"Gods of modern Grub street; impressions of contemporary author"

by

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Freeditorial

THOMAS HARDY

Those who dissent from Byron's dictum that Keats was "snuffed out by an article" usually add that no author was ever killed by criticism; yet there seems little doubt that the critics killed Thomas Hardy the novelist, and our only consolation is that from the ashes of the novelist, phoenix-like rose Thomas Hardy the Poet.

As a novelist, Hardy began and finished his career in the days of Victoria, but though he has only been asserting himself as a poet since then, his earliest verse was written in the sixties; his first collection of poetry, the "Wessex Poems," appeared in 1898, and his second in the closing year of the Queen's reign. These facts should give us pause when we are disposed to sneer again at Victorian literature. Even the youngest scribe among us is constrained to grant the greatness of this living Victorian, so if we insist that the Victorians are over-rated we imply some disparagement of their successors, who have admittedly produced no novelists that rank so high as Hardy and few poets, if any, that rank higher.

Born at Upper Bockhampton, a village near Dorchester, on the 2nd June, 1840, Mr. Hardy pa

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his childhood and youth amid the scenes and people

that were, in due season, to serve as material for his stories and poems. At seventeen a natural bent drew him to choose architecture as a profession, and he studied first under an ecclesiastical architect in Dorchester, then, three years later, in London, under Sir Arthur Blomfield, proving his efficiency by winning the Tite prize for architectural design, and the Institute of British Architects' prize and medal for an essay on Colored and Terra Cotta Architecture.

But he was already finding himself and realizing that the work he was born to do was not such as could be materialized in brick and stone. He had been writing verse in his leisure and, in his twenties, "practised the writing of poetry" for five years with characteristic thoroughness; but, recognizing perhaps that it was not to be taken seriously as a means of livelihood, he presently abandoned that art; to resume it triumphantly when he was nearing sixty.

His first published prose was a light, humorous sketch of "How I Built Myself a House," which appeared in Chamber's Journal for March, 1865. In 1 87 1 came his first novel, "Desperate Remedies," a story more of plot and sensation than of character, which met with no particular success. Next year, however, Thomas Hardy entered into his kingdom with that "rural painting of the Dutch school," "Under the Greenwood Tree," a delightful?, realistic prose pastoral that has more of charm and tenderness than any other of his tales, except "The Trumpet Major." The critics recognized its quality and,

without making a noise, it found favor with the public. What we now know as the distinctive

Hardy touch is in its sketches of country life and subtle revelations of rural character, in its deliberate precision of style, its naked realism, its humor and quiet irony; and if the realism was to grow sterner, as he went on, the irony to be edged with bitterness, his large toleration of human error, his pity of human weakness, were to broaden and deepen with the passing of the years.

It is said that Frederick Greenwood, then editing the Cornhill, picked up a copy of "Under the Greenwood Tree" on a railway bookstall and, reading it, was moved to commission the author to write him a serial; and when "Far from the Madding Crowd" appeared anonymously in Cornhill its intimate acquaintance with rural England misled the knowing ones into ascribing it to George Eliot — an amazing deduction, seeing that it has nothing in common with George Eliot, either in manner or design.

U A Pair of Blue Eyes" had preceded "Far From the Madding Crowd," and "The Hand of Ethelberta" followed it; then, in 1878, came "The Return of the Native," which, with "The Mayor of Casterbridge" and "The Woodlanders," stood as Hardy's highest achievements until, in 1891 and 1896, "Tess of the D'Urbervilles" and "Jude the Obscure" went a flight beyond any that had gone before them and placed him incontestibly with the world's greatest novelists.

Soon after Hardy had definitely turned from architecture to literature he went back to Wessex,

where he lived successively at Cranbourne, Sturminster, and Wimborne, until in 1885 he removed to

Max Gate, Dorchester, which has been his home ever since. And through all those years, instead of going far afield in search of inspiration, he recreated the ancient realm of the West Saxons and found a whole world and all the hopes, ambitions, joys, loves, follies, hatreds — all the best and all the worst of all humanity within its borders. The magic of his genius has enriched the hundred and forty square miles of Wessex, which stretches from the Bristol Channel across Somerset, Devon, Dorset, Wilts and Hampshire to the English Channel, with imaginary associations that are as living and abiding, as inevitably part of it now, as are the facts of its authentic history.

A grim, stoical philosophy of life is implicit alike in Hardy's poetry and stories, giving a strange consistency to all he has written, so that his books are joined each to each by a religion of nature that is in itself a natural piety. He sees men and women neither as masters of their fate nor as wards of a beneficent deity, but as "Time's laughing-stocks" victims of heredity and environment, the helpless sport of circumstance, playing out little comedies or stumbling into tragedies shaped for them inexorably by some blind, creative spirit of the Universe that is indifferent to their misery or happiness and as powerless to prolong the one as to avert the other. The earlier pastoral comedies and tragicomedies have their roots in this belief, which reaches its most terribly beautiful expression in the

epic tragedies of "Tees" and "Jude the Obscure." I am old enough to remember the clash of opinions over the tragic figure of Tess and the author's presentation of her as "a pure woman"; how there

were protests from pulpits; how the critics mitigated their praise of Hardy's art with reproof of his ethics; but the story gripped the imagination of the public, and time has brought not a few of the moralists round to a recognition that if Hardy's sense of morality was less conventional, it was also something nobler, more fundamental than their own. He will not accept the dogmas of orthodox respectability, but looks beyond the accidents of circumstance and conduct to the real good or evil that is in the human heart that wrongs or is wronged. The same passion for truth at all costs underlies his stark, uncompromising realism and his gospel of disillusion, his vision of men as puppets working out a destiny they cannot control. If he has, therefore, little faith in humanity, he has infinite compassion for it, and infinite pardon. The irony of his stories is the irony he finds in life itself, and as true to human experience as are the humor and the pathos of them. Other eyes, another temperament, may read a different interpretation of it all; he has honestly and courageously given us his own.

The outcry against "Tess" was mild compared to the babble of prudish censure with which u Jude the Obscure" was received in many quarters, and it is small wonder that these criticisms goaded Hardy to a resolve that he would write no more novels for a world that could so misunderstand his purposes

and misconstrue his teachings. "The Well-Beloved," though it appeared a year later than "Jude," had been written and published serially five years before, and it was with "Jude," when his power was at its zenith, that Thomas Hardy wrote finis to his work as a novelist.

Happily his adherence to this resolve drove him back on the art he had abjured in his youth, and the last quarter of a century has yielded some half dozen books of his poems that we would not willingly have lost. Above all, it has yielded that stupendous chronicle-drama of the Napoleonic wars, "The Dynasts," which is sometimes acclaimed as the highest and mightiest effort of his genius. This drama, and his ballads and lyrics, often too overweighted with thought to have any beat of wings in them, are at one with his novels in the sincere, sombre philosophy of life that inspires them, the darkling imagination with which it is bodied forth, and the brooding, forceful personality which speaks unmistakably through all.

Hardy, is, and will remain, a great and lonely figure in our literature. It is possible to trace the descent of almost every other writer, to name the artistic influences that went to his making, but Hardy is without literary ancestry; Dickens and Thackeray, Tennyson and Browning, had forerunners, and have left successors. We know, as a matter of fact, what porridge John Keats had, but we do not know that of Hardy. Like every master, he unwittingly founded a school, but none of his imitators could imitate him except superficially, and already the scholars

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are going home and the master will presently be alone in his place apart. His style is peculiarly his own; as novelist and poet he has worked always

within his own conception of the universe as consistently as he has worked within the scope and bounds of his own kingdom of Wessex, and "within that circle none durst walk but he."

HILAIRE BELLOC

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So long and persistently has Hilaire Belloc been associated in the public mind with G. K. Chesterton — one ingenious jester has even linked and locked them together in an easy combination as the Chesterbelloc — that quite a number of people now have a vague idea that they are inseparables, collaborators, a sort of literary Siamese twins like Beaumont and Fletcher or Erckmann-Chatrian; and the fact that one appears in this volume without the other may occasion some surprise. Let it be confessed at once that Chesterton's omission from this gallery is significant only of his failure — not in modern letters, but to keep any appointments to sit for his photograph.

I regret his absence the less since it may serve as a mute protest against the practice of always bracketing his name with that of Hilaire Belloc. The magic influence of Belloc which is supposed to have colored so many of G. K. C.'s views and opinions and even to have drawn him at length into the Roman Catholic community, must be little but

legendary or evidence of it would be apparent in his writings, and it is no more traceable there than the influence of Chesterton is to be found in Bel-Ioc's books. They share a dislike of Jews, which nearly equals that of William Bailey in "Mr. Clut-

terbuck's Election"; Chesterton has illustrated some of Belloc's stories, and Belloc being an artist, too, has made charming illustrations for one of his own travel volumes. All the same, there is no more real likeness between them than there was between Dickens and Thackeray, or Tennyson and Browning, who were also, and are to some extent still, carelessly driven in double harness. Belloc's humor and irony are hard, often bitter; they have none of the geniality, nimbleness, perverse fantasy of Chesterton's. The one has a profound respect for fact and detail, and learns by carefully examining all the mechanical apparatus of life scientifically through a microscope ; while the other has small reverence for facts as such, looks on life with the poet's rather than with the student's eye, and sees it by lightning-flashes of intuition. When Chesterton wrote his History of England he put no dates in it; he felt that dates were of no consequence to the story; but Belloc has laid it down that, though the human motive is the prime factor in history, "the external actions of men, the sequence in dates and hours of such actions, and their material conditions and environments must be strictly and accurately acquired." There is no need to labor the argument. "The Napoleon of Notting Hill" is not more unlike "Emanuel Burden" than their two authors are unlike each other,

individually and in what they have written.

Born at St. Cloud in 1870, Belloc was the son of
a French barrister; his mother, an Englishwoman,
was the grand-daughter of Joseph Priestley, the

famous scientist and Unitarian divine. She brought
him over to England after the death of his father,
and they made their home in Sussex, the country
that has long since taken hold on his affections and
inspired the best of his poems. I don't know when
he was "living in the Midlands," or thereabouts
except while he was at Oxford, and earlier when he
was a schoolboy at the Birmingham Oratory and
came under the spell of Cardinal Newman, and
I don't know when he wrote "The South Country,"
but not even Kipling has crowned Sussex more
splendidly than he crowns it in that vigorous and
poignant lyric —

"When I am living in the Midlands,

That are sodden and unkind,
I light my lamp in the evening;

My work is left behind;
And the great hills of the South Country

Come back into my mind.

The great hills of the South Country

They stand along the sea,
And it's there, walking in the high woods,

That I could wish to be,

And the men that were boys when I was a boy

Walking along with me . . .

If ever I become a rich man,

Or if ever I grow to be old,
I will build a house with a deep thatch

To shelter me from the cold,
And there shall the Sussex songs be sung

And the story of Sussex told.

I will hold my house in the high wood,

Within a walk of the sea,
And the men that were boys when I was a boy

Shall sit and drink with me."

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Nowadays, he has to some extent realized that desire, for he is settled at Horsham, in Sussex again, if not within a walk of the sea. But we are skipping too much, and will go back and attend to our proper historical "sequence in dates." His schooldays over, he accepted the duties of his French citizenship and served his due term in the Army of France, as driver in an Artillery regiment. These military obligations discharged, he returned to England, went to Oxford, and matriculated at Balliol. He ran a dazzling career at Oxford, working assiduously as a student, carrying off the Brackenbury Scholarship and a First Class in Honor History Schools, and at the same time reveled joyously with the robust, gloried in riding

and swimming and coruscated brilliantly in the Union debates. His vivid, dominating personality seems to have made itself felt among his young contemporaries there as it has since made itself felt in the larger worlds of literature and politics; though in those larger worlds his recognition and his achievements have never, so far, been quite commensurate with his extraordinary abilities or the tradition of power that has gathered about his name. In literature, high as he stands, his fame is less than that of men who have not a tithe of his capacity, and in politics he remains a voice crying in the wilderness, a leader with no effective following. Perhaps in politics his fierce sincerity drives him into tolerance, he burns to do the impossible and change human nature at a stroke, and is too far ahead of his time for those he would lead

to keep pace with him. And perhaps in literature he lacks some gift of concentration, dissipates his energies over too many fields, and is too much addicted to the use of irony, which it has been said, not without reason, is regarded with suspicion in this country and never understood. Swift is admittedly our supreme master in that art, and there is nothing more ironic in his most scathingly ironical work, "Gulliver's Travels," than the fact that Gulliver is only popular as an innocently amusing book for children.

Belloc began quietly enough, in 1895, with a little unimportant book of "Verses and Sonnets." He followed this in the next four years with four delightfully, irresponsibly absurd books of verses and pictures such as "The Bad Child's Book of Beasts," "More Beasts for Worse Children," pub-

lishing almost simultaneously in 1899 "The Moral Alphabet" and his notable French Revolution study of "Danton." In a later year he gave us simultaneously the caustic, frivolous "Lambkin's Remains" and his book on "Paris," and followed it with his able monograph on "Robespierre." It was less unsettling, no doubt, when "Caliban's Guide to Letters" was closely succeeded by the first and most powerful of his ironic novels, "Emanuel Burden," but serious people have never known where to have him. He collects his essays under such careless titles as "On Nothing," "On Anything," "This and That," or simply "On"; and the same year that found him collaborating with Cecil Chesterton in a bitter attack on "The Party Sys-

tern," found him collaborating with Lord Basil Blackwood in the farcical "More Peers, " and issuing acute technical expositions of the battles of Blenheim and Malplaquet.

His novels, "Emanuel Burden, " "Mr. Clutterbuck's Election," "A Change in the Cabinet," "The Mercy of Allah," and the rest, satirize the chicanery and humbug rampant in modern commerce, finance, politics, and general society, and are too much in earnest to attempt to tickle the ears of the groundlings.

For four years, in the first decade of the century, Belloc sat in Parliament as Member for Salford, but the tricks, hypocrisies, insincerities of the politicians disgusted and exasperated him; he was hampered and suppressed in the House by its archaic forms, and instead of staying there stubbornly to leaven the unholy lump he came wrathfully out,

washing his hands of it, to attack the Party system in the Press, and inaugurate The Witness in which he proceeded to express himself on the iniquities of public life forcefully and with devastating candor.

No journalist wielded a more potent pen than he through the dark years of the war. Hi's articles in Land and Water recording the various phases of the conflict, criticizing the conduct of campaigns, explaining their course and forecasting developments drew thousands of readers to sit every week at his feet, and were recognized as the cleverest, most searching, most informing of all the many periodical reviews of the war that were then current. That his prophecies were not always fulfilled meant

only that, like all prophets, he was not infallible. His vision, his intimate knowledge of strategy, his mastery of the technique of war were amazing — yet not so amazing when you remember his service in the French Army and that he comes of a race of soldiers. One of his mother's forbears was an officer in the Irish Brigade that fought for France at Fontenoy, and four of his father's uncles were among Napoleon's generals, one of them falling at the head of his charging troops at Waterloo. It were but natural he should derive from such stock not merely a love of things military but that ebullient, overpowering personality which, many who come in contact with him find irresistible.

As poet, he has written three or four things that will remain immortal in anthologies; as novelist, he has a select niche to himself; "The Girondin" indicates what he might have become as a sheer romantist, but he did not pursue that vein; his books

of travel, particularly u The Path to Rome" and u Esto Perpetua," are unsurpassed in their kind by any living traveler; as historian, essayist, journalist, he ranks with the highest of his contemporaries; nevertheless, you are left with a feeling that the man himself is greater than anything he has done. You feel that he has been deftly modeling a motley miscellany of statuettes when he might have been carving a statue; and the only consolation is that some of the statuettes are infinitely finer than are many statues, and that, anyhow, he has given, and obviously taken delight in the making of them.

ARNOLD BENNETT

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If his critics are inclined to write Arnold Bennett down as a man of great talent instead of as a man of genius, he is himself to blame for that. He has not grown long hair, nor worn eccentric hats and ties, not cultivated anything of the unusual appear-

ance and manner that are vulgarly supposed to denote genius. In his robust, commonsense conception of the literary character, as well as in certain aspects of his work, he has affinities with Anthony Trollope.

Trollope used to laugh at the very idea of inspiration; he took to letters as sedulously and systematically as other men take to farming or shopkeeping, wrote regularly for three or four hours a day, whether he was well or ill, at home or abroad, doing in those hours always the same number of words, and keeping his watch on the table beside him to regulate his rate of production. He was intolerant of the suggestion that genius is a mysterious power which controls a man, instead of being controlled by him, that

"the spirit bloweth, and is still,"

and the author is dependent on such vagrant moods, and he justified his opinions and his practices by be-

coming one of the half dozen greater Victorian novelists.

I do not say that Arnold Bennett holds exactly the same beliefs and works in the same mechanical fashion, but that his literary outlook is as practical and business-like is apparent from "The Truth about an Author," from "The Author's Craft," "Literary Taste," and other of those pocket philosophies that he wrote in the days when he was pot-boiling, and also from the success with which, in

the course of his career, he has put his own precepts into practice.

The author who is reared in an artistic atmosphere, free from monetary embarrassments, with social influence enough to smooth his road and open doors to him, seldom acquires any profound knowledge of life or develops any remarkable quality. But Bennett had none of these disadvantages. Nor was he an infant phenomenon, rushing into print before he was out of his teens; he took his time, and lived awhile before he began to write about life, and did not adopt literature as a means of livelihood until he had sensibly made up his mind what he wanted to do and that he could do it. He was employed in a lawyer's office till he was twenty-six, and had turned thirty when he published his first novel, "A Man from the North." Meanwhile, he had been writing stories and articles experimentally, and, having proved his capacity by selling a sufficient proportion of these to various periodicals, he threw up the law to go as assistant editor, and afterwards became editor, of a mag-

azine for women — which may, in a measure, account for his somewhat cynical views on love and marriage and the rather pontifical cocksureness with which he often delivers himself on those subjects.

In 1900 he emancipated himself from the editorial chair and withdrew into the country to live quietly and economically and devote himself to ambitions that he knew he could realize. He had tried his strength in "A Man from the North, " and settled down now, deliberately and confidently,

to become a novelist and a dramatist; he was out for success in both callings, and did not mean to be long about getting it, if not with the highest type of work, then with the most popular. For he was too eminently practical to have artistic scruples against giving the public what it wanted if by so doing he might get into a position for giving it what he wanted it to have. He expresses the sanest, healthfulest scorn for the superior but unsaleable author who cries sour grapes and pretends to a preference for an audience fit thougtrfew.

"I can divide all the imaginative authors I have ever met," he has written, "into two classes — those who admitted and sometimes proclaimed loudly that they desired popularity; and those who expressed a noble scorn or a gentle contempt for popularity. The latter, however, always failed to conceal their envy of popular authors, and this envy was a phenomenon whose truculent bitterness could not be surpassed even in political or religious life. And indeed, since the object of the artist is to share

his emotions with others, it would be strange if the normal artist spurned popularity in order to keep his emotions as much as possible to himself. An enormous amount of dishonest nonsense has been and will be written by uncreative critics, of course in the higher interests of creative authors, about popularity and the proper attitude of the artist thereto. But possibly the attitude of a first-class artist himself may prove a more valuable guide. " And he proceeds to show from his letters how keenly Meredith desired to be popular, and praises him for compromising with circumstance and turning from the writing of poetry that did not pay to

the writing of prose in the hope that it would. I doubt whether he would sympathize with any man who starved for art's sake when he might have earned good bread and meat in another calling. The author should write for success, for popularity; that is his creed: "he owes the practice of elementary commonsense to himself, to his work, and to his profession at large."

Bennett was born in 1887, and not for nothing was he born at Hanley, one of the Five Towns of Staffordshire that he has made famous in his best stories — a somber, busy, smoky place bristling with factory chimneys and noted for its potteries. How susceptible he was to the spell of it, how it made him its own, and how vividly he remembers traits and idiosyncrasies of local character and all the trivial detail in the furnishing of its houses and the manners and customs of its Victorian home-life are

evident from his books. He came to London with the acute commonsense, the mother wit, the shrewd business instinct and energy of the Hanley manufacturer as inevitably in his blood as if he had breathed them in with his native air, and he adapted himself to the manufacture of literature as industriously and straightforwardly as any of his equally but differently competent fellow-townsmen could give themselves to the manufacture of pottery. He worked with his imagination as they worked with their clay; and it was essential with him, as with them, that the goods he produced should be marketable.

There is always a public for a good story of mystery and sensation so, in those days when he

was feeling his way, he wrote "The Grand Babylon Hotel," and did it so thoroughly, so efficiently that it was one of the cleverest and most original, no less than one of the most successful things of its kind. In the same year he published "Anna of the Five Towns," which was less popular but remains among the best six of his finer realistic tales of his own people. He followed this with three or four able enough novels of lesser note; with a wholly admirable collection of short stories, "The Grim Smile of the Five Towns" ; was busy with those astute, provocative pot-boiling pocket-philosophies, "Journalism for Women," "How to Become an Author," "How to Live on Twenty-Four Hours a Day," and the rest; writing dramatic criticisms; plays, such as "Cupid and Commonsense," "What

the Public Wants"; and, over the signature of "Jacob Tonson," one of the most brilliant and entertaining of weekly literary causeries.

Then, in 1908, he turned out another romance of mystery and sensation, "Buried Alive," and in the same year published "The Old Wives' Tale," perhaps the greatest of his books, and one that ranked him unquestionably with the leading novelists of his time. A year later came "Clayhanger," the first volume in the trilogy which was continued, in 191 1, with "Hilda Lessways," and completed, after a delay of five years, with "They Twain." This trilogy, with "The Old Wives' Tale," and the much more recent "Mr. Prohack," are Arnold Bennett's highest achievements in fiction. The first four are stories of disillusion; the romance of them is the drab, poignant romance of unideal love and disappointed marriage, and the humor of them is sharply edged with

irony and satire. In "Mr. Prohack" Bennett returns to the more genial mood of "The Card" (1911). Prohack is a delightful, almost a lovable creation, and the Card, with his dry, dour humor, for all his practical hardheadedness, is scarcely less so.

Unlike most men, who set out to do one thing and end by doing another, Bennett laid down the plan of his career and has carried it out triumphantly. He is a popular novelist, but, though he cheerfully stooped to conquer and did a lot of miscellaneous writing by the way, while he was building his reputation, the novels that have made him popular are among the masterpieces of latter-day realistic art.

And with "Milestones" (in collaboration with Edward Knoblauch) and "The Great Adventure," to say nothing of his seven or eight other plays, he is a successful dramatist. His versatility is as amazing as his industry. It may be all a matter of talent and commonsense perseverance but he seems to do whatever he chooses with an ease and a brilliance that is very like genius. His list of nearly sixty volumes includes essays, dramas, short stories, several kinds of novel, books of criticism and of travel; he paints deftly and charmingly in water-colors; and if he has written no poetry it is probably because he is too practical to trifle with what is so notoriously unprofitable, for if he decided to write some you may depend upon it he could. He has analyzed "Mental Efficiency" and "The Human Machine" in two of his little books of essays, and illustrated both in his life.

JOHN DAVYS BERESFORD

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There seems to be something in the atmosphere of the manse and the vicarage that has a notable effect of developing in many who breathe it a capacity for writing fiction. Not a few authors have been cradled into literature by the Law, Medicine and the Army, but as a literary incubator no profession can vie with the Church. If it has produced no poet of the highest rank, it gave us Donne, Herrick, Herbert, Crashaw, Young, Crabbe, and a multitude of lesser note, and if it has yielded no greater novelists than Sterne and Kingsley, it has fostered a vast number that have, in their day, made up in popularity for what they lacked in genius.

Moreover, when the parsons themselves have proved immune to that peculiarity of the clerical environment, it has wrought magically upon their children, and an even longer list could be made, including such great names as Goldsmith, Jane Austen and the Brontes, of the sons and daughters of parsons who have done good or indifferent work as poets or as novelists.

Most of the novelists moulded by such early influences have leaned rather to ideal or to glamorously or grimly romantic than to plainly realistic interpretations of life and character, and J. D.

Beresford is so seldom romantic, or idealistic, so

often realistically true to secular and unregenerate aspects of human nature, that, if he did not draw his clerical characters with such evident inside knowledge, you would not suspect that in his beginnings he had been subject to the limitations and repressions that necessarily obtain in an ecclesiastical household.

He was born in Castor rectory, and his father was a minor canon and precentor of Peterborough Cathedral, and, if it pleases you, you can play with a theory that the stark realism with which he handles the facts, even the uglier facts, of modern life is either a reaction from the narrow horizon that cramped his youthful days, or that the outlook of the paternal rectory was broader than the outlook of rectories usually is.

After an education at Oundel, and at King's School, Peterborough, he was apprenticed, first to an architect in the country, then to one in London; but before long he abandoned architecture to go into an insurance office, and left that to take up a post with W. H. Smith & Son, in the Strand where he became a sort of advertising expert and was placed at the head of a bookselling department with a group of country travellers under his control.

Before he was half-way through his teens, he had been writing stories which were not published and can never now be brought against him, for he is shrewdly self-critical and all that juvenilia has been ruthlessly destroyed. He was contributing to Punch in 1908, and a little later had become a reviewer on the staff of that late and much lamented

evening paper the Westminster Gazette. Among the destroyed juvenilia was more than one novel. In what leisure he could get from his advertising and reviewing, he was busy on another which was not destined to that inglorious end. For though "Jacob Stahl" was rejected by the first prominent publisher to whom it was offered, because, strangely enough, he considered it old-fashioned, it was promptly accepted by the second, and its publication in 191 1 was the real beginning of Beresford's literary career. Had it been really old-fashioned, it would have delighted the orthodox reading public, which is always the majority, but its appeal was rather to the new and more advanced race of readers, and though its sales were not astonishing, its mature narrative skill and sound literary qualities were unhesitatingly recognized by the discriminat-

ing; it gave him a reputation, and has held its ground and gone on selling steadily ever since. One felt the restrained power of the book, alike in the narrative and in the intimate realization of character; its careful artistry did not bid for popularity, but it ranked its author, at once, as a novelist who was considerably more than the mere teller of a readable tale.

"Jacob Stahl" was the first volume in a trilogy (the other two being "A Candidate for Truth" and "The Invisible Event") — a trilogy which unfolds a story of common life that might easily have been throbbing with sentiment and noisy with melodramatic sensation; in Mr. Beresford's reticent hands, however, it is never overcharged with either,

but is touched only with the natural emotions, subdued excitements, unexaggerated poignancies of feeling that are experienced by such men and women as we know in the world as we know it.

Meredith, in "The Invisible Event," rather grudgingly praises Jacob Stahl's first novel, "John Tristram," as good realistic fiction of the school of Madame Bovary. "It's a recognized school," Meredith continued. "I don't quite know any one in England who's doing it, but it's recognized in France, of course. I don't quite know how to define it, but perhaps the main distinction is in the choice of the typical incidents and emotions. The realists don't concentrate on the larger emotions, you see — quite the reverse; they find the common feelings and happenings of everyday life more representative. You may have a big scene, but the essential thing is the accurate presentation of the

commonplace." "Yes, I think that is pretty much what I have tried to do," commented Jacob. "I think that's what interests me. It's what I know of life. I've never murdered any one, for instance, or talked to a murderer, and I don't know how it feels, or what one would do in a position of that sort."

That is perhaps a pretty fair statement of Beresford's own aim as a novelist; he prefers to exercise his imagination on what he has observed of life, or on what he has personally experienced of it. And no doubt the "Jacob Stahl" trilogy draws much of its convincing air of truthfulness from the fact that it is largely autobiographical. In the first vol-

ume, the baby Jacob, owing to the carelessness of a nursemaid, meets with an accident that cripples him for the first fifteen years of his existence; and just such an accident in childhood befell Mr. Beresford himself. In due course, after toying with the thought of taking holy orders, Jacob becomes an architect's pupil. "A Candidate for Truth" shows him writing short stories the magazines will not accept, and working on a novel, but before anything can be done with this, the erratic Cecil Barker gets tired of patronizing him and, driven to earn a livelihood, he takes a situation in an advertising agency and develops into an expert at writing advertisements. Then, having revised and rewritten his novel, he is dissatisfied with it and burns it. He does not begin to conquer his irresolutions and win some confidence in himself until after his disastrous marriage and separation from his wife, when he comes under the influence of the admirable Betty Gale, who loves him and defies the conventions to

help him make the best of himself. Then he gets on to the reviewing staff of a daily newspaper, and writes another novel, "John Tristram, M and after one publisher has rejected it as old-fashioned, another accepts and publishes it, and though it brings him little money or glory, it starts him on the road to success, and he makes it the first volume of a trilogy.

Where autobiography ends and fiction begins in these three stories is of no importance; what is not literally true in them is so imaginatively realized that it seems as truthful. Philip of "God's Coun-

terpoint," who was injured by an accident in boyhood is a pathological case; there are surrenderings to the morbid and abnormal in "Housemates," one of the somberest of Beresford's novels, and in that searching and poignant study in degeneracy, "The House in Demetrius Road"; but if these are more powerful in theme and more brilliant in workmanship they have not the simple, everyday actuality of the trilogy; they get their effects by violence, or by the subtle analysis of bizarre, unusual or unpleasant attributes of humanity, and the strength and charm of the Stahl stories, are that, without subscribing to the conventions, they keep to the common highway on which average men and women live and move and have their being. This is the higher and more masterly achievement, as it is more difficult to paint a portrait when the sitter is a person of ordinary looks than when he has marked peculiarities of features that easily distinguish him from the general run of mankind.

Although, in his time, Mr. Beresford was an

advertising expert he has never acquired the gift of self-advertisement; but he found himself and was found by critics and the public while he still counted as one of our younger novelists and had been writing for less than a decade.

He has a subdued humor that is edged with irony, and can write with a lighter touch, as he shows in "The Jervase Comedy" and some of his short stories; and though one deprecates his excursions into eccentricities of psychology, for the bent of his genius is so evidently toward portraying what

Meredith described to Stahl as the representative "feelings and happenings of everyday life," one feels that he is more handicapped by his reticences than by his daring. He is so conscious an artist that he tones down all crudities of coloring, yet the color of life is often startlingly crude. An occasional streak of melodrama, a freer play of sentiment and motion would add to the vitality of his scenes and characters and intensify their realism instead of taking anything from it; but his native reticence would seem to forbid this and he cannot let himself go. And because he cannot let himself go he has not yet gone beyond the Jacob Stahl series, which, clever and cunninger art though some of his other work may be, remains the truest and most significant thing he has done.

JOHN BUCHAN

JOHN BUCHAN

I HAVE heard people express surprise that such a born romantist as John Buchan has turned his mind successfully to practical business, and been for so long an active partner in the great publishing house of Thomas Nelson & Sons. But there is really nothing at all surprising about that. One of the essays in his "Some Eighteenth Century Byways" speaks of "the incarnation of youth and the eternal Quixotic which, happily for Scotland, lie at the back of all her thrift and prudence"; and in another, on "Mr. Balfour as a Man of Letters", he says, "the average Scot, let it never be forgotten, is incorrigibly sentimental; at heart he would rather be 'kindly' and 'innerly' than 'canny,' and his admiration is rather for Burns, who had none of the reputed national characteristics, than for Adam Smith, who had them all." He adds that though Scotsmen perfectly understand the legendary Caledonian, though "in theory they are all for dry light *a hard, gem-like flame,' in practice they like the glow from more turbid altars."

