes have been operative for a long time. Some of them were noted in the volume on the nineteenth century. Now we turn to the end of that century to notice the emergence of some of the factors which have been involved.

(ii) 1880-1900

In 1880 Joseph Henry Shorthouse (1834-1903) published *John Ingkants*[^] the unique account of the group gathered at Little Giddings by Nicholas Ferrar early in the seventeenth century. Pleasing to all serious readers of fiction, and particularly to friends of the High Church, the novel came at a time when great changes were being shaped in this literary form. The great Victorian novelists, although widely read, had

passed. Hardy and Meredith alone were left, both of whom were noticed in our previous volume. We may recapitulate briefly.

George Meredith (1828-1909), of Welsh and Irish descent, was educated at Neuwied-on-the-Rhine, returned to England to study law, and soon turned to writing. In 1849 he married; after the marriage proved unhappy, he moved in 1860 into the house shared by Rossetti and Swinburne in Chelsea. Two years later he re-married and supported himself by journalism, since his more ambitious writing was poorly received. His *Poems* (1851) and the fantastic novel *The Shaving of Shagpat* (1855), although given appreciative criticism, failed to attract the public. The same fate awaited *farina* (1857), *The Ordeal of Richard Feverel* (1859), *Evan Harrington* (1861). *Modern Love* (1862), *Emilia in England* (now known as *Sandra Belloni* 1864), *Rhoda Fleming* (1865), *Vittoria* (1867) and *Harry Richmond* (1871) were also comparatively neglected, but success came with *Beauchamp's Career* (1875) and *The Egoist* (1879) brought Meredith fame. After *The Tragic Comedians* (1880) came the instant popularity of *Diana of the Crossways* (1885). Meredith now collected his poems, and issued *Poems of Tragic Ufe* (1887) and *A Reading of Earth* (1888). He then resumed the novel with *One of Our Conquerors* (1890), *Lord Ormont and his Aminta* (1894, serially in the *Pall Mall Magazine*), and *The Amazing Marriage* (1895). This was his last book, the *Celt and Saxon* posthumously published being an

early, uncompleted work. In 1905 Meredith received the Order of Merit. He died in 1909 and was buried in Dorking churchyard.

Meredith's early poems were contemporary with Tennyson's *In Memoriam*, and his novels were published at the same time as the best works by Dickens and George Eliot. The fact that he had to wait thirty years for full recognition was largely due to an eccentricity of style discouraging on first acquaintance, but still more due to an outlook on life unacceptable to the Victorian mind and by no means unacceptable in the twentieth century. He excelled his contemporaries in portraying the convention and the primal instinct which go to make the average civilised man. He de-sentimentalised men and women, drew them faithfully from life. In him also we note an ebullience which rejoices in conflict yet is distrustful of self-confidence. He was, then, a true satirist and a supreme individualist, differing thus from his age, but from ours only in that he had no despair. And from our time he differs also in his insistence on the temperance which eschews both asceticism and sensuality. He is more of us than of his own people; from them he strained forward to what we now are, even though much of what we have he would have rejected. And of his qualities the most significant was his insistence that man is of the earth and should remain faithful to the earth and his own nature. In this belief he shook off much Victorian convention of thought. Whether he would have accepted our interpretations of it is

a point which does not arise from our aspect of him.

Thomas Hardy (1840-1928) was born at Upper Bockhampton, near Dorchester. He trained as an architect and, through his interest in books, studied modern languages at King's College while he also studied Gothic architecture under Sir Arthur Blomfield. His first attempt at a novel came into the hands of George Meredith, as reader to Messrs. Chapman and Hall. Meredith advised rejection of the novel, but got into touch with Hardy, who, profiting by friendly criticism and advice, made a second attempt and wrote *Desperate Remedies* (1871). It is convenient to list his other novels; his poetry will be considered later. *Under the Greenwood Tree* (1872) was followed by *A. Pair of Blue Eyes* (1873), *Far from the Madding Crowd* (1874), *The Return of the Native* (1878), *The Mayor of Casterbridge* (1886), *The Woodlanders* (1887), *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* (1891), and *Jude the Obscure* (1896).

Hardy resembled Meredith in his interest in the earthy, elemental parts of man. He differed from him in that this interest concerned character when "it is not easily seen". In this approach to his subject, by the way, we note how he links up with some later authors, such as Henry James. In spite of their affinity, Hardy was no second Meredith, for he saw a certain similarity between man and Nature. He keenly perceived the atmosphere of places, of damp wood, of the heath under impending storm. And he saw a relationship between man and the places in

which he lived. Further, he was led by his brooding imagination to regard character as the outcome of both place and a special environment. He watched people, so formed, reacting to life under the stimulation of their primitive instincts of courage, endurance, sexual devotion, and their cruder impulses. In all this, which he handled with a delicacy unusual in the Naturalists, he was far removed from the outlook of the nineteenth century, and was closer to us than even Meredith.

As his convictions deepened, they led him to see little but the tragedy of life. His sensitiveness made life's pain exquisite; his want of doctrinal or even philosophical belief meant that he had no answers to the problems which his observation suggested. Pessimism deepened into an intolerable burden so that, seeing the senselessness of despair, he was driven to urge a suspension of disbelief in the conclusions towards which he was forced. If there were no Providence—and he saw little reason to believe in one—life made even less appeal to reason than if there were. Meanwhile suffering continued and he, himself without faith, had no remedy for it. That was the cruel dilemma in which he was placed. Evidently it is of our century rather than of the nineteenth.

This fact noticed, we may briefly remark his complete artistic sincerity, which compelled him to shirk nothing of investigation and of statement of his findings; his humour, which was irony; most importantly his sense of law, and his sense of pity. In

these qualities he differs from his predecessors rather than foreshadows his successors, since we have little recognition of law and almost no sense of pity as he understood it. His tenacious and bitter preoccupation with life is like ours, but more courageous and unrelenting. His rejection of the conventional explanations of life separated him from most earlier novelists and, to some extent, joins him to certain speculative writers of today. To these he is also allied in his explanation of character as the result of environment; the same opinion divided him from his early contemporaries, such as George Eliot, who, although her mind and method were akin to his, was a moralist who believed in both Providence and retribution.

One of the ablest of these non-romantic writers was George Gissing (1857-1903). His life was unfortunate, since his career at Owen's College, Manchester, was broken off by misfortune, one of several which altered his life, and he later contracted two unhappy marriages. He maintained his resolution to live by literature and not by journalism, thereby involving himself in many difficulties. His more important novels were *The Unclassed* (1884), *Isabel Clarendon* and *Demos* (1886), *Thyr^a* (1887), *The Nether World* (1889), *New Grub Street* (1891). The two novels which are better known to present-day readers are *Bom in Exile* (1891) and *The Odd Women* (1893). His novels are full, of close observation of the joyless life of the city poor; the result is that, without elevation given by humour or imagination, they appear arid and depressing. Yet

he was important as a realist, as the outspoken student of sex psychology, as the possessor of artistic integrity and of a poetic imagination which he repressed too constantly. So much for him as a novelist. His other books include the rather depressing "*Beside the Ionian Sea* (1901), and *The Private Papers of Henry Ryecroft* (1903), a most interesting book, and largely autobiographical. Unmistakably his best book was his *Charles Dickens : A. Critical Study* (1898). Among other merits it effectively disposes of the myth that Dickens was a caricaturist and not a creator of characters. The book has not yet been excelled.

We may note by way of interest that Morley Roberts (1857-1942) in his novel, *The Private Papers of Henry Maitland* (1912), wrote almost a biography of Gissing. It is an able book, worthy of the author of the outstanding travel book, *The Western Avernus* (1887).

Before turning to further authors who influenced the growth of the modern novel, we may briefly consider the reading public which was formed in the late nineteenth century, and see what it was reading by way of popular fiction.

At the outset there is the widest extension of the reading public which English literature has ever received or can receive. The Education Act of 1870 was by now beginning to extend the reading public to include most of the adult population.

These new readers turned to the writers of popular fiction, much of which was of considerable literary merit. There were, for instance, the novels of

Margaret Oliphant (1828-97), who had been writing since *Margaret Maitland* (1849) and had completed the *Chronicles of Carlingford* (*Salem Chapel*, *The Rector and the Doctor's Family*, *The Perpetual Curate*, and *Miss Marjoribanks*). Now in the period of transition she continued with novels from *A beleaguered City* (1880) and *A Little Pilgrim in the Unseen* (1882) to the well-known *Kirsteen* (1890). Many of these novels had a strong religious element in them, a fact of importance to connect with one already mentioned with reference to the teaching of reading as a devout duty by many members of the Nonconformist denomination. The efforts of the religiously minded people to extend the benefits of education necessarily affected the kind of reading to which the newly literate turned. In Mrs. Oliphant's novels they found not only what their taste preferred, but what was undoubtedly literature only slightly below the excellence of the best which the women writers of the century produced.

Apart from the enormous output of designedly simple books of no literary value except in so far as they fostered a taste for "a book"—publications such as those of Mrs. Margaret Gatty or Mrs. Juliana Ewing, and the juvenile magazines which appeared towards the end of the century—the readers of 1880 and onwards had the books of William Black (1841-98), whose *Daughter of Heth* (1871), *A Princess of Thule* (1874), and *Macleod of Dare* (1878) are still obtainable in standard editions. Henry Kingsley (1830-76) had published *Geoffrey Hamlyn* (1859) and *Ravenshoe*

(1862); more excitingly for the more alert, there were Lewis Carroll's *Alice* books, and for the less perceptive the eminently readable novels of Richard Doddridge Blackmore (1825-1900), with *Lorna Doone* in 1869, followed by *Cripps the Carrier* (1876), *Christomll* (1882), *Springhaven* (1887), and *Perlycross* (1894). Still much alive out of a long list of popular novels was *The Heir of Redclyffe* (1853) by Charlotte Yonge, and two books which appeared in 1857, Mrs. Craik's *John Halifax, Gentleman*, and Thomas Hughes's *Tom Brown's Schooldays*. Miss Braddon's *Lady Audley's Secret* was entering its eighteenth year of unfailing popularity, while her *Ishmael* was yet to come. Rhoda Broughton (1840-1920) was offering novels of both skill and interest in *Cometh up as a Flower* (1867), *Red as a Rose is She* (1870) and *Belinda* (1883). Walter Besant (1836-1901), sometimes in collaboration with James Rice, was producing *Ready-Money Mortibay* (1872), *The Chaplain of the Fleet* (1881), *All Sorts and Conditions of Men* (1882), *The Children of Gibeon* (1886), *The World Went Very Well Then* (1897).

This short selection of what was available at the lending libraries in 1880 and the twenty years following shows that the new reading public was by no means at a loss for books which were satisfyingly emotional, sincere, skilful, and above all honestly trying to provide a story. Many a twentieth-century reader goes back to some of these old favourites and finds considerable pleasure in them.

Before reviewing the literature published approxi-

mately between 1880 and 1900, two important events must be noticed. The first was the widening of the horizon by the translation of major foreign works. Here the name of Henry Vizetelly (1820-94) must be given the place of honour in the publication of novels by Dostoevsky and others, including Zola. His policy led to unbounded abuse, but it succeeded. Thus a new influence entered English literature, for acquaintance with works written abroad had an enormous effect on both authors and readers. Part of it lay in the better comprehension of all that is entailed in craftsmanship. Familiarity with Russian fiction, for instance, undoubtedly increased interest in the psychological exposition of character, while the French literary methods of Flaubert, Constant, and others had a more immediate result in the kind of realism the English novel was to adopt.

The second activity notable at the time was the attack on the lending-library system made by certain publishing houses which began to issue cheap editions. Until now the novel was usually a "three-decker" affair, the three volumes being retailed at half a guinea. Now novels appeared in one volume priced at six shillings. One effect of this was a far larger sale of books and a big falling off in the subscription lists of the libraries. An even more important effect was presently seen in the construction of novels. To illustrate the point, it may be said that the average length of a novel in the days of Wilkie Collins or Thackeray was some 240,000 words, whereas today

the standard length, which means the length favoured by the general reading public, is some 80,000 words. Reaching the length favoured by the largest subscribers is still a major consideration, but it is far less oppressive than it was when novels had to be padded out by a variety of means to reach the necessary three-volume dimensions. Readers who today find much unnecessary matter in the novels of Trollope and others should remember that the authors of the long novels of the last century were fully aware of their faults. They had no choice, however, between padding out to the length demanded, for either serial or book publication, or not being published.

With the opening up of the one-volume cheap publication the burden placed on the novelist was considerably lightened. Nor was this anything more than the smaller part of the result. A further implication was that authors could now concentrate more on details of construction, instead of spreading out each instalment over a definite number of pages. At a time when interest in craftsmanship was stimulated by the possibility of comparison between the English and foreign novel, an opportunity came for experimenting in the new technique without undue regard to the final length of the book.

Even more important was the fact that the one-volume edition freed authors from the narrow limits which library censorship placed on them. It was necessary that Mudie's and Smith's and the other great lending libraries should not offend their patrons by

stocking any book which might "bring a blush to the maiden's cheek". Inevitably publishers were generally unwilling to produce books which the lending libraries would be unlikely to accept. In this indirect but inescapable way a censorship both rigid and extremely narrow was imposed on literature. The way out was found when publishers undertook one-volume editions which readers could buy and lend among their friends. Now literature could experiment as its authors might direct. This was obviously an invaluable advantage, although one must not be blind to the fact that it had its dangers. Energy directed through a narrow channel is able to do a great deal more than if it is dispersed. The coming of the one-volume edition, it cannot be doubted, allowed the enormous vigour of the novel for telling a story to spread itself over many forms of novel, so that variety and technical skill were both increased. Unfortunately, the story value of the novel was, on the whole and almost imperceptibly, slowly diminished.

With so much by way of brief preliminary, we pass from the popular literature available about 1880 to a review of the more important novels written up to 1900.

Apart from the naughty excitements of Louise de la Ramée ("Ouida", 1839-1908) and the equally unimportant novels of Minnie Mackay ("Marie Corelli"), there were the excellent writings of Mary Augusta Arnold (later Mrs. Humphry Ward, 1851-1920), which began with *Miss Bretherton* (1886), and went

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through a long list which includes *David Grieve* (1892), *Marcella* (1894), *Lady Rose's Daughter* (1903), *The Marriage of William As he* (1905) and *Fenwick's Career* (1906). Wanting in true creative impulse though they are, the novels are serious attempts to tell stories about problems, and their construction is invariably sound. Mrs. Ward continued, although in many ways differing from her, the tradition of Mrs. Henry Wood, ever to be remembered for the popularity of *East Lynne* (1861).

Small though their record may be in literary manuals today, the readers of their time set great store by the novels of other authors whose names should therefore be recalled, since their publications had some literary value. The first of these to come to mind is Stanley Weyman (1855-1928), with his *Chippinge*, *Ovington's Bank*, and others including the greatest, *A Gentleman of France* (1893) and *Under the Red Robe* (1894). Weyman was not entirely free from obligation to Dumas, but other writers of historical romance were more original, as Justin McCarthy with his still unforgotten *The Duke's Motto* and various members of the "Kail Yard School". Of these the most notable were S. R. Crockett (*Red Axe* and many another exciting story with a curiously Pre-Raphaelite quality of description), George Douglas (*The House with the Green Shutters*, still widely read, and not superseded by Dr. Cronin's *Hatter's Castle*) and John Watson ("Ian MacLaren").

The Kail Yard School portrayed life in the Scottish Lowlands, and is grouped round Sir James Matthew Barrie (1860-1937), who brought Scottish senti-

mentality and shyness to a welcoming London. Beginning as a journalist, he published his first novel with *better Dead* (1887) and, in 1888, his second and more successful *Auld Licht Idylls*. A year later a further volume of sketches of his native Kirriemuir ("Thrums") appeared in *A Window in Thrums* and the Kail Yard School was established. Humorous pieces were followed by *My Lady Nicotine* (1890) and Barrie's first long and successful novel in *The Little Minister* (1891). Barrie's plays are noticed elsewhere, as is also his hardness and even cruelty, an aspect of him which surprised his readers on the appearance of *Sentimental Tommy* (1896) and its sequel *Tommy and Gri^el* (1900). Two years later *The Little White Bird* returned to sentiment and whimsy; more importantly, it introduced *Peter Pan*. The novels and sketches have an ephemeral value; many parts of them will be prized, but even their sentiment is limited by the streak of resentful realism in their author.

The novels of Eden Phillpotts (b. 1862) are numerous, and all commanded a wide circle of readers who loved his stories of life in Devonshire. Among the best were *The Children of the Mist* (1898), *The Human Boy* (1899), and *The Secret Woman* (1905).

The world of Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch ("Q", 1863-1944) was Cornwall, which is his "Delectable Duchy". His long series of stories, gripping in interest and supremely well told, began with *Dead Man's Rock* (1887), while his ability to fascinate grown-ups as well as children may be judged by the strangely

overlooked *Poison Island* (a kind of *Treasure Island* written by Dickens) and by *The Splendid Spur* (1889). Fowey came into its own with *The Astonishing History of Troy Town* (1888). *The Delectable Duchy* (1893) and *The Mayor of Troy Town* (1905) increased their author's reputation.

Contemporary with "Q" in the publication of exciting and romantic novels was Rider Haggard (1856-1925) whose inventive genius took Africa, then being opened up, as the scene for *She* (1887), *Allan Quatermain* (1887), and the best of the series, *King Solomon's Mines* (1885).

A whole literature has grown up round the stories of another contemporary, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle (1859-1930). Most of his work was done in the short story, but space must be given to the facility of his novels, *Micah Clarke* (1889), *The Firm of Girdlestone* (1890), *The White Company* (1891), *The Refugees* (1893), *Rodney Stone* (1896), and *The Tragedy of the Korosko* (1898). Doyle had an individual characteristic of description, whether of persons or of places. The details he supplies appear almost casual, yet they have the clarity and completeness of dry-point etching. Partly allied to this technique was his never-failing suspense.

More romantic was Sir Anthony Hope Hawkins ("Anthony Hope"), (1863-1933), who discovered Ruritania, the most exciting country of its kind, and filled it with the adventures of *The Prisoner of Zenda* (1894) and its sequel, *Rupert of Hent^au* (1898). These

books are Hawkins at his best, although *The King's Mirror* (1899) is little inferior and *Sophy of Kravonia* (1898) is a tale of interest and action. There is little now of interest in the comedies, *The Dolly Dialogues* (1894), *The Adventure of Lady Ursula* (1898), and *Pilkerton's Peerage* (1902).

A realist who was extremely effective, except in his longer novels, was Israel Zangwill, whose *The Children of the Ghetto* (1892) gave permanence to his name. With him we may couple Arthur Morrison, a writer of considerable ability and imagination who applied his gifts to the realistic presentation of life in the poorest quarters of London. His works are being currently reprinted, so that his neglected art, as in *Tales of Mean Streets* (1894) and *A Child of the Jago* (1896), is receiving appreciation.

Romance flourished again in the novels of Maurice Hewlett (1861-1923). In spite of the frequent use of archaic speech and an unnecessary elaboration of plot and incident, Hewlett was successful in *The Forest Lovers* (1898), *Richard Yea-and-Nay* (1900), *New Canterbury Tales* (1901) and the much better *The Queen's Quair* (1904). He later published two volumes of verse of some merit, *The Masque of Dead Florentines* (1895) and *The Song of the Plow* (1916).

Yet realism keeps breaking through as the end of the century approaches. Some of it occurs in work of literary value, and the rest in fiction which is notable simply because it announced a change.

The first unmistakable hint came from overseas with
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a deceptive quietness in *The Story of an African Farm* (1883) by Olive Schreiner (Mrs. Cronwright, 1859-1920). There is no challenge to convention, no violence of action, in this story of a girl which affirms, by suggestion, that each man and woman has the right to freedom of thought and act.

At home the progress of religious opinion had formed the background of novels by William Hale White ("Mark Rutherford", 1829-1913), among which were *The Autobiography of Mark Rutherford* (1881), *Mark Rutherford's Deliverance* (1885), *The Revolution in Tanner's Lane* (1887), and *Catherine Furze* (1894). Social realism is found in Richard Whiteing's *The Island* (1888) and still more in his *Number 5 John Street* (1899).

The women writers, however, were foremost in bringing forward problems which the new circumstances of authorship, as outlined earlier in the chapter, made possible. Mrs. Golding Bright ("George Egerton") portrayed disillusioned marriage with unusual frankness in *Discords*; Mrs. M'Fall ("Sarah Grand") attacked the same problem in *Ideals* (1888) and in *The Beth Book* (1897), and dealt with chastity before marriage in *The Heavenly Twins* (1893); Mrs. Mannington Caffyn ("Iota") dealt with education in *A Yellow Aster*; Elizabeth Robins ("C. E. Raimond") dealt with various questions in several publications, among which were the novels of *The Convert* (1907), about the suffrage controversy, and *The Open Question* (1898), dealing with disease and marriage.

Above these writers in literary ability were others equally concerned to discuss the questions of the day. Prominent among them was Charles Kingsley's daughter, Mrs. Mary Harrison ("Lucas Malet", 1852-1931), whose most popular success was *The Wages of Sin* (1891), followed by a study in the abnormal in *The History of Sir Richard Calmady* (1901). The epithets "daring" and "lively" were among the kinder adjectives attached to Mrs. Reginald Craigie, "John Oliver Hobbes", (1867-1906), because of *Some Emotions and a Moral* (1891), and *The Sinner's Comedy* (1892). Later novels were *The School for Saints* (1897) and the more interesting *Robert Orange* (1902).

However, all was not problem and discussion at the end of the nineteenth century. In returning to fiction of lighter purpose we come to names which carry us well forward into the 1900's. There was much wit in *Concerning Isabel Carnaby* (1898) by Ellen Thorneycroft Fowler, and the pathetic sentiment of *Ships That Pass in the Night* (1893) made Beatrice Harraden extremely popular.

Jerome Klapka Jerome (1859-1927) published *Idle Thoughts of an Idle Fellow* (1886) and *Three Men in a Boat* (1889) with its sequel *Three Men on the Bum meL*. The pathetic sentiment of Beatrice Harraden is found again in his *The Passing of the Third Floor Back* (1907).

Thomas Anstey Guthrie ("F. Anstey", 1856-1934) showed his humour, with its magic element and Cockney dialect, in *Vice Versa* (1882) and in *Voces Populi* (1890), as well as his story-telling ability

in *The Giant's Kobe* (1883), *Tinted Venus* (1885), and *The Brass Bottle* (1900).

More delicate entertainment was offered by "Elizabeth" (Elizabeth Mary, Countess Russell, formerly Countess von Arnheim, 1866—1941), whose truly feminine humour made *Elizabeth and Her German Garden* (1898) treasured for many years. It was followed by *This Solitary Summer* (1899), *The Adventures of Elizabeth in Rjtgen* (1904) and, among others, *The Enchanted April* (1923) and *Mr. Skeffington* (1940).

In a different world, but still with delicacy of perception and humour, was Kenneth Grahame (1859-1932), whose genius in understanding the child mind gave us *Pagan Papers* (1893), *The Golden Age* (1895), *Dream Days* (1898), and *The Wind in the Willows* (1908). These books cannot be surpassed.

Except for his two short stories, studies in the macabre, William Wymark Jacobs (1863-1943) wrote of wharves and night watchmen and the unbelievable things that can happen to men who come up from the sea and the safety of their ships, in *Many Cargoes* (1896), *The Skipper's Wooing* (1897), *Light Freights* (1901), and *The Lady of the Barge* (1902). His humour cannot be classified. It belongs to the essence of humour, as we find it in Dickens and Smollett.

So ended the nineteenth century, with its signs of change, its fierce disagreements about religious and social problems, its laughter and sentiment and, not least, a mellow peace we cannot but envy. To mark its close we note two men, George Grossmith (1847-

1913) and Weedon Grossmith (1854-1919), who gave us the immortal Footer and his *Diary of a Nobody* (1894). No doubt it must date, but we who can still enjoy it to the full must be grateful for one of the most surprising books of sustained humour which can come our way.

(iii) 1900-50

Henry James (1843-1916), brother of the philosopher, William James, American by birth but European by choice, became naturalised as a British subject shortly after the outbreak of the 1914-18 war. Being under no necessity to do anything except cultivate art and society, James published a volume of stories, *A Passionate Pilgrim* (1875), and a year later his first novel, *Roderick Hudson*, a record of the mental experiences of an American in Europe. The same theme is discernible in many of his novels. Of the enormous number of writings which followed we may note *The American* (1877), *The Europeans* and the little masterpiece *Daisy Miller* in 1878, *Four Meetings* (1879), and *The Portrait of a Lady* (1881). By now James had discovered that life can be unpleasant, and this fact he analysed in a series of stories uncertain of themselves and occasionally confusing to the reader. The growth of his artistic ability during this second period is none the less certain, as is proved by *The Bostonians* (1886), the excellent *The Aspern Papers* (1888), and *The Tragic Muse* (1890). The stage failure of his play *Guy Domville* (1895) almost coincided with the appearance of

Terminations[^] a collection of stories which opens the third period of his work. His technique was now perfect and his reflections on life mature. *The Spoils of Poynton* followed in 1896, with a surprising psychological study of a child's mind in *What Maisie Knew* (1897). In *The Two Magics* (1898) appeared the famous ghost story, *The Turn of the Screw*, whose genesis in James's mind has become a study in psychology almost as fascinating as the tale itself.

It is now a commonplace to say that James looked at life as at a succession of people and scenes in a mirror. There is little action in most of his novels and short stories, which are usually an analysis of the finer shades of emotion and more abstract thought. Their situations and themes are simple; their implications are complex. Indeed, James is an explorer of the implicit. The psychological effects of ordinary conversation and action are examined in a rarefied atmosphere.

A follower of Flaubert and Turgenev, he took extreme pains to perfect his work and revised with the utmost thoroughness. To accomplish his designs he evolved a technique of his own and it is through this that his influence is active. In the earlier novels he described the experiences of his characters; later he abandoned this method for description by the characters themselves. Not content with the exactitude this allowed him, he resorted to indirect narration, by which he deduced the thoughts of his characters from the least of their actions. The most trifling remark or

act was shown to be charged with psychological implications of the utmost importance which, however, are rarely stated fully and explicitly.

The method inevitably had weaknesses. A certain haziness and indefiniteness, over trivialities a care which can be annoying, a quietness of narration in which the lovely monotone of prose can become merely monotonous—these defects necessarily appeared in James's style. Yet he remains the greatest craftsman of contemporary literature, to whom incident is almost nothing and its treatment is everything.

Admirers claim *The Golden Bowl* (1905) as his greatest work. Those whose taste is less mature find the novel too quiet and unexciting. James's writings after this were delightful sketches of autobiography, *Small Boy and Others* (1913), *Notes of a Son and brother* (1914), and the unfinished *The Middle Years*. An insight into his view of the novelist's art may best be gained by a reading of the prefaces to the collected edition of his stories and of his *Notes on Novelists* (1914).

The indirect narrative method of James was developed by Joseph Conrad (1857-1924). Born in the Ukraine, of Polish descent, Teodor Josef Konrad Korzeniowski turned back from a University education to follow the sea. He became a master in the British Merchant Service in 1884. In 1895 he published *Almayer's folly*; its success determined him to leave the service and follow, as a writer, the romance which had made him a sailor. For Conrad was a romantic.

The novels show a man preoccupied by sympathy for common humanity and absorbed in studying man in conflict. Thus the theme of Conrad's novels is always clearly defined—man struggling against the sea, against his own weaknesses, against adverse circumstance. Such themes had wide appeal, for Conrad's principal characters are always universal types—they have in them something which enables each of us to identify ourselves with them. Added to this is the romance of place, which led him excitingly to set his stories in the colour and heat of the tropics and out-of-the-way corners of the earth. Then there is the romance of words, in which he delighted. Acquiring a mastery of English, he searched its farthest resources for treasures of colour, rhythm, and music. In his early novels these features are slightly exaggerated, but as the immediacy of his impression faded after he had settled in England their faint crudeness wore away.

Conrad drew upon all arts, as he believed a novelist should, in building up his own. There is not only the colour of music and words in his writing, but the brightness of brilliant descriptive painting, an architectural structure even in his simplest stories, and a characterisation of sculptured strength.

His first novel was followed by *An Outcast of the Islands* (1896) and this was succeeded by *The Nigger of the Narcissus* and *Tales of Unrest* (1898). Perhaps his best-loved book, *Youth*, followed in 1902, with *Typhoon* (1903). These two novels marked an important stage in Conrad's technique. They showed that he

had solved the problem of how to give characterisation " in the round " while avoiding an impossible omniscience on the part of the author. Through the narrator " Marlow " he could not only relate and describe, but also explain, reflect, speculate, and interpret. The second importance of the books is in their development of the Jamesian technique. Not only did he avoid the indefiniteness of much of James's indirect narrative, but he made that method more effective by the simple daring of extending it. Thus Conrad even goes so far as to tell us what one character imagines a second to be guessing about the thoughts of a third. His method thus became unique, involving the simultaneous presentation of several characters in action, at least of thought, so that all are interpenetrated.

Collaboration with Ford Madox Hueffer resulted in *Romance* (1903), still popular, but not representative, as was the still not too happy *Nostromo* (1904) and *Lord Jim* (1906). *The Secret Agent* (1907), the stories of *A Set of Six* (1908), *Under Western Eyes* (1911) and *Twixt Land and Sea* (1912) showed no advance, and were succeeded by the appearance of two books of reminiscences and essays. Fiction appeared again in *Chance* (1914), his most popular book, and in the even better *Victory* (1915), in which is unfolded the tragedy of a man who, seeking to isolate himself from all human attachments, is betrayed by the fineness of his own character into attachments which leave him beyond the reach of human aid. Here was a theme

truly after Conrad's heart. In the same year *Within the Tides* offered short stories, and his technique was again well illustrated in the autobiographical *The Shadow 'Line* (1917). His gun-running experiences in aid of the Spanish Carlists provided material for *The Arrow of Gold* (1919); the eastern islands were once more the scene in *The Rover* (1920). Conrad now turned to an historical novel of Nelson and Napoleon, *Suspense* (1921). His stories, *Tales of Hearsay*, were published posthumously (1925). His *Notes on Life and Letters* and *Notes on My Books* (1921) contain much of interest.

Conrad's popularity has been lessened by the note of sombre fate discernible in most of his work, by a certain harshness of language which its music cannot wholly remove, and by his technique, which, involving what this cinematic age would describe as unnecessarily lengthy "flash-backs" to explain causes and motives, discourages the reader who looks only for a narrative of thrills in rapid succession.

These may more readily enjoy Rudyard Kipling (1865-1936), who was also a born story-teller who employed gusto rather than technique in its subtler forms. Born in Bombay, the son of the curator of the Lahore Museum, Kipling produced some published adolescent verse, was educated in Devonshire, and returned to India in 1882 to take up journalism. His first recognisable work was *Departmental Ditties* (1886), followed by the famous "soldiers three" of *Plain Tales from the Hills* (1888) and six novels in the

now eagerly sought grey-backed books sold on the Indian railway station bookstalls, *Soldiers Three*, *The Story of the Gadsbys*, *In Black and White*, *Under the Deodars*, *The Phantom Rickshaw*, and *Wee Willie Winkle*, all in 1888. The short stories were enormously popular. That Kipling had not mastered the novel technique was evident on the publication of *The Ught that Failed* (1890, with a more tragic ending in the volume publication of 1891) with its crude sentimentality and short-story form. *Naulakha* (1892, in collaboration with Wolcot Balestier) was a greater failure. Kipling returned to the short story in *Life's Handicap* (1891) and *Many Inventions* (1893), which appeared a year after *Barrack-Room ballads*. Kipling now turned to the animals, whom he made famous in *The jungle Book* (1894) and *The Second Jungle Book* (1895). His best verse appeared in *The Seven Seas* (1896), successful narrative in *Captains Courageous* (1897), and the short story in *The Day's Work* (1898). For all its modern reputation, usually from people who have not read it, *Stalky and Co.* (1899) was ill-received, but his best novel, *Kim*, an epic of Indian life, was welcomed in 1901. The readers of his jungle stories were given *Just-So Stories* in 1902. *The Five Nations* (1903) provided more verse, and the short story was again offered in *Traffics and Discoveries* (1904). Kipling showed his amazing versatility by the successful *Puck of Pook's Hill* (1906) and the similar *Rewards and Fairies* (1910). These were his last books worthy of mention.

Despite his faults, chief of which was his complete

insensitiveness to literary value in his work, Kipling was a great writer. His imperialistic views, his ethical outlook, his cocksureness, his superficiality of characterisation, may be balanced against his sonorous vocabulary, his colour, his mastery of the short-story form, his conciseness; the question of his worth may be left unresolved. What makes him a great writer is the fact that he had a background. Whether we like it or not, it was there. He had beliefs, political and human, which provided him with a culture of which he had not the least doubt. Because of this his gift for telling a story became creative genius. He had, then, what many more gifted writers had not.

George Moore (1852-1933), son of an Irish landowner and, thanks to financial security, the educational child of the studios and cafes of Paris, first published two volumes of verse, *Flowers of Passion* (1877) and *Pagan Poems* (1881). Then followed novels and short stories in *A Modern Tover* (1883), *A Mummer's Wife* (1884), *Mike Fletcher* (1889), *Esther Waters* (1894), *Celibates* (1895), *Evelyn Innes* (1896), *Sister Teresa* (1901), among publications of less importance. Books of criticism included *Impressions and Opinions* (i 890) and *Modern Painting* (1893). His popularity was greatly increased by *The Brook Kerith* (1916), a heterodox Life of Christ with Joseph of Arimathea as the central figure, which was welcomed as a reassuring tendency countering his earlier eroticism. The less successful historical novel, *Helolse and Abelard*, appeared in 1921. *Ulick and Soracha* (1926) was succeeded by *A Story-*

teller's *Holiday* (1928) and the limpid prose of *Aphrodite in Aulis* (1930). One of the leading figures of literary London for forty years, Moore occasionally discoursed on his art, as in *A Story-teller's Holiday* (1918), *Avowals* (1919), and *Conversations in Ebury Street* (1924). His plays, *The Strike at Arlingford* (1893), *The 'Bending of the Bough* (1900), *The Coming of Gabrielle* (1921), and *The Passing of the Essenes* (1930), have no significance for himself or the stage. Far more important are the autobiographical books, *Confessions of a Young Man* (1888), *Memoirs of My Dead Life* (1906), *Hail and Farewell : Ave* (1911), *Salve* (1912), *Vale* (1914), in which the fictional element has a large part.

Starting as a realist, Moore was coldly intellectual and purposeful while also seeking aesthetic emotion and idealism. There were in him both Gallic and Celtic influences. He refused to accept the moral as a factor in art, a conviction which led to his being banned by the circulating libraries. Later he became increasingly interested in art itself and devoted himself conscientiously to writing. An unmannered prose was the result, lucid, sensuous in a surprisingly detached way, with which he clothed matter often witty but never humorous. Careful study of form marks all his work. Moore believed that the artist should be wholly objective, concentrating on things rather than on ideas. That art should be objective and amoral was his main principle; applied to himself, this is not worth discussion, since the theory he evolved out of it entangled him in the very ideas he believed in avoiding.

It is in his incidentals of criticism rather than in his principles that Moore is valuable. Towards the close of his long literary life, he published a delightful book of reminiscences, *A Communication to My Friends* (1933). Less intimate with the artists of his time than he would have us believe, and not as intelligent as he appeared, Moore may have less influence than was once thought probable. Yet he will always be read for the apparent ingenuousness which is lightly wrapped around much of his delightfully malicious comment on people and events, for the reality of such books as *Esther Waters*, *The Brook Kerith*, *The Mummer's Wife* (the acknowledged prototype of Arnold Bennett's "Five Towns" stories), for the beauty of his later prose, and for his autobiographical works.

Equally objective as a realist and equally under the influence of Huysmans and French "Naturalism", Arnold Bennett (1867-1931) was born near Hanley, Staffordshire, was assistant in a draper's shop, went into journalism, became assistant editor of *Woman*, was a smart society gossip-writer under the pseudonym "Gwendolen" and slowly achieved his ambition to get the best out of life and to become an author. His first novel, *A Man from the North* (1898), showed a promise which strengthened in *Anna of the Five Towns* and *The Grand Babylon Hotel* (1902). *Teresa of Watling Street* (1904) also earned deserved notice. His success was largely due to his finding, during his residence in France from 1900 to 1908, that his art was to consist in a detailed observation of life and a faithful recording

of his impressions. Unlike Moore, he brought to the task no specifically declared doctrines; his viewpoint is implied in his characters and never taught. *The Old Wives Tale* (1908) established his reputation, ranked him with George Eliot and, with considerable reservations, with Dickens, as the chronicler of the middle-class families of industrial England. His remarkable trilogy, *Clayhanger* (1910), *Hilda Lessways* (1911), *These Twain* (1916), while showing a progressive weakening of his power, certainly stands high in merit. Much non-fictional work appeared which need not be recorded except in so far as some of the books show a fascinating determination, including infectious enthusiasm, to "get on" and enjoy life to the full. Of these *The Truth About an Author* (1903), *How to become an Author* (1903), *How to Live on Twenty-Four Hours a Day* (1908), the admirable "Literary Taste" (1909), and *Things That Have Interested Me* (1921-25) are among the best. This more personal side of Bennett is concluded in his *Journals* (1930-33) and *Letters to His Nephew* (1936). As a novelist Bennett appeared to have written himself out by the time *These Twain* was published. Humour was rarely successful with him, except in *The Card* (1911) and its sequel *The Regent* (1913). Always unsparing of self, Bennett nevertheless lacked the vitality necessary for sustained output of major work. Yet *Rjceyman Steps* (1923) showed the old mastery, with the warm sympathy for the shop-keeping class which supports much of his best writing. *Lord Ilaingo* (1926) and *The Strange Vanguard*

(1928) were necessarily less successful as being outside his true range. In 1930 *Imperial Palace* was a return to the busy world of *The Grand Babylon Hotel*, and was therefore mistaken for an attempt to work in a vein formerly successful. The novel actually is successful in itself, apart from some slightness in the story.

