VICTORIAN FICTION

PRODIGIOUSLY, during the second half of the 19th century did the art and practice of novel writing increase; and now the annual production is probably in the thousands. Twenty-five years ago there was an average issue of about eight hundred novels; but now novel writing has become a regular trade—to which men and women serve a sort of apprenticeship. It has become a common saying that "anybody can write a novel, with a little training." I need scarcely say that novel production of this kind threatens to kill good literature. A really great man of letters who should now give four or five years to the writing of a masterpiece of English fiction, would be only wasting his time, his strength, and his money. A cheap novel, written to order, in three or four weeks, by some half educated person, would pay very much better for the time being, and obtain a great many more readers. Only for the time being, it is true. But that is all that the publishers care about. And great minds are discouraged from competing in such a book-market. There are now being produced no really great novels. We must go back to the early part of the Victorian period to find the names of them. Of course, in speaking to you of English novels, I am not giving much attention to the question of the story itself, but to the question of the book as a work of art and ideas. I need to speak only of eight or ten novel writers; —the others need to concern you very little, if at all.

Now these names of which I shall talk to you will represent only particular types of fiction. You will remember that in our study of the pre-Victorian novelists I told you to be sure to bear in mind that each of the great novelists mentioned either perfected, or brought into being, a particular kind of fiction. We need not now concern ourselves about the host of Victorian novelists: for the literary student the greatly important names

can be those only of masters, of teachers, or of new discoverers in the art of story-telling.

MISS BRONTË

The first noteworthy name of the new group of novelists is perhaps that of a woman,—Miss Charlotte Brontë.[1] Miss Brontë was one of three sisters, all literary, and all more or less talented. They were the daughters of a country clergyman in Yorkshire, who was probably of Irish descent. Charlotte herself is, however, the only very important one of the three; Anne and Emily needing only a passing mention here. Miss Brontë was educated for a governess, or private teacher; and passed several years in Belgium studying for her profession. Her life was, outside of literature, rather uneventful; she married somewhat late, and died within a short time after her marriage. I suppose that these facts may seem to you scarcely worth mentioning in this short lecture; but unless you know them you cannot very well judge of Miss Brontë's literary invention. She was one of the first to put her own experiences into the form of enduring fiction; and by experiences I do not mean the extraordinary or the exceptional in any way, but the common facts of everyday life of a teacher. It was this that gave to her books the astonishing charm which the public found in them, and which have placed them in the front rank of great novels. People who read these stories, and sorrowed with the sorrows expressed in them, or rejoiced with the hopes uttered in them, understood that real life was portrayed in those pages. I do not mean that they, or anybody else, at first knew what the source of the stories really was; nobody then knew much about the private life of Brontë. Only a great critic could have been sure that the author had taken those chapters out of her own life,—written them, so to speak, with her own life. This was a different kind of literary work from the fiction of the

[1] (1816-1855).

preceding era. It was not the work exactly of a great genius,—not purely creative work in the sense that Thackeray's novels were; yet it produced a very similar effect upon the reader. Also there were several novel characteristics in those stories. Other novelists had made their heroes and heroines handsome and brave, or in some sort typically superior to ordinary mankind. I do not mean that all did so; but this was a general rule,—a romantic tendency. Or, writers of fiction, like Dickens, would characterize their principal figures by some exaggeration of traits. Miss Brontë, on the other hand, not only made her principal characters ordinary people, but even somewhat unpleasant or ugly people. There was no exaggeration about the ugliness nor about the disagreeableness: it was real warm life that she was painting, but the life of people about whom romantic novelists of a former time would not have thought it possible to write. Nevertheless, Miss Brontë hit upon a great truth,—that the value of character in the art of fiction means imcomparably more than the value of circumstance. Or, to put the thing still more plainly, I should say that it does not matter in the least whether her heroines be rich or poor, old or young, genteel or common, ugly or beautiful, if she has character. Miss Brontë's women had character,—intense character, and plenty of it, because they represented really the true women whom she best knew in this world: herself and her favourite sister. Also her men,—at least the principal male characters in her books—had great individuality, or rather personality, because she studied them and drew them after certain teachers whom she had every opportunity to observe in all their moods and tenses. Though in her four novels there is a considerable variety of incidents and of names, the real persons depicted are few. It was said that all Byron's heroes were representation of Byron himself. It may be said of Mis Brontë's heroines that most of them are pictures of herself; but we must give her credit also for the picture of her sister.

Two things about Miss Brontë's work I have mentioned:—that she drew her fiction out of her own experience altogether,—and that her personages were principally remarkable

for force of character. The third fact remains to be mentioned. There are many kinds of what we call strong character. Strong character may be irresistibly attractive; it may also be intensely repellent. Miss Brontë's strong characters are not of the attractive kind. Now here is the wonder of her books. We have placed before us certain perfectly truthful figures of men and women, physically unpleasant and morally harsh. Or, shall I say ugly and cross and hard? But presently these harsh, disagreeable men and women become slowly attractive each to the other. Then new phases of character come into playing. There is a tremendous struggle against Self on both sides, as well as a tremendous struggle in favour of Self. The heart, the deeper and tenderer hidden nature, wants to love; but the cold, harsh, cautious and intensely proud intellectual nature resists. The woman and the man seem a moment as if their own emotions were about to tear them to pieces. It is impossible not to be deeply moved by this wonderful representation of mental and emotional conflict. The woman loves,—yet she would not, on any consideration, allow the man to suspect that she loves; the man loves,—yet he would not, for anything, allow the woman to imagine that she has any power to move him; and therefore he treats her with studied harshness, and sometimes with remorseless cruelty. At last they find each other out, and the strange drama comes quite naturally to an end.

Most critics agree in calling *Jane Eyre*[1] the best of Miss Brontë's novels; but I venture to say that I think this judgment may yet be changed. It appears to me that *Villette*,[2] of which the scenes are laid in the French schools of Belgium, is a better novel,—more natural, and quite as emotionally intense. But some of the characters, being *very* French, are not so likely to interest English readers. *Shirley*[3] and *The Professor*[4] complete the list of Miss Brontë's successes—if *The Professor* can be called a real success. *Shirley* is the book in which Miss Brontë's sister, Emily, is said to have been drawn. I should

[1] *Jane Eyre, an autobiography, by Currer Bell.* 3 vols. 1847.
[2] *Villette.* 3 vols. 1853
[3] *Shirley, a tale.* 3 vols. 1849.
[4] *The professor, a tale, by Currer Bell.* 2 vols. c. 1845 (1857).

not venture any further comparison or comment, as to the respective merits of the four books. All are good; and the influence of all has been very great in English fiction.

Miss Brontë is generally said to have invented the "ugly heroine" in fiction; but it would be quite as true to say that she has invented the ugly hero. Neither her men nor her women are attractive otherwise than by their character. As I have told, this was not really an invention at all;—it came to pass only through the fact that her own life had not been "cast in pleasant places," and that she drew the material of her novels from her own life. But she unintentionally set a new fashion in literature. After her a multitude of writers began to write novels with ugly heroines and ugly heroes in them. Few writers have had more imitators; but none of the imitators could compare with the original. Literary sincerity has this value,—that no matter how much it is imitated, no imitation can reproduce the effect which it is desired to repeat. It has been said that in every life there is the material for a novel;—that "any clever person can write a good story out of his own experience." There is truth in this saying. But it is also true that if a person depends altogether upon personal experience for the material of fiction, that individual cannot help soon exhausting his or her literary possibilities. The very great novelists and dramatists do *not* depend upon their own life-history for inspiration: they are guided rather by intuition. On this subject I shall give you a separate lecture later on. For the present, I shall only say that Miss Brontë's novels rank below those of Thackeray just because she only had her own life to furnish the material of her stories; and that she really exhausted that material before death.

Of the other two sisters, Anne[1] and Emily,[2] the second was much the cleverer. Anne wrote a novel called *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall*[3] which is not now much read. But Emily who wrote *Wuthering Heights*[4] had a particularly weird imagina-

[1] (1820-1855).
[2] Emily Jane Brontë (1818-1848).
[3] *The tenant of Wildfell Hall, by Acton Bell.* 3 vols. 1848.
[4] ***Wuthering Heights, a novel, by Ellis Bell.*** 3 vols. [in one] **1847.**

tion, and critics have given her so much attention lately that it is probable she may eventually obtain a new vogue. For the present, however, we had better turn to a more imposing figure.

George Eliot

The very greatest woman novelist of the Victorian period was certainly that famous Mary Ann Evans[1] who wrote under the name of "George Eliot," by which name she is generally known. In that time there was a certain tendency among the English public to doubt the ability of women to write good novels. Therefore women-novelists used to write under men's names; and some of them do so even at this day. Miss Brontë wrote under the name of "Currer Bell,"—which left the sex in doubt. George Eliot might have adopted her pseudonym in imitation of that great French female author who disguised her personality behind the name of "George Sand." But even to-day, as I remarked, we have the case of "John Oliver Hobbes," — whom everybody now knows to be a clever woman. Gradually, however, the English public have learned that a woman is quite as capable as the average man of writing a good novel, and that in certain forms of the novel, she has even many advantages over the man. This ought to have been known from the case of Miss Austen who can almost compare with Thackeray. But Miss Austen was never really popular; and a prejudice dies hard.

Mary Ann Evans was a very different person from Miss Brontë — having much greater educational advantages, and an intellect rather musculine than feminine in its depth and range. Look at her face in some one of her later portraits; and I doubt whether you will be able to discover anything feminine about it. It is anything but an attractive face, —long, strong, strange face, bony and queer, that makes you think of the face of a horse. This comparison is not original with me; every-

[1] George Eliot (Mary Ann *or* Marian Evans) 1819-1880.

body who saw George Eliot in her later years was impressed by this singularity. All you can say of good about the face is that it is kindly and intelligent; but it certainly is not womanly. And there was nothing very womanly about the girl who became so famous. She was the daughter of a land steward, able to educate her well; and at an early age she had mastered several European languages. At an early age also she translated into English Strauss's *Life of Jesus* from the German: a work which in those days caused a great deal of anger to religious people. This would imply that Mary herself was rather liberal in her opinions; and this was true. Although a young girl her talents and her liberal opinions soon attracted notice in intellectual circles, and she was given the position of an assistant editor of the *The Westminster Review*,—a publication requiring no small scholarship on the part of those directing it. Herbert Spencer was at that time writing for the *Westminster Review;* and he there made the acquaintance of this extraordinary young woman, whom he helped, so far as he was able, with advice and sympathy. It was he who introduced her to George Henry Lewes, whom you may know as the author of an excellent history of philosophy. Lewes was one of the brilliant positivists of the time,—a circle of English thought now chiefly represented by Mr. Frederick Harrison. But Mr. Lewes was much more than a writer of scientific essays and a critic of sociological ideas. He had an excellent taste in literature; and he soon perceived that Miss Evans could do something much better in literature than she could ever hope to do in philosophy or science. He advised her to write stories; and she became, under his direction, one of the greatest of English novelists. I think you have heard that she afterwards became companion of Mr. Lewes without being actually married to him. The circumstances were very peculiar. Lewes had an insane wife, from whom he could not obtain a divorce under the English law. In view of this unhappy difficulty, society—or at least the intelligent part of it—overlooked the fact that Miss Evans and Mr. Lewes overrode the law. After the death of Mr. Lewes she married a Mr. Cross; but she died within a

short time after her marriage. An uneventful life, but filled with wonderful work—work which we can only consider in a general way, because a detailed study of it would occupy many hours of lecturing.