Having that dual personality himself, it is not incongruous that John Buchan should be at once a poet, a romantic and a shrewd man of affairs. But he is wrong in thinking the nature he sketches is peculiar to his countrymen, the Scots; it is as

characteristically English. Indeed, I should not count him among practical men if he had not proved himself one by doing more practical things than publishing; for publishing is essentially a romantic calling as you may suspect if you consider the number of authors who have taken to it, and the number of publishers who have become authors. Scott felt the lure of the trade, in the past, and in the present you have J. D. Beresford working at it with Collins & Sons; Frank Swinnerton first with Dent, now with Chatto & Windus; Frederick Watson, a brilliant writer of romances and of modern social comedy, with Nisbet; Michael Sadleir with Constable; C. E. Lawrence, most fantastic and idealistic of novelists, with John Murray; Roger Ingram, writing with authority on Shelley and making fine anthologies, but disguised as one of the partners in Selwyn and Blount; Alec Waugh, joining that admirable essayist his father, Arthur Waugh, with Chapman & Hall; C. S. Evans, whose "Nash and Others" may stand on the shelf by Kenneth Grahame's "Golden Age," with Heinemanns; B. W. Matz, the Dickens enthusiast and author of many books about him, running in harness with Cecil Palmer; you have Grant Richards writing novels that are clever enough to make some of his authors wonder why he publishes theirs: Sir Ernest Hodder-Williams, an author, with at least half-a-dozen successful books to his name; Herbert Jenkins, a popular humorist and doing sensational detective stories; Sir Algernon Methuen developing a passion

for compiling excellent anthologies of poetry — and there are others.

But here is enough to show that Buchan need not think he is demonstrating his Scottish practicality by going in for publishing. As a fact, I have always felt that publishing should be properly classed as a sport. It is more speculative than racing and I do not see how any man on the Turf can get so much excitement and uncertainty by backing a horse as he could get by backing a new book. You can form a pretty reliable idea of what a horse is capable of before you put your money on it, but for the publisher, more often than not, it is all a game of chance, since whether he wins or loses depends less on the quality of the book than on the taste of the public, which is uncalculable. So when Buchan went publishing he was merely starting to live romance as well as to write it.

A son of the manse, he was born in 1875, and going from Edinburgh University to Brasenose, Oxford, he took the Newdigate Prize there, with other more scholarly distinctions, and became President of the Union. Even in those early days he developed a love of sport, and found recreation in mountaineering, deer-stalking and fishing. His enthusiasm for the latter expressed itself in the delightful verses of "Musa Piscatrix," which appeared in 1896, while he was still at Oxford, his first novel, "Sir Quixote," a vigorous romance somewhat in the manner of Stevenson, who was then at the height of his career, having given him prom-

inence among new authors a year earlier. I recollect the glowing things that were said of one of his finest, most brilliantly imaginative romances, "John Burnet of Barns," in 1898, and with the fame of that going before him he came to London.

There he studied law in the Middle Temple, and was called to the Bar, but seems to have been busier with literary and journalistic than with legal affairs, for two more books, "Grey Weather" and "A Lost Lady of Old Years" came in 1889; "The Half-Hearted" in 1900, and meanwhile he was occupied with journalism and contributing stories to the magazines.

Then for two years he sojourned in South Africa as private secretary to Lord Milner, the High Commissioner. Two books about the present and future of the Colony were the outcome of that excursion into diplomacy; and better still, his South African experiences prompted him a little later to write that remarkable romance of "Prester John," the cunning, clever Zulu who, turned Christian evangelist, professes to be the old legendary Prester John reincarnate, and while he is ostensibly bent on converting the natives, is fanning a flame of patriotism in their chiefs and stirring them to rise against the English and create again a great African empire. Here, and in "John Burnet of Barnes," and in some of the short stories of "The Watcher by the Threshold" and "The Moon Endureth," John Buchan reaches, I think, his high-water mark as a weaver of romance.

After his return from South Africa he joined the

staff of the Spectator, reviewing and writing essays for it and doing a certain amount of editorial work. At least, I deduce the latter fact from the statement of one who had the best means of knowing. If you look up "The Brain of the Nation," by Charles L. Graves, who was then assistant editor of the Spectator, you will find among the witty and humorous poems in that volume a complete biography of John Buchan in neat and lively verse, telling how he came up to town from Oxford, settled down to the law, went to Africa, returned and became a familiar figure in the Spectator's old offices in Wellington Street :

"Ev'ry Tuesday morn careering
Up the stairs with flying feet,
You'd burst in upon us, cheering
Wellington's funereal street . . .

Pundit, publicist and jurist;

Statistician and divine;
Mystic, mountaineer, and purist

In the high financial line;
Prince of journalistic sprinters —

Swiftest that I ever knew —
Never did you keep the printers

Longer than an hour or two.

Then, too, when the final stages
Of our weekly task drew nigh,

You would come and pass the pages
With a magisterial eye,

Seldom pausing, save to smoke a
Cigarette at half past one,

When you quaffed a cup of Mocha
And devoured a penny bun."

The War turned those activities into other channels, and after being rejected by the army as beyond the age limit, he worked strenuously in Kitchener's recruiting campaign, then served as Lieutenant-Colonel on the British Headquarters Staff in France, and subsequently as Director of Information. The novels he wrote in those years, "The Power House," "The Thirty-nine Steps," "Greenmantle," and u Mr. Standfast," were written as a relief from heavier duties. They are stories of mystery and intrigue as able and exciting as any of their kind. "Greenmantle," he says in a preface, was "scribbled in every kind of odd place and moment — in England and abroad, during long journeys, in half hours between graver tasks." He was present throughout the heroic fighting on the Somme, and his official positions at the front and at home gave him exceptional opportunities of seeing things for himself and obtaining first-hand information for his masterly "History of the War," which will give him rank as a historian beside Kinglake and Napier.

With "The Path of the King," and more so with "Huntingtower," he is back in his native air of

romance, and one hopes he will leave the story of plot and sensation to other artists and stay there.

Like all romancists, he is no unqualified lover of the democracy; it is too lacking in picturesqueness, in grace and glamor to be in harmony with his temperament. He belongs in spirit to the days when heroism walked in splendor and war was glorious. He has laid it down that the "denunciation of war rests at bottom upon a gross material-

ism. The horrors of war are obvious enough; but it may reasonably be argued that they are not greater than the horrors of peace . . . the true way in which to ennoble war is not to declare it in all its forms the work of the devil, but to emphasize the spiritual and idealist element which it contains. It is a kind of national sacrament, a grave matter into which no one can enter lightly and for which all are responsible, more especially in these days when wars are not the creation of princes and statesmen but of peoples. War, on such a view, can only be banished from the world by debasing human nature."

That is the purely romantic vision. Since 19 14, Buchan's experiences of War and the horrors of peace that result from it may have modified his earlier opinions.

Anyhow, it is a wonderful theme for romance when it is far enough away. It shows at its best in such chivalrous tales of adventure and self-sacrifice as have gathered round the gallant figure of the Young Pretender. You know from his books that John Buchan is steeped in the lore of the Jacobites

and sensitive to the spell of u old songs and lost romances." Dedicating "The Watcher by the Threshold" to Stair Agnew Gillon, he says, "It is of the back-world of Scotland that I write, the land behind the mist and over the seven bens, a place hard of access for the foot-passengers but easy for the maker of stories." One owns to a wish that the author of "John Barnet of Barns" would now set his genius free from the squabble and squalor

of present-day politics (by the way, he once put up for Parliament but fortunately did not get in) and write that great story of the '45 which he hints elsewhere has never yet been written.

DONN BYRNE

Domn Byrne

DONN BYRNE

There are more gods than any man is aware of, and there is really more virtue in discovering a new one, and catching him young, than in deferring your tribute until he is old and so old-established that all the world has recognized him for what he is. You may say that Donn Byrne is not a god of modern Grub Street, but you can take it from me that he is going to be. He has all the necessary attributes

and is climbing to his due place in the hierarchy so rapidly that he will have arrived there soon after you are reading what I have to say about him.

There is a general idea that he is an American; unless an author stops at home mistakes of that kind are sure to happen. People take it for granted that he belongs where he happens to be living when they find him. Henry James had lived among us so long that he was quite commonly taken for an Englishman even before he became naturalized during the War. The same fate is overtaking Ezra Pound; he is the chief writer of a sort of poetry that is being largely written in his country and in ours, and because he has made his home with us for many years he is generally regarded here as a native. On the other hand, Richard Le Gallienne left us and has passed so large a part of his

life in the United States that most of us are beginning to think of him as an American.

The mistake is perhaps more excusable in the case of Donn Byrne, for he was born at New York in 1889, but before he was three months old he was brought over to Ireland which ought to have been his birthplace, since his father was an architect there. He was educated at Trinity College, Dublin, and when he was not improving his mind was developing his muscles; he went in enthusiastically for athletics, and in his time held the light-weight boxing championships for Dublin University and for Ulster. He knows all about horses, too, and can ride with the best, and has manifested a more

than academic interest in racing. In fact, he has taken a keen interest in whatever was going on in the life around him wherever he has been, and he has been about the world a good deal, and turned his hand to many things. There is something Gallic as well as Gaelic in his wit, his vivacity, his swiftly varying moods. He is no novelist who has done all his traveling in books and dug up his facts about strange countries in a reference library. When he deals with ships his characters are not such as keep all the while in the saloon cabin; they are the ship's master and the sailors, and you feel there is a knowledge of the sea behind them when he gets them working; and if he had not been an athlete himself he could not have described with such vigor and realistic gusto that great fight between Shane Campbell and the wrestler from Aleppo in "The Wind Bloweth."

DONN BYRNE $ S

How much of personal experience has gone into his novels is probably more than he could say himself. But when he is picturing any place that his imaginary people visit, you know from a score of casual, intimate touches that he, too, has been there, and is remembering it while he writes. Take this vivid sketch of Marseilles, for example :

"Obvious and drowsy it might seem, but once he went ashore, the swarming, teeming life of it struck Shane like a current of air. Along the quays, along the Cannebiere, was a riot of color and nationality unbelievable from aboard ship. Here were Turks, dignified and shy. Here were Greeks, wary, furtive. Here were Italians, Genoese, Neapolitans, Livornians, droll, vivacious, vindictive. Here were Moors, here were Algerians, black

African folk, sneering, inimical. Here were Spaniards, with their walk like a horse's lope. Here were French business men, very important. Here were Provencals, cheery, short, tubby, excitable, olive-colored, black-bearded, calling to one another in the langue d'oc of the troubadors, ' Te, mon bon! Commoun as? Quezaco?"

There is that same sense of seeing things in the glamorous description of the Syrian city where Shane lived with the Arab girl he had married; and in the hasty outline of Buenos Aires:

"Here now was a city growing rich, ungracefully — a city of arrogant Spanish colonists, of poverty-stricken immigrants, of down-trodden lower classes ... a city of riches ... a city of blood. . . .
Here mud, here money. . . . Into a city half mud

hovels, half marble-fronted houses, gauchos drove herd upon herd of cattle, baffled, afraid. Here Irish drove streams of gray bleating sheep. Here ungreased bullock carts screamed. From the blue-grass pampas they drove them, where the birds sang and waters rippled, where was the gentleness of summer rain, where was the majesty of great storms. . . . And by their thousands and their tens of thousands they drove them into Buenos Aires, and slew them for their hides. . . ."

That was the Buenos Aires of Shane's day, in the Victorian era; but in essentials it was probably as Donn Byrne saw it. For when he was about twenty-two he quitted Ireland and went back to America, and presently made his way to Buenos Aires to get married. His wife is the well-known

dramatist Dolly Byrne who wrote with the actress Gilda Varesi, the delightful comedy "Enter Madam, " which has had long runs in London and in New York.

It was during this second sojourn in the States that Donn Byrne settled down seriously to literary work. He says he began by contributing to American magazines some of the world's worst poetry, which he has never collected into a volume; but he is given to talking lightly of his own doings and you cannot take him at his own valuation. One of the poems, at least, on the San Francisco earthquake, appropriately enough, made something of a noise and was reprinted in the United Irishman, but Ireland had not then become such a furious storm-

center and an earthquake was still enough to excite it. Before long he was making a considerable reputation with his short stories, and a collection of these, "Stories Without Heroes," was his first book.

But he will tell you he does not like that book and will not have it reprinted. He says the same about his first novel, "The Stranger's Banquet,' 1 though it met with a very good reception and had a sale that many successful authors would envy. Then followed in succession three novels that are original enough in style and idea and fine enough in quality to establish the reputation of any man — "The Wind Bloweth," "Messer Marco Polo," and "The Foolish Matrons." These were all written and published in America, and America knew how to appreciate them. The third enjoyed such a vogue that we became aware of him in England

and the second, then the first, in quick succession, were published in this country, and "The Foolish Matron" is, at this writing, about to make its appearance here also. And with his new-won fame Donn Byrne came home and is settled among his own people — unless a wandering fit has taken him again before this can be printed.

The beauty and charm of that old-time romance of the great Venetian adventurer, "Messer Marco Polo," are not easily defined; different critics tried to shape a definition of it by calling it fascinating, fantastic, clever, witty, strangely beautiful, a thing for laughter and tears, and I think they were all

right; and that the book owes its success as much to the racy humor, the vision and emotional power with which it is written as to the stir and excitement of the story itself. Half the books you read, even when they greatly interest you, have a certain coldness in them as if they had been built up from the outside and drew no warmth from the hearts of their writers; but "Messer Marco Polo" glows and is alive with personality, it is not written after the manner of any school, but it is as full of eager, vital, human feeling as if the author had magically distilled himself into it and were speaking from its pages.

That is part of the secret, too, of the charm of his more realistically romantic "The Wind Blow-eth." You are convinced, as you read, that those early chapters telling how the boy Shane gets a holiday on his thirteenth birthday and goes alone up into the mountains to see the Dancing Town in the haze over the sea, are a memory of his own

boyhood in Ireland. From the peace and fantasy of that beginning in the Ulster hills, from an unsympathetic mother and his two quaint, lovable uncles, Shane, at his own ardent desire, goes to knock about the world as a seafarer, and, always with the simplicity and idealism of his boyhood to lead and mislead him, is by-and-by tricked into marrying the cold southern Irish girl who dies after a year or so, and, his love for her having died before, he can feel no grief but only a strange dumb wonder. Then, while his trading ship is at Mar-

seilles, he meets the beautiful, piteous Claire-Anne, and their lawless, perfect love ends in tragedy. After another interval, comes the episode of his charming little Moslem wife, and he loses her because he never understands that she loves him not for his strength but for his weakness. Thrice he meets with disillusion, but retains his simplicity, his idealism throughout, and is never really disillusioned; and it is when he is in Buenos Aires again that the kind, placid, large-hearted "easy" Swedish woman, Hedda Hages, gives him the truth, and makes clear to him what she means when she says, "No, Shane, I don't think you know much about women."

And it is not till his hair is graying that he arrives at the true romance and the ideal happiness at last. The story is neither planned nor written on conventional lines; you sense the tang of a brogue in its nervous English, which is continually flowering into exquisite felicities of phrase, and it lays bare the heart and mind of a man with a most sensitive understanding. It is a sort of Pilgrim's Progress, and Shane Campbell is a desperately

human pilgrim, who drifts into danger and disasters, and stumbles often, before he drops his burden and finds his way, or is led by strange influences, into the City Beautiful.

I daresay Donn Byrne will laugh to discover that I have put him among the gods; he is that sort of man. But it is possible for others to know him better than he knows himself. Abou Ben Adhem

was surprised you recollect, when he noticed that Gabriel had recorded his name so high in the list of those that were worthy; and though I am no Gabriel I know a hawk from a handsaw when the wind is in the right quarter.

WILLIAM HENRY DA VIES

Wu.i jam Henry Davies

WILLIAM HENRY DAVIES

The lives of most modern poets would make rather tame writing, which is possibly why so much modern poetry makes rather tame reading. It is a pleasant enough thing to go from a Public School to a University, then come to London, unlock at once a few otherwise difficult doors with the open sesame of effective introductions, and settle down

to a literary career; but it leaves one with a narrow outlook, a limited range of ideas, little of personal experience to write about. Fortunately W. H. Davies never enjoyed these comfortable disadvantages. He did not come into his kingdom by any nicely paved highroads, but over rough ground by thorny ways that, however romantic they may seem to look back upon, must have seemed hard and bitter and sufficiently hopeless at times while he was struggling through them.

There is nothing to say of his schooling, except that it amounted to little and was not good; but later he learned more by meeting the hard facts of life and by desultory reading than any master could have taught him. Born at Newport, Monmouthshire, in 1870, he was put to the picture-frame making trade, and went from that to miscellaneous farm work. But work, he once confessed to me, is among the things for which he has never had a

passion, and a legacy from a grandfather gave him an interval of liberty. This grandfather, with a sensible foresight, left him only a small sum in ready cash, but, in addition, the interest on an investment that produced a steady eight shillings a week. With the cash Davies went to America, and saw as much of that country as he could as long as the money lasted. Then he subdued his dislike of manual labor and did odd jobs on fruit farms; wearied of this and went on tramp, and picked up much out-of-the-way knowledge of the world and of men from the tramps he fell in with during his roamings. Presently, he got engaged as a hand on

a cattle-boat, and as such made several voyages to England and back.

At length, getting back to America just when the gold rush for Klondike was at its height, he was seized with a yearning to go North and try his luck as a digger. The price of that long journey being beyond his means, he followed a common example and tried to "jump" a train, fell under the wheels in the attempt and was so badly injured that he lost a foot in that enterprise and had to make a slow recovery in hospital. When he was well enough, his family sent out and carried him home into Wales.

But he could not be contented there. Although he says himself that he became a poet at thirty-four (when his first book was published), the fact is, of course, he has been a poet all his life and through all his wanderings was storing up memories and impressions of nature and human nature that live

again now in vivid lines and phrases of his verse and prose. He had already written poems, and sent them to various periodicals in vain, and had a feeling that if he could be at the center of things, in London, fortune and fame as a poet might be within his reach.

So to London he came, early in the century, and took up residence in a common lodging-house at Southwark, his eight shillings a week sufficing to pay his rent and keep him in food. The magazines remaining obdurate, he collected his poems into a book, and started to look for a publisher. But the publisher were equally unencouraging, till he

found one who was prepared to publish provided Davies contributed twenty pounds toward the cost of the adventure. Satisfied that, once out, the book would quickly yield him profits, he asked the trustees who paid him his small dividends to advance the amount and retain his income until they had recouped themselves. They, however, being worldly-wise, compromised by saying that if he would do without his dividends for some six months, when ten pounds would be due, they would pay him that sum and advance a further ten, paying him no more till the second ten was duly refunded.

This offer he accepted; and he tramped the country as a pedlar, selling laces, needles and pins, and occasionally singing in the streets for a temporary livelihood. When the six months were past he returned to London, took up his old quarters at the lodging-house, drew the twenty pounds, and before

long "The Soul's Destroyer and Other Poems" made its appearance. But so far from putting money in his purse, it was received with complete indifference. Fifty copies went out for review, but not a single review was given to it anywhere. No publisher's name was on the title page, but an announcement that the book was to be had, for half-a-crown, u of the Author, Farmhouse, Marshalsea Road, S.E.," and possibly this conveyed an impression of unimportance that resulted in its remaining unread. After a week or so, seeing himself with no money coming in for the next few months, the author became desperate. He compiled from "Who's Who," at a public library, a list of people who might be expected to take an interest in poetry,

and posted a copy of his book to each with a re-
quest that, if it seemed worth the money, he would
remit the half-crown.

One of the earliest went to a journalist who was,
in those days, connected with the Daily Mail. He
read it at once and recognized that though there
were crudities and even doggerel in it, there was
also in it some of the freshest and most magical
poetry to be found in modern books. Mingled
with grimly realistic pictures of life and character
in the doss-house were songs of the field and the
wayside written .with all Clare's minute knowledge
of nature and with something of the imagination
and music of Blake. Being a journalist, he did not
miss the significance of this book issuing from a
common lodging-house (and one, by the way, that
is described in a sketch of Dickens'), could easily

read a good deal of the poet's story between the
lines of his poems, promptly forwarded his remit-
tance and asked Davies to meet him. Not sure
that he would be welcome at the doss-house, he
suggested a rendezvous on the north of London
Bridge, and a few evenings later the meeting came
about at Finch's a tavern in Bishopsgate Street
Within. "To help you to identify me," Davies had
written, U I will have a copy of my book sticking
out of my pocket"; and there he was — a short,
sturdy young man, uncommunicative at first, as shy
as a squirrel, bright-eyed, soft of speech, and with
a general air about him of some woodland creature
lost and uneasy in a place of crowds. By degrees
his shyness diminished, and in the course of a two
hours' session in that bar he unfolded the whole of
his story without reserve. Then said the journal-

ist, "If I merely review your book it will not sell a dozen copies, but if you will let me combine with a review an absolutely frank narrative of your career I have an idea we can rouse public interest to some purpose."

This permission being given, such an article duly appeared in the news columns of the Daily Mail, and the results were more astonishing than any one could have foreseen. Not only did the gentle reader begin to send in money for copies, but ladies called at the doss-house and left At Home cards which their recipient was much too reticent to act upon. Editors who had ignored and probably lost their review copies sent postal orders for the book and lauded it in print; illustrated papers sent pho-

tographers and interviewers; a party of critics, having now bought and read the poems, made a pilgrimage to the Farmhouse, and departed to write of the man and his poetry. After a second article in the Mail had recounted these and other astonishing happenings, a literary agent wrote urging Davies to entrust him with all his remaining copies and he could sell them for him at half-a-guinea and a guinea apiece.

His advice was taken, and the last of the edition of five hundred copies went off quickly at these prices. So enriched, the poet quitted his lodging-house and went home into Wales for a holiday, and while there began the first of his prose books, "The Autobiography of a Super-Tramp," which was published in 1908 with an introduction by George Bernard Shaw. Meanwhile, Davies had written two other volumes of verse, and his recognition as one

of the truest, most individual of living lyrists was no longer in doubt. Mr. Shaw notes of his prose that it has not the academic correctness dear to the Perfect Commercial Letter Writer, but is "worth reading by literary experts for its style alone"; and much the same may be said of his poetry. It is not flawless, but its faults are curiously in harmony with its unstudied simplicity and often strangely heighten the beauty of thought and language to which verses flower as carelessly as if he thought and said his finest things by accident. He has the countryman's intimacy with Nature — not for nothing did he work on farms, tramp the open roads, sleep under the naked sky — knows all

her varying moods, has observed trivial significances in her that the deliberate student overlooks; and he writes of her with an Elizabethan candor and fantasy and a natural, simple diction that is an art in Wordsworth. He has made a selection from his several volumes in a Collected Edition, but has published other verse since. For some years after his success he lived in London, but never seemed at home; he has no liking for streets and shrinks from crowds; and now has withdrawn again into the country, where our ultra modern Georgian poets who, despite the fact that he is in the tradition of the great lyrists of the past, were constrained to embrace him as one of themselves, are less likely to infect him with their artifices.

WALTER DE LA MARE

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Walter De La Mare

WALTER DE LA MARE

Except in the personal sense — and the charm of his gracious personality would surely surround him with friends, whether he wanted them or not — Walter de la Mare is, like Hardy, a lonely figure in modern English poetry — no other poet of our time has a place more notably apart from his contemporaries. You might almost read an allegory of this aloofness into his "Myself " :

"There is a garden grey
With mists of autumntide ;
Under the giant boughs,
Stretched green on every side,

"Along the lonely paths,
A little child like me,
With face, with hands like mine,
Plays ever silently. . . .

"And I am there alone:
Forlornly, silently,
Plays in the evening garden
Myself with me."

only that one knows he is happy enough and not

forlorn in his aloneness. You may trace, perhaps,

here and there in his verse elusive influences oi

Coleridge, Herrick, Poe, the songs of Shakespeare,

or, now and then, in a certain brave and good use

of colloquial language, of T. E. Brown, but such influences are so slight and so naturalized into his own distinctive manner that it is impossible to link him up with the past and say he is descended from any predecessor, as Tennyson was from Keats. More than with any earlier poetry, his verse has affinities with the prose of Charles Lamb — of the Lamb who wrote the tender, wistful "Dream-Children" and the elvishly grotesque, serious-humorous "New Year's Eve" — who was sensitively wise about witches and night-fears, and could tell daintily or playfully of the little people, fairy or mortal. But the association is intangible; he is more unlike Lamb than he is like him. And when you compare him with poets of his day there is none that resembles him; he is alone in his garden. He has had imitators, but they have failed to imitate him, and left him to his solitude.

It is true, as Spencer has it, that

"sheep herd together, eagles fly alone,"

and he has this in common with the lord of the air, that he has never allied himself with any groups or literary cliques; yet his work is so authentic and so modern, so free of the idiosyncracies of any period, that our self-centered, self-conscious school

of "new" poets, habitually intolerant of all who move outside their circle, are constrained to keep a door wide open for him and are glad to have him sitting down with them in theifr anthologies.

But he did not enter into his own promptly, or

without fighting for it. He was born in 1873; and had known nearly twenty years of

"that dry drudgery at the desk's dead wood"

in a city office, before he shook the dust of such business from his feet and began to win a livelihood as a free-lance journalist. One is apt to speak of journalism as if it were an exact calling, like that of the watchmaker; but "journalism" is a portmanteau word which embraces impartially the uninspired records of the junior reporter and the delightful social essays and sketches of Robert Lynd; the witty gossip of a "Beachcomber," and the dull but very superior oracles of a J. A. Spender. Not any of these, but reviewing was the branch of this trade to which de la Mare devoted himself, and his reviews in the Saturday Westminster ; Bookman, Times Literary Supplement, and elsewhere, clothed so fine a critical faculty in the distinction of style which betrays his hand in all he has written that, his reputation growing accordingly, the reviewer for a time overshadowed the poet; for though he

did much of it anonymously his work could be identified by the discerning as easily as can the characteristic, unsigned paintings of a master.

Too often, in such a case, the journalist ends by destroying the author; dulls his imagination, dissipates his moods, replaces his careless raptures with a mechanical efficiency; makes him a capable era Itsman, and unmakes him as an artist. But de la Mare seems to have learned how to put his heart

into journalism without letting journalism get into his heart; I have seen no review of his that has the mark of the hack upon it; his mind was not "like the dyers hand" subdued to what it worked in. Fleet Street might echo his tread, but his spirit was away on other roads in a world that was beyond the jurisdiction of editors. He was not seeking to set up a home in that wilderness, but was all the while quietly paving a way out of it; and in due season he has left it behind him.

A good deal of what he wrote then bore the pseudonym of "Walter Ramal," a transparent anagram; and throughout those days he went on contributing poems, stories, prose fantasies to Cornhill, the English Review, and other periodicals. In 1902 he had published "Songs of Childhood," a first revelation of his exquisite genius for writing quaint nursery rhymes, dainty, homely, faery lyrics and ballads that can fascinate the mind of a child, or of any who has not forgotten his childhood — a genius that flowered to perfection eleven years later in "Peacock Pie."

"Henry Brocken" (1904) showed another side

of his gift. It is a story — you cannot call it a novel — that takes you traveling into a land unknown to the map-makers, that is inhabited by people who have never lived and will never die. You go with Brocken over a wild moor and meet with Wordsworth's Lucy Gray; you go further to hold converse with Poe's Annabel Lee, with Keat's Belle Dame, with Charlotte Bronte's Jane Eyre, with Swift's Gulliver, with Lady Macbeth, Bottom,

Titania, with folk from the "Pilgrim's Progress," and many another. It is all a riot of fancy and poetry in prose, with an undercurrent of shrewd commentary that adds a critical value to its appeal as a story.

This fresh, individual note is as prevailing in all his prose as in his verse. It is in the prose and verse of his blithe, whimsical tale for children, "The Two Mulla-Mulgars," and in that eerie, bizarre novel, "The Return" — where, falling asleep by the grave of old Sabathier, Arthur Lawford goes home to find his family do not know him, for, as he slept, the dead man's spirit had subtly taken possession of him and transformed his whole appearance. And the spiritual adventures through which Lawford has to pass before he can break that grim dominance and be restored to himself are unfolded with a delicate art that never over-stresses the beauty or significance of them.

By common consent, however, de la Mare's prose masterpiece is "The Midget." One can think of no other present-day author who might have handled successfully so outre a theme; yet the whole conception is as natural to de la Mare's pecu-

liar genius as it would be alien to that of any of his contemporaries, and he fashions his story of the little lady, mature and sane in mind and perfect in body, but so small that she could stand in the palm of an average hand, into a novel, a fable, a romance — call it what you will — of rare charm and interest. The midget's dwarfish, deformed lover, and the more normal characters — Waggctt, Percy Maudlin,

Mrs. Bowater, Pollie — are drawn realistically and with fleeting touches of humor, and while you can read the book for its story alone, the quiet laughter and pathos of it, as you can read Bunyan's allegory, it is veined with inner meanings and a profound, sympathetic philosophy of life is implicit in the narrative.

It was two years after his 1906 "Poems" appeared I remember, that Edward Thomas first asked me if I knew much of Walter de la Mare, and, in that soft voice and reticent, hesitating manner of his, went on to speak with an unwonted enthusiasm of the work he was doing. Until then, I had read casually only casual things of de la Mare's in the magazines, but I knew Thomas's fine, fastidious taste in such matters, and that he was not given to getting enthusiastic over what was merely good in an ordinary degree, and it was not long before I was qualified to understand and respond to the warmth of his admiration. The "Poems" were, with a few exceptions, more remarkable for what they promised than for what they achieved, but they had not a little of the unique magic that is in his "Songs of Childhood"; and "The Listeners and Other Poems" (1912), and "Motley and Other Poems" (191 8) more than fulfilled this

promise and brought him, at last such general recognition that in 1920, after a lapse of eighteen years, his poems were gathered into a Collected Edition.

He began late, as poets go, for he was nearly thirty when his first book came out, and about forty

before he began to be given his due place among the poets of his generation. He was so slow in arriving because he came without noise, intrinsically unconventional but not fussily shattering the superficial conventions of others, making no sensational approach, not attempting to shock or to startle. I don't think his verse ever had the instant appeal of a topical interest, except such of it as grew out of the War, and nothing could be more unlike the orthodox war poetry than that strange, poignant lyric of his, "The Fool Rings his Bells" —

"Come, Death, I'd have a word with thee;
And thou, poor Innocency;
And love — a lad with a broken wing;
And Pity, too:
The Fool shall sing to you,
As Fools will sing. . . ."

Its quaintness, sincerity, tenderness and grim fancy are spontaneously in keeping with the lovely or whimsical dreamings, the wizardries and hovering music of his happier songs. He may not have lived in seclusion, unfretted by the hard facts of existence but the world has never been too much with him, so he can still hear the horns of elfland blowing over an earth that remains for him

"a magical garden with rivers and bowers,"

haunted by fays and gnomes, dryads and fawns and the witchery and enchantment that have been in dusky woods, in misty fields, in twilight and midnight places since the beginning of time. Howbeit, even the ghostly atmosphere of "The Listeners"

is pierced with a cry that is not of the dead, for in his farthest flights of fantasy he is not out of touch with nature and human nature, and it is a glowing love of these at the heart of his darkling visions and gossamer imaginings that gives them life and will keep them alive.