Bennett's main interest is in human conduct, about which he shows a guarded pessimism; from individuals he can show a whole class, or even a nation; his realism has warm sympathy for men and women and a romantic enjoyment of living which make it unique in our time. A certain heaviness of style necessarily results from the slowness of his detailed examination of life as he sees it among his characters. This defect is least noticed in the early great novels; the lifelessness which is its chief symptom was the first warning of the tiredness which marked much of his later work. Interested in life here and now, able to make a great story out of dreary materials, Bennett has a conviction about his people which makes them real to his readers. In presenting real people in a recognisably real world he found his greatest talent.

Contemporary with Bennett only in time was John Galsworthy (1867-1933). In place of Bennett's realistic account of the lower middle class, Galsworthy gave us an increasingly sympathetic account of the upper middle class, to which he belonged. Educated at Harrow and Oxford, called to the Bar, possessed of a love of justice and a profound distrust of pride in property, he essayed his first novel, *The Island Pharisees*

(1904), with some satire of purpose. His short stories prior to this are not important. In 1906 came *A Man of Property*, followed by *The Country House* (1907), which established him, *Fraternity* (1909), *A Motley* (1910), *The Patrician* (1911), *The Dark Flower* (1913), *The Little Man* and *The Free lands* (1915), *Beyond* (1917), *Five Tales* (1918), *Saint's Progress* (1919), *Tatterdemalion* and *In Chancery* (1920), *To Let* (1922), *The White Monkey* (1924), *The Silver Spoon* (1926), *Swan Song* (1928). These last three form, under the general title *A Modern Comedy*) the second part of *The Forsyte Saga*, comprising *A Man of Property*, *In Chancery*, and *To "Let*. A third trilogy continued this work, its general title being *End of the Chapter* (1934), and its parts being *Maid in Waiting* (1931), *Flowering Wilderness* (1932), and *Over the River* (1933). Some falling off in sureness of touch and facility of apt phrase is noticeable in the final trilogy, but it is too inconsiderable to account for the unusually severe decline in popular esteem which set in immediately after Galsworthy's death. His verse is inconsiderable, and his plays are dealt with elsewhere.

A historian of his class, gifted by a spaciousness of outlook which he admirably conveyed to his readers, Galsworthy changed considerably in his attitude towards his subject. From a quietly satirical criticism of it he slowly passed to a sympathetic understanding of it. Soames Forsyte, with his sense of property in wives and in material goods, slowly but surely won his creator's friendship, so that a man emerges to replace a type. So it is with Galsworthy's other characterisa-

tions. A realism of extreme delicacy is remarkable in all his novels, based on an unusually detached perception of the small world of the " gentry " and, later, of prosperous " City " classes, with their art and loves and ambitions and failures. The realist became a coolly observant humanitarian, specially excellent in suggesting the scepticism of his time. It is an assured but basically uncertain scepticism. It is impossible to believe that his influence will remain in abeyance, or that the integrity and fidelity of his art will long be overlooked. The late novels lack the lyricism of the early, but they are more concentrated and surer in form. The symbolism of most of his novels is interesting, such as the White Monkey of its own novel or the cat of " Shadows " or Fleur's dog, with its tiny, age-old eyes. What Galsworthy wished to state he often preferred to suggest, especially by a symbolism which replaces the need for sub-plots or other methods of counterpoint. Perhaps one may hazard the guess that his inability to portray women may be partly responsible for his lack of appeal at present. In his women the feminine traits are there, perfectly observed and delicately touched in. But the source from which they spring is not suggested. The life of woman is not behind them. What was Bennett's unfailing strength appears to be totally wanting in Galsworthy, although great art almost succeeds in concealing the fact. His prose is occasionally self-conscious, but it is cleared of all unnecessary verbiage—a fact which makes his stories move briskly.

With far less sympathy in his nature and less of quiet charm, but as acutely observant as Galsworthy, was Herbert George Wells (1866-1946), born at Bromley, Kent, of lower middle-class origin; employed, like Bennett, as a shop assistant, and later a science student, a tutor, and an author. Something of the deficient education which he stated he had received and of his indignation arising from his consciousness of it appears in his late work. His early novels are full of the excitement of the machine age and of highly imaginative stories with a scientific background, *The Time Machine* (1895), *The Island of Dr. Moreau* (1896), *The Invisible Man* (1897), *The War of the Worlds* (1898), *When the Sleeper Wakes* (1899), *The First Men in the Moon* (1901), *The Food of the Gods* (1904), *In the Days of the Comet* (1906), *The War in the Air* (1908). Already Wells had become keenly interested in social welfare, and this activity was expressed, apart from various tracts, in *The Wheels of Chance* (1896), *Love and Mr. Lewisham* (1900), *Kipps* (1905), *Tono-Bungay* and *Ann Veronica* (1909), *The History of Mr. Polly* (1910), and in *The New Machiavelli* (1911), to mention only the more important books of these years. The problems of the 1914-18 war he dealt with in *Mr. Eritling Sees it Through* (1916), and the same interest in social affairs provided matter for *The World of William Clissold* (1926), *Christina Alberta's father* (1925), and *Mr. Bettsworth on Rampole Island* (1928). Of Wells's non-fictional works, the most impressive are *Anticipations* (1901), *Mankind in the Making* (1903), *A Modern Utopia*

(1905), *God the Invisible King* (1917), *Men Like Gods* (1923), and the famous *Outline of History* (1920), bitterly attacked by Belloc and Chesterton. Apart from *Experiment in Autobiography* (1934), little of his late work deserves mention. His mind appeared to be haunted by a destructive pessimism and a despair which led him to express the worst of his stupid, irrational prejudices instead of the logical thought found in earlier books, so that productions like the unhappy *Crux Ansata* are best left aside.

For long it was said that he had none of Galsworthy's pessimism and that he also differed from his contemporary in offering solutions to the social problems he described. In the end he was overwhelmed by pessimism, and the solutions he offered changed so often that no definite points of view can be ascribed to him. Essentially manichaeic, he is at times hopelessly agnostic, rabidly dogmatic, filled with thoughts of an evolutionary progress of man to a state of earthly perfection, despondent of man's survival in any but the most degraded forms, capable of startling factual inaccuracy and of penetrating insight on the next page. The fact is that Wells had no abiding principles to fall back on, no trust in any tradition, was too ready to regard man as an invariably intelligent animal, was unable to find peace of mind in dealing with sex problems, and virulently contemptuous of organised religion. This sums up to the conclusion that he was a catalyst of thought. His own thoughts, striking in particular applications, have no continuity, but his

mind was able to provoke others to exercise their utmost ability in dealing with his statement of problems and his varying solutions. When he wrote as a creative artist he showed gifts and technical ability of the first order. As a novelist he happily remains for posterity as the author of the earlier scientific stories and of *Mr. Polly* and *Kipps*, which have a verve and a creative power undisturbed by his unstable temperament.

Hugh Walpole (1884-1941) was one of the most personally distinct and at the same time one of the most influenced of modern writers. Born in New Zealand, the son of a Bishop, he was educated at Cambridge. His *Maradick at Forty* (1910) attracted an attention which he made permanent by *Mr. Perrin and Mr. Trail* (1911), which is claimed by some to be his best work. From this study of school animosities he turned to *Fortitude* (1913), a fine study of a boy's growth to manhood in Cornwall and London. It is perhaps slightly disappointing on re-reading. *The Duchess of Wrexhe* (1914) proved that Walpole had mastered the novel form; in *The Dark Forest* (1916) he drew with greater success on personal experience of Russia during war service. Until now he had been working under the influence of Conrad, Henry James, and Nathaniel Hawthorne. From this point Russian influence is discernible in his themes. *The Green Mirror* (1917) continued and surpassed *The Duchess of Wrexhe*; *The Secret City* (1919) continued *The Dark Forest*. In the same year Walpole published the first of his attractive "boy" books with *Jeremy*. Already he was gaining

by his reading of Trollope, for an understanding of which his own origins were helpful, and in 1922 he published *The Cathedral*, and achieved greater success with the less popular *The Old Ladies* (1924). The *Portrait of a Man with Red Hair* (1925) showed considerable power. By now Walpole was pondering the fulfilment of a plan he had formed in the trenches of the Carpathians for the writing of a novel of generations from Elizabethan days to our own. The first of the great series which resulted was *flogue Herries* (1930), followed by *Judith Paris* (1931), *The Fortress* (1932), and *Vanessa* (1933). The weakening of the characters noticeable as the series progressed was intentional. Walpole now embarked on four further novels to extend his chronicle. Of these only two were completed, *The Bright Pavilions* (1940) and the posthumously published *Katherine Christian* (1944). On these books his reputation mainly depends, but by no means entirely. There is much work of equal excellence in his other books, whether in his studies of life in London, Cornwall, or Cumberland, or in his "thrillers" such as *Above the Dark Circus*.

There can be no doubt that he is securely among the great novelists of the century, since he had a natural gift for telling a story, an invention at least as useful as Trollope's, and a conscientiousness as an artist which kept all his work at the highest level. As to what will be considered his best writing fifty years from now speculation is impossible. He wrote too much in too many ways for an assessment to be

possible at present, and his own character has not yet been seen clearly in his writing. Sometimes the relationship is puzzling, as in placing the surprising trace of sadism which recurred.

The two most significant facts about James Joyce (1882-1941) are that he was a musician and had a flair for languages. Born in Dublin, educated by the Jesuits, trained as a tenor singer, then a student and teacher of languages in various European countries, Joyce issued a volume of verse, *Chamber Music* (1907), which attracted no attention. His short stories, *Dubliners* (1914), were competent. The publication of *A. Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* (1916) revealed an author in rebellion against much that he had learned of art, religion, and life; the book also contained signs of an attempt to force a way out from self for a great creative power. The passage was made explosively in *Ulysses* (1922), a book long unobtainable because its indecencies caused it to be widely banned. It relates a day in the life of a Dublin Jew, Leopold Bloom, against an analogical background of Homeric geography and allusion. The book is notable for several features. One is the intensely psychological expression of its characters. It is a confused outpouring of all their mental disturbances and reactions, an evacuation of the unconscious mind. The second feature is its language, which, in Joyce's efforts to express every possible shade of thought and emotion, involves a vocabulary wholly original and bewildering. Joyce attempted to make prose do the work of music—an

attempt necessarily futile—as an artistic medium of meaning and not only of rhythm and sound. A third feature of the book is its complete want of form. These features are found in Joyce's later *Finnegan's Wake*. He formed amazing vocal patterns in *Work in Progress* (1927) and *Anna Uvia Plurabelle* (1928) but beyond impressionism failed to achieve comprehensibility.

It may be that a writer will yet find a form and a vocabulary by which to achieve the work Joyce set out to do. Up to the present there has been no sign of such an attempt. In the meantime, critics whom Joyce's shattering work has shocked will continue to decry his merits; outraged admirers will continue to declare that a failure to appreciate the technique by which (to them) he clearly shows the flow of images straight from the unconscious indicates a state of literary philistinism. The fact is that, while Joyce has creative ability and technical gifts, he has not written any major literary work. Only if a book can be mostly incomprehensible, verbally unintelligible, and completely formless, without destroying both the science and art of literature can we admit Joyce's last four works to be in themselves acceptable.

Almost as much objection has been found, chiefly on moral grounds, to the writings of David Herbert Lawrence (1885-1930). The most expressive of his works are *The Plumed Serpent* (1926) and *Lady Chatterleys Lover* (1928). His other books are *The White Peacock* (1911), *The Trespasser* (1912), *Sons and Lovers*

(1913), *The Rainbow* (1915), *Women in Love* and *The Lost G/r* (1920), *Aaron, s Rod* (1922), *Kangaroo* (1923), *The Boy in the Bush* (1924), *St. Mawr* (1925), *The Virgin and the Gipsy* (1930), *The Man Who Died* (1931).

The son of a Nottinghamshire miner, Lawrence became a school teacher and, like many other authors, worked his way to the freedom necessary for creative writing. This fact he always resented, chiefly because of a deep feeling of lower-class inferiority. In addition to this severe handicap he was oppressed by physical ill-health and the conviction that he was psychologically ill at ease. The result was an excessive interest in complexes and fixations and an exaggerated absorption in sexual matters. Through theories about these facts he believed he could evolve a rational philosophy. His failure to do so drove him to restless wanderings and to savagely bitter and unnecessarily frank statements about society, religion, and the personal intimacies of life. By many he was accepted as a writer with something important to say; by others he was rejected as a neurotic impostor.

From the strictly literary point of view, Lawrence was like Joyce, in that he endeavoured to find an absolute artistic truth, which would also be the means of moral safety and psychological sanity. Unlike Joyce, he did not torture his medium or try to forge a new one. His short stories are more disciplined than his novels and perhaps exhibit his best work. Not least among his gifts are his power to present a true, convincing picture of his characters in their own setting, an

excellent narrative power, an evocative quality unsurpassed in his own time, and a magic of words more effective in his prose than in his verse. Further, he was gifted with remarkable descriptive power which, again curiously, is more effective in his novels than in his two travel books, *Twilight in Italy* (1916) and *Sea and Sardinia* (1917). Most striking of all, perhaps, are the outpourings of his soul in words of glowing sincerity. Beside these qualities we may ignore the bitterness and sickness and the railings of an unhappy man. Probably *Sons and Lovers* is now his most popular book. It is interesting to speculate as to whether, until such time as his value may be adequately estimated, *The White Peacock* may not overtake it in the test of sales. One other speculation, much more useful, may be permitted. Was not the deepest search of Lawrence's life a quest for love, complicated by the problem that the love which comes by the body almost invariably disharmonises the love which comes by the soul? Perhaps a study of Lawrence with that question in the mind might help us past the hasty impressions which suggest that he was a pornographer.

A novelist who will retain high rank because he solved the greater part of his problem and expressed it, chiefly in carefully handled themes, in novels of excellent construction, was Edward Morgan Forster (b. 1879). Of plot Forster offers little, being content to carry out his own advice, in *Aspects of the Novel* (1927), by relying on "suspense" to make the reader

keep on turning the pages to find out what happens next. In addition to two volumes of short stories, *The Celestial Omnibus* (1911) and *The Eternal Moment* (1928), and a book of essays, *Abinger Harvest* (1936), and an historical guide to Alexandria as a result of war service there, Forster has published *Where Angels Fear to Tread* (1905), *The Longest Journey* (1907), *A Room with a View* (1908), *Howard's End* (1910), *A Passage to India* (1924). The last is usually claimed as his masterpiece; admirers often assert the superiority of *Howard's End*. Forster works in a rhythmical prose of great evenness. His novels are soundly constructed, although their characters are rarely vital; they are all puppets speaking for him. Their meaning is unmistakable—that individual life is of supreme value. In a world of theories and -isms and uncertainties, he asserts, without any claim for the perfection of any person, every man's right to be himself. His *The Development of English Prose between 1918 and 1939* is of interest.

More scientifically intellectual and more uncertain both as to the nature of his spiritual problems and as to their possible answers is Aldous Huxley (b. 1894). His verse *The Burning Wheel* (1916) and *The Defeat of Youth* (1918) showed an idealism which had disappeared by the time his first novel, *Crome Yellow*, appeared in 1921, and was followed by *Mortal Coils* (1922). It was largely made up of conversational pieces, like Peacock's novels, but the influence of Meredith was noticeable in it as well as in *Antic Hay* (1923). Here Huxley gaily

shows all his pitifully human exhibits; for all his recklessness, disillusionment fills the novel. Almost equally cynical was *Those Barren Leaves* (1925). Huxley experimented boldly in *Point Counter Point* (1928), when he adopted a musical rather than a literary form, so that he might handle his themes more freely, distortionately, repeatedly, so as to show his characters from every point of view. Here also he handled sex factors with more detail and disgust than before. *Brave New Worlds!* (1932) satirically and almost despairingly looked into a mechanical future. *'Eyeless in Gaea* (1936) was less readable because this mood darkened it even more; *After Many a Summer* (1939) was happier and better. His books include the excellent biography, *Grey Eminence* (1941). A return to fiction came with *Time Must Have a Stop* (1944), which is less definably Christian than his previous writings and the powerful *Ape and Essence* (1949) shows the turning to the death cult favoured by some of his contemporaries.

Huxley is over-weighted by his own intelligence. His creative power seems at times to give up the fight to assert itself. Enmeshed in science, especially in biology, he gropes towards a mysticism from which he as often shrinks. Emerging from this is his belief in non-attachment. Man must find his reasons for life by complete detachment from love and lust and possessions and social position and everything else he can call his own. It is obvious that the author has not yet found himself. If he does so, English letters may

receive an impetus such as rarely comes to it. Meanwhile Huxley's views of the human scene are always witty, sometimes repulsively mordant, almost invariably written with distinction. His latest statement of his beliefs was in *The Perennial Philosophy* (1946) and *Science, Liberty, and Peace* (1947).

Huxley's particularly intellectual approach to the novel is markedly different from the psychological writing of Virginia Woolf (1882-1941). Dispensing almost entirely with plot or even with characterisation, Mrs. Woolf was keenly interested in form of her own devising. With a perception of extreme fineness and strength, she examines in the minutest detail every fleeting thought and mood of the immediate present. Absorbed by the interaction between characters in groups, she ignores incident in order to spread out and inspect the iridescence of the most transient thought. In doing so she appeals to the whole reader, to all his external and internal senses. And this is done in prose of gossamer lightness. Death and life are the themes of her work. The first novel was *The Voyage Out* (1915); then came *Night and Day* (1919), *Jacob's Room* (1922). Perhaps her next novel was her best, *Mrs. Dalloway* (1925), although admirers may prefer *To The Lighthouse* (1927). *The Waves* (1931) followed *A Room of One's Own* (1929), bringing to realisation her chosen method of following less the exploitation of events than "the stream of consciousness". *Flush* (1937) was followed by *The Years* (1937). *Three Guineas* (1938) was disappointing, but "*Between the Acts*,

on which she was working at the time of her death, showed considerably more vitality. Claimed as an imaginary biography, but surely to be listed as a satirical fantasy in prose, is *Orlando* (1928), which is wholly unlike anything else from Virginia Woolf's pen. It has vivacity, raciness of style, plenty of incident and movement. Many of its qualities are suppressed in her other fiction, and are perhaps more suitable to verse writing. Her critical essays and sketches were issued in the two books of *The Common deader* (1925 and 1932). Those who do not enjoy Virginia Woolf's fiction hold her essays at least to be of considerable merit.

Another follower of "the stream of consciousness" technique is Dorothy Richardson, who, beginning with *Pointed Roofs* (1915), wrote ten novels in following the mental life of her central character, Miriam Henderson. The final novel of the series appeared in 1931, and the series has been published under the collective title *Pilgrimage* (four volumes, 1938). There is creative impulse in Dorothy Richardson, but it does not succeed in reaching the reader, who is inclined to find his interest flagging. A similar method, the destruction of the time factor and its continuity, was employed by May Sinclair (1879-1946), who wrote *The Divine Fire* (1904) and the much more powerful *The Combined Maze* (1913)- In 1914 she wrote *The Three Sisters*, a novel about the Brontës, who were also the subject of her study, *The Three Brontës*, in the same year. *Mary Olivier* appeared in 1919, and perhaps the most

representative of her books was *The Life and Death of Harriet Frean* (1922). Much of her work is psycho-analytical, and all of it is strongly intellectual and gifted; in portrayal of the drab, the inhibited, it is sometimes too realistic and horrible. Less closely allied to the impressionist writers and definitely a disciple of Henry James was Edith Wharton (1862-1937), who has over twenty novels to her credit, from *The Touchstone* (1900) to *The Gods Arrive* (1932). The pattern of conscious thought is always carefully examined and, as in the case of Virginia Woolf, the internal life of her characters is set out in minutely careful detail.

Ford Madox Ford (1873-1939) was judged a failure by the literary reviewers, but some revision of the opinion is necessary. Undoubtedly he wrote too much, for, apart from collaboration with Conrad in four books, he published verse, children's books, books of travel, biography, and reminiscence, as well as literary criticism and books by "Daniel Chaucer". Of his novels, the Tietjens saga gives us representative examples in *Some Do Not* (1924), *No More Parades* (1925), *A Man Could Stand Up* (1926) and the least satisfactory of the tetralogy, *Last Post* (1928). *The Good Soldier* (1915) is well worth attention, while his last completed novel, the largely autobiographical *It Was the Nightingale* (1934), contains useful information about himself as a novelist. Ford founded and edited *The JEnglish Review** and was indefatigable in helping young authors. His *Collected Poems* was published in

1936. Perhaps his greatest success was in management of the timeshift. A weakness in alteration of the time factor develops because the significance of periods of incident becomes apparent, in real life, during the less exciting intervals in which nothing happens. The authors who have tried to overcome this difficulty, by the "stream of consciousness" and other experiments, have failed because the duller intervals have caused loss of interest. Ford was more successful, and his method should be studied. Further, he manipulated his timeshift in such a way as to make it aid the progress of the story to its climax. Both facts are so well concealed that he has been less valued than he should have been.

Another mark of his fiction is the skill with which he alters the rhythm of his prose to meet the needs of the story. Here also he observes an artistic discretion/ which has hidden his ability from all but critically alert readers.

As a social historian (which he believed every novelist should be) Ford has undoubtedly been successful. Here again he has been unfortunate, in that the decade, about and after the 1914-18 war, which he took as his subject, quickly lost interest once it had passed. The reaction against it and against books about the war caused his novels to be neglected. This does not affect the intrinsic value of his portrayal of the English gentleman, such as Christopher Tietjens, which is as good as any of Galsworthy's characterisations, nor does it militate against the novels from the literary point of view.

One of the formative influences of the century is William Somerset Maugham (b. 1874), whose characterisation, scenic description, and, more especially, construction of both short story and novel, are examples to his contemporaries. From other aspects his work has rarely fulfilled its early promise.

The influence of Gissing is observable in *Liza of Lambeth* (1897); *Mrs. Craddock* (1902) was more individual and in *Of Human Bondage* (1915), which is largely autobiographical, Maugham achieved his finest novel. His wide travels have been employed for vivid background, as in *The Moon and Sixpence*, a thinly disguised life of Gauguin. *The Trembling of a Leaf* (1921), *The Painted Veil* (1925), *The Casuarina Tree* (1926), *The Narrow Corner* (1932), *Altogether* (1934, short stories), *The Summing Up* (1938), and even the skilful *The Boer's Edge* (1944) all give us a detached, maliciously witty, sometimes deliberately careless, poised and perhaps deeply bored author. Life has become a bore. Something in it, one feels, has hurt Maugham. It has put acid into his blood. Yet the technique is perfect. Only the vitality is missing from books which are everything except really alive. Indeed, Somerset Maugham shows signs of having written himself out, which is an unhappy comment on so gifted a writer. His *Catalina* (1948) is fantastic and unconvincing. Perhaps his best book is *Cakes and Ale* (1930), which has all his best without the coldness and contemptuous mockery which made *A Christmas Holiday* (1939) an unredeemable failure.

A more popular author praiseworthy alike for his joy in story-telling and his ability is John Buchan, Lord Tweedsmuir (1875-1940). Beginning with *A Lodge in the Wilderness* (1906), he came into his romantic own with *Salute to Adventurers* and *The Thirty-Nine Steps* (1915), *Greentnadle* (1916), *Huntingtower* (1922), *Midwinter* (1923), *The Three Hostages* (1924), among many other good novels. John Buchan also wrote historical books on Cromwell, Julius Caesar, Walter Scott, Montrose, and Glencoe, and published a delightful collection of reminiscences in *Memory Hold-the-Door* (1940).

Less literary but more versatile was A. E. W. Mason, whose death in 1948 ended an amazing literary career. Mason was able to change from one kind of fiction to another without effort, turning out historical romance, detective thrillers, or novels of character. He will be long remembered for *Clementina* (1901), *The Four Feathers* (1902), *At the Villa Rose* (1910), *House of the Arrow* (1924), *Fire Over England* (1936).

A highly promising writer whose work was influenced by ill-health was Gilbert Carman (b. 1884). His best early novel was *Round the Corner* (1913). Less realist in his later work were *Mendel* (1916) and *The Stucco House* (1918). Later writing is of smaller value.

John Boynton Priestley (b. 1894) revived the sane and vital telling of a story in *The Good Companions* (1929). Dickensian in its gusto and characterisation,, largely picaresque, the book was an ideal medium for

Priestley's gifts; its defects are that it became sentimental, depended on coincidence for its resolution, and indulged a heartiness possibly a trifle too deliberate. Yet it was a great novel in the English tradition. *Angel "Pavement* (1930) was more realistic, better as a novel, and offered promise of work which has so far remained unwritten. *Let the People Sing* (1939) was thin, while *Daylight on Saturday* (1943) and *Bright Day* (1946) are worthy of their author but do not advance his position as an influence on the contemporary novel.

This at one time appeared to be rivalled by Louis Golding (b. 1895), whose *Magnolia Street* (1932) won the author a popularity equal to Priestley's. His first book was a volume of verse, *Sorrow of War* (1919), after which came *Forward from Babylon* (1920), *Day of Atonement* (1925), then came *Magnolia Street* and, in 1934, *Five Silver Daughters*. *Mr. Emmanuel* (1939) continued Golding's popularity, but said little of importance. It was followed by *The Glory of Elsie Silver* (1945) and *Three Jolly Gentlemen* (1947). Two books of travel were widely successful, *In the Steps of Moses the Lawgiver* (1937) and *In the Steps of Moses the Conqueror* (1938), while Golding's verse may be found in the collected edition *Prophet and Fool* (1923).

Another author of wide popularity and remarkable gifts is James Hilton' (b. 1900). His books include *Catherine Herself* (1920), *Contango* (1932), *Lost Horizon* (1933), *Good-bye, Mr. Chips* (1934), *We Are Not Alone* (1937), *Random Harvest* (1941), *So Well "Remembered* (1946), *Nothing So Strange* (1947). *Contango* is an

interesting experiment in form and contains some of Hilton's finest descriptive writing. Characterisation is the chief merit of later books. So far he has said nothing of fundamental importance, being content to handle individual themes and personal problems with exceptional ability.

Charles Morgan (b. 1894) is a more philosophical novelist, although he has so far given no synthesis of thought, except such as may be gathered from his insistence on the value of culture and of individuality. *Portrait in a Mirror* (1929) was the first of his studies of rather involved and frustrated personalities, written with great sympathy and detachment. *The Fountain* (1932) was popular, and a wide public has read *Sparkenbroke* (1936), *The Voyage* (1940), *The Judge's Story* (1947), in which Morgan's strong sympathy of thought and feeling for French culture is apparent. His *Epitaph on George Moore* (1935) is a delicate literary assessment.

Clive Staples Lewis (b. 1898) is a novelist who has chosen to present his ethical and philosophical views in a remarkable series of books, chief among which are *Problem of Pain* (1940), *The Screwtape Letters* (1942), *The Great Divorce* (1945), *Miracles* (1947), constituting the best non-professional theological writing of the time. His novels are fantastic in conception and highly involved in execution, being based on a curious mysticism, Arthurian legend, and scientific speculation. The blend is extraordinarily interesting, especially as the novels are by no means detached from

the current trend of affairs. They are *Out of the Silent Planet* (1938), *Perelandra* (1943), and *That Hideous Strength* (1945).

They will remind readers of some of the work of Charles Williams (1886-1945), who has also specialised in convincing thrillers about magic and spiritual conflicts. *War in Heaven* (1930) and other fiction works may not supply a self-sufficient reason for themselves—a purpose such as we have come to expect from literary novels, but the approach in itself gives them a certain value. They are powerfully written and exercise a well sustained fascination.

As a vivid portrayer of contemporary life Herbert Ernest Bates (b. 1905) has won high rank. His first important novel was *A. House of Women* (1936), followed by *Spella Ho* (1938) and, after war experience, *Fair Stood the Wind for France* (1944), *The Cruise of the Bread-winner* (1946), *The Purple Plain* (1947). His short stories have exceptional skill and are frequently anthologised. Bates is essentially a stylist, experimenting daringly less in structure than in language. His late work suggests that he may have reached the limit of useful development here; a slight sense of straining for effect is perceptible but *The Jacaranda Tree* (1949) is wholly successful. There is no doubt that he has evolved a use of English which will be effective in the development of prose style.

Another experimenter is Rex Warner (b. 1905), less attractive than Bates because he uses a harsher style, but at least as interesting, since his point of view is

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highly original, his researches more recondite, and his experiments concern form as well as style. His *Poems* appeared in 1937 when also his first novel *The Wild Goose Chase* was published, followed by *The Professor* (1938), *The Aerodrome* (1941), *Why Was I Killed?* (1945), and *Men of Stone* (1949). He is more a questioner than a constructive thinker.

A more fluent commentator on the modern scene is Nigel Balchin (b. 1908), whose first success was *The Small Back Room* (1943). His strongest power is persuasiveness; his novels read like sections of vivid autobiography, dealing with up-to-the-minute events. The background is usually scientific. *Darkness Falls from the Air* (1942) was less convincing, but *Mine Own Executioner* (1945) was successful. A non-stage play, *Lord, I Was Afraid* (1947), gave Balchin a medium which he employed with great imaginative skill.

The saga of the lower classes has been the theme of Frank Tilsley (b. 1904), who is a convincing chronicler of "the people" in their pleasures (*Pleasure Beach*, 1944) or wars (*Jim Comes Home*, 1945), or their daily lives (*Champion Road*, 1948).

Nevil Shute (b. 1899) gained great popularity with *Pied Piper* (1942) and the sensitive *Pastoral* (1944). These, with *The Chequer Board* and *Most Secret*, reveal an original mind capable of expressing complex ideas simply. An aeronautical engineer, Shute took engine fatigue as the central problem round which to group his characters in *No Highway* (1948), thereby giving to

the slender literature of the air some really good writing.

More varied and important is Frederick Lawrence Green, whose novels are *Julius Penton* (1934), *On the Night of the Fire* (1939), *The Sound of Winter* (1940) and other works leading up to *Odd Man Out* (1945), *A Fragment of Glass* (1947), and *Mist on the Waters* (1948). Green's novels look two ways, into the lives of their characters and out to the world about them. Each novel is like a mirror of two sides which is turned about so that the reflections in each side momentarily mingle, each giving significance to the other. Green is clear as to the inevitability of the power of human emotions which twist men round the designs they plan for their own lives. Behind this is a pattern of life on a structure of religion against which human life is thrown in relief. All Green's important work is related to a life after death. About both worlds his views are firm. It is not surprising that through going to the north of Ireland for a holiday he decided to make his home there, where many of the problems he studies are high-lighted. Green is important partly because he has definite beliefs which are systematised and partly because, without didacticism, he uses them as themes in novels of notable craftsmanship.

Another novelist with a "culture" which is a living force in his work is Graham Greene (b. 1904), on *The Times* staff 1926-30, traveller, expert on colonial affairs. From *The Man Within* (1929), a rather violent psychological study in an historical setting, through

Stamboul Train (1932), a more or less conventional piece of reportage on a trans-continental journey, to "*England Made Me* (1935), Greene was mastering his technique and forming his views. In *Brighton Rock* (1938) came his first important statement, in a novel about a vicious young gangster and the girl he loved and hated, about the fundamental problem of good and evil in man. *The Power and the Glory* (1940), about a "whisky" priest facing death for his priesthood in Mexico, narrowed the issue, and the novel did not escape controversy. *The Ministry of Fear* added little, but *The Heart of the Matter* (1948) showed the climax of Greene's thought. In the traditional view derived from Augustine of Hippo, man has been essentially evil since the Fall, although the graces of Redemption bring to him the possibility of becoming essentially good. So far it appears that Greene is inclined to the opposite, Pelagian, view that man is essentially good, but flawed by evil. The implications of these views are enormously different, and it is a matter of no small importance that an expression of a viewpoint overlooked for many centuries should, in our times, be given by a novelist of rare ability. Without any other comparison, we may think that Greene's novels are at least as important to English literature as those of Hardy and more important than those of Lawrence.

It is interesting to notice that in F. L. Green and Graham Greene we have systematised belief, whereas in most of their comparable contemporaries we have want of belief. The interest is increased by the fact

that both writers appear to have developed rather out of line from the traditions whence their thought comes, e.g. the implications of the end of *Odd Man Out* and all of Greene's later books. The future work of both writers must necessarily be given close attention.

Howard Spring (b. 1889) has written novels of merit, dealing with working-class people, in *My Son, My Son* (1938), *Fame is the Spur* (1940), and *There is No Armour* (1949). Like many contemporaries, he does not venture on an assessment of the spiritual life of his characters whom, more externally, he brings convincingly to life.

The psychological basis of the novel is well illustrated in *The Journal of a Disappointed Man* by "W. N. P. Barbellion", the author behind the pseudonym being Bruce Frederick Cummings (1889-1919). Interested mainly in science and faced by the prospect of an early death, Cummings turned within himself to explore experience of life. He quickly discovered the reality of the two conflicting selves of whom psychologists had written much during his lifetime, and a good deal of his writing was a detached record of the reactions of "the unknown self", the deepest and abiding reality in man, to the thoughts and activities of the self of everyday life. Considered as a novel, his main work has little value, since it is without plot and has little structure. Yet as an experiment towards a new form it may be found to have importance. Cummings also wrote two books published after his death, *Enjoying Life and Other Literary Remains* and *A Last Diary* (1920).

One of the most perceptive of our novelists is Frank Swinnerton (b. 1884), of whose books we mention *Nocturne* (1917), *The Georgian House* (1932) and *The Doctor's Wife Comes to Stay* (1949). His detached but amiable appreciation of people, his wholly satisfying treatment of life and its significance, his quietly subtle art, these will cause him to be remembered when many contemporaries are forgotten.

Exceptional gifts enabled Stella Benson (1892-1934) to make full use of her wide travels and to point with witty comment her observation of human follies and stupidities, in *I Pose* (1915), *Living Alone* (1919), *The Poor Man* (1922), *Pipers and a Dancer* (1924), *The Little World* (1915) and the more popular *Tobit Transplanted* (1931). Her wit was not merely satirical; in her later novels a deep sympathy with suffering and weakness is increasingly evident.

Richard Church (b. 1893) has been mainly concerned with contemporary life in *High Summer* (1931), *The Porch* (1937), *The ROOM Within* (1940), *The Sampler* (1942), *The Stronghold and the Porch* (1944). He is a quiet, careful writer whose construction should be noted. The novels of Winifred Ashton ("Clemence Dane"), who is better known as a dramatist, are skilful above the average, as in *Regiment of Women* (1917) and *Broome Stages* (1931). Elizabeth Bowen has many popular novels to her credit, from which we choose *Friends and delations* (1931), *Last September* (1929), and *Death of the Heart* (1938) as representative and, in the second two, perhaps her best work. Margaret

Kennedy will be long remembered for her first and best novel, *Constant Nymph* (1924). Storm Jameson has steadily improved throughout her novels, so that her latest work is her best. Of it we mention *Cousin Honort* (1940), *Then We Shall Hear Singing* (1942), *The Other Side* (1946).

Margaret Irwin has been a superb writer of historical stories in *Koya/ Flush* (1932) and *The Gay Galliard* (1941), with particular success in the Stuart period. Another writer exceptionally able in presenting the atmosphere and factual reality of period writing is David Leslie Murray (b. 1888), who has had considerable success with *Regency* (1936), *Tale of Three Cities* (1940), *"Enter Three Witches* (1942), *Folly bridge* (1945), and *Leading Lady* (1947), which are marked by soundness of plot, characterisation in the round, and fidelity of detail. The historical novels of Maurice Walsh (b. 1879) have also been enormously popular. They are romantic and adventurous rather than historical. Inclined to repetition, the stories nevertheless continue to please with their open-air setting, running burns, trout-fishing, and smell of smouldering peat, not to mention the adventures and the sting of whisky at the right moment. *The Key Above the Door* (1923) was followed by *While Rivers Run* (1926), *The Small Dark Man* (1929), *Blackcock's Feather* (1932), *Man in Brown* (1945), *A Man for Castle Gillrain* (1948). Less concerned with half-lights and mysterious twilights are the novels of Neil Gunn (b. 1891), writer of adventurous stories with a Scottish setting. *Grey Coast*

(1926), *Highland River* (1937), *Wild Geese Overhead* (1939), *The Key of the Chest* (1946), *The Drinking Well* (1947) are among his satisfying books.