In speaking to you of Bulwer-Lytton, I told you that one of the most remarkable things about that great writer was his ability to produce stories so different from each other in subject and style that they might seem to have been written by different persons. This power of writing in different ways is called versatility. Now George Eliot possessed this versatility to still greater degree than Bulwer-Lytton,—though in a different direction. You can divide her works into groups of novels; and each group of novels is so completely different from every other group, that without positive information, we could scarcely believe all those books to have been written by the same woman.

In the judgment of most critics the first group is the best. It consists entirely of stories and sketches of country life in England. It began with the collection of the sketches entitled *Scenes of Clerical Life*,[1]—small bright pictures of the everyday existence of a country clergyman and his parishioners. Then came such wonderful books as *Adam Bede*,[2] *The Mill on the Floss*,[3] and *Silas Marner*,[4] —which last I think you have read, as it used to be a textbook in the middle schools. The value of this early work is very great, — both as to novelty and method. As to novelty, George Eliot made a new departure by treating of the life of common country people, — farmers, artisans, weavers, etc., — instead of making only ladies and gentlemen, or members of the middle class the subject of her stories. And the style of these books was delightfully simple and pure. There was nothing at all in those books to suggest that the woman who wrote them had studied Comte and Spencer, and all the great German thinkers of the age. There was no sign of scholarship; there was only a display of the

[1] *Scenes of clerical life.* 2 vols. Edinburgh, 1858. (First appeared in *Blackwood's Magazine*, Jan.—Nov. 1857).
[2] 3 vols. Edinburgh, 1859.
[3] 3 vols. Edinburgh, 1860.
[4] Edinburgh, 1861.

purest simple English that had been written since the time of Goldsmith.

The next group of novels was of quite another kind. The subjects were drawn from higher class life, — the life of the gentry and aristocracy. The style became elaborate and learned,—too learned at times. And the treatment of the characters became intensely psychological. Everything said or done was explained in astonishingly minute detail. The effect was wonderful; but it was the kind of effect that only select readers — only a cultivated class—could appreciate. The greatest of the novels of this class is *Middlemarch*,[1]—the story of a charming girl, full of ideas of duty and self-sacrifice, who throws her life away by devoting it to a selfish, crotchety old man of letters. In short the book is the story of a woman's martyrdom, — a lifetime of suffering for the sake of duty. But all this group of novels is not of the same kind. There is one novel so different from the rest that, only by reason of its psychology, can it be classed with them. I mean *Romola*,[2] It is a historical novel,—a novel of the Italian Renaissance. In order to write that novel the author had to study more than five hundred books and documents relating to old Italian history — not to speak of the study that she had to make in relation to art, antiquity, old MSS., bronzes, and Greek gems. It took her many years to write it. She said that she was a young girl when she began, and an old woman by the time that she finished it. Nevertheless most critics have spoken badly about this book —they say that it is somewhat artificial. And here I might venture to express my own conviction,—that it is the best and greatest of all her books. I do not think the criticism just which calls it artificial, because any historical romance, written about life in another century and in another country, must be a little artificial. It is impossible otherwise to make such a romance at all. But if it be claimed that the principal characters are artificial,—then criticism is foolish; for they live intensely, so that you never can forget them. The principal

[1] *Middlemarch. A study of provincial life.* 4 vols. Edinburgh, 1871-2.
[2] *Romola* 3 vols. 1863. (First appeared in *The Cornhill Magazine*, with illustrations by Sir F. Leighton. July 1862—Aug. 1863.)

male character in the story is not Savonarola as careless readers have said: it is Tito, the handsome, gifted, selfish, and ungrateful Greek. I cannot help thinking this a very wonderful study of a personality that is at once intensely charming and thoroughly bad. Tito is not a man who would speak unkindly to a woman or a child; but he is a man who would betray any woman, or any friend, or his country, for the sake of personal gain or pleasure. He is supremely gentle, supremely refined, supremely an artist; but of self-sacrifice he is utterly incapable. And we feel a sense of satisfaction when the benefactor whom he has so shamefully deserted strangles him at last. The woman, the daughter of the old antiquarian, is altogether sweet and human—quite as real as the girl in *Middlemarch*. Psychologically *Romola*, though a historical romance, is exactly the same kind of novel as *Middlemarch;* and its dramatic part is composed with the same motive,—showing us the sorrow and the beauty of a fine character making every sacrifice for an unworthy object. Also I think that in this novel the style of George Eliot reaches its highest in the direction of coloured prose. There is a dream in the book—the dream of a strange marriage, in which the priest is Death—which is one of the weirdest and most unforgettable pages of English literature. We must go to Ruskin to find another bit of prose worthy to compare with this, or else to De Quincey. Moreover it is educating to read *Romola*. Many a young man has obtained his first clear idea of Italian Renaissance from this book.

The third group of George Eliot's work is best exemplified by the extraordinary novel of *Daniel Deronda*.[1] But when I say that this novel represents the third stage of her literary evolution, I do not say that it represents a group of novels. It stands, as a novel, entirely by itself; she wrote no other novels after it; and it belongs by its psychological part rather to that class of work which we might call her psychological essays. You know she wrote a book of essays, half philosophical, half psychological, entitled *Impressions of Theophrastus Such*.[2]

[1] 4 vols. Edinburgh, 1876.
[2] Edinburgh, 1879.

Perhaps I am not quite right in calling these impressions essays: they resemble more the notes of a commonplace book. I do not mean to say that *Daniel Deronda* is like the *Impressions of Theophrastus Such.* It is really a novel,—a story; and there are splendid pages in it. But a very large part of it is written in the style of the *Impressions*, and shows that George Eliot was tending to become more and more philosophic and less and less romantic as she grew older. It is rather a *heavy* book,—this *Daniel Deronda.* And it did not please the English public; for it made the hero of the book a Jew, and expressed much enthusiasm for the great dream of the New Judea, a new Land of Israel. You must not imagine that the English public have any foolish prejudice against the Jews—quite contrary; it might even be said that a great number of the most aristocratic families in England have been more or less allied with Jewish blood. But everybody knew that the author of this novel was practically married to George Lewes, who happened to be a Jew; and everybody was aware that he influenced her work. The anger or disappointment was less directed towards her than towards him,—because people thought that he had badly used his power over her, making her write a novel "for a purpose,"—a hopeless purpose,—and spoiling her talent. There was perhaps a good deal of truth in this suspicion. The intellect and the genius of this great woman could have been put to a better use than that of championing the dreams of a particular sect or the ambitions of the particular race. But in spite of whatever the critics have said—even in spite of what Professor Saintsbury has said — the finer chapters of *Daniel Deronda* really represent the very best of George Eliot's work to my thinking. Cut out from it everything relating to the Jews, Jewish religion, and Jewish custom; and still you have a great novel. The extraordinary power in this book is that displayed in drawing a particularly disagreeable man. Daniel Deronda himself is a gentleman, a Jew and a very attractive person; but though he gives his name to the book, he is not the real hero of it—he is only a minor figure. The strong character is the English lord, his rival, cold, selfish, calculating, and

pitiless. A more disagreeable character had never been more strongly drawn. I am quite sure of one thing, that when you have seen his picture,—I mean when you have read all about him, you will never forget that book; you will forget almost everything about Daniel Deronda, you will forget the philosophical chapters, and the psychological chapters, and the sociological chapters. But the face and the voice and the character of that cold hard nature you never can forget. This is what gives the book its extraordinary dramatic excellence as a portrayal of life.

There is only one of George Eliot's novels of importance which I have not mentioned,—*Felix Holt*.[1] This is a little difficult to class. Some critics put it in the same group as *Middlemarch*; and I feel tempted to do the same thing. But upon further reflection I believe that I can safely call it a *transition* book—a novel which half belongs to the earlier style, and half to the second period. It was in this book that the psychological tendency first showed itself in a marked way; but it was not then obtrusive—I mean that there was not too much of psychology, and a great deal of the book was charmingly simple and strong. It represented the struggle of a good brave man, for a new ideal, against the condition of English society. It made the nearest approach to a novel of middle class life which George Eliot attempted. Really she was not a novelist of a middle class life at all, but of country life, and of certain phase of aristocratic and cultured life. She saw and painted the depth and the heights—not the middle.

What did she do for literature in the way of fiction? Two very great things. The first was to interest the public in the life of the honest working classes of the country. Before her nothing really great was done in the same direction. The other thing that she did was to prepare the way for the psychological novel. I have told you that she was too psychological,—that she spoiled her work by it. But she spoiled her work with psychology only because her real genius did not lie in that direction. She saw what was to be done; but she did not have

[1] *Felix Holt the radical.* 3 vols. Edinburgh, 1866.

the particular kind of genius to do it.

She could only show the way to others. She showed the way especially to George Meredith. The greatest of all English psychological novelists beyond all question is George Meredith; and George Meredith learned from George Eliot. I need scarcely tell you that to-day the psychological novel represents a separate and distinct branch in English fiction. I am sorry to say that it cannot interest you without a knowledge of English society life; and even if you had the knowledge I doubt whether you would like the psychological novel. I say so because I detested it myself. However, I know that it is a very great and a very difficult work of art when well executed, and that it deserves the praise which it has received. But I think that the only purely psychological writer of fiction to-day in whom you could find interest would be Henry James, an American, though long residing in England. His master-work consists almost entirely of short stories, each of which is a psychological study. Some of them are so extraordinary that I imagine you would like them. At all events, try to remember that all this branch of literature derives from George Eliot.

Besides her novels and essays, she produced one volume of poetry. Probably she did so owing to the pressure of literary friends. The name of the book is *The Spanish Gypsy and Other Poems*. *The Spanish Gypsy*[1] itself is a drama in verse. It is not favourably judged, although the verse is good. One remembers Longfellow's drama on a similar subject; and one feels that George Eliot here goes a great deal below Longfellow. The only other important poem is entitled *Jubal*,—I think you know that Jubal is said in the Bible to have first invented music for mankind. Here is an example of George Eliot's verse —a little song chosen from that book of poetry:—

> Day is dying! Float, O swan,
> Down the purple river,—
> Requiem chanting to the Day,
> Day, the mighty Giver!

[1] Edinburgh, 1868.

Pierced by shafts of Time he bleeds,
    Melted rubies sending
Through the river and the sky,
    Earth and heaven blending,—

All the long-drawn earthy banks
    Up to cloudland rifting:
Slow between them floats the swan
    'Twixt to heaven drifting,—

Wings half open, like a flower
    Inly deeper flushing
Neck and breast as virgin's pure,—
    Virgin proudly blushing.