SIR ARTHUR CONAN DOYLE

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If Sir Arthur Conan Doyle were more of a conventional man of letters — had he been just "a book in breeches," as Sidney Smith said Macaulay was — it would not be so difficult to know where to make a beginning when one sits down to write of him. But no author could be farther from being "all author" ; he is much too keenly interested in life to do nothing but write about it, and probably

shares Byron's scorn of "the mighty stir made about scribbling and scribes," and his preference of doers to writers. He has read much, but lived more, as a novelist ought to, giving freely of his time and thought and sympathy to lives outside his own. He has no fretful little moods of morbidity, cynicism, pessimism, but is essentially a big man and writes always like himself, with a complete freedom from affection, a naturalness, a healthy vigor and breadth of outlook that cannot be developed within the four walls of a study.

Characteristic of himself, I think, is this reflection in 'The Tragedy of the Korosko" : "When you see the evil of cruelty which nature wears, try and peer through it, and you will sometimes catch a glimpse of a very homely, kindly face behind." And this, which he puts into the mouth of Lord Roxton. in "The Lost World"; "There are times,

young fellah, when every one of us must make a stand for human right and justice, or you never feel clean again."

You may depend he felt that time had come for him when he took up the cudgel for George Edalji and would not rest or be silent till the case had been reopened and Edalji proved innocent and set at liberty; it came again when he threw everything else aside to render patriotic services in the Boer War (which were to some extent recognized by the accolade), and again in the later and greater War; it came for him when he resolutely championed the cause of the martyred natives in the Bel-

gian Congo; when, believing in Oscar Slater's innocence, he wrote a masterly review of the evidence against him and strove to have him re-tried; and it came once more when, risking his reputation and in defiance of the ridicule he knew he would have to face, he openly confessed himself a believer in spiritualism and has persisted in that unorthodoxy until he has become one of the most powerful and insistent of its apostles.

These and other such activities may seem outside a consideration of Doyle's work in literature, but they are not, any more than are his medical knowledge or his love of sport, for you find their influence everywhere in his books. There were ghosts in his fiction before ever he began to raise them at the seance. Some find it hard to square his absorption in spiritualism with his robust personality, with the sane philosophy of his stories, and the fact that he is so much a man of action, a lover of the open

air and all the wholesome human qualities that keep a writer's blood sound and prevent his ink from getting muddy and slow. But it is just these circumstances that add weight to his testimony as a spiritualist; he is no dreamer predisposed to believe in psychic phenomena; he is a stolid, shrewd man of affairs who wants to look inside and see how the wheels go round before he can have faith in anything.

He has played as strenuously as he has worked. He has tasted delight of battle with his peers at football, cricket, golf; he has made balloon and aeroplane ascents; introduced ski-ing into the Grison division of Switzerland; did pioneer work in

the opening up of miniature rifle ranges; can hold his own with the foils and is a formidable boxer; he is a fisherman in the largest sense, for he has been whaling in the Arctic Seas, he used to ride to hounds and is a good shot, but has a hearty hatred of all sport that involves the needless killing of birds or animals.

Born at Edinburgh, in 1859, Conan Doyle commenced writing tales of adventure when he was about six, and it was natural that he should illustrate these with drawings of his own, for he was born into a very atmosphere and world of art. His grandfather, John Doyle, was the well-known political caricaturist who for over thirty years concealed his identity under the initials "H. B."; his father, Charles Doyle, and three of his uncles were artists, one being that Richard Doyle whose name is inseparably associated with the early days oi

Punch. The remarkable water-colors of Charles Doyle, which I have seen, have a graceful fantasy that remind one of the work of Richard Doyle, but at times they have a grimness, a sense of the eerie and the terrible that lift them beyond anything that the Punch artist ever attempted; and you find this same imaginative force, this same bizarre sense of the weird and terrible in certain of the stories of Charles Doyle's son — in "The Hound of the Baskervilles," in some of the shorter Sherlock Holmes tales, in many of the "Round the Fire" stories and in some of those in "Round the Red Lamp."

In 1 88 1, by five years of medical studentship at Edinburgh University, Doyle secured his diploma and, after a voyage to West Africa, started as a

medical practitioner at Southsea. But all through his student days he was giving his leisure to literary work, and in one of the professors at Edinburgh, Dr. Joseph Bell, a man of astonishing analytical and deductive powers, he found the original from whom, in due season, Sherlock Holmes was to be largely drawn. His first published story, a Kaffir romance, appeared, like Hardy's, in Chamber's Journal. That was in 1878, and it brought him three guineas; but it was not until nine years later, when "A Study in Scarlet" came out in Beeton's Annual for 1887, that Sherlock Holmes and Dr. Watson made their first appearance in print, and laid the foundation of his success.

During ten years of hard work as medical student and practitioner Doyle had gone through the usual experience of the literary beginner; he had

suffered innumerable rejections, had contributed short stories to Cornhill, Temple Bar, Belgravia and other magazines, never in any year earning with his pen more than fifty pounds. His first long novel, that brilliant romance of the Monmouth rebellion, "Micah Clarke," after being rejected on all hands, was sent to Longmans and accepted for them by Andrew Lang, whom Sir Arthur looks upon as one of his literary godfathers, James Payn, who encouraged him in Cornhill being the other.

"Micah Clarke" was followed in the same year (1889) by another Sherlock Holmes story, "The Sign of Four." In 1890 Chatto & Windus published "The Firm of Girdlestone," and "The White Company" began to run serially in Cornhill.

Then it was that, taking his courage in both hands, Sir Arthur resigned his practice at Southsea and came to London. He practised there for a while as an eye specialist, but the success of those two last books decided him to abandon medicine and devote himself wholly to literature.

He has written a score or so of novels and volumes of short stories since then; one — and an admirable one — of literary criticism, "The Magic Door"; two of verse; a History of the Boer War, and three or four volumes embodying his gospel and experiences as a spiritualist. This is to say nothing of his plays — "A Story of Waterloo," the Sherlock Holmes dramas, and the rest.

"Sir Nigel" and "The White Company" are, in his own opinion, "the least unsatisfactory" of all

his books, which is to put it modestly. I would not rank the latter below such high English historical romances as "The Cloister and the Hearth" and "Esmond," and think it likely Doyle will be remembered for this and "Sir Nigel," and perhaps "Micah Clarke," long after the sensational, more resounding popular Sherlock Holmes books have fallen into the background. Howbeit, for the present, there is no getting away from the amazing Sherlock; not only is he the most vivid and outstanding of all Sir Arthur's creations, but no other novelist of our time has been able to breathe such life and actuality into any of his puppets.

Not since Pickwick was born has any character in fiction taken such hold on the popular imagination, so impressed the million with a sense

of his reality. He is commonly spoken of as a living person; detectives are said to have studied his methods, and when it was announced that he was about to retire into private life and devote himself to bee-keeping, letters poured in, most of them addressed to "Sherlock Holmes, Esq.," care of Conan Doyle, expressing regret at this decision, offering him advice in the making and managing of his apiaries, and not a few applying for employment in his service. It is on record, too, that a party of French schoolboys, sight-seeing in London, were asked which they wished to see first — the Tower or Westminster Abbey, and unanimously agreed that they would prefer to go to Baker Street and see the rooms of Mr. Sherlock Holmes.

As for the imitators who have risen to compete

with him — there are so many there is no guessing off-hand at their number; their assiduity has brought into being a recognized Sherlock Holmes type of story, and though some of them have been popular, none of them has rivaled the original either in popularity or ingenuity.

Obviously, then, for his own generation Doyle is, above everything else, the creator of that unique detective. But with him, as with Ulysses, it is not too late to seek a newer world, and he may yet do what nobody has done and fashion from his latter-day experiences a great novel of spiritualism.

JOHN DRINKWATER

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From his essays and some of his poems you gather an idea that John Drinkwater was cradled into poetry by natural inclination but grew to maturity in it by deliberate and assiduous study of his art. He set out with a pretty definite idea of the poet's mission, which is, he lays it down in one of his essays, "not to express his age, but to express himself"; and though he has largely lived up to that gospel, he has from time to time gone beyond it and, perhaps unwittingly, expressed his age as well. He subscribes to Coleridge's rather inadequate definition of poetry as "the best words in the best order," but improves upon it elsewhere by insisting that they shall be pregnant and living words. He has all along taken himself and his function with a certain high seriousness, believing it was for him and his fellow artists to awaken the soul of the world, and conceiving of himself and them as beset on every side by "prejudice, indifference, positive hostility, misrepresentation, a total failure to understand the purposes and the power of art."

There may be a touch of exaggeration in all this, but it is the lack of some such intense belief in themselves that makes so many of our modern poets trivial and ineffective, and the possession of it that

gives a sincerity and meaning to much of Drink-

water's verse and atones for the austerity and conscientious labor with which he fashions the lofty rhyme after the manner of a builder rather than of a singer. But there is magic in his building, and if he has not often known the rapture of spontaneous singing he has known the quiet, profounder joy of really having something to say and, as Alexander Smith says, the joy, while he shaped it into words, of

"Sitting the silent term of stars to watch
Your own thought passing into beauty, like
An earnest mother watching the first smile
Dawning upon her sleeping infant's face,
Until she cannot see it for her tears."

During the twelve years in which he served as clerk in divers Assurance Companies, he was serving also his apprenticeship to the Muses. His first book of verse, published in 1908, when he was twenty-six, contained little of distinction or of promise, and much the same may be said of his second. If he was a born poet he was not born ready-made, and in those books he was still making himself. His third and fourth showed he was succeeding in doing that, and when the best things in those first four were gathered into one volume, in 19 14, it was recognized that not merely a new but an authentic poet had arrived. One might have recognized that if this little collection had contained nothing but the four poems, "January Dusk," "In Lady Street," "Reckoning," and "A Prayer," in which he has finely expressed so much of himself, his own outlook and aspirations:

"Lord, not for light in darkness do we pray,
Not that the veil be lifted from our eyes,
Nor that the slow ascension of our day
Be otherwise.

Not for a clearer vision of the things
Whereof the fashioning shall make us great,
Nor for remission of the perils and stings
Of time and fate . . .

Grant us the will to fashion as we feel,
Grant us the strength to labour as we know,
Grant us the purpose, ribbed and edged with steel,
To strike the blow.

Knowledge we ask not — knowledge Thou hast lent,
But, Lord, the will — there lies our bitter need,
Give us to build above the deep intent
The deed, the deed."

He has little of the delicate fantasy, the eerie atmosphere, the gracious humor of Walter de la Mare, and little of the grim, stark realism of Wilfrid Gibson. He cannot write of the squalors of a Birmingham street, with its trams and fried-fish and rag shops without touching it to loveliness in the dreams of the old greengrocer who, among the colors and scents of his apples, marrows, cabbages, mushrooms and gaudy chrysanthemums, sees the sun shining on lanes he had known in Gloucestershire. And when he takes a slight and elusive theme that can only be made to dance to the airiest pipings it dies on his hands and is cold and stiff and formal, an embodied idea, that should have been a thing all music and light or it is nothing. Drinkwater's genius is more didactic, descriptive, narra-

tive than lyrical. He is heavy and not happy on the wing; he is more at home when he feels the earth under his feet, and walking in the Cotswolds or in the streets of the city it is the visible life and beauty around him, the human joys and griefs, strivings and visions in which he can share that are his surest sources of inspiration.

There is enough dramatic and rhetorical power in several of his poems — in "Eclipse," "Uncrowned," "Reckoning," "A Prayer" — to make it nothing strange that he should turn to the stage. Moreover, he is more prophet than minstrel, more preacher than singer, and though the dogmas he has formulated about art and "we" who are artists, with the claim that the renewal of the world rests with "us," may seem confident and self-assertive, he is a very modest egoist and, I think, of a sort that must have felt he could express himself with greater freedom and force through the medium of imaginary characters than in his own person. Anyhow, in his early days, he joined in founding the Pilgrim Players who have since developed into the Birmingham Repertory Theater, and he proceeded to write plays to be produced there under his own direction. These were written in blank verse — "Cophetua," "Rebellion" (not without hints of his practical idealism, for all its romance), the three one-act pieces he published in one volume with the title of "Pawns," the best of which is that poignantly dramatic sketch "The Storm" — and they gave him the beginnings of a reputation as dramatist, but none of them was particularly successful

from a business point of view; and even later "Mary Stuart" was not that. By some irony of circumstance, after devoting his life whole-heartedly to poetry he scored his first big success with a play that was done in prose, and the success of "Abraham Lincoln" was so big and so immediate that it carried him straightway into a full tide of popularity on both sides of the Atlantic.

I doubt whether anybody who read it can have foreseen for "Abraham Lincoln" such a triumphant reception. You might say it is completely artless, or most subtly artistic in design and workmanship with an equal chance of being right. Its structure is so simple, its dialogue cast in such natural, everyday language that you easily may overlook its bold originality of invention, overlook that it ignores theatrical technique and traditions and in the quietest way makes a drastically new departure. It is a chronicle play, but attempts none of the beauty and harmony of poetry that clothes the chronicle plays of Shakespeare in magnificence, nor is it alive with incident as his, nor even knitted up into a continuing story. It is a chronicle play in the barest meaning of the term; the dialogue is pieced out, where possible, with Lincoln's recorded sayings; each scene presents an event in his career; there are more committee and cabinet meetings than exciting episodes, far more talk than action throughout. Yet because of the essential nobility of Lincoln's character, his unique personality, his quaintnesses, his brave honesty of thought and intention, this unadorned presentment of the man and his doings

becomes curiously impressive, profoundly moving — the more so since it strove to reincarnate what had happened with an exact and naked realism unheightened by the conventional artifice and tricks of the stage. The whole thing gained something undoubtedly by being produced in 191 8 when the shadow of the Great War that was upon us gave a topical significance to Lincoln's heroic struggle with the South, his passion for freedom, his humanitarian but practical attitude toward war in general. His vision and his ideals were at that time those of the better part of our own people; the play largely voiced the minds of the multitudes that crowded to see it, so that in writing "Abraham Lincoln," despite his artistic faith, Drinkwater was expressing his age no less than himself.

Already he has had imitators; his method looked too easy not to be imitated; but it must be harder than it looks for none of them has succeeded. Perhaps he cannot do it twice himself, for his "Oliver Cromwell," fashioned on similar lines, does not, in my thinking, reveal so true and convincing a portrait of the man. Nearly ten years earlier Drinkwater had tried his hand on the great Protector in a blank verse poem sympathetically and dramatically conceived but not altogether rising to the height of its subject. Like "Abraham Lincoln," the later "Oliver Cromwell" is a chronicle play, but he has allowed himself more latitude in this than in that. He has less warrant for some of his incidents; the pathos he introduces into Cromwell's home life is occasionally just a trifle

stagey, and he has sentimentalized Oliver himself, made him less of the sturdy, bluff, uncompromising

Roundhead that we know from his letters and speeches and the researches of Carlyle; but it is a vivid, vital piece of portraiture and so often catches the manner and spirit of the original as to leave a final impression of likeness in which its unlikelier aspects are lost. I am told it does not act so well as it reads, but if it does not rival "Lincoln" on the boards one has to remember that it has not the advantage of timeliness that "Lincoln" had.

I have said nothing of John Drinkwater's excursions into criticism; his studies of Swinburne and Morris, of "The Lyric," "The Way of Poetry"; for what he has written about poetry and the drama is of small importance in comparison with the poetry and the dramas he has written. As poet and dramatist he has developed slowly, and it is too soon yet to pass judgment on him. Plenty of men spend their lives in trying vainly to live up to a brilliant first book, but he began without fireworks and has grown steadily from the start, and is still young enough not to have done growing.

JEFFERY FARNOL

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Had it been, as some believe it is, an irrevocable law that a man's mind and temperament are naturally moulded by his early environment, Jeffery Farnol ought to have been an uncompromising realist.

Plenty of good things come out of Birmingham, but they are solid things ; you would not suspect it was the native city of any peddler who had nothing but dreams to sell.

Scott, Ballantyne and Stevenson were all born in Edinburg, a very haunt of romance; Mayne Reid came from Ireland which, though Shakespeare does not seem to have known it, is where fancy is bred; Stanley Weyman hails from just such a quaint little country town as he brings into some of his stories; Manchester nursed Harrison Ainsworth, and even Manchester carries on business as usual against a shop-soiled background of fantasy and the black arts. But Birmingham — well, Birmingham forgets that it was visited by the Normans and sacked by the Cavaliers; it has made itself new and large and is as go-ahead and modern as the day after to-morrow; a place of hard facts, factories, practical efficiency, profitable commerce, achievement in iron and steel, and apparently has no use for fancy and imagination except on strictly business lines, when it manufactures idols for the

heathen and jewellery that is not what it seems.

Nevertheless, a fig from a thorn, a grape from a thistle, in Birmingham Jeffery Farnol was born, and it would not have been surprising if he had grown up to put present-day Birmingham and its people into his novels, as Arnold Bennett has put the Five Towns and their people into his; but instead of doing that he has perversely developed into one of the most essentially romantic of modern

novelists. He was writing stories when he was nineteen, and some of them found their way into the magazines. For a while, feeling after a source of income, he coquetted with engineering, and there is some romance in that, but not of the sort that could hold him. He experimentalized in half a dozen trades and professions, and presently looked like becoming an artist with brush and pencil rather than with the pen. In those uncertain years, when he was still dividing his leisure between writing tales and painting landscapes and drawing caricatures, he came to London and spent his spare time at the Westminster Art School, where the now distinguished Japanese artist, Yoshio Markino, was one of his fellow-pupils.

Then, in 1902, he cut the painter in one sense, though not in another, and grown more enterprising went adventuring to America; where, having married the youngest daughter of Hughson Hawley, the American scenic artist, he took to scene-painting himself and did it diligently for two years at the Astor Theater, New York. When he was not busy splashing color on back-cloths, he was

working strenuously at the writing of fiction, and if his first novel smacks somewhat of the conventions and artificialities of the theater in whose atmosphere he was living, his second, "The Broad Highway," is as untrammeled by all such influences and as breezily, robustly alive with the wholesome, free air of the countryside of eighteenth century England and the native spirit of romance as if he had never heard of Birmingham or been within sight of a stage door.

With "The Broad Highway" he found himself at once; but he did not at once find a publisher with it. Often enough an author who has been rejected in England has been promptly received with open arms by a publisher and a public in America; then he has come home bringing his sheaves with him and been even more rapturously welcomed into the households and circulating libraries of his penitent countrymen. But in Farnol's case the process was reversed. America would have none of "The Broad Highway"; her publishers returned it to him time after time, as they had returned "Mr. Tawnish," which he had put away in despair. It had taken him two years to write what is nowadays the most popular of his books, and for three years it wandered round seeking acceptance or slept in his drawer between journeys, until he began to think it would never get out of manuscript into print at all.

It was looking travel worn and the worse for wear, and had been sleeping neglected in his drawer for some months, when his wife rescued it and, on

the off chance, sent it over to England to an old friend of Farnol's who, having read it with enthusiasm, passed it on to Sampson Low &: Co., and it came to pass that "The Broad Highway" was then published immediately and as immediately successful. That was in 19 10; and in the same year Jeffery Farnol came back to his own country and settled in Kent, which has given him so many scenes for the best of his romances.

Strange, you may say, that a novel so wholly and peculiarly English should have been written so far

away from its proper setting and in such unpro-
pitious surroundings, especially while Farnol had
all the glamorous adventure and lurid, living ro-
mance of the American outlands waiting, as it
were, at his elbow. But

"The mind is its own place, and in itself
Can make a heaven of hell, a hell of heaven,"

and an eighteenth century England of a twentieth
century New York; otherwise he might have been
among the pioneer revivalists of the riotously ro-
mantic novel of the Wild West. Stranger still
that when u The Broad Highway" recrossed the
ocean it was no longer rejected and had soon scored
an even larger success with American than with
English readers. The magazines there opened
their doors to the author without delay and made
haste to secure the serial rights in his next stories
before he had begun to think of them. Within the
next three years, "The Money Moon" and "The
Amateur Gentleman" had increased and firmly es-

tablished his reputation, and the earlier "Mr.
Tawnish" came out on the strength of their
abounding popularity, which was more than strong
enough to carry the tale of that elegant and hon-
ourable person much farther than it might have
gone if it had not had such best sellers and long
runners to set the pace for it.

Romance is Farnol's native air, and he does not
breathe happily in any other. When he tells a
story of the trousered, railway-riding life round
him he is a like wizard who has turned from his
spells and incantations to build with mundane bricks

and mortar instead of with magic — he does the ordinary thing capably but in the ordinary way. "The Chronicles of the Imp" is an entertaining trifle, and "The Definite Object" is a clever, exciting story of a young millionaire's adventures in New York's underworld, but they lack his distinctive touch, his individual manner; he is not himself in them. He is the antithesis of Antaeus and renews himself when he reaches, not the solid earth, but the impalpable shores of old romance. He can do wonders of picturesque realism with such charming latter-day fantasies as "The Money Moon," but give him the knee-breeches or strapped pants and the open road and all the motley, thronging life of it in the gallant days of the Regency and he will spin you such virile, breezily masculine, joyously humorous romances as "The Broad Highway," "The Amateur Gentleman" and "Peregrine's Progress" ; give him the hose and jerkin, the roistering merriment and rugged chivalries of the Middle

Ages and he will weave you so glowing and lusty a saga as "Meltane the Smith"; and you will have far to go among recent books before you find more fascinating or more vigorously imaginative romances of piracy and stirring adventure on land and sea than "Black Bartlemy's Treasure" and its sequel, "Martin Conisby's Vengeance."

He gives away the recipe for his best romance in that talk between Peter Vibart and another wayfarer which preludes "The Broad Highway" :

"As I sat of an early summer morning in the shade of a tree, eating fried bacon with a tinker, the thought came to me that I might some day

write a book of my own; a book that should
treat of the roads and by-roads, of trees, and wind
in lonely places, of rapid brooks and lazy streams,
of the glory of dawn, the glow of evening, and the
purple solitude of night; a book of wayside inns
and sequestered taverns; a book of country things
and ways and people. And the thought pleased
me much.

" 'But,' objected the Tinker, for I had spoken my
thought aloud, 'trees and suchlike don't sound very
interestin' — leastways — not in a book, for after all
a tree's only a tree and an inn an inn; no, you must
tell of other things as well.'

" 'Yes,' said I, a little damped, 'to be sure there
is a highwayman '

" 'Come, that's a little better !' said the Tinker en-
couragingly.

" 'Then,' I went on, ticking off each item on my
fingers, 'come Tom Cragg, the pugilist '

"'Better and better!' nodded the Tinker.

u ' a long-legged soldier of the Peninsula, an

adventure at a lonely tavern, a flight through woods
at midnight pursued by desperate villains, and —
a most extraordinary tinker.' "

The tinker approves of all these things, but urges
that there must also be in the story blood, and
baronets, and, above all, love and plenty of it, and
though Peter Vibart is doubtful about these ingre-

dients because he lacks experience of them, as he goes on his journey he makes acquaintance with them all, and they are all in the story before it ends. The tinker was only interpreting the passion for romance that is in Everyman when he pleaded for the inclusion of picturesque or emotional elements that Peter was for omitting, and the instant and continuing popularity of "The Broad Highway" shows that he was a correct interpreter.

Born no longer ago than 1878, Farnol is younger than that in everything but years. If he is seldom seen in literary circles it is simply because the country draws him more than the town; he is the most sociable of men, and his intimates will tell you that the geniality, the warmth of feeling, the shrewd, humorous philosophy that are in his books are also in himself; that his love of romance is as genuine and inherent as every other sense belonging to him, and, consequently, when he sits to write on the themes that naturally appeal to him he merely follows Samuel Daniel's counsel and dips his pen into his heart.

JOHN GALSWORTHY

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JOHN GALSWORTHY

In attempting a personal description of almost any living poet or novelist it is becoming such a customary thing to say he does not look in the least like an author that I am beginning to feel a consuming curiosity to know what an author looks like and what can cause him to look so entirely different from men of other professions that you can tell him for one at a glance. In my own experience, the worst poetry nowadays is written by men of the most picturesquely poetical appearance, and the best by men who are stout, or bald, or of an otherwise commonplace or unattractive exterior. Nor among the many literary persons I have met do I remember meeting even one novelist of genius who looked it. How this myth of the ideal author, the splendid creature carrying his credentials in his face, came into being is not within my knowledge. An old gentleman of my acquaintance who had, in his time, set eyes on Dickens assured me that he was an insignificant little person who might have passed for a retired sea-captain. Thackeray rather resembled a prize fighter who had gone flabby. Trollope, with his paunch and massive beard suggested the country squire. Browning would not have seemed out of place as a bank manager, and

though Tennyson was said to look a typical poet,

he really looked much more like a typical stage brigand.

The fact is that while other trades and professions have developed recognizable characteristics in such as follow them, literature has naturally failed to do that. For men are drawn into it from all sections of the community and there is no more reason that they should conform to a family likeness than that they should each write the same kind of books. They do not even, in appearance, live up to the books they write. Stanley Weyman looks as unromantic as Austin Chamberlain; that daring realist George Moore gazes on you with the blue-eyed innocence of a new curate; and the mild and gentle aspect of Thomas Burke does not harmonize with the violence and grim horrors of his tales of Chinatown.

In a word, no two authors look alike; as a race, they have even given up trying to achieve a superficial uniformity by growing long hair and, when they have any, cut it to an orthodox length. A few cultivate the mustache; not many indulge in whiskers; the majority are clean shaven; and in this they are not peculiar, for the same, in the same proportions, may be said of their readers. Therefore, when at a recent dinner a lady sitting next to me surveyed John Galsworthy, who was seated opposite, and remarked, "You could guess he was an author — he looks so like one," I anxiously enquired, "Which one?" and was, perhaps not undeservedly, ignored.

If she had said he looked like an indefinite intel-

lectual; that his countenance was modeled on noble and dignified lines; that it expressed at once shrewdness and benignity, I could have understood and agreed with her. But these qualities are so far from being infallibly the birthright of the author that they are seldom apparent in him. With his firm, statuesque features, his grave immobility, his air of detachment and distinction, the calm deliberation of his voice and gesture, Galsworthy embodies rather what we have come to regard as the legal temperament. It is not difficult to imagine him in wig and gown pleading earnestly, impressively, but without passion, or, appropriately robed, summing up from the bench sternly, conscientiously, and with the most punctilious impartiality.

Consequently, it was without surprise I heard the other day, for the first time, that he had studied for the Bar and became, in his early years, a barrister, though he did not practice. Nor is this legal strain to be traced only in his personal aspect and bearing; it asserts itself as unmistakably and often with considerable effectiveness throughout his novels and plays. He has the lawyer's respect for fact and detail; he must have the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth; and this gives his stories a certain aridity; a hardness as well as clearness of outline. The ways of the impressionist are not his ways; he omits nothing, but is as precise, as exact in developing plot and character as a lawyer is in getting up a case. He is not satisfied merely to paint portraits of his men and women, he analyses them meticulously, tells you every little thing about them

and their families and friends, their taste in food and dress and furniture, shows them in their domestic relations, in their business activities, inventories their virtues and vices and material surroundings with a completeness that leaves nothing unexplained and affects the reader with an extraordinary sense of the reality of it all. If he is recording a funeral he will take care to tell you "the hearse started at a foot's pace; the carriages moved slowly after." You might have been trusted to assume that this would be the order of the procession, but nothing is assumed, the thing has got to be described just as it happened. You are then told who was in each carriage, and note is made of the thirteenth carriage which follows at the very end "containing nobody at all." That is the Galsworthy method. When he relates, in u The Man of Property," that the young architect, Bosinney, is building a house in the country for Soames Forsyte he does not slur things and content himself with generalities but acquaints you with the size, design and cost of the house, its architectural peculiarities, and the point is that all these particulars are strictly relevant and serve to reveal more intimately the characters and idiosyncrasies of Bosinney and of Soames, and have their significance in the unfolding of that poignant tragedy of Soames's wife.

As the historian of later Victorian upper middle-class life in England, Galsworthy is the legitimate successor of Anthony Trollope. He is as true a realist as Trollope without the reticence imposed

on the Victorian writer by his period; but Trollope's style was exuberant, slipshod, obese, like himself, and Galsworthy's, like himself, is lean, subdued, direct, chary of displaying emotion; he observes a close economy in the use of words, despite the length of his books. In common with most of his contemporary novelists, Trollope was something of a moralist; he handled from a sensible, man-of-the-world point of view divers religious, financial and domestic problems of the time that lent themselves to his purposes as a teller of stories. But the problems that interested him were those that had to be faced by the well-to-do and the respectable; he had no particular sympathy for the lower orders and little contempt, good-humored or otherwise, for the vulgar folk who had earned their own money, climbed up from the depths, and were awkwardly trying to breathe and flutter in the refined air of good society.

He had a nice feeling for sentiment, and lapsed carelessly into sentimentality. Galsworthy is generally too controlled and self-conscious to do that. But if his irony and satire are keener-edged than his predecessor's, his sympathies are broader and deeper. He is a humanitarian whose sense of brotherhood extends to birds and the animals described as dumb. On the one hand, he understands and has compassion for the under-dog, the poor, the humble; and on the other, though he can smile, as in the three novels that make up his greatest achievement, u The Forsyte Saga," and elsewhere — and smile with a sardonic humor — at the

outlook and pretensions of those old prosperous families who move in the best circles and, comfortably materialistic, have, in place of a sense of brotherhood, acquired an ineradicable sense of property in their wives, money, houses, he is not blind to the finer human qualities that underlie their inherited social conventions. In two of his dramas, "Strife," and u The Skin Game," he handles the eternal struggle between capital and labor, and the conflict of interests between a wealthy parvenu and an impoverished patrician with such an honest balancing of wrongs and rights, such sedulous impartiality, that you can scarcely say at the end which side retains most of his sympathy.

He takes life too seriously, it seems, to be able to write stories or plays for their own sake; he writes them to expose moral or economic evils of his time, to advocate reforms in our social organization; the crude barbarity of our prison system; the tyranny of the marriage law; the hypocrisies of religion and orthodox morality; the vanity of riches; the fatuity of all class inequalities — with him the creation of character, the fashioning of a tale of individual love, rivalry, ambition, triumph or disaster are generally more or less subordinate to communal or national issues such as these.

It is characteristic of Galsworthy's reticence that he issued his first three or four novels under the pseudonym of John Sinjohn; and of the genuineness of his democratic ideals that when he had built up a reputation and was offered a knighthood he declined it. It is characteristic, too, of his restrained,

deliberate habit of mind that, unlike the generality

of writers, he does not seem to have rushed into print until he was old enough to have acquired enough personal experience to draw upon. He was thirty-one when his first novel, "Jocelyn," was published; and thirty-nine when, in the one year, 1906, he made another and a real beginning as a novelist in his own name with "The Man of Property," and as a dramatist with "The Silver Box." The keynote of his work is its profound sincerity. Art and the zeal for reform seldom run in double-harness, but they do when Galsworthy drives.