Completely in contrast by reason of sophistication and the cosmopolitan life they describe are the novels of William Gerhardt (b. 1895), more popular in America than England. *Futility* (1922), *The Polyglots* (1925), *My Sinful Earth* (1928) showed a diminishing promise which has not been renewed. Equally out of the beaten track was Radclyffe Hall, whose *Well of Loneliness* (1928), notorious and banned, caused great excitement because of its alleged obscenity or blasphemy. A penetrating study of introversion, where the introversion is expressed by the posture of outward events and their significance to the central character, it necessarily appears exaggerated and often obscure. The book has real literary value, but its notoriety has prevented readers from appreciating Miss Hall's gifts, shown for instance in *Adam's Breed* (1926). Another writer whose way is unusual and whose structure is sometimes a cause of doubt to readers is "Claude Houghton" (C. H. Oldfield), who commanded attention with *I am Jonathan Scrivener* (1930). This has been retained by *Chaos Is Come Again* (1932), *Christina* (1936), *Six Lives and a Book* (1943), and in *Birthmark* (1950). His novels bear re-reading by the serious student of the novel, for they overcome the artificiality of the soundly constructed plots and the impression that the author is ingenious rather than inspired. He has, in fact, real inspiration,

but there is a self-consciousness about it which appears to impede its ease of expression. There is no doubt that Houghton has high aims as a craftsman, a remark which applies equally to Ray Coryton Hutchinson (b. 1907), whose career has been interrupted by war. That he is purposeful is clear from *Thou Hast a Devil* (1930), *The Answering Glory* (1932), the more notable *The Unforgotten Prisoner* (1933), *One Burning Light* (1935), *Shining Scabbard* (1936), *Testament* (1938), *The Fire and the Wood* (1940), and the brief novel, *Interim* (1945)-

Winifred Holtby (1898-1935) is popularly remembered for *South EJding* (1936), although this is probably the least satisfactory of her novels. With its wide range of characters, its success in stimulating interest in petty municipal affairs, it is less revealing of the author's gifts than *Anderby Wold* (1923), *Poor Caroline* (1931), *Mandoa, Mandoa* (1933). Her bright personality, zest for life, her passionate belief that each should work for the good of all his fellows, both in private life and as widely beyond it as possible, are shown more clearly within the narrower compass of the less-known novels. Their readers should gain a clear acquaintance with the author by turning to *Lettersto a Friend* (1937).

Stella Gibbons had some gift for satire, especially of rustic life, which best found expression in *Cold Comfort Farm* (1932). Monica Dickens (b. 1915), great-granddaughter of Charles Dickens, studies her subjects at first hand, whether they are the life of a housemaid, a

nurse, a pigeon-fancier, or a psychiatrist. The reality of her novels has thus earned her a steadily increasing circulation for *One Pair of Hands* (1939), *Mariana* (1940), *One Pair of Feet* (1942), *The Fancy* (1943), *Thursday Afternoons* (1945), *The Happy Prisoner* (1946), and *Flowers on the Grass* (1949).

Uniformly satisfying, Gerald Bullett (b. 1893) has written soundly conceived novels in his family history—*The History of Egg Pandervil* (1928), *Nicky, Son of Egg* (1929), and *The Pandervils* (1930)—and elsewhere, as in *The Bending Sickle* (1938), *The Elderbrook Brothers* (1945), *Judgement in Suspense* (1946). A slightly ironical detachment, a sympathetic understanding even of those who provoke her amusement, are shown by Victoria Sackville-West (b. 1892) in *The Edwardians* (1930) and *All Passion Spent* (1931). Her prose is pointed, rhythmical, and suitable to her matter. Less satisfactory, because of a reserve (or impression of it) which prevents his novels from attaining freedom and complete conviction, is L. A. G. Strong (b. 1896). In spite of his gifts, most apparent in *The Brothers*, *The Unpractised Heart*, and *The Director*, we are aware of the printed page, of the telling of the story, in *Dewer Rides*, *The Garden*, *All Fall Down*, *Othello's Occupation*. In spite of this fault, his work is more artistic than that of Archibald Joseph Cronin/ whose *Hatter's Castle* (1931) was an instant success. He was less sure of himself, because further removed from his range, in *Three Loves* (1932), and *Grand Canary* (1933), but returned to his better writing in *The Stars Look*

Down (1935), *The Citadel* (1937), *The Keys of the Kingdom* (1942). In these books he treats of an apparently real life in much the same manner as Warwick Deeping in *Sorrell and Son* and other books. There are true gifts, well used, yet one feels that there is a deliberate writing for the lending library. Additionally, in Cronin's case, there was the desire to rebel, expose abuses, show the glittering immorality of everyday life. Then came *The Green Years* (1944) and *Shannon's Way* (1948), which increase in mellowness of thought and decrease the harshness of style often apparent in the more sensational novels. Cronin's fully satisfying work may yet be done as his inspiration develops to harmonise with his talent.

Of more recent writers, Joseph Mallalieu (b. 1908) is realistic without aiming at anything exceptional in style. He has become more interesting from *Rats* (1941) and *Passed to You* (1942) to *Very Ordinary Seaman* (1944). The adventure of Neil Paterson's *China Rjtn* (1948) helped to make an excellent book, while Walter Marsden, in *The Wasp's Nest*, showed himself to be an author of special interest for the future. The quiet narrative of daily life has been excellently written by Barbara Noble, in *The House Opposite* (1943) and *Doreen* (1946).

Also concerned with daily life and the effect on character of its influences is Leo Walmsley (b. 1892). In *Phantom Lobster* (1933), *Foreigners* (1935), and *Master Mariner* (1948) there is excellent reportage. However, it is in *Three Fevers* (1932) and *Sally Lunn* (1937) that

the fishermen of the north-east coast really come to life, with a vitality and a briskness of incident which wholly convince. They have the genuine inspiration which enables Walmsley to make the most effective use of his often remarkable talent. He has also written *So Many Loves* and, in 1939, the autobiographical *Love in the Sun*. The scrupulous care with which his novels are written and revised belongs also to Henry Williamson, whose delicacy of writing and sensitivity of perception were apparent in the tetralogy, *The Flax of Dream* (1921-28). Frequent re-writing of his work gives the excellent texture of *The Old Stag* (1926), *Tarka the Otter* (1927), *Salar the Salmon* (1935) and *The Phasian Bird* (1949).

The prose of Rebecca West's fiction has been held to be too conscious and esoteric. It is difficult to agree with the view. It is more sensuous than that of Sir Osbert Sitwell, but it is as authentic a medium as her psychological method, which might so easily become extreme, is reasonable and effective. The best example of her fiction is *The Return of the Soldier* (1918). More mannered and repetitive was the style of Mary Webb (1883-1927), whose *Precious Bane* (1924), *Gone to Earth*, and other novels show that her literary skill was less than her insight into character and rustic life. A novel about University life, *Dusty Answer* (1927), won attention for Rosamond Lehmann, who has since written work of distinction and made some interesting experiments in form, as in *The Ballad and the Source* (1944).

Also interesting as an experimentalist in approach, David Garnett (b. 1892) has written *Lady into Fox* (1923), *A Man in the Zoo*, *The Sailor's Return*, *Go She Must!*, *The Grasshoppers Come*, *Beany-Eye*. The curious feature of Garnett's flights into fantasy is that they do not, in the first novel, for instance, leave one with the viewpoint of either man or fox. Instead a new viewpoint is discovered which is often disturbing and sometimes shocking.

A deeply thoughtful writer who achieves a beautiful prose is L. H. Myers, whose trilogy *The Root and the Flower* (completed 1935 and comprising *The Near and the Far*, *Prince Jali*, *Rajah Atnar*) is one of the most important of contemporary novels.

Henry Green (b. 1905) is another writer to be watched. Terse in style, with psychological insight into character, which he analyses closely, he has written *blindness* (1926), *Living* (1929), *Party Going* (1939), *Pack My Bag* (1940), *Caught* (1943), *Loving* (1945), *Back* (1946).

Anne Crone's word-careful, effective first novel *Bridie Steen* (1949) is memorable; it may be important.

Joyce Gary (b. 1888) projects himself wholly into his characters, whether an African clerk, a slum child, or a Protestant lawyer. He has shown himself consistently one of our leading novelists, through books including *Aissa Saved* (1932), *Mister Johnson* (1939), *Charley is My Darling* (1940), *To Be a Pilgrim* (1942), *The Horse's Mouth* (1944), *A Fearful Joy* (1949). The excellence of George Orwell (Eric Blair (1904-50)

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was shown in *Animal Farm* (1945) and *1984* (1949), and critical writings.

Unique in every way and inimitable, Ivy Compton-Burnett has written twelve surprising novels, including *Dolores* (1911) and *Manservant and Maidservant* (1946). With one exception, they deal with families in their own homes between 1888 and 1902. Their sole aim is study of character, which is revealed almost entirely by dialogue, since this is the most immediate method for complete exhibition. The action is slight, the unfolding of the story is slow, and the limited aim of the novels requires quiet contemplation rather than the excitement of plot. Students of the novel cannot afford to miss the author's work.

The work of Ian Niall is of increasing interest, and may be usefully compared with that of Leo Walmsley; both excel when handling familiar material. Live characterisation, compelling interest, a soundly constructed story with plenty of movement, have marked *No Place to Rest*, *Tune on a Melodeon*, and *Foxhollow* (1949).

Chapter Two

Other Fiction

(i) The " Thriller " Novel

To the uninitiated the term *jazz* means any music which they do not recognise as being *serious*. The knowledgeable, however, regard such a view as not merely ignorant but hostile, and insist on the actual distinctions between *Waltz* and *swing* and *boogie-woogie* and *jive* and perhaps a few newer distinctions by the time this book is in print. No doubt they are right, and there are eager readers who likewise insist on the use of correct connotations for *detective*, *adventure*, *mystery*, *thriller*, and *crime* stories.

Here also we must admit the correctness of an attitude which might be irksome were it not for the fact that we can be little concerned with it, since most of the books so carefully classified are not literary. Some of them, however, show all the elements which make a book something more than reading matter. They have good characterisation, skilfully used dialogue, wit, soundness of plot, even humour, and that suspense which is literary because it causes a " willing suspension of disbelief ". Perhaps we may mention, out of gratitude, Bram Stoker's *Dracula* and Mrs. Belloc-Lowndes' *The Lodger*.

The genesis of the "thriller" comes from mystery stories such as Wilkie Collins's ever-popular *The Moonstone* and *The Woman in White*. After these novels two important dates are landmarks in the progress of the detective story. The first is 1897, when Arthur Conan Doyle (1859-1930) published *A Study in Scarlet*, and introduced Sherlock Holmes. From then onwards a public eager for detective stories was formed, since the story was wanted for its particular qualities. Not any story would do, but only a story about the detection of crime. The next date is 1913, when E. C. Bentley (b. 1875) wrote *Trent's Last Case*. This won over the critics, for, whatever they might say about Doyle's longer crime stories, Trent's book was a novel. The plot was exciting, but the interest of the book did not turn only on the solution of a crime. It was in this last point that a distinction became possible, which had scarcely been possible since Wilkie Collins, between the crime element and the theme of the story.

By the observance of this distinction, as well as of the ordinary technique of the novel which we outlined in the first volume of this book, we differentiate between the mere "detective" novel and the real novels in which detection of crime occurs. The same holds good for the short story, and should be borne in mind, for instance, in recognising the literary merit of *The Innocence of Father Brown* and seeing its absence in many other stories and full-length books which are at least its equals as "thrillers".

To enumerate the authors of "detective", "thriller", and similar novels, even if they were all qualified to rank as literary authors, would require more space than we can use. And to try to separate the skilled writers who are not literary, in the sense that they do not desire to write real novels, from those whose aim is to write a novel in which crime and its resulting adventures or detection are featured, would be rather useless. For people who are able to distinguish the novel from the story, the literary form from the mere tale, do not require a list to help them see the value of their authors. It is sufficient to say that, as the writing of "detective" novels has become increasingly specialised, with the law, medicine, psychology, criminology, and every other expert aid carefully brought into use, this kind of book has gained remarkable value even apart from its form. The following authors all have considerable merit in one or more branches of the "detective" or "thriller" story: Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, E. C. Bentley, Anthony Berkeley, Francis Iles, Ngaio Marsh, Freeman Wills-Crofts, J. J. Connington, R. Austin Freeman, Agatha Christie, "Josephine Bell", Margery Allingham, Rt. Rev. Mgr. Ronald Knox, Nicholas Blake, "Francis Beeding" and "David Pilgrim" (joint pseudonyms of Hilary A. St. George and the late John Palmer), Milward Kennedy, Edmund Crispin, Dilwyn Rees, H. C. Bailey, "Richard Keverne", Philip MacDonald, Laurence Meynell, A. E. W. Mason, Edgar Wallace, Gladys Mitchell, G. D. H.

and I. M. Cole, Hammond Innes, Mary Fitt (who also writes on classical Greek literature), John Ferguson, Henry Wade, Julian Symons, John Innes Mackintosh Stewart ("Michael Innes"), C. H. B. Kitchin, and intelligent, sardonic Malcolm Muggeridge.

One might add "Josephine Tey" (the dramatist, Miss Gordon Daviot). And Dorothy Sayers cannot be omitted, since she is not only in the "best-seller" class of "detective" novelists, but a recent translator of Dante's *Divina Commedia*[^] author of *The Man Born to be King* (1942), which was one of the most appreciated plays yet broadcast, and of such books as her *Op. I* (verse, 1916), *Unpopular Opinions* (1946), and *Creed or Chaos* (1947).

The purpose of this brief review is satisfied, without any further listing of writers, by its pointing out that some novels have real literary form and technique, and that others have specialised knowledge and great skill which rise well above the level of ordinary storytelling. It is from them that we shall be able, when they can be viewed at a distance, to see unmistakably which have earned a place in our literature. In the meantime we need do nothing more than thoroughly enjoy them.

(ii) The Short Story

(a) General

Although the short story has been a formed piece of writing in English literature for almost eighty years, an evaluation of its authors or examples would still be

a hazardous undertaking. This is partly because it is an ephemeral form of writing which the public prefers to look for in periodical literature and chooses not to buy in book form. Consequently most authors do not use the short story as a serious art form, but only as a means of profitably entertaining magazine readers. The body of good short-story writing, then, is still comparatively small. Its contents are remarkably varied. Consequently we do not attempt to judge the merits of short-story writers comparatively, but are content to refer to some of them whom the reader who wishes to study this form should not omit. The theory of the short story has been dealt with in our first volume.

Short stories of distinction were rare before 1900. Such examples as R. L. Stevenson's *Sire de Mattedroifs Door*, where the manner rather than the matter is found to be the secret of success, were exceptional. Towards the close of the nineteenth century the short-story technique improved, chiefly through the theory and practice of Edgar Allen Poe and Nathaniel Hawthorne. Nevertheless, although Eden Phillpotts was writing sound stories, there was little worthy of note, unless we include such " rattling good yarns " (technically good yarns, too) as Cutcliffe Hynes's " Captain Kettle " series. The first serious writer in this form who made a definitely literary advance was St. John Lucas (1879-1934), whose stories now appear to be almost forgotten. Told with quiet irony, they are excellent reading and should be sought for, in *Saints*,

Sinners, and the Usual People (1912) and *The Lady of the Canaries* (1913). At the same time the stories of Stacy Aumonier and Leonard Merrick, both masters of the form, supreme in matter and manner, should be read.

Within a few years of the opening of the century the demand for short stories increased enormously, an interest stirred up chiefly by the "Sherlock Holmes" stories of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle and, to a lesser extent, the stories of W. W. Jacobs previously mentioned. Stories completely different from those of detection or humour were written by H. H. Munro ("Saki", 1870-1916), whose *The Chronicles of Clovis* (1911) excelled in irony, wit, and humorous characterisation. A novel, *The Unbearable Bassington* (1912), preceded his next collection in *Beasts and Superbeasts* (1914). Munro's popularity followed his death, in action, during the war. So far the short story had not been specially literary nor a vehicle for impressionism nor, like Munro's, satire. It had been mostly a means for telling stories of adventure or mystery, or like W. J. Locke's *The Joyous Adventures of Aristide Pujol*, or with mingled humour, pathos, and foreign travel as in Merrick's *While Paris Laughed* (1918).

Two writers, however, were busily shaping the future of the English short story, both using it as an artistic medium for their own purposes. Arthur Machen (1863-1947) wrote *The Hill of Dreams* (1907) and, although occasionally descending to a cheaply journalistic story, usually maintained a high level of authorship in his chosen role of hinting at another

world into which we may inadvertently stray from this. This was often his subject, in *The Great God Pan*, *The House of Souls*, *The Bowmen*, *Dog and Duck*. A. E. Coppard (b. 1878), slight in matter but accomplished in manner and form, was supported by serious critics of the short story, and his work has always led towards increasing perfection in this branch of fiction. Of his many books of stories we may note *Adam and Eve and Pinch Me* (1921), *My Hundredth Story* (1931), *Selected Tales* (1946).

Stories more specialised in matter were written by Walter de la Mare in *Henry Brocken* (1904), since when he has written many other stories, unique in their suggestion of unreality made real, in addition to the full-length studies *The Return* (1910), *Three Mulla Mulgars* (1910), *Memoirs of a Midget* (1921).

Katherine Mansfield (born Kathleen Beauchamp, 1888-1923) published *In a German Pension* in 1911. Her quiet, perfect craftsmanship is used in stories of character and scene rather than of action. The lightest touches serve to reveal personality or significance, and she is at her happiest in stories of children. Some of her best work is in *Bliss* (1920), and her last book was *The Garden Party* (1922).

H. E. Bates, a literary experimentalist of great skill and sensitivity, has written many excellent short stories, collected in *Thirty Tales* (1934), *Short and Sweet*, *My Uncle Silas*, *The Flying Goat*, *Cut and Come Again*, *Through the Woods*, and other books.

The short story should further be studied in *The*

Black Venus (1944), *The Trip to London* (1946) and *Boy with a Trumpet* (1949) by Rhys Davies (b. 1903).

One of the best writers was H. G. Wells, some of whose stories (the "story" usually predominates, whereas in later authors the technique or message is presumed to be more important) equal the best that has appeared. Unfortunately he could be equally bad—the story about the taxidermist is perhaps the worst ever perpetrated by a serious artist—but there are many items in his *Collected Short Stories* which are of great merit.

To suggest that humour in any way detracts from the literary merit of a story is obviously ridiculous. Yet the fact remains that the stories of Pelham Grenville Wodehouse (b. 1881) are rarely mentioned in manuals of English literature. The truth is that they are among the best written and, strictly from the literary point of view, are not to be surpassed. If perfect suitability of language to matter, a neat, sound plot, skilfully handled form, are the marks of a good short story, then Wodehouse has succeeded all the way from *The Pothunters* (1902) to *Full Moon* (1947).

There is also merit in the stories of J. Maclaren-Ross, William Sansom, T. O. Beachcroft, H. A. Manhood, V. S. Pritchett, Harold Nicolson (who sometimes used real people in his stories), Lord Dunsany, and Sir Osbert Sitwell, of whose several books we may choose *Triple Fugue* (1924), since it includes both his one murder story and the exquisitely narrated story about the Misses Cantrell-Cooksey.

Mary Lavin shares with " Said " the curious faculty of being able to bring the reader up sharply, and apparently without meaning to do so, with a stinging sense of his own defects. Her *Tales from the Active Bridge* (1943) revealed a disconcerting power of insight into other people. Frank O'Connor came into the front rank with *Crab-Apple jelly* (1944).

Tales of the supernatural or macabre have not been favoured, perhaps because the supernatural is less credited with having a real existence and the macabre seems too like the front page of a morning newspaper. Since J. Sheridan le Fanu and his powerful stories and novels, such as *The House by the Churchyard*, *Uncle Silas*, and others, this kind of story has languished. W. W. Jacobs gave us *The Well* and *The Monkey's Paw*, and other writers have ventured an occasional story which is frankly " weird ".

Two authors have specialised in this *genre*. Algernon Blackwood (b. 1869) excelled in *The Empty House* (1906), *John Silence* (1908), *The Tales of Algernon Blackwood* (1938) and others. Montague Rhodes James (1862-1936) was utterly convincing in the Le Fanu manner in *Ghost Stories of an Antiquary* (1904), in a similar series (1911), and in *A Thin Ghost and Others* (1919). Likewise A. N. L. Munby's *The Alabaster Hand* (1949) is notable. Several hundred stories are broadcast each year, and the fact that they are heard instead of being, at least in the first place, read does not preclude them from being considered as possible literature. It is regrettable that a genuinely

radio technique has not been exploited by authors. One form of it was discovered and successfully used by "A. J. Alan". Winston Clewes, T. G. Hopkinson, and Legh Lowes deserve mention.

(b) *The "Thriller"*

As we noticed when dealing with "thriller" novels, the term is wide and uncertain. Definition of it is scarcely required by the short story, since most stories of mystery are tales of crime and detection. Those in which the detection is unimportant differ little in technique from R. L. Stevenson's *Markheim*. Much good work has been done in the mystery story, strictly so called, but there has been small progress except where the author has been mainly concerned with craftsmanship, in which cases his work is only nominally of the "thriller" class.

In the "detective" short story there is little which can be called literature. The name can certainly be given to Conan Doyle's stories and to the "Father Brown" series of G. K. Chesterton. Most other writers have found it difficult enough to put all their material into the short length of the story; to write literature as well makes the task too difficult. Excellent as many of these stories are, and much as we enjoy the excitement in relaxation which they bring, we cannot admit our friends, Montague Egg, Dr. Thorndyke, Mr. Fortune, and the rest of them, into the world where the gaunt Holmes waits, on a foggy November evening, for the ringing of his bell in

Baker Street, or the tubby priest is found straying, on a windy hill against a flaming sunset, pondering a stolen tea-spoon and the whole moral theology of fallen man. We shall see their like again, but the thrilling and the literary do not often meet us as one.

Chapter Three

Life and Letters

(i) Autobiography

BIOGRAPHY has always been a popular form of reading in England, and this popularity increased in the twentieth century. The increase may be partly due to the continued rise in the educational level of the people, partly to a wider interest in the " psychology " of others, partly to a desire to live vicariously the experiences of others as an escape from the ever more oppressive routine of systematised living which the century has brought with it.

George Moore's *Memoirs of My Dead "Life* (1906) has been in constant demand; if its factual value is both small and exasperating to those whose affairs are touched by it, to the general reader it has at least the merit of reading like good fiction. The fictional element was more pronounced in *Ave Atque Vale* (1912), a bizarre version of events which requires close checking, especially where the author deals with contemporaries and the Celtic Revival.

The merits of the *Autobiography of Lady Oxford and Asquith* in 1920 were the opposite of those in Moore's books, since they add to witty comment a good deal of out-of-the-way information about people and events which gives it an historical value.

In both cases the main attraction of the books lay in their " sidelights on the great " content, in which they differ from the *Autobiography of a Super-Tramp* (1908) by W. H. Davies, where the poet related events of his hobo days in America and the incidents of his poverty and early literary life in England. The book has a sufficiency of humour and realism. The adventure of life is also the subject of *Fortune Grass* (1934) by Mabel Lethbridge. Howard Spring (b. 1889) dealt frankly but not unfairly with the hard facts of his early life in *Heaven Ltes About Us* (1939). The record is continued in *In the Meantime* (1942) and in *And Another Thing* (1946). Less effective, but well written, was *A Cornish Childhood* (1942) by A. L. Rowse, while sensitivity and insight into the growing mind are shown in Forrest Reid's *Apostate* (1926).

The artist's enjoyment of life is set out with grace and humour in *Impressions that Remained* (1919) by Dame Ethel Smyth (1858-1944), composer of several operas and other musical works. The same detached and witty commentary on life appears in Maurice Baring's *Puppet Show of Memory* (1922) and *Have You Anything to Declare ?* (1936). A mixture of this with *causerie* made the public welcome Mrs. Belloc-Lowndes' trilogy, *I Too Have Lived in Arcadia* (1941), *Where Love and Friendship Dwelt* (1943), and *The Merry Wives of Westminster* (1946).

Lovers of Nature have given us some of the best autobiographical writing, such as Richard Jefferies's lovely *The Story of My Heart* (1883). William Henry

Hudson (1841-1922) recorded feelings and impressions rather than actual events in *Far Away and Long Ago*. Less known but equally attractive is *A Small Boj in the Sixties* by George Sturt, the Berkshire son of a wheelwright. It is concerned with rustic character rather than scenery, and is told with appropriate feeling and atmosphere.

In 1929 Robert Graves published *Good-bye to All That*, a highly personal comment by a man not then thirty-five, on the events and beliefs of his time. The book provoked much discussion and was honestly candid. In the same year appeared Axel Munthe's strange and haunting *Story of San Michele*, which quickly became a best seller. Another autobiography much in demand was *Testament of Youth* (1933) by Vera Brittain, which expressed with sincerity the authoress's view of the results of the war years. E. F. Benson's *As We Were* (1930) provided another important social document, the period covered here being the Edwardian. The account is excellent, charming, and faithful. Shortly before his death the novelist completed his reminiscences in *Final Edition: An Informal Autobiography* (1940). At the same time interest was drawn to *Rjzin Upon Godshill* (1939) by J. B. Priestley, whose previous *Midnight on the Desert* (1937) had been in the same vein, and also to Sir Hugh Walpole's *Roman Fountain* (1940), which was episodically autobiographical.

By contrast *An Experiment in Autobiography : Discoveries and Conclusions of a Very Ordinary Man* (1934)

by H. G. Wells narrated frank autobiography but was, in any deeper sense, uninforming. The book was generously charitable where it might have been bitter or contentious; disappointed, the reader feels that it ultimately tells little. It may be contrasted with Frank Swinnerton's excellent *Swinnerton: an Autobiography* (1937)-

Death prevented the completion of the delightful *Memories and Opinions* (1944) of Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch, the product of a gracious and orderly mind. Balance and dignity mark Sir Thomas Beecham's aptly titled *A Mingled Chime* (1944), and there is grace in *Farewell, My Youth* (1943), in which Sir Arnold Bax recalls his early years in Ireland and London, and in his *Rosemary for Remembrance* (1948).

A literary event was the publication of four volumes by Sir Osbert Sitwell, *Left Hand, Right Hand!* (1945), *The Scarlet Tree* (1946), *Great Morning* (1948), and *Laughter in the Next Room* (1949).

The books survey a wide scene and refer to many people well known in public life and in artistic circles. The relations between the author and his father are described with a clear-eyed respect similar to that of Sir Edmund Gosse. The writing is inclined to self-consciousness. As one of the finest prosemen of the time, Sir Osbert Sitwell has perhaps been tempted to strain too far; the prose is occasionally too stretched, although always rich and classical in texture.

Sean O'Casey has expressed his views on politics and drama in three books, *I Knock at the Door* (1939),
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Pictures in the Hallway (1942), and *Drums under the Window* (1945). The record continues in *Irish/alien, Fare Thee Well* (1949). The books have realism and poetic imagination, but suffer to some extent from too much reflection on troubles grievous at the time but now past, and not to be repined against while life continues to offer new experiences.

Other books or authors requiring mention must include the *Autobiography* of G. K. Chesterton, full of delightful rumination, originality, and reticence. Lord Tweedsmuir's *Memory Hold-the-Door* has previously been mentioned. G. G. Coulton's *Fourscore Years* (1943) was worthy of its author. Winston S. Churchill's autobiographical *The Second World War* has not disappointed, the author's literary ability being suited to sustain both the grimness and gaiety of the volumes so far published—*The Gathering Storm* (1948) and *Their Finest Hour* (1949).

Interest has continued in *The Arches of the Years* by Halliday Sutherland (b. 1882). The prose value of writing by George Santayana may be debated, but there is much interest in his recollections, in which *Persons and Places* has been followed by *Middle Span* (1948), whether these pages deal with his own family, universities, or persons of international reputation. The Poet Laureate, John Masefield, has published an account of his early struggles in his *In the Mill* (1940) and of his naval training in *New Chum* (1944).

Autobiographical writing of interest has also been given to us by Somerset Maugham, Eric Gill, Elizabeth

Bowen, George Orwell, Arthur Waugh, Henry Williamson, L. E. O. Charlton, and Denton Welch (1908-49), a young writer of great talent whose *Maiden Voyage* (1943) gave promise which was fulfilled by *In Youth is Pleasure*. His short stories, *Brave and Cruel*, appeared shortly before his death.

One of the best autobiographies was that of Neville Cardus. Best-known of literary journalists, the author relates almost nothing of his personal life, but a great deal, in distinguished prose, of his life among letters, sport, and music. Related to it in some of its interests is *46 Not Out* (1948) by R. C. Robertson-Glasgow, scholar, wit, and cricketer.

The traveller F. D. Ommanney (b. 1903) has also written interesting reminiscences, as also have W. Graham Robertson (in his remarkable *Time Was*, 1945), Edith Sitwell, Rose Macaulay, and St. John Ervine.

(ii) Biography

The twentieth century opened with the Earl of Rosebery (Archibald Philip Primrose, 1847-1929) continuing his excellent work, which had included *Pitt* (1891), *Peel* (1899), and the popular *Napoleon, the Last Phase* (1900). Later came the short but excellent *Lord Randolph Churchill* (1906) and *Chatham, his Early Life and Connections* (1910). Unsited to historical research, Rosebery excelled in live portraits.

Winston S. Churchill (b. 1874) published a life of *Lord Randolph Churchill* in 1906 and completed in 1938

his monumental *Mar/borough : His Life and Times*, where his talent for characterisation, panoramic description, vividness and exactness of military detail and movement had the widest scope.

In 1907 Sir Edmund Gosse published *Father and Son*, in which an irreconcilable clash between temperaments is fully examined with fairness and reverence. The book has remained a model of what such books should be.

The derisory element which some authors allowed themselves was established as a fashion by Giles Lytton Strachey (1880-1932). The war years of 1914-18 were followed by disillusionment and a desire to make the past appear pretentious. Consequently Strachey's second book (his first, *Landmarks in French Literature*, 1912, was a serviceable commentary), which was "*Eminent Victorians* (1918), perfectly suited the mood of the time. Viewing personalities of the nineteenth century with the unfocused eyes of the early twentieth, stripping them bare of almost everything except humanity and giving to that a nakedness unobservable in its own day and unimportant in any other, Strachey contrived to present acceptable portraits of Florence Nightingale and General Gordon. Other portraits, such as that of Cardinal Manning, were more balanced, but were yet unreasonable representations. The book was widely read, its irreverence enjoyed, its more sober parts accepted as the bread which went with the jam. The extravagances were diminished in *Queen Victoria* (1921), in which a queen and a woman appeared. This

was Strachey's best book, showing that his method had value when rightly used. Far less happy was *Elizabeth and Essex* (1928), which, contributing nothing to history, was merely "biography as entertainment".

After an uncertain start among short studies, later collected as *Men of Letters*, *Men of Affairs*, and *Men of War* (which were published as *Collected Essays*, 1927), Philip Guedalla (1889-1944) showed that he was more than a disciple of Strachey. His shorter sketches had improved to the standard of *Supers and Supermen* (1920) and *A Gallery* (1924) when he wrote *The Second Empire* (1922). Thoughtful in characterisation and thorough in documentation, Guedalla had a prose style both distinguished and popular, although his pages occasionally smelt of the lamp. *Palmerston* (1926) was a marked advance, and Guedalla reached his best in *The Duke* (1931), an excellent portrait of Wellington. More panoramic than strictly biographical was *The Hundred Years* (1936), centred on the abdication of Edward VIII. A high level was again reached in *The Two Marshals* (Bazaine and Pétain) in 1943.

Arthur Bryant (b. 1899) ^{is able to} bring an age to life as easily as a people. His insight into character is sympathetic without being biased. These reasons, apart from the soundness of his prose, account for the good reception given to *Charles II* (1931). Of his *Samuel Pepys*, begun in 1933, *The Man in the Making* and *The Years of Peril* have appeared. His interest in epochs led him to *English Saga* (1940), a review of the preceding hundred years, as well as to the Napo-

Iconic Wars in *The Years of Endurance* (1942) and *The Years of Victory* (1944).

Sir Herbert John Grierson (b. 1866) added to Lockhart's work by his excellent *Sir Walter Scott* (1937). Evelyn Waugh (b. 1903) gave a most readable account of the Jesuit martyr in *Campion* (1935), and Professor R. W. Chambers was no less readable in his *Sir Thomas More* (1935), based on careful research. Biography at its best is also found in A. Duff Cooper's (b. 1890) *Talleyrand*[^] published 1932, which shows an excellent sense of period; in Captain B. H. Liddell Hart's *Sherman* (1930), *Foch—the Man of Orleans* (1931), and the less accomplished *Haig* (1936); in the more popularly written manuals by John Buchan (Lord Tweedsmuir), namely *Montrose* (1928), *Sir Walter Scott*[^] *Julius Caesar* (1932), *Oliver Cromwell* (1934), *Augustus* (1937). Lord David Cecil (b. 1902), an excellent proseman and discerning critic, wrote of Cowper in *The Stricken Deer* (1929), and of *Sir Walter Scott* (1933), *Early Victorian Novelists* (1934) and *Jane Austen* (1935). Lord Melbourne (1939) was followed by *Hardy the Novelist* (1943); *Two Quiet Lives* (Dorothy Osborne and Thomas Gray, 1948) is one of his best studies. Professor J. E. Neale's *Queen Elizabeth* (1934) was acclaimed while J. B. Morton's *The Bastille Falls* (1936) and *The Dauphin* (1937) were outstanding. E. M. Forster made use of new facts about the Bronte family in his *Charlotte Bronte* (1932) and filled a gap in biographical records by his excellent study of an influential but little-known scholar in *Goldsworthy*

Lowes Dickinson (1934). Christopher Lloyd's *Fanny Burney* (1938) and *Captain Marry at and the Old Navy* (1939) deserve notice, as do G. P. Gooch's biographies of *Charles, Third Earl Stanhope* and *Lord Courtney*. The reputation of Peter Quennell (b. 1905) has risen steadily through the publication of *Tyron: The Years of Fame* (1935), *Byron in Italy* (1941), and *Four Portraits* (1945). Similar in interest is Austin K. Gray's *Teresa* (1948), the story of Byron's last mistress.

Of books by A. J. A. Symons (1900-41), *WhtQuest for Corvo* (1934), an account of the tragic Frederick Rolfe, has been most in demand. The author's method, as well as his narrative, is original and arresting. His excellent short biography, *H. M. Stanley* (1933), may be linked with *Livingstone's Last Journey* (1945) by Sir Reginald Coupland, whose *Raffles of Singapore* (1946) was spirited and informative.

Charles Dickens has been the subject of two outstanding studies, apart from the biographical essay by G. K. Chesterton and Forster's standard work. These are the biography by George Gissing (in 1898), which is unlikely to be surpassed as a comprehensive study, and Dame Una Pope-Hennessy's *Charles Dickens* (1945). In literary biography Edmund Blunden (b. 1896) gave us a *Life of Leigh Hunt* (1930), *Charles Lamb and His Contemporaries* (1934), *Keats⁹ Publisher* (1936), and *Thomas Hardy* (1942), while originality of conception led to discussion about his *Shelley* (1946).

Interest in Lamb was congenial to the essayist Edward Verrall Lucas (1868-1938), who wrote *Bernard*

Barton and His Friends (1893), *Charles Lamb and the Lloyds* (1898), and a *Life of Charles Lamb* (1908). These books are Lucas at his best. John William Mackail (1859-1945) wrote two excellent biographies in *William Morris* (1899) and *George Wyndham* (1925).

Historical biography in the tradition of Hilaire Belloc began with his *Danton* (1899), which many readers hold to be his best book in this line. The least important, *Joan of Arc*, appeared in 1929 and, of the major biographies, *Wolsey* and *Richelieu* in 1930, followed by *Cranmer* (1931) and *A Study of Louis XIV* (1938). As in the case of his history, Belloc loses value through lack of notation. His mass of detail is almost incredibly well handled and critics have often shown that it is accurate. The ordinary reader, however, would be assured by a reasonable amount of references. Apart from this defect, the books in themselves are splendid biography. Readers who distrust them will probably prefer Professor Albert Pollard (b. 1869) in his *A. Life of Thomas Cranmer* (1904) and *Wolsey* (1929).

General competence such as is found in biography is equalled in no other branch of writing save that of the novel. Consequently many single works or works which are only part of their authors' output must be mentioned, such as *Titus Dates* (1949) by the historical novelist, Jane Lane. George Dangerfield (b. 1904) has dealt competently with matters of post-Victorian interest in *Victoria's Heir: The Education of a Prince* (1942). Its title will recall to some Sir Theodore

Martin's *Life of the Prince Consort* (1880), written at the request of Queen Victoria. Field-Marshal Viscount Wavell wrote a most readable book in *Allenby*, while an outstanding event of 1948 was the publication of the life of Nelson written by Carola Oman, a book of markedly objective writing with a minimum of theory or comment. Miss Oman had previously written lives of *Prince Charles Edward*, *Henrietta Maria* and *Elizabeth of "Bohemia"*. Other biographies demanding notice are H. E. Wortham's account of *Oscar Browning* (1927); Edward Thompson's recollections of *Robert Bridges* (1944); D. B. Wyndham Lewis's excellent lives of *Villon* (1936) and *Ronsard* (1944); a more recent biography of *Villon* is that of Cecily Mackworth in 1948. Artists have been the subjects of D. S. MacColl (*The Life, Work, and Setting of Philip Wilson Steer*, 1945) and Marguerite Steen (*William Nicholson*), while historical biography includes the excellent *William the Silent* (1944) by Miss C. V. Wedgwood and Sean O'Faolain's vigorous *The Great O'Neill* (1943). Archbishop David Mathew's historical writing includes the first part of *Acton: The Formative Years* (1946), a so far unfinished study of the great historian who profoundly affected modern writing but wrote almost nothing himself.