The first stanza which I have quoted is here repeated at the close of this hymn to the sunset. I have always thought these verse pretty and pleasing because of their colour and imagery. But it must be confessed that the narration is not consecutively clear, and that the verse is plainly artificial. George Eliot could not be a great poet; she could only write correct verse, making an agreeable use of colours and sounds. But as a prose writer she was indeed one of the greatest, if not the greatest, among English women.

Charles Kingsley

Perhaps the third in order of the typical novelists of this period is Charles Kingsley—though, in order of merit, it would be unfair to classify him in the same way. His life was not very long: born in 1819, his career comprises a total period of scarcely fifty-five years. We may say that the working part of it covered a period of scarcely twenty-five years; and the amount of work that he managed to do in twenty-five years was prodigious. Very probably it shortened his life. Charles Kingsley was a clergyman and a son of a clergyman; and the ancestral history of the family is largely clerical. Not only is the same thing true of Tennyson, but of a great many others

of English people of letters: it is worth while to remember in this connection that a very large proportion of English literature was produced by men and women belonging to the established church. This is worth thinking about. It is not that the belief in itself needs to interest us here;—it is that the difficulties of producing literature have been in a vast number of cases overcome only by the help of the Church as a profession. This English Church is, as you know, something of a vast official institution: it is liberal in a very considerable degree, so far as dogma is concerned; it is enormously wealthy; and any person who obtains an appointment in it is certain to enjoy considerable amount of leisure. If it should be disestablished, as it is likely to be in the future, I am not sure but that literature will in consequence suffer a good deal. In that event, it is, however, likely that the great literary work will thereafter be chiefly done by men to whom the various branches of professional teaching allow a certain amount of spared time. To make a living merely by literature has long been almost impossible: it is a fact that the student will do well to bear in mind. Most of English literature has been written by men engaged in some other occupation.

Kingsley had a good education: that was one of the advantages of being a clergyman's son. He left Cambridge to obtain the rectorship of a little country town, Eversley, and he kept that place until the time of his death. But he also obtained several lucrative positions. He had a chaplainship to the Queen. He was also for some time a professor of modern history at Oxford. How he managed to become a great novelist, and yet satisfactorily fulfilled all his duties is somewhat wonderful. Personally he was a very shy man, apt to stutter a little in talking; and he was quite a failure as a public speaker. To see him and to hear him, you would have imagined a man of decidedly weak and unsteady character. But when you read his books, you find in them a generous piety, a noble enthusiasm for everything good, a force of expression, and a sense of beauty of romance that are altogether unique. There is no other English novel writer exactly like Kingsley—though his

brother Henry Kingsley sometimes came very close to him. What Kingsley did for English literature was to give it three new kinds of romance; for, strictly speaking, Kingsley's novels are much more romances than they are novels.

Even as a student he was much given to enthusiasm; and one of his first great enthusiasms was what is called Christian Socialism. There are many kinds of Christian Socialism. Ruskin, you know, was a Christian Socialist—with a socialism all his own. The great Russian writer Tolstoi was also a Christian Socialist. But these two great names especially represent a Christian sentiment that has left dogma out of the question. You cannot find much of church dogma neither in Ruskin nor in Tolstoi; the preaching of both is simply a religion of love and equality in the sense in which these were understood by the primitive Christian. Kingsley could not go so far away from existing dogma as either of those freer minds: he was held fast within the circle of those conventions established by the church to which he belonged. But within that circle he expressed himself very freely indeed. And, on the whole, very generously. The man who most influenced him, in those young days, was the famous friend of Tennyson, the clergyman named Maurice to whom the poet addressed some beautiful verses. The great teaching of Maurice and his circle was a kind of new Christianity to be proved less by dogma than by action,—than by effort, by genuine sympathy with the forms of human suffering inevitable to industrial existence,—and by a certain democratic spirit not inconsistent with the existing institution. To put the matter very plainly, these men held it a duty to assist the right under all circumstances,—whether the right happened to be on the side of poverty and ignorance or not; and to fight the wrong unquestioningly under all circumstances—even if the wrong were on the side of government, church, and all the powers combined. I do not mean that they actually preached revolutionary doctrines; but they came very close to it. And as for the individual the rule of conduct was to be strong and to act. Ruskin said that life without effort is crime. That was about the teaching also of the Christian Socialists

represented by Maurice and Kingsley. Their doctrines were made fun of in a good-natured way by the English press of the time: their ideas were qualified as "Muscular Christianity." Kingsley was the great literary prophet of "Muscular Christianity."

I have had to tell you all this, in order to enable you to understand many allusions that you are likely to find in Kingsley's books to the social enthusiasms of his day. But these matters are chiefly treated of in two of his earlier works, respectively named *Alton Locke, Tailor and Poet*[1] and *Yeast.*[2] These two books were written to represent the struggles of generous natures against the social evils of the time; and they were written especially under the literary influence of Carlyle. For Kingsley was one of the earliest and most energetic converts to Carlyle's philosophy. I am not sure that you could care for the story-parts of either *Alton Locke* or of *Yeast*—because they refer so particularly to the agitation of a special period of English social history. But, in the matter of style, it may be doubted whether Kingsley ever surpassed certain pages of these early books. For example, in *Alton Locke* there is a wonderful dream,—the dream of a man, who in a time of fever, imagines himself to behold the entire history of the migration of the Aryan race from India westward into Europe. He takes part in the migration,—recalls the battles, the terrors of the unknown, all the trials of the journey. I believe that today this series of an Aryan migration is no longer supported by the best scientific authority—Professor Huxley himself gave it a blow. There was more than one migration, of course; but the imaginary movement of a whole race from India to Western Europe, as it was described fifty years ago, would be laughed at now by competent thinkers. Nevertheless no discoveries, ethnical or philological, will ever in the least diminish the literary value and the strange beauty of the dream in *Alton Locke;* if you do not read anything else of those books, do not fail to read that.

[1] 1850.
[2] *Yeast: a problem* 1851. (First published in *Fraser's Magazine,* July — Dec. 1848).

Kingsley did not do much more in the way of romances, modern or historical, embodying his social theories, except in the novel *Two Years Ago.*[1] Tom, the hero in *Two Years Ago,* represents Kingsley's ideal of what a Christian gentleman should be in modern society. The book is a sort of "gospel of action" in the guise of a modern novel. But you must not think that any of the books are religious books: they are simply stories with some expression in them of new social ideas. Putting those three books together you have Kingsley's first group of novels—romantic novels embodying his particular enthusiasms and hopes in the direction of social reform. They are noble books: if I do not ask you to read them, it is only because they treat so particularly of English life that you would find much in them hard to understand. Observe only that they all represent a new kind of work in fiction. Novels they seem to be, because they reflect the social life of Kingsley's day;—romances nevertheless they are,—because their characters are pictured as acting according to ideal motives and heroic impulses,—because they act somewhat differently and better than such person would act in real life. Suppose we call this group of novels the Social Romances.

Much more widely is Kingsley known by his historical romances. There were plenty of historical romances before Kingsley's time; but he made two new kinds—new in quality—new in conception. No two of these are exactly the same in character,—all represent widely different periods of history, And yet I think that we can put two of them in a group apart, because they deal with certain race ideas that Kingsley was the first to grandly express in English fiction. I think you will remember that I told you, in the course of our lecture on the 18th century, that the poet Gray was about the first to introduce Norse subjects into English poetry,—and that the work of Mallet, *Northern Antiquities,* first gave the 18th century public some general idea of the deep and strange poetry of the Northern myths. Before that time the English people did not know very much or care very much about the Northern liter-

[1] 3 vols. 1857.

ature. Sir Walter Scott helped them to know by translating some of the Sagas. But it was not until after the middle of the 19th century that Norse studies began to take a wide range in England. Now, just about Kingsley's time, new English historians began to insist with great force upon the Scandinavian element in English history, upon the blood relation between the English and the men of the far North, and upon the trace of that relation left in the current speeches, in the names of places and even in the character of people in certain sections. Then a new enthusiasm began among literary men. Remembering the grand qualities of the old Norse men, rather than the cruel and bad ones, English readers everywhere began to feel proud that in their blood something of Northern blood probably existed, and many traits of English character were explained by references to Northern characters as exhibited in Norse literature. No one carried this new enthusiasm,—this new sense of kinship with Scandinavian,—further than Kingsley. You will find that feeling splendidly expressed in his noble *Ode to the North-East Wind*, and you will find sparks of the feeling glittering here and there through all the body of his poetry. But it was especially in two romances that he represented his ideal of Northern character. One of these romances is *Hereward the Wake*,[1]—the other is *Hypatia*.[2]

There was really a great English warrior called Hereward, who was one of the last Englishmen who opposed the Norman conquerors after their cause had really become hopeless. Very probably as his name suggests, he was rather Danish than English in blood. Kingsley represents him to have been a typical English Viking, — makes him the associate of Norse men in their forays all over Europe,—gives him all the experience of a Norse berserk and hero. After passing his youth in wild adventure he came back to England to defend her against her enemies. Hereward, in this romance, is the strong man—the man who uses his strength and courage to protect the weak against the powerful, and who succeeds always in his battles

[1] *Hereward the wake, 'last of the English.'* 2 vols. 1865.
[2] *Hypatia, or new foes with an old face.* 2 vols. 1853. (First published in *Fraser's Magazine*. Jan.—Dec. 1852; Jan.—April 1853).

while he continues to fight only for the right. But at last this strong man makes a mistake,—commits a weakness, yields to the witchery of a bad woman; and from that day the power seems to depart from him. But he repents, and dies a glorious death. This is a very great romance. It is the book of all Kingsley's books that I should especially like you to read. Nowhere does Kingsley's prose display greater strength and beauty. Besides, there is nothing in this book which you cannot quite easily understand. You will find in Hereward nearly all those fine qualities which belong in Japanese romance to the *samurai;* and the few weaknesses of the hero only serve to make him appear more human and less impossible. This book has inspired many English artists. A great many pictures have been made representing the principal themes of the romance; and there is a fine marble statue representing Hereward carrying a woman out of a burning castle. But remember that this book is especially typical as a romance of Northern character.