SIR ANTHONY HOPE HAWKINS

Sir Anthony Hon: Hawkins

SIR ANTHONY HOPE HAWKINS

The dawn of the present century brought with it what critics, who like to have such matters neat and orderly, delight to call a romantic revival in fiction. As a matter of fact, it also brought with it a revival of realism, and both had really started before the century began, and have continued to advance together ever since on pretty equal terms. In the i89o's Gissing was nearing the end of his career, but the torch of realism was being carried on by Hubert Crackanthorpe (who died too soon), by Arnold Bennett, Arthur Morrison, Pett Ridge, Edwin Pugh, George Moore, Oliver Onions, Kipling, Wells (who divided his allegiance between both movements), George Egerton, Elizabeth Robins, Mrs. W. K. Clifford, and many another.

The romantic revival, which had started earlier, was well afoot during the same period. Stevenson died in 1894. Rider Haggard's best romances were out in the 1880's; Doyle's "Micah Clarke" and "The White Company" belong to 1888 and 1890; Sir Gilbert Parker came soon after; Stanley Weyman and Anthony Hope arrived in the movement together, when the century was still in its infancy. All these were in the same boat but, to adopt Douglas Jerrold's pun, with very different skulls; how they are to take rank in the hierarchy

of letters is not my concern at the moment — I am only saying they were all romantics. That Weyman might have been something else is indicated by the strong, quiet realism of his second book, "The New Rector," and the much later novels he has written, after an inactive interval of ten years, "The Great House," and 'The Ovington Bank"; and that Anthony Hope Hawkins might have been something else is the inference you draw from nearly all his work after "The Intrusions of Peggy."

His father was the Vicar of St. Bride's, Fleet Street, and he was a nephew, or some other near relation, of the famous "hanging Judge," Sir Henry Hawkins. From Marlborough he passed to Balliol, Oxford, where he took his M. A. degree and was president of the Oxford Union Society. He seems to have set out with an eye on a career at the Bar which should lead him into the House of Commons. But though he was, like Stanley

Weyman, duly called to the Bar, like Weyman, he did not do anything much in the way of practising. Once he put up as a Parliamentary candidate, but was not elected; yet one can imagine him as an ideal Member — he has the distinguished presence, the urbane, genially courteous manner, the even temper and nimbleness of mind that ought to but do not always go to the making of an Attorney General and, as any who have heard him take part in after-dinner discussions will know, in addressing an audience he has all the gifts of clarity, ease and humor that make the successful public speaker.

But law and politics piped to him in vain, and his ambition took the right turning when he wrote his first novel, "A Man of Mark." It was a deft and lively enough tale; it was read and talked about, and was considered promising, but caused no particular excitement. The excitement was waiting for his next book. When "The Prisoner of Zenda" burst upon the town, in 1894, it leaped into success at once. Stanley Weyman's "Under the Red Robe" was issued almost simultaneously and the two ran a wild race for popularity and both won. Both were dramatized promptly, and repeated on the stage the dazzling success they had enjoyed between covers. Each inspired a large school of imitators, which increased and multiplied until the sword and cloak romance, and stories of imaginary kingdoms were, in a few years, almost as plentiful as blackberriers and began to become a drug in the market. But, meanwhile, the spirit of romance was awake and abroad, and any capable novelist who rode into the library lists wearing her favors was pretty sure of a welcome.

In the same bustling year, 1894, we had from Anthony Hope "The God in the Car," a tale of a South African Company promoter, and "The Dolly Dialogues." These were not in a direct line of descent from "The Prisoner of Zenda," and were possibly written before that; they were, at all events, written before the enormous vogue of that could prompt the author to follow it with another of the same desirable brand. But "The Dolly Dialogues" soared to an independent success of

their own. Those crisp, neat entertaining chats of that adroitest of flirts, Dolly Foster, with her husband, with Mr. Carter, and others of her fashionable circle, were not without a certain distant likeness to the bright, irresponsible talk of "Dodo," and repeated the triumph that had been "Dodo's" a decade earlier. The "Dialogues" set another fashion, and generated another school of imitators. Whether people ever talked with such consistent brilliance in real life was of no consequence; it was amusing, clever, it was often witty, and when it was not it was crisp and smart and so like wit that it could pass for it. And in so far as such acute remarks and repartee were too good to be true they only brought the book into line with the airy, impossible romance and inventive fantasy of "The Prisoner of Zenda."

With "Rupert of Hentzau" Anthony Hope was back in his imaginary kingdom next year; if the sequel was not so good as "The Prisoner" it had as good a reception; and "The King's Mirror," and a romantic comedy, "The Adventure of Lady Ursula," not dramatized from one of his books but specially written for the stage, followed in quick

succession. For those were days when he was working strenuously and systematically at his art; to cultivate the habit of work he left home every morning, like any lawyer or stockbroker, and went to a room off the Strand — wasn't it in Buckingham Street? — where he wrote steadily for a fixed number of hours without interruption. The notion that an author can only do his best by fits and starts

as the mood takes him is a romantic convention dear to the dilettante, but Hope was never that; he kept his romance in his books as sedulously as Scott did and was as sensibly practical as Scott in his methods of making them.

But he had to pay for his first popular success, as most novelists do. Jerome has more than once complained that the public having accepted "Three Men in a Boat" with enthusiasm and labeled him a humorist would never after allow him to be anything else. His "Paul Kelver" is worth a dozen of the other book, but it has withdrawn into the background and "Three Men in a Boat" is still selling freely. "Quisante" (1900) marked a new departure, suggested that Hope was turning from romance to reality. That study of the political adventurer and the aristocratic wife who realizes she has made a mistake in marrying out of her order, is, as literature and as a story, a stronger, finer piece of work than any Hope had done before, but it was not what his readers had expected of him, and it did not win the new reputation it ought to have won for him, though the critics did not fail to recognize its quality. To the general world of readers he was the author of "The Prisoner of Zenda"; that was the type of novel they wanted

from him; they continued to ask for it and would not willingly take any other. He humored them at intervals with "The Intrusions of Peggy," and "Sophy of Kravonia," but on the whole he had done with such light entertainments and settled down to the serious interpretation of modern life

and character. Next to "Quisante," I would place his poignant and dramatic handling of the marriage problem in "Double Harness," the study, in "A Servant of the Public," of a temperament that is only baffling by reason of its elemental simplicity ; the masterly realistic presentment of a capable, courageous, unconventional, attractive woman in "The Great Miss Driver," and the brilliant treatment again of the problem of marriage and disillusion in "Mrs. Maxon Protests." These five — subtle in characterization and fashioned of the comedy and tragedy of actual human experience — these and not his more notorious trifles are the true measure of Anthony Hope's achievement as a novelist.

But they are obscured by the flashier glory of "The Prisoner of Zenda" and "Rupert of Hentzau," which are now renascent and appealing mightily on the films to the romantic susceptibilities of a new generation of admirers.

The novels he has written since the honor of knighthood was conferred upon him in 191 8 are sufficient to show that his invention and skill in narrative are by no means failing him, though neither "Beaumaroy Home from the Wars" nor "Lucinda" reach the level of "Quisante" or "Mrs. Maxon Protests." But "Beaumaroy" has touches

of humor and character that are in his happiest vein, and if I say that "Lucinda" is an abler and more notable piece of work than is either of the dazzling fairy tales that established his position, it is not that I would belittle those delightful enter-

tainments but would emphasize that so far from representing his capacity they misrepresent it; they stand in the way and prevent his better work from being seen in its just proportions, so that though at first they may have secured a prompt recognition for him, it looks as if, at last, they will, in a larger sense, prevent him from being recognized.

ARTHUR STUART MENTETH HUTCHINSON

Arthur Stuart Menteth Hutchinson'

ARTHUR STUART MENTETH HUTCHINSON

Success is good for people, when they do not get too much of it too soon. Failure is even better for them, when they do not get more than enough of it for too many years. Hardship, difficulty, failure

— these knock the nonsense out of a man and teach him his art or his business; there is something lacking from the character and work of one who has never known them. Many authors recover at last from their failures, but an instant and early success is generally fatal; it makes them take themselves too seriously and their work not seriously enough; their vogue dwindles, in consequence, and the publishers who began to run after them begin to run away from them. There is little more difference between a too triumphant beginning and an unending failure than between a drought and a deluge.

The two extremes are equally devastating, and A. S. M. Hutchinson is among the luckier ones who have been destined to a middle course. He has not won his pearl without diving for it; but he has not had to dive and come up empty-handed.

Those who imagine, as some do, that, with u If Winter Comes," he simply came, and saw, and conquered, imagine a vain thing. He had come three times before that, and had, moreover, toiled

at the oar as a very miscellaneous journalist, a writer of articles and short stories that editors too frequently rejected. If he never exactly lived in Grub Street, he sojourned for a few years in a turning out of it.

He had no literary or journalistic ancestry, and was originally dedicated to another profession, but he did not "drift into journalism" — that not being his way; he walked into it deliberately, having

made up his mind to go there. His father is a General in the Indian Army, and A. S. M. was born in India, in 1880. But his grandfather was a doctor of medicine, and at an early age Hutchinson was settled in London, beginning a career of his own as a Medical student. To this day, he has a quiet, kindly, sympathetic bearing that would have served him as an excellent bedside manner, if he had taken his M. D. and put up a brass plate. But he is one of the shyest, most retiring of men ; you cannot associate him with any sort of brass; and even while he was trying a 'prentice hand in medicine and surgery at St. Thomas's Hospital a private ambition was drawing him in another direction.

"I always intended to earn my living with my pen," he told me, some years ago. "I was writing then in my leisure, sending out all kinds of MSS. and getting most of them back, and at length I took the plunge when I had about one short story accepted by a magazine, two articles by Punch and some verses by Scraps. I did not know a soul who

had the remotest connection with literary work, but I chanced it."

And threw physic to the dogs. He did not limit himself to any working hours, but by writing hard all day contrived to pick up a regular five shillings a week from Scraps for comic verse, and, augmenting this from a precarious sale of articles and tales to various publications, compiled a weekly income of about one pound sterling. He had done this for three months or so, when a letter came from Pearson* s accepting a story and asking for more;

and he has related how this sent him crazy all day with excitement. A few days later he was asked to call at the office and undertake a small, special job, and, one thing leading to another, was presently engaged on the staff at £2 10s. a week. By the time he had gained experience as assistant editor of the Royal Magazine and been made co-editor of the Rapid Review, he felt the hour had come for another plunge.

A friend of those days describes him as "a slight, almost boyish young man of middle-height, who gazed at you with intense concentration through the powerful lenses of his glasses." This still describes him, if you touch in an elusive twinkle of genial humor about the mouth and eyes, and add that his slightness, despite something of a stoop, gives him an appearance of being actually tall. Already he had started on his first novel, "Once Aboard the Lugger," and wanted to cut adrift from too much editing and escape into other fields.

He resigned from Pearson's and hearing that the Daily Graphic was looking for a leader-note writer, posted specimens, and secured the appointment as a stand-by. In 1907 he was sub-editing that paper, and edited it from 1912 to 1916.

Meanwhile, "Once Aboard the Lugger" being finished, he offered it to one publisher who declined it, because u humor was not in his line," and to another who published it, in 1908; and it scored what counts for a considerable success, if you do not compare its sales with those of his fourth and fifth books. That out of hand, he commenced "The Happy Warrior," but when it was done, was

dissatisfied with it, and being, as he confesses, "an appallingly, vilely conscientious" worker, he did it all over again. It swallowed the leisure of four years, but when it came out, in 191 2, added not a little to his reputation.

His first book was a lively mingling of comedy and burlesque; his second, a realistic romance of humor and pathos, struck a deeper note, was fired with a fine idealism, and revealed him as a shrewd observer and one subtly acquainted with the complexities of human character. Then in 19 14 came "The Clean Heart," the tragedy of a life that lost its way, of one who had to learn through folly and suffering that self-sacrifice is the secret of happiness. It was as successful as its predecessors, and I am not sure that they are wrong who hold that it is the best of all Hutchinson's work; but the War overshadowed it and left it no chance of anticipat-

ing the phenomenal popularity that was waiting for his later books.

For nine years he published no more. He was serving as a lieutenant of the Royal Engineers, attached to the Canadian forces, and, after the peace, went as a Captain of the R. E., with the Army of Occupation, into Germany. Before he was demobilized he had planned his fourth novel, and when he could, at length, return to civilian life, he decided not to hamper himself again with journalism but to stake his prospects on his new book, and in 192 1 "If Winter Comes" more than amply justified him of his decision. Not more than one or two novels within my remembrance have leaped into such instant and enormous popularity. For

a few weeks it was praised by the reviews, but there was no particular stirring of the waters till a "boom" broke out in America. The noise of it soon woke us over here, and the story got rapidly into its stride; Hutchinson suddenly found himself famous as a best-seller of half a million copies in America and half as many in his own country. The furore it created had scarcely showed signs of subsiding when "This Freedom" followed in its wake and brewed another storm. A storm of mingled eulogy and censure; for the critics this time were largely hostile. The story handled the problem of woman's emancipation, and Hutchinson stood for the old ideals of feminity, the sanctities and traditional duties of womanhood; he believed that a mother has positive and inalienable

responsibilities, and set himself to demonstrate that she could not put them by and arrogate to herself a share of what is known as man's work in the world without neglecting her children, losing their affection, and bringing tragic disaster on them and on her husband. He was accused of exaggeration; of being out of sympathy with the modern spirit; but if, instead of giving the novel this general application, you take it, as a work of imagination should be taken — as a story of what happened when one woman strove to break away from conventions and be herself at all risks — it is a powerful and poignantly suggestive narrative and one that may well be temperamentally true of such a woman and of such a family.

Here, as in his other books, Hutchinson is so in earnest and realizes his characters so intensely, that he becomes, as it were, this character and that

in succession, slips involuntarily into writing from their standpoints as if he personally felt the wrong, hope, pain or passion each experienced, and this misleads some of his critics into taking for mannerisms what are nothing but his intimate realization of his people and the outcome of his complete sincerity. He is so closely interested in them himself that he cannot play the showman and stand apart exhibiting his puppets; to him they are not puppets but have burgeoned and become living realities and their emotions are his no less than theirs.

On the stage "If Winter Comes" did not capture the public so completely as it did in the book, but it ran well in London and the provinces and here

and in America still keeps its place on tour. It has got on to the films, of course and u This Freedom" is following in its footsteps.

Hutchinson took his first successes with a tranquillity that seemed like indifference, and his later and larger triumphs and the denunciations he has endured, have I think, moved him as little. He has aimed at doing his own work in his own way, and his popularity is an accident; he is not the sort of man that finds success, but the sort of man that success finds.

SHEILA KAYE-SMITH

Sheila Kaye-Smith

SHEILA KAYE-SMITH

Talki.ng of Charlotte Bronte, in a novel of Sheila Kaye-Smith's that goes back to mid-Victorian days, a hairy young man, with a mustache, in addition to the whiskers of the period, agrees that she is crude and outlandish, and adds, "That always comes when women write books. They're so frightened of being called feminine that they bury what talent they may have under a mountain of manliness — and manliness for them consists entirely of oaths and violence and scarlet sin."

Whether you agree or disagree with him, the hairy young critic was expressing an opinion that was common among his contemporaries, who have handed it down to a large number of their successors. It was probably half true, and is not so true now as it was. The women novelists now who specialise in scarlet sin have no particular use for oaths and violence. Moreover, though it would be easy to name several who have a tendency to color their pages with sin of all colors, there is nothing exclusively masculine in that and their novels remain essentially feminine. It would be easy to name others who are much addicted to violent scenes and characters, but I doubt whether that is any conscious attempt on their part to be manly — on the contrary, it arises from an inherent,

very feminine admiration of that barbaric strength and muscular vigor which the average woman is supposed to find so splendid and so attractive in the average man. It is such an orthodox feminine conception of the ideal male that its presence in a story almost inevitably betrays the sex of the author.

All which means no more than that the woman novelist quite legitimately does her best to draw a man, as the man novelist does his best to draw a woman, and she succeeds nearly as often; and no woman novelist, past or present, has been more uniformly and extraordinarily successful in this difficult application of her art than Sheila Kaye-Smith. It is usual for the male author to excuse his artistic shortcomings by insisting that woman is a mystery and it is impossible to comprehend her; but it seems likely that he may himself be as much of a mystery to woman and that is why, in fiction, the men she depicts so often seem like women in masquerade. Two of our leading women writers, who can analyse and reveal characters of their own sex with an almost uncanny insight, lose that power when they try to exercise it on the male of the species and he thinks, feels and talks in their pages more or less after the manner of women. They are brilliantly clever in every other way, but can only make man in their own image.

But the men in Miss Kaye-Smith's novels are the real thing; they are the unqualified male in whom male readers unhesitatingly recognize their kind. Not because they are harsh or brutal, though some of them are that; not because they are susceptible

to the lure of the other sex and masterfully over-

ride the laws of conventional morality, though some of them do that; not because they are heavy drinkers and lusty fighters with their fists, though some of them are this and some that; but simply because in their general habits, their ordinary everyday behavior, in what they say no less than in what they think, they are obviously of the masculine gender. It is easy to create an illusion that your character is a man if you call him a soldier and describe him as acting with vigor or daring; but take this fragment of conversation, chosen at random from "The Challenge to Sirius," between Frank Rainger and the retired studious Mr. Bellack. Frank is the son of an embittered gentleman who has withdrawn from the struggle of life; he works, from choice, on the farm where he and his father live, and goes daily to the Rectory to take lessons with Mr. Bellack, but has come to hesitate between his love of working on the land and a desire to go away somewhere and know more of life, and asks his tutor to advise him:

" 'The question is which is the best: happiness or experience? If it's experience, you had better get out of this hole as quickly as possible; if it's happiness, you had better stay where you are.'

11 'Which do you think it is, sir?'

"'My good boy, how can I tell you? Personally I would rather you did not go to London and take your chances there, as I feel that, though you have brains and certain rudimentary gifts, it is not the kind of life you are cut out for, and that you

will probably fail and be wretched. On the other

hand, never renounce what seems to you a good opportunity and a fine experience because an old chap like me hints at trouble ahead. Besides, your father would rather see you starve as a journalist than grow fat as a farmer. Perhaps he is right — perhaps I am.'

11 'Did you ever have to make a choice of your own, sir?'

" 'Certainly I did, and I chose to be Rector of Wittersham with an income of two hundred a year, no congenial society, a congregation of hop-sacks, and for my sole distraction the teaching of a muddle-headed boy who, at the age of nineteen, is still undecided as to how he shall live the rest of his life.'
So you chose wrong, I reckon.'
'How do you reckon any such thing? You don't know what my alternative was. Besides, you may be sure of this, no matter which way you choose you will never definitely know whether you were wrong or right. The great question of all choosers and adventurers is "Was it worth while?" — and whatever else you may expect of life, don't expect an answer to that.' "

Now if there had been nothing to indicate who the boy was talking with you would know at once he was not talking to a woman, for there is a man's way of thinking, a man's manner, even a man's voice in all that Mr. Bellack says. There is always this subtle, easy, truthfully realistic presentation of Miss Kaye-Smith's male characters, of the mild, unassertive, commonplace, as well as the ag-

gressive and more virile of them. Her rustic clowns are as roughly human and racy of the soil as Hardy's. Robert Fuller, half animal, half saint, in "Green Apple Harvest" ; Monypenny, the practical idealist of "Tamarisk Town," who, ambitious to develop and popularize a seaside resort, triumphs over all obstacles, carries his schemes through, rises to wealth and dignity, and, sacrificing to his ambition the woman he loves, finds himself lonely and unhappy on his height and turns remorsefully and madly to destroy all he has so laboriously built; Miles, in "Starbrace," with his strangely varying moods, his strength and pitiful weaknesses; the stern, harsh, ruggedly heroic Reuben Backfield, in "Sussex Gorse," wholly given over to his desperate, indomitable fight for the possession of a wild unfruitful common; Mr. Sumption, the dour, pathetic Baptist minister in "Little England," a graphic, poignant revelation of what the war meant in a rural community, and one of the two or three great novels of that era — these and, in their differing class and degree, all the men who belong to her stories are real, authentic, humans — are men in flesh and bone and spirit, easy, natural, alive.

Her women are drawn with a knowledge that is apparently as minutely exact and is certainly as sympathetic. If I had to single out her most remarkable study in feminine temperament and psychology, I think I should say Joanna Godden; but her explicit interpretations of women are not so unusual as her understanding of men. She knows their

businesses as thoroughly as she knows them. If, like Coalbran or Backfield, they are farmers and working on the land, she is not contented with vivid generalities but makes the varied, multifarious circumstance of farming and cattle raising, and the whole atmosphere and environment that has moulded their lives part of her story. When Monypenny devotes himself to the development of Tamarisk Town you are not asked to take anything for granted but are shown how he financed his scheme, acquired land, carried out his building operations, how the borough was formed, and the elections conducted — you follow the growth of the place through its various stages, and Monypenny's own story grows with and through it. It is this acquaintance with practical detail, this filling in of all essential surroundings that help to give the novels their convincing air of realism.

You would not suspect such broad and deep knowledge of humanity and the affairs of the world in the quiet, soft-spoken, grey-eyed, dreamy, very feminine person you discover the author to be when you meet her. At a little distance, too, with her slight figure and bobbed hair, you might take her for a mere school-girl. Little more than a school-girl she was when she wrote her first novel, "The Tramping Methodist," which, after being rejected half a dozen times, was published in 1909. She had no further difficulties with publishers, however, for this and her second book, "Starbrace," next year, put her on sure ground with critics and public,

though she had to wait for the beginnings of popularity until "Tamarisk Town" came out in 19 19.

She was born at Hastings, her father being a doctor there, and has passed all her life in Sussex. Her first two novels are of the eighteenth century; one or two are of mid-Victorian times; the rest are of our own day. Occasionally she brings her people to London, but nearly always they are at home in Kent or Sussex. In "The Challenge to Sinus" and "The End of the House of Alard" they are on the borderland of the two counties; but mostly her scenes are in the county where she was born. In her books she has become its interpreter and made it her own. She has put something of her love of it and of the rugged lives and passions of its folk into the poems in "Willow Forge," and "Saints in Sussex"; but her best poetry is in her novels. If you can compare her with some of her leading women contemporaries you have a sense of as much difference between them as there is between the collector of insects and the hunter of big game. Those others take you into a study and scientifically exhibit curious specimens under a microscope; she is too warmly human for such pendantries and takes you where there is sky and grass and a whole ordinary world full of mortal creatures and shows you them living and working in the light of common day. I believe the secret of her power is largely in her complete unselfconsciousness; she has no affectations; the charm and strength of her style is its limpid simplicity; she seems, while you read, to

be merely letting her characters act and think; to be thinking of her work and never of her own cleverness; as if she were too sure and spontaneous an artist to be even aware of the fact.

RUDYARD KIPLING

Rudyard Kipling

RUDYARD KIPLING

It is usual to write of the 1890's as the days of the decadents; but I never see them so labeled without being reminded of the Hans Brietmann ballad —

"Hans Brietmann gif a barty:
Vhere is dot barty now?" . . .

For though Wilde and Beardsley remain, the rest of their hectic group have either gone home or are going, and, from this distance it is possible to focus that decade and realize that its prevailing influences were Henley and Stevenson, and that the true glory of the 90's is that they were the flowering time of Shaw, Barrie, Wells and Kipling.

Kipling, indeed, began his literary career in the 8o's, and by the end of the 90's was the most popular, the most belauded and decried of living authors. After being sent home to Westward Ho! in Devon, to be educated at the school he has immortalized in "Stalkey & Co.," he went back to India (where he was born in 1865), and served successively on the staffs of the Lahore Civil and Military Gazette and the Allahabad Pioneer from 1882 to

1889. The satirical verses, sketches of native character, stories of Anglo-Indian life, with their intriguings and their shrewd understandings of the

shabbier side of human nature, that he contributed

to those papers between the age of seventeen and twenty-five, rather justified Barrie's dictum that he was "born blase." But when they were collected into his first eight or nine small books — "Departmental Ditties," "Plain Tales from the Hills," "In Black and White," "Soldiers Three," "Under the Deodars," and the rest — they capped an instant boom in India with an even more roaring success in England and America. The vogue of the shilling shocker was then in its infancy, and Kipling's insignificant looking drab-covered booklets competed triumphantly with that showy ephemeral fiction on our bookstalls for the suffrage of the railway traveller. From the start, like Dickens, he was no pet of a select circle but appealed to the crowd. While his contemporaries, the daintier decadents, issued their more perishable preciosities in limited editions elegantly bound, he carelessly flung his pearls before swine, and the maligned swine recognized that they were pearls before the critics began to tell them so.

And when he came to England again, a youth of five-and-twenty, his fame had come before him. He settled down from 1889 to 1891, on an upper floor of a gloomy building squeezed between shops, at 19 Villiers Street, Strand, and in that somewhat squalid London thoroughfare were written some of

the best stories in "Life's Handicap," and two of his comparative failures — "The Record of Badalia Herodsfoot," and his first novel, "The Light that Failed." Stevenson in his letters, about then, deplored his "copiousness and haste," said, "He is

all smart journalism and cleverness; it is all bright and shallow and limpid, like a business paper — a good one, s'entendu; but there's no blot of heart's blood and the Old Night ... I look on and admire; but in a kind of ambition we all have for our tongue and literature, I am wounded." But, naturally, Stevenson, conjuring fastidiously with words, like a lapidary with jewels, felt that his literary ideals were outraged by this exuberant, amazing young man who, coming with a banjo for a lyre, took the sacred temple of the Muses by violence and disturbed it with raucous echoes of the music hall; who brought the manners and speech of the canteen into the library, made free use of slang and ugly colloquialisms with the most brilliant effectiveness, and in general strode rough-shod over so many accepted artistic conventions. It was easy to say his verse was meretriciously catchy, but its cleverness, the bite of its irony and humor were indisputable; that his Anglo-Indian stories were marred by vulgarities and crudities of characterization; that the riotous humors of Mulvaney and his soldier-chums showed nothing but a boisterous, schoolboyish sense of fun; but there was no denying the originality of mind, the abounding genius that was experimentally at work in all these things.

Not only had Kipling broken new ground; he had defied conventions and broken it in a new way

of his own, and through the following ten years he was justified of his daring by the maturer, more masterly poems and stories in "Barrack-Room

Ballads," "The Seven Seas," "Many Inventions," the two "Jungle Books," and, above all, by "Kim" — that wonderful story, steeped in the magic of the Orient, with its rich gallery of characters, native and European, and its intimately pictured panorama of the strange, motley life that flows along the Grand Trunk Road.

He was a born story-teller, and could interest you as keenly in ships, bridges, machinery and mechanical objects as in the human comedy and tragedy. He could take his tone with an equal mastery, as occasion served, from the smoke-room, the bar or the street, and from the golden phrasing and flashing visions of the biblical prophets. However much the critics might qualify and hesitate, the larger world of readers, men and women, cultured and uncultured, took him to their hearts without reserve. Never since Dickens died had any author won so magical a hold on the admiration and affection of our people.

In those days, at the height of his fame, when he lay dangerously ill in New York, the cables could not have flung more bulletins across the world, nor the newspapers followed his hourly progress more excitedly if it had been a ruling monarch in extremis. The Kaiser cabled enquiries; all England and America stood in suspense, as it were, at the closed door of that sick chamber, as those who loved Goldsmith lingered on his staircase, when he was near the end, waiting for news of him. Yet,

curiously enough, in the personality of Kipling, so far as it has revealed itself to his readers, there is

little of the gentleness and lovableness of Goldsmith, nor of the genial, overflowing kindness that drew the multitude to Dickens. It was the sheer spell and brilliance of his work, I think, that drew them to Kipling more than the lure of any personal charm.

During the Boer War he developed into the poet and apostle of Imperialism; became our high-priest of Empire, Colonial expansion, commercial supremacy and material prosperity. You may see in some of his poems of that period and in his recently published "Letters of Travel" how he has failed to advance with the times, how out of touch he is with the spirit of modern democracy. A certain arrogance and cocksureness had increased upon him; his god was the old Hebrew god of battles, his the chosen race, and even amid the magnificent contritions of the "Recessional" he cannot forget that we are superior to the "lesser breeds without the law." He is no idealist and has no sympathy with the hopes of the poor and lowly; there is scornfulness in his attitude toward those who do not share his belief that the present social order cannot be improved, who do not join him in worshipping "the God of things as they are," but pay homage rather to the God of things as they ought to be. And yet I remember the beauty, the wisdom and whimsical understanding there is in his stories for children — I remember that children's

song in "Puck of Pook's Hill"—

"Teach us the strength that cannot seek,
By deed or thought, to hurt the weak;

That, under Thee, we may possess

Man's strength to comfort man's distress."

— I remember stray, poignant things in this book and that, especially in u The Years Between," and am ready to think I misjudge him when I take his intolerant Imperialism too seriously, and that these rarer, kindlier moods, these larger-hearted emotions are at least as characteristic of him.

Someday somebody will gather into one glorious volume "The Finest Story in the World," "Without Benefit of Clergy," "At the End of the Passage," "The Man Who Would Be King," "The Brushwood Boy," "They," and a score or so of other short stories; and with "Kim," and a book of such poems as "Sussex," "Tomlinson," "To the True Romance," "NT Andrew's Hymn," "The Last Chantey," those great ballads of "The Bolivar" and "The Mary Gloster," and half a hundred more, there will be enough and more than enough to give him rank with those whose work shall endure "while there's a world, a people and a year." After all, most of his Imperialistic verse and his prose essays into political and economic problems were mainly topical and are already pretty much out of date; he is rich enough to let them go and be none the poorer.

If his popularity has waned it is chiefly, as I

have said, because he has not advanced with the times — he has lost touch with the real spirit of his age; and I believe that is a result of his having withdrawn too much from contact with his fellows. Dickens did not immure himself at Gads' Hill; he

was always returning to those planes where ordinary folk do congregate and found inspiration, to the last, out among the stir and business of the world. Shakespeare's work was done in the hurly-burly of London — he stagnated, after he settled down at Stratford, and wrote no more; and one feels that if Kipling would only come out from his hermitage at Burwash and mingle again in the crowded ways of men, as he did in the fulness of his powers, he has it in him yet to be "a bringer of new things," that shall add new luster even to his old renown.

WILLIAM JOHN LOCKE

William John Locke

WILLIAM JOHN LOCKE

You can account for almost every other sort of sudden outbreak, but why an author of W. J. Locke's unquestionably popular appeal should have had to write eight novels in nine years and only achieve popularity all of a sudden with a ninth in the tenth is one of those mysteries that baffle even the wisest. There is no reason why any one out of six of those earlier books should not have done as much for him, for they have the same distinction of style, the same wit and humor, gay romance and charming sentiment that captivated the reader so effectively in "The Morals of Marcus Ordeyne" — indeed, I still think that its immediate predecessor, "Where Love Is," at least equaled that novel in all those qualities, and in delicacy and finish of workmanship went beyond it. So I put the problem and make no pretence to offering a solution of it but cast myself for the safer, humbler role of the chronicler of facts.