Three women biographers have given us delightful and charming books in *Time and Chance* (1943), in which Joan Baker deals with Sir Arthur Evans and his family; *Charles Darwin and the Voyage of the "Beagle"*

(1946) by Nora Barlow; *father* (1948) by Sarah Champion, in which G. G. Coulton's daughter covers the ground of her father's autobiography by adding a picture of the historian which shows his eccentricity, his unfailing interest to his family, and his always "bitter-sweet" character. Different were Virginia WoolPs carefully drawn outline of *Roger Fry* (1940) and Beatrice Webb's *Our Partnership* (1948), which follows her *My Apprenticeship* by covering the first nineteen years of her married life and the unremitting labour of two people for whom life meant scientific sociology. Other women writers to be mentioned are Mary MacCarthy, whose *A Nineteenth-Century Childhood* (1924) has recently been reprinted, and Mona Wilson, whose careful documentation increased the value of her *Life of William 'Blake* (1927). She later wrote *Sir Philip Sydney and Jane Austen and Some Contemporaries*.

Esther Meynell's *Portrait of William Morris* (1947) was refreshingly unconventional in method and outlook; Gerald Bullett's *George Eliot* in the same year was adequate; of Siegfried Sassoon's *Meredith* (1948) it may be said that the book is good and provides an excellent approach to the novelist for readers wishing to come to his works with real understanding. Lewis Gibbs provided a reliable and standard biography in *Sheridan* (1947); almost simultaneously Roger L. Green did the same in *Andrew Lang*', while Ford Madox Ford has been kept well before the public by Douglas Goldring (b. 1887) in *South Lodge*, and *The Last Pre-*

Raphaelite (1948). The appreciative *The First Romantics* (1947) by Malcolm Elwin outlined the lives of Wordsworth, Coleridge, and Southey, and examined the bond between them. William Gaunt (b. 1900) excelled in his study of the Pre-Raphaelites in *The Pre-Raphaelite Tragedy* (1942) and *The Aesthetic Adventure* (1945). Two useful biographies of 1948 were a study of the great Liberal journalist, / L. Garvin, by his daughter, Katharine Garvin, and *Maurice Baring*, by Laura Lovat. *John Nash, Architect to George II* (1935) made us wish for more biography from John Summer-son (b. 1904), whose essays on architecture appeared in *Heavenly Mansions* (1949). *Lady Sarah Lennox* (1948), by Edith Roelker Curtis, is more personal than historical, and moves gaily. An unusual book was *The English Country Parson* (1947), an outline of the history of the Church of England with innumerable references to parsons known and unknown.

Personal records are scarcely to be admitted as biographies, but rather as journals. Yet their interest for readers of biography requires the inclusion of *Lady Gregory's Journals* (1947), edited by Lennox Robinson, with its information about famous contemporaries, and *The Order of Re/ease* (1948), in which Admiral Sir William James, in printing letters of his grandmother, Effie Gray, showed why her marriage to Ruskin was annulled after six years. Definitely valuable was *John Ruskin* (1949), by Peter Quennell.

A biography unusual in that it is reliably imaginative and reconstructive both of the man and his surround-

ings was Sacheverell Sitwell's *Life of Liszt* (1936). A book on the musician as a man came from the pen of the celebrated music critic, Ernest Newman, the fourth and final volume of whose monumental *Life of Richard Wagner* appeared in 1948. Elizabeth Sprigge's *The Strange Life of August Strindberg* (1949) was noteworthy.

One of the most competent of contemporary biographers, whose subjects are allowed to speak for themselves, is Elizabeth Jenkins, whose *Lady Caroline Lamb* (1932) and *Jane Austen* (1938) have been greatly appreciated. This quietly effective method was followed in *Anthony Trollope* by Michael Sadleir.

(iii) Various Wanderings

Few travel books reach the level of literature by combining good prose with accuracy of fact and a compelling interest. Only three or four books during the period under review and before 1900 fulfil these conditions as did, for example, *Wanderings in South America* by the amazing Charles Waterton (1782-1865). The first important book we have to mention is *Arabia Deserta* (1888), in which Charles Montagu Doughty (1843-1926) described his life among Arabs. From what has earlier been noted of his verse, it will be expected that his prose is no less mannered, deliberately Elizabethan, compact, and often harsh, but always strikingly suitable to his subject.

In 1881 appeared Samuel Butler's only contribution to travel writing, the readable *Alps and Sanctuaries of*

Piedmont and the Canton Ticino; a similar book was A. F. Mummery's *My Climbs in the Alps and Caucasus* (1895). As different from them as it was better than them was *Naveis in West Africa* (1897), by Mary Kingsley (1862-1900).

The century line is crossed by two noted authors, Maurice Hewlett with *Earthwork Out of Tuscany* (1895) and *The Road in Tuscany* (1904), and Henry James with charming pictures in *A Utile Tour in France* (1885) and *TLnglish Hours* (1905). Travellers who also visited the same places have been Norman Douglas (b. 1868) and Evelyn Waugh (b. 1903). Douglas wrote *Siren Land* (1911), *Fountain in the Sand* (1912), and *Old Calabria* (1915). Then came a novel, *South Wind* (1917), one of his most successful books, and the other titles *They Went* (1920), *Alone* (1921), *Together* (1923), and an autobiographical travel book, *Looking Back* (1933). The cultured mind of the author and his understanding of the Mediterranean world are everywhere apparent, but Douglas's books are marred by an impression of unresolved conflict which appears to be in the author rather than his subjects. Evelyn Waugh gave less a travel book than a witty commentary, with an awareness of beauty in the world, in *Labels* (1930), which was nominally an account of a Mediterranean tour. *Waugh in Abyssinia* (1936) was less successful.

Undoubtedly the wanderer who most pleased arm-chair travellers—a wanderer's public—in the early century was Hilaire Belloc, who preached the gospel of vigorous walking and arduous thinking, accom-

panied by close observation and the enjoyment of beer. His *Path to Row'* (1902) was followed by *The Old Road* (1904), *Esto Perpetua* (1906), and *The Cruise of the "Nona"* (1925). Fine prose, much philosophical speculation pleasantly discoursed, not a little poetic imagination—these were their excellences. *Four Men in Sussex* (1912) is one of the happiest of the books about that lovely county.

Joseph Conrad's passion for the sea and his power to share it with readers were well shown in *A Personal Record* (1912) and *The Mirror of the Sea* (1906). The same qualities, with perhaps more human interest, appear in H. M. Tomlinson's *The Sea and the Jungle* (1912), and in parts of *Old Junk* (1918), *London River* (1921), *Tidemarks* (1924).

Dame Ethel Smyth showed her charming and quick curiosity about people and things in *A Three-Legged Tour in Greece* (1927). War books about adjacent parts of the world were *The Dardanelles Campaign* by H. W. Nevinson (1918) and the *Gallipoli : The Fading Vision* (1936), by John North (b. 1894).

E. V. Lucas ended his first period of literary biography by turning wanderer and writing the excellent series, *A Wanderer in Holland* (1905), followed by visits to *London* (1906), *Paris* (1909), *Florence* (1912), *Venice* (1914), and *Rowe* (1926). To another series he contributed *Sussex* (1904), where it is a companion to Clifford Bax's *Essex* (1939).

Other books concerned mainly with home are those of Henry Vollam Morton, who supplies an irresistible

mixture of fact, *causerie*, humour, local legend, and history, with his own unobtrusive companionship in *In Search of 'England'* (1927), with similar volumes dealing with *Scotland* (1929), *Ireland* (1930), *Wales* (1932), and *South Africa* (1948), as well as *In Scotland Again* (1933). Other books were the lengthier and equally good *In the Steps of the Master* (1934) and *In the Steps of St. Paul* (1936).

The English scene has never been better described than by the South-American-born William Henry Hudson (1841-1922), who came to England in 1869. Country loveliness and beauties of bird life were seen in his autobiography, previously noticed, and in *A Shepherd's Life* (1910) — one of his finest books — as well as in *British Birds* (1895), *Nature in Downland* (1900), *"Birds and Man"* (1901), *Hampshire Days* (1903), *Afoot in England* ((1909)*Adventures Among Birds* (1913), *Birds in Town and Village* (1919). The same interpretation of Nature which links Hudson with the metaphysical poets and certain aspects of Wordsworth is seen in his fictional *The Purple Land that England "Lost"* (1885), *A Crystal Age* (1887), *A Little Boy Lost* (1905), and the popular *Green Mansions* (1904). Foreign travel is described in *Idle Days in Patagonia* (1893), *The Naturalist in La Plata* (1892), and *El Ombii* (1902). Hudson wrote with a calm detachment which allowed the beauty of his subjects to show through his prose.

J. B. Priestley has also dealt with the English scene in *English Journey* (1934), which is as companionable as Morton's book, but concentrates rather on character

and industrial development. More informal and restricted, but delightfully open-air, was Sir John Squire's *Water Music* (1939); the author had previously written *The London Perambulator* (1925), a book inevitably recalling the almost unsurpassable *The Edinburgh Perambulator* (1926) of James Bone (b. 1892). An author of considerable interest was George Sturt ("George Bourne", 1863-1927), whose style was individual but sound. The poor of the rural areas are shown in *The Bettesworth Book* (1901), *Memoirs of a Surrey Labourer* (1907), and *Lucy Bettesworth* (1913). Country life more generally appears in *Change in the Village* (1912). Sturt is more interested in character than in scenery. He drew largely on his family history for *William Smith* (1920) and *A Farmer's Life* (1922). Village craftsmanship is excellently dealt with in his best book, *The Wheelwright's Shop* (1923).

Readers who prefer foreign travel have found excitement and colour in Robert Bontine Cunninghame Graham (1852-1936). Too impatient of the requirements of literature, impatient of anything which did not immediately feed imagination and his hunger for life, he left no book worthy of his talents. Romantic in outlook and appearance, he lived gaily but thoughtfully, occasionally writing a book difficult to classify. *Mogreb-el-Acksa* (1898), *The Ipanf* (1899), *A Vanished Arcadia* (1901) are mixtures of travel and history. Fiction predominates in the sketches of *Success* (1902), *Progress* (1905), *Faith* (1909), *Hope* (1910), *Charity* (1911).

Colour and adventure are also found in the books of Maurice Collis (b. 1889), who blended travel, biography, and history in *Siamese White* (1936), *She Was a Queen* (1937), *The Great Within* (1941), *British Merchant Adventurers* (1942), *The Motherly and Auspicious* (1943), *Foreign Mud* (1946), *Lord of the Three Worlds* (1947)- These books are deservedly classics in this branch of literature, and their standard is reached by Graham Greene's account of Mexico in *The Lawless Roads* (1939) and Sir Robert Lockhart's *Memoirs of a British Agent* (1932) and *Return to Malaya* (1936). Much excitement is found in Major J. Corbett's excellent books, *The Man-hunters of Kumaon* (1946) and *The Man-eating Leopard of Rudraprayag* (1948).

Among the great names in the tradition of Charles M. Doughty are those of David George Hogarth (1862-1927), who wrote *A Wandering Scholar in the Levant*, and Thomas Edward Lawrence (1888-1935), who met Hogarth at his entry to Syria in 1909 and was greatly influenced by him. Lawrence's astonishing career needs no recapitulation here; in any case, the real Lawrence may never be known, not even by the aid of *The Letters of T. E. Lawrence*, edited by David Garnett in 1938, nor the *Secret Despatches from Arabia* and *Oriental Assembly*, chapters now printed after close revision, and originally omitted from Lawrence's great work, *The Seven Pillars of Wisdom*. Lost while in manuscript, then re-written and circulated among friends, next issued in a short version as *Revolt in the Desert* (1927), the complete book, still with

noticeable omissions, finally appeared in 1935. Inadequate as a history of Arabia's part in the war of 1914-18, not definable as a picture of tribal life, still less an autobiography, the book is as inscrutable a mystery as its author. Since his purposes in writing it cannot be assumed, its proportions cannot be judged, but for those caught by its arid and strong prose, by its revelations of naked humanity, by an atmosphere not to be found except in Doughty and Hogarth, it remains one of the great books of the century. Far less important from every point of view are the posthumous *Crusader Castles* (1936) and *Men in Print* (1940).

Gertrude Bell's travels are made known to us chiefly by her *Letters* (1927) and *Earlier Letters* (1937), dealing chiefly with the Middle East. Freya Stark has found a public eager for her *Bagdad Sketches* (1933), *The Valleys of the Assassins* (1934), *A Winter in Arabia* (1940), *Letters from Syria* (1942), and *East is West* (1945), among other books. Equally acceptable is Joan Rosita Forbes, with *The Secret of the Sahara-Kufara* (1922), *From Red Sea to Blue Nile* (1928), *Forbidden Road—Kabul to Samarkand* (1937), *India of the Princes* (1938), *The Prodigious Caribbean* (1940), and *Appointment with Destiny* (1946).

Peter Fleming (b. 1907) has written with verve and finish in *Brazilian Adventure* (1933), *News from Tartary* (1936), *The Flying Visit* (1940), and *A Story to Tell* (1942). His ironic humour is an asset. F. D. Ommanney (b. 1903) gave an unforgettable picture of

Antarctica in *South Latitude* (1938), followed by a grimly real account of a trawler deck-hand in *North Cape* (1939). His *Flat Top* (1945) concerns an aircraft carrier's war voyage to Russia.

Two unusual travel books by Cecil Beaton (b. 1904) were *Near East* (1943) and *Far East* (1945), illustrated by his own photographs, and excellently written. Even more original was Rose Macaulay's *They Went to Portugal* (1946), in which she portrayed, with learning and acute commentary, the many British travellers who have visited Portugal in the past 800 years.

Other books which have been appreciated may be briefly noted : Edmund Blunden's *The Voyage of the "Bonaventura"* (1922), Francis Brett Young's *Marching on Tanga* (1918), J. R. Ackerley's *Hindoo Holiday* (1932), Alec Waugh's *The Coloured Countries* (1930), Aldous Huxley's *Beyond the Mexique Bay* (1934), *Gobi Desert* (1943), by Mildred Cable and Francesca French, and *The Golden Carpet* (1945), by Captain Somerset de Chair. The famous *Journal* (1913) of Captain R. F. Scott was finely written and is associated in our minds with *The Worst Journey in the World* (1922), by Apsley Cherry-Garrard (b. 1886). D. H. Lawrence's travel books have already been mentioned. W. Somerset Maugham published *The Gentleman in the Parlour* (1930), a travel book of slightly acid humour; Moray MacLaren (b. 1901) was vigorous and very open-air in his most readable *Return to Scotland* (1930); a Borrovian quality is discernible in *Kagg/e Taggle* (1933) and *Spanish Reggie Taggle* (1934), by Dr. Walter Starkie

(b. 1894); Sir Osbert Sitwell travelled to China, with fascinating aside and perception all the way, in *Escape With Mel* (1939); the *London Fabric* of James Pope-Hennessy was as attractive as its successor in the following year, *West Indian Summer* (1943). A striking and unusual book was *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon* (1941), in which Rebecca West explains how, after a short holiday in Yugo-Slavia, she felt impelled to make a full study of a people whose destiny seemed to her of great importance.

After so much brilliance abroad, we may return briefly to England to note three books by the scholar, soldier, philosopher, and cultured man of the world, Sir Arnold Wilson (1884-1940), who was killed in action as a rear gunner in his fifty-sixth year. His straightforwardness, good nature, and love of the countryside are shown in *Walks and Talks* (1934), *Walks and Talks Abroad* (1936), and *Thoughts and Talks* (1938).

Sean O'Faolain (b. 1900) was naturally at home in the successful *An Irish journey* (1940), which may be contrasted with Donn Byrne's *Ireland: The Rock Whence I was Hewn*, or *Gentle Ireland* by Hugh de Blaam.

Chapter Four

Art and Letters

(i) Essays

SIR MAX BEERBOHM is the *doyen* of contemporary essayists, revered and inimitable. His first volume, surprisingly entitled *The Works of Max Beerbohm?* (1896), was followed by *More* (1899) and *Yet Again* (1909). In the meantime he had written the parable, *The Happy Hypocrite* (1897). The sketches associated with his name appeared in *The Poet's Corner* (1904) and *Rossetti and His Circle* (1922). *A Christmas Garland* (1920) preceded *Seven Men* (1919), and in *And Even Now* (1920) was printed the brilliant sketch of Swinburne and Watts-Dunton in No. 2. *The Pines*. *Zuleika Dobson, or an Oxford Love Story* (1911), is, in its way, clever and attractive as a literary hoax. Whether dealing with books, men, or imaginary people, Beerbohm's work has an inimitable personal quality, which is something of an acquired taste, and a lightly malicious satire. His writing has become richer in content and less mannered. Not his least success is his ability to preserve his style even in the medium of broadcast talks, such as were printed in *Mainly on the Air* (1946).

Graciousness and dignity are the marks of Augustine Birrell (1850-1933), beginning with the two series of

Obiter Dicta (1884 and 1887) and continuing in *Res Judicatae* (1892), *Essays about Men, Women, and Books* (1894), *In the Name of the Bodleian* (1906), and *More Obiter Dicta* (1924). There is a personal flavour about these essays which is even more noticeable in those of Henry Austin Dobson (1840-1921), whose matter is sometimes trivial but whose style is graceful and eighteenth century. Among Dobson's pleasantly conversational books were *Eighteenth-Century Vignettes* (1896), *A Bookman's Budget* (1917), and *Later Essays* (1921). The essays of Alice Meynell are even slighter in content, but they are direct in purpose and the prose is compact. Her *Collected Essays* were published in 1914.

Alfred George Gardiner ("Alpha of the Plough") (1865-1946) was popular among readers interested in the personalities involved in current affairs. Yet his essays were critical as well as biographical, penetrating and sound in judgment, with a lightness often more effective than sheer weight of thought. His books include *Prophets, Priests, and Kings* (1908), *Pillars of Society* (1912), *Pebbles on the Shore* (1917).

Gilbert Keith Chesterton (1874-1936) was a prolific essayist; his publications include *All Things Considered* (1908), *Tremendous Trifles* (1909), the popular *A Defence of Nonsense* (1911), and *A Miscellany of Men* (1912). His essays were rounded out by powerful fantasy and a delight in getting a right view of the outside by turning things inside out. Marred by excessive ingenuity and paradox, which the reader nevertheless enjoys, his manner eventually involved

loss of clarity and direction in his thought. His handling of the essay will be more favourably appreciated when writers "in the manner of" have been forgotten. Almost equally easy to imitate are the essays of Hilaire Belloc, which are intellectually more ingenious but imaginatively less riotous than those of Chesterton. Of his many books we mention *Avril* (1904), *Hills and the Sea* (1906), *On Nothing* (1908), *On Everything* (1909). Closely associated with these authors was Maurice Baring (1874-1945), whose detachment of outlook gave his essays a more cultured finish. He pierced gently and decisively, instead of blowing his subjects all over the sky. His most memorable pieces are in *Dead Letters* (1910), *Diminutive Dramas* (1911), *Lost Diaries* (1913), *Punch and Judy* (1924).

The name of Edward Verrall Lucas (1868-1938) figures prominently in periodical essay-writing; his journalistic work occasioned wide variety of subject but excessive output, which has depressed his style. His best work is in *Character and Comedy* (1907), *One Day and Another* (1909), *"Loiterer's Harvest"* (1913). A wittier writer, whose output also prevented his reaching the real standard except occasionally, was Robert Lynd (1879-1949), from whose long list of books we choose *The Pleasure of Ignorance* (1921) and *Y.Y. : Selected Essays* (1933).

Virginia Woolf (1882-1941) may be considered to be at her best in the essay, where presentment and comment reveal more of her than is evident in other

writings. She had a taste for the old, the slightly odd in personality or event, and her thought was exact. *The Death of the Moth* posthumously appeared in 1944.

Stanley Baldwin, later Earl Baldwin (1867-1947), had a love of the countryside and of the national idea which inspired essays such as those in *On England* (1926). His prose is occasionally "precious", but it is sound and harmonises with his subjects.

Cricket, the sport in which Englishmen excel at least in theory, has been the special subject of Neville Cardus (b. 1889). Every possible enjoyment of the game has been commented on in *Days in the Sun* (1924) and *The Summer Game* (1929). The author's informed love of music and critical competence are shown in *Ten Composers* (1945). Another writer on sport, Bernard Darwin (b. 1876), is a skilled essayist in *Out of the Rough* (1932), a collection mainly about golf; in *Life is Sweet* (1940) and *Pack Clouds Away* (1941) Darwin has written of subjects of more general or autobiographical interest.

Collections of the essay *genre* which should also be mentioned are: *Channel Packet* (1942), by Raymond Mortimer (b. 1895); *The Condemned Playground* (1944), by Cyril Connolly, (b. 1903); *Critical Essays*, by George Orwell; *In My Good Books*, by V. S. Pritchett (b. 1900); *Men in Print* (1940), by T. E. Lawrence; *To-day and Yesterday* (1948), by G. M. Young (b. 1882); the mainly historical *The English Spirit* (1944), by A. L. Rowse (b. 1903); *An Ideal Voyage* (1946), by Sir John Shuckburgh (b. 1877); *'The Mancroft Essays*

(1932), of exceptional interest, by Arthur Michael Samuel, Lord Mancroft (1872-1942); *A Coat of Many Colours* (1945), by Herbert Read (b. 1893); *And Another Thing* (1946), by Howard Spring; *Obstinate Cymric* (1948), a collection of essays written 1935-47 by John Cowper Powys; the two series of *Reflections in a Mirror* (1944 and 1946), by Charles Morgan; J. B. Priestley's excellence in the essay may be judged from such books as *Open House* (1927), *Apes and Angels* (1928), or *Self-Selected Essays* (1932); *Poets and Story-Tellers* (1949), a collection of essays and addresses by Lord David Cecil.

(ii) History

In the preceding volume we included historical writing up to 1900, since this division was required by the subject. To link up with contemporary writing we mention Justin McCarthy (1861-1936), whose *History of Our Own Times* and *A Short History of the United States* are of popular interest. Less popular but equally well written was his *History of the Four Georges* (1901).

Sir George Otto Trevelyan (1838-1928), nephew of Thomas Babington Macaulay, secured his place in literature by *The Early History of Charles James Fox* (1880). Trevelyan has no axe to grind, no uncontrollable emotions or sympathies. His aim, to write history objectively and with interest, was admirably fulfilled in *The American Revolution* (1905-12) and *George III and Charles Fox* (1914).

His son, George Macaulay Trevelyan (b. 1876) commanded a wide circulation for his *Garibaldi's Defence of the Roman Republic* (1907), *Garibaldi and the Thousand* (1909), *Garibaldi and the Making of Italy* (1911). His ability in sustained and detailed narrative, often lightened by humorous touches or human interest, is shown in *Blenheim* (1930), *Lawillies and the Union with Scotland* (1932), and *The Peace and the Protestant Succession* (1934). His shorter works have deservedly been established in the "best-seller" class, for they are as interesting as they are reliable—a *History of England* (1926) and *English Social History* (1944).

The long life and devoted work of Lord Passfield and his wife, formerly Sidney and Beatrice Webb, resulted in a list of notable books which are of more value to sociological history than to literature, beginning with *Problems of Modern Industry* (1898) and continuing with *The History of Trade Unionism* (1904), *English Local Government* (1922), and *English Poor Law History* (1929). With them we may associate the books of John Lawrence Hammond (b. 1872) and his wife, Lucy Barbara Bradby (b. 1873). Their *The Rise of Modern Industry* (1925) and *The Age of the Chartists* (1930) were well received; preceding works were *The Village Labourer* (1911), *The Town Labourer* (1917), and *The Skilled Labourer* (1919).

Mention should be made of the *History of the Church of England from the Abolition of Roman Jurisdiction* (1902) by Canon Richard Watson Dixon (1833-1900), whose poetry we note later.

The evolutionary view of history was stated at length by Herbert George Wells (1866-1946) in his *Outline of History* (1920). This was consistently opposed by Hilaire Belloc, whose volumes of *A History of England* (1931) had considerable power and insight but lost value through want of detailed reference. Mistrustful of both the evolutionary view and the "culture" doctrine was George Gordon Coulton (1858-1947), who, like Belloc and Wells, spent too much time in conflict. Coulton edited many medieval selections, with commentary; his original work is at its best in *Five Centuries of Religion* (1936), and *Medieval Panorama* (1938). Of his compilations, *From St. Francis to Dante* (1906) and *Life in the Middle Ages* (1930) are notable. Of his smaller original works *Chaucer and His England* (1909) and *Christ, St. Francis, and To-day* (1910) are eminently readable.

Albert Frederick Pollard (b. 1869), one of the important contributors to *The Cambridge Modern History* and *The Political History of England*, has written widely. His books include *The Jesuits in Poland* (1892), *England under Protector Somerset* (1900), *Factors in Modern History* (1907), *The Reign of Henry VII from Contemporary Sources* (1914), *The Evolution of Parliament* (1920), *Factors in American History* (1925).

The high standard of historical authorship set up in the nineteenth century has been well maintained by these writers, to whom others must be added. Among them is Herbert Albert Laurens Fisher (1865-1940) who, apart from *Napoleon* (1913), wrote the vast

History of Europe (1935) which placed him in the first rank of historical men of letters. In spite of extended range, the narrative never flags; an impression of factual certainty supports it admirably.

Ernest Barker (b. 1874) has given much thought to the interpretation of many historical tendencies, in *Greek Political Theory* (1918), *Political Thought in England from Herbert Spencer to To-day* (1915), *The Crusades* (1923), *National Character* (1927), *Church, State, and Study* (1930), *Oliver Cromwell and the English People* (1937)[>] ^{an}d *The Citizen's Choice* (1937). Strength of purpose and of writing are evident throughout.

Light-hearted but by no means light-minded is G. K. Chesterton's *A Short History of England* (1917), surely the oddest of histories and, when you are in the mood for it, one of the most delightful. Cecil Chesterton's history of the United States has first-class readability and, in its more recent, edited text, real historical value.

One of the century's greatest works is Arnold Joseph Toynbee's six volumes of *A Study of History* (1939), of which a shortened version was later published. The views presented are clearly stated; the enormous mass of matter is never out of control; the narrative is lucid throughout. As a philosophical meditation on stated facts it is likely to remain unchallenged.

One of the most influential historians writing at present is Alfred Leslie Rowse (b. 1903), for whom facts are shaped things which, when reasonably fitted together, make a structure of indisputable plan. In

brief, he is speculative, but more allied to scientific than philosophical history. His books include *On History* (1927), *Queen Elizabeth and Her Subjects* (1935), *Tudor Cornwall* (1941), *The Spirit of English History* (1943), *The Use of History* (1946), and *Studies in Contemporary History* (1947). Rowse's future work will be of interest and perhaps of the first importance.

The works of G. P. Gooch (b. 1873) are also formative in the development of contemporary historical thought. They include *English Democratic Ideas in the Seventeenth Century*, *History of Our Time*, *History and Historians in the Nineteenth Century*, *History of Modern Europe* (1878-1919), *Studies in Modern History*, and *Diplomacy and Statecraft*.

Books which have won a place on our bookshelves are the *History of India* (1923), by V. A. Smith (1848-1920); *The French Revolution* (1944), by Dr. J. M. Thompson (b. 1878); *Dynamic Defence* (1940), by Captain B. H. Liddell Hart (b. 1895); *The Spanish Labyrinth* (1943), by Gerald Brenan; *King Charles and King Pym* (1949), by Esme Wingfield-Stratford. A. J. P. Taylor (b. 1906) has written *The Italian Problem in European Diplomacy* (1934), *The Hapsburg Monarchy* (1941), and the valuable *The Course of German History* (1945).

Denis W. Brogan (b. 1900) has gained much attention by his books, since he is by no means traditional in view nor likely to be bound by underlying principles. He has written *The American Political System* (1933), *Proudhon* (1934), *Abraham Lincoln* (1935), *The Development of Modern France 1870-1939* (1940), *The English*

People (1943), *The American Problem* (1944), *The Free State* (1945), *French Personalities and Problems* (1946). Possessed of wide general knowledge and interested in the contemporary scene and its peoples, he writes with a commendable rapid style which is occasionally harsh.

(iii) Thought and Criticism

In this section are mentioned authors who have enriched our literature with the results of their studies either of art or science.

(a) *Literary Studies*

Walter Horatio Pater (1839-94), influenced by Keble and the Tractarians, thought of taking Orders in the Church of England, then favoured Martineau and Unitarianism, and finally became absorbed in Ruskin and the Pre-Raphaelites, with whom he was temperamentally akin. *Studies in the Renaissance* (1873)^{an<3} *Marius the Epicurean* (1885) were followed by a period of critical work for the *Atben<3> Guardian*, and *Pall Mall*. *Greek Studies* was published in 1895 and *Plato and Platonism* (1893) reprinted as a course of lectures.

As subjective as Ruskin, though unmoved by his social interests, Pater was profoundly influenced by Greek thought and eclecticism of style. His doctrine was "art for art's sake", and outside it he recognised no moral principles as valid in art. This has led to his acceptance as a refined sensualist, which is a completely untrue belief for his theory meant only that art exists

to give us our intensest and noblest pleasure, that it has its own ethical basis. His essay on Style, in *Appreciations* (1889), makes it clear that the creation and perception of beauty are man's highest functions. They imply the use of a special prose, in which every word must be carefully chosen so that its underlying content and colour may help to establish the mood suitable to the message, and for which planned rhythms are essential. Pater's essays on Lamb and Rossetti are excellent examples of beauty in gradation and music of words. The pursuit of aesthetic pleasure by such means as Pater advocated is both a discipline and a happy study; if long continued, it becomes enervating and tedious. This is the ultimate fate of "art for art's sake".

A disciple of Pater, though his inferior as stylist and critic, was John Addington Symonds (1840-93), whose greatest work was *Renaissance in Italy* (1875-86), in addition to which he wrote *Shakespeare's Predecessors in the "English Drama"*—with its exceptionally fine criticism of Marlowe—*Dante* (1872), *Studies of the Greek Poets* (1876), *Essays Speculative and Suggestive* (1890). Diffuse and unmethodical, Symonds is picturesque, suggestive, and forceful.

The third important Esthete was Oscar Wilde (1856-1900) whose *Picture of Dorian Gray* (1890) has a word brightness and elusive quality of evil essential to the more extreme practice of Wilde's literary principles; his plays have brilliance of dialogue and little else (*Lady Windermere's Fan* shows how in-

adequate was his treatment of serious emotion) except for the genuine comedy, *The Importance of Being Earnest*, which was the first good comedy on the English stage for over a century. Wilde's *Ballad of Reading Gaol* is acceptable as good verse—for some, it is good poetry. He had genius, and it is shown at least in the small book, *Intentions* (1891), where sane and subtle criticism is expressed easily and pungently.

Remote from aesthetic adventure were the critical writings of Theodore Watts-Dunton (1832-1914), unfortunately scattered through the columns of the *Encyclopedia Britannica* and the journals to which they were contributed. Unable to face the task of tracing and collating them, and unwilling that any should be reprinted without the revision which would make them coherent by clearly defined lines of thought, Watts-Dunton must be searched for or sampled in the small collections *Poetry and the Renaissance of Wonder* and *Old Familiar Faces*. His novel *Ay twin* (1898) is interesting as a picture of gipsy life and for its sketch of Rossetti.

The biographical writings of Sir Leslie Stephen (1832-1904), especially his work for the *Dictionary of National Biography*, deserve mention together with his *Hours in a Library* (1879) and *Studies of a Biographer* (1902). Ernest Dowden (1843-1913) is remembered for his *Shakspeare : A Critical Study of his Mind and Art* (1875) and for the *Life of Shelley* (1886). Henry Duff Traill (1842-1900) attracted thoughtful notice of the letters in *The New Lucian* (1884) and the critical essays in *The New Fiction* (1897). Arthur Symons (1865-

1945) was associated with the ^Esthetes and wrote *The Romantic Movement in English Poetry* (1909) and *The Symbolist Movement in English Literature* (1899). This Movement we will notice later; it may profitably be studied in *The Heritage of Symbolism* (1943), by C. M. Bowra, whose *From Virgil to Milton* is important.

Also valuable were the *Shakespearean Tragedy* (1904), *Commentary on "In Memoriam"* (1901), and *Oxford Lectures on Poetry* (1909), by Andrew Cecil Bradley (1851-1934). Histories of English Literature as well as critical studies came from the ready pen of George Saintsbury (1845-1933), whose wide learning, assured judgments, and brightness of style charmed even when they exasperated. Of his many books we must notice *A. History of Criticism* (1904), *A History of English Prosody* (1910), *A History of English Prose Rhythm*—a book which had every qualification for success except conviction—the excellent *The Peace of the Augustans* (1915), and *Notes on a Cellar Book* (1922). His *Short History of English Literature* (1898) has enjoyed many editions. The similar *History* (1892) of Stopford Brooke (1832-1916) is also well known.

Sir Walter Raleigh (1861-1922) was a popular rather than an original or weighty critic. He was enjoyable and sensible. *The English Novel* (1891), *Style* (1897), *On Writers and Writing* (1926) are in demand; his biographical studies, such as *Stevenson* (1907), *Milton* (1900), *Wordsworth* (1903), and *Shakespeare* (1907) are excellent introductions; his best work is found in *Six Essays on Johnson* (1910) and *Some Authors* (1923).

More widely read and informative but less known because of his manner of writing was William Paton Ker (1855-1923), whose *Epic and Romance* (1896), *Essays on Medieval "Literature"* (1905), *The Art of Poetry* (1923), *Form and Style in Poetry* (1928), and *Collected Essays* (1925) are worth seeking. The historical writing of Oliver Elton (1861-1945) is enshrined in *A Survey of English Literature* (completed 1928) covering 1730-1880.

The main teaching of Henry James is in his book on the theatre, *The Tragic Muse* (1890), and in *Notes on Novelists* (1914).

Sound practical criticism is the strength of *Metaphysical Poets, Donne to Butler* (1921) and other books by Sir Herbert John Clifford Grierson (b. 1866), giving permanent value to *The Background of English Literature* (1925), *Cross-Currents in the Literature of the Seventeenth Century* (1929), and his best work—*Lyrical Poetry from Blake to Hardy* (1928). His *A Critical History of English Poetry* (1944) was written in collaboration with J. C. Smith.

C. H. Herford has written with some diffuseness but with true insight in his *Age of Wordsworth* (1897).

Shakespearean criticism was not presented in its most readable form nor in views generally acceptable by John Mackinnon Robertson (1856-1933), but his name deserves mention for the integrity behind the opinions of *Montaigne and Shakespeare* (1909), *The Baconian Heresy* (1913), his books on Hamlet and on the Sonnets, and in the two parts of *The Shakespeare Canon*

(1922 and 1923). Sir Edmund Kerchever Chambers contributed usefully in *The Medieval Stage* (1903) and *The Elizabethan Stage* (1923); his *Shakespeare, a Survey* (1925) was also authoritative. He wrote a biography of Coleridge in *Modern Studies* (1907), *A Sheaf of Papers* (1922), *The English Muse* (1933), and *Essays and Addresses* (1939) are outstanding in literary criticism.

Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch (1863-1944) will be remembered for *On the Art of Writing* (1916), *Shakespeare's Workmanship* (1917), the three series of *Studies in Literature* (1918, 1922, 1929), *On the Art of Reading* (1920), *Charles Dickens and Other Victorians* (1925), *The Poet as Citizen* (1934), and for other Cambridge lectures which have been reprinted. "Q" always passed on his enthusiasm, tempting the reader by hints of hidden delight and drawing him on to learn something of literary craftsmanship. He stressed the relationship between author and book, especially in character, and was not afraid to give credit for human virtue. He believed in knowing the whole man and the whole book.

Some of our finest criticism came from John William Mackail (1859-1945) in *Lectures on Poetry* (1911) and *Studies of English Poetry* (1926).

The opinions of authors about their art is apt to be as uncertain of value as the reflections of scientists on philosophy. Yet there is profit in reading George Moore's *Avowals* (1919), *Conversations in Ebury Street* (1924), and the introduction to *Pure Poetry* (1924). Art became so abstract to Moore as to vitiate his

critical faculty, since art appeared to be something which may not have intellectual implications. In spite of this he avoided "art for art's sake". He insisted that an artist must work for none but motives of art; only in defining these did he become too restricted, and in 1944 edited, under the title *Shakespearean Comedies*, some of the writings of George Gordon (1881-1942), who shared Watts-Dunton's dislike of printing what he could not collate and revise. John Palmer (1885-1944) did valuable work in *The Political Characters of Shakespeare* (1945) and *Come Characters of Shakespeare* (1945). His *Ben Jonson* (1944) repays study. Also notable are John Masefield's *Shakespeare* (1911) and A "Macbeth" Production (1945). Prominent among contemporary Shakespearean scholars is John Dover Wilson (b. 1881), whose books include *The Essential Shakespeare* and *Life in Shakespeare's England* (1911), the interesting *What Happens in Hamlet* (1935), and *The Fortunes of Fa/staff* (1943). George Bagshawe Harrison (b. 1894), compiler of the widely read four volumes of the Elizabethan and Jacobean *Journal*, has written *John Bunyan, a Study in Personality*, *England in Shakespeare's Day*, *Introducing Shakespeare*, and, in collaboration with Granville-Barker, *A Companion to Shakespeare Studies*.