It is much more difficult to speak to you adequately of *Hypatia.* In this book, too, we have a Norse ideal; but it is only used as a foil, as a contrast, as a relief to the other part of the book. The scenes are laid in Alexandria, in the period of the moral decay of the Roman Empire, and the great bloody riots of the Christian monks in that city. Hypatia, you know, was about the last great teacher of the Greek philosophy in Alexandria. She was a beautiful and learned woman; she attracted to her college all the young men of the time attached to the older learning, and she taught them the neo-Platonic philosophy. You can find the horrible story of her murder by the monks in Gibbon, or indeed in any standard history. She was hated as a pagan—because she represented the old learning, the old god, the old religion. The monks tore her limb from limb, and scraped her flesh from the bones with oyster shell. This is the episode of church history which Kingsley took for the subject of his novel. I need scarcely suggest to you that it is a noble attack upon ignorant bigotry and fanaticism. But how does the Norse idea come into the story? That has been managed in a wonderfully clever way. At the his-

torical period in question, the Norsemen had already began to ravage the coasts of Northern Africa, and to plunder cities all along the Mediterranean, even to the vicinity of Constantinople. At Constantinople many of them were actually engaged by the emperors to serve as a bodyguard — and this famous bodyguard is known in history as the Varangian guard. (It is known that there were several Englishmen in it.) To the Romans of the West these terrible sailors and robbers were chiefly known by the name of Goths and Vandals; but the names are misleading; for the early marauders appeared to have been largely from Scandinavia and Denmark—not true Goths in the later historical sense of the term. Kingsley imagined a strong body of these men to have forced their way up the river, and fortified themselves in Alexandria, notwithstanding the presence of a small force of Roman soldiers, who would have had no chance at all with them in battle. The fancy startles; but it is at least historically possible that at the time of which Kingsley speaks there might have been a force of these men in the African capital. By introducing them in his romance Kingsley is able to make a magnificent contrast between the luxurious and effeminate corruption of the South, and the fierce, hard heroism and the force of the North. The principal figure among these Goths is not the young leader Amalric;—it is the true Scandinavian warrior, old Wulf, the gray-bearded fighter who reproaches his younger companions with their weakness for the pleasures and lusts of women, and sings to them old heroic songs in order to keep them awake from women and wine. He is the one who constantly urges them to return to the North, for fear of corrupting their moral. But they do not listen to him until several misfortunes have come to them in consequence of indulgence with women. Then they go. But first they amuse themselves by slaughtering the monks who murdered Hypatia. These, not knowing with what kind of men they had to deal, attempted to force their way into the castle held by the Goths. The Northern leaders immediately ordered his men to open the doors wide and let the whole mob come in. But after they came in the doors were

shut, and they never came out again. This is not historical; but the description of the slaughter is so strange, and gives the reader such a sense of moral satisfaction that he really wishes it were. Besides this contrast — so cleverly managed — of luxurious South and heroic North, we have another contrast scarcely less finely represented: I mean that between the corrupt Rome of the age, and the last expiring splendour of Greek learning and Greek philosophy. For there was, even in the most corrupt age of decaying Rome, a circle of learning and of art as morally pure and good as any that ever existed; and this little band of whom Hypatia was a kind of priestess as well as teacher, strove as well as it could against all that was ignorant and cruel and wicked in that time. So we have four elements of history mingled in this wonderful book—Greek art and thought; Northern heroism; Roman corruption and vice; monkish fanaticism and brutality, unconsciously helping the wrong instead of the right. With such a subject any clever man could make a good romance; Kingsley made one which is more than good—it cannot be qualified by any weaker word than splendid. This is a book that you certainly ought to read; and, except a few pages on the subject of Platonic philosophy, I think that you will find in it nothing heavier than the narrative of *Hereward.*

I am not able to understand why nearly all the English critics have called *Westward Ho!*[1] Kingsley's masterpiece. I do not mean to imply that I do not think it a great romance; but I much prefer either *Hypatia* or *Hereward.* However, you can judge for yourselves. *Westward Ho!* is a story of the time of Queen Elizabeth,—a story of the sea-kings who wrested from Spain her maritime power, and really established English power in America. You can best get at the real history of those times, in a small compass, by reading Froude's *English Seamen in the Sixteenth Century*—or you might read his chapter on the same subject in his splendid *History of England,* which has all the charm of a romance, and almost the

[1] *Westward ho! or the voyages and adventures of Sir Amyas Leigh, Knight, of Burrough, in the county of Devon, in the reign of Her Most Glorious Majesty Queen Elizabeth. Rendered into modern English by Charles Kingsley.* 3 vols. 1855.

same enthusiasm and force of style as that of Kingsley's own books. The hero of the story is one called Sir Amyas Leigh, very much the same kind of hero as that real Sir Richard Grenville of whom you have read in Tennyson's stirring poem of *The Revenge.* The incidents are mostly founded upon the actual chronicles of those times,—chronicles of buccanneers, captures of Spanish galleons full of jewels and gold,—heroic sea fights, — struggles against Spanish military power, and against the hideous cruelty of the Inquisition. There are plenty of horrors in the book;—perhaps that is one of the reasons why I cannot like it quite so well as I do the others. But there are certainly chapters in it which are veritable prose epics;—poems of great deeds,—which make every Englishman's heart beat quicker when he reads them. I should prefer to class this book by itself: it is quite different in a certain way from the others.

Nevertheless there is a certain linking of the sentiment in all the books. Some have thought it didactic; but I think this is a shallow judgment. It is much more likely to have been the natural outcome of Kingsley's own character and feeling. In nearly all of his books you find that monkish religion always appears on one side as the enemy of culture and enemy of freedom; — and there is no doubt that when Kingsley thus denounced monkish religion he was thinking of Roman Catholicism. On the other hand we always find him championing and praising the old spirit of the North,—the spirit of heroism and freedom and force; and when he sings or proclaims the praises of the North we know that he is thinking especially of the Protestant England with her Scandinavian traditions, with her legacy of freedom obtained through the Reformation by the great religious revolution which the North certainly made. (It is now believed that the next great moral and intellectual revolution in Europe will also come from the North.) I think this is why Kingsley wrote as he did;—I think he felt exactly as he wrote. But I need scarcely tell you that Roman Catholics do not speak well of his books, and they are apt, if speaking of him at all, only to refer to his unfortunate controversy with

Newman. Everybody who knows everything about the matter, and who is capable of judging impartially must be aware that Newman was wrong and that Kingsley was thoroughly right. But Kingsley was a bad logician, and argued clumsily for a good cause; while Newman argued cleverly in a bad cause — much after the fashion of what has been called "intellectual burglary." And at that time, many took sides against Kingsley just as many took sides against Froude. But now nobody except Roman Catholics ever reads Newman; and Charles Kingsley has become a classic, and the more that we learn of his honest and earnest life, the brighter his memory becomes.

Besides his novels proper, Kingsley wrote another book that has become a very great classic: I mean his *Greek Heroes*, or, *Greek Fairy Tales.*[1] This little book written for his own children has passed through an enormous number of editions. It still remains the very best book in the world as an introduction to the study of Greek mythology. There is nothing else to compare with it for children in any European classic. And, as for style, we have here almost, if not absolutely, the most beautiful prose that can be produced with very simple English. Kingsley himself thought that he got his inspiration for this style from the English Bible; but the truth is that only genius could have made such a style.

Moreover no man that has not made a very careful study of such Greek poets as Pindar could have made this book. As for simple practical prose I am not afraid to say that it is superior to anything else in English except the prose of certain part of the Bible. Long ago I tried very hard to interest students in the beautiful language of this book: I believe that I was the first to cause its introduction into Japan. But I am sorry to say that my attempts were quite unsuccessful: the students complained that the English was too easy — a complaint which proved that they could not understand the emotional beauty of the book at all. But, surely, university students ought to know better. Let me quote to you a few bits from this beautiful book: it does not really matter much at

[1] *The heroes; or, Greek fairy tales for my children* 1856.

what page we make the choice,—but I think that the boy's vision of gods by the sea-shore is perhaps particularly striking:—

> Then he saw afar off above the sea a small white cloud, as bright as silver. And it came on, nearer and nearer, till its brightness dazzled his eyes.
>
> Perseus wondered at that strange cloud, for there was no other cloud all round the sky; and he trembled as it touched the cliff below. And as it touched, it broke, and parted, and within it appeared Pallas Athené, as he had seen her at Samos in his dream, and beside her a young man more light-limbed than the stag, whose eyes were like sparks of fire. By his side was a scimitar of diamond, all of one clear precious stone, and on his feet were golden sandals, from the heels of which grew living wings.
>
> They looked upon Perseus keenly, and yet they never moved their eyes; and they came up the cliffs towards him more swiftly than the sea-gull, and yet they never moved their feet, nor did the breeze stir the robes about their limbs;—only the wings of the youth's sandals quivered, like a hawk's when he hangs above the cliff. And Perseus fell down and worshipped, for he knew that they were more than man.

Of course every boy who has read a little of Greek stories and seen a little of Greek pictures knows at once who the young man is, "more light-limbed than the stag, whose eyes were like sparks of fire." That is Hermes, messenger of the Gods, and guider of the ghosts of the dead. But what other English writer ever gave us the feeling of this mythological figure in such few simple words? Or listen to the paragraph describing the song of the Sirens:—

> And now they could see Sirens, on Anthemousa, the flowery isle; three fair maidens sitting on the beach, beneath a red rock in the setting sun, among beds of crimson poppies and golden asphodel. Slowly they sang and sleepily, with silver voices mild and clear, which stole over the golden water, and into the hearts of all the heroes, in spite of Orpheus's song.
>
> And all things stayed around and listened; the gulls sat in

> white lines along the rocks; on the beach great seals lay basking, and kept time with lazy heads; while silver shoals of fish came up to hearken, and whispered as they broke the shining calm. The Wind overhead hushed his whistling, as he shepherded his clouds toward the west; and the clouds stood in mild blue, and listened dreaming, like a flock of golden sheep.
>
> And as the heroes listened, the oars fell from their hands, and their heads drooped on their breasts, and they closed their heavy eyes; and they dreamed of bright still gardens, and of slumbers under murmuring pines, till all their toil seemed foolishness, and they thought of their renown no more.

If this is not true poetry, in every sense of the word poetry, except only that of division into feet, there is no such thing as poetry. Its colour, the sound, the vividness of the images, the rise and fall of the sentences in musical waves, and the bright emotion communicated through the appeal to the senses of the reader represent everything that poetry can do. You will not find any prose like this in any other modern English writer. You will only find it in some beautiful translations made from Pindar and from other old Greek poets into melodious prose. Moreover, nearly all the images and similes used in the book are taken from the Greek, — though you could not possibly suspect the fact, unless you had read the Greek poets and Greek dramatists. For example, the Greeks spoke of the mother of the gods, as the "Ox-eyed"—an expression which would seem strange to any English reader who had not noticed how beautiful and gentle the eyes of a young cow sometimes are. Kingsley takes all these strange expressions and modifies them so as to give in English the exact effect intended by the Greek comparison:—

> And as she looked she grew fairer than all women, and taller than all men on earth; and her garments shined like a summer sea, and her jewels like the stars of heaven; and over her forehead was a veil, woven of the golden clouds of sunset, and through the veil she looked down him *with great soft heifer's eyes*, with great eyes mild and awful, which filled all the glen with light.

So beautiful may an epithet become when properly understood. And notice the description of the garments and the jewels—suggesting that this mother of the gods is clothed with the summer sky, and decorated with the stars of heaven.