The fact that nearly all his stories are sweetened with a gracious human kindness and a full allowance of love and sentiment might be traced by subtle psychologists to some benign influence that the place of his nativity had upon him, for he was born in British Guiana, at Georgetown on the Demarara, where the sugar comes from. There may or may

not be something in such a theory; anyhow, that is

where he was born in 1863 and, after an interval in England, he was sent to school at Trinidad, where his father was a banker. Returning to England, when he was eighteen, he matriculated at Cambridge, took the Mathematical Tripos, and, having completed his education at St. John's College, departed from it with his B. A. degree.

Thereafter, he lived for a while in France; he has lived there a good deal, from time to time, since then, and if you were not aware of this you would guess as much, and that he had a warm regard for the French people, and a wide acquaintance with the literature of France, from the sympathy and intimacy with which he draws the French characters in his stories, and from a certain airy, sparkling wit and laughing, good-humored cynicism that belong to him and are commonly accepted as peculiar to the Gallic temperament. It has been said that he has affinities with Anatole France. He has none of Anatole's daring irreverencies; nor his passionate revolt against the existing order of society, nor his power in social satire; but he has the sure touch that is at once light and scholarly, an abounding sense of fantasy, and a tolerant, worldly-wise philosophy that he edges with an irony often as delicately shrewd though never so bitter, so devastating as that of the great French master.

But we are going ahead too fast. When Locke quitted Cambridge he was still a long way from the beginning of his literary career. I believe he was already writing stories in those days, and am told

that he wrote at least one novel — one, moreover, of a highly melodramatic and sensational kind — but

he was too severely self-critical to attempt to publish it and it remains hidden away in manuscript to this hour. Feeling it was time to turn to something for a livelihood, he put an end to holidaying in France and became for some years mathematical tutor at a school in the North Country. I have seen it suggested that his mastery of mathematics has been as valuable to him in the construction of his novels as Hardy's practical knowledge of the principles of architecture has been to him, but you are at liberty to doubt this after reading the opinion of that science which he allows Marcus Ordeyne to express. "I earned my living at school-slavery," says Marcus, "teaching children the most useless, the most disastrous, the most soul-cramping branch of knowledge wherewith pedagogues in their insensate folly have crippled the minds and blasted the lives of thousands of their fellow-creatures — elementary mathematics." From which you may gather also that he took little joy in those years of labor in the school up North, and the wonder is that his native urbanity and gracious personal charm should have remained completely unruffled by those uncongenial experiences.

He had escaped from schoolmastering and published four novels before he was appointed secretary of the Royal Institute of British Architects, and he did not relinquish that post until after his two most successful novels had made him famous and his position in literature was more than secure.

Not as a precocious genius, but as a man of thirty-two who had seen enough of life to know something about it, Locke entered the publisher's list in 1895 an d challenged the world at large with

his first book, "At the Gate of Samaria." It was by way of being a problem novel, for the problem novel was then having a day out. It was done in rather somber, more realistic colors than he was going to use in his succeeding stories; has little of the gaiety, glancing fancy and idealistic sentiment that have now become characteristic of his work. But it was a sound, capable piece of craftsmanship, the critics were on the whole appreciative, the public interested, and the sales respectable without being exciting.

Following this in steady succession came "The Demagogue and Lady Phayre," a A Study in Shadows," "Derelicts," ' "Idols," "The Usurper," "Where Love Is" — and the reviewers went on handing out laurels to him (most of them), his circle of readers remained loyal, and it began to look as if he were settling down among the many novelists whose unfailing public is large enough to make an author's life worth while but has done growing. Yet by the time he had written "Derelicts" he had discovered the formula that was presently to carry him far beyond such quiet success into a roaring popularity; he had discovered his gift for transfiguring the commonplace world and its people, conjuring them into a fairy-tale and still making his men and women seem amazingly lifelike and his

tale all true. Nor is there any hint of disparagement in saying this. Hasn't Chesterton eulogistically declared thait Mr. Pickwick is a fairy? Doesn't he insist that all Dickens' characters are fairies, gnomes and his scenes laid in a fairylaind of his own invention? There is a sense in which

this is simple truth; a sense in which it is the simplest truth of Locke. He is an idealist, and sees that soul of goodness in things evil which remains invisible to your superficial, short-sighted, unimaginative realist. He has the imagination that creates, and therefore is not contented merely to observe and describe what any of us can see for himself, but rightly treats the visible existences around him as raw material for his art, chooses his clay puppets and somewhat etherealizes them, touches them with ideal qualities that most of us have but only exercise in our dreams, as a magician might take a dull peasant and turn him into a prince, not making him less human but more finely human in the process.

For ten years he wove his spells adroitly and that circle of the faithful was susceptible to them; then he did it once again and, in 1905, with "The Morals of Marcus Ordeyne," did it so triumphantly that Marcus was soon the talk of the town, the book of the year, and not only a special section but a wide world of all sorts and conditions was at his feet. Yet there is nothing in the story to justify the miracle. It is a typical Locke fantasy, and certainly not superior in theme or treatment to its immediate forerunner. Sir Marcus, you remem-

ber, meets on the Thames Embankment the lost, helpless, pretty Carlotta, who has been brought from a Turkish harem by a rescuer who has deserted her; he takes pity on the child, adopts her, devotes himself to her training and upbringing with, after many tribulations, the only ending that could have pleased everybody. Nothing here for which one would prophecy a "boom." But the book was

full of character; its various characters were all alive, such human traits were touched into them so subtly that you could not disbelieve in them while the author had his spell on you; and the whole thing was told with a wit and humor so lively and so delicate, a sentiment so irresistibly alluring that you surrendered yourself to the sheer delight of it without thinking what you were doing. I recollect how one critic began by saying the plot was crude and ridiculous, and ended by confessing his enjoyment, his admiration of the artistic finish with which even the slightest characters were drawn, and praising without stint the cleverness and brilliant ease of the narrative throughout. That was the kind of hold it took upon its readers. It gave Locke a vogue in America too, and being dramatized filled a London theater for many nights and toured the provinces for years.

Next year Locke clinched his success with the greatest of his books — u The Beloved Vagabond," which eclipsed "The Morals of Marcus" as a novel if not as a play, and still remains the high-water mark of his achievement. It is the outstanding picaresque romance of our day. Mr. Locke has a

special weakness for such delightful, irresponsible, romantic, golden-hearted rascals as Paragot, who could so easily have been a squalid, unmitigated bounder in the hands of a plodding realist. Sebastian Pasquale, in "The Morals of Marcus Ordeyne," is a lesser member of the same family; so is that later, slighter, joyous heathen Aristide Pujol; and there are other such in other of his books.

The driving force behind his stories is their sincerity; their sympathy with the sins, follies, vanities, errors of the motley human multitude is his own; they are idealistic because he is himself an idealist and in some ways almost as quixotic as any of his favorite heroes. He puts himself into his books, and you find him there, scholarly, kindly, witty, unaffected, and so much a man of the world that he no more feels it necessary to write like one than a millionaire feels it necessary to prove he is rich by talking all the time about his money.

STEPHEN McKENNA

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STEPHEN McKENNA

You would think it should be easy — far easier than writing a novel — for any man of literary capacity to sit down and write the story of his own life, bring into it, instead of imaginary characters, the real men and women he has known, and so make a great Autobiography. Yet there are fewer great books in autobiography than in any other form of literature. Some years ago I was remarking on this to Keble Howard, and he accounted for the deficiency by laying it down that hardly any man started to write his memoirs till his memory was failing and he was getting too old to work. It is

supposed to be presumptuous, a little self-conceited, for a celebrity of any sort to publish his private history until he is so far advanced in years that, even if he has done nothing else respectable, he can claim to be respected on account of his age. Howard contended, and I agree with him, that a man of seventy or so has generally forgotten as much of the earlier half of his life as he remembers, and often misinterprets what he does remember because he looks back on it from a wholly different standpoint, misses the importance of things that were important when they happened, feels for his young self now as he did not feel at the time, makes tragedies of what then seemed comedies, and com-

edies of what seemed tragedies, and gets the whole picture out of focus.

I have lived long enough since then to have been able to prove for myself that all this is accurate; for I have read divers memoirs of men whom I knew when they were middle-aged and I was youthful, noting how much they omitted, incidents they have warped in the telling, events to which they have given an emotional significance that never really belonged to them. To remedy such a state of things Keble Howard's idea was that anybody who had done anything and meant to do more, should write the first volume of his autobiography when he was under thirty, while he was still near enough to his youth not to have lost all the freshness of its feelings, still near enough to his childhood to be able to revive in his thoughts the actual magic of its atmosphere; he should write his second

volume when he was about fifty, and his third when he was so far from the beginning that the end could not be much farther on. That is the only way, I believe, to do the thing perfectly. We have so few great autobiographies because most of them are more or less imaginary, so few of them are true.

Possibly Stephen McKenna arrived independently at the same conclusion, for in 1921, when he was thirty-three, he published "While I Remember/' which is in effect the first volume of his autobiography. But he reveals less of himself in this than of his surroundings. He is too much of what is commonly described as a gentleman of the old school to indulge in personalities and give away

unpleasant facts about his friends, or even about his enemies; he will criticize their public life with devastating wit and epigrammatic satire, but he betrays no intimacies, will have nothing to say of their private characters or conduct, and he is almost as reticent in talking of himself as of others. You gather from his first autobiographical fragment that before he went to Oxford, of which he gives some delightful impressionistic sketches, he went to Westminster School, and was for a while, a teacher there, and perhaps the most personal note in the book is in a greeting to some of his old pupils, which owns that he blushes to recall the lessons he taught them. "My incompetence was incurable," he says. "I should be well pleased to think that your memories of me are a hundredth part as kindly as my memories of you. Does it comfort you to know that my awe of you continued for three terms? If ever the prayer-bell had not rung before I showed that I could not solve some

diabolical equation! If you could have seen into my mind during the first week when I ranged you in alphabetical order and guided myself despairingly by the two red-heads in the form!"

If he does not fill his pages with careless and indiscreet gossip of all sorts of well-known people it is not for lack of material, but simply that he has a conscience and a strict code of honor that make such chatter impossible to him. He will tell you of his experience, during the War, in the Intelligence section of the War Trade Department, and, briefly, of his experiences with the Balfour Mission

in America, but though he has mixed largely in modern society and the world of letters and, as nephew of one of the ablest of latter-day Chancellors of the Exchequer, has been a good deal behind the scenes in political circles, he does not, after the manner of the usual sensational Diaries and Memoirs, now-a-days, scarify individual members of any circle, but reserves his commentary and condemnation for the changes and degeneration that have come over our general social habits and behavior, limits his discussion of contemporary writers to their works, and his criticism of famous politicians, and this is drastic enough, to their doings and misdoings in the political scene.

All which reticences are natural to him and exactly characteristic. They seem to denote an austerity that is in keeping with his somewhat ascetic appearance. But if in profile, as somebody has suggested, he curiously resembles the portraits of Dante, there is more of the graciousness than of the gloom and bitterness of the somber Florentine

in his composition. You may realize that if you read "Tex," the charming memorial volume he produced after the death of Texiera de Mattos. It is a collection of his dead friend's letters linked together with explanatory notes of his own, and in these letters, and indirectly in the notes, I think you get more intimate glimpses of the real McKenna than anywhere else, and find him, behind the polite mask and settled air of restraint, often irrespon-sibly outspoken, always sympathetic, warm-hearted, and with a very genius for friendship.

If he has studiously avoided personalities in his memoirs, he has, of course, drawn freely in his novels on his knowledge of political and social life and people, though even there nobody has, so far, pretended to recognize living originals of any of his characters. He began his career as a novelist with two artificial comedies. "The Reluctant Lover," in 1912, and "Sheila Intervenes," in 1913. They had some affinity with the romantic fantasies of W. J. Locke and the sparkling talk of "Dodo" and "The Dolly Dialogues." The story in each was told with the lightest of light touches, and the conversations were punctuated with smart epigrams. Their cleverness was undeniable, and already, in "Sheila," he was making play with his knowledge of political affairs. They were brilliantly clever, but ran entertainingly on the surface of things. He was learning to use his tools; feeling his way. In "The Sixth Sense" he was beginning to find it, and he found it triumphantly in "Sonia, or Between Two Worlds."

"Sonia" is one of the notable things in fiction that came out of the War. It appeared in 19 17,

when we were all uplifted to high ideals and sustained by a fine belief that a new and nobler world was to rise, phoenix-like, out of the ashes and chaos into which the old world had been resolved. The atmosphere of that time, all its surge of altruistic emotion, are so sensitively and realistically preserved in the story that one cannot re-read it now without a sense of regret that we have forgotten so much of our near past and failed so meanly to real-

ize the better state that, in those dark days, we were all so sincerely confident of building. Beginning in the decadent world of the late 'nineties and the dawn of the century, the story comes down, or goes up, into the miraculously new world that the war made, and glances optimistically into the future. Most of its characters are drawn from the higher classes of society, and the love romance of Sonia and David O'Rane, the most charming and glowingly human hero McKenna has ever given us, has the social and political history of the period for its setting. Never before or since has he shown himself so much of an idealist nor handled great issues with such mastery and imaginative insight. "Sonia" has been ranked with the great political novels of Disraeli, and I doubt whether Disraeli ever did anything so fine in poignancy of feeling and delicacy of style.

"Ninety-Six Hours' Leave," his other war novel, was a lively tale written for amusement only; and "Sonia Married" maintained the tradition attaching to sequels and did not rise to the level of "Sonia." The biggest of his other novels are, I think, u Midas and Son," a masterpiece of irony, a mordant satire on the vanity of riches; and that bril-

liant study of the snobbishness, shallowness, cynicism, social ambition of the unpleasant Lady Ann Spenworth, "The Confessions of a Well-Meaning Woman." It blends a maturer philosophy of life with the vivacity and sparkle of his early conversational novels. It exposes without mercy the squalid little soul of a person who is or has been

of importance in society, and if her self-revelations make her seem abhorrent it is because she herself seems so abhorrently alive and so minutely true to certain morbid, unlovely sides of human nature.

You would not guess from the abounding vitality he puts into his novels that McKenna was by no means of the robust kind. In winter he generally escapes from our unsatisfactory climate, and you hear of him voyaging to remote parts of Asia or South America, or somewhere where the sun shines. But when he is at home, there is an hour before lunch, at the end of the morning's work, that is given over to any friends who may drop in at his pleasant Lincoln's Inn chambers, to find him the most genial and interesting and interested of hosts, with as neat a hand for mixing a cocktail as any in London.

COMPTON MACKENZIE

Compton Mackenzie

COMPTON MACKENZIE

From a literary and dramatic point of view, Compton Mackenzie may almost be said to have been born in the purple. Even a quite modest minor prophet who had stood by his cradle at West Hartlepool, in January, 1883, might have ventured to predict a future for him. For his father was the well-known actor Edward Compton, author of several plays and founder of the Compton Comedy Company, and his aunt was "Leah" Bateman, one of the most famous Lady Macbeth's who ever walked the stage; his uncle C. G. Compton was a novelist of parts; and he numbers among his distant relations the poet and critic John Addington Symonds and that brilliant and, nowadays, too little appreciated novelist and playwright "George Paston" (Miss E. M. Symonds). Nor did he absorb all the gifts of the family, for that distinguished actress Miss Fay Compton is his sister.

From St. Paul's School, Mackenzie went to Oxford in the early years of this century, and if he did not break any scholarship records at Magdalen, he edited "The Oxford Point of View," which he helped to found, and became business manager of the Oxford Union Dramatic Society, and on occasion showed himself an actor of distinction. After leaving Oxford he married and withdrew into the

wilds of Cornwall, where he seems to have written industriously for some years with no immediate results, beyond the publication of a book of verse in 1907, and a play, "The Gentleman in Grey," which was produced at the Lyceum Theater, Edinburgh, but did not stay there long enough to matter. Also in his Cornish retirement he wrote his first novel, "The Passionate Elopement," but it took him longer to get it published than to write it. When it had been up to London and back again three or four times it began to look so worthless and he grew so indifferent toward it that he would not waste more money than necessary on it but let it go wandering unregistered up and down and take its chance of being lost in the post. Seven publishers had rejected it before, in a happy hour, he sent it to Martin Seeker, who was then about setting up in business, and when he published it, early in 191 1, it sold so well that within three weeks it had to be reprinted. The story is of the eighteenth century; the scene is laid at Curtain Wells, a gay and fashionable spa, where Beau Ripple reigned supreme, as Beau Nash used to reign at Bath. The characters are as gracefully artificial as if they had walked out of an eighteenth century pastoral — the pretty blue-eyed Phyllida, the chivalrous Charles Lovely, who loves her in vain, and the dashing, rascally card-sharper, Vernon, who wins her and carries her off in the end — they live gracefully, and their tale is all told, and they smile and sigh and mince and bow their ways through it, with the charm and fragile daintiness that belongs to old

minuets and Dresden china shepherds and shepherdesses. Mackenzie has never done another such light and exquisite caprice though he had every encouragement to repeat the experiment, for "The Passionate Elopement" pleased the public as well as the critics and had run through four editions by the end of the year.

Just before or immediately after this success, he came from his Cornish fastness up to London, settled in Westminster, and turned his hand to potting plays, writing lyrics and reviews for Pelissier, whose "Follies" were then at the height of their popularity. But in spite of these distracting employments he found time for a good deal of more important work during the brief period that Westminster's staid, old-world North street numbered him among its tenants. There he wrote his second novel, "Carnival," and had prepared a dramatic version of it before it was published in 1912; he collected a second volume of his verse, "Kensington Rhymes" (since when he has done no other) and it appeared in the same year; and he had begun on the writing of "Sinister Street," but had to lay it aside to cross the water and superintend the production of "Carnival" at a New York theater.

He never set up his tent again in London; partly, I believe, because its atmosphere had affected his health unfavorably; partly, I suspect, because the social interruptions to which a town-dweller is subject interfered too much with his working arrangements. Anyhow, he transported himself to the Gulf of Naples and discovered an ideal retreat in a

delightful villa on the Isle of Capri. In these latter days, as if the love of solitude had grown upon him, he has acquired one of the smaller of the Channel Islands and made himself lord of Herm, and now divides his year between that remote and rocky islet and his villa at Capri.

At Capri he finished "Sinister Street," one of the longest of modern novels and much the longest of his own. Some of De Morgan's were nearly as long, and some by Dickens and Thackeray were longer, but a book of two hundred and fifty thousand words is apt to daunt the degenerate reader of to-day so "Sinister Street" was published in two volumes with half a year's interval between, and nobody was daunted. No book of Mackenzie's had a more enthusiastic reception. His readers are uncertain whether this or "Guy and Pauline" is his highest, most artistic achievement, and I am with those who give first place to "Sinister Street." If there has ever been a more revealing study of the heart and mind and every-day life of a boy than that of Michael Fane, I have never read it. He and his sister Stella, the Carthew family and the miscellaneous characters gathered about them in their early years are drawn with such sympathy and insight, such a sense of actuality, that not a few have professed to identify living originals from whom certain of them were modeled.

The War had broken out between the appearance of "Sinister Street" and "Guy and Pauline" and Mackenzie had gone on the Dardanelles Expedition as a Lieutenant (shortly to be promoted to a

captaincy) in the Royal Marines. He was invalided out of this business and presently made successively, Military Control Officer at Athens, and Director of an Intelligence Department at Syria, and in due course received various honors for his War services. There is little or no trace of the War in his subsequent books, unless you ascribe to its disturbing influences the facts that neither "The Early Life and Adventures of Sylvia Scarlett" nor "Sylvia and Michael," admirable and vivid picturesque stories as they are, will compare, either in subtlety of characterization or in grace and strength of style, with the best of his pre-war work. Neither "Rich Relatives" nor "Poor Relations" marked much of a recovery, and "The Vanity Girl," in which he uses the war for the purpose of getting rid of a bad character, is not saved by occasional flashes of narrative power and brilliant descriptive passages from being an essay in picturesque and rather cheap melodrama. But with "The Altar Steps" in 1922, he returned to higher levels — his hand was never more cunning in the portrayal of character, and there is enough in this story of the growth of Mark Lidderdale's soul and his progress toward the religious life to indicate that the author of "Sinister Street" and "Guy and Pauline" is not yet to be put aside with those whose future is behind them.

I have seen it said that two or three of Mackenzie's novels are largely autobiographical. Certainly he puts into them scenes and places that were associated with his youth and early manhood, life

at Oxford, Cornwall, the theater and theatrical people, and goes on handling, developing three or four of his characters in successive novels, bringing them into this, that and the other story as if he were giving them their proper place in episodes that had really happened. Sylvia Scarlett reappears in "The Vanity Girl"; Maurice Avery of "Carnival" flits through "Sinister Street," and Guy Hazlewood, who is at Oxford in that novel, is the hero of "Guy and Pauline," in which also, Michael Fane, the principal figure in "Sinister Street," plays a very minor part. Thackeray, Trollope and others practised the same device, and there is no reliable significance in it, except that it helps the reader, and probably the author himself, to an easier sense of the reality of such persons. Something of Mackenzie's childhood has gone, no doubt, into his "Kensington Rhymes"; and he, like Michael Fane, spent his boyhood at Kensington, attended a big public school in London, and, like Michael, went to Oxford, and may have given Michael throughout some of his own experiences. You may fancy resemblances between his withdrawing into Cornwall and publishing a book of verse, and Guy Hazlewood going, as his father has it, "to bury yourself in a remote village where, having saddled yourself with the responsibilities of a house, you announce your intention of living by poetry!" There may be personal touches in this, and in Guy's effort to find a publisher for his book of poems, but who shall say where autobiography ends and fiction begins? Naturally, every novelist works with his experience

as a potter works with clay, but he usually transfigures that raw material and moulds it into new shapes of his own invention. The truest, most

living characters in fiction are those that draw their vitality from the author's self. No doubt if we knew enough about him, we could find a good deal of Shakespeare in his most masterly characterizations.

There is a lot of solemn and pretentious nonsense talked in the name of psychology. It is possible to make shrewd guesses, but no man can positively analyse the mind of another.

When we think we are making a marvelous study of another's motives, we are studying the motives that would have been ours in his circumstances. Professor Freud, with his doctrine of psychoanalysis, has turned the head and choked the narrative vein of many an otherwise capable novelist who has felt a spurious sense of superiority in trying to graft the art of medicine on the art of fiction.

There is truer psychology in Mackenzie's novels than in the precious novels of most of our professed psychologists. He has done bigger work than theirs with a more modest conception of the novelist's function. "I confess that I like a book to be readable," he once wrote; "It seems to me that a capacity for entertaining a certain number of people is the chief justification for writing novels." He deprecates this as "a low-browed ambition," but it was high enough for the great novelists of the past, and the pseudo-medical methods of Freudism do not look like producing any that are greater.

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JOHN MASEFIELD

John Masefield

JOHN MASEFIELD

Were I put to select the four or five poets who are most typically modern — most essentially of our own time, I think I should name Kipling, Hardy, Wilfrid Gibson, Siegfried Sassoon and John Masefield, and Masefield perhaps before all. There are others who have written poetry as fine, or even finer, but nearly all of them, had they been contemporary with Tennyson, Wordsworth, Keats, Blake, might have written very much as they are writing now without seeming to have been born out of their due period. The five I have named could not have done this: either in theme or manner their poems are too intimate a growth of our own generation, as unmistakably of to-day as the motor-bus or as wireless is. I am not forgetting Crabbe, the father of modern realistic poetry, but he mitigated his unorthodoxies by observing a respectable reticence of phrase, by subscribing to poetical conventions of language, and clothing his newness in the old-fashioned mantle of Pope.

The philosophy of my chosen five may be sometimes akin to that of Fitzgerald's Omar, but the old wine is in aggressively new bottles. And I am not forgetting that Hardy was Tennyson's contemporary, and not a little of his poetry was written in

the 6o's and 70's, though it was not published then.

If it had been published, the tastes and standards of that formal age would have found it so wanting that it never would have won for Hardy then the fame it has given him now. Think of Tennyson, with his conviction that

"the form, the form alone is eloquent,"

trying with his hyper-sensitive ear the wingless, rugged lyrics of Hardy, setting himself to read them aloud, like the poet in his own "English Idyls,"

"mouthing out his hollow oes and aes,"

and finding it couldn't be done, for here was a poetical nonconformist who sacrificed verbal beauty to naked truth and was more earnest about what he had to say than about mouthing it in grandiose orotundities of phrase.

Certainly, by the time Tennyson had done with it, poetry was becoming too much a matter of phrase-making; the poet himself was contracting a sort of sentimental snobbery, segregating himself from the crowd, losing touch with common life, and for their own sakes and that of their art, many of us felt, as Dixon Scott put it, that we wanted to "flatten out Parnassus. For poetry has been looked up to far too long; it is time the reader looked down on it; nothing is doing its dignity more damage than the palsying superstition that it is something excessively sublime. The reader picks out his prose-men; he

is familiar with philosophers; but the moment he mentions verse he remembers the proprieties; up go his eyes and down drops his voice; and from

what is no doubt just a nice, natural desire to do nothing offensive to refinement, he invariably speaks of the specially simple, jolly, frank and friendly souls who make it as though they were wilted priests. Whereas, in reality, of course, they are of all writers, exactly the men whom it is most needful to see as human beings; for of all forms of writing theirs is the most personal, intimate, instinctive — poetry being, after all, simply essence of utterance — speech with the artifice left out. 1 '

To this it now approximates, but it was not this, nor were the poets such simple, unaffected souls until Kipling had begun to outrage their delicacies, shock their exquisite, artistic refinements with the noise and dazzle of his robust magic, and others, like Hardy, Gibson and Masefield, had brought poetry out of her sacred temple and made her at home in inns, and kitchens, and workshops, cottages and mean streets and all manner of vagabond places, restored her to plain nature and human nature and taught her to sing her heart out in the language of average men — sometimes in the language of men who were quite below the average. But even this was better than limiting her to expressing her thoughts and emotions in artificial elegancies that no man ever uses except when he is posing and perorating on public platforms.

In his beginnings Masefield was not unaffected by the Kipling influence; you can trace it in the lilting measures of some of his early "Salt Water Bal-

lads" ; perhaps here and there in his early prose stories and sketches, U A Tarpaulin Muster," "A

Mainsail Haul." He was realizing and naturalizing the seamen there, as Kipling had realized and naturalized the soldier. But he was already doing more than that; he put into those first Ballads, and the "Poems and Ballads" that soon followed them, a grace of fancy, a charm and beauty, also true to the life he pictured, that do not come within the range of Kipling's genius. He was feeling after and foreshadowing there, too, his own special mission as a poet — if one may use so portentous a word as mission without having it taken in any but its artistic significance. His business was not to be with dignitaries and classical heroisms, he says in "Consecration," but with sailors and stokers and men of no account —

"Not the rulers for me, but the rankers, the tramp of the road,
The slave with the sack on his shoulders pricked on with the

goad,
The man with too weighty a burden, too weary a load . . .
Of the maimed, of the halt and the blind in the rain and the

cold —
Of these shall my songs be fashioned, my tales be told."

And of this purpose have come that most poignant and effective of his dramas, "The Tragedy of Nan," his stories, "The Street of To-day," "Multitude and Solitude," and those narrative poems that are his highest and most distinctive achievement, "The Everlasting Mercy," "The Widow in the Bye Street," "Dauber," and "The Daffodil Fields."

In these he is still on that quest for beauty —

"that one beauty
God put me here to find — "

to which he consecrated his gift at the outset, when he claimed as his kingdom

"the dirt and the dross, the dust and scum of the earth,"

though he is following it here less obviously than in the statelier, noble sonnet sequence of "Lollingdon Downs." In the narrative poems he is seeking for the soul of beauty in things evil, in things common and sometimes unclean, in lives that are broken and that the world's rough hands have soiled. His passion for realism, for the stark truth of life as it is lived, is transparently sincere; it is absurd to object that his stories are melodramatic, since they are not more so than life itself is, but there is reason in the protest that he pushes the crudities of his dialogue too far, is apt to be overviolent in language and uses ugly expletives so freely that, instead of adding to the reality of his characters and incidents, they detract from it, come to seem artificial, till one suspects an affectation in them and is more irritated than impressed. Take, for example, the close of that squabble between Saul Kane and Billy Myers, in "The Everlasting Mercy" —

"You closhy put."
"This is my field."
"I'm ruler here."

"I'll fight you for it."

"You bloody liar."

"This is my wire."

"You ain't."

"I am."

"Right, by dam."

Whether such a man would say "I'm ruler here" is of small consequence, but no man swears "By dam," and you feel that the word is either used arbitrarily for the sake of the rhyme, or with an idea of being forceful at all costs. And though a man might say, "I'll bloody well put him in a bloody fix," and "I'll bloody well burn his bloody ricks," there is the same sense of desperate straining after effect in making him say,

'Til bloody him a bloody fix.
I'll bloody burn his bloody ricks,"

because no ruffian was ever heard to speak so elliptically, and you feel it is only done in order that the meter may be made to accommodate a startling plethora of profanity. Such excesses sound a false note and are out of tune with the general truth, the vivid reality that give the stories their authentic power and greatness.

I have heard it said that these aberrations repre-

sent the efforts of one who is naturally reticent and fastidious to present with due forcefulness certain brutal and lawless types of character that are not within his personal knowledge; but I doubt this. He may have exercised his imagination, and if so he exercised it potently, in writing "Reynard the Fox" and "Right Royal," for I should guess he never went fox-hunting or steeple-chasing, but for "Dauber" and the raw human creatures of "The Everlasting Mercy," "The Widow in the Bye Street" and "The Daffodil Fields" he may very well have drawn on memory and experience of

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people he has known. For he was not reared in cotton-wool nor matured among the comparative decorums of office-life. From a training vessel, he went to sea in the merchant service, knocked about the world on sailing-ships and has put some of his old shipmates into his ballads and some of them and some of their yarns into U A Mainsail Haul" and his first novel, "Captain Margaret." Quitting the sea, he went tramping in America, picking up a livelihood by casual work on farms, and after a while settled down to serve behind a bar in New York, escaping from the noise and squalor and drudgery of it at night to solace himself with the "Morte d'Arthur" after he had gone up to his garret to bed. It was a harsh apprenticeship, that on sea and on land, but it broadened his outlook and his sympathies, and fitted him to be, as he was presently resolved to be, the interpreter of "the men of the tattered battalion" —

"He had had revelation of the lies
Cloaking the truth men never choose to know;
He could bear witness now and cleanse their eyes;
He had beheld in suffering; he was wise."

His work as a critic is in a certain newspaper where he used to review new poets before he was recognized as one, and in his scholarly, revealing study of "Shakespeare"; but his finest, most imaginative prose is in that poignant book "Gallipoli" which he wrote after he came home from serving there in the Great War.