A critic whose opinions are greatly respected is Desmond MacCarthy (b. 1878); his knowledge is wide and deep, his view of literature warmly human and perceptive. His chief books, all too few, are *The Court Theatre*, *Remnants*, *Portraits*, *Criticism*, *Expert-*

ence. *Drama*. Sir John Collings Squire (b. 1884), founder of the *London Mercury*, has been too busily occupied in journalistic and minor literary work to accomplish anything of considerable importance. His criticism is widely appreciated, and may be illustrated by the three series of *Books in General* (1918, 1920, 1921), *Essays on Poetry* (1924), *Shakespeare as a Dramatist* (1935), *Reflections and Memories* (1935). His gift for parody has been mentioned. Problems of literary form occupied Percy Lubbock (b. 1879) in *TAe Craft of Fiction* (1921), especially those which for reader and author concern wholeness and continuity of comprehension. In *Earlham* (1922) he wrote an imaginative book, about the English way of life, which is steeped in poetic appreciation of his subject. Less notable were *Roman Pictures* (1923) and *Shades of Eton* (1929). T. S. Eliot's *Elizabethan Essays* (1936) and *Essays Ancient and Modern* (1934) are disappointing, chiefly because they do not add to what has been written by Hazlitt, Lamb, Swinburne, and others. Hugh FAnson Fausset (b. 1895), poet and a subtle critic of poetry, has given us excellent studies in *Keats* (1922), *Tennyson* (1923), *John Donne* (1924), *Coleridge* (1926), *William Cowper* (1928), *Wordsworth* (1933), and other books apart from his articles in *The Times Literary Supplement*, and the *Manchester Guardian*.

A psychological and aesthetic approach was made in *Principles of Literary Criticism* (1924), by I. A. Richards, which suggested methods for obtaining the maximum result from the senses. Busy with their own impres-

sions, the senses are too blocked by receptivity to make satisfactory outlets for mental energy. Richards looked to literature, especially to poetry, to clear the senses and release the energy of the mind. The theory was found interesting, being closely allied in practice to Imagism. Unfortunately the means suggested consisted of little more than manipulation of words and sound or rhythm patterns. The author's *Science and Poetry* (1926) should be noted. The literary criticism of Edith Sitwell has direct relationship with these theories, as also with Imagism. The psychological value of prosody absorbs her attention and provides a fascinating commentary of the texture of poetry, as in *A Poet's Notebook* (1943) or *A Notebook to William Shakespeare* (1948).

The Victorians received worthy appreciations in G. K. Chesterton's *The Victorian Age in Literature* (1913) and John Drinkwater's *Victorian Poetry* (1923).

More searching and of permanent interest is *The Georgian Literary Scene* (1935), in which Frank Swinnerton, perhaps a shade too self-consciously unhappy about "the Mod'ns", gave us a first-class survey of authors of the present century. Swinnerton has otherwise expressed sober counsels, with both authority and humour, in other books of literary criticism, among which were *R. L. Stevenson* (1914) and *The Reviewing and Criticism of Books* (1939). His *George Gissing* (1912) was an exceptionally able appraisal of the man and his work.

Among single books which have attracted attention

are *History of English Poetry* (completed 1909), by W. J. Courthope (1842-1917); *English Prose Styfa* (1931), by Herbert Read; *Thanks Before Going* (1946), in which John Masefield dealt with Rossetti; *English Poetry in the Later Nineteenth Century* (1933) and *English Poetry Betiveen the Wars* (1947), by B. Ifor Evans ; *The Development of English Biography* (1937) by Harold Nicolson; the sound and amusing *The Muse in Chains* (1937), by Stephen Potter; *On English Poetry* (1922), by Robert Graves; *The Road to Xanadu* (1940), a study of Coleridge, by J. L. Lowes; *The Idea of Good Poetry* (1925) and *Jane Austen and her Art* (1939), by Mary Lascelles; *The Beardsley Period* (1925), by Osbert Burdett; *The Poetry and Philosophy of George Meredith* (1920), by G. M. Trevelyan; *Rupert Brooke and the Intellectual Imagination* (1919), by Walter de la Mare; *The Three Sitwells* (1926), by R. L. Megroz; *Trollope, a Commentary* (1933), by Michael Sadleir. English literature since 1900 has been well covered by *Twentieth-Century Literature, 1901-40*, by A. C. Ward, and by *The Literature of England, A.D. 500-1946*, by W. J. Entwistle and Eric Gillett; *Preludes and Studies* (1942), a collection of critical essays by Alan Dent (b. 1905), is based on reliable principles.

(b) *Scholarship*

Here we may group some of the writers who do not find a suitable place in any other section, but whose aims were too permanent and clearly defined for inclusion in the section following.

John William Mackail, whose literary scholarship we have already acknowledged, did not confine his researches to English literature. His *'Latin' Literature* (1895) is itself a literary work, and the same is to be said of *The Springs of Helicon* (1909). A remarkable study of Greek thought, in all its aspects, was given in *The Greek View of Life* (1896), by Goldsworthy Lowes Dickinson (1862-1932). The classical viewpoint is maintained in his other books, *Letters of John Chinaman* and *The Meaning of Good* (1901), *A Modern Symposium* (1908), *Appearances* (1914), *The Magic Flute* (1920). His reaction to life is expressed in *The European Anarchy* (1916), *The International Anarchy* (1926), and *After Two Thousand Years* (1930). Dickinson's secluded life was partly responsible for the comparative neglect of his message, but it has been passed on by more popular writers of less ability.

Another Greek scholar of insight is Sir Gilbert Murray (b. 1866), whose first claim to a place in our literature came from his translations, *Hippolytus* (1904), *The Trojan Women* (1905), *Electra* (1906), *Medea* (1907), *The Baccha* (1908). These translations were made, without sacrificing their Greek form, as practical plays for the stage, since Professor Murray's *Carlyon Sahib* (1899) and prose *Andromache* (1900) had been produced by the Stage Society in 1901; they were, moreover, plays of great value to English poetry. The translator had already provided their background by his *A History of Ancient Greek Literature* (1897). *The Rise of the Greek Epic* (1907), and the more significant *Four*

Stages of Religion followed in 1912, being re-issued in 1925 as *Five Stages of Greek Religion*. Believing that Greek thought is important in contemporary affairs, he has also written on problems of war, peace, and foreign policy. His doctrine is that, underneath the upheavals and disasters man has endured, an abiding desire to do good is in the human race. This is certain to triumph, again and again, over evil. Part of Sir Gilbert Murray's plea is that our personal and national life shall be such as will allow this power in man to emerge. This idea is seen in his latest book, *From the League to U.N.* (1948).

The classical view is distrusted by writers who rely on material science and the evolutionary theory. The thought of such writers as Julian Huxley and H. G. Wells is presented today by Earl Bertrand Russell (b. 1872). Most of his writings are not literary, but we note *An Outline of Philosophy* (1927), *Religion in the Making* (1927), *Process and Reality* (1929), *Adventures and Ideas* (1934). Organisation is the foundation of his thinking, as it was of Alfred North Whitehead and of Edward Carpenter (1844-1929), who has been influenced by German philosophy, Walt Whitman's poetry, and his own researches into physical science and anthropology.

Carpenter sought a recognition of the "cosmic-self" and a yielding of man's highly organised life to a life more elemental which can be made known to him by his senses. To effect this he required a co-ordination of all branches of human knowledge without the

influence of preconceived or traditional interpretation. The individual, then, must express himself through every part of himself, since he is a united organism. We cannot here trace the effects of Carpenter's teaching, but it is evident that it is the basis of much self-expression and freedom of thought even among writers to whom his views were unacceptable. The latest manifestation of his work is the interest taken by some writers in Eastern thought and literature. We should note that Carpenter believed his views led ultimately to the recognition of man as a personality both physical and spiritual and endowed with creative impulse. Thus he was more ethically developed and comprehensive than many of his followers; he had links with the classical tradition which they considered unnecessary. His principal works were the prose-poem *Towards Democracy* (completed 1902), *Civilisation, Its Cause and Cure* (1889), *The Art of Creation* (1904), and the essays of *Love's Coming of Age* (1896). His *My Days and Dreams* (1916) is of autobiographical interest.

Andrew Lang (1844-1912) translated Moschus, Bion, Theocritus, and collaborated with Walter Leaf and E. Myers in the *Wand* with S. H. Butcher in the *Odyssey*.

Clear of literary controversy, but by no means free from storms in other quarters, were some of Hilaire Belloc's books, chiefly *The Servile State* (1912), a speculation as to the nature and ethical problems of slavery. The inquiry was of interest because of increasingly

totalitarian policies. G. K. Chesterton also advanced views of considerable force, ingeniously if too paradoxically presented, in *Orthodoxy*, *George Bernard Shaw*, *Heretics*, and *The Everlasting Man*. He and Belloc were leaders of the Distributivist theory of social science. The explorations of Henry Havelock Ellis (1859-1939) were too separated to be uniformly effective. His writings on the psychology of sex, once banned as indecent, and his speculations on social problems at least helped to break down the convention that "disturbing" problems should be left alone. His literary work is less dated, such as his editions of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century playwrights for the "Mermaid" series, and his biography of *George Chapman* (1934). Interest also remains in *The New Spirit* (1890), a vivid impression of the artistic movements of the time. *Affirmations* (1897), *A Study of "British Genius"* (1904), *The World of Dreams* (1911), *The Dance of Life* (1923), and *Views and Reviews* (1932) are other books in which he showed that there is a lawful approach and a scientific analysis by which we may study the socially less discussed aspects of life.

The scholar in Dr. William Ralph Inge (b. 1860) will outlast the journalist and publicist in the Dean of St. Paul's. The unpredictable journalist wrote the series of *Outspoken Essays* (1919 and 1922), *England* (1926), *Lay Thoughts of a Dean* (1926), *More Lay Thoughts of a Dean* (1931), and *A Rustic Moraliser* (1937). The scholar, who insisted on the examination of facts in the coldest obtainable light of reason, wrote *The*

Platonic Tradition (1926) and *The Philosophy of Plotimts* (1931).

Maurice Baring's *Landmarks in Russian "Literature and An Outline of Russian Literature* have a lasting place in critical writing. A. G. MacDonell (1895-1941) was looked to for good things had not death cut short his literary career after *Napoleon and His Marshals* and the enjoyably satirical *England, Their England*. Harold Nicolson (b. 1886) takes an impish delight in the slightly eccentric; he excels in biography and the short story. His urbane prose may be sampled in *Paul Verlaine* (1921).

Space prevents our taking more than passing notice of any but a few of the excellent translations which have been published since 1880. Mention must be made, however, of the translations of Chinese poetry by Arthur Waley. Helen Waddell (b. 1889) has also published a small volume of this kind, but her main work is in exquisite and faithful translations from Latin, as in *Medieval Latin Lyrics* (1929), and its companion study, *The Wandering Scholars* (1927). She has also written the interesting *The Desert Fathers* (1936) and the novels *Peter Abelard* and *The Abbe Prtvost*.

The essays of Sir George James Frazer (1854-1941), his translation of Pausanias, and his enormous study of comparative religion in *The Golden Bough* have added to our literary sources as well as to scholarly reading. Other books of deliberately more popular appeal include those of Julian Huxley (b. 1887), with *Scientific Research and Social Needs* (1934), *At the Zoo*

(1936), *The Modern Synthesis* (1942), *Evolutionary Ethics* (1943), *Man in the Modern World* (1947), *Soviet Genetics and World Science* (1949), and of J. B. S. Haldane (b. 1892), who has written *Possible Worlds* (1927), *The Causes of Evolution* (1933), *Science and Everyday Life* (1939), and *Science Advances* (1947). In addition, there have been *An Enquiry Concerning the Principles of Natural Knowledge*, *The Concept of Nature*, *Science and the Modern World*, *Process and Reality*, *Nature and 'Life*, and other books by Alfred North Whitehead (b. 1861); Professor da Costa Andrade's *The Structure of the Atom* has been eagerly studied, while *The Universe of Light*, by Sir William Henry Bragg, has also been valued. Wide circulation was achieved by *Mathematics for the Million* (1936) by Lancelot Hogben (b. 1895), who followed it by *Science for the Citizen* (1938) and *From Cave Painting to Comic Strip* (1949). Equally interesting but necessarily more obscure was *An Experiment with Time*, by J. W. Dunne (b. 1875), a book which has given rise to a small library of fiction and non-fiction. Sir James Jeans (1877-1946) popularised astronomy in *The Mysterious Universe* and *The Stars in their Courses*. Here our short list must close, since the line between literature and books which are popular or valuable in the records of their own subjects must be observed.

(c) *Miscellany*

A miscellany is a literary or other medley, not an obscure corner for unimportant authors who are

scarcely to be fitted into a literary record, but "a garden enclosed", in whose pleasantries may stroll those authors whose inspiration or fancy has been unusual. Here also we may greet the authors whose vocation has not yet called them into the general assembly in which they may later be important figures.

For example, one would not expect to meet Richard Jefferies, for he has been classified and placed and ticketed by reviewers and librarians. But one may meet people like him, lovers of Nature and authors of exceptional interest, such as Eric Parker (b. 1870), whose attention was divided between Nature and religion. He has written *An Angler's Garland* (1920), *English Wild Life* (1929), and the delightful *The Gardener's England* (1936). His *Surrey* appeared in 1947. With him may be associated Adrian Bell, no less observant and charming, with *Corduroy* (1930), *Silver Ley* (1931), *The Cherry Tree* (1932), as well as his poetry and *Apple Acre*.

Where but in a miscellany could one look for the fiction of G. K. Chesterton? His novels and short stories are fantasy at its wildest and best; whether one considers *The Club of Queer Trades* (1905), *The Man Who Was Thursday* (1908), *The Ball and the Cross* (1909), *Manalive* (1912), and *The Flying Inn* (1914) ridiculous or excellent, one must admit that they are unique and well written.

The novels of Hilaire Belloc have suffered because he refused to take the novel form seriously. Yet there are good things in *Emmanuel Burden*, *Mr. Clutterbuck's*

Election, *A Change in the Cabinet*, *Pongo and the Bull*, and the more important *The Girondin* (1911).

Older readers recall with pleasure the plays in which R. L. Stevenson and W. H. Henley collaborated. *Three Plays* (1892) contained *Deacon Brodie*, *Beau Austin*, *Admiral Guinea*; with *Macaire* (1895) they have been popular on the stage and still make good reading.

Sir Alan Herbert (b. 1890) has given us two novels in *The Water Gipsies* and *Holy Deadlock*, the second being part of his campaign for revision of the divorce laws. His opinions have also found humorous expression, in prose and verse, in *Uncommon Law*, *Trials of Topsy*, *Topsy, M.P.*, *Misleading Cases*, *Honeybubble & Co.*, *Let Us Be Glum*, and other books. Readers who wish to assess the value of his writing may be helped to survey the question by the aid of Alfred Duff Cooper's *The English Sense of Humour* (1947).

Books of adventure have been legion, and the two main wars have supplied more than we could conveniently list. Much attention has been given to *The Road to Endor* (1919), by E. H. Jones, and *The Escaping Club* (1921), by A. J. Evans. *Adventures of a Bengal Lancer* is the best known of books by F. Yeats-Brown. *Sagittarius Rising*, by Cecil Lewis, is more recent and is outstanding. Of the many books dating from the second war a selection cannot be made from the many official and unofficial records, but we may note the anonymous *Fighter Pilot* (1941), the excellent literary quality of *Horned Pigeon*, by George Millar, and the noteworthy *Malayan Postscript*, by Ian Morrison.

Also outstanding were *The Jungle is Neutral* (1949), by F. Spencer Chapman, a truly amazing story of human endurance, with *The Wooden Horse* (1949), by Eric Williams, and *The Cage* (1949), by " Dan Billany and David Dowie ".

Of the more placid adventures of life, none has written more delightfully than E. M. Delafield (1890-1943), whose *The Pelicans* and *The War Workers* (1918) showed something of the shrewdness and satire which grew into the *Diary of a Provincial Lady* (1930) and its successors. Rose Macaulay also has an eye brightened by the foibles of her fellows, which she picks off with a rapier point in *Pottensm* (1920), *Orphan Island* (1924), *Dangerous Ages* (1921), *Told by an Idiot* (1923), *Staying with Relations* (1930). Reminiscences—for the fiction is so convincing as to achieve complete verisimilitude—of a different and refreshingly delightful kind are found in the books of Edith Somerville and her cousin Violet Ross (" Martin Ross "), who wrote *An Irish Cousin*, *Some "Experiences of an Irish R.M., Further Experiences of an Irish R.M.,* and other books. They deal with an Ireland gone for ever, or with an Englishman's view of southern Ireland, such as George A. Birmingham (Canon Hannay) had delighted in, with " General John Reagan " and other characters. They were surprisingly close to reality; how far they were removed from its facts, if not from its characters, may be judged by readers of Canon Sheehan and Canon John Guinan.

Fragments of the witty and ridiculous, with gently

penetrating comment, are given us by Douglas Woodruff (b. 1897). *Talking at Random* (1941) and *More Talking at Random* (1944) are, however, poor substitutes for his earlier *Plato's American Republic* (1926) and *flatus Britannia* (1930).

Chapter Five

Poetry, 1880-1900

(i) The Pre-Raphaelites

BY 1880 Victorian poetry had come to its close, and the remaining years of the century showed little of the old except a lingering Pre-Raphaelitism and Decadence. Besides these two movements little derived from what had gone before. We have already dealt with the poets who belonged to the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood ; we here note only two other facts—the meaning of Pre-Raphaelitism in poetry, and the work of its later exponents.

The work of the Pre-Raphaelites themselves, the core of the fact, was fully formed between about 1848 and 1870. In literature their movement stood between , the classical and the romantic. It is romantic in so far as it is highly imaginative, emotional, and sensuous; it is classical in so far as it is precise in thought and imagery. Additionally it insisted on a certain kind of factual fidelity. We may grasp this most quickly if we suppose we are to describe an image—of a face, perhaps—which has formed in our minds. Our aim is not to provide such a factual description as would be found in a police report, nor to give a description wholly impressionistic. Therefore we would aim at

including such factual details as would enable someone else to recognise the face were he to see it, and also to weave into this statement such particulars of our general impression as would help that person to see what we saw and respond to it as we did.

If we were to add to this "vague clarity" or slightly blurred precision of outline an emphatically imaginative and emotional content, we would have something easily recognisable as similar to the thought and imagery of Patmore's *Angel in the House*. It would be neither classical nor romantic; it would be Pre-Raphaelite.

It is essential to the Pre-Raphaelite idea that this precision of fact and this emotional sensibility should be found in the manner as well as in the matter of what is written. Matter and form must become a texture. This texture must have both gorgeousness of thought and form, together with exactness and fidelity to what is real and objective.

These marks show that Pre-Raphaelitism in literature is by no means confined to the prose and poetry of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood. For instance, Shelley's *Queen Mab* is as surely romantic as his *The Cenci* is Pre-Raphaelite. The same distinction may be applied to Keats's *Endywion* and *Hyperion*. Apart from the definably Pre-Raphaelite poets, we may find the texture of Pre-Raphaelite matter and form in Wordsworth—whose *Dover Beach* is romantic and *Westminster Bridge* sonnet is Pre-Raphaelite—and in the early Tennyson (e.g. *The Lady of Shalott* and the *Mariana*

poems), in Swinburne (as in *The Garden of Proserpine* and, although he denied this, in *Atalanta in Calydon*), and in Coventry Patmore (for instance, earlier poetry and also the odes of *The Unknown Eros*). The qualities and extent of Pre-Raphaelitism are important, for we observe its nature in some of the poetry of, for instance, Gordon Bottomley, Sturge Moore and Edith Sitwell.

Wherever we find fidelity to fact or object which is in accordance with that thing's nature, together with an idealising of the subject (a process which gives this poetry its romantic element), and a poetic style at once gorgeous and faithful to the nature of language, we have Pre-Raphaelitism.

Of the later Pre-Raphaelite poets with whom some of the twentieth-century poets have affinity, we may mention the most important.

Lord de Tabley (1835-95) published his first book, *Poems* (1859), under the pseudonym " G. F. Preston ", and this exceedingly reserved poet, whose reputation was overshadowed for too long by Swinburne while his private life was darkened by an early sorrow, issued most of his work under pen-names. His *Poems, Dramatic and Lyrical* appeared in 1893 and a collected edition of his work in 1903. He was a true poet, whether in his least pieces or in the magnificent *Ode to Pan*.

Philip Bourke Marston (1850-87), the blind poet, was a true disciple in *Song-tide All in All*, and *Wind Voices*. The same may be said of William Allingham (1824-89), popularly remembered for *Up the Airy*

Mountain. His is remarkable for the variety of his stanza forms.

Mary Coleridge (1861-1907) was thoroughly acquainted with Pre-Raphaelite principles; her post-humous *Poems* shows an occasional but striking success in their practice.

The most eminent of the group was Canon Richard Watson (1833-1900), well known as an ecclesiastical historian. His *Historical Odes* (1864), *Mano* (1883), *Odes and TLclogues* (1884), and *Lyrical Poems* (1887) are sometimes difficult to understand, chiefly due to the poet's use of unusual words, syntactical peculiarities, and his management of the *ter^a rirna*, but they excel in lyrical beauty. Like Blake, Watson often discovers a meaning of religious value where another would have missed it. More obvious similarities to Keats and Rossetti are noticeable, while his approach to Nature resembles that of Coleridge.

While Pre-Raphaelitism was in full swing a poet who had some share in its excellence was opening the way to a French influence which overwhelmed it. In the first series of *Poems and ballads* (1866) Swinburne was remarkably Pre-Raphaelite; in the second (1875) and third (1889) he introduced *Dolores'*, ecstatic rhythms, and Baudelaire. The introduction was exciting, especially as Rimbaud, Gautier, Victor Hugo, and others were brought in to sweep England with their mixed theories. An enthusiastic welcome was given by poets and versifiers who were interested in rhythm and themselves. Thus Decadence was born.

(ii) **The Decadents**

It had been conceived in England when Meredith began the microscopic examination of character, which was continued by Henry James and others, and had gone beyond his time in his views about "passion"; Carlyle had castigated many of the "respectable" manners of Victorian England; Gissing and George Moore anticipated the realism of Arnold Bennett; Samuel Butler had attacked the machine age (but we must note that *The Way of All Flesh*, sometimes quoted as an illustration of a viewpoint which led to Decadence, was not published until 1902); scientific investigation was leading towards the breakdown of systems of belief; Arthur Symonds was explaining the French theory of Symbolism; Hardy and George Moore were practising, also under French influence, a new technique of plot structure and verbal precision. This last cause of the Decadent movement, springing from the teaching of Flaubert and Maupassant, was one of the first to produce quick results, for writers were greatly attracted by "anxiety" about the right word and, partly due to Symbolist doctrine, they became fussy about vowel and consonant patterns.

At a time when few had anything important to say, a number of authors found it stimulating to talk about smashing the bourgeois convention in literature and to spend their talents on trivialities. Ernest Dowson (1867-1911) wrote a few memorable things because of deep emotion (such as "I have been faithful to thee,

Cynara, in my fashion ") and too many merely decorative pieces, shallow in thought, but dangerously attractive with a finical perfection. His name is often coupled with that of Richard Middleton (1882-1911), whose fluency and form are purer than Dowson's. Even less known to-day is Edmund John (1883-1917). Although his *Flute of Sardonyx* (1913) and *Symphonic Symbolique* (1919) were published late, they are worth studying for occasional intrinsic merits as well as for the position they hold between Pre-Raphaelitism and Decadence. Stephen Phillips (1868-1915) is considerable, although his *Christ in Hades* (1896) and *Poems* (1897) gained praise chiefly for metrical ingenuities which later critics said were unintentional. No special reason occurs for mentioning Richard le Gallienne and his pastiche except that omission might suggest he has been overlooked. Oscar Wilde (1856-1900) wrote a good deal of persiflage, some lyrical verse, and the poem *The Ballad of Reading Gaol*. Arthur Symonds (1865-1945) was unfortunate in being absorbed by the Decadence, for he had poetic insight. His verse is imitative, however; a vehicle for shallow thought and the sweet sins and curiosity which, he was pleased to say, ruled his blood. John Addington Symonds (1840-93) imitated the verse of poets, adequately translated Michaelangelo's sonnets and in *Wine, Women, and Song* (1884) less satisfactorily rendered the Latin poems of the medieval scholars. Lionel Johnson (1867-1902) was more substantial, with a scholarly background and literary appreciation which he showed in critical

writing, *The Art of Thomas Hardy* (1894), as well as in *Post Liminium* (1911). He survives chiefly in anthologies, where his "By the Statue of King Charles" is a favourite.

(iii) Other Poetry

We may now put away the candles and roses and incense, and forget the perfumes and virginal sins which made life attractively leprous, to review some writers who stood aside from the fashions of the eighties and nineties.

Andrew Lang (1844-1912) rejoiced in the French forms of rondeau, ballade, sestina, chant royal, without leaving genuine feeling and sound imagination. William Ernest Henley (1849-1903) also was a student of French poetry and brought French Impressionism into English verse. His experiments in form and matter, as well as his irregular unrhymed verse, were successful. In spite of his combativeness, he wrote some excellent poetry, as in the books *'Echoes* and *London Voluntaries*. Henry Austin Dobson (1840-1921) was delicate, pretty, artificial, yet the slightness of his poetry is deceptive. His perfection of form is perhaps better appreciated than his other merits. Other poets deserving mention are Roden Noel, for a general high standard of verse; Frederick Myers, for delicacy of metre; Wilfrid Sea wen Blunt, less for the *luove Sonnets of Proteus* (1808) and *The Seven Golden Odes of Pagan Arabia* (1903) than for his strong individuality and the lyrics which express his love of English

natural beauty; Robert Louis Stevenson, for the genuine fantasy of *A Child's Garden of Verses*, *Underwoods*, and *Songs of Travel*, which were more original in their day than they now appear.

John Davidson (1857-1909), savagely out of sympathy with life, did not discover for almost forty years that writing badly constructed plays was not his destiny. In spite of the intense dissatisfaction and maladjustment to life which led to his suicide, he was a real and vigorous poet. His *Fleet Street Eclogues* (1893), *Ballads and Songs* (1894), and a second series of *Fleet Street Eclogues* (1895) are vivid pictures of contemporary life. Davidson rebelled against his times, their futility, and against himself.

Sir William Watson (1858-1925) first gained attention with *Epigrams of Art, Life, and Nature* (1884); his writing improved in *Wordsworth's Grave* (1890) and *Macbrymae Musarum* (1892). Unfortunately he turned to political themes, and true inspiration faded from his verse. His ephemeral work had little to commend it, so that the public entirely neglected him and the earlier work which had been forgotten.

The poetry of Francis Thompson (1859-1907) was wholly without influence. *Poems* (1893), *Sister Songs* (1895), and *New Poems* (1897) were almost still-born. Charles Garvin hailed a poet second only to Shakespeare, but the third volume sold only some half-dozen copies. Thompson derives partly from Crashaw and the seventeenth century, which is one reason why his verse is extremely "literary". The soul of poetry

glowed in him, and his lines have incomparable splendours. He has been more appreciated since about 1930, but his public is still too limited. His prose, as in the celebrated essay on Shelley, is outstanding; the biography of St. Ignatius Loyola has a unique style and charm.

(iv) Light Verse

The standard of light verse had been high since Barham's *Ingoldsby Legends* (1840), the writings of Praed, Percival Leigh, W. J. Prowse, Mortimer Collins, Edward Lear, William Brighty Rands, and Frederick Locker-Lampson (1821-95), who is remembered for his *vers de societt* in *London Lyrics* (1857) and *Patchwork* (1879).

Late in the century nonsense verse went out of favour as compared with light verse, which was continued by two writers who resemble each other in being still read and in the personal misfortune of their lives. Charles Stuart Calverley (1831-84) was gifted with excellence in parody (and real parody is as much creative as it is imitative) and was a facile, reliable translator. His more important books were *Verses and Translations* (1862), *Fly Leaves* (1866), and the posthumous *Literary Remains* (1885). James Kenneth Stephen (1859-92) published *Quo Musa Tendis?* and *Lapsus Calami* in 1891, showing kinship with Calverley in both light and serious verse. Mention must also be made of *The Rattle of the Bays*, in which Sir Owen Seaman (1861-1936), editor of *Punch* for many years,

parodied contemporary poets in an imaginary contest for the Poet Laureateship.

In the twentieth century notable light verse has been rare. G. K. Chesterton had a gift of parody, and effervescence has risen happily through the verses of A. P. Herbert (b. 1890).

Poetry, 1900-50

(i) **Introduction**

THE poetry of the eighties and nineties had no programme. Partly it was incidental to its time, partly it was related to what had gone before, partly it was in self-indulgent, unplanned, blind revolt against belief or faith. About 1900 a new phase began—a phase which may prove to be one of the most revolutionary English poetry has known. Whether it is yet settling into a new tradition or is still an upheaval of creative energy which has not found its outlets remains to be seen.

The change was less remarked because it was unopposed. A hundred years earlier the Romantics had led a recognised and declared war upon the Augustans and the Classical school. This time there was nothing to fight against, because the Victorian era was in increasingly rapid dissolution, and there was nothing defined to fight for, since the new factors which interested poets were too diverse to be coherent in any one set of principles. So for a long time the beginnings of the change looked like mere restlessness. Its causes we have already noted generally, and to this review we must add here only one other element—an

aspect of the Edwardian era which is usually overlooked.

It is the realisation that the enjoyment of art is not the prerogative of a privileged class. The inrush of new science and speed and machinery upon the comparatively static world of self and aesthetics, of an almost eremitical enjoyment of art such as Pater's critical principles required, taught the lesson that art must absorb the new or be overthrown by it. This idea involved the fact that art must be produced by people who shared in life and not by those who, because of financial security, were able to enjoy art. Only those who took part in life and contributed to the life of the community, as that new life was seen to be, could possess themselves of the materials of art as it was coming to be, and also have the right to share the world of artistic development. Thus it was less the threatened breakdown of social security which caused a change in literature than the idea that art and life were inseparable. "Art for art's sake" was discredited, and there was a revival, although not a deliberate adoption, of Browning's "art for life's sake".

Browning did not formulate this doctrine. Literary artists do not formulate it, because its exponents are usually those writers who are too busy living to expound doctrines about art. It is therefore an elusive doctrine, immensely powerful but often imperceptible. At the opening of the twentieth century it revived.

(ii) The Celtic Revival

As an example of this motive of art we may cite the revival of literature begun by Standish O'Grady (1846-1928), who, in two volumes of Irish history and in *'Early 'Bardic 'Literature* (1879), made the Celtic culture known to many thousands who became keenly interested in it. This interest he extended to yet other readers by the excellence of his historical novels. People were now able to turn with informed minds to the *Poets and Poetry of Munster* and the *'Bards of the Gael and Gall* of George Sigerson (1839-1925). Douglas Hyde (b. 1860) widened the work by interesting English readers in his translations of early Irish poetry, works of an excellence worthy of their originals, and in his *A Uterary History of Ireland* (i 897).

By this time Irish writers had begun to use the materials which the scholars had provided, materials artistic already, but drawn from life. For example, W. B. Yeats used them in *The Wanderings of Oisín*, *The Countess Kathleen*, and *The Celtic Twilight*. Colour and mysticism were drawn from life; authors, English as well as Irish, responded to the method in contributing to *Poems and ballads of Young Ireland*. It is significant that these writers were not one in political or racial outlook, nor were they all romantic in mind and temperament. What drew them together was the "art for life's sake" which was behind the movement.

The very name "Young Ireland" indicated the course this literary movement was to follow, a course

paralleled by national literary movements in Wales and Scotland. It was bound, by its nature, to lead to a practical application of its theory, so that there came no cry for a new Wolfe Tone or Emmet. The lovely dreaming about Inisfail, the haunting stories of Cathleen ni Houlihan, became a business-like preparation for the rebirth in freedom of ancient Ireland, whether the elusive Home Rule measure were finally lost or not.

(iii) Other Group Movements

The first important change to be noted in English poetry was the reformation in technique attempted by writers like Hopkins, Bridges and, to a less extent, Charles Doughty. Their reasons for attempting reform were individual, but they appear to have had a common view that the writing of verse needed to be formed anew in a changing world. Their experiments were directed towards changes in metre and diction.

Another activity was that of the Georgians, who, at first with the aim of increasing the number of the poetry-reading public, planned to issue a volume called *Georgian Poetry* from Harold Monro's Poetry Bookshop. Between 1912 and 1925 five such volumes were published, containing work by forty poets who supported the movement at various times during that period. Their leader was Edward (later Sir Edward) Marsh, whose translation of Fromentin's *Dominique* (1863) in 1948 was widely welcomed. Among the promoters of the neo-Georgians were Rupert Brooke, John Drinkwater, W. W. Gibson, and others; Ralph

Hodgson soon joined the movement, with James Stephens and John Freeman. The movement came to represent an attempt to break away completely from whatever might be Victorian in outlook or manner, while avoiding the ephemeral or unsound and remaining true to the main traditions of English poetry.

The existence of the group was a challenge quickly taken up by less conventional poets, whose literary organ was *Rhythm*, a magazine conducted by John Middleton Murry and Katherine Mansfield. The *Rhythm* movement insisted on the importance of rhythm in verse, to a revitalising of which a large amount of theory was brought forward. In 1914 the movement was continued in the four issues of *New Numbers*, with which are associated the names of Rupert Brooke, Lascelles Abercrombie, and John Drinkwater.

Yet another group formed around the teaching of T. E. Hulme (1883-1917), of the authenticity of whose few poems there is some doubt. Among man's unavoidable imperfections, Hulme said, is the misfortune that we are conscious only of what our senses perceive. To this proposition he added the conclusion that we should confine our imaginative writing to the same limits. This could be done by the use of word rhythms and patterns which would make the meaning evident to the senses apart from the message to the mind. In this theory is born much of the interest in Free Verse, which is mentioned in Chapter Seven. The immediate effect of the theory was to stimulate interest

in words, which were to be used with such precision and combination that the image to be conveyed would be, as it were, shaped within them. The words were to be like carved gems, being suggestive, primarily to the senses, of the thought they contained.

By this transition of thought we leave Hulme for the full teaching of Imagism, the name given by Ezra Pound to a theory eagerly taken up on both sides of the Atlantic. Pound produced the *Des Imagistes* anthology in 1914. The Imagists were active until about 1920; one or two of them were in evidence as late as 1930. *The Egoist*, the periodical of Imagist exposition, first appeared in 1914.

It will be noticed that in Imagism and elsewhere there was a growing tendency for the poet to be less and less the creative writer who would express what he felt in common with other people, but more and more to be a searcher for means by which he could express his personal reactions without necessarily making them intelligible and evocative. The interest in the technique of poetry was temporarily, although this effect has by no means wholly passed, making poetry a means for mere self-expression; the writer was encouraged to be isolationist, with little regard for the worlds of other men and women. Poetry is becoming intellectual and withdrawn from the affairs which after 1880 it had begun to enter.

From this point forward an attempt to coalesce the various tendencies or individual experiments in poetry would be premature. The reader will be able to

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obtain from what follows such impressions of what is going on as may be formed.

(iv) Biographical Notes

Robert Bridges (1844-1930), a scholar and painstakingly careful in the theory and practice of poetry, published a small volume in 1873, which was followed in 1876 by the sonnet sequence known as *The Growth of Love*, the verse version of *Eros and Psyche* in 1885, and the exquisite *Shorter Poems* in 1890. A collected edition began to appear in 1898. In poetic drama he industriously published ten pieces between *Prometheus the Firegiver* (1883) and *December* (1904). In 1929 he published the four books of *The Testament of Beauty*, a poem of rather less merit than was credited to it at the time. It contains a good deal of theorising, bare passages of scholarly statement, an excellent opening, and not much else. Bridges will be remembered rather for the remarkable lyric qualities of his earlier work, where we find a love of Nature like Tennyson's, the happy serenity we enjoy in Spenser, a rhythm always expressive, and a texture of words always apt and beautiful. His experiments in prosody resulted in less original work than has been supposed; these were of academic interest, although his use of the iambic hexameter line may yet bear fruit. His efforts to purify the spelling and pronunciation of English were similarly interesting rather than effective.

Alfred Edward Housman (1859-1936) was another scholar, of great appeal and influence within narrow

limits, who first won attention with *A Shropshire Lad* (1896). The poem is beautiful in shape and economical in expression. His severely classical mind, which admitted nothing decorative to his verse and which cherished ideals of paganism and mild pessimism, surrounded his sense of the tragedy of life with a great deal of earthly beauty. This content was readily accepted by poetry readers, since what he wrote was easily understandable, and he enjoyed the popularity which he deserved. His use of consonants is of exceptional interest; his diction is simple; he emphasises the physical basis of poetry. Later books contained much verse written years earlier; *"Last Poems* (1922) and the posthumous *More Poems* (1936) had the benefit of the revision which his standard required.

The poetry of his brother, Laurence Housman (b. 1865) is of slight value, since *The Little Plays of St. Francis* are dramas rather than poetry. His work is mainly dramatic.

After his novels had established him with the public, Thomas Hardy (1840-1928) wrote verse for some thirty years without finding a publisher. Then *Wessex Poems* appeared in 1898, followed by *Poems of the Past and Present* (1902), and the astonishing epic, *The Dynasts* (1904). Then came *Time's Laughing-Stocks* (1909), *Satires of Circumstance* (1914), *Moments of Vision* (1917), and the *Collected Poems* of 1930. The final instalment of *The Dynasts* came out in 1908. The thought behind his novels is expressed as relentlessly in the poems—man is a helpless creature working out

his life and enduring torments, often self-inflicted, under an impassive fate.