Books which please us as children are apt, for obvious reasons, to disappoint us when we turn back to them as men, —because our minds have changed. I think that it must be a very great book indeed which can please us even more in our old age than in childhood. I read *The Heroes* first at the age of thirteen,—in a great hurry in a railway carriage; I bought it at a railway bookstall, on my way home from school. Since that time I have read it over every few years; and now it seems to me even much more beautiful, and much more wonderful, than it seemed in my boyhood, so I cannot help thinking that it is one of those books which the Japanese student ought to become fond of and to read many times over—not for the story, but for the beauty of the language and generous emotion of the thought.

I need not say much more about the work of Charles Kingsley: almost everything he wrote is good and worth reading. But you must not be ready to think that it is all equally good. For example *The Water-Babies*[1] has lately been very much praised and popularized, — but not for a good reason. Certain churches have taken interest in it chiefly because of various, and rather stupid, sneers in it on the subject of modern science. Probably if Kingsley had lived a little longer, he would have changed this. Also I must warn you that a greater number of his scientific lectures, especially those in books for children, though once very good and amusing, are now old-fashioned and now "out of date." This is not true, however, of his splendid book on the West Indies, entitled *At Last.*[2] In that book there is really the best popular description of a tropical forest that has ever been made. I went myself to the very places in Trinidad where Kingsley made these studies,—and I went partly in order to see if what he said was exactly true;

[1] *The water-babies. A fairy-tale for a land-baby* 1863.
[2] *At last: a Christmas in the West Indies.* 2 vols. 1871.

and nothing half so good has since been written of the same kind in a popular way.

Henry Kingsley

I think that it is better to classify Henry Kingsley[1] with his brother instead of putting him in any other group. He had exactly the same kind of talent and the same generous character as Charles; but he did not have the same opportunity to cultivate them. Still his work astonishingly resembles that of his brother's in all its best qualities. He was a young son, and had nothing to help him through the world except a good education,—a common fate of a younger son in England. He went to Australia to try his fortune and there he wrote an excellent and very successful novel called *Geoffrey Hamlyn*.[2] After many years of indifferent success in Australia he came back to England and there he wrote his masterpiece, *Ravenshoe*.[3] *Ravenshoe* is almost equal to anything written by Charles Kingsley. It is the story of an English gentleman of high degree, reduced by painful circumstances to become a common soldier, and to act as servant to an officer belonging to the same social rank which he had formerly occupied. The position is a bitter one; but tact and kindness smoothed the way. Eventually the young man recovers his social position and wins high rank as well. I am telling you the merest thread in the general weaving of the novel. Two characters in it have become really famous. One is the type of the English officer described under the name of Hornby,—a splendid character whose life and death offer stirring examples of self-control and duty well done. The other character is a typical aristocrat Welfer: at first in his youth not particularly moral, but keeping in the profound of him a good heart that makes us esteem him at last. And there is in this book a wonderful description of the famous charge of the

[1] (1830-1876).
[2] *The recollections of Geoffrey Hamlyn.* 3 vols. 1859.
[3] *Ravenshoe.* 3 vols. 1861.

Light Brigade at Balaclava. It is difficult to believe, when you read this, that it could have been written by any man who had not actually been engaged in the battle; — you have all the sensation of the soldiers in danger and death. This is Henry Kingsley's great book, — the one which I should like you to read. He went back to Australia again for the subject of his third novel *The Hillyars and the Burtons.* With *Hetty* he returned to English life, and wrote for a living until his death. All his work is good; but it is only in *Ravenshoe* that he rises to the height of his brother's art. This might also be called a novel of "Muscular Christianity" — for its main teaching is that of Effort as Duty. On the whole the two Kingsleys were a little too fine in their art to become as popular as they deserved to be.

TROLLOPE

I think you will remember that Kingsley gave us the socialistic romance,—the historical romance written to illustrate or embody certain heroic social ideas,—and, thirdly, the romance of Northern character. The work of the both brothers was in the one direction. A new direction was taken by Anthony Trollope.[1] Anthony Trollope invented a particular kind of middle class novel. He was one of the first realistic novelists, in the true sense of the word realism. There was nothing heroic or ideal in his books at all: his aim was to "reflect" the life of the well-to-do middle classes, — "the respectables," as some writers ironically say. This, of course, particularly represents the class of conventions and of humbug, though it also represents the common good qualities of English life. It was not a subject likely to tempt any emotionally imaginative person; —it required a particular character, and particular opportunity, and particular experience to do such work at once agreeably and truthfully. Trollope had all the faculties necessary. He

[1] (1815-1882).

wrote so many novels that it would tire you even to write down the names of them. And you may think it strange that he did this prodigious work in the capacity of a government official. He began life as a clerk in the post office; and he remained a post office clerk during the whole of his existence. That is the proof of two things: one, that a man who wants to find time for literary work can usually manage to find it;—the other fact is that government positions in England, not above the class of small clerkships, allow the incumbent a great deal of leisure. Four or five hours a day represent the average work in many departments—though in the post office the position is not quite so easy. But here is something still more extraordinary to observe, — Trollope, in spite of his post office duty and his novels, found plenty of time for hunting, fishing, pleasure trips to all parts of the country and even outside of it. How did he manage it? I do not know; and nobody else was ever able to understand. All we know is that when this extraordinary person was travelling in a railroad car, or on a steamer, he had with him a little portable table and wrote his novels in the rush of the train or the swaying of the steamboat. We need not expect great *literary* art from anybody who works in that way, —like a steam engine or an electrical machine. But we may expect exactitude and some interest. Trollope was able to give both of these. We may say that he was the realistic novelist who, taking actual life for his subject, composed his work with the aid of vast multitude of notes. He wrote down notes about everything, and used them well. I think I told you that Defoe in the 18th century used to do the same thing; but you must remember that Defoe was really a picaroon romancer; that he did not deal with the life of his time: he was not a true novelist. There was no true novelist before Richardson,—perhaps we might even say, before Fielding; for there is a great deal of mere romance in Richardson. Well, Trollope made a modern study of real life as minutely as Defoe made his studies of adventure with the help of innumerable notes. It would not be just, notwithstanding, to think of Trollope as depending entirely upon notes. He really had a great deal of dramatic im-

agination; and his conversational passages, which form the very best part of his work, could not have been made by the help of any kind of note taken. He knew the middle classes well; and he knew perfectly well all the fashions, conventions, and prejudices of his times. He painted these as he saw them. It has been said of him that he was the first English novelist who would not hesitate to tell the public what a bishop said to his wife in bed. Other novelists would have stopped the conversation of the bishop and his wife at the bedroom doors and have told us simply that they went to sleep. But Trollope knew that even in the case of a bishop, the real time for an important conversation in regard to some private social matter could best be carried on in the privacy of the bed chamber: therefore he allows us to hear the conversation of the bishop and his wife until they fell asleep. I mention the fact as intensely characteristic of Trollope's way of looking at life. In everything and everywhere and everybody he saw the human first of all, — the convention only afterwards, as a matter of secondary consideration. There is a proverb to the effect that "No man is a hero to his lackey,—to his body-servant." Trollope looked at men of all ranks just as truly and simply as the body-servant of the Duke of Wellington might have observed the habits of his master. But, just as a good servant is able to see and to know everything, without ever giving offence, so Trollope could always paint the small details of human life without making anybody angry. Bishops did not in the least object to those novels in which the bishops were represented as ordinary human beings. The perfect truth of Trollope's books delighted everybody; and there was much good, strong character pictured in them. The books were not great mines of literary style—very far from it: they only chronicle the truth of middle class life as sharply and as clearly as photographs. And just there was their weakness. Photographs only give us surfaces; and the surfaces of society are constantly changing. The surfaces of society are conventions, are fashions; they change like fashions. A fashion changes in England every twenty five years a great deal; in fifty years, a great deal more.

I do not know any better proof of this than what you will find in the volume of that famous London journal *Punch*. There you can study how quickly English fashions change — how much they have changed in ten, in fifteen, in twenty-five, in forty years. The pictures that I saw in *Punch* when a boy and that made me laugh very much because I knew the truth veiled under the fun of them, would not make anybody laugh now: they represent what has utterly passed away. They have now the interest only of records. So it is with the novels of Trollope. He pictured life exactly as he saw it on the surface; —and, lo! the surface has completely changed; and Trollope is not read any more! What he described has ceased to exist. Yet I think that any man of letters can still like Trollope, for the man of letters finds an interest in the past even exceeding that of the present. It is only the public who neglect Trollope.

The best of his books, to my thinking, is *Doctor Thorne*;[1] I am not sure whether you would care for it. *Barchester Towers*[2] is considered by many people at least equally good. Unfortunately I cannot advise you to read much of Trollope because you have so many other things of more importance to read, and because Trollope does not go deeply into human nature. Again, I cannot think that you would find pictures of English middle class life very interesting. Nothing in English literature which is not capable of interesting you, can do you any good. If a poem or a story in English cannot touch your emotion, or please your fancy, it cannot be of any real use to you; so I shall not recommend Trollope. You ought to know his place in literature, however; and, if by any chance you want to know more of him, then try to read *Doctor Thorne*.

READE

The next typical novelist is Charles Reade.[3] Charles Reade was certainly one of the greatest of all English story-tellers;

[1] 3 vols. 1858. [2] 3 vols. 1857. [3] (1814-1884).

he came very near to Thackeray;—he was much more clever in treating human nature than Trollope was. But he always fell somewhat short of Thackeray. Still, he made some great innovation, influenced literature in a new and very healthy way, and therefore must be remembered as a typical novelist. He was not educated at a public school, but he went to Oxford very young, was able to pass a satisfactory examination, took a degree, and then won a Fellowship, which made him independent for the rest of his life. In those days a Fellow was not allowed to marry, and Reade never married. He kept to his Fellowship and wrote novels until his death. Some people have thought him insane,—just a little bit insane; and there is no doubt that he was what we usually call queer. But the charge of insanity was probably inspired by Reade's peculiarly irritable temper. Upon no condition would he allow anybody to criticize him with impunity; and people who wrote him kind letters, suggesting something which they hoped that he would not do, were astonished by the ferocity of the letters which he sent them in return. I remember, for example, that when Reade once wrote a novel treating some musical matter, a professional musician ventured to send him some exact information on the subject of the violin. The reply of Reade to that unfortunate musician was published at that time in the papers as a curiosity of literary ill temper. No one who read such examples of Reade's correspondence could have wished to make his acquaintance. But he did not want anybody's acquaintance: he only wanted to be let alone, that he might do his work in peace; and there really was some reason for his vexation. People in England will not let a successful author alone; and Reade was determined to be let alone. Hence these charges of insanity. Insane or sane, however, there is no question at all of his power in the world of letters. I said that he was an innovator; and I must tell you in what way. Before the time of Charles Reade people were afraid to talk much about natural character,—about inherited ability,—about inherited tendency of any kind. Writing of that kind seemed to attack the theological idea of free will. Even Thackeray

would not have felt inclined to say much about characters as an inevitable result of inheritance. Reade did just exactly the opposite. He wrote his novels to show that men are good or bad, under certain conditions, not because they can help it, but because they cannot possibly help it,—because their characters have been made for them long before they were born.