ALFRED EDWARD WOODLEY MASON

Alfred Edward Woodley Mason

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ALFRED EDWARD WOODLEY MASON

It is interesting, and a little saddening, to look through a list of living novelists and pick out the names of those who were well in the first flight of popularity ten or fifteen years ago but have since fallen back steadily, year after year, into the second, third and fourth flights, until now they are almost absorbed into the multitudinous rearward ranks where the unpopular and the mediocre rub shoulders with survivors who still ruffle it obscurely

on the strength of a past reputation. For it is easier to become popular than to remain so. No author can take the public by surprise a second time. A novel that has some freshness of fable or style, though it be in some ways crude and in no way great, may do the trick once; but if an author follows this with a succession of books in a too-similar vein, showing no ripening of his mind, no growth of knowledge or invention, nothing but a sprightly repetition of that same morning freshness, which was well enough when the day was new, his public begins to yawn and go away. A juggler, when he has exhausted his little repertoire and finds the plate coming back to him almost empty, can roll up his scrap of carpet, walk around the corner, and in another street collect a different crowd to whom

all his old conjurings are new; but no writer can at-

tract a fresh public for each fresh book he produces — his only way is to keep sure hold on his first readers and add to them, and this he cannot do unless he matures in his books as he does, or should do, in himself. His public is all the while growing older, and the pathos and humor and general outlook on life that satisfy a young man or a young woman will rarely make the same appeal to them when they arrive at maturity. The humor that tickles you to-day will scarcely move you to a smile when you have lived, enjoyed, worked and suffered for another decade or so in such a world as this; the pathos that once melted you to pleasant tears jars upon you when you re-read it now and seems but shallow, youthful sentimentality; what you

had used to think a dashingly romantic incident or character bores you now and seems tinsel unreality. You have been growing up, and if the growth of your favorite novelist does not at least keep pace with your own, you naturally pass on and leave him behind. Had "David Copperfield" been simply another "Oliver Twist," Dickens would have been but the novelist for an age, and that not the middle-age.

Largely, I think, because he went on with a broadening vision of life, a ripening knowledge of the world, a deepening sympathy with human character, the books of A. E. W. Mason have retained for him the popularity he won about a quarter of a century ago with "The Courtship of Morrice Buckler." Read "Morrice Buckler" again, and then "The Four Feathers" and "The Broken

Road," and you will recognize how he grew up with his readers. You can still take delight in "Morrice Buckler," but the later books yield you a fuller enjoyment — they have put off the careless glamor and reckless gallantries of gay romance, and have put on the soberer, more enduring garb of more familiar humanity, that does not wear its romance upon its sleeve, but more poignantly, more wonderfully, at the troubled heart of it.

Born in 1865, Mason is an old Dulwich College boy, and took his B. A. degree at Oxford. At Oxford, too, he showed a strong predilection for the drama, and was one of that University's notable amateur actors. Later, he took to the stage in earnest, and toured the provinces with the Benson Company and the Compton Comedy Company, and

played in London as one of the soldiers in Shaw's "Arms and the Man." But the ambition that called him on to the stage presently called him off, and in 1895 he commenced his career as a novelist.

It was not a very promising beginning. His first novel, "A Romance of Wastdale," was well enough received by the critics, but the public did not rise to it, and Mason seems to have suppressed it with unnecessary rigor. Competent judges have assured me it was a story of more than ordinary distinction and merited a better fate. However, its author had not long to wait for his due meed. A year after, in 1896, "The Courtship of Morrice Buckler" was published, and its publication gave Mason his place forthwith as an extraordinarily

popular novelist. It was the novel of the day; it was read and talked about everywhere, ran through I don't know how many thousands, and still goes as a safe seller into any series of popular reprints.

"The Philanderers" appeared in 1897, and in quick succession came "Laurence Clavering," "Parson Kelley" (written in collaboration with Andrew Lang), "Miranda of the Balcony," "The Watchers," "Clementina," that has all the dash and headlong movement of Dumas and a grace and pathos that Dumas had not, "The Four Feathers," "The Truants," "Running Water," "The Broken Road," "At the Villa Rose," "The Turnstile," and "The Summons."

But Mason was never one of the authors who are all authors; he is not of the sedentary breed who

are contented to study life in books or from their study windows; the noise and business of it have always appealed to him irresistibly; he has roamed the world rubbing shoulders with all sorts and conditions of humanity everywhere, and his later books mirror much of his personal experience and the countries and people he has known. He blends the appearance of a writer of romance with the restless energy of a man of action, and in 1906, his superabundant energies seeking a new outlet or a new ambition prompting him, he turned his attention to politics, threw for Parliamentary honors, and was elected M. P. for Coventry. He signalized his advent in the House with a notable maiden speech; did not speak there often but proved himself shrewd and eloquent in debate, and if he had

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not escaped we might have been the richer by a sagacious, sympathetic Cabinet Minister and one brilliant novelist the poorer. Fortunately, however, the fascinations of the Mother of Parliaments could not subdue him, and after some three years under her shadow he did not offer himself for election again.

Fortunately, because the air of the House of Commons is not healthful breathing for poets or novelists. For them it is a soporific and suffocating air. You may note that when a writer of imaginative literature has sat in the House for more than a limited period his spirit puts on flesh, dulness settles on his faculties and communicates itself

to his pen. What plays did Sheridan write after he took his seat there? And who shall say that Lytton might not have written with fewer capital letters and less of the manner of the big bow-wow if he had never ventured into that fatal atmosphere? Mason's sojourn in the House had no influence on his fiction, unless it was his stay there that turned his thoughts toward India and the grave problem of the education of its native Princes in England and so resulted in his writing one of the most powerful of his books, "The Broken Road"; in which case he has brought more good out of it than any novelist who ever went into it, except Disraeli, and Disraeli was really a politician in his romances and a romancist in his politics, so he can hardly be counted.

I could never imagine the author of "Miranda of the Balcony" sitting out interminable debates,

or trooping with his party into the voting lobby. He must have felt much more at home in uniform when he became in the first days of the war a Captain of the Manchester Regiment, and later, a Major on the General Staff. If he wrote no more romance for a time (his only book through those years was a collection of short stories, "The Four Corners of the World," in 19 17) it was because he was too busy living it. For with all its squalors and horrors and agonies, the Great War is beginning, in remembrance, to take on the color of romance by comparison with the tameness and monotony of ordinary everyday life.

You would gather from his stories that Mason was much given to boating, traveling and moun-

taineering, for a love of the open air blows through nearly all of them. The Alps and the enormous shadow of them dominate "Running Water"; and the skies and landscapes and peoples of present-day Egypt, Italy, India fill the pages of "The Four Feathers," "The Broken Road," and "At the Villa Rose." Latterly, too, his new novels have become few and far between and he has given himself again, more and more, to the stage. He never quite severed himself from it. Soon after the novel appeared, he dramatized "Morrice Buckler," in collaboration with Miss Isabel Bateman, and it was very successfully produced at the Grand, Islington, and had a long run in the provinces; 1901 saw a dramatic version of "Miranda of the Balcony" staged in New York; in 1909 he produced two comedies, not founded on his books "Colonel

Smith" and "Marjorie Strode"; and in 191 1 the most successful of all his dramatic ventures, "The Witness for the Defence."

Since then, we have had "Open Windows," and dramatized versions of "At the Villa Rose" and "Running Water," and one hears rumors of other plays that he has in preparation. The indications are that in future he will appear more often on the boards than between them, and nobody need regret this if he only offers us as much pleasure in the stalls and the pit as we have had from him in our arm-chairs at home.

WILLIAM SOMERSET MAUGHAM

WILLIAM SOMERSET MAUGHAM

On the whole, I incline to the orthodox belief that if an author wants to find a short way to success he should not be too versatile. Nearly all our famous writers have been contented to do one thing well — have seemed to say with Marvell,

"Let us roll all our strength and all
Our sweetness up into one ball."

I could name authors of our day who have dissipated their energies in half a dozen or more directions. They are journalists, novelists, poets, essayists, critics, dramatists, writers of books for children and editors of all manner of books. They have no settled reputation, the public does not know where to have them; they are all sorts of things to all sorts of readers and nothing in particular to any. They win some vague popularity, perhaps, and an income, but not fame. Fame comes to the man who concentrates on the one kind of work for which he has special gifts, puts all his heart and all his skill into the doing of that.

You may say that Somerset Maugham is versatile; but he has written no verse, no essays, no criticism, no tales for children. He wisely exercised his versatility within the range of a single art until he turned his attention to the stage, and if

he has been versatile since, it has been only inside the limits of these two arts, a versatility as legitimate in the artist as it is sagacious in the man who has to earn a livelihood with his pen and hopes to go on pleasing his audience with many books. For there is no virtue in the opposite extreme to which some novelists go nowadays, who concentrate so conscientiously that they narrow their outlook to one phase of life, one type of character, and never shift their scenery. By this means they ensure that their stories are graphically accurate, meticulously true, but by the time they have told four or five the reader becomes aware of a sameness, a monotony in them, pines for a change, goes after new gods, and the old shrine begins to lack worshippers. If Maugham's circulation ever dwindles it will not be for this reason.

Happily he has a sense of humor which prevents him from adopting anything in the nature of a pose; but, however unassuming, he is not diffident; he is without affectations, and assured me once he was without ideals, by which I believe he meant no more than that he was not too idealistic to be a practical man. It was when he had succeeded as a novelist and was starting on his successful career as a dramatist that he told me he felt there was a tremendous amount of nonsense talked about the serious drama. "All this high falutin chatter about ideals!" said he. U A playwright's and a missionary's calling appear to me to be two distinct and quite separate callings which should not be permitted to overlap. I cannot understand why a

serious play should be held to be pre-eminently greater or more important than a humorous play, a comedy, for instance. Nor do I admit for a moment that the former is more difficult to write or demands a consideration peculiar to itself." Briefly, he protested that his one aim as novelist or dramatist was to amuse; he thought that was the first business of all authors, adding, "I would excuse almost anything but dullness." No book fails because its literary quality is too high, but because the writer who can write literature does not always know how to write it interestingly. And I found that Maugham, in the broad sanity of his judgment, had no sympathy with the egotistical talk of unpopular but superior persons who ascribe their failure to a fine inability, a noble disinclination to "write down" to the presumably lower apprehensions of the vast majority of mankind.

His practice, through the many years since he emerged as a new author, has always squared with his precepts. Somebody writing of him a little while ago said he got his intimate knowledge of men and women, particularly of the London poor, while he was working as a doctor, but this is scarcely accurate. After completing his education at King's School, Canterbury, and Heidelberg University, he became a student at St. Thomas's Hospital, and in due course took his M.R.C.S. and L.R.C.P. degrees, but he never put up his brass plate and worked as a doctor. He had never seriously intended doing so. His family wished him to study medicine, and he yielded to that wish,

but his own ambition from the first had been to write for the stage. He was convinced that stagecraft was a knack he could acquire if he made up his mind to it; but he had a saving leaven of common sense and had seen enough of things to know that it was infinitely harder to worry through all the difficulties between writing a play and getting it produced than to find a publisher for a novel, so he resolved to turn novelist as a means of earning bread and butter and winning a large enough reputation to move theater managers to feel that it was at least worth their while to look at his dramas.

That was in the 90's — the glamorous 1890's when some would persuade us the whole world of letters in this country was dominated by Oscar Wilde and his circle. But Maugham was one of the many authors of the period — I have referred to others already — whose work shows little trace of that influence. There is nothing much of romance in the story of his literary beginnings; he did not cast himself upon the town and drudge in the byways of journalism, nor did he undergo the disheartening experience of having his manuscripts persistently rejected by the magazines. While he was still a student at St. Thomas' he sent Fisher Unwin a collection of stories that eventually appeared under the title of "Orientations," and that astute publisher at once accepted it, but strongly advised Maugham that it would be much better for himself that he should make a start with a novel; and he accepted the advice and went away to act upon it.

Just then the slum story was all in the air — so

much so that "slumming" had become a popular

pastime with young ladies of leisure. The vogue of Gissing was at its height; Arthur Morrison had written in "Tales of Mean Streets" and "The Child of the Jago" some of the most powerfully realistic of any pictures of London low life; Edwin Pugh had revealed the same underworld in U A Street in Suburbia" and "The Man of Straw"; Pett Ridge's "Mord Em'ly," showing something of the happier side of that drab underworld, was running serially, and various other writers were finding themes for fiction in those ugly facts of existence that the city keeps as much out of sight as possible. In any case, the slums of Lambeth lay beside St. Thomas's Hospital, their inhabitants came into it as patients, so Somerset Maugham knew them, their homes, their habits, their manner of speech, their manner of living, and fashioned his first novel out of such personal experience. He called it "A Lambeth Idyll"; Fisher Unwin accepted it and, in 1897, published it as "Liza of Lambeth." Its stark, violent realism roused a good deal of protest; we were not so tolerant in such matters then as we have now become; and though there were not wanting those who praised the stern faithfulness with which it depicted certain phases of London life, more and louder voices denounced it as unpleasant, brutal, repellant, extravagantly squalid. Crude and raw it may have been, somewhat obviously out to shock the delicate, omitting too much light and massing too much shadow, but there was truth if not all the truth in it, Liza and her mother

and her barbaric lover, Jim, were alive and real, and the controversy that raged round the book served, at least, the good purpose of obtaining for it a measure of the success it merited.

But if any imagined that, like so many of his contemporaries, Maugham was going to devote himself to the exploitation of the slums, or of low life, they soon found they were mistaken. He finished with the slums in "Liza of Lambeth" and never wrote another novel about them. He moved through average society in "The Making of a Saint" (1898) ; then his actual first book, the short stories "Orientations," made its appearance; on the heels of this followed "The Hero"; then came what I still feel to be the strongest and ablest of his novels — "Mrs. Craddock." Good as it is, the times were not ripe for such frank handling of sex mysteries and the book was rejected by every publisher of consequence. Even Heinmann declined it at first; then, on a second consideration, accepted it and published it in 1903. The study of that elemental, passionate, intensely female creature, Mrs. Craddock, is an aggressively candid, extraordinarily subtle essay in feminine psychology; her story is touched with satire and irony and inevitably clouded with tragedy, wherefore the general reader, who prefers pleasanter things, did not take to it kindly. Maugham has never since, perhaps, been so somber, though the sex element has continued to play a potent part in most of his novels and stories, which have had their scenes in middle-class and high society, at home, at the North Pole, in the South Seas

and, with those wonderful sketches of character, u On a Chinese Screen," in China.

Meanwhile, as everybody knows, his triumphant progress as a novelist had not diverted Somerset Maugham from his original bent. In 1902 he had

a one-act piece, "Schiffbruchig," produced in Germany. Next year he wrote "The Man of Honor" for the Stage Society, but instead of attracting theatrical managers to him it frightened them off, for there was no laughter in it, and they appear to have taken for granted that it fully represented what he could do and meant to do, and that consequently nothing of his was likely to appeal to the playgoing public or could be made to pay.

But they reckoned without their host. Maugham set to work and wrote three comedies, "Lady Frederick," "Jack Straw" and "Dot," which were destined to establish him as a dramatist whose plays had money in them.

His later plays have not gone begging for producers — producers have gone begging for them. And the plays of Maugham have been as varied in theme and manner as his novels. From gay, witty, frivolous, ironic comedy, he has passed to sentimental or romantic drama; but he has learned to touch in his realism more deftly, more cunningly, and is no longer faced with the task of having to placate a public obsessed by the mid-Victorian gospel that the plain truth about men and women is not respectable and must not be told.

WILLIAM BABINGTON MAXWELL

William Babington Maxwell

WILLIAM BABINGTON MAXWELL

It has passed into a sort of proverb that famous men never have sons who equal them in fame. There are, of course, exceptions. Benjamin Disraeli has eclipsed that delightful bookworm, his father Isaac, who wrote the "Curiosities of Literature"; Henry James, having a father who was a distinguished novelist and theologian, used to describe himself on his earlier books as "Henry James, Junr." but the use of "Junr." as a means of identifying him has long ceased to be necessary. There are others; but half a dozen swallows do not make a summer, and a dozen such instances would not falsify the proverb.

Perhaps what is true concerning fathers is not so true about mothers. Nobody now reads the once popular novels of Mrs. Frances Trollope, mother of the greater Anthony; Gilbert Frankau, to come at once to our own times, looks like outshining that clever novelist, his mother, "Frank Danby" ; Shaw has gone far beyond his mother's fame as an operatic star; the novels of W. B. Maxwell surpass those of his mother, M. E. Braddon, in literary art, and though he is not so enormously popular in his day as she was in hers, he is widely read now when she is scarcely read at all.

He began to write while she was still writing;

her vogue had declined, but remained considerable, and she was still writing as well as ever — in fact, in her two or three latest books, notably in "The Green Curtain," I think she was writing better than

ever. There were disadvantages for a young novelist, no doubt, in having a popular novelist for his mother; but there were also advantages. His father was the publisher, John Maxwell, whose business developed into that of Messrs. Hurst & Blackett. He grew up in a literary atmosphere; the very men who could open doors for a beginner, and make his way easier r were friends of the family; moreover, he had a critic on the hearth who could prompt his first steps and check his 'prentice errors with knowledge drawn from a long and very practical experience.

"Most of the knowledge I possess of how to write," Maxwell once told Clive Holland, "and, indeed, the fact that I commenced to write at all, I owe to my mother. She was never too busy, or too immersed in her work to discuss my literary ambitions, or work of my own. She did not always know the way any story of mine was going, for I wished neither for it to be an imitation of hers nor in any way to trade upon her own great and world-wide reputation." He confessed, however, to a frequent feeling that however difficult he might find it to master his art, he had an even more difficult task in the attempt to follow her and necessarily challenge comparison with her work and her un-qualified success. "I remember," he added, "the son of a great man saying in my hearing that the

fact that he was so situated had, in a measure, spoiled his life. 'People expect too much,' he re-marked pathetically, 'and sometimes get so little. I might have been quite a success if I had not been overshadowed by my great father.' "
But he broke

"his birth's invidious bar"

and without grasping either his mother's skirts or those of happy chance (unless Grant Richards was wearing them on the occasion I will presently mention), he became a novelist in his own way and up built his own reputation. Considering the influences that must have been round him in his childhood, taking it that he inherited his literary gift from his mother and that she, as he tells us, taught his young idea how to shoot, if his stories had been more or less of the M. E. Braddon pattern, it would not have been surprising. But, unlike those, his novels are much less concerned with sensational happenings or plot of any kind than with intricacies of character and the mysteries of human psychology. Even from the beginning he struck out in independent line for himself, and his first book, published in 1901, when he was thirty-five, was (to give it its full title), "The Countess of Maybury: Being the Intimate Conversations of the Right Honorable the Countess of Maybury. Collected with Sedulous Care and Respectful Admiration by W. B. Maxwell," a series of satirical, light comedy dialogues of high society which preceded the "Dolly Dialogues" by a year or two but did not, as they

did, set a fashion. His second book, two years later, was a volume of short stories called "Fabulous Fancies," and this revealed him as a realist — one not without idealism and a sensitive feeling for the romance of life, but a realist none the less, and that quality of realism predominates in all the novels and stories he has written since.

He was late in making this beginning, when he was over thirty, especially considering how his environment favored his development, but he was not hastened by the spur of necessity; he had found a sufficient outlet for his energies in a healthy love of hunting and outdoor sport, and traveled a good deal. Also he has said that he only turned to literature after he had failed in other directions. What those directions were I do not know, except that he was bitten with a young ambition to be a painter and studied on and off for some years at certain art schools in London. On the whole, and despite his ancestry, he thinks himself he might never have taken seriously to the writing of fiction if he had not happened to meet that enterprising publisher Grant Richards who, with characteristic courage and fore-sight, commissioned him to write him a novel, "an arresting novel," of modern life. Not many publishers would have risked giving such a commission to an almost untried author, but the result amply justified the publisher's prescience, and with "The Ragged Messenger," in 1904, Maxwell scored the first and one of the biggest of his successes. Its success was the more remarkable in that it was a story of tragedy, and there is a trad-

ition that the public shrinks from such, but it was its reality, the understanding and poignant truth to human experience with which its characters were drawn and their lives laid bare that caught the reader's sympathy and gave the book its power of appeal.

"Vivian" was a readable successor to this, but "The Guarded Flame" (1906) rose to an altogether higher level. So far as my judgment goes, u The Guarded Flame" shares with the brilliant satirical story of the middle-class, self-reliant "Mrs. Thompson" and that grim and powerful study in degeneracy, "In Cotton Wool," the distinction of representing the highest reach of Maxwell's art, with not far below them "The Devil's Garden" and "The Mirror and the Lamp."

"The Devil's Garden," which was published in the year before the War burst upon us, brought Maxwell into trouble with our unofficial censorship and was banned by the libraries. I remember it as a vivid, uncompromising story of a self-made man whose life and the lives of his associates do not smack of the innocence of Arcadia and are portrayed with a conscientious exactitude, but the morality of the novel was implicit, and why any one should object when an artist faithfully pictures the unpleasant facts of life, why we should be shocked to find in a novel things that we go on tolerating in the world around us is one of those little eccentricities of the moral sense in man that I have left off trying to understand. The only effect of the ban was that "The Devil's Garden" was more talked

of and sold better than any other of his novels, and it is this perhaps that has led many to accept it as the best he has done; but I would rank it at most with his second best.

For five years after that event, from September 19 14 till the end of the war, he turned his back on literature and served as subaltern and as Captain in

the Royal Fusiliers. He says that during the war he felt that when peace came we should witness the uprising of u a new and vigorous school of romantic novelists"; that a world so long oppressed "by hideous realities must crave for the realm of pure imagination," for gaiety, joyousness, for something more akin to the charm and happiness of the fairy-tale.

But when the war was over, he confesses, he soon found he was mistaken. No such complete change entered even into his own stories. A note of idealism is sounded in "The Mirror and the Lamp," in "A Man and his Lesson" and "Spinster of this Parish," but so it was in the books he wrote before the war, and otherwise, as in those, he still handles, with a subtle mastery of atmosphere and detail, the dark problems of character and temperament, the ugly but real facts of human experience that are still the spiritual inheritance and material environment of real men and women.

He did, in one of his post-war novels (" A Little More"), experiment in what was for him rather a new vein. It was the story of a once well-to-do family that was reduced to squalid poverty, and the father and one daughter faced their altered circum-

stances with more resolution than resignation, though the father had more courage than competence. I think Maxwell was trying his hand at the kind of grown-up fairy-tale toward which a reaction from the grim realities we had just come through inclined him; but the sentiment softened at times into sentimentality, his scenes and characters of poorer life were not so convincing as they are in

some of his other novels. The spirit of the time had too thoroughly subdued him; but he made a quick recovery and with u Spinster of this Parish" triumphantly found himself again and proved that his hand had not lost its earlier cunning.

LEONARD MERRICK

Leonard Merrick

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LEONARD MERRICK

Until a collected edition of his novels and stories appeared in 191 8, Leonard Merrick had been writing for thirty years without receiving a tithe of the recognition that was over-due to him. I doubt whether even now he has such popularity as is enjoyed by many novelists who have not half his capacity, his sure and delicate art, his supreme gift as a story-teller. I can only explain this with a theory I have sometimes played with that a book draws its life from its author, and most books that are immediately and noisily successful are written by men of robust and pushful personality; they impart these qualities to what they write and so give their books an impetus that carries them to success, makes them as pushful and aggressive in the reading world as the personality behind them is in the world at large.

This may be purely fantastic, but the fact remains that Leonard Merrick is a personality of a gracious and retiring order; he is seldom seen in literary circles, and has no skill in self-advertisement. Once, not long ago, I told him I had often wondered that such stories as his had not from the first taken the public by storm, and asked if he could to any extent help me to understand why they had not done so. He accepted the implications in

my question with a smile and said, in the quietest, most impartial fashion, "I don't know. Of course I have been disappointed when my books were freely praised by the critics and did not meet with the large circulations I had hoped for them, and sometimes, when I have thought about it, I have had a suspicion that perhaps I wrote too much of artists — of novelists, journalists, actors — and, moreover, too much about artists who failed. I fancy the public are not particularly interested in the artist; they prefer to read about people more like themselves — people with whom and whose ways they are more familiar. Or if they are to be told of the artist, they want him to be a hero — they want to be told how he struggled through thrilling trials and difficulties to happiness and prosperity at last — they don't want to be saddened by a tale of his failure; they don't want to know about him unless he was the sort of man who could conquer fate and circumstance romantically and, as the Americans say, make good in the end. And I have seen a good deal of the artist's life, and seen how there is bound to be far more failure than suc-

cess in it, and I suppose I have tried to picture it truthfully. Perhaps that was a mistake and I ought, in the language of the theater, to have kept my eye on the box-office. I don't know. That is merely a casual notion of mine, and may not account for anything."

However that may be, and whatever it was that kept the large public that has come to him by degrees from promptly appreciating him, Merrick's

greatness as a novelist has from the beginning been fully realized by his fellow-craftsmen; he has all along been the novelists' novelist, somewhat as Keats was the poets' poet, and the collected edition of his works bore testimony to this in prefaces to the various volumes by Barrie, Wells, Locke, Chesterton, Neil Munro, Neil Lyons, and other distinguished authors. None was more generous in his acclaim than Barrie, who had long before greeted him as a master of fiction and, in his introduction to "Conrad in Quest of his Youth," said, "I know scarcely a novel by any living Englishman, except a score or so of Mr. Hardy's, that I would rather have written." Allowing for his very different angle of vision, Merrick is as true a realist as Hardy, but he touches in his characters and incidents with a lighter hand, and has as shrewd a sense of the comedy — the piteous comedy it may be at times — as Hardy has of the tragedy of existence. He does not show his men and women as the foredoomed and helpless victims of a blind, indifferent, implacable life-force, but simply tells his story of them, what they did and what they felt and said, and any spiritual, moral, or social problem involved in their doings and sufferings is implicit in

his dramatization of their lives and characters; he does not take you aside to expound it or dogmatize about it: there it is — that is how things happen, and he is a showman, not a preacher. His prevailing qualities are a Gallic sparkle and effervescence of wit and gaiety — especially in such tales as make up "While Paris Laughed" and U A Chair on the

Boulevard" — a limitless charity and pity for the follies, weaknesses, caprices of mankind, a charm of sentiment that just stops short of sentimentality, a quick sensitiveness to the humor and pathos of common life, the anxieties of living by precarious employment; the tragedy of straitened circumstances; the sheer joy of living in spite of everything.

He has experienced much of the life he has depicted, and has put not a little of his personal experiences into "The Worldings," into "Laurels and the Lady," one of the stories of "The Man Who Understood Women," and into other of his books. Usually there is nothing to tell of a novelist's early days, except that he went to certain schools, practiced journalism for a while, then wrote a book or two which found acceptance sooner or later and thereafter took up permanent residence in the literary world. But Merrick's career has been less orthodox and more varied.

A Londoner born, he went with his people to South Africa when he was eighteen and, entering the South African Civil Service, became clerk in the Magistrate's Court on the Diamond Fields. But he had not the smallest intention of settling down to that. He was, as he told me, born "stage-

struck," and his one ambition as a youth was to tread the boards and achieve fame as an actor. In 1884 ne returned to England and obtained an introduction to Augustus Harris, who gave him an engagement to act in a touring company that was traveling the country with one of the big Drury

Lane autumn melodramas. He proved himself a thoroughly capable player, yet would have lost his part, because the touring manager was bent on pushing him out and supplanting him with a friend of his own, but for the voluntary intervention of another member of the company who wrote privately to Harris urging him to go down and see Leonard Merrick's acting for himself before making any change. Harris did so, with the result that Merrick retained his position in the company for two years, at the end of which period, his enthusiasm for the actor's life being cooled, he retired from the profession for good. Not until some years later did he discover by chance that the member of the company who, without his knowledge, had befriended him and saved him from dismissal, was Arthur Collins, who, in due season, was to succeed Augustus Harris as Drury Lane's managing director.

When the disillusioned mummer strutted his little hour before the footlights for the last time he was twenty-three, and "The Position of Peggy Harper" is by no means the only one of his books to which his two years in motley have yielded a rich harvest. Since then, except that he wrote "The Free Pardon" with F. C. Phillips and some very popular dramas in collaboration with George R. Sims, the stage has ceased to lure him and he has

devoted himself to the writing of stories.

Nor did he lose much time in passing from the one calling to the other, for his first book appeared when he was twenty-four. His second novel, u Vio-

let Moses, " was rejected by Chatto & Windus, but accepted by Bentley; and his third, "The Man Who Was Good," was rejected by Bentley as not up to the level of the other, but promptly accepted by Chatto & Windus; one of life's lighter ironies that nobody — certainly not Merrick — would have wished to evade. He had published some half dozen novels before he began to write short stories. He confesses that he prefers to write these, and there are stories in at least two of his volumes that for delicate satirical comedy and subtle art of narration have not been surpassed by any of his contemporaries.

From the outset, Merrick met with a more popular reception in America than in this country; his books enjoyed a considerable vogue there, and his short stories were soon in great demand with the American magazines. This has happened to so many other of our writers that one merely mentions it as a biographical fact and not as matter for surprise. His first real success with short stories over here came when his agent, A. P. Watt, handed one of his books to the editor of the Bystander, urging him to read it and see whether its stories were not of the sort he wanted. He read it, and commissioned six, and before these had all appeared commissioned a further twelve. Thereafter, the trouble was not to place such stories but to write as many as were required.

While he was in his thirties Leonard Merrick lived for some time in Paris, and Paris still draws him at intervals from the retirement of his English

home, for he finds there ideas and stimulation, and can work there as he never can in London. As a rule, the Londoner born has a sneaking regard for his city and cannot be long away from it without feeling its intangible human hands plucking at his heart and its multitudinous voices calling him back, but in spite of the fact that he is a true-blue Cockney, born, in 1864, at Belsize Park, on the skirts of Hampstead, Merrick tells you he does not love London. It is the most comfortable of cities, he admits, but he finds it uninspiring and can work better and more easily when he is almost anywhere away from it — especially when he is in Paris.

ALAN ALEXANDER MILNE

Alan Alexander Milne

ALAN ALEXANDER MILNE

The tradition that the Scot has no humor still

lingers among old-fashioned people who don't like changes, but of recent years Barrie, Neil Munro (as Hugh Foulis), J. J. Bell, Ian Hay, A. A. Milne, and some others have shaken it to such an extent that only the incurably obstinate now attempt to maintain it.

But while the humor of the others smack finely of the north of the Tweed, the humor of Milne seems to indicate that his spiritual home is a much more frivolous place. There is something Irish or English about its airy gaiety, its blithe, amusing flippancy. Dr. Johnson once spoke slightingly about the art of carving faces on cherry-stones, but if he had tried his hand at that work he would have realized that to accomplish it successfully one must be born with a gift that is as rare as the more impressive gift for writing serious prose. Our ancestors, as a whole, realized that, and would exclaim with admiration at the marvelous facility of Swift who could write you an essay off-hand on anything or nothing. I remember how, when I was a small boy, a bookish old gentleman informed me of this in his library and went on to tell with bated breath the familiar yarn of how, to test the Dean's

limitless capacity, a lady challenged him to write an

essay on a broomstick, and he at once sat down and did it. But we should think little of that nowadays. Milne would not need so much as a broomstick; he could do it on one of the bristles.

So could E. V. Lucas or Chesterton, or Belloc.

But in the matter of slightness of theme and the capacity for writing charmingly and humorously on next to nothing at all Milne has closer affinities with Lucas; they not only can do it but make a habit of doing it. Both write light verse as well as light prose; both contributed to Punch (Lucas contributes to it still), and as Anstey and many another, in various forms, had practiced the same volatile literature in those pages, it seems possible that the influence of Punch may have been more or less responsible for developing likewise in them a delightfully neat and sprightly vein of humor.