Clearly this view could not be the ultimate opinion of an intelligent man, and Hardy pursued it to a conclusion with great courage of heart, sincerity of thought, and integrity as an artist. He was tormented by pity for man, a pity which could not be exercised because he neither saw any reason why man should suffer nor any way of relieving him. Chesterton's famous reference to him (less flippant than has been assumed) as "the village atheist brooding and blaspheming over the village idiot" touched the nerve of Hardy's pain, for it pictures a man baffled by the suffering of those who know not why they suffer, and therefore cursing God, in whom he cannot believe, because no other cause of suffering is imaginable. This is the "pessimism" which so anguished him as to compel Hardy to seek a deity who should be neither divinity nor humanity but an Immanent Will existing in mankind. Even this, whose struggle with men is the theme of *The Dynasts*, he could not rationally accept, so that he had recourse to "a willing suspension of disbelief for the moment" as his only faith. Hardy is the most poignant of modern authors. Even the loveliness of poetry appeared to him an unworthy refuge in which to be comforted, so that much of his verse was deliberately angular and bare. Yet he has moments of true lyric joy, of broad vision, and a skill in metre and rhyme which rewards those who share the sorrows and bewilderment of his mind.

The poems are built up, line by line, in a carefully planned architecture. The sense of inevitable pattern in the structure, coupled with sensitiveness to the unrelieved pessimism in the matter, presents difficulties which some readers do not overcome. Yet no other forms of poetry were open to Hardy, who refused to compromise his dark convictions by even the least yielding to the human desire for remission. It is thus inevitable that much of his poetry will perish. What survives is important. A curious feature of his work is that his thought is of this century, while his style is not. He was not an innovator of form, so that little here is likely to be imitated, but his thought was along lines which the twentieth century has decided to explore in its disillusionment. A study of Hardy, in life as well as in poetry, may save many an unnecessary journey.

Popularity, a good deal of verse, some poetry, were the harvest of Rudyard Kipling (1865-1936). *Barrack Room Ballads* (1892), *The Seven Seas* (1896), *The Five Nations* (1903), *Songs from Books* (1912), *The Years Between* (1919) are not all transient, because there is in them enthusiasm for the sea, for the Empire, for Sussex, for the "romance" and colour of the East. The first and second of these are permanent; of the second and fourth, Kipling's aspect of them is at least memorable. Whether we share his enthusiasms or not, we must see in him a good deal of the genuine poet. Slighter in output but equally patriotic was Sir Henry John Newbolt (1862-1938), whose *Songs of the*

Sea (1904), *Songs of the Fleet* (1910), and *Songs Old and New* (1912) are in many ways Edwardian and contain every schoolboy's ideas of the Services (up to 1939) and a manly code of honour. Newbolt was always musical and within his range.

The rumbustious quality of Kipling is even more turbulent in the poetry of Gilbert Keith Chesterton (1874-1936), who shook off the languors of Pre-Raphaelite tradition to become a boldly rhetorical crusader. Gifted with striking hyperbole, as in "The Donkey" of popular appeal, a born propagandist and journalist, robustly cheerful yet capable of deadly derision, able to put his best into even his least writings, he published *The Wild Knight and Other Poems* (1900) and, in 1911, discovered his greatest strength in the form of *The Ballad of the White Horse*. His irresistible humour made a success of *Wine, Water, and Song*, and the *Poems* of 1915 enabled his measure to be taken. *The Ballad of St. Barbara* (1922) did not add to his stature. His *Collected Poems* appeared in 1933. He has more verse than poetry, but everything he wrote was sane, full of a jovial and healthy love or hatred.

Always coupled with his name is that of Joseph Hilaire Pierre Belloc (b. 1870), whose poems for children are of exceptional merit—*The Bad Child's Book of Beasts* (1896), *More Beasts for Worse Children* (1898), *A Moral Alphabet* (1899), *Cautionary Tales for Children* (1908). While his reputation rests on his humorous verse, he was capable of vigorous poetry of unusual sonority and of such metrical lightness as we

find in "Tarantella". His earliest book was *Sonnets* of 1896; his *Sonnets and Verse* (1923) contains some of his best lyrics, musical, simple, haunting in their nostalgia.

Gordon Bottomley (b. 1874) is neglected now and usually badly anthologised. Too individualist to belong to a group, he had worked alone from his early poetry, richly sensuous in diction and Pre-Raphaelite in conception—the finest of its kind outside Rossetti—to the tightly compressed statements of more recent years, where he has been aided by his dramatic sense. The *Poems at White Nights* (i 899), *The Gate of Smaragdus* (1904), and both series of *Chambers of Imagery* (1907 and 1912) are reminiscent of Keats and Browning as well as of Rossetti or Morris. Particularly worth attention are his "Hymns", which resemble Odes; here he is anxious to express his immediate apprehensions about life and death and poetry. Not unreasonably he has been likened to a non-Catholic, Francis Thompson. His best work is found in *Poems of Thirty Years* (1925) and his dramatic ability in *The Riding to Lithend* (1909), *King Lear's Wife* (1915), and *Gruach and Britain's Daughter* (1921).

Poetry lies in the verse of Thomas Sturge Moore (1870-1944), but is not wholly resolved. Beginning under Pre-Raphaelite influence, he broke away to form his own medium. His best work is in *The Vine-dresser* (1899), in addition to which he wrote *Danaë* (1903), *The Route of the Amazons* (1903), and *Judas* (1923). Four volumes of *Collected Poems* appeared in

1934. In dramatic form he wrote *Aphrodite Against Artemis* (1901) and the more striking *Absalom* (1903).

Charlotte Mew (1870-1928) is more appreciated today than in her lifetime. Simplicity backed by dark intensity haunts her poetry as it did her life, which she ended by her own act. Her best work is equal to the best of most of our women poets. Apart from prose work which appeared in *The Yellow Book*, she is known by the poetry collection, *The Farmer's Bride* (1915). Her tragic end stirred interest, so that further poems, with a memoir, appeared in *The Gambling Sailor* (1929).

Walter de la Mare (b. 1873) is as unique in his verse genius as he is in his prose. To the delight of children and others, he walks surely, delicately, in a world of soft sounds, audible silences, moonlight and shadows, and sees bewitched and phosphorescent beauties. In word and cadence he is able to express his subtleties perfectly—a fact which makes the faint tinge of horror, quite rightly always present and almost safely round the corner, the more delicious and uneasy. He has published *Songs of Childhood* (1902), *Poems* (1906), *The Listeners* (1912), *The Sunken Garden* (1917), *Motley* (1918), *Peacock Pie* (1913), *Ding-Dong Bell* (1924), *Old Rhymes and New* (1932), and *The Burning Glass* (1945). Collected editions appeared in 1920 and 1942. Two facts are noteworthy about De la Mare—he never indulges in whimsy and he is never preoccupied with his exquisite craftsmanship.

John Masefield (b. 1878), trained for the sea, later variously occupied in the earning of a living, whether

as a mill hand in America or a writer for the *Manchester Guardian* in England, began his career as a poet with *Salt-water Ballads* (1902), which contained the famous "Sea Fever". The *Poems and Ballads* of 1910 marked development, but the publication in the *English Review* of a sinner's confession, *The Everlasting Mercy* (1911), brought him fame. The stark realism of its octosyllabic couplets and the violence of its language finally proved a heavy disguise for the nature of Masefield's poetry. This disguise was increased by the narrative poems *The Widow in the Bye Street* (1912) and *Dauber* (1913). The less violent Masefield who reappeared in *The Daffodil Fields* (1913) was held by his readers to be an anaemic other-self, unwelcome. This attitude also greeted *Lollington Downs* (1917); only with *Reynard the Fox* (1919) and *Enslaved* (1920) was Masefield realised to be more than a vigorous realist. *Right Royal* (1920), *King Cole* (1923), *Midsummer Night* (1928), *The Wanderer of Liverpool* (1930), and *Minnie Maylow's Story* (1931) continued his success. Further long poems made up *Wonderings* (1943). The Poet Laureate still writes occasional verse, of varying quality.

Certain faults of rhyme, unevenness of style, a weakness for purple patches, excessive force beyond the violence proper to some poems, may be alleged against his verse. On the positive side are a strong creative impulse, expressing itself in original material; almost ceaseless movement with a corresponding accompaniment in rhythm; beauty of imagery; a

profound, unsentimental sympathy with the "under-dog"; a remarkable blend of youthful idealism with a realisation of the bitterness of life. His work may chiefly rest on fragments of his narratives, together with some shorter poems. A curious feature of his verse is its recitative quality, which, however, is often lost when the poetry is declaimed. His poetry is meant to be read rather than heard.

Alfred Noyes (b. 1880) wrote verse marked by facility and smoothness, of which the chief work is *The Torchbearers* (1922-30), an account of leaders of thought and scientific progress. His poetry, satisfactory although not always of high quality, has been most popular, and includes *The Loom of Years* (1902), *Drake, an English Epic* (1908), *Forty Singing Seamen* (1907), *Tales of the Mermaid Tavern* (1913), and *A Tale of Old Japan* (1914).

John Freeman (1880-1929) excelled in short pieces where his reserve is less guarded. Never widely read, his poetry is of the intellect rather than of the imagination and emotions. Its appeal lies in a carefully wrought technique and in great beauty of word and imagery. *Twenty Poems* (1909), *Fifty Poems* (1911), *Stone Trees* (1916), *Presage of Victory* (1916) were followed by *Poems Old and New*, which established his reputation. Further publications were *Music* (1921), *Prince Absalom* (1925), *Solomon and Ealkis* (1926), the *Collected Poems* (1928) and posthumous *Last Poems* (1930).

Wilfrid Wilson Gibson (b. 1878) has been likened to

Crabbe, a comparison justified in so far as he has been interested in the lives of ordinary people in dull, industrial surroundings and, in writing of them, has shown occasional true poetry. He began romantically with *Urlyn the Harper* and *The Queen's Vigil* (1902), and *The Golden Helm* (1903). Stern reality then claimed *The Nets of Love* (1905), the dramatic Blank Verse *Stonefolds* (1907), Free Verse *Daily Bread* (1910), and the rhymed monologues of *Fires* (1912). The lyric element is more evident in *Thoroughfares* (1914) and *Livelihood* (1917). Dramas not intended for stage production were the valuable *Krindlesyke* (1922) and *Kestrel Edge* (1924), which contain sound characterisation and excellent situations.

Edward Thomas, born 1878 and killed in action in 1917, marked his turning from prose to poetry by assuming the pseudonym of Edward Eastaway, under which he published *Poems* (1917). *Last Poems* appeared shortly after his death. His poetry has simplicity and an "other-wordly" quality of distinction, especially when the poems are heard instead of being read.

A poet of uneven work but most important to contemporary poetry was Harold Monroe (1879-1932), who wrote *Poems* (1906), *Before Dawn* and *Judas* (1911), *Strange Meetings* (1917), *The Earth for Sale* (1928), and other volumes. His poetry is highly individual, with naive humour and an uncanny skill of being inside other skins—his *Milk for the Cat* is the best-known example of this delightful gift. Monroe founded the original *Poetry Review* and was responsible for "the

Poetry Bookshop ", where authors met and poetry readings were held and the financially straitened could obtain suitable accommodation for a low charge. His shop was the centre of the " Georgian " group which was the more conservative element in the development of verse after 1910.

Lascelles Abercrombie (1881-1938) used much Blank Verse, but was also notable for valuable experiments in metre and diction. Metaphor and a recitative quality mark his chosen forms—the dramatic monologue and poems intended for acting—as in *Interludes and Poems* (1908). *Emblems of "Love Designed in Several Discourses* (1912) shows the blend of emotion and metaphysics characteristic of him. His verse was compact, rugged, and unusual in epithet; he analysed strange themes enthusiastically. Later works were *The Sale of St. Thomas* (1911), *four Short Plays* (1922), and *Twelve Idylls* (1928). Extracts cannot do him justice; a lengthy reading of his poetry is well worth while.

An author who also chose dramatic subjects and was an individualist was Charles M. Doughty (1843-1926), famous as the author of *Arabia Deserta*. His style is difficult and occasionally obscured by peculiarities, such as his omission of the apostrophe. His subjects are interesting (*The Cliffs*, 1909, describes an aerial invasion of England, while *The Clouds*, 1912, shows the country partly occupied by savage enemies) and his slow, majestic measures are well suited to his themes. An unusual ability in scenic description, joined to a visionary content, gives a certain Pre-Raphaelite

quality to his verse. *The Mansoul, or the Riddle of the World*, and *The Dawn in Britain* (1906-7) are more apocalyptic. Eccentric as it may be, Doughty's poetry is certainly poetry for today. In originality and intrinsic merit it may come to be ranked with the work of Manley Hopkins, Francis Thompson, and W. B. Yeats.

William Butler Yeats (1865-1939) was equally distinguished in prose, poetry, and drama; it is difficult to deal with him under any one aspect. Bitterly regretting that "organised religion" deprived him of a religious belief, he set about the formation of a faith derived from folk-lore and anthropology, arriving from such improbable sources at conclusions surprisingly coherent. This fact led him to adopt unanimism and convinced him of the dual personality of man—in the self of our habits and associations with the self who, by constant struggle against the other, finds freedom in the world of the spirit. Yeats is thus essentially a mystic, with affinity to Blake. His beliefs suited an artist essentially lyrical; they explain why his gift of poetry was at full power from the beginning, while his art has developed. Looking on poetry as something to be chanted to harp accompaniment, he wrote verse like "The Lake Isle of Innisfree" in *The Rose* (1893), which succeeded *Mosada, a Dramatist Poem* (1886), and in the book which established him, *The Wanderings of Oisín* (1889). The climax of his early writing was in *Poems* (1895) and *The Wind Among the Reeds* (1899). Yeats now turned from

mythology to mysticism, from Celtic twilight to the twilit world within man, from observation of Nature to speculation. Thus he abandoned the sources of his inspiration but external affairs, such as his marriage and the political troubles in Ireland, helped to re-direct him by assisting his search to discover what is fundamental in man. Something of his findings is in *Per Arnica Silentia I^unae* (1918) and *The Wild Swans at Coole* (1919); the title character in *Michael Kobartes and the Dancer* (1921) typifies his idea of man. The final phase of Yeats the poet came with *The Tower* (1928), *The Winding Stair and Other Poems* (1929), *Last Poems and Plays* (1940). Here he speaks mostly of man in perfected rhythm, word, and image. Although his turning from Nature had for a time almost killed his inspiration and had made his poetry like the verse of the Decadents, Yeats came through mythology, mysticism, psychology, and gnostic speculation to fullness of creative genius and poetic artistry. His later poetry showed how naturally speech and verse metre might be united (a lesson similar to Synge's use of prose rhythm in his plays). His metres were free in structure; by skilful use of vowel and consonantal patterns he achieved a diction amazingly musical.

Closely associated with his mystical quest was George William Russell ("A. K.", 1867-1935), who turned to Theosophy. His best work is *Homeward: Songs by the Way*, which was followed by *The 'Earth breath* (1897) and *The Divine Vision* (1903). His collected poems and *Gods of War* appeared in 1915.

Unsuitable for detached quotation, his search for absolute beauty, and his attempts to express it are accompanied by lyric beauty and true poetic genius. Symbolism, rather vague, characterises his verse, and it is made clear by the poetic insight which it reveals as he tries to utter the ineffable.

William Henry Davies (1871-1940), who lived as a tramp in England and America until he was thirty, issued many small books of poetry, including *The Soul's Destroyer and Other Poems* (1904), the *Collected Poems* of 1916 and 1928, and *The Poems of W. H. Davies* (1934). Critics have seen resemblances to Wordsworth and even to Campion, but Davies rarely writes of the inward nature of things, but rather of what is sensibly perceptible. His verse has directness and extreme simplicity.

Ralph Hodgson (b. 1871), one of the more promising Georgian poets, has scarcely fulfilled the promise in his slight output, consisting chiefly of *Poems* (1917). His range is limited, being usually an expression of sympathy with animals, but he has considerable emotional power and a varied music. His language is extremely compressed. He is best known by his narrative poems, *The Bui/* and *The Song of Honour* (1913).

John Drinkwater (1882-1937) published *Poems* (1903), *Olton Pools* (1916), *Loyalties* (1918), *Bird in Hand* (1927), and *Summer Harvest: Poems* (1933), in which is nothing sufficiently personal to be effective.

Sir John Squire (b. 1884), founder and editor of the

London Mercury, published a neglected '*Poems and Baudelaire Flowers* (1909), and the more acceptable *The Uly of Malaud* (1917) and *The Moon* (1920); other books include the collection, *Poems* (1926). Much of his verse is rhythmical and fluent; his gift of fantasy is too little used. His parody is famous, as in *Imaginary Speeches* (1912), *Steps to Parnassus* (1913), and *Tricks of the Trade* (1917). Whatever influence he may have will be for the good.

Siegfried Sassoon (b. 1886) was haunted by the loneliness of life and man's ineptitude in the face of war problems. *The Old Huntsman* (1917) and *Counter-Attack* (1918) are angry and ironical; their merits were not recaptured in *Satirical Poems* (1926). There is much echoing music and real poetry in *The Heart's Journey* (1928) and *Vigils* (1935).

Far better known as a war poet, although he wrote little about war, is Rupert Brooke (1887-1915), whose early popularity has given way to an unjustified prejudice against his worth. Beginning almost as a Decadent, he quickly passed to a realism no longer daring, went through a phase of naturalism, and made a few interesting metrical experiments, chiefly in Greek classical patterns. It is true that little of his poetry is original; much of what he wrote is echoed in the literature of other ages and countries. Yet he had real poetry and sufficient originality to justify the statement that his early death was a loss to contemporary literature. A sensuous love of beauty was combined with acute perception of physical appearances, accompanied

by dexterous ease of expression. His poetry best represents the culture of his class and time. The *Collected Poems* (1918) show gifts which inspired some to read and others to write. Thus his influence has been wide, if not deep. His sonnets and a few other pieces contain his best work. Apart from poetry, he published, in 1916, *John Webster and the Elizabethan Drama* and *letters from America*.

Dexterity is again a keynote in Humbert Wolfe (1885-1940), whose talent developed steadily through *London Sonnets* and *Shylock Reasons with Mr. Chesterton* (1920), *Kensington Gardens* (1924), *Lampoons* and *The Unknown Goddess* (1925), *Humoresque* and *News of the Devil* (1926), and *Cursory RJymes* (1927) to the highly popular *Requiem* of the same year. This lyric sequence was his best work. Satirical, remotely sentimental, technically gifted, Wolfe always suggests a reserve of power he never employs, so that his poems lack conviction and vitality.

Two poets who belong rather to the 1890's than to the 1900's, but whose collected poems were not issued until the 1920's were Lord Alfred Douglas (1870-1945) and Alice Meynell (1847-1922). Some of Douglas's nonsense verse is worthwhile; of his serious work little is original in thought, and its language is heavily mannered by out-of-date phrasing. Technically he was more than able; a few lyrics and sonnets are memorable, as may be seen in *Collected Poems* (1919), *Collected Satires* (1926), and *Complete Poems* (1928). Alice Meynell's reserve led her to file and polish her

verse until it was almost too smooth. The weakness which this suggests is not there, but genuine inspiration which, like her style, is reminiscent of the eighteenth century, is full of thought and delight. Her sonnets are of special value. She wrote poetry as early as 1875; her *Collected Poems* appeared in 1913 and "*Last Poems*" in 1923. Her essays are slight but effective.

Wilfrid Owen (1893-1918) left verse which Siegfried Sassoon, whose viewpoint about life he shared, edited as *Poems by Wilfrid Owen* (1920); his complete works were published in 1931. "Strange Meeting" is one of the best poems of his time. Owen was considerably under French influence, but had originality of form and metrical deftness.

Edmund Blunden (b. 1896) also found entry into war an entry into hell. His *Pastorals* (1916) contains much of his best poetry; *Undertones of War* (1928) is less characteristic, since war overshadows it as much as it does the *Poems* of 1930. A more genuine inspiration, new metrical patterns, a return to his inspiration by Nature, are discernible in *Shells by a Stream* (1944).

The early poetry of Edith Sitwell (b. 1887) contains much verbal ingenuity and clowning which have led to the view that *Clown's Houses* (1918), *The Wooden Pegasus* (1920), and *Bucolic Comedies* (1923) have brittle brilliance and are possibly an escape to the nursery—a particularly precocious nursery, of course. Actually the poems were rather of the "nursery" of French decadence. She made a highly decorated and artificial

world, in which were wit and witchery, and followed true Imagist theory by securing great effects from single words. In this practice she often used the method of sense transfusion, by applying to a sense the perceptions of another, as one does in speaking of the sparkling cry of a bird. The device was not, of course, original in Miss Sitwell's poetry, but she has used it more constantly than any other writer of her prominence. Another feature of her work lies in the highly effective use of consonants and open or closed vowel patterns—to which she pays close attention in her literary criticism. Her *Fafade* (1926) was sensational in its rhymes and assonances; a public performance added to the shock, but also revealed the reality in poems almost overwhelmingly dreamlike. Her poems appeared in a collected edition in 1930; the best of her later work is in *A Song of the Cold* (1945) rather than in *Fanfare for Elizabeth* (1946). The problem of how far Miss Sitwell is a true poet and how far she is brilliantly gifted in everything except insight is too large to be dealt with here. The underlying significance of what she observes is rarely noted. Or is it, in an unusual, individual manner? The question is worth taking pains to answer for oneself; in examining it, her relationships to Blake and T. S. Eliot are to be remarked.

Sir Osbert Sitwell (b. 1892) is equally mindful of the eighteenth century and baroque. Less ironic than his sister, curiously attracted to the use of hymn rhythms, he showed himself in *Fables and Satires* and in *Argonaut*

to be a true satirist with some defiance and a good deal of kughter. His *Collected Poems* were published in 1945.

Of the verse of Sacheverell Sitwell (b. 1897) little can be said. Sprung rhythm is effectively used, and the old English love of the garden is sanely, unsentimentally used as a recurring subject. *Collected Poems* appeared in 1936. Less anxious than the other Sitwells to find a personal idiom, he made skilled use of free verse, which is often impressionistic.

The early poems of James Elroy Flecker (1884-1915) were Decadent in tendency, but he quickly shook off all influence and developed originally. His Romantic nature was evident in *Forty-two Poems* (1911) and still more in the *Golden Journey to Samarkand* (1913). The posthumous production of *Hassan* (1922) was, from the literary viewpoint, a failure, for much of the work was melodramatic, showily "theatre", and marred by repetition. Flecker was genuinely oriental in tone. His verse was a triumph of craftsmanship, easy yet subtle, a beautiful vehicle for the serene expression of caught beauty. Its rhythms swing to and fro as its patterns are woven and a most effective recitative quality is noticeable in them. Yet his aim restricts his wholeness of success, for, following the French "Parnassian" poets, he aims at creating beauty itself. To this end he drove all emotion out of his work. The purpose was essentially impossible of attainment, but Flecker achieved the miracle of almost capturing the abstraction.

His celebrated work in medicine has obscured the

verse of Sir Ronald Ross (1857-1932), who wrote much verse during the years of scientific research in India. It was published at various times and collected in *Poems* (1928). His warmly humanitarian outlook often moved him to satire, while his practical view of life preserved him from Decadent tendencies. The lyric element was strongly present in him.

Walter J. Turner (1889-1946) also wrote some good lyrics. He is at his best in short romantic poems of great simplicity in pattern. This may be seen in *The Hunter and Other Poems* (1916), *The Dark Fire* (1918), and *In Time Like Glass* (1921).

Robert Laurence Binyon (1869-1943) has the restraint usually associated with the classical, together with poetic insight and scholarship. The intellectual element predominates without sterilising his inspiration, which was unmistakable in *London Visions* (1896), *Porphyryon* (1898), and in poems from the 1914-18 war, of which the most famous is "For the Fallen".

Unreliable as he is, Herbert Edward Palmer (b. 1880) has a verve and vitality worthy of notice. His books include *Two Fishers*, *The Unknown Warrior*, *Jonah Comes to Nineveh*, *Cinder Thursday* (which has attracted much attention) and *Summit and Chasm*.

James Stephens (b. 1882) is more successful in prose than in verse. Nevertheless his poetry has originality and a baffling mixture of insight and simplicity. His metres are equally elusive, since they are as original as the matter they sing, suggesting an almost incredible immediacy of inspiration. In brief, he has genius.

This is specially true of the earlier poems, such as occurs in *The Crock of Go/dand Hill of Vision* (1912), as well as occasionally in *The Demi-Gods* (1914) and the *Collected Poems* (1926).

Aldous Huxley (b. 1894) was a poet before he turned to prose and mordant criticism of the manners of his time. *The Burning Wheel* (1916), *The Defeat of Youth* (1918), and *L,eda* (1920) alternate between quiet meditation and moods of frustration which are the result of his search for aesthetic and religious principles. A growing pessimism is evident, a gloom which has darkened his inspiration, possibly until it has withered. The poetry is sound in form.

The poetry of Maurice Baring (1874-1945) is fastidious, but not deeply inspired. It is exquisite craftsmanship in verse rather than in poetry, except for certain war poems of deep emotion, e.g. *Diffugere Nives* and *In Memoriam A. H.* (1917). For the rest, he prefers technical perfection and a gentlemanly reserve.

Robert Graves (b. 1895) wrote some of his best verse in *Ardours and Endurances* and *Fairies and Fusiliers* (1917). The poetry of later years is less imaginative and more thoughtful. It includes skilful experiments in verse. The *Collected Poems* of 1938 is representative, and is supplemented by *Poems 1938-45* (1946).

Edward Buxton Shanks (b. 1892) has written *The Queen of China and Other Poems* (1919), which helped to increase the reputation gained by *Songs* (1915), *Poems* (1916). Other books include *Island of Youth* (1921),

The Shadowgraph and Other Poems (1925), a collected edition, and also *The Enchanted Village* in 1933, *Tom Tiddler's Ground* (1934) and *Images from the Progress of the Seasons* (1947). He has also written a novel and a *Study of Rxdyard Kipling* (1938).

Francis Ledwidge (1891-1917), whose *Complete Poems* appeared in 1919, wrote of poetry and of what he would do if death should take him from the Nature he loved. L. A. G. Strong (b. 1896) wrote *Dublin Days* (1921), *The Lowery Road* and *Difficult Love* (1927), *Northern Lights* (1929), *Laughter from the West* (1935), *Call to the Swan* (1936). Richard Church (b. 1893) first published *The Flood of Life* (1917) and various poems up to *Twenty New Poems* (1946) and *Collected Poems* (1948). Victoria Sackville-West (b. 1892), whose *Collected Poems* appeared in 1933 and *Selected Poems* in 1941, is memorable for her description of country life in the course of the seasons, entitled *The Land* (1926), one of the finest poems written since 1900. Clifford Bax (b. 1886) has retained the appreciation of his readers by sensitive writing, which is most recently illustrated by his narrative poem, *The Traveller's Tale* (1945). The Cumberland poet, Norman Nicholson, uses his native scenery as background, especially to the verse-play *The Old Man of the Mountains* (1946); *Rock Face* appeared in 1948. He is among the more promising of the younger poets. Andrew Young (b. 1885) has written *Boaz and Ruth* (1920), *Winter Harvest*, *Collected Poems* (1936), *Speak to the Earth*, and *A Prospect of Flowers*.

Richard Aldington, previously referred to, published the *Complete Poems of Richard Aldington* in 1949. Like A. E. Housman, he emphasises the physical basis of poetry. Henry Treece, who leads the Apocalyptic movement, is often obscure, especially in the first two volumes of his poetry, but in *The Haunted Garden* (1947) are a more direct simplicity, imagery less strained, and greater lyricism of form. The verse of Hugh PAnson Fausset (b. 1895), as in *Before the Dawn* (1924), shows the delicate craftsmanship proper to a critic of fine perception; his sonnet sequence, *The Spirit of Love* (1921), is memorable. Unusual technical skill, arising from his intimate knowledge of prosody, marks the poetry of John Redwood Anderson (*Walls and Hedges* and *The Mask*, 1912, followed by volumes including *Haunted Islands*, *Tower to Heaven*, *The Curlew Cries*, *Fugue of Time*, and the distinguished *Paris Symphony*, 1948). Critics have remarked in him the influences of Milton and Rainer Maria Rilke.

Two writers have overcome considerable difficulties to emerge as poets with something to say and skill in saying it. Huw Menai, taught at a Ragged School which he left to peddle fish, sell newspapers, and in other ways fight for a living, was moved by the First World War to write verse. *From the Upcast Shaft* (1922), *The Passing of Guto* (1929), *Back in the Return* (1933), and *The Simple Vision* (1946) show both the man and his affinity to Wordsworth's thought. In the First World War, F. Victor Branford was wholly incapacitated but recovered sufficiently after helpless

years to write *Titans and Gods* (1922)—of the wanderings of the mind between the worlds of science and mysticism—and *The White Stallion* (1925). Of these two poems, one depicts the soul against a background of modernity and the other gives an analysis of aspects of modern life.

Charles Williams is related to the eighteenth century, a relationship he shares with Alice Meynell. Unlike her, however, he approaches Donne by his quality of theological speculation. In a wide range of poetry he works on the themes of love and the relationship between the soul and the spiritual world. As in his prose writings, he is actively Christian but fascinated by paganism. These motives may be seen in *Poems of Conformity* (1917) and *Windows of Night* (1925). *A Masque of Thomas Cranmer* (1936) is striking. *Arthurian Torso* (1949) contains a valuable introduction by C. S. Lewis, whose thought is often akin to that of Williams.

Richard Church (b. 1893) has shown sanity of outlook and clearness of vision in *The Flood of Life* (1917) and other books, including *Twelve Noon* (1936), *A Twentieth-Century Psalter* (1943), and *The Lamp* (1947). Slight but useful output, as in *Haiders' Dawn*, was achieved by Alun Lewis, killed in the Second World War. Another recent writer of note is Christopher Hassall (b. 1912), who wrote *Poems of Two Years* (1935) and composed the music for his *Christ's Comet* (produced at the Canterbury Festival, 1938). Rex Warner (b. 1905) has attracted attention by poetry

since *Poems* (1937), which showed a rhythmic use of free verse, freshness of imagery, and originality of metaphor (occasionally strained). In later work, as in the sonnet sequence added to the *Poems*, and entitled *Poems and Contradictions* (1946), he has experimented in new rhyme schemes. Geoffrey Johnson followed *The Timeless Land* by *The Ninth Wave* (1948). Possibly he is too prolific as yet; he is full of promise, with essentially lyric gifts, spontaneity, swiftness of perception and immediacy of response. Martyn Skinner (b. 1906) wrote *Sir 'Elfadore and Mabyna* (1935) and gained warmly appreciative notices for his *Letters to Malaya I and II* (1941). The verse, in the manner of Pope, but with something of the good earth instead of the Augustan mode, continued in series 777 and IV (1943), and K (1947).

John Gawsworth, leader of a neo-Georgian movement before the Second World War, has published twenty-one books summarised in *Collected Poems* (1949). Another *Selected Poems* (1948) came from the verse of John Betjeman (b. 1906), author of *Ghastly Good Taste*, *Old Lights for New Chancels*, and other books of criticism and poetry. Gently satirical, he has recently shown signs of developing into a poet of more than mere skill. George Barker (b. 1913) is interesting for *Janus*, *Alanna Autumnal*, and especially for *Calamity* and the *Sacred and Secular Elegies*. Sidney Keyes (1922-43) was regarded as the Rupert Brooke of the 1939 war, and some neglect has followed this hasty judgment. His verse, which is strong and clear,

should be studied carefully in *The Cruel Solstice* (1943) and *Collected Poems* (1945).

(v) Shorter Notices

A short text-book which covers the whole of contemporary English literature cannot mention, still less evaluate, the numerous poets and verse-writers of the time. Regretfully we have excluded others whose verse has much merit, such as Mary Webb, Frances Cornforth, Ford Madox Ford, Rose Macaulay, merely for want of space. We conclude our review, then, by mentioning briefly a few more poets whose work has interested or is likely to become interesting.

Lord Dunsany, literary critic and dramatist, has written much good poetry, including *To Awaken Pegasus* (1949).

Martin Armstrong (b. 1882) : *Exodus and Other Poems* (1912), *The Buzzards* (1921), *Collected Poems* (1934). Iolo Aneurin Williams (b. 1890) : *Poems* (1915), *New Poems* (1917). Walter Sherard Vines (b. 1890) : *The Two Worlds* (1916), *The Kaleidoscope* (1921), *The Pyramid* (1926), *Triforium* (1928). Wilfred Rowland Childe (b. 1890) : *The Little City* (1911), *The Gothic Rose* (1922), *Ivory Palaces* (1925), *Selected Poems* (1936). Herbert Read (b. 1893) : *Naked Warriors* (1919), *Eclogues* (1919), *Poems 1914-34*, *Thirty-five Poems* (1940), *A World Within a War* (1944). Frank Kendon (b. 1893) : *Poems and Sonnets* (1924), *Arguments and Emblems* (1925), *A Life and Death of Judas Iscariot* (1926), the ballad narrative *Tristram* (1934), *The Cherry-*

minder (1935). E. R. Dodds (b. 1893): *Thirty-two Poems* (1929). Teresa Hooley, previously mentioned : *Songs of the Open*, *Collected Poems* (1928), *New Poems*, *Orchestra* (1935). Richard Hughes (b. 1900): *Confessio Juvenis* (collected poems, 1926), *Gipsy Night and Other Poems* (1922). Michael Roberts (b. 1902) : *Poems* (1936), *Orion Marches* (1939). Geoffrey Grigson (b. 1905) : *Under the Cliff* (1942), *The Isles of Scilly* (1946), *The Harp of Aeolus* (1947). Vernon Watkins (b. 1906) : *Ballad of Mari Lwyd and Other Poems*, and *The Lamp and the Veil*. William Alan Rook (b. 1910) : *Songs from a Cherry Tree*, *Soldiers This Solitude*, *Those Are My Comrades*, *We Who Are Fortunate*, *Not As a Refuge*. Julian Symons (b. 1912) : *The Second Man*, *Confusion About X*. Thomas Moulton, music, literary, and art critic : *Down Here the Hawthorn* (1921), *Willow Pattern* (1936). Edwin Muir : *First Poems* (1925), *Chorus of the Newly Dead* (1926), *Variations on a Time Theme* (1934), *Journeys and Places* (1937). William Plomer (b. 1903) : *The Family Tree* (1929), *The Five-fold Screen* (1932), *Selected Poems* (1940). James Findlay Hendry (b. 1912) : *The Fernie Brae*, *The Bridal Tree*, *Orchestral Mountain*, *Blackbird of Ospio*. John Buxton (b. 1912) : *Such 'Liberty*, *Atropes and Other Poems*, *Westward*, *Judas*. Laurence Whistler (b. 1912) : *Armed October*, *Four Walls*, *The Emperor Heart*, *In Time of Suspense*, *Who Uve in Unity*. Keidrych Rhys (b. 1914): *Poems from the Forces*, *Storm and Landscape*. Dylan Thomas (b. 1914) : *Eighteen Poems* (1934), *Twenty-five Poems* (1936), *Deaths and Entrances* (1946). Peter Yates (b. 1914) : *The*

Expanding Mirror, The Motionless Dancer. Clifford Dyment (b. 1914) : *The Axe in the Wood, Selected Poems, Poems 1935-47'* John Lehmann: *A Garden Revisited* (1931), *Forty Poems* (1942), *The Sphere of Glass* (1944). Roy Fuller : *A Lost Season.* Eilunid Lewis : *December Apples, Morning Songs.* Dorothy Wellesley (Lady Gerald Wellesley) : *Poems* (1920), *Poems of Ten Years* (1924-34). Sylvia Lynd : *The Goldfinches* (1920), *The Yellow Placard* (1931), *The Enemies* (1934), *Collected Poems* (1944).

Associated with Henry Treece and the Apocalyptic Movement is J. F. Hendry; more remotely allied are Norman McCaig, Tom Scott, and Nicholas Moore. The work of G. S. Fraser and Terence Tiller is marked by intellectual analysis and complication of ideas. David Gascoigne's recent work has a genuinely mystical element. William Empson's excellent work is markedly intellectual and often difficult. Of modern Scottish poetry, the work of Edwin Muir is the most notable; for lesser reasons Adam Drinan, the assertive "Hugh McDiarmid", and Ruthven Todd should be studied. Other poets to be considered are E. J. Scovell, Francis Scarfe, Laurie Lee, Lilian Bowes Lyon, Ronald Bottrall. Unusual promise is seen in Henry Reed and F. T. Prince.

Chapter Seven

" Modern " Poetry

(i) The Approach

BECAUSE poetry is a living thing, it changes as often as any major change occurs in man, since it expresses his thoughts, visions, and emotions. As often as a social group changes, its poetry changes. Thus, the poetic impulse in the seventeenth century differing from that of the eighteenth, the poetry of the two centuries was widely different. To study why poetry changes at various periods of English history is a fascinating study, to which we can do no more than refer and pass on to the fact that we are in the course of a revolution in the writing of poetry at the present time. The space available here must be used to set out some of the changes which are taking place : the causes of those changes are indicated here and elsewhere in this book.

As an approach to an understanding of what is happening, let us read two extracts. Both deal with love. One is by Thomas Randolph (1605-35) and the other by John Betjeman (b. 1906).

I have a mistress, for perfections rare
In every eye, but in my thoughts most fair;
Like tapers on the altars shine her eyes :
Her breath is the perfume of sacrifice :

And whereso'er my fancy would begin,
Still her perfection lets religion in.
We sit and talk, and kiss away the hours
As chastely as the morning dews kiss flowers :
I touch her, like my beads, with devout care,
And come unto my courtship as my prayer.