Besides these that we may call novels of heredity, the novels of Charles Reade must also be considered as early examples of another kind of novel, — that novel of experience and observation which was at later days in France to be so highly developed by Zola, and the school of naturalism. The art of working with notes and facts collected in vast quantities, grouped, systematized, and used to illustrate a theory, was carried to much greater perfection by Reade than by anybody before him. For example, if he wanted to introduce into one of his stories the character of an athlete, he would read everything to be found on the subject of athletic training, athletic capacity, the opinions of the doctors at the effect of training upon muscle, the peculiar disease called muscular atrophy; — then he would visit an athletic training school, observe for himself, fill note-books with his observations. To-day we have what are called "clipping agencies"—that is great companies which employ a multitude of persons to read all newspapers and magazines, and to cut out from these newspapers and magazines all articles of interest on specialized subjects. To-day if you want to know anything about almost any subject — say, for example, photography with the Röntgen rays, you have only to write to a clipping agency; and, in exchange for so much money, they will send you envelopes full of printed matter on the subject clipped from newspapers and magazines, each clipping dated and credited. Reade worked in the time before such agencies had come into existence; but he did his own clippings quite as well as it could have been done for him by a company. He was a tremendous worker. Please remember these two facts about him; because they prove that the so-called naturalistic novel was produced in England long before Zola made it famous in France. And also please to observe

that Zola's novels are essentially like Reade's novels of heredity. Zola, though very great, did his work in a much more brutal fashion than Reade,—in a way that would not be tolerated in England by those laws which regulate public morals; while Reade never offends the moral sense, or represents humanity as worse than it really is. But essentially the work of the two men is alike in principle,—if we except the single, and quite unimportant, fact that Zola pretends to write his novels according to the philosophy of positivism : that is to say, according to the system of Comte.

Among the many novels of Charles Reade, the best known, perhaps, are *Griffith Gaunt*,[1] *Hard Cash*,[2] *Peg Woffington*,[3] *The Cloister and the Hearth*,[4] *It is Never too Late to Mend*[5] and *A Terrible Temptation*.[6] Critics say that the best are *It is Never too Late to Mend* (this title is a common English proverb turned to literary account), and *The Cloister and the Hearth*. I do not think that either of them would prove to you particularly attractive;—the first is largely a story of Australian life, and deals with the conditions of prisons; the other is an extraordinary historical novel, in which the chief character is Erasmus. I best like the novel called *A Terrible Temptation*,—chiefly the story of a woman who having lost her social position through a moral fault finds it very difficult fo regain and to keep it. This is a powerful and a very pathetic story; but unless you can understand the cruelty of English society in moral matters, there are parts of it that will puzzle you. In the same book illustrating the hereditary tendency, there is a remarkable account of the fruitless attempt of bringing up a gypsy child according to the rigid English habits; the wild nature of the boy rendering this impossible. But all of Reade's novels are really good—good both as to style, as to plan, and as to verisimilitude. The student will do well, I imagine, to choose for himself in this case.

Speaking of gypsies, I may mention here very briefly the name of a writer contemporary with Charles Reade, who wrote

[1] 1866. [2] 1863. [3] 1853. [4] 1861. [5] 1856. [6] 1871.

the best gypsy story in English language if we except the work of Borrow;—J. Sheridan Le Fanu.[1] Le Fanu wrote very little, but the little that he did write possesses extraordinary excellence. It is hard to class him—perhaps he cannot be classed at all. His single powerful novel, *Uncle Silas*,[2] one of the most terrible stories ever written, deals with the consequence of entrusting a daughter to the care of a guardian, with the dangerous condition that her property will pass to the guardian in case that she should die before him. Naturally the guardian wants her to die; and being a thoroughly wicked man he has no scruples as to the method of making her die. She escapes, after a series of adventures that make anybody shudder to read. The value of this book is not, however, in the story; but in descriptions of character — horrible characters. An interesting chapter is that describing some feats of a professional boxer —an expert. The author appears to have known a great deal about athletics. But it is in his gypsy story that he shows this knowledge; and to my thinking his gypsy story is a real masterpiece. It is quite short and is entitled *The Bird of Passage.* This is a history, founded on fact, of a wealthy English country gentleman falling in love with a gypsy girl, and wanting to marry her. She runs away from him—not because she does not love him but because she does love him—too much for his own sake. She knows that to marry him would eventually cause him great sorrow—so she sacrifices her life, practically speaking, for his sake. That is the subject of the book—a very simple subject; but the extraordinary mixture of tenderness and force with which the tale is told, touches every heart.

Collins

We now come to a writer whose work represents something of retrogression as well as innovation,—Wilkie Collins.[3]

[1] Joseph Sheridan Le Fanu (1814-1873).
[2] *Uncle Silas: a tale of Bartram-Haugh* 1864.
[3] William Wilkie Collins (1824 1889).

By his novel of heredity, his experimental fiction, Reade made a very marked advance upon really scientific lines. But Collins, instead of effecting any progress, went back to the oldest and worst form of the novel, — the form adopted by Richardson and called epistolary. I suppose you know that the epistolary novel is a novel all written in the form of a letter. We get very tired of reading this kind of book to-day; but Collins had certain great qualities as a story-teller which held the attention and charmed the imagination of the readers. Bad though the form certainly was, the story was always good. With Collins the story is almost everything; the form absolutely nothing. And the story depends for its great attractiveness upon the ingenuity and the novelty of the plot. For this reason the novels of Collins proved especially adapted to dramatization; and a number of them were dramatized for the English stage with great success. I think that something of Collins has even been translated into Japanese: in this case the story itself was the attraction. No Englishman has imagined better stories than Collins—though the manner in which he presents them, the use he makes of his materials, is more than open to question. He has been savagely criticized; but criticism never lessened his popularity, nor did it in the least diminish the value of his stories to the English stage. There is no other English story-teller just like Collins—to find a good comparison for him we must contrast him with a great French story-teller Émile Gaboriau, who resembles him in a number of ways.

All this does not in the least give you any idea of his influence as an innovator. It was not by inventing new plots that Collins especially brought something new into fiction. It was by a curiously sympathetic treatment of wicked characters. Here Collins did something entirely new—and also something true to life. You must remember that wicked people who are able to succeed in life, or very nearly to succeed by "sheer wickedness," cannot be, as a rule, very unpleasant people. Especially they cannot be brutal. The world very soon disposes of men who try to break their way by violence to power and position. The difficult people to deal with are those who at-

tract us by an apparent refinement and gentleness and kindness—though secretly watching for an opportunity to do us all possible injury. In the hypocrisy of wickedness women are likely to be much more successful than men: they have the terrible charm of sex to help them. Now, before Collins, it has been the rule to make bad characters in fiction appear as bad and hateful—just as in the time of the old Mystery plays, vices were represented upon the stage by hideous or grotesque figures, and virtues by handsome people beautifully dressed. How easy it would be to go smoothly through the world, if such were the real stage of things! If vice were really ugly, and virtue really beautiful to the common eye—who would be deceived? Now Collins deals especially with the charming side of bad character. I do not say that his novels mark an immoral advance on that account: he is not quite true to life even in this. Nor do I say that the influence of his novels is morally good—it is not very good. But he gave impulse to a new and true idea. One defect, I think, is this—that he makes us like his bad characters too much. We fairly fall in love with them: and when they get into terrible trouble at last, we are not glad as we ought to be, but shamefully sorry. However, the book makes us think about things. For example, the wicked Count Fosco in *The Woman in White*,[1] and the red-headed governess in *Armadale*[2] both attract us a great deal—in spite of their thorough badness: and we have to ask ourselves why. Then the answer comes, of course, that it is by the power to deceive and by a certain quality of real attractiveness that such people are able to do mischief. It would be no use to give you the names of all of Collins' novels: the best, I think, are *The Woman in White*, *Armadale* and *The Moonstone*.[3] Perhaps it is not quite correct to call all of these books novels—some of them are much more romances than novels. Certainly *The Moonstone* is a romance; and such a book as *Antonina*[4] must be called a historical romance. For the sake

[1] 3 vols. 1860 [First appeared in *All the Year Round*, 1860].
[2] 2 vols. 1866.
[3] 3 vols. 1868.
[4] *Antonina; or the fall of Rome. A romance of the fifth century.* 3 vols. 1850.

of the story almost any of Collins' books are good readings; but they are not models of pure style; and, as to construction, they mark a bad reaction against progress.

We are now coming to contemporary writers; and about these one must be very careful in pronouncing judgment. However, a few must be mentioned; and I want you to notice that those whom I can mention are romance writers rather than novelists. Towards the close of the Victorian era, a great revival of romance took place. This did not at all interfere with the production of the novel proper, but continued side by side with it. Many writers of novels attempted both forms with success. For example, George Meredith, the greatest living English novelist, who carried the art of psychological novel to the highest possible perfection, also attempted a romance in the style of *The Arabian Nights;* — and this is perhaps his greatest book. For Meredith's novel, like Trollope's, reflects social fashions which must change and pass away—some of which actually have passed away in their author's lifetime. But his romance, *The Shaving of Shagpat*[1] contains a truth not likely to pass away in less than another million years. The teaching of this wonderful book, written in the most poetical and wonderful prose, is simply the difficulty of destroying errors in the world. Many persons, having themselves a sincere love of truth, are apt to imagine that, if you prove something to be false, then people will acknowledge that it is false. But no greater mistake could possibly be made. Most men will not acknowledge an error because it is proved to be an error—not at all; they will rise up to defend it against all reasons, with the most desperate effort, and the most unpardoning malice;—because this world of ours is not ruled as yet by reason, but by emotion. The work of destroying even one little bit of popular ignorance may require more than the strength of twenty governments, and cost more than the blood and money of fifty wars. That is the moral of *The Shaving of Shagpat;* and the marvellous Sword of Aklis in that story represents the power

[1] *The shaving of Shagpat, an Arabian entertainment* 1856 [1855].

of truth. While on the subject of Meredith, I may mention to you that his greatest novel is said to be *The Egoist*,[1] a wonderful story of English characters in the highest society. But I shall not talk to you about Meredith as a novel writer for the present: his work could not impress you in this direction; and his attraction for you should rather be in his single romance and his wonderful poetry.

R. L. Stevenson

The greatest romantic writer, almost of the century — if we except Sir Walter Scott—was a man who lived and died in our own time, contemporary with us, representing both in his thought and sentiment the best that the later Victorian period had to give. I mean Robert Louis Stevenson.[2] His recent death, and the appreciation of his work which followed it, enable us to place him very definitely in relation to English fiction. He was the son of a lighthouse architect, and was intended for a more serious profession than literature. But from boyhood, all his tendencies were literary; and to a natural love of literature he added a natural love of travel and adventure. No man could have been better prepared by nature for the career of a great story-teller,—excepting the one too important fact that he had not been given a strong body. Slender, very weak, and developing consumption almost in boyhood, he found himself at the beginning of his career destined to an early death. Nevertheless, his great natural courage, natural cheerfulness, and an unfailing sweetness of temper helped him to face the gloom before him without hesitation and with astonishing success. Should he continue to live in his own country among his own people, it was evident that his life would be very short. By seeking a gentler climate he might prolong it. Though poor, and dependent upon his pen for a living, he did not hesitate to sentence himself to exile; and he went very far

[1] *The egoist, a comedy in narrative.* 3 vols. 1879, 1880, 1890.
[2] (1850-1894).

away indeed—to the island of Samoa in the Pacific, where he passed the latter part of his life. There he became a kind of chief among the natives; and there he wrote the greater number of his wonderful books. He died, quite suddenly, one morning, just after he had sat down to continue the MSS. of an unfinished novel. Considering these facts and his comparatively short life, what he did remains astonishing.