However that may be, Milne had begun to exercise his characteristic style while he was at Cambridge, where he was made editor of the Granta. He came to London in 1903, and settled down, first in Temple Chambers, afterwards at Chelsea (where he still resides, but not in his original two rooms) to make a living as a free-lance author and journalist. His earnings through the first two years were far below the income-tax level, but in the third year he was appointed assistant-editor of Punch, to which he had already been contributing largely, and the world in general began to be aware of him from seeing the initials A. A. M. appearing in that periodical with significant regularity. It not only saw them, but looked out for them, and

was soon betraying curiosity in public places as to the identity of the person who owned them; an in^ fallible sign that a writer is giving the public what it wants as well as what it ought to want.

Between 19 10 and 19 14 he collected his Punch contributions into three volumes, "The Day's Play,"

"The Holiday Round," and "Once a Week," but was no sooner so established as an entertaining and popular essayist than the War intervened to take him to fresh woods and pastures that were new but not desirable. It is impossible to unfold the record of any of our younger and few of our older contemporary authors without coming up against the War. Milne promptly withdrew from Punch, joined the Royal Warwickshire Regiment, and was sent out to France. Here, in odds and ends of leisure from military occupations, he found opportunity and the moods for writing that quaint, whimsical story "Once on a Time," which was published in 19 17; and then, too, he made a first experiment as a dramatist with his shrewdly, cleverly satirical comedy of "Wurzel-Flummery." There is a new depth and maturity under the humor of these things, and he said that in writing the story he for the first time wrote in earnest.

By-and-by, after a breakdown which had put him in hospital for a while, when he was sent to act as signaling instructor at a fort on Portsdown Hill, he had an impulse to continue playwriting, and would spend a long day at the fort teaching his class how to signal, then go home to the cottage where he and his wife were living, a couple of miles

away, and dictate to her, until he had produced in succession, "Belinda," "The Boy Comes Home" and "The Lucky One." These were in due course presented on the London stage, and if they had no success comparable with his later plays, they were successful enough before the footlights, and in the book into which he gathered them in 19 19, to demonstrate that a new dramatist had arisen, and

one to be reckoned with.

There are plenty of signs of the potential dramatist in the pre-war essays — in their easy and natural use of dialogue, and their deft, vivid handling of incidents: and there is a bite of realism in their genial satire and burlesque irony, which foreshadows the keener, riper irony and satire of "Bladys." For instance, there is the sketch of "The Newspaper Proprietor," that "lord of journalism," Hector Strong, who, to oblige a lady, saves her play from failure and forces it into a raging success by the adroitness with which he booms it in his numerous newspapers. It may seem ridiculous, and Milne may have invented it all, but take away a few farcial details from his narrative, and there are those behind the scenes who will assure you that this deed was actually done. As for "A Breath of Life," in which the actor who plays the young hero falls really in love with the actress who plays the heroine and on a passionate impulse finishes the play triumphantly at the end of the third act to such thunders of applause from the audience that the fourth is cut away for good — ask any dramatist and he will tell you that his own plays

suffered worse than that at the hands of their producers until he became successful and important enough to insist on the piece being acted exactly as it was written.

Always there was this germ of truth in Milne's earlier trifles and flippancies. "A Trunk Call" is by no means such an irresponsible farce as some may think it. Here, the dainty Celia buys a fancy knocker and puts it on the door of her husband's

study, in order that she may give him warning at any time before she comes to interrupt him. He wants her to try it forthwith, but she demurs:

" 'Not now. I'll try later on, when you aren't expecting it. Besides, you must begin your work. Good-bye. Work hard.' She pushed me in and shut the door.

"I began to work.

"I work best on the sofa; I think most clearly in what appears to the hasty observer to be an attitude of rest. But I am not sure that Celia really understands this yet. Accordingly, when a knock comes at the door I jump to my feet, ruffle my hair, and stride up and down the room with one hand on my brow. 'Come in,' I call impatiently, and Celia finds me absolutely in the throes. If there should chance to be a second knock later on, I make a sprint for the writing-desk, seize pen and paper, upset the ink or not as it happens, and present to any one coming in at the door the most thoroughly engrossed back in London.

"But that was in the good old days of knuckle-knocking. On this particular morning I had hardly

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written more than a couple of thousand words —

I mean I had hardly got the cushions at the back
of my head comfortably settled when Celia came in.

" 'Well?' she said eagerly.

"I struggled out of the sofa.

" 'What is it?' I asked sternly.

" 'Did you hear it all right?'
'I didn't hear anything.'

'Oh!' she said in great disappointment. 'But
perhaps you were asleep/ she went on hopefully.

" 'Certainly not. I was working.'

" 'Did I interrupt you?'
'You did rather; but it doesn't matter/
'Oh, well, I won't do it again — unless I really
have to. Goodbye, and good luck.' "

The knocker may be an effort of the imagina-
tion, otherwise this reads as if it were taken from
life. It may even be true about Milne himself, for
he has said in print that his work comes easy to
him; and if you show the complete sketch to the
wife of any literary man of your acquaintance the
chances are she will wonder how Milne got to know
so much about her husband. But his trim figure
and alert, clean-shaven face, apart from the quantity
of work he has placed to his credit, belie any sug-
gestion that since he finds his work easy he takes
his ease, except when it is finished. He is restlessly
alive, and gives you the impression of being some-
thing of an out-door man, a golfer probably, per-
haps a cricketer, though you need not believe he
looks forward to the opening of the cricket sea-

son quite so enthusiastically as he suggests in "The First Game" —

"It is the day that I watch for yearly,
Never before has it come so late;
But now I've only a month — no, merely
A couple of fortnights left to wait ;
And then (to make the matter plain)
I hold — at last! — a bat again:
Dear Hobbs! the weeks this summer — think! the weeks I've lived

in vain."

When he was demobilized, his old post of assistant-editor of Punch was waiting for him, but he had formed other plans for his future during the war, and arranged not to go back. He did not just then intend to abandon the light essay, and in "If I may" (1920) his hand for it is as cunning as ever; but the theater had got into his blood, his ambition was taking higher flights, and "Mr. Pirn Passes By" (he wrote it also into a novel as quaintly humorous and sentimental as the play) and the mordantly ironic "Truth About Bladys" soared at once and almost simultaneously to such heights of popularity that if the dramatist has not presently absorbed the essayist altogether, it won't be for want of an excellent excuse.

ALFRED NOYES

Alfred Noyes

ALFRED NOYES

Early in his career, being rash as well as young, Alfred Noyes made the tactical mistake of writing poetry that became popular. He was crowned with eulogy by leading critics who, naturally, could not foresee that he would also win the applause of the multitude or, no doubt, they would have been more careful. Meredith helped to mislead them; he praised the beauty and finely restrained pathos of "Michael Oaktree," a narrative poem in Noyes's very first volume, "The Loom of Years." But it was his third and fourth books, those exquisite fairy tales in verse, "The Flower of Old Japan" (1903) and "The Forest of Wild Thyme" (1905), that carried him right into the popularity which disillusioned those self-centered experts who cling to a narrow faith that poetry cannot be poetry if it makes a triumphant appeal to the large world that lives and works in outer darkness beyond the limits of their own select, small circle.

Noyes has always been reckless in these matters. He never took the precaution to attach himself to any of our little groups of poetasters who ecstatically give each other the glory the common public with-holds from them. Before he made a book of his great epic, "Drake" — and it is great not only by comparison with what has been done by his liv-

ing contemporaries — instead of treating it as some-

thing too rare and delicate for human nature's daily food, he ran it serially in Blackwood's Magazine, as if it had been a new novel. No poem had ever appeared in that fashion before. I believe he had not written more than half when the first instalment of it was printed, and the orthodox could not be expected to approve of that sort of thing. They began to say Noyes was too facile; wrote too hurriedly and too much; began to take it for granted that no man who wrote thus copiously and fluently could be an authentic poet, when they might more reasonably have assumed that he did by a certain native gift what was only possible to themselves by the slower, sedulous exercise of an average talent. Howbeit, from being lauded freely, Noyes is now more misrepresented, by a group of poet-critics, whose judgments are too often sound in the wrong sense, than any other poet of our day. Whether anything less respectable than a restricted poetical outlook can account for this misrepresentation I shall not attempt to guess, but, noticing it, I have sometimes been reminded of lines he puts into the mouth of Marlowe, in his "Tales of the Mermaid Tavern" —

"I tell thee 'tis the dwarfs that find no world
Wide enough for their jostlings, while the giants,
The gods themselves, can in one tavern find
Room wide enough to swallow the wide heaven
With all its crowded solitary stars."

Unprofessional lovers of poetry read Noyes not because it is the proper, high-brow thing to do, but

solely because they enjoy reading him. It is an excellent reason; and for the same reason Tenny-

son and Browning are famous; so, in these times, are Masefield and Davies; de la Mare and William Watson. Noyes differs from most of his contemporaries in being at once, like Chaucer, a born story-teller and, like Swinburne, an amazing master of meter and rhyme. He is not alone in being able more readily and adequately to express himself in meter and rhyme than in prose, and it is ridiculous to assume that this ability indicates any shallowness of thought; it indicates, rather, that he is really efficient in an art he has taken pains to acquire.

It is equally ridiculous to dub him old-fashioned, as some of our superior persons do, because he accepts the classical tradition in poetry. He has not accepted it unintelligently or slavishly; if you look through his books you will note how cunningly he makes old meters new again, and that he has invented enough new meters or variations in accepted metrical forms to give him a place even with those who claim to be rebels against authority. One such rebel, a prominent American poet, included the other day in his collected works a goodly proportion of vers llbre from which one of our advanced critics chose two passages for admiring quotation. The ideas in these passages were a mere repetition of two that are expressed with higher art and deeper feeling in "In Memoriam," yet that advanced critic is one who dismisses Tennyson as out of date and has hailed the American poet

as the last word in modern thinking. Perhaps he and his like have not troubled to read what they consider old-fashioned. I mention the circumstance by way of showing to what a pass some of

our critics and poets have come.

If Noyes has any theories of poetry, I gather they are that the poet is essentially one endowed with the gift of song; that all the great poets, from Homer downward, have been great singers; and that when he utters himself in meter and rhyme he is but putting himself in tune with the infinite order of the universe — with the rhythm of the tides, of the seasons, the recurring chime of day and night, the harmonious movement of the stars in their orbits. He once confessed to me that he was so far from fearing the possibilities of metrical invention were exhausted that he was convinced we are still at the beginning of them; they were exhausted, according to the first disciples of Whitman, sixty years ago, but Swinburne arose and invented so many new meters that he was considered more revolutionary in his era than Whitman's later disciples are in ours.

There is a virility and range of subject and style in Noyes's work that make a good deal of modern verse seem old-maidish or anaemic by comparison. It is a far cry from the grace and tenderness and dainty fancy of "The Flower of Old Japan", u The Forest of Wild Thyme", and some of the lyrics in "The Elfin Artist", and elsewhere, to the masculine imaginative splendor in thought and diction, the robust energy of his epic, "Drake", or, though

gentler moods of pathos, humor, wistful fantasy are never absent from any of his books, to the series of narratives that make up "The Torch Bearers" — an ambitious succession of poems that reveal, with dramatic power and insight and a

quick sensitiveness to the poetry of science, the progress of scientific discovery in the life-stories of the great discoverers. None has pictured War in more terribly realistic terms or with a more passionate hatred of its inhumanity than he has in "The Wine Press"; and you have him in the breeziest, most riotously humorous of his moods in "Forty Singing Seamen." But if I should single my own favorite from his books it would be the "Tales of the Mermaid Tavern." Here he finds full scope for his many-sided gift; you can turn from the rollicking yarn of "Black Bill's Honeymoon" to the dignity and poignance of "The Burial of a Queen," from the anecdotal picturesqueness of "A Coiner of Angels" to the fervor and glittering pageantry of "Flos Mercatorum," from the suspense and tragedy of "Raleigh" to the laughter and lighter tears and buoyant tripping measures of "The Companion of a Mile," telling how Will Kemp, the player, danced from London to Norwich for a wager, and passing through Sudbury met a young butcher who offered to dance a mile with him —

"By Sudbury, by Sudbury, by little red-roofed Sudbury,

He wished to dance a mile with me! I made a courtly bow :
I fitted him with morrice-bells, with treble, bass and tenor bells,

And 'Tickle your tabor, Tom/ I cried, 'we're going to market now/

And rollicking down the lanes we dashed, and frolicking up the hills we clashed,

And like a sail behind me flapped his great white frock
a-while,
Till with a gasp, he sank and swore that he could dance
with me no more;
And over the hedge a milk-maid laughed. Not dance with
him a mile?

'You lout!' she laughed, 'I'll leave my pail, and dance with
him for cakes and ale !
'I'll dance a mile for love,' she laughed, 'and win my wa-
ger too.
'Your feet are shod and mine are bare; but when could
leather dance on air?
'A milk-maid's feet can fall as fair and light as falling
dew.'

I fitted her with morrice-bells, with treble, bass and tenor
bells:
The fore-bells, as I linked them to her throat, how soft
they sang !
Green linnets in a golden nest, they chirped and trembled
on her breast,
And faint as elfin blue-bells at her nut-brown ankles
rang.

I fitted her with morrice-bells that sweetened into wood-
bine bells,
And trembled as I hung them there and crowned her sunny
brow :
'Strike up,' she laughed, 'my summer king!' And all her
bells began to ring,
And 'Tickle your tabor, Tom,' I cried, 'we're going to
Sherwood now!' "

This, and the rest of it, is \ 7 ery typical of Noyes
in his lighter vein, and if you can't see the poetry

that twinkles through the deft, airy gallop of the verse we won't talk about it; typical of him too is the pathetic aftermath of the dance, so delicately touched in that the pathos is almost lost in the beauty of it, till the motley epilogue strikes the deeper note of sadness through the loud laughter of the fool.

Noyes was born in Staffordshire in 1880, and I know nothing of his doings at Oxford, except that he rowed in the Exeter College Eight. He is nowadays an Hon. Litt. D. of Yale University, and since 19 14 has been Professor of Modern English Literature at Princeton University, in America, and divides his time between that country and this. He is the most unassuming of men, looking much younger than his years, and of a sturdy, robust, serious aspect that (till his genial laugh, when he breaks silence, spoils your calculations) seems more in keeping with the vigor of his epic narratives, or with the noble rhetoric of such as that most impressive of his shorter poems, "The Creation," than with the fairy fancies, the butterfly blitheness and laughing music of "Come down to Kew at lilac time" and other of his daintier lyrics. Like most true poets who have not died young, he has become popular in his lifetime; and if he were not so versatile less versatile critics, instead of panting after him in vain, would be able to grasp him and get him under their miscroscopes and recognize him for the poet that he is.

E. PHILLIPS OPPENHEIM

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E. PHILLIPS OPPENHEIM

Even if we grant that there is a wide world of difference between imaginative and inventive fiction, and that the way to immortality is only open to the former, there is still so much to be said in praise of the latter that, if the verdict rested with his contemporaries instead of with posterity, the inventive author would often go permanently crowned with the fame that is now reserved for his more imaginative rival. Within my own recollection Wilkie Collins was the most popular novelist of his day; Meredith and Hardy had their thousands of readers and Collins his tens of thousands; everybody read him then, but hardly anybody reads him now. He used to complain, as Hall Caine records in "My Story," that the reviewers were all along disposed to sniff and qualify their appreciation, but he boasted that the public always received him with enthusiasm and overwhelmed him with grateful and adulatory letters. Moreover, his brother novelists admired and lauded his amazing ingenuity; Dickens collaborated with him, and his influence is perhaps traceable in "The Mystery of Edwin Drood" — in the unusual dexterity and subtlety with which its plot is constructed.

His own formula for holding the reader's at-

tention was "make him laugh; make him weep; or make him wait" ; and he devoted himself almost exclusively to the third of these methods. Character is of quite minor importance in his stories — Count Fosco was his one masterly creation; the only one of all his dramatis persona you recall without effort — there is little humor in them, and little pathos. For him, the plot was the thing, a cunningly contrived, carefully dovetailed plot, with a heart of mystery and sensation that should hold the reader in suspense till it was unraveled and cleared up in the last pages. His justification was that he thrilled and delighted enormous multitudes. It is enough that he did triumphantly what he set himself to do; the best and most precious things in life are not often the most lasting; and whether or not his work is immortal, it was great in its kind and an art beyond the genius of novelists who seem destined to outlive him.

And, as a form of literature, the novel of sensation, crime, mystery is immortal if its authors are not. Collins has been dethroned, but his successors are legion, and none has made out a stronger title to the inheritance of his mantle than Phillips Oppenheim. For the skill with which he constructs a baffling plot, intrigues his readers from the opening, and keeps them in suspense till it is time, at last, to give away his secret, none of them excels — I am not sure that more than one of them equals him. I don't think he aims to be anything but entertaining, and how many of our novelists who claim to be much more are not even that!

Two of our most distinguished critics have, at different times, confessed to me that with the passing of years they have lost their taste for fiction; the modern psychological novel seems pretentious and bores them; they are no longer young enough to be susceptible to romantic adventure; they can learn nothing and get no amusement from the crudeness and boyish or girlish naivete of the latter-day sex novel, but they do find interest, excitement and a tonic recreation in novels such as Oppenheim writes. "I suppose I have seen too much of actual life," said one of them, u to be startled or particularly interested in what I am told about it by a novelist who knows no more of it than I know myself. I like Oppenheim because he takes me outside my personal experiences; he does not appeal to my memory but to my imagination; he tells me a tale that is new to me, that rouses my curiosity, keeps me guessing, makes me forget everything else in my keenness to follow up the clues to his mystery and see how he solves it. I don't care whether it is good literature, I know it is a good story, and that's what every novel ought to be and few are. I sometimes think we take our novelists and they take themselves and their function too seriously. The old troubador, when he sang his ballads and told his yarns in the street, didn't do it for glory but for the coppers the crowd, if he pleased them, would throw into his hat. He was nothing but an entertainer; people didn't want him to be anything else — it is all I want his modern representative, the novelist, to be, and it is what Oppenheim emphat-

ically is. He simply writes for the time, and the time is promptly rewarding him with popularity

and hard cash, while so many of our little artists will not stoop to the present and are writing neatly for a future that will never read them."

He has written some sixty novels and books of short stories, having seen his first novel published in 1886, when he was twenty. I do not pretend to have read them all, but since I read "Mysterious Mr. Sabin," a good many years ago, I have never missed reading any Phillips Oppenheim story that has come within reach of me. Read "The Amazing Partnership," "The Plunderers," "A Prince of Sinners," "Mr. Lessingham Goes Home," and you will find that while he is as ingenious as Wilkie Collins at fashioning a plot that captures your interest in its complexities, he gets more rapidly into his story, handles dialogue more skillfully, unfolds his incidents as vividly but with a lighter hand and loses no time on the way.

After he left school Phillips Oppenheim went into his father's leather business at Leicester, but he had started writing stories for his own amusement before that. The leather business was so successful that Blumenthals, the big American and Paris leather firm, bought it up, and appointed Phillips Oppenheim their director at Leicester. His experience in that trade has proved immensely useful to him. It has not only helped him to material for his tales, but it was through the American head of Blumenthals that he had his chief incentive to the writing of the type of story that has brought him

such success as a novelist. This gentleman introduced him to the proprietor of the Cafe de Rat Mort, the once famous Montmartre haunt, for

Oppenheim was frequently in Paris on the affairs of his leather company, and at the Cafe he acquired his taste for the mysteries of those international intriguings and rascalities that figure so largely in several of his books, for the proprietor used to tell him all manner of thrilling yarns about political and international adventurers, some of whom had been among his customers, and his listener formed a habit of weaving stories round the more striking personalities in the cosmopolitan crowd that he met in the Rat Mort. He assured me that however ingenious I might think them, he never really constructs his stories but simply lets them grow. "Two or three people in a crowded restaurant may arouse my interest, and the atmosphere is compelling," says he. "I start weaving a story round them — the circumstances and the people gradually develop as I go on dictating to my secretary the casual thoughts about them that arose in me while I was looking at them and their surroundings. First of all I must have a congenial atmosphere — then the rest is easy."

Easy, that is, to him, partly from long practice but chiefly because it was the method that came natural to him and suited his temperament. There is no use in telling any one how to write a novel, in laying down rules for doing it as if it were a mechanical trade. James Payn's plan was to prepare an elaborate synopsis, divide this into chap-

ters, then write down a description of each character, and keep these details pinned on a screen where they were handy reference while he was working. William De Morgan would start with little more than a general idea of what was going to

happen in future pages; he would get his characters together and give them their heads and let them develop the story as it went along. Every way is the best way — for the author who finds it for himself and can do as well in it as Phillips Oppenheim has done in his.

He has traveled considerably; spent much of his time in America, where he was married (and, by the way, large as his vogue is in Great Britain, he is another of our authors whose vogue is even larger in America) ; but for the most part he divides his days of work and leisure now between his home in London and his other home by the sea, in North Devon.

He is fond of the country, and of golf and all kinds of sports; he is an equally keen theater-goer, but gets more enjoyment out of writing stories than out of anything else, and since he draws more inspiration for these from the town than from the country, he is never happier than when he is in town. "The cities for me !" he said to an interviewer. u Half a dozen thoroughfares and squares in London, a handful of restaurants, the people one meets in a single morning, are quite sufficient for the production of more and greater stories than I shall ever write. " He wrote "Mr. Laxworthy's Adventures" while he was staying at a hotel in Paris;

but though Paris and New York attract him, London is his spiritual home and, with its endless streets and motley crowds, is the chief begetter of his sensational romances.

Yet his appearance is less suggestive of the city

than of rural life. Ruddy, genial, smiling, with his sturdy figure and bluff manner, it is easier to fancy him, in gaiters, carrying a riding whip, as a typical country squire, than as a brilliant imaginative author creating fictitious villains and preoccupied with dreams of strange crimes and the mysterious doings of lawless and desperate men. Which is to say only that he no more gives himself away to the casual observer than he gives away the secret of any of his plots in the first chapter of the book.

MAY SINCLAIR

May Sinclair

MAY SINCLAIR

In a rash moment, recently, Michael Sadleir committed himself to the retrospective and prophetic assertion that there never had been a great woman novelist and never would be. The first part of that statement is, of course, open to argument; the second cannot be proved. If he had said the greatest novelists, so far, have been men, he would have been on safe ground; for I don't think even the most politely complaisant master of the ceremonies would suggest that Fielding, Dickens and Thackeray should step back and allow Jane Austen, Charlotte Bronte and George Eliot to lead this particular procession of the immortals. Which is not to say that these last are not great, but only that there have been greater.

Turning to living authors, if, so far as this country is concerned (and here we are not concerned with any other), the same order of precedence still obtains, the distance between the men in the first rank and the women in the second has, at least, sensibly diminished. Leaving Hardy apart in his incontestible supremacy, have we any novelists alive who are, on the whole, superior to Wells, Conrad, Bennett, Galsworthy? It is a question Time alone can decide with certainty, but fallible men must needs, meanwhile, make up their separate minds as

best they can, and, for my part, I would answer in the negative. But should any one claim that there are four women novelists who, if they do not surpass, are equal in achievement with the four men I have named, I could not begin to deny it until I had read them all over again. So nice, so delicate a matter is not to be settled off-hand. Even such godlike judges as Gosse and Squire might well lay aside their thunder and lightning in face of it and be disposed to temporize.

For, relegating to outer darkness (where many of us would be willing to join them) all whose glory is nothing but a vast popularity and its accessories — think what a galaxy of women novelists there are and what sound and notable work the best of them have done. Of course who have been longest before the public, you have Lucas Malet, Sarah Grand, George Colmore, Mary Cholmondeley, Mary and Jane Findlater, Mrs. W. K. Clifford, Mary E. Mann; of those who began somewhat later, Elinor Mordaunt, Dolf Wyllarde, Violet

Hunt, Mrs. Henry Dudeney, M. P. Willcocks, Peggy Webling, Mrs. Dawson Scott, Beatrice Harraden, Mrs. Belloc Lowndes, Phillis Bottome, Rose Macaulay, May Sinclair, Sheila Kaye-Smith; and of a still later day, Viola Meynell, Ethel Sidgwick, Dorothy Richardson, Virginia Woolf, Mary Webb, Clemence Dane, Rebecca West, G. B. Stern, Storm Jameson, M. Leonora Eyles, Stella Benson . . . This by no means completes the list, and there is no reason for ending it here except that it is long enough and contains a sufficient number of names

for whomsoever will to select from It four whose work may fairly challenge comparison with the greatest that has been done by contemporary novelists of the other sex.

Any adequate survey of the modern English novel would, at all events, have to take into account most of the women writers I have mentioned, but for my present less ambitious occasions I am contented to limit my record to two — May Sinclair and Sheila Kaye-Smith — whom I take to be generally representative of such of them as are still in the full tide of their careers: the latter as having acquaintance with the larger variety of human character and giving breadth, color and fullness of life to her stories out of a wider, robuster interest in the multifarious affairs that absorb so much of the thought and activities of men; the former as being the subtler artist both in psychology and style.

As long ago as 19 16, the distinguished American critic, Dr. Lyon Phelps, described Miss Sinclair as "to-day the foremost living writer among English-speaking women." He rightly dated her rise to

this eminence from the publication of "The Divine Fire," in 1904, and as rightly reminded us that "the British audience for whom it was intended paid no attention to it" till it had been acclaimed by critics and read with enthusiasm by thousands of readers in America. Why Miss Sinclair had to wait eight years for that recognition I cannot explain. She adventured into literature in orthodox fashion by publishing two volumes of verse early in the 'nineties. Her first novel, "Audrey Craven," appeared

in 1896. Then came, with longish intervals between, "Mr. and Mrs. Nevil Tyson" and "Two Sides of a Question." These three books were touched with something of the grey realism that prevented Gissing from becoming popular with a public which, then more than now, disliked novels of that hue and preferred its fiction to be either elevating or pleasantly entertaining. But if there was no run on these three books at the libraries, they did not pass, unless my memory misleads me, without due meed of praise from the more discriminating reviews; and, as Miss Sinclair has done far finer work since "The Divine Fire," so I think she did truer, finer work before that in, at least, the second of her three earlier volumes. It were harder to say why the laurels fell upon the fourth than why they missed the second.

Rock Ferry, in Cheshire, was Miss Sinclair's birthplace, but when fame discovered her she had been living some years at Hampstead, in London, and "The Divine Fire" moves among London literary circles, sketches cleverly various literary types of character and life in boarding-houses round about Bloomsbury, with for central figure a young

Cockney poet, a kind of new Keats, who worked as a shop-assistant, wrote exquisite verse, had all the instincts of a gentleman, but was afflicted with a deplorable habit of dropping his aitches. So much is made of this weakness (which was really only as superficially significant as was Stevenson's inability to spell certain words correctly) that the frequent insistence on it comes by degrees to seem a lit-

tie finicking, a little irritating. I do not share Dr. Phelp's fancy that Charlotte Bronte returned to earth to write "The Divine Fire." Miss Sinclair may have learned things from Charlotte Bronte; she has written ably and searchingly of her in "The Three Brontes"; but influence from that source — even from the Charlotte of "Shirley" days — is scarcely traceable in any of her books and certainly does not, in "The Divine Fire," dominate her own quietly distinctive personality.

Few authors owe their popularity to their best work, and, at the risk of appearing heretical, I will admit I have always counted "The Divine Fire" as one of Miss Sinclair's unsuccessful experiments, and "The Helpmate" as another. Both have charm and distinction of style, but they have not the insight, the clearness of vision, that mark her later novels. She is, especially in the second, like an artist drawing without models and erring in small details, getting the anatomy of her characters here and there out of proportion. The cleverness and the interest of "The Helpmate" are undeniable, but its people do not wear flesh about them; they are seriously presented, but one feels they are as outside the world of actual humanity as are the brilliant creations that play so deftly in some of the

artificial comedies of the Restoration.

"The Creators" is another tale of literary life, and one in which you are not always sure whether the author wishes you to take her poets and novelists in dead earnest or whether she is secretly laughing at them and touching off their idiosyncrasies

with a covert irony, the latter suspicion finding encouragement in the neat realism and hard-cut brilliance with which the whole thing is done. Some have complained that several of her novels are too preoccupied with the mysteries and intimacies of sexual relationship, but you might as reasonably complain that other authors exclude these from their scheme of things and are too preoccupied with other and less vitally human experiences. There is no forbidden tree in the garden of literature; all the world is the artist's parish and he is justified of any theme so long as he can handle it with such artistic success as Miss Sinclair does in "Kitty Tailleur," in "The Combined Maze," and in that tragically poignant short shory "The Judgment of Eve."

Perhaps she reaches the highest expression of her genius in this and other of her short stories ("The Wrackham Memoirs" is a little masterpiece of ironic comedy) and in the shortest of her novels, "The Life and Death of Harriet Frean" — the detached pity, the insight, the minute, illuminating realism with which the whole feeble, self-sacrificing, sentimental little soul of Harriet is revealed, and the perfect technique with which it is all set down, give power and beauty to what in less skilled, less sensitive hands might have been a frail, wist-

ful story of no particular significance.

Miss Sinclair is more erudite than the majority of novelists and, outside the world of fiction, has proved herself a suggestive and original thinker in such philosophical subtleties as "A Defence of

Idealism." She worked, during the early stages of the War, with the Red Cross, recording her experiences in "A Journal of Impressions in Belgium, " and she drew on those experiences for scenes in some of her novels, notably in "Tasker Jevons" and in that finer story of the same period, "The Tree of Heaven."

Literary characters, the literary life, and sex problems enter pretty largely into Miss Sinclair's novels, but she has never like so many of the successful settled down to run in a groove; she does not repeat herself. She has not accepted ready-made formulas of art but has been continually reaching out for new ways of advance. She was quick to see virtue in the literary method of James Joyce and Dorothy Richardson and the possibilities inherent in the novel which should look on everything through the consciousness of a single one of its characters, and proclaimed it as the type of novel that would have a future. She may not have convinced us of this when she applied the method in the ejaculatory, minutely detailed "Mary Olivier," but its maturer development in "Harriet Frean" demonstrated that it was a manner which could be used with supreme artistic effectiveness. All the same, the method is not so new as James Joyce; you may find the beginnings of it, employed less self-consciously, with more reticence and more hu-

mor, in the first and last novels of that very old-fashioned novelist William De Morgan.

FRANK SWINNERTON

Frank Svvimnerton

FRANK SWINNERTON

When his first novel, "The Merry Heart," was published, in 1909, Frank Swinnerton was still so youthful that I remember persons of my own age had a way of referring to him, with an avuncular air, as "young Swinnerton." He was twenty-four, but his smooth, boyish face, his unassuming manner, that hovered between a natural vivacity and a sort of shyness, made him look and seem younger than he was. In the fourteen years since then he has done work, as novelist and as critic, that has made him famous on at least two continents, he has grown a moustache and a trim, pointed reddish beard that with the lurking twinkle in his eyes, give him somewhat the appearance of an acute Frenchman (though nobody could, in general, be more thoroughly English), and, so far from being shy, he will now rise on a platform or at a public dinner and make you an admirably serious or witty and humorous address with the completest self-possession.