Most of what has been written in Volume I and the present book shows why we accept these lines as poetry. If we turn to Betjeman, we find something wholly different in form and content. Whether it attracts us or not is less important than whether we understand why we react to it as we do. That is, our response must be intelligent. To begin with, here is our quotation :

Miss Joan Hunter Dunn, Miss Joan Hunter Dunn,
I can hear from the car park the dance has begun.
Oh I full Surrey twilight! importunate band !
Oh ! strongly adorable tennis girl's hand.

Around us are Rovers and Austins afar,
Above us, the intimate roof of the car,
And here on my right is the girl of my choice,
With the tilt of her nose and the chime of her voice.

And the scent of her wrap, and the words never said,
And the ominous, ominous dancing ahead.
We sat in the car park till quarter to one.
And now I'm engaged to Miss Joan Hunter Dunn.

Now let us make a few notes which will help us to decide how far any example of " modern " verse is poetry, whether there is a growth of new poetry in our time, and what the experimental writers are trying to do.

(ii) Metre

A first objection to "modern" verse is that it is not verse, because its prosody has no patterns of iambic or dactylic or other metrical units. But does what we know of verse justify us in saying that absence of a conventional metrical pattern gives us prose and not verse? If you sound out "modern" verse audibly, you will notice that it certainly has a rhythmic freedom which a metrical pattern would not allow, and that its rhythm is simultaneously too restricted to be that of prose.

What emerges from a listening to the lines is the fact that their rhythm depends on the fall of an accent three or four times in each line. The position of the accent is not determined by any arrangement of metrical feet. In brief, the verse has a rhythm less planned than that of rhetoric, more limited than that of prose, and more regular than that of conversational English. We conclude that we have verse based on the fall of accent as many times in a line as the writer determines, and that the verse is based on rhythmical accentuation and not metrical accentuation. Listen to it in lines by T. S. Eliot, which give an example so quiet as to do little more than make us notice something unusual in the metrical pattern.

The brown waves of fog toss up to me
Twisted faces from the bottom of the street,
And tear from a passer-by with muddy skirts
An aimless smile that hovers in the air
And vanishes along the level of the roofs.

Experiments on these lines are not new. John Skelton (c. 1460-15 29) was a pioneer in suggesting new forms. His

By saint Mary, my lady,
Your mammy and your daddy
Brought forth a goodly baby!
My maiden Isobel,
Reflating Rosabel . . .

has a curiously modern ring about it. In rhyme also he was an innovator. He says that although it

... be jagged,
Tattered and ragged,
Rudely rain-beaten,
Rusty and moth-eaten . . .

yet he can claim that

It hath in it some pith.

(iii) Rhyme

This is interesting, for Skelton did what some "moderns" do—he often avoided true rhymes in favour of polysyllabic words which carry us into the poem and are rhythmically interesting. Here is an example from T. S. Eliot:

After the torchlight red on sweaty faces
After the frosty silence in the gardens
After the agony in stony places
The shouting and the crying
Poison and palace and reverberation
Of thunder of spring over distant mountains
He who was living is now dead
We who are living are now dying
With a little patience.

Not even punctuation here, but a certain weird of words, almost an invocation of sorcery, which stirs imagination, feeling, and interest by its falling accents and polysyllables instead of rhyme.

(iv) **Diction**

Closely allied to rhythm and rhyme is the diction of much contemporary verse, which we feel is too ordinary to rank with

At the mid hour of night, when stars are weeping, I fly
To the lone vale where we loved, when life shone warm
in thine eye. . . .

The new diction is too stark, too wanting in allusiveness, to secure the effects of

My heart aches, and a drowsy numbness pains
My sense, as though of hemlock I had drunk,
Or emptied some dull opiate to the drains
One minute past , . . ,

In appreciating the use of "modern" diction we must remember that language can be either so bare as to be merely real life without poetic inspiration or so artificial as to be too remote from life to have poetic significance. A curious mixture of both faults is seen in the Countess of Winchilsea's *Nocturnal Reverie* :

When the loos'd Horse, now as his Pasture leads,
Comes slowly grazing through th'adjoining Meads,
Whose stealing pace, and lengthened Shade we fear,
Till torn up Forage in his Teeth we hear,
And nibbling Sheep at large pursue their Food,
And unmolested Kine rechew the Cud . . .

Between these extremes there is a level of language proper to verse, and it is possible, along that level, to write verse in words drawn from our daily vocabulary. Spenser and Keats purposely wrote above this level; Shelley preferred to keep it in mind; Wordsworth avowedly made it his norm. In declaring his principle that the ordinary language of ordinary people is proper to verse, he not only destroyed a fundamental tenet of the Augustans, but gave poetry a way out to recover the freedom which it had lost in the eighteenth century. That line of thought has by now been considerably extended. Poets now seek a diction which is inevitably suited to their matter and essentially ordinary. The fact that their experiments fail at times does not invalidate the principle any more than do some of Wordsworth's remarkable lapses below the level he sought to find.

To see the theory, as we now have it, look at an extract from Spender's *The Prisoners* :

Far far the least of all, in want,
Are these,
The prisoners
Turned massive with their vaults and dark with dark.

They raise no hands, which rest upon their knees,
But lean their solid eyes against the night,
Dimly they feel
Only the furniture they use in cells.

Their time is almost Death. The silted flow
Of years on years
Is marked by dawns
As faint as cracks on mud-flats of despair.

Here the diction almost gives us stone prisoners in prisons of stone. Yet not quite that, which would be too much, but enough to give us years deadening a man by weight, dulling him to apathy, to almost complete vacuity of mind. Their solid eyes, the hands resting in massive heaviness, the silt of time which slows them to immobility—these allusions would be less successful if the diction and rhythm were different.

The diction of much "modern" poetry, then, is chosen so as to convey an allusiveness suitable to the poet's purposes. It is of first importance to note in this connection that these are usually unfamiliar. Where traditionally we had *eyes that shone like dew* or *pale wasted hand*, we now have eyes which are *polished marbles* and hands which are *meagre, blue-nailed, phthisic*. What has really changed is the way of looking at things—a fact about which complaint is stupid—and the diction is suitable to the bare, factual images many contemporary poets wish to use.

Diction may be further understood if we note that the "modern" poet often alludes to things which we regard as being far apart. To express their new outlook, whatever its value may be, they need new connections to link "modern" ideas with the emotions. Our interest is in their method of combining new references instead of old ones, as in

In the quarry
I found the face—brow and nose and eyes
Cleft in a stare of ten-year-old surprise,

With slate lids slid backwards, grass and plantain
 Tufted in ear and nostril, and an ooze
 Like drip from marble mouth that spews
 Into the carved trough of a city fountain.

Undeniably this use of diction has enormous power. In fact, it has a power to frighten, which is one reason why we may shy away from it unintelligently. Behind that reaction, however, is a conviction that, whether we admit its inspiration or artistic authenticity, we recognise the effectiveness and artistic suitability to the writer's purposes of most of the prosody and diction of present experimental verse.

(v) Experience

Besides the above facts, we should remind ourselves that poetry is an experience, by which sensibility is aroused and the mind widened to new perceptions and associations. It is not primarily a means of exercising the intelligence alone, but of opening the whole mind to impression and suggestion.

To understand this is easy with,

Whither, O splendid ship, thy white sails crowding,
 Leaning across the bosom of the urgent West.. .

where we perceive the force of *leaning* and of *urgent*. To open the mind to stimulation of the same kind is less easy in Spender's *The Express* :

After the first powerful plain manifesto,
 The black statement of pistons, without more fuss
 But gliding like a queen she leaves the station.
 Without bowing and with restrained unconcern

She passes the houses which humbly crowd outside
 The gasworks and at the heavy page
 Of death, printed by gravestones in the cemetery.

In the first quotation we respond readily, partly because we to some extent anticipate what is coming, experience and imagination helping us, while we respond less to the second because it has no sensuousness and familiarity of music, colour, and smoothness of line and image. A full comparison of the two quotations would raise many questions, but this at least we ought to notice—that when verse is stripped of sensuousness we may allow ourselves to regard it as appealing to intelligence alone. Thus we may try to piece its meaning together like apprehended scraps of a geometrical theorem at a first reading, ignoring the truth that the verse appeals to the whole mind. We should try to perceive its appeal to imagination and emotion, even though the prosody and diction may present these contents to us in wholly unfamiliar forms.

(vi) **Inspiration**

Going farther into the poetic nature of this new verse, we find that time and patience must be spent in discovering what lies behind many experiments. Many viewpoints are struggling for expression. We are as bewildered both by the poetry and its forms as were the readers who turned from Prior and Dryden to find Coleridge and Wordsworth shockingly new. Presently the novelty was found, to a great extent, to be a

return to the old, and I have suggested, specifically in the matter of prosody, that much present novelty is revival or development.

The reader of poetry has much critical writing to which he can turn for explanations, many of them tentative, of the theories which support "modern" poetry, both in matter and form. As an example we may quote Gerard Manley Hopkins's search for the nature of poetry. He recognised the power of an object to affect the mind and, as the Scholastic philosophers had first suggested, believed it to be uniquely individual in every object even of the same species. This individual power to affect, this "inscape", causes its effect, the "instress", on the mind. Inspiration he believed to lie somewhere in the interplay of these factors.

Now, the mind itself can affect other minds, so that it has its own "inscape". In so far as I understand the matter, I believe that Hopkins's idea was that when a poet, under the influence of "instress", is aware also of his own "inscape" quality, poetry exists and his expression of it is poetry.

This is not as technical as it sounds. It is not remarkably different from the Platonist's view of inspiration explained in Volume I. But this comment is by the way. The theory has been mentioned only as an example of the thought which is going on about the nature of poetry, as well as about its verbal expression. Some consideration of current theories will show the student that, whatever its ultimate value may be, or

even its chance of working out its principles, we are living through a revolution in verse immeasurably more critical than occurred during the Romantic Revival which was its first cause.

(vii) Subjectivity

These notes will have led to the conclusion that much "modern" verse is necessarily subjective. Pre-occupation with theories about form and content, aided by contemporary interest in the world within ourselves, has made poets introspective. Up to a point we can all follow subjective poetry. We understand

The morning light creaks down again

without having to refer to a footnote which points out the Imagist theory in the line or the typical transference of one sense perception to another sense.

There comes a point, however, where we may ask whether the poet has not become so subjective that he is no longer an artist. Hopkins struggled to express to others, in terms freed from subjective contents, impressions which were highly subjective, as *in feel-of-primrose hands* and *fresh-firecoal chestnut falls*. Other writers, however, appear to ignore the reader (as if there were some point in writing but not for a reader) by presenting enigmas to which the sole key is within themselves. Is this fatal degree of introspection realised? Has the boundary between intelligible and intellectually sensible subjectivity been divided from self-expression based on introspection?

Here we have a battle-ground in more than one form of art. For instance, may I lawfully paint a picture of a skeleton and a flue-brush lying on a golden dinner-plate, with the remote background of the head of a young girl in a sixteenth-century widow's coif, and expect you to respond to it as I intend? You have as much right to understand it as "Domesticated Man Famishes in Home of Wealthy Widow" as I have to claim it means

Golden lads and girls all must,
As chimney sweepers, come to dust.

How far you will admit subjectivity into art will depend on how far your definition of art includes as essential the transference of the artist's perception to the beholder. In literature the problem is exactly the same as in other art forms, and must be settled on a general principle, and not by any literary rule. Allied to this problem and to subjectivity is the difficulty many readers have in accepting the attitude to life implicit in some "modern" poetry. In dealing with this we must be careful, for, while we have every right to refuse approval to any moral or philosophic outlook which we consider false, we must not allow our reaction to warp our criticism of poetry as an art. Too often a reader who would give a volume of verse to the salvage collector because it upset him violently, so that he regards it as bad poetry, will readily agree that you need not become a Baptist to appreciate the literary value of *The Pilgrim's Progress* nor a Catholic to value

The Hind and the Panther. The same principle is involved in both cases; where experimental verse is concerned it is often disregarded.

(viii) **Particular Notes**

Before passing to certain technical elements which require notice, a few notes may be drawn up as aids to general reading. They may be regarded as conclusions following from what has been so far written in this chapter.

(a) *Scope*

It is useful to realise that " modern " poetry is often limited in appeal. New patterns of thought are worked out in new verse forms : both elements are frequently unfamiliar to some readers. This is not a fault, for they are familiar to other readers. This apparent contradiction is due both to the spread of education and to the shrinking of the world. A poet who writes about lambs will be understood by everyone. Today petrol buses are almost as familiar to most readers as are lambs, but to a few they will be strange. Thus already a minority is formed to protest against a poem about a bus. If they ask why so ugly a subject or simile is used, the answer is that to other people it is not ugly.

Our almost fantastically efficient means of communication have brought us to a stage where we know too much. We all know things no one else round us knows, but which are familiar to thousands

of other people. Thus I have heard, although I have never left England, bells ring in Bethlehem, conch-horns sound in Delhi, traffic pass over Brooklyn Bridge, a tiger turn to bay in Africa, and an electric charge enter a human brain. If I were to use all five items in a poem it might be said to be too unfamiliar, although a majority of people would find the items in my list separately intelligible and perceptible.

Poets are people with alert minds and imaginations. Once they concentrated on lambs and rain; now they may express themselves in terms of radio-valves or subliminal consciousness. We shall be able to decide how far such novelty is good only if we are constantly careful not to condemn the unfamiliar as necessarily unsuitable to poetry.

(b) *Personal Perception*

Arising from the last note is the fact that we should not expect every poet to write poetry which everyone of us can easily understand. The common sense of this warning is evident if we recall how many factors may be involved—novelty of thought, newness of thought pattern, unfamiliarity of allusiveness, diction, and prosody. Experimental verse is necessarily limited in appeal, especially when its content is highly individual. Do not be annoyed with yourself or the author if you cannot understand him. Do not condemn him and his works. First be patient with him and yourself until you find at least one convincing reason for acceptance or rejection.

Perhaps your understanding may come sooner if you do not try to read a meaning into a poem. The poem may be impressionistic or emotional rather than intellectual. The best approach to poetry you find really difficult is to let it drift through your mind. Pass it through your imagination rather than through your intellect. As a rule, the poetry will thus be able to draw your mind away to itself. You will find it making its own impression, giving its own meaning (possibly fragmentary at first) until, in the end, you have assimilated whatever it has to give you.

From this we inevitably pass to a note on

(c) *Manner of Reading*

Ordinarily we regard a poem as something which tells us something because we see its words and piece together the ideas or images they convey. Actually a good deal of "modern" poetry, especially if marked by precision of imagery, is intended to sound its meaning to us. Here again we have novelty.

Or is that untrue? Is it really novel that we should be asked to understand poetry by hearing it rather than by seeing it? All early poetry was meant to be heard. At all times poems have been written for the ear rather than for the eye. A wise reader of experimental verse will always hear it, for often its significance is to be detected by the ear. When that has been apprehended we are able to read the poem and understand it.

(ix) Technical Notes

This chapter would be incomplete without detailed reference to three technical features of " modern " verse which have received mention in Volume I and earlier in this chapter. It is impossible to appreciate much experimental poetry, written mainly since 1900, without knowledge of scientific development in the art of poetry. Thus, from among metrical experiments, we must consider briefly :

(a) *Sprung Rhythm*

Early in these volumes we saw how the first English rhythms persisted, in certain features, and shaped verse written after the Transitional or Middle English period. One of these forms was free syllabic verse, or verse made by grouping unstressed syllables round stressed syllables. It is uncertain whether these syllabic sequences were managed according to formulated rules, but it is certain that trochaic and dactylic feet were employed together with the occasional stressing, for variety, of an unaccented instead of an accented syllable. If this happened twice in two feet together, a remarkable result followed.

A metre arose from the feet the ear gathered from the page and from the feet the reader heard in his mind. The page gives the reader the " Reversed Feet " we have described, while the mind accompanies it by the trochaic or dactylic metre which had been passing through it from the verse pattern.

From this combination a third rhythm manifested itself, mounted on the other two. You will find it in early English poetry, in Gregorian Chant (more remarkably than in other modes of music), quite noticeably in Coleridge and others who deliberately aimed at it, and most remarkably among contemporaries in Gerard Manley Hopkins. This Sprung Rhythm may easily be found, to choose an example where it is sustained, in Langland's *The Vision of Piers Plowman*. Here is an example from Coleridge's *Christabel*:

Is the night chilly and dark ?
 The night is chilly, but not dark.
 The thin grey cloud is spread on high.
 It covers but not hides the sky.
 The moon is behind, and at the full;
 And yet she looks both small and dull.
 The night is chill, the cloud is grey . . .

Notice how the trochaic metre is made to run with a dactylic irregularity, so that Sprung Metre emerges as a kind of counterpoint.

Hopkins sought to define this metre. He said it consisted of feet up to four syllables, with the accent always falling on the first syllable (since he believed this was its natural and inevitable position in English verse). Two stanzas from his *The Loss of the Eurydice* may illustrate his practice :

And you were a liar, O blue March day.
 Bright sun lanced fire in the heavenly bay;
 But what black Boreas wrecked her ? he
 Came equipped, deadly-electric.

O beetling bald bright cloud through England
 Riding : there did not storms mingle ? and
 Hailropes hustle and grind their
 Heaven gravel ? wolf snow, worlds of it, wind there ?

Sprung Rhythm, especially that of Hopkins, has given verse a freedom impossible to classical patterns. When the foot may be extended to four syllables, by the addition of extra syllables, there is a constant shifting of stresses which nevertheless recur regularly. Moreover, the lines tend to drop back to the ordinary "running rhythm", mainly trochaic and dactylic, of English verse. Finally, Sprung Rhythm has an elevating effect, so that verse gains something of the chant found in the earliest forms. This is partly why it puzzles readers who have never strayed from conventional patterns of metre. If you read Hopkins's *The Wreck of the Deutschland* you will find a clear example of what this rhythm means in contemporary verse.

(b) *New Rhyme*

Apart from our earlier reference to this, we should note here that where Sprung Rhythm is used the ear is drawn to the music of metre rather than to that of rhymes (e.g. "burn all" and "eternal" and other examples over which the protagonists themselves disagree) which are not in keeping with the conventional rules of rhyme mentioned in Volume I. More interesting than these are the *carry-over rhymes*, so called because they do not end with the end of a line. For instance, where the end of a line is not also the end of a

rhythmical foot, the rhyme has been split. An example occurred in our last quotation :

But what black Boreas wrecked her ? he
Came equipped, deadly-electric.

Notice how the hard *C* of *Came* is intended to complete the rhyme between *wrecked her he* and *electric*. Is this lawful ? Is it importing rules of music into writing ? Those are two of the questions involved in a study of the results which the new definition of Sprung Rhythm has had on metre, rhyme, and diction. In turning to older examples of the rhythm, remember that it is native to English verse; the latest experiments in it must not be confused with the thing itself. Once you are aware of it, you will find this Rhythm almost everywhere, except in the verse of the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries, where it is a rarity.

(c) *free Verse*

The revival of Free Verse since 1900 has been largely due to Ezra Pound. A master of classical and romantic metres, he has insisted on the use of real Free Verse—i.e. not the re-arranged metres so often passing for it in Whitman and others. Connected with the movement were the writings of T. E. Hulme (1883-1917), edited by Herbert Read in the volume *Speculations* (1924). Hulme attacked romanticism because man fails unless he is organised and disciplined, so that the classical is preferable as his environment.

The effect of this view is seen in Pound and T. S.

Eliot, where every romantic element, even if satirical or comic, is driven out of verse. The matter of such poets is a detached contemplation of life; this is expressed in verse which as closely as possible resembles the rhythms of daily speech. In Free Verse we may detect two standards, one exemplified by much of Coventry Patmore or by D. H. Lawrence (whose *The Snake* is a frequently anthologised example). Here this form is chosen without any compulsion and often reaches excellence. Distinguishable from it is the Free Verse used because no other form could have fitted the tenseness of the thought. For instance, the strong and vital verse of *The Waste Land* is less a matter of choice than of necessity for supplying the suspensive verbal quality and rhythms adequate to the poet's ideas.

(x) Conclusion

This brief survey of modern tendencies supports the belief that we live in one of the supremely important revolutionary periods of English poetry. Inevitably the work of imitators and less inspired verse-writers obscures what is being done by new thought and new forms. Time will remove these uncertainties and enable what is of permanent value to become definite and clearly understandable. A more settled world, a more stable society, will doubtless help poets to derive new forms of surprising power and resilience with which they can shape for us the thoughts and emotions coming, still too confusedly, from the rapidly expanding world of the mind and soul.

Chapter Eight

Some " Modern " Poets

FROM what has been written in the previous chapter the connotation of " modern " in this chapter will be apparent. It means simply " out of the tradition of poetry " as it is accepted by the ordinary reader. It does not mean " without roots ", for, as we have seen, its technique has little that is really new, and its thought, even when it is strongly critical of tradition, is not in revolt, but rather engaged in revision of previously accepted ideas. In this chapter, then, we gather notes about some of the poets who, since 1900, have been influential in modern writing.

The first to be mentioned is Gerard Manley Hopkins (1844-89), a disciple of Pater who became a Catholic and a Jesuit. Although he died long before most modern poets were born, his work has been a recent influence because he published nothing in his lifetime. Most of his poems were sent in letters to Robert Bridges, who did not publish any of them until 1918. In the next twenty years his papers, note-books, and letters have been published in various collections of considerable critical value.

His main contributions to the pattern of verse have already been considered. The freedom which

they gave to poetry can best be seen in his sonnets, where the form is shaken out like the very wings of poetry, as in *The Starlight Night*. Apart from this experimental work, Hopkins aimed at what has been well called "an incandescence" of verse, to find expression which would take light from the ecstasy of poetry. In trying to make such expression he is extremely compressed (relative pronouns disappear alarmingly), elliptical, frequent in compound words, full of subtle alliterations and difficult rhymes. In other words, he is often obscure and angular to apprehend. When this much has been said, we are left with the fact that this Professor of Greek, the priest who regarded poetry as one of the vanities of life, had the fire of poetry in his soul and amazing gifts of music in his verse. He is much too important for an evaluation to be yet possible; we must be content to avoid the company of those who hail him as the greatest of all great and those who, perhaps through unhappy experiences among his many imitators, regard him as a misfortune.

An experiment which has ended is found in the writing of the Imagists. It represented for a time that aspect of modern poetry which, in revolt against romanticism, desired clear and precise images instead of generalisation. In this sense Imagist is a title which could be applied to Chaucer as much as to Richard Aldington (b. 1892), whose *Images* appeared in 1915, *Images of War* and *Images of Desire* in 1919. The American Ezra Pound had launched the *Imagist*

Anthology in 1914, and the movement was supported by T. S. Flint as well as by certain Americans, such as "H. D." (Hilda Doolittle). The principle behind the movement was to find immediacy and present it spontaneously, without comment or emotional background or any addition which could in any way distort the meaning or value of the datum of mental life. The Imagist must therefore always be concrete and extremely sparing in use of words. In fact, much imagist poetry consists of bundles of words which are the indispensable means of communication; anything considered in the least unnecessary to the transmission of the original perception in its own freshness and vigour was omitted. Inevitably obscurity resulted, and the movement was less credited than it deserved.

Presently its work was done; the theories of Hopkins and the Free Verse of Pound had provided a medium sufficiently clear and dry for the use of writers like T. S. Eliot, and Imagism disappeared. There was no longer need to emphasise personal detachment and concreteness of expression.

Attracted to this movement, probably because of its affinity to the former Symbolism, but never part of it, Thomas Stearns Eliot (b. 1888) was born in the United States, and became a naturalised British subject in 1927. His early publications were *Prufrock and Other Observations* -(1917), *Ara Vos Prec* (1919), and *Poems* (1920). From the futilities of post-war Europe Eliot drew arid hopelessness and wrote about it in dry and bare language. In *The Waste Land* (1922) he

contrasted the desert which was England with the cultures of other ages and countries. The poem is full of irony, overburdened by recherché scholarship explained (in part) in pages of notes, heavily marked by denial of faith in anything human or divine. Everything is parched, sterile, harsh, lyrical, amazingly vivid in its natural rhythms, bewilderingly symbolical. The Waste Land is observed by

I Tiresias, though blind, throbbing between two lives,
Old man with wrinkled female breasts . . .,

by whose guidance pictures in the driest colours pass through our minds. In effect, we have a powerful statement of unbelief and, at least in retrospect, an appalling need for a faith, a tradition, something which will supply to reality a life quite opposed to the cynical, unreliable actuality Eliot saw in the world.

The Hollow Men (1925) attracted readers who wished to follow this line of thought, but many of them deserted Eliot after *Ash Wednesday* (1930), for here was a faith and a linking up with tradition. A Catholic element had appeared and, while the verse of the poem was displeasing in some respects, Eliot had at least found a spirit to lighten his darkness. A more definitely Anglo-Catholic ideal lay behind *The Road* (1934) and *Murder in the Cathedral* (1935). His verse became more intelligible because he had something positive to say, instead of analysing negations into emaciated figures posturing among ruins and barren

fields. The forward line of thought was apparent even in *Sweeney Agonistes* (1932) and is considerably advanced in *The Family Reunion* (1939), the year of the happy *Practical Cats*, and in the more mystical and immediately inspired *Four Quartets* (1944).

Immediate inspiration is not a characteristic of Eliot, who perceives and broods and is moved to expression by verbal image and musical form. Purely literary inspiration, as distinct from the less poetic inspiration which comes from scholarship and meditation, cannot be discovered in his work up to the present. He is striking in effect partly because his images are vivid, his description exact and colourful, and because he is repetitive. His lines are carefully measured and grouped, his rhythms are subtle, his words perfectly chosen and placed. It is, then, as a technician that he excels. For the rest, what is yet to come must be decisive; it may well be of the first order. Until his work is more complete, Eliot remains a poet deriving from the metaphysical tradition, who will always interest by personal qualities which emerge from his work rather than by anything he will give his readers of the future.

Cecil Day Lewis (b. 1904), who claims Wilfrid Owen and Yeats as "ancestors" of modern verse, as well as Hopkins and Eliot, is probably the most immediately satisfying of contemporary experimentalists. *Transitional Poems* (1929) attracted attention, although some obscurity and difficulty of form were apparent. His imagery is drawn from urban life and the machine age,

but behind it one may suspect, even from the outset, a spirit more sensitive and romantic than is found in the others who are ideologically preoccupied with their times. Technically like Hopkins, he has evolved a freedom of expression, perhaps through the influence of Auden, and has reached a maturity of thought which make him possibly the most promising of the "moderns". *A Time to Dance* (1935) led on to the more accomplished *Overtures to Death and Other Poems* (1938) and to the wholly satisfying sonnet sequence in *Word Over All* (1943). Lewis is outstanding as a critic of poetry, a fact referred to elsewhere in this book. There is no doubt that complete sincerity in the following of his art has had no small part in the growth to true beauty which has marked the career of one of the truest poets of the time.

W. H. Auden (b. 1907) is less certainly a poet in spite of a lyric quality certainly in him. Gaiety, some noisiness, a satirical talent for abuse, a facility in what S. P. B. Mais has called "a typical elision of thought", a gathering of material from sources as disparate as music-halls and ethical theories and psychology and economics—these attributes are not as surely the marks of a poet as his earlier popularity suggested. His fondness for the topical makes it unlikely that future readers will find in him a great deal of interest. Probably *'Look, Stranger!'* (1936) and *Another Time* (1940) contain his best work. The Spanish Civil War moved him deeply, resulting in a long poem, *Spain*, which is worthy of him. *For the Time Being*

(1944) reverted to the aimlessness of earlier verse; his critical anthology *Tennyson* (1946) has caused much heart-searching as to his ability and judgment.

Like Eliot, he felt the need for explanatory notes in *New Year 'Letter* (1941), and there is substance in the suggestion that his true *mitier* may finally be found in dramatic writing rather than in poetry. Here he has achieved success, in collaboration with Christopher Isherwood (b. 1904), in *The Dog beneath the Skin* (1935), a moral and political work obviously experimental, as also in *Ascent of F.6* (1937) and *On the frontier* (1938). The authors indulge in eccentricity, but their dramatic talent is unmistakable. Incidentally, they also collaborated in the prose *Journey to a War* (1939), an account of travels in China.

Isherwood's own work consists of a series of novels, of which *Mr. Norris Changes Trams* (1935) and *Prater Violet* (1945) are the best. In addition he has published the autobiographical *Lions and Shadows* (1938), and his interest in Eastern thought is represented by his translation of the *Bhagavad Ghita* (1944). His novels are marked by a precise analysis of the abnormal, especially in character and personality.

A poet who has, like Day Lewis, consistently developed is Louis MacNeice (b. 1907). His work is varied, consisting of prose *Letters from Iceland* (1937), two sound critical books, *Modern Poetry*, *A Persona/ Essay* (1938), and *The Poetry of W. B. Yeats* (1941), and his poetry. Although these claim for him alliance with W. H. Auden and his followers, MacNeice's

poetry shows him to have a more classical background and a more romantic outlook. His use of rhythm is original and bright. His main work is in *The Earth Compels* (1938), *Autumn Journal* (1939), *Plant and Phantom* (1941), *Springboard* (1944), and *The Dark Tower* (1946).

Another romantic whose tendency has been suppressed, in this case by his political thought, is Stephen Spender (b. 1909). Possessing a wide and deep sympathy with his fellow men, liberal in opinion, Spender has felt compelled to follow a left-wing ideology which has ill-suited the nature of his art. The conflict which he has fought out in his mind and heart—such is the impression his poetry gives—has forced him to keep within the narrowest bounds those lyrical and romantic elements which are the best of his work. In the true tradition of poetry, he has quarrelled with tradition. Effects are inescapable. His best verse is to be found in *Poems* (1933), *Trial of a Judge* (1938), *The Still Centre* (1939), *"Ruins and Visions"* (1941). Spender is a true poet who, in spite of his adopted beliefs, reverences human nature and whatever else "is truly great". His later work includes *The Creative Element* (1944) and *European Witness* (1946).

So far the "moderns" have been essentially intellectual. Far different is the fiery, elemental spirit of the South-African-born Roy Campbell (b. 1902). He faces the chaos of the world with a lusty vigour, hearty and indiscriminate condemnations, slashing

attacks of satire, words which flare with sound and dazzle with colour. Yet behind it all there is a meaning, a belief in something better than Marxian economics and the shabbily ordered justice of a Socialist or Communist State. Sometimes wanting in perception, often inaccurate in pattern, Campbell succeeds partly by overwhelming gusto and partly by the thought and art which his more superficial qualities may easily hide as the reader is pushed around and hurried along. A good example of his art is found in *The Flawing Terrapin* (1924), in which the Terrapin is post-war youth hauling the Ark (which is life) and its bewildered Noah (the human race) over the stormy cross-currents of spiritual sickness and despair which are the ruined world of today. In *The Way^goose* (1928) and *Adamastor* (1930) he satirised and described South African life. The London intellectuals were under fire in *The Georgiad* (1931), after which Campbell published *Pomegranates* and became an owner of fishing-boats in Southern France. The civil war in Spain was a challenge to his beliefs, which are always practical, and he fought against the Communist element and then wrote *Flowering EJfr* (1939). *Talking Broncho* (1946) carries on his war against his old enemies.

Like all ebullient disciples, Campbell will win few converts, but he is great fun and—the point must be marked—essentially a poet. Principally he uses the old Latin forms as we have received them through the medium of French verse, so that he is traditionally

in line with some of the best and oldest English poetry. In particular he is remarkable for his use of pentameter quatrains and, in the sonnet form, has secured a power and freedom not to be equalled except by Hopkins.

Chapter Nine

The Drama, 1880—1900

(i) The Approach to Realism

THE nineteenth century was almost a blank in the literature of the drama. The reason for this sterility was not due to a defect in the authors of the time, but rather to the impossible circumstances in which the theatre was involved. Thus the censorship of plays prohibited, in effect, any play which had a real message about a subject of human importance. Furthermore, until 1843 the performance of plays was permitted only in patent theatres. When this ban was removed the building of theatres began, in the sixties and seventies. A third reason for the poor standard of dramatic writing was the old system by which dramatists drew remuneration in the form of a single cash payment. The result of this system was that payment was frequently inadequate and discouraging, since no one could tell in advance which plays might meet with commercial success. We have seen in a previous volume how the development of publishing to its present system of royalties was beneficial to the writing of fiction. Unfortunately the organisation of dramatic production was far slower, so that many authors of outstanding ability and keen interest in the play were novelists and

not dramatists. One need mention only Charles Dickens or Wilkie Collins to illustrate the point. The drama was also still surrounded by the convention that it was not quite "correct". Society comedy might be all right but, apart from that, the play in a theatre was felt to be too immediate and stimulating a presentation of a story to be wholly proper. This convention was slowly broken down when Queen Victoria began to show interest in dramatic forms of amusement, if not in the theatre itself. A further reason for the lifelessness of the nineteenth-century theatre is found in the belief that the stage, which the reasons already mentioned had fatally restricted from showing its powers, was unable to present any statement of problem or characterisation or incident in a form adequate and comparable to the handling of such subjects and themes in the novel.

This difficulty was overcome when the plays of Ibsen were made accessible to English readers. Apart from the lessons in dramatic technique which Ibsen taught the English stage, the first and most important lesson he taught the public was that a play not only could deal with subjects of importance, but that, if it was to be a good play, its subject must be one of real human interest. Ibsen's greatest disciple was George Bernard Shaw, whose *Quintessence of Ibsenism* (1891) and weekly articles in the *Saturday Review* between 1895 and 1898 constantly repeated the lesson. These journalistic writings were partly reprinted in *Dramatic Opinions and Essays* (1907) and in *Our Theatres in the Nineties* (1931).

While these opinions were being pondered the stage was entering on a period of revival which, although far from hinting at the serious dramatic work soon to be done, at least departed from the days when people went to see William Thomas Moncrieff's *The Rajah's Daughter* because real horses and a real waterfall were among its attractions. The subject was far-removed from any situation the audience was likely to meet, so that the play was safe and proper, and there was the excuse of the spectacular as a reason for witnessing it. A period of "Adelphi melodramas" also kept interest in the theatre, with the evergreen favourites such as Jerrold's *Black-ey'd Susan* and John Buckstone's *The Green Bushes* and *The Flower of the Forest*. Other plays which held the boards for the rest of the century and well into the twentieth were *The Colleen Bawn* (adapted from the best Irish novel of the century, Gerald Griffin's *The Collegians*), *Arrah-na-Pogue*, and *The Shaughraun* by "Dion Boucicault", Dionysius Lardner Boucicault (1820-90). Both at the Adelphi and at Drury Lane plays tended after this to go back to the spectacular but Thomas William Robertson (1829-71) in the sixties caused something of a sensation by writing plays in which real life situations, such as the audience might meet with, were portrayed if not worked out to a conclusion and in which everyday speech replaced the stylised stage diction formerly conventional. The best known of his plays is *Caste* (1867). The social play was thus successfully introduced, largely under the management of the Bancrofts,

who continued the naturalism of play interest by such productions as the completely popular *Our Bojs* (1875) of Henry James Byron. A period of interest in French plays followed, but there the tendency was towards artificial "society" drama.

Each movement came a little nearer the stage of today, and was succeeded by another before it had quite turned away from its approach to realism. The next approach came through comedy, which now returned to the stage to reach, in Oscar Wilde, a brilliance comparable with that of Sheridan.

The early burlesques of William Schwenk Gilbert (1836-1911) became a definite influence, in spite of the artificial motive (by which each character is impelled to reveal what is passing in his mind) which remained useful for later playwrights. How far the author of *The Palace of Truth* (1870), *The Wicked World* (1873), *Pygmalion and Galatea* (1871), and *Broken Hearts* (1875) would have developed if he had not found another line in the unique Gilbert and Sullivan operas is a speculation we may avoid.

The standard set by Robertson was raised by Henry Arthur Jones (1851-1929), who passed on to melodrama which, in spite of too much bombastic exhortation, as in *Saints and Sinners* (1884), *The Middleman* (1889), *Judah* (1890), and *The Dancing Girl* (1891), was at least close to real life. His greatest successes were *The Silver King* (1882) and, more importantly in some ways, *Michael and his Lost Angels* (1896), which deals with a problem both religious and social. He considered

marriage and emotional conflict in *Liars* (1896). His plays are less important than the influence of his work in general in re-establishing the theatre as an art medium.

In 1879 Arthur Wing Pinero (1855-1934) wrote his first light comedy, *A Clerical Error*, following it by such successes as the still popular *Dandy Dick* (1887) and the sentimental, highly esteemed *Sweet Lavender* (1888). He became more serious in *The Profligate* (1889) and achieved a great advance, in mastering the technique exhibited by Ibsen, in *The Second Mrs. Tanqueray* (1893). In Pinero is an author who presented serious subjects by means increasingly artistic; construction improved considerably and his plays are marked by plenty of lively movement for the actors. Pinero continued to write for the stage until *The Enchanted Cottage* (1922), one of his most useful plays being *Trelawny of the Wells* (1898), with its subject drawn straight from life.

There is scarcely need to mention Stephen Phillips, the poet of *Christ in Hades* (1896) and *Poems* (1897), considered so promising as to be asked by George Alexander to write *Paolo and Franeesca*, written in 1899 and produced with great success in 1902, and commissioned by Beerbohm Tree to write the less successful dramatic poems *Herod* (1901), *Ulysses* (1902), *The Sin of David* (1904), and *Nero* (1906). Phillips had no genuine inspiration in either poetry or drama.