The rich mass of his work is very difficult to group in a definite way — so great is the variety which it exhibits. His work includes romantic sketches of travel, moral stories and parables, fantastic stories dealing with romance in relation to modern life, romances dealing with interesting episodes of history — especially 16th and 17th century episodes, — and again modern stories which, although marvellous as realistic studies, are nevertheless fraught with just enough of the improbable to justify us in calling them romances. Nor does this variety express the whole of his work in fiction. There is a particular part of it, essentially humourous in tone, which he accomplished in partnership with a cousin Mr. Lloyd Osbourne. What parts the cousin wrote, and what parts Stevenson wrote, has not yet been publicly proved—perhaps it does not matter. The result of the partnership was a series of the very best books published in this whole period of fiction, and quite unique in their way. It has always been doubted by literary men, with good reasons, whether the best class of novel, romance, or drama, can possibly be created by a literary partnership. The idea has been that the mixing of two different individualities generally gives a bad result,—that there is a loss of personality on both sides. Even French fiction, as in the case of the famous brothers Goncourt, appears to sustain this opinion. But Stevenson's case certainly proves a surprising exception: the result of his partnership with Osbourne was indubitably gain, not loss.

You see how difficult it is to "group" Stevenson. But I can try to speak of various typical works in their relation to different classes of effort. I need not speak to you about his books of travel, but I will begin with the subject of moral fiction, or rather symbolic fiction.

Stevenson first really attracted great attention by a very short story,—not by a novel. This short tale was entitled *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde.*[1] I believe that you have heard of it. Everybody wondered at first why the story has such an enormous success. But in this case even the usually dull public felt the symbolic truth underlying the apparently simple story. It is the story of what we might call "double personality." Much more clever stories of double personality have been written—both before Stevenson and after him. But none has produced quite so great and direct an effect. The meaning of the book may be summed up as the struggle within a man of his good and evil nature. A variety of other tales can be classed to this. All of Stevenson's short stories have extraordinary power; but sometimes the power is one of sheer horror. Very horrible, for instance, is the tale of the beautiful Spanish girl who inherits the curse of a thirst for blood—an inclination to cannibalism or to something very like to it. Of course such a story suggests what terrible things may be transmitted from parent to child. Then I think you remember the story about the miller-boy in the little country valley—watching the stream every day flow by, and wishing that he could follow it far away, — down to the great town and the sea. Here, you have, in a short form, the whole story of human dissatisfaction with the actual, and longing for the unknown which, nevertheless, seldom brings us happiness of any kind. I need not follow the subject of symbolic stories further than to tell you that all are good, and that you ought to read them all. Remember that they are models of pure clear English. Stevenson's style has been meanly criticized by jealous people even since his death. It is pleasant to find Professor Gosse call him the writer of the most exquisite English of his time.

But you must not think that all of Stevenson's short stories are symbolic stories. There is quite distinct group of stories which are not at all moral—in fact some narrow-minded people have called them immoral. The plain truth is that they are neither immoral nor moral,—but simply unmoral. They are

[1] 1886.

humorous, extravagant, and represent incongruities of the most amusing kind. It is curious that *The Arabian Nights* should have given, in the later Victorian period, fresh inspirations to minds so utterly dissimilar as those of George Meredith and of Robert Louis Stevenson. Stevenson did not attempt in any way to imitate the style of *The Arabian Nights* as Meredith did: he only imitated the oriental plan of them. That plan, you remember, is that a number of people are successively brought together by accident, each one of whom has to tell an extraordinary story. Instead of putting the scene of the stories in Bagdad, as the Arabian writer did, and as Meredith did, Stevenson puts them in the middle of London—the London of the later Victorian period. He called this book the *New Arabian Nights*[1] and it is one of the most amusing books in existence. In connection with the series of stories commonly grouped under this title must be mentioned two separately published narratives, both conceived upon the same plan. One of these is the famous story of *The Suicide Club*—this is rather a serious narrative. There is in London a secret society or club composed of persons all of whom are under a solemn pledge to commit suicide under certain conditions. Every year one has to kill himself; but who the person may be is not decided in advance. The tale is a tale of terror rather than of amusement; and it contains some remarkable studies of strange human nature. The other tale is called *The Dynamiter* — a tale of a society of nihilistic people who believed in bringing about reform by the destruction of civilization, and occasionally amused themselves by blowing up parts of London. But the tale of this secret society is only one of a great many stories linked together in the most curious way,—every story being the study of one or two different human characters.

The *New Arabian Nights* is a title sufficiently suggestive of the really oriental plan of the production. But another book called *Island Nights' Entertainments*[2] is not oriental at all — in spite of its title. It is a book of Polynesian stories, collected in Samoa and other South Sea Islands and told with

[1] 1877-82. [2] 1893.

astounding skill. The charm of these stories is partly in their novelty; they deal with Polynesian superstitions, which are very weird, and not like any other superstitions in the world. Perhaps there is no other books of this kind in existence; and the art of it has no superior in English—perhaps no superior even in French. For you must not think, even in the case of Stevenson, that popularity is a test of the best work. It is the least known work of Stevenson that should especially interest the literary student; and this book is an example. The best of the stories, I think, is *The Beach of Falesa.* It is a tale of Polynesian witchcraft,—so wonderfully told that it has all the terror of reality. The most striking page in it is perhaps that of the transformation, when the victim in the story finds himself alone upon the Sea of the Dead, in a small boat, with the wizard, whose body begins to grow larger and larger until the boat bursts. There is no finer page of weird writing in modern literature. Besides this story there is an excellent story of *Taboo,*—a subject better explained by this rough colloquialism than by many volumes of learned explanation. Lastly, I should call your attention to the excellent tale of *The Bottle Imp.* This is not Polynesian in origin; but it represents the engrafting upon Polynesian imagination of a mediæval superstition perhaps learned from Christian sources. The idea of diabolical gift, enabling its possessor to fulfil any wish at the cost of his soul, unless he can induce somebody else to buy the gift at the same terms, is much older than Stevenson. I think you will remember that this is the idea upon which the wonderfully horrible story of *Melmoth the Wanderer* is based. Stevenson had read *Melmoth* in his boyhood, and perhaps drew his inspiration from it. But nevertheless he so transformed the original idea with Polynesian colour that his originality cannot be questioned for a moment.

It is not surprising that such a man should have produced the best boys' book of adventure ever written, *Treasure Island.*[1] Certainly the mere story here would not give the book the unequalled merit which it has. The plan of the story reminds us

[1] 1883.

a little of various tales by Washington Irving. But not even Irving could have written with such wonderful style and realistic colour. You read Irving or Marryat, and remember the story—that is all. But when you read Stevenson you remember the very words: sentences and paragraphs remain in imagination as if they had been burnt into it. That is what the difference of style means. For example, as I speak to you, there comes immediately to memory Stevenson's description of the cunning look of the one-legged conspirator whose eye glittered under his half-closed lids "like a clump of glass." Hundreds of expressions like this, conveying exactly the impression of a picture, cannot be forgotten.

It has been the fashion of critics to say less about the compound work than the solitary work of Stevenson—I mean to pass lightly over such books as *The Wrecker*,[1] and *The Wrong Box*,[2] because his cousin helped him to write them. But I feel sure that this is a mistake. They have no equals in the fiction of the century; and it is probable that the cousin's help gave them certain qualities of excellence which Stevenson alone could not have given. Although this is only guessing, I imagine that the numerous conversations in *The Wrong Box*—which is the story of a man trying to get rid of a dead body by shipping it away in a box to an imaginary address—were produced by the collaborator. And I think that a good deal of the wonderful character of Naves, the American captain, was partly created by the same pen. I should put *The Wrecker* at the head of all Stevenson's modern stories. Every character in it lives with extraordinary life, and every one is typical as well as human. The tale is the wildest of romances—yet you cannot say that anything in it is impossible. Romantic as the story is, the characters are intensely realistic. And for this reason I think that the book best represents Stevenson's effect upon English literature. For the great power of him lay just in this method of combining romance and realism. Nobody did the same thing in exactly the same way before—nobody ever thought it possible. To make a purely romantic plot,

[1] 1892. [2] 1889.

which, however improbable, could not be considered impossible; and to make all the characters of the story purely human, everyday types—so real in all their words and acts that we can touch them and feel them and hear them—that was an extraordinary feat; and Stevenson has accomplished it, not only in *The Wrecker*, but in at least half a dozen books of totally different kind,—historic romances like *The Black Arrow*,[1] extravagances like *The Dynamiter*, 17th century tales like *The Master of Ballantræ*.[2]

As I have said all of Stevenson's stories are worth reading. I am not sure that the same thing cannot be said about his essays, nor about his poetry. As for the stories—the whole bulk of fiction, with its marvellous variety—there is no doubt at all that you can safely assume it to represent the very best reading in which you can indulge. And here we may leave Stevenson—with only last word about his poetry. Elsewhere I have told you that he did not have the art of poetry to any marked degree. His *Songs of Travel*[3] will not live. But his *Child's Garden of Verses*[4] is likely to live for a very long time —not because it is even good poetry as to form, but because it possesses the same qualities of truth to nature and beautiful but simple feeling which distinguishes his other imaginative work. For instance, consider those verses of *The Wind:*—

I saw you toss the kites on high
And blow the birds about the sky;
And all around I heard you pass,
Like ladies' skirts across the grass.

* * *

I saw the different things you did,
But always you yourself you hid,
I felt you push, I heard you call,
I could not see yourself at all—
O wind, a-blowing all day long,
O wind, that sings so loud a song!

[1] *The black arrow: a tale of the two Roses* 1888.
[2] *The master of Ballantrae, a winter's tale* 1889.
[3] 1896. [4] 1885.

Now this may not be poetry, as form goes; but it represents exactly what a child feels, when he first begins to think about the mysterious and ghostly thing which we call wind. He hears it; he feels it push him—and yet he never can see it. Is it a ghost?—or an animal?—or what is it? There are many charming things like this in the *Child's Garden of Verses* which cannot die.