In fact, he has so matured, in himself and in his knowledge of life, that he makes those who once called him young feel as if they had not kept time with him and he had become their senior. Yet in the best way he is still as young as ever. He has

that tonic streak of frivolity in him which is better

than any monkey-gland for saving a man from getting old. He can be as serious as most people on occasion, but his joyous gifts for telling a droll anecdote or mimicking the voice, manner and peculiarities of an acquaintance are gifts not so commonly shared. He takes his art seriously, but unless you catch him in the right mood he is not ready to talk seriously about it. Some authors appear to be so in love with their work that they will tell you they are never happier than when they are driving the pen and putting their thoughts on paper, but Frank Swinnerton is not one of those. He protests that he writes slowly; with difficulty; that he does not like work; finds it irksome; that he finds pleasure in thinking out an idea, but once he has thought it out he has a feeling that it ought to be all done with, and puts off shaping it into words as long as he can, and then can only bring himself to do it by fits and starts or with intermittent bursts of energy. But if you took him too literally in this I think you would misunderstand him. It would be truer to say of him, as he has said of Gissing, "Conscientiousness was the note of his artistic character. . . . The books are full of steady and sincere work. Only when they were written with joy (which does not signify gaiety) they were of original value."

For if his own books were not written with that same joy in creation (which may co-exist with a dislike of the mechanical act of writing) they could not be so intensely alive as they are.

You might almost guess from his novels that Swinnerton was a Londoner, or at least, like Dick-

ens, had been made a naturalized citizen of the "dear, damned, delightful, dirty" town when he was a child. He was born at Wood Green, no such ideally rural suburb as its name suggests, and has lived in London all his life. A severe illness when he was eight years old made going to school out of the question for some time, and continued delicate health and recurring break-downs rendered any education so fragmentary as to be pretty well negligible. But he was all the while, without knowing it, educating himself in ways that were fitting him for the career he was to follow. Books were his teachers, and his literary ambitions took an active form so early that at the age of ten he was running an amateur magazine — one of the kind that years ago (and probably still) used to circulate in manuscript among subscribers who were all contributors and usefully, and sometimes mercilessly, critized each others effort.

He was about fourteen when he turned his hand to real business and became a clerk in the London office of some Glasgow newspaper publishers. After an interval, he worked for a few years in the publishing house of J. M. Dent & Co.; then transferred himself to the firm of Chatto & Windus, whose literary adviser he has since remained, dividing his time between writing books of his own and

reading and passing judgment on the books of others, to say nothing of his doings as a reviewer or as the writer for an American magazine of one of the best monthly literary letters that go out of London.

At twenty he wrote his first novel, and it was rejected by every publisher to whom it was offered. Two more novels shared the same discouraging fate, and I believe their author has now destroyed all three. But a happier fate was reserved for his fourth, u The Merry Heart," which was promptly accepted and published; and if neither in story nor in characterization this bouyant, quietly humorous romance of a London clerk will compare with his maturer fiction, it has a charm and morning freshness of feeling and outlook to atone for what it may lack in finish.

"The Young Idea" marks a great advance in his mastery of the type of novel to which he was particularly devoting himself. This "comedy of environment," traces with a wonderfully sympathetic understanding the mental and moral development of Hilda Vernon, who is a clerk in a London office. She shares a flat with her boorish brother and delightful younger sister, and disillusioned and disheartened by her everyday experiences of the meanness and squalor of the life around her, longing still to believe "in the beauty of something, in the purity of some idea, or the integrity of some individual," but giving up hope, she meets with a man, a clerk like herself, who by his clean, courageous personality and strength of character saves her from despair and revives her old faith in humankind.

The novel is remarkable for its insight and subtle analysis of character no less than for the interest of its story; but henceforth in Swinnerton's work the

analysis of character grows and the story itself declines in importance. It is so in "The Casement," "The Happy Family," "On the Staircase," "The Chaste Wife," "Nocturne," until with "The Three Lovers," the story begins to reassert itself. I have seen "The Chaste Wife" described as his one failure, but to me it seems one of the ablest and most poignant of his books and Priscilla Evandine one of the most gracious, finely simple women he has ever drawn. "Shops and Houses" is perhaps less satisfactory, though it follows his favorite method and studies very skillfully and with a shrewd irony the various members of a middle-class family. It is in "September," a brilliant handling of the marriage of incompatible temperaments, in "The Happy Family," "The Casement," "On the Staircase," and, more than all, in "Nocturne" that Swinnerton's art is at its surest and highest. There are only five characters in "Nocturne," and from the time when Jenny Blanchard is riding home in the tram to her going out and returning from a covert visit to her lover in his yacht on the Thames, the action occupies less than six hours. Jenny, her sister Emily, their pitiful, tiresome, amusing old father, and the homely, dull Alf Rylett, who pursues Jenny with unwelcome attentions — they and their whole environment are revealed with a most graphic and intimate realism, and Jenny's impetuous rebellion against the squalor and narrowness of her lot, the spiritual tragedy of her brief, passionate self-surrender are touched with an emotional

power and sense of pity that make a story which

easily might have been drab and gross a thing strangely beautiful. Few who read it will wonder that H. G. Wells should have declared it is a book "that will not die. It is perfect, authentic, and alive."

One of his American critics (and his vogue is larger in America than in this country) has described Swinnerton as u the analyst of lovers. " He is that in most of his books, but he is a good deal more than that. It is loosely said that he is a disciple of Gissing, but so far as I can see he is one of the most original of living novelists and derives less from his predecessors than do most of his contemporaries. He deals with the gray, swarming London streets, and with middle and lower class London life, but that life has changed radically since Gissing's day, and Swinnerton is true to its modern developments. Moreover, he is no pessimist; he writes with a genial sympathy of the people whom Gissing despised, and there is a prevailing sense of humor in his pages that is never in Gissing's. His mental attitude, his style, his realistic art are altogether different.

In his book on Gissing (I have not read his book on Stevenson, which they tell me is unorthodox, and gave offence to Stevenson's admirers) he says that in Gissing's time realism was regarded as "something very repulsive and unimaginative . . . he did not see in realism very much more than laborious technical method. We are all realists today, trying very hard to see without falsity and to reproduce our vision with exactitude. Realism, I think,

is no longer associated with the foot-rule and a stupid purposeless reproduction of detail." It is not so associated in the reticent, imaginative realism he practises himself. I fancy, too, that he is getting back to his earlier manner — to the making of the story as important as the study of psychology. "The Three Lovers," as I have said, moves in that direction, and if it goes so far as to be occasionally melodramatic there is no falsity in that, for life itself is full of melodrama. He recognized in "The Casement" that love is not the whole of life, that "work of any kind seems to absorb the faculties, and some business men do, I suppose, live for their work"; and recently he has owned to a feeling that in its next development the novel will be a definite and plain tale, that there will be a revival of realistic romance which will pay less attention to men's intermittent amorous adventures and more to the business and general affairs that preoccupy most of the time of the majority. And the signs are that he is of those who are beginning to travel on those lines.

HUGH WALPOLE

Hugh Walpole

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Without reading anything of an author's works, or anything that was written about them, you might form a practical notion of his value and follow his progress along the path to glory by merely watching the growth of his reviews and the extent to which they climbed up from the obscurer into the more prominent parts of the papers. Unless he breaks the precedents and is a roaring success from the first, and that seldom happens, he will start by receiving short, inconspicuous notices some weeks or months after his book is issued, or be grouped with four or five others in a collective article, on the sardine principle. Perhaps he will never escape out of that limbo; but if he is destined for success, you will presently note that he is promoted to the dignity of long reviews with a special heading to himself; and when you find him topping a column, discussed at considerable length, with a breathless announcement bracketed under the title, "Published Today," you may be sure that, if you have not yet started to read him, it is time you began.

Hugh Walpole has been through all those stages; he went through more rapidly than most authors do, and has gone beyond them, for he was still three or four years short of forty when a leading London publisher sealed him of the elect by producing a

collected edition of his works. So as far as I can recall, he is the youngest novelist who ever had that

mark of distinction bestowed upon him. And, by way of corroborating the significance of this, a selection of passages from his books has been published in a special "Hugh Walpole Anthology," and two years in succession, with "The Secret City" and "The Captives," he has taken the Tait Black Prize awarded by the University of Edinburgh for the best novel of the year.

His father was vicar of a church at Auckland, New Zealand, in 1884, when Hugh Walpole was born. In 1887 the family removed to New York, where Dr. Walpole had accepted an appointment as Professor in a Theological College; and seven years later they migrated to England, where, in the fulness of time, the son was to become a famous novelist, and the father Bishop of Edinburgh. After completing his education at King's School, Canterbury, and Emanuel College, Cambridge, Hugh Walpole worked for a year or so as teacher at a boy's school in the provinces. Then he went to London, settled in cheap lodgings at Chelsea, and reviewed books for the newspapers, to provide for his present needs, and wrote novels with an eye on the future.

He had written his first, "The Wooden Horse," while he was at Cambridge, but discouraged by the friend to whose judgment he submitted it, laid it aside for about five years, and only offered it for publication and had it accepted in 1909, after he had taken the plunge and entered on that journalistic career in London. It was well enough received

and put a little money into his purse, and "Maradick at Forty," a much maturer work which followed within a year, met with a reception from

critics and public that made it clear he had found his vocation; then with "Mr. Perrin and Mr. Traill," a brilliant, somewhat bitter, study of the boys and masters at a dreary, lonely school in Cornwall (reminiscent, no doubt, of his own teaching days) he fairly established himself. That was in 191 1, and thence-forward his story is the story of the successsive books he wrote, until the War came to interrupt his career.

In the earlier days of the war he worked with the Red Cross on the Russian front; later, he was put in charge of British propaganda at Petrograd, and lived there throughout the chaos of the first Revolution, keeping a full diary of his experiences which has never been published. People he met, things he did and saw while he was serving with the Red Cross went into "The Dark Forest," the sombrest and one of the most ably written of his books. It came out in 19 16, while he was in Petrograd. He made a finely sympathetic study of the soul of the Slav, and pictured Petrograd in the days of the Revolution, in "The Secret City," which has been described as the truest novel of Russian life ever written by an alien, and was published toward the close of the war, when he was home again and working here in the Ministry of Information.

But these two books, though they rank with his best, are not representative. Hugh Walpole is probably as near to being a typical Englishman as

any man can be, and of his dozen other novels, "The Golden Scarecrow" and "Jeremy" show how wonderfully he can enter into the minds of children, and the rest are stories of lower-middle, mid-

dle and higher English society in town and country. "The Duchess of Wrexe," with its vividly realistic drawing of the dreadful old Duchess, enshrines an essentially English grande dame of the old-school that is rapidly becoming extinct; there are no better pictures of English family life than the pictures of the Trenchards in "The Green Mirror," and a later novel; and you guess that personal observation and experience have gone into "The Captives," "The Cathedral," and other of his stories concerned with the clergy and schoolmasters, and into the narrative in "Fortitude" of how Peter Westcott ran away from his Cornish home to face poverty in London and embark on a successful career as a novelist; for though Walpole has stated that he never draws his characters from living models, he owns that living persons suggest themes and characteristics to him.

He reveals an English trait, I think, by his confession of faith in the outlook and methods of Anthony Trollope, the most thoroughly English of all our novelists. It is curious how in writing of present-day fiction I am continually coming up against Trollope. His style is easygoing, undistinguished, often slipshod; he did not pretend to be an artist; rarely troubled much for a plot, never worried about psychology, never heard of psychoanalysis, but wrote simply of people as he saw and

knew them, put them into a loose sort of story of things that were happening round about him, and now we are more and more recognizing that in his unassuming tales of the social, political and business life of his period he was a closer observer, a greater realist than were some of his contemporaries who

surpassed him in humor, imagination and in literary genius. I come up against him so often that I suspect his quiet influence is growing more potent with our younger writers than that of Dickens, or Thackeray, or Meredith.

Not long ago, both W. L. George and Douglas Goldring announced that they would write no more psychological novels; they had arrived at a conclusion that the novelist's real business was to tell a plain tale in which his characters should be left to express themselves in action. Compton Mackenzie had preceded them with a declaration that the novelist's function was not to analyse states of mind and emotions but to dramatize them, that the novelist should before everything else be an entertainer, a teller of tales; and since the war Hugh Walpole has laid down his own views on this subject in a statement that was published by Meredith Starr in his book on "The Future of the Novel."

U A novel seems to me," says Walpole, "quite simply a business of telling a story about certain people whom the writer attempts to make as living as possible. Probably behind the lines of these people there would be some philosophy of life either stated definitely or implied in the attitude of the author. ... If I were to make any prophesy

about the future of the novel, I would say that many of us are growing tired of the thirst for novelty and are turning back with relief to any simple presentment of real people in a real way. A good instance of this is the wonderful recrudescence of Anthony Trollope, who cared nothing about form or technique or style, and had, indeed, the smallest

pretensions of himself as a novelist. But he kept his eyes fixed on the characters about whom he was writing and tried to tell the truth about them as he saw them. He was indeed too deeply interested in their adventures to think about anything else. And I believe that it is this kind of simplicity of interest on the part of the narrator to which we will return. "

The Trenchards are a kind of family Trollope might have created had he been living now; "The Cathedral' r is a kind of story he might have told, with its realistic melodrama and its clerical atmosphere, but Walpole tells it with a subtler art in the writing and the construction, with a conciseness and charm of style that are outside the range of the earlier novelist. Trollope was fat, ponderous, bewhiskered; Walpole is tall, well-knit, clean-shaven, looks even younger than his years, is nimble-witted and modern-minded; and the two do not differ more in personality than in their manner of telling a tale. The tale, and the truth of it, may be the law for both, but though they row in the same boat, to apply the pun to Douglas Jerrold, it is with very different skulls.

Most of Walpole's work is done at his cottage

by the sea in Cornwall; he retires to that seclusion when a new idea has taken hold upon him, stays there for some months at a stretch, then, with another novel completed, returns to London for recreation, and is a very familiar figure again at all manner of social functions, and one of the cleverest and most popular of after-dinner speakers. "We love him out yonder," an American assured

me; u none of your author-lecturers who come over to us has larger or more delighted audiences." A cousin of the Earl of Orford, I have seen it said that he indirectly inherits no little of the wit and shrewd worldly wisdom of his distant kinsman Horace Walpole; but the realism and haunting mysticism of "The Dark Forest" have nothing in common with the crudely romantic terrors of "The Castle of Otranto," and his wit and perspicacity are mitigated by a genial human kindness that is no part of that conjectural inheritance.

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HERBERT GEORGE WELLS

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H. G. Wells made one of his mistakes — even the wisest of us have to make a few — when, during a controversy with Henry James, he breezily denied that he was an artist and proclaimed himself a journalist. I think he must have said it with his tongue in his cheek; anyhow, it was a mistake to put that opinion into anybody's mind and those words into anybody's mouth, for there are always critics and artists, mainly of the lesser breeds, ready enough, without such prompting, to belittle any greatness that gets in their way.

Undoubtedly, Wells is a journalist, and a mightily efficient one; but he is also as subtle and fine an artist as you shall find among our living men of letters, and something of an authentic prophet, to boot. I hope his ideal state will never be realized; it is too dreadfully efficient, too exactly organized, so all mechanical, with human beings clicking in as part of the machinery that, if it ever came to pass, life in it would be reduced to such monotony that I am quite certain he would himself be one of the first to emigrate. You may say the journalist is uppermost in his social and economic gospels, such as "A Modern Utopia" and "New Worlds for Old," in those wonderful imaginative, inventive scientific romances, "The First Men in the Moon,"

"The War of the Worlds," "The War in the Air," "Men Like Gods," and in novels so given over to problems of religion, morals, sex, education and general contemporary life and conduct as are "God the Invisible King," "Joan and Peter," "Ann Veronica," "The Soul of a Bishop," "The Undying Fire," and "The Secret Places of the Heart," yet in all these it could be demonstrated that the artist and the prophet collaborated with the journalist. It has been said that when in those early romances he foresaw the coming of the Great War and the part the aeroplane would play in it he was no prophet but a clever prognosticator who had followed the progress of invention, noted certain tendencies and calculated their developments as one might work out a problem in mathematics, and that a prophet needs no such guides to knowledge

but speaks by inspiration and is concerned only with the things of the spirit. However that may be, it is with the things of the spirit that he is mostly preoccupied in at least three of the six later novels I have just mentioned and, to name but one, his vision of "God the Invisible King" is more like prophetic utterance than any we have had in our time.

But he is before all else an artist in the greatest of his novels — in "The Wheels of Chance," "Love and Mr. Lewisham," "Kipps," "The History of Mr. Polly," "Tono Bungay" and "The New Machiavelli," in "The Country of the Blind" and nearly all the other short stories in the same volume. That book epitomises Wells's versatile gen-

ius; its stories represent in little nearly every variety of his work. They are by turns fantastic, humorous, supernatural, visionary, grimly terrible and sternly or sympathetically realistic. Personally, I like him best here, as in his larger works, when his stories are all of ordinary men and women living average human lives in the light of common day; but his bizarre studies in psychology, his short tales of the eerie, nightmare order and those that grow out of surprising scientific discoveries are fashioned with an art as sure and as strong and as finished. If the author of "The Country of the Blind" and "Kipps" is not an artist but a journalist the sooner our other writers of fiction take to journalism the better, both for them and for us.

He is one of those exceptional authors who are in themselves exactly what they seem to be in their books. Unaffected, alive with energy, sociable,

genially talkative, it is an amusing object lesson to see him seated at a public dinner next to some distinguished but orthodox philosopher of less learning than himself, younger but looking older, with none of his imaginary power, his far-seeing vision, his originality and suggestiveness as a thinker, who is yet clothed in the gravity, reticence, aloofness that are supposed to denote superior wisdom. There is nothing so impressive in Wells's manner, his quick gestures, his high, not unpleasant voice; but his keen gray eyes, with a humorous twinkle in the depths of them, look out from under a broad, massive forehead that prevents his appearance from being commonplace. Sidney Dark has called

him "The Superman-in-the-Street." He is a great deal more than that, but he owes his deep knowledge of humanity, his broad sympathy with its sufferings and aspirations to the fact that he did at the outset share the homely satisfactions, the limitations and disadvantages that are the lot of the man-in-the-street, grew wise in those experiences, and carried the memory of them with him into the study. A far more profitable proceeding than to arrive in the study ignorant and learn of the outer world from hearsay or from what others have written.

Socialist, scientist, practical idealist, immensely interested in men and affairs, insatiably curious about all life, its origins, implications, possibilities, restlessly delving into the history and mystery of the past for truths that would light his guesses at the darker mystery of the future, it was natural for Wells to put his latest interests into each new book that he wrote, whether it was a matter-of-fact

philosophical treatise or romantic or realistic fiction. If this habit of using as material for his work whatever was readiest to hand led to his scandalizing friends and acquaintance by putting even them, under thin disguises, into certain of his novels, he has, at least, put himself into them also and no little of his autobiography. You may trace the growth of his mind, the development of his ideas through his successive books. He has been accused of inconsistency by those who fancied his opinion had changed because it had matured, that he had acquired a new root when he had merely grown

new branches. All his life, as somebody once said, he has been thus educating himself in the public eye, but he was educating himself strenuously and in face of many difficulties long before the eye of the public became aware of him.

He was born, in 1866, at Bromley, Kent, where his father, a noted cricketer who played in the County team, kept a small glass and china and general shop. But the business failed; his father had to find employment; his mother went as housekeeper to a great house near Petersfield and Wells, then about thirteen, was apprenticed to a draper at Windsor. Before long, he left there to go to Midhurst as assistant to a chemist, and presently abandoned that profession to resume his interrupted schooling at Wimblehurst. Thence, in 1881, he went to be, for a brief period, pupil teacher at his uncle's school in Somerset, and gave that up to take to his first trade again in a draper's shop at Southsea. After two years of this, he emerged as assistant teacher at Midhurst Grammar School, till, having won a scholarship at the South Kensing-

ton School of Science, and taken his B.Sc. degree with honors, he secured an appointment to teach Science and English at Henley House School, St. John's Wood. To increase his income, he passed from that to work as lecturer and tutor to some University Correspondence Classes, and the incessant and arduous labor this involved resulted in such a complete breakdown of health that he had to resign his appointment and go away to the south coast to rest and recuperate.

But before he was fairly convalescent the irksomeness of doing nothing and the need of getting an income prompted him to try his luck with his pen. So far his literary work had not gone beyond what I am told was an admirable biological text-book, contributions to technical journals, and a few occasional newspaper articles. He turned now to writing essays and sketches of a light and humorous kind, and found a ready market for them in the Pall Mall Gazette, and other papers. Once in the lists as a literary free-lance, he rode from success to success with astonishing deftness and energy. In 1895 ne published "Select Conversations with an Uncle," but it was eclipsed by the appearance in the same year of "The Stolen Bacillus and Other Stories," and two of the most original and characteristic of his early imaginative tales, "The Time Machine" and "The Wonderful Visit." Next year, hard on the heels of that grim fantasy, "The Island of Dr. Moreau," came the most charmingly humorous, realistic-idyllic of his novels, "The Wheels of Chance."

No man with a serious purpose should, in this country, retain a sense of humor. If nature has

afflicted him with one, he should do his best to have it removed; it is more inimical to his well-being than an appendix. But Wells seems to be incurable, and that he has carelessly broken through all manner of prejudices to almost universal acceptance, in spite of his handicap of humor, is in itself a testimony to the power and quality of his work.

If Darwin had followed "The Origin of Species" by writing "Three Men in a Boat" I doubt whether the pundits would have taken him seriously enough to have him buried in Westminster Abbey. Wells, having published a novel and three searching and profoundly earnest books on the Great War in 19 14, burst forth next year with the farcical, bitingly satirical "Boon" and the irresponsibly laughable, "Bealby," and immediately after appealed to us with his prophetic "What is Coming?" and one of his finest novels, and certainly the finest novel of the War, "Mr. Britling Sees it Through."

All which is, of course, as it should be. It is your little man who has only one mood for all occasions, and dare not laugh and unbend from his pose and come down from his pedestal lest he should seem no bigger than those who had looked up to him. While other scholars are toiling laboriously to write the record of a single nation, or a single reign, Wells sandwiches between novel and novel that stupendous survey, "The Outline of History," which is not only a scholarly and vastly comprehensive chronicle of the evolution of man and the progress of humanity the world over from the dawn of time to the day before yesterday, but is, as Macaulay rightly said all history ought to be, as easy and fascinating reading as any work of fic-

tion.

No English author has a wider vogue outside his own country — he is popular in America, and in Russia, Germany, Scandinavia, where many other

of our famous writers are unknown; and who was that Frenchman that, on a visit to London, expressed himself as agreeably surprised to discover that Wells is nearly as much appreciated over here as he is in France?

ISRAEL ZANGWILL

Israel Zangwill

ISRAEL ZANGWILL

Although I don't think I ever exchanged a dozen words with him until recently, since the days of my youth I have felt a special personal interest in Israel Zangwill. With the passing of time, as it became possible to know him from his books and his public doings, that interest has strengthened to admiration and a real regard alike for the great qualities of his work and the courageous sincerity of his character; but I fancy it had its beginnings in quite trifling associations. We were both born Londoners, and started in the same way: when we

were twenty, or less, we were competing against each other for prizes in a weekly paper called Society, and I believe his first appearance in print was with a prize story in that long deceased periodical. I am a little uncertain of the exact dates, but he was still in his twenties when he started Ariel, a brilliant rival to Punch, and I sent him some contributions for it which he did not use. About the same time I ran another short-lived rival to Punch myself, but he sent me no contributions for it, or, without desiring to heap coals of fire on his head, I should have used them. Then we both became members of the New Vagabond Club, and used to meet at its dinners occasionally and sometimes nod to each other, but never spoke. As a matter of fact, I

don't suppose he knew who I was and cannot have suspected that I entertained such warm and proprietorial sentiments toward him. For many years now, since his marriage (his wife, the daughter of Professor W. E. Ayrton, is herself a novelist of distinction), he has made his home at East Preston, in Sussex, and his visits to London have been few and far between. But when he was up on business, staying at his chambers in the Temple, I used to come across him at long intervals careering down the Strand or Fleet Street, and always felt I was meeting a sort of old friend, though, until recently, we passed without recognition.

It was in 1864 that he was born, his father being an exile who, lying under sentence of death for a trivial military offence, had escaped to this country from a Russian prison. He was educated at the

Jews' Free School, in East London, where, a year or two before taking his B. A. degree, with triple honors, at the London University, he became a teacher. But teaching, though he proved extraordinarily successful at it, was not to be his career. In 1888, he wrote in collaboration with Louis Cowen a farcical political romance, "The Premier and the Painter," and presently resigned his scholastic engagement and proceeded to earn a livelihood by free-lance literature and journalism. That success did not come to him till he had paid for it in hard work you may know by the moral he drew from his memories of those days when he wrote (as J. A. Hammerton records in his "Humorists of To-Day"), "If you are blessed with some talent,

a great deal of industry, and an amount of conceit mighty enough to enable you to disregard superiors, equals and critics, as well as the fancied demands of the public, it is possible, without friends, or introductions, or bothering celebrities to read your manuscripts, or cultivating the camp of log-rollers, to attain, by dint of slaving day and night for years during the flower of your youth, to a fame infinitely less wide-spread than a prize-fighter's and a pecuniary position which you might with far less trouble have been born to."

But in the first two years of the 90's he had established himself as a humorist with "The Bachelor's Club," "The Old Maid's Club," and "The Big Bow Mystery," an ingenious burlesque of the popular detective story which was as exciting as the

real thing; and as a new novelist of high and original achievement with "The Children of the Ghetto." Just then Jerome and Robert Barr started The Idler, with G. B. Burgin as their assistant editor: a year later Jerome launched To-Day f and Zangwill, who, on the strength of his earlier books, had been branded by the superior as a "humorist," was among the notable group of young writers that J. K. J. collected on his two magazines. Many of his short stories appeared in the one, and to the other he contributed a causerie, "Without Prejudice" (which re-emerged in due course as a book), and his novel, "The Master," as a serial.

"The Master" is a sustained and revealing study of a single character — the story of a young painter, Matt Strang, who comes from Nova Scotia to Lon-

don, self-centered, afire with ambition, but it is not till, broken by disillusion and failure, he withdraws from the babble and dazzle of art circles and social swaggerings, returns to the obscurity of his own home and subserviates his hopes to his wife's happiness that he finds himself and is able to do the great work he had dreamt of doing. There is more of the ironic, satirical Zangwill in "The Mantle of Elijah"; he places his scenes in the days of Palmerston, but drives home a big-minded gospel that is as badly needed in the politics of these days as it was then. Broser, a strong, self-confident political leader, rises to power by breaking his promises and changing his convictions as often as necessary and is acclaimed the savior of his country, but he has a wife, Allegra, whose conscience is not so accommodating, who cannot abandon her principles whenever he abandons his, and in the

hour of his triumph she leaves him, to devote herself to working for the cause that, in the interests of his career, he had betrayed.

Nearly twenty years later Zangwill gave us "Jinny the Carrier," a very charming story of mid-Victorian life and character in rural Essex; but his finest, most memorable work in fiction has been done as the interpreter of his own people. This he is in "Children of the Ghetto," in the whimsical grotesque, broadly and grimly humorous tales of "The King of Schnorrers," that glorious Hebrew mendicant Manasseh Bueno Barzillai Azevedo da Costa, and in the masterly little stories of light and shadow that make up the "Ghetto Tragedies" and

"Ghetto Comedies. " He has his unique place in letters as the novelist of London's modern Jewry. Aldgate, Whitechapel, Hoxton, Dalston, all the roads and byways, mean lanes and squalid squares there and thereabouts are a world large and varied and crowded enough for his purposes. His pride of race glows as surely in such stories of the children of his fancy, the poor of the Ghetto, their profoundly simple piety, their patience, self-sacrifice, humble endurance, human kindness, as in his subtle studies of those real, yet scarcely more real in seeming, "Dreamers of the Ghetto, " Heine, Lasalle, Spinoza, and other such seers and prophets of latter-day Israel. But he is too much of an artist to suppress anything of the truth, and dealing with his own people, actual or imaginary, he shows them starkly as they are, their vices as well as their virtues, their avarice, meanness, hypocrisies, as well as their generosity and loyalties. He is steeped in the Jewish tradition, and fills in the

atmosphere and intimate detail of his pictures with most meticulous realism; he is ready enough to ridicule obsolete racial bigotries and ancient customs that have lost their meaning, but is sensitively reverent to the beauty and mystic significance of all old ceremonies and practices that still embody the essential spirit of the faith.

Nowhere has the soul of the London Jew (and the rich Jew who lives in the West has not been overlooked) been more sympathetically or impartially unveiled than in Zangwill's novel and tales of the Ghetto. His tragedies are touched with com-

edy, his comedies with tragedy; if I were limited to three of his short stories, I would name "They that Sit in Darkness," "Transitional" and "To Die in Jerusalem," for their delicate art and simple directness of narrative, among the greatest in the language.

How many plays Zangwill has written altogether I do not know; but he began in 1892 with "Six Persons," a comedy, and in the last decade or so has written more plays than stories. "Merely Mary Ann," a tale of a quaint little lodging-house slavey, came out first as a short novel, then was adapted to the stage and had a popular success in both forms. He dramatized "Children of the Ghetto"; and "Jinny the Carrier" was a domestic drama before it was a novel. But his bigger work in this kind is "The Melting Pot," "The War God," "The Next Religion," "The Forcing House" and "The Cockpit." Each of them is inspired with a high and serious purpose. The first is a moving plea for race-fusion: the Jews are not a nation but

a race; they become absorbed into the nation where they make their home, and you are shown how David Quixano, in America, "God's crucible, where all the races of Europe are melting and re-forming," is moulded into a patriotic American with a passionate ideal of freedom. "The War God," with its appeal for international goodwill and its scathing indictment of the crime and folly of war is a prophetic commentary on much that has befallen the world since 1912; "The Forcing House"

is a tragi-comedy of revolution, which has its parallel in Bolshevik Russia; "The Cockpit" is the tragi-comedy, edged at times with bitterest satire, of the restoration of a Queen who, bent on ruling by love, is thwarted and brought to disaster by her ministers, who have a family likeness to ministers everywhere; and "The War God" (1911) was recognized as the noblest, most impressive drama that had been seen on the London stage for years. If Zangwill's road has sometimes been difficult, one reason is that he has never gone with the crowd, never been afraid to go against the view of the majority. More than once he has got himself into trouble through championing unpopular causes. When it needed courage to come out openly in favor of Woman's Suffrage, he supported it in the press and on the platform; for he is as witty and can be as devastating with his tongue as with his pen. And with all these activities he has found time to do a lot of spade work as President of the International Jewish Territorial Organization, which aims at establishing Jewish Colonies wherever land can be found for them, and time to give practical service in Leagues and Committees that are doing what is possible to build up the peace and universal

brotherhood that politicians are too busy to do more than talk about. From which you may take it that he does not put all his sympathies into the printed page, does not write one way and live another, but that his books and his life are of a piece, and if you know them you know him.