The century closed with the artificial light comedy of Oscar Wilde (1856-1900), whose polished and easy wit

more than compensated for weaknesses of plot. The dialogue and the gay irresponsibility of his situations pleased and delighted. His opening *Lady Windermere's Fan* (1892) was more serious than his usual vein permitted, and was thereby weaker than his later comedies. It was, of course, a success, and the public looked forward to further plays by the author of the short stories of *Lord Arthur Savile's Crime* (1891) and the "shocking" novel, *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (1891). They received them in *A Woman of No Importance* (1893), *An Ideal Husband* (1894), and Wilde's masterpiece, *The Importance of Being Earnest* (1895). In the same year as his triumph came his fall, after which he wrote only *The Ballad of Reading Gaol* (1898) and *De Profundis* (1905), of which the complete text has recently been published (1949).

(ii) The Celtic Revival

The relationship between the drama in Ireland and the development of English drama is difficult to define. It might be better to take the easy way out of the difficulty by saying that there is no true relationship. Perhaps there has been the influence of a lively neighbour rather than any recognisable degrees of affinity or consanguinity. Influence there certainly was, and we shall look to that, and not to any organic unity between the two movements. And we shall find the effects of the Celtic Revival, in drama, coming into operation when the revival itself has settled down.

The aspirations for nationhood which the work of
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Standish O'Grady, George Sigerson, Douglas Hyde, and others had occasioned found its readiest outlet in efforts to secure intellectual freedom through the revival of national art. The first move was made when Augusta Persse, Lady Gregory (1859-1932), W. B. Yeats, John Millington Synge (1871-1909), George William Russell (1867-1935), and Edward Martyn (1859-1923) decided to establish a group for the production of plays in Dublin. Such a theatre as they proposed had been demanded by George Moore in both Dublin and London for the production of art rather than the offering of amusement. The Independent Theatre Society met his requirements in London in 1891, two years after the Irish Literary Theatre in Dublin began its productions with Yeats's *The Countess Kathleen*. In London the Independent Theatre Society relied mostly on translations of Ibsen and other Continental dramatists, so that its founder, J. T. Grein, had to endure considerable abuse for the alleged immorality of his stage. In Dublin the quest was for Irish playwrights, and Edward Martyn was ready with two plays, written in 1899, *The Heather Field* and *Maeve*, which his group's National Theatre (later known as the Abbey Theatre) produced. As George Moore pointed out, Martyn was a disciple of Ibsen, from whom he differed, however, in pointing no moral but instead, in characteristically Celtic fashion, worked out his plays in relief against a background of mysterious, spiritual forces. Further pieces from Martyn's pen were *The Wild Duck*, *Rosmersholm*, *The*

Tale of a Town (Moore's *The Bending of the Bough* is a re-written version of this), *The Enchanted Sea*, *Glencaiman*, and *The Dream Physician*.

George Moore's own contributions to the National Theatre movement were insignificant as original work, since his first play was the adaptation just mentioned, and his *Diarmuid and Grania* (1901) was from Yeats; his later plays, *The Strike at Arlingford* (1893), *The Coming of Gabrielle* (1920), and *The Passing of the Essenes* (1930), were unimportant. For his part, Yeats was not naturally a dramatist, so that his *Pot of Broth*, *The King's Threshold*, and *The Shadowy Waters* are good because of their poetic rather than for their dramatic qualities. The same is even more true of later work. Their importance for us is that they supplied two elements which were to predominate in the Celtic Revival, one being the mystical or mythological element and the other the "peasant drama".

Probably Yeats's greatest work for the Revival was his discovery of J. M. Synge in Paris and his sending him to the Aran Islands to absorb the peasant life of the West. The result was that Synge found perfect material for unique gifts and perfect dramatic ability. The National Theatre produced *The Shadow of the Glen* in 1903, followed by *Riders to the Sea* (1904), *The Well of the Saints* (1905), and the sensational *The Playboy of the Western World* (1908). It was sensational to people who regarded the Celtic Revival as essentially a national movement. In its drama at least it was of far wider aim and importance than this. It was begun for

the production of great plays, not necessarily great Irish plays. Under Yeats, and especially Synge, it was a means by which elements of the Celtic character could be shown by means of the dramatic principles accepted on the Continent, but still new to London and Dublin. This second aim was far from being suitable to supply the propaganda which many conceived it to be the duty of an Irish theatre to provide, so that *The Playboy of the Western World*, one of Synge's finest plays, appeared to them to be an irreligious and defamatory attack on subjects sacred to most Irishmen. Synge continued his work, after the production of *The Tinker's Wedding* (a not too happy comedy written earlier, but not produced until 1908), with *Deirdre of the Sorrows* (1910). Here his work in the Anglo-Irish idiom, which later fell into some disfavour as being neither truly Irish nor English, reached its limit of perfection. The remarkable cadences and vowel-patterns into which he formed idiomatic representation of Celtic language gave it the finest flower of its beauty.

Lady Gregory's best contributions to the stage were her one-act pieces, such as *Spreading the News*, *The Workhouse Ward*, *The Gaol Gate*, and some of her satirical comedies, such as *The Canavans* or *The White Cockade*. Her strength lay in her characterisation and in use of dialect, as distinct from the idiom of Synge.

Here we must leave the Celtic Revival at the point where it shows the marks which distinguish it in comparison with the dramatic revival going on in London.

English drama was moving towards realism in facing life; it was establishing itself as an artistic medium based on Continental principles learnt chiefly from Ibsen. The Irish drama was showing those principles in practice; it was also fusing an "other-worldly" element, in theme and diction, into its true-to-life realism. Both these characteristics were to merge into the English drama, or at least to link up effectually with it. The result was not of enormous importance, which is why we have hesitated to talk about a relationship between the two movements, but it certainly had an importance not easy to understand unless we see how it arose in the drama as it developed in Dublin.

Our note on the Celtic Revival has taken us as far ahead as 1910, and we must go back to London in 1894 to outline the development proceeding rapidly in a settled direction after its several starts away from the artificial to the real.

Chapter Ten

The Drama, 1900-50

(i) George Bernard Shaw

SOMETHING of Shaw's outlook on the drama has already been described. Now we come to his work as a playwright, which succeeded the important service he rendered the English stage as a critic.

Born in Dublin in 1856, Shaw came to London when he was twenty years of age, and at once plunged into social problems as expounded by the Webbs and the Fabian Society. In his first three years he became an able and eager speaker, from which his energy was in part diverted, between 1879 and 1883, by the writing of five completely unsuccessful novels, of which only *Cashel Byron's Profession* (published as a separate book in 1886) has in any way survived. At this time Shaw was wholly occupied in fiction-writing, and his increasingly important dramatic and literary and social journalism. He next attempted a play, in *Widowers' Houses*, produced by the Independent Theatre Group in 1892. Excellence of situation and the individuality of its characters did not make the play as notable as it might have been. This theatre was too limited for the production of *The Philanderer* and of *Mrs. Warren's Profession*, which, with *Arms and*

the Man, made 1894 notable in Shaw's life, if not in the history of the theatre. Shaw's brilliance of dialogue, the masterly technique by which he was able to handle any situation according to the technique of the play, his characterisation, his gaiety, did not avail against the facts that he was unknown and, not unexpectedly, that his liability to shock the conventions of the day could not win him favour in high places. *Arms and the Man* may be his best play; in 1894 it was held to be a satire on the Army and in the worst of bad taste. Its success was perhaps due as much to the fact that it was produced by Miss Emily Horniman as to any merit the public wished to see in the play.

In 1898 Shaw published two volumes of *Plays Pleasant and Unpleasant*, which contained, besides the plays already named, *Candida*, *The Man of Destiny*, and *You Never Can Tell*. The opportunity to read Shaw's plays drew many supporters to him. His effort to get to the causes of the problems he proposed was welcomed and found to be interesting. Only slightly less interest was taken in *Three Plays for Puritans* (1901), containing *Cesar and Cleopatra*, *The Devil's Disciple*, and *Captain Brassbound's Conversion*. Social speculation and fantasy mingled in *Man and Superman* (1903), but Shaw remained a read playwright. Theatre managers were still uninterested in plays which, when given by the Stage Society (1899), were attended by select, small audiences of disciples.

The New York production of *Candida* in 1904 was the turning-point. Its outstanding success led Harley

Granville-Barker, of the Stage Society, to join with J. E. Vedrenne in a series of productions at the Court Theatre between 1904 and 1907. In these productions Shaw triumphed, and with him were established the dramatic principles for which he had written and worked for over ten years.

This work accomplished, Shaw felt free to show forth less didactically the technique of dramatic composition and to use the play as a means of ventilating his own ideas. From now onwards, we may say as a generalisation, there is less of the play and more of Shaw. He had made a play on any subject live, and live interestingly through any series of incidents or situations. Having taught the lessons which he had himself learnt readily, he became the lecturer or comedian, as the mood pleased him, and the result has both gain and loss.

John Bull's Other Island and *Major Barbara* appeared in 1907; *The Doctor's Dilemma*, *Getting Married*[^] and *The Shewing-up of Blanco Posnet* were published in 1911; *Misalliance*, *The Dark Lady of the Sonnets*, *Fanny's First Play* came next, in 1914; in 1916 appeared *Androcles and the Lion*, *Overruled*, *Pygmalion* :then came *Heart-break House* (1919), *Back to Methuselah* (1921), *Saint Joan* (1923), *Translations and Tomfooleries* (1926), *The Apple Cart* (1930), *Too Good to be True* (1934), *The Simpleton*, etc. (1935), *Geneva* (1938), and *In Good King Charles's Golden Days* (1939).

Many of these plays were prefaced by essays, sometimes of enormous length, which may well be more

important than the plays as a fully argued expression of Shaw's opinions. With these we are not primarily concerned. We may say briefly that Shaw often says what he does not mean, that his wisdom is profound, his desire to be original sometimes silly, and his views on religion, ethics, economics, history, philosophy, literary art, and science are stated with a gaiety, wit, and closeness of argument unlikely to be surpassed in this century. Of the value of those opinions we have nothing to say. Our concern is with Shaw and the stage. Here he is indisputably the master, from almost every point of view. One of the exceptions is Shaw's weakness for trying to make art replace argument. That art should, as a means of communication between the artist and his audience, cause certain planned responses in them is a proposition entirely different from the attempt to make art an instrument of propaganda. From this fault Shaw is by no means free.

To such faults we need pay little attention, for his importance is in the work he has done in making English drama a sound art fulfilling, at least in his earlier plays, true functions of art. Once that was done, he might expect us to allow him to enjoy himself. This should be our attitude to the faults of later plays, especially since Shaw enables us to find a huge enjoyment as well. He has ignored too many susceptibilities, been too generous to his impish sense of humour, hit at too many conventions, for us to be able to see his value. There is no doubt that, when this restless, laughing, infuriating, ascetical figure is more

remote, it will be seen to have been of titanic proportions. That he has denied his plays colour and been miserly of romance, that he has avoided the tragedy of life as much as possible, will be regretted. But then there are regrets about Shakespeare—especially those of Shaw.

(ii) Harley Granville-Barker

The plays of Granville-Barker (1877-1946) are of less importance to dramatic literature than his work for the drama. Taking his plays first, there is the simplicity and ingenuity of *The Marrying of Ann Leefe*, produced by the Stage Society in 1902, and the fantasy (in collaboration with Laurence Housman) of *Prunella* in 1906. Far more serious was *The Voysey Inheritance* (1905), and *Waste* (1907) was killed by the censorship because it dealt seriously with an illicit love affair and an illegal operation. *The Madras House* (1910) was a gloomy but excellent play dealing with the position of women in the opening years of the century. All the plays show considerable originality of conception, if not of logical thought which reaches a definite conclusion, and *The Madras House* has accomplished technical ability. In *The Secret Life* (1923) and, to some extent, the less important *His Majesty* (1928) Granville-Barker gave his audience a too enigmatic representation of the futility which too many people find in their lives. They show what was a pre-occupation in most of the plays—the problem of the man who feels that life never presents him with oppor-

tunities of using his better self. Man has aspirations for which he can find no outlet; the result is a highly dramatic situation—the plight of the man who is in a spiritual isolation. A fault found in the plays is the awkwardness of inactivity during dialogue. Not one of the least of Shaw's lessons taught playwrights how this may be avoided skilfully and imperceptibly. In dealing with current social problems Granville-Barker continued the tradition begun by Robertson, Pinero, and Jones. Beyond this, however, he was distinguished by his ceaseless work for the widening of the appeal of the theatre. His aim was to make the drama as accessible to the people as possible. Sunday performances, by the Stage Society, were begun as early as 1898. He was also the spirit behind the movement to build small theatres, since he believed in the grouping of small audiences wherever they might be formed. The Repertory movement owes a great deal to his untiring service.

His critical writings receive notice elsewhere.

(iii) Miss Emily Horniman

Mention has already been made of Miss Horniman's support for Shaw's *Arms and the Man* in 1894 at the Avenue Theatre, London. Her generosity and interest in the theatre were of unfailing help, both in England and Ireland, during the early struggles to form independent theatres. In 1904, when the never secure finances of the National Theatre had reached a crisis,

she maintained it until 1910, finally giving it a permanent home in the Abbey Theatre. Her interest in the extension of the theatre in England also claimed her, and she took over the Midland Theatre, Manchester, in 1907, and a year later opened the Gaiety Theatre, Manchester, where she ran repertory seasons from 1908 to 1921. In 1907 she produced Charles McEvoy's *David Ballard*, a play of promise not later fulfilled. The Manchester group which flourished through her work enabled drama of local interest to be built up and then to become the centre of national interest. Of the playwrights whom Miss Horniman assisted to the development of dramatic talent was William Stanley Houghton (1881-1913). Not primarily a literary man, unable to overcome thinness of plot and a certain weakness in characterisation, Houghton nevertheless had true dramatic gifts, which were first shown in *The Dear Departed* (1908), *The Younger Generation* (1910), *The Master of the House* (1911) and finally in the celebrated *Hindle Wakes* (1912). These plays dealt with situations of human interest, even of startling interest, as in the last where Fanny Hawthorn refuses to marry the wealthy father of her illegitimate child. They may read rather tamely now, partly because of the inferior literary quality above which Houghton could not rise, but they are soundly constructed and show the drama to be where its protagonists after 1880 were determined it should be—in the middle of reality.

(iv) Various Dramatists

Laurence Housman (b. 1865) has written successfully in dramatic form, although his works can scarcely be called stage plays. Because they dealt with the royal family, *Pains and Penalties* (1911, dealing with George IV and Queen Caroline), *Angels and Ministers* (1911, dealing with Queen Victoria) and the similar three series of *Palace Plays* (1930, 1931, 1933) were all barred from stage production. The stage was an unsuitable medium for the qualities of two series of 'Little Plays of St. Francis' (1922, 1931). Greater success has attended *Victoria Regina* (1934), *The Golden Sovereign* (1937), and *Gracious Majesty* (1941). *Prunella* (1906, in collaboration with Harley Granville-Barker) has been an ever-popular success.

St. John Hankin (1869-1909) had a slight cynicism and a disregard for such conventions as the happy ending; this changed his Victorian plots into Edwardian plays. He wrote *The Two Mr. Wetberbys* (1902), *The Return of the Prodigal* (1905), *The Charity That Began at Home* (1906), *The Cassilis Engagement* (1907), and the less valuable *The Luast of the De Mullins* (1908). His dialogue is easy and amusing, and never holds up action, while his situations are interesting and unusual. His plays are eminently readable.

When Yeats suggested, in 1909, that Edward John Moreton Drax Plunkett, Lord Dunsany (b. 1878) should write for the theatre, the suggestion was not wholly suitable. Lord Dunsany's gifts are not drama-

tic. Nevertheless he evolved a world of his own and a technique suitable to his purposes. His characters do not evolve out of the action of the play, but arrived, fully formed, and the plot stands still while every angle of each character is shown by other means. This is not drama but, with the genius of Lord Dunsany behind it, the original technique is interesting and to that extent successful. His delicate fantasy adds considerably to their effectiveness. *King Argimenes* appeared in 1911, as also did *The Gods of the Mountain*; *The Tents of the Arabs*, *The Golden Doom*, and *The Lost Silk Hat* belong to 1914; *A Night at an Inn* followed in 1916, and *If* in 1921. Of his many plays, these are the best and will endure longest, although none is likely to live as long as his short stories and his classical criticism and influence.

The plays of Sir James Matthew Barrie (1860-1937) show the same qualities as his stories, a blending of the obviously impossible although wistfully desirable with the most detailed realism. They are filled with a soft poetic fancy, an unashamed sentiment coupled with reserve, and the gentle sadness of the sensitive and unsuccessful. The mixture is one of which the English reading public or theatre-going audience can take a large amount if the doses are spaced out. Barrie's first play, in collaboration, was the worthless *Rjchard Savage* (1891). The story of adaptation and further collaboration may be omitted. In *The Professor's Love Story* (1894), as in a stage version of *The Little Minister* (1897), he found successes the public repeatedly

demanding. Barrie now felt called on to speak more of what he was really thinking, so that the far from sentimental *The Wedding Guest* (1900) was coldly received. *The Little White Bird* (1902), mentioning Peter Pan, resulted in the huge success of the play of that name in 1904. By this time Barrie's knowledge of stage requirements had shown itself, in 1902, in two of his best plays, *Quality Street* and *The Admirable Crichton*. *Alice-Sit-by-the-Fire* (1905) was better than the unhappy *Josephine* and unworthy *Punch* of 1906. Typically Barrie now produced the success of *What Every Woman Knows* (1908); his reputation revived; he continued with *The Twelve-Pound Look* and *Old Friends* (1910), one good and the other poor; then *Rosalind* (1912) and *The Adored One* (1913), one excellent and the other so weak that it was put through two transformations and emerged again as *Seven Women*. *A Kiss for Cinderella* was thin and feeble, but Barrie followed it in 1917 with *Dear Brutus*, beautifully imaginative and with the sentiment checked by irony. It may be his best play. He followed it by the incredibly bad *Rosy Rapture* (1918) and four short and pointless plays under the title *Echoes of the War*. True to form, Barrie next wrote *Mary Rose* (1920) and, although the merits of the play may be suspected, won the audiences which crowded to it. A highly ingenious one-act play, *Shall We Join the Ladies?*, appeared in 1921. After some years it was assumed that Barrie had finished with the theatre but rumour of *The Boy David* caused its production in 1936 to be eagerly anticipated. The

play was found to be uneven, ranging from excellence to triviality. Its main defect was a heaviness of structure unsuited to the delicacy of its sentiment.

Barrie was a unique phenomenon in the theatre, just as he was in stories and novels. He is outside the ordinary canons of criticism; his effect on the drama is, because of his individuality of conception and method, negligible. To consider him only as someone who tried to substitute a world of fancy for reality, however, would be a mistake. He was at times hard and surprisingly cruel, as his novels show. His society plays show at least his sense of reality and his toughness in dealing with it. A collected edition of his plays was issued in 1942. The plays are very readable, since Barrie took the pains to revise them for this purpose, adding or removing with a view to the requirements of a reading public.

The plays of John Galsworthy (1867-1933), collected for publication in 1929, are too unequal to require detailed mention. Their outlook is humanitarian, so sympathetic as to be in danger of distorting the audience's goodwill into an unreasonable favour for the unfortunate or hunted. At the same time every situation is fairly presented, with a level balance of reasons on both sides. Most of the plays deal with a problem of human relations. Galsworthy brought to his task an excellent knowledge of stagecraft, which was evident in *The Silver Box* (1906, an indictment of the inequality of social classes before the Law); *Strife* (1907, an exposition of the stupidity of dictatorships)

was less clearly cut; *justice* (1910, about prison life) is better, and *The Fugitive* (1913, analysing a phase of loveless marriage) is less successful than *The Eldest Son* (1912). It is plain that Galsworthy's plays were weakened by his belief that all human institutions must be administered with a patience and consideration which would greatly impair their value to the community. He insists on it even when, as in *The Pigeon* (1912), the victim for whom he pleads is frankly stated to be unworthy of further kindness. Moreover, as familiarity with his plays increases, the uneasy impression grows that the answer has been prepared in advance of the question, an experience which greatly lessens respect for it when it is calmly and smoothly delivered. *The Mob* (1914) continued the list, with *The Foundations* (1920), *The Skin Game* (1920), the greatly successful *loyalties* (1922), *Windows* (1922), *The Forest* (1924), *Old English* (1924) and plays of lesser note, down to the *Exited* and *The Roof* of 1929.

Galsworthy's value as a playwright lies in his construction (his situations always arise naturally from the original idea and the characters in action), his ability to show thought and conflict in emotion, his reduction of plot to essentials, his dialogue (which is strong but never strident), and the characterisation (which is firmer than in his novels). That is to say, in spite of his faults and his failure to take his pleas beyond the point of gentlemanly protest, he succeeds because he uses every quality of sound literary craftsmanship. Finally we may note his skill in never making his plays

too dramatic. They are often urgent but never implacably demanding.

William Somerset Maugham (b. 1874) exhibits more clearly in his plays than in his stories the brilliance of gifts which are completely without feeling or appreciation of the spiritual values in man's experiences of life. For the greater part of his career as a playwright this fact was hidden; his first play (produced by the Stage Society in 1903), *A Man of Honour*, showed technical competence in handling a story of sufficient interest and showed nothing else. *Ladj Frederick* (1907), *Jack Straw* and *Mrs. Dot* (1908), *Man and Wife* (1909), *Grace* (1910), *Loaves and Fishes* (1911) is merely a list of some of the plays by which Maugham played endless variations on old themes with a skill which ensured commercial success. *The Unknown* (1920) proposed a problem but did not face its solution; incidentally it showed such a misunderstanding of the ordinary Christian's view of religion as ruined his novel *Catalina*. Far more effective was *The Circle* (1921), as also was *Caesar's Wife* (1922), and the more considerable *Our Betters* (produced 1923). By now Maugham decided to tell the world what he thought of it, with considerable cynicism. He is in these later plays at his best and most personal. It is by now conventional, but none the less true, to say that *The Constant Wife* (1926) resembled the Restoration comedy, although the note of genuine gaiety is missing. Certainly these plays do not contain the intensity which gave vigour to the best plays of the writers before 1920. *The*

Sacred Flame (1928) followed and later *The Breadwinner* (1930), *For Services Rendered* (1932) and *Sheppey* (1933). Although the intelligence behind the plays is unmistakable, they do not in the least illuminate human experience or give an answer to any problem. They are wanting in significance and life. Technical ability is their chief value, and the attraction of a rather glittering cynicism which mocks the audience it pretends to flatter completes the appeal.

John Drinkwater (1882-1937) secured one great success in *Abraham Lincoln* (1918), where the martyr theme, the cause Lincoln is made to represent, and the timely production when England and America were closely united, served to give the play a popularity not granted to the equally competent *Mary Stuart* (1921), *Oliver Cromwell* (1921), and *Robert E. Lee* (1923). Before these plays Drinkwater, who had been actor and manager of the Birmingham Repertory, had written more imaginatively in *Rebellion* (1914), *The Storm* (1915), *The God of Quiet* (1916), and *X—O: A Night of the Trojan War* (1917). All these plays were poetic drama rather than plays of vitality and conviction. Within this limitation they had considerable merit. • The final play was a comedy, *Bird-in-Hand* (1927).

John Masefield's *Tragedy of Nan* (1908) was one of the plays produced by Miss Horniman at Manchester. The excellent imagination in the play and the musical prose of its diction were spoilt by two faults. One is that we are presented with misfortune rather than

tragedy. The other is that English is not suited to the kind of elevation possible in Anglo-Irish idiom. The play is, however, better than *The Campden Wonder* of 1907 and its faults did not appear in *The Tragedy of Pompey the Great* (1910). Masfield seems to have sought for a suitable diction for his plays, preferring to write in a medium perfectly suited to his sweeping rhythms than to adapt his creations to either verse or prose which would be effective with a large audience. Most of his plays have been privately produced. *Philip the King* (1914) was in verse, as also was *Good Friday* (1915). Prose and verse, and the use of both dialogue and chorus, are found in *A King's Daughter* (1923), *The Trial of Jesus* (1925), *Tristan and Isolde* (1927), *The Coming of Christ* (1928), *Easter* (1929), and in *End and Beginning* (1934). There is nothing Elizabethan or traditional about these plays. They are purely experiments in form and diction. They are therefore out of the main trend of realism in the theatre today but, since they are little known in the theatre, they cannot be said to be opposed to it. All of the plays deserve to be widely known, since there can be little doubt that they would be a formative influence on the dramatic interest of both writers and audience.

Other playwrights associated with the "Manchester School" are Gilbert Cannan (b. 1884), whose work was collected in *Four Plays* (1902) and *Seven Plays* (1923); Harold Brighouse (b. 1882), who wrote the popular *Hobson's Choice* (1916) as well as *Gar side's Career* (1914) and *What's Bred in the Bone* (1927); Allan

Monkhouse (1858-1936), who wrote *Mary Broom* (1911), *The Education of Mr. Surrage* (1912), and *The Conquering Hero* (1923). Monkhouse also wrote novels and earned a merited reputation as a literary critic.

Exceptional charm and a whimsical sentiment not unlike Barrie's were brought to the theatre by Alan Alexander Milne (b. 1882) otherwise famous for the Winnie-the-Pooh books. His pieces are usually slight and graceful and include such well known titles as *Mr. Pirn Passes By*, *The Dover Road*, *The Truth about Blayds*, and *The Great Broxopp*. They have been collected in *First Plays* (1919), *Second Plays* (1921), *Three Plays* (1923), and *Four Plays* (1926). In 1929 came the pleasant *Michael and Mary*.

The name of St. John Ervine (b. 1883) recalls the revival of drama which in Ulster accompanied that in Dublin early in the century. The Ulster Literary Theatre began in 1902 and two years later was able to produce plays by Ulster dramatists, the first being *The Reformers* of David Parkhill ("Lewis Purcell"). Most of the plays deriving from the Ulster movement are lighter than those associated with Dublin, and included plays by Joseph Campbell, Samuel Waddell ("Rutherford Mayne"), Harry Morrow, Gerald Macnamara, George Shiels, and Leslie Montgomery ("Lynn Doyle"). Among the plays, it is interesting to note, was *The Spoiled Buddha* (1915), a play in a Japanese setting, by Rutherford Mayne's sister, Helen Waddell, who later won a wide reputation as a scholar

and translator. The only play by Ervine produced in the Ulster Theatre was *The Ship* (1924). His earlier plays were *Jane Clegg* (1911, one of his best,) *Mixed Marriage* (1911), *The Magnanimous Lover* (1912), *The Orangeman* (1913), *John Ferguson* (1915). They are all rather too theatrical and do not rise above average competence. The author's main interest is in the man who, divided in motives, finds himself in circumstances too distracted to offer him any clearly marked course of action. This is an old dramatic theme but St. John Ervine brings it to life in local settings either of Ulster or an almost sordidly lower middle class England.

In this he is in keeping with the realism of the English stage. Also united with it but bringing in the "pther world" background typical of the drama in Dublin is the work of more recent Irish playwrights, such as Denis Johnston (b. 1901), whose *The Moon in the Yellow River* (1931) therefore gives a memorable story of the years of twentieth century rebellion. It is observable that this suggestion of spiritual background, often unhappily called mystical, rounds out characterisation most effectively, creates a world convincingly real for those characters to live in, and adds a dignity to people who would otherwise be typified thugs or wastrels or weaklings. In this highly important vitalising of the drama, one element of the Celtic Revival is still showing the English theatre a lesson it has been "too real" and unimaginative to learn.

It is seen at its best in Sean O'Casey (b. 1884), whose *Juno and the Paycock* (1926) heightens the reality of each world by the presence of the other, just as he contrives to make tragedy and comedy bring out the fullness of each other. O'Casey is essentially Anglo-Irish. That is to say, his diction is the speech of Dublin slums—with a difference, in the same way that Synge's diction is that of the west with a difference. Here, too, we see the heightening effect of the methods used. In conception, characterisation, and diction O'Casey derives from the Dublin drama revival, a fact as clear in the plays *The Shadow of a Gunman* (1923) and *The Plough and the Stars* (1926) as in the first. An elaboration of thought rather than a development, and some uncertainty of diction, may be found in *The Silver Tassie* (1929) and *Within the Gates* (1934). These plays were regarded as aiming excessively at a symbolism unsuitable to the stage, a defect less noticeable in *Red Roses for Me* (1946).

Something of the Dublin lesson referred to may be found expressed in part of the dramatic work of John Boynton Priestley (b. 1894). His first play was a dramatised version of *The Good Companions* which he wrote in collaboration with Edward Knoblock. He turned to original writing in *Dangerous Corner* (1932), *The Roundabout* (1933), *laburnum Grove* (1933), *Eden End* (1934), *Duet in Floodlight* (1935), *Cornelius* (1935), *Bees on the Boat Deck* (1936), and *Time and the Conways* (1937). All these plays were marked by sound characterisation and satisfactory technique. In the

last Priestley showed an interest which he has considerably developed and which was supposed to be due to the fascination he found in contemporary theories as to the reality of time. Later plays show that his interest is not merely in the nature of time but in a metaphysical inquiry into the nature of man. They show a consciousness that life may have its unexpected spiritual experiences, which he explores dramatically by using new conceptions of the nature of time and place. His characters enter new worlds; against the background of those worlds they are themselves seen with a new vision. These ideas Priestley continued to examine in *I Have Been Here Before* (1937), *Johnson Over Jordan* (1939), and *The Long Mirror* (1940). In doing so he has had to contend with several difficulties. One is that the world he enters is new to him; he has not received it from his own intellectual background, a fact which limits his progress. Again, his gifts are towards a solid characterisation rather than to the less earthly real characterisation his aims require. Finally, his speech is not convincing; the spiritual quality of his thought has not entered into it. In these points we see similarities to the Celtic drama and serious differences from it. In spite of the defects, these plays are good and, even if Priestley is perhaps striving for something he may never grasp, his attempt to achieve the complete "realism" of life as distinct from the merely factual realism of the English theatre is supremely important. Later plays are a war play written for the Army, *Desert Highway* (1944), where the religious discussion does

not seem to be connected with the main line of Priestley's thought in the more important plays, and excellent comedies, *How Are They at Home?* (1945), and *When We Are Married* (1938). *The Linden Tree* (1947) has been well received.

Other novelists have written for the theatre with varying success. Arnold Bennett dramatised his novel *Juried Alive* as *The Great Adventure* (1913) and, collaborating with Edward Knoblock, wrote the extremely popular period piece *Milestones* (1912). His *What the Public Wants* (1909), *The Title* (1918) and *Judith* (1929) may also be mentioned. Eden Phillpotts collaborated and also wrote original plays, such as *The Farmer's Wife* (1916), *Devonshire Cream* (1924), and *Yellow Sands* (1926) which are good entertainment. Winifred Ashton ("Clemence Dane") is more distinguished as a playwright than as a novelist. Her *A Bill of Divorcement* (1921) was soundly constructed (unlike *Will Shakespeare*, also of 1921) and retains interest although now dated by changes in the divorce laws. *Naboth's Vineyard* (1925), *Granite* (1926), *Mariners* (1927) were satisfactory; *Adam's Opera* (1928) proved to be at least a most interesting experiment in technique.

Noel Coward (b. 1899) is considered to suffer from nostalgia for the past, by other critics to be mutely sensitive to the follies of his time, seeking revenge in cynicism. The second suggestion may be nearer the truth, but we may take his want of intellectual background to be a fact on which any real reading of him must be based. Opening with the amusing *The Young*

Idea (1922), which was sufficiently thoughtful to be promising, his later plays showed that he could perceive the symptoms of the times, define them admirably, but not relate them to either cause or cure. *The Vortex* (1924), *Fallen Angels* (1925), *Private Lives* (1930), *Design for Living* (1933) are examples of his ability to turn round for inspection, with brilliance of wit, the excesses of modernity which he found in fashion, spiritualism, neurasthenia. Nowhere did he deal with the realities. Matter which was almost valueless in itself became memorably amusing or rather slickly significant. His ability thus to entertain the public in ways never free from brittle cleverness was his chief asset. *Hay Fever* (1925) had so far been his best play. If he was lacking in depth, he partly compensated for the fault by turning to length. A series of plays, including *Bitter Sweet* (1929), *Cavalcade* (1931), *This Happy Breed* (1944), were panoramic. Their effect was more solidly successful, especially as in this type of play Coward's undoubted skill in technique found maturer expression. Among his most popular plays are *Conversation Piece* (1934), *To-night at Eight-thirty* (1936) and the sparkling farce, *Blithe Spirit* (1941). Even in his autobiography, *Present Indicative*, Coward gives the impression that he darts about on the surface of life; the idea is misleading but what goes on below the surface has not yet appeared.

The names of Reginald Berkeley, H. F. Rubinstein (author of over thirty plays), Halcott Glover (*Bellairs* and others), C. K. Munro, Ashley Dukes (several well-

known plays, including *The Scene is Changed*} Warren Chetham Strode (*The Guinea P/g*, 1947), are noted, with Miss Gordon Daviot, who has written historical plays, besides *Ltith Sands* (1941) and *The Little Day Thorn* (1946). Miss Daviot also writes successful detective novels as " Josephine Tey ".

Emlyn Williams (b. 1905) is distinguished as playwright, producer, and actor. His plays include *A Murder Has Been Arranged*, *Night Must Fall*, *The Com is Green*, *The Light of Heart*, *The Wind of Heaven*, *The Morning Star*, *Guest in the House*. Usually sombre, avoiding the application of their suggestions to modern life by taking place in the past, powerful and even violent, the plays are in some way unresolved. The author's temperament, his Welsh tradition, and his marked ability as a dramatist, appear not to have been fused into one inspired act as yet. To say this is not to belittle the value of the plays but to express the hope that something even better may yet be given to us.

Inspiration of a most compelling kind is not wanting in Dr. J. Mavor (" James Bridie ", b. 1888). In sheer inspiration he probably excels any playwright living in the first half of this century, not excluding the greatest. *The Anatomist* and *Tobias and the Angel* (1931) have been followed by *Jonah and the Whale* (1932), *A Sleeping Clergyman* (1933), *Susannah and the Elders* and *The King of Nowhere* (1938), *Mr. Bolfiy* (1944), *// Depends What You Mean* (1945), *The Forrigan Reel* and *Dr. Angelus* (1946). It is notable that his plays earn our respect

even while they stir our emotions or suitably move our sense of humour. He is erratic in his choice of subject, in the handling of his themes, and occasionally obscure. Against these faults must be balanced his ability to make unusual scenes wholly convincing, his delicacy of characterisation, and the sound structure of his plays. Over and above these merits is the unmistakable illumination of his mind and his burning zeal.

Patrick Hamilton (b. 1904) has gained attention by the stark realism and smooth construction of his plays, of which the grim *Rope* (1929) and *Gaslight* (1939) are examples. It may be held that they are too documentary in character to be artistically satisfying; if so, the opinion must be one for personal examination.

Of playwrights prominent since 1940 three are outstanding.

Terence Rattigan (b. 1912) caused much amusement with *French Without Tears* (1937), and continued with increasing success in *Flare Path* (1943) and *The Winslow Boy* (1946). In these plays, serious though some of their subjects or implications might be, he merely gave indications of their depth but, carefully not descending into them, he chose to set living, amusing characters against their background. Of the short pieces of *Playbill* (1948), however, *The Browning Version* was not only among the outstanding successes of the year but seemed to mark the appearance of Rattigan as a first-rate serious dramatist.

Notable chiefly for his technical originality is Peter Ustinov (b. 1921), author of *House of Regrets* (1940),

Blow Your Own Trumpet (1941), *The Man Behind the Statue* (1945), *The Indifferent Shepherd* (1948).

In *The Girl Who Could Not Quite* Leo Marks wrote a psychological play of exceptional interest and ability. He is also the author of *Written for a Lady* (1948), which has the same features of subtle delineation of character and originality of plot.

A number of other plays and playwrights must be noticed, and may be briefly listed: *Autumn Crocus* (1930), *Service* (1932), *Call It a Day* (1935), and *Dear Octopus* (1938) by Dodie Smith ("C. L. Anthony"); *The Shining Hour* (1934) by Keith Winter; *Musical Chairs* (1932) by Ronald MacKenzie; *The flashing Stream* (1938) by Charles Morgan; *Berkeley Square* (1928) by J. C. Squire and J. L. Balderston; *Chains* (1909) by Elizabeth Baker; *The Rotters* (1915) by H. F. Maltby; *Murder in the Cathedral* (1935) by T. S. Eliot; *Journey's End* (1928) by R. C. Sherriff; *The Barretts of Wimpole Street* (1930) by Rudolf Besier; *Outward Bound* (1923) by Sutton Vane; *The Sisters' Tragedy* and *A Comedy of Good and Evil* by Richard Church; *Escape Me Never* (1933) by Margaret Kennedy; *Last Train South* (1938) by R. C. Hutchinson; *The Assassin* and *The Burning Mask* by Peter Yates; *Quiet Week-End* (1945) by Esther McCracken; *The Years Between* by Daphne du Maurier; *The Cure for Love* by Walter Greenwood; *Lady from Edinburgh* (1945) by Aimee Stuart and L. Arthur Rose; *The Hasty Heart* by John Patrick; *The Old Man of the Mountains* by Norman Nicholson; *The Shadow Play* and *This Way*

to the Tomb (music by Benjamin Britten), two remarkable poetry dramas by Ronald Sutton. Interesting experiments towards a new form are discernible in T. S. Eliot's *The Cocktail Bar* (1949) and Sean O'Casey's *Cock-a-Doodle Dandy* (1949).

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