George Du Maurier

After Stevenson there has been very little romance of a recognizably lasting order; but two names deserve mentioning. One is that of the late George Du Maurier;[1]—the other that of Rudyard Kipling. The first mentioned deserves mention chiefly for the extraordinary originality of his imagination. He was not by profession a man of letters at all; he was an artist, and chiefly a caricaturist. From the humourous artists we should scarcely expect a very high order of novel; but the two faculties of humour and of literary art are not incompatible—Thackeray being a good example. I think you remember that Thackeray used to draw pictures for his own novels—very funny pictures indeed, caricatures of the finest kind. Du Maurier was the leading artist of the *London Punch* for many years; and his drawings during those years are much more than mere caricatures; they reflect the life and the fashions of English society during the Victorian era. What novelists were describing in words, he described in pictures. You cannot find any better way to understand the life depicted in English novels written between 1850 and 1885 than by looking at the pictures of the *Punch*. I suppose you know that the men who draw those wonderful pictures of English life are obliged *ipso facto* to be society men: they must be accomplished gentlemen, able to appear anywhere, and feel themselves respected. And their lives are passed in the study of everything relating to society

[1] George Louis Palmella Busson Du Maurier (1834-1896).

— whether military, religious, artistic, musical, or commercial. Now the artist goes to the theatre for an inspiration; now he goes to a dinner given by military officers; one day he is in the Cabinet of the Ministers: the next day he may be in the cottage of a mechanic. Of course this experience is of the widest and best kind in relation to art; and the man chosen for such work is highly paid. Du Maurier, as his name implies, was but half English; he was much more French than English both by education and character—and the fact gave to his art a particular delicacy. When he had become rather advanced in life, it suddenly occurred to him to write a novel,—or rather a romance of modern life, for which he had obtained some purely original inspiration. This novel, which he illustrated himself in the most beautiful way, was called *Peter Ibbetson.*[1] It is the story of a man who discovered a peculiar secret method of living a *double* life. If you lie down on your back at night, with your hands clasped above your head, and your left foot crossed over the right foot (I am not sure whether it is the left or the right foot),—and then fall asleep thinking of any place in which you would like to be,—presently you will find yourself in that place, and everything will happen just as you desire. Thus you can live *against time.* For example, do you regret your childhood?—would you like to see yourself as a child again, and to see your dead mother, or sister, or brother? If you wish for that, go to sleep according to the rules given in the book, and then you will be able to travel back against time, and to live in the past, and to meet and talk with all the dead people that you loved long ago. That is the main idea of the story. Two things made it intensely interesting—the first was the extraordinary charm of its characters, idealized indeed, but very human and tender; and the other fact was the daring novelty of its ideas about the supernatural world. Evidently Du Maurier had been studying the religions of the East — Brahminism and Buddhism; and the latter part of the book with its notions of pre-existence and its curious suggestions about the relation of every human life to the future and to the

[1] 1892.

past—is anything but English. The whole thing is a wonderful oriental dream, in a setting of modern life partly English, but much more French. The charm is very deep and very strange —the pathetic passages are never to be forgotten. And strange to say, this charming book is not written according to literary laws at all, but almost in spite of them. There is no attempt at style; but the beautiful, passionate, and tender feeling of the artist pours itself out in such effective words that all the effect of style is actually produced.

Perhaps this book was too fine, too beautiful to become immediately popular except with artists. Indeed persons unacquainted with French life could not have been expected to understand all of it. But Du Maurier's next book *Trilby*,[1] which was also very much of a book about French life, had a prodigious — an unnatural success. Hundreds and hundreds of thousands of copies were sold; and the English speaking world (except the great critics) simply went mad over the book. And here is a proof that immediate popularity is no test of enduring literary value. For *Trilby* was not nearly so wonderful a book as its predecessor. Its success was perhaps owing to the facts that it contained a sensuous quality more easily understood by the common mass of readers. It dealt with the life of artists and artists' models in Paris—an existence in which morals are somewhat loose; and the story was a story of hypnotism. I suppose you know what is meant by hypnotism to-day, that it is what was called mesmerism in a former generation. A girl is hypnotized by a great musician. She does not know any music; but when he puts her into a mesmeric trance he is able to make her sing as no other human being ever sang before in the history of the world. One night, in the theatre where she is singing, her mesmerizer and master suddenly dies. After that she cannot sing at all; the charm is gone; the magic is past. Men of science will tell you that such hypnotism is impossible. But the story of the impossible is certainly very interesting and it is an omen of the possibility of applying romance to really scientific subject. I think it has some importance for

[1] *Trilby, a novel.* 3 vols. 1894.

this reason. It was probably the first of many scientific romances of a totally new kind that are likely to be produced. But it is not so fine a book, by any means, as *Peter Ibbetson.*

However, Du Maurier deserves to be remembered for these two books—the metaphysical romance of *Peter Ibbetson,* the pseudo-scientific romance of *Trilby.* The astonishing success of the book unfortunately induced him to accept an offer of 30,000 dollars (equal to 60,000 *yen*) for another novel. He wrote it or tried to write it; but he died in consequence of over-work involved by fulfilling the contract. The book was called *The Martian*[1] — it sold well, it was well illustrated, and altogether worthless. It is not even worth speaking about, except in relation to the fact that great books cannot be produced simply by paying the author to write them. Here is an extraordinary case of a man killing himself for the sake of earning money, and quite unable to do anything equal to the work that was done from the pure love of the subject. The artist was greatly regretted. But as for the novelist it is not likely that if Du Maurier had lived longer he could have done any better. The two good books which he produced actually represent the whole experience of his life as an artist in Paris and in London; and he has exhausted those experiences.

RUDYARD KIPLING

It is not possible to name any other figure of great importance—certain importance—until we come to Rudyard Kipling,[2] a contemporary writer still comparatively young. In the case of so young a man, and one so near to us, popularity is no test whatever; and it is not because of the popularity that I would mention him. Nearly all the leading critics, who make it a rule not to mention living authors, have broken that rule in the case of Mr. Kipling. He has been made the subject of an essay by Professor Gosse; and he has been referred to by

[1] *The Martian: with illustrations by the author* 1896.
[2] (1865-1936).

most of the other English leaders in criticism, as well as by the chief critics of France and Germany. I therefore think that it is necessary to say something about him—notwithstanding the fact that his prose cannot appeal to you like the work of Stevenson. Probably Kipling's ultimate place in literature will be decided by his poetry rather than by his prose. It is yet too early to say much about his poetry. But a great deal may be said about his prose.

Like Thackeray he was born in India; but it was as a writer of Indian stories that he first became well known. He is not a university man; and his work does not show, as Stevenson's does, results of literary training. But it shows extraordinary originality, as well as a very careful study of the methods of the best French writers. Probably it was much better for this extraordinary man that he did not study at university. University study would have deprived him of the invaluable experience which he enjoyed in wandering all over the world as a newspaper correspondent, and it would probably have left him with less courage to attempt original things. Lastly, it would certainly have left him ignorant of the dialects which he knows so well — the speech of working people, of mechanics, of sailors, of peasants—all of which he has put to excellent account in his poetry as well as in his prose. By experience he learned the truth of Emerson's saying that "the language of the street is much more forcible than the language of the academy." Unfortunately his wonderfully clever use of this language is just that which must prevent you from reading his best work with pleasure. Unless you know something about such colloquial you will find pages of Kipling almost incomprehensible.

And it is not for this use of colloquial that I wish to praise him, but for qualities having a much closer relation to great literature. His unsurpassed merit is that of a writer of short stories; as a writer of short stories he is probably the cleverest Englishman that ever lived. But he is great in this direction, not only because he was born a genius, but because he studied to excellent purpose the methods of the best French story-tellers.

Short stories never became really popular in England until Kipling wrote them. But they had been popular for hundreds of years in France; and since the time of the Renaissance, the French have been the best of all writers of short stories. It was thought a few years ago that short stories never could become successful in English literature. Kipling has proved the contrary.

But there are many kinds of short stories; and you know that a number of our world classics are short stories; for example, there was *Undine* by La Motte-Fouqué, *Manon Lescaut* by the Abbé Prévost, *Peter Schlemihl* by Chamisso — not to speak of the stories of Andersen. These are read in every language; but they were not written by Englishmen. If classifiable, we should call them romantic stories. There are thousands of romantic stories in French. Realistic stories are more rare; I could not speak of French romantic stories without giving a very long list; but short stories of the realistic order do not seem to have been successfully undertaken before the 19th century. The 19th century produced several famous volumes of realistic short stories. Perhaps the earliest great writer of them was Prosper Mérimée, whose *Carmen* is already a classic. But even Mérimée fell short of Maupassant, who succeeded him. All the genius of the French race for story-telling seemed to have been concentrated in that wonderful man. I think there is no doubt that Kipling obtained his inspiration chiefly from the study of Maupassant. You must know something about Maupassant; a number of his stories have been translated, I think, into Japanese. The great peculiarity in the work of Maupassant which strikes any reader immediately, is his conciseness. It is not so much what he says that surprises us as what he does not say. He never uses one unnecessary word. He does not make descriptions or give explanations. He draws a character merely by making the character talk; and from the talk you know exactly what the character is. The stories of Maupassant have the vividness of photographs—strongly coloured photographs; but they give us what no mere pictures can give: sensations of hearing, taste,

touch, and smell. As I said Kipling's work is of this kind. But there is one particular in which he differs a great deal from Maupassant,—sympathy. A terrible feature of Maupassant's work is the total absence of all sympathy: there is no indication of human feeling whatever on the writer's part. You read the French stories with intense emotion; but it is the picture, the fact, that stirs you—not anything that the writer says. He remains so absolutely impersonal that you cannot even imagine his presence. In his mercilessness, his supreme indifference, he has been aptly compared to "a force of nature." A force of nature acts; but it has no sympathy.

This standard of realism Kipling could not attain—perhaps it will not be attained again for a thousand of years. He remains very human—a little hard on the surface, but not so hard that we cannot feel the beating of the heart underneath. You feel a very comprehensive and very sympathetic personality behind his stories. He appears to love noble men and noble things, and wish to make us share his affection for them. He is a realist—the best English realist living; but he has a good deal of romantic feeling in his work.

The work—at least the best of it—is represented by about a hundred short stories—chiefly of an exotic and an extraordinary kind. The greater number deal with Indian life, or the life of the English in India; but there are stories also of South Africa, of South America, of London and the English coast, of almost all parts of the world. I might have said Japan also; but Kipling's best story of Japan is in verse, and need not immediately concern us; it is the story of seal-fishing.

His most important work is represented in prose by the short stories; and of these there are several volumes, which appeared in about the following order:—

Soldiers Three; In Black and White; Wee Willie Winkee; The Story of the Gadsbys; Under the Deodars; Life's Handicap; Plain Tales from the Hills; Many Inventions; and *The Day's Work.*

Of these stories the variety is extraordinary, both as to

place and subject. The first, entitled *Soldiers Three*,[1] deals with the experiences of the common English soldiers in India, as related by the soldiers themselves, in their own colloquial manner. One of the soldiers is an Irish type; and two are English—the first representing the peasant type of soldiers, the second the city type. It was the first time in English literature that anything of the kind was effectively done; and as the stories were all of a character to create public sympathy with the common soldier, the success was very great. *In Black and White*[2] is stories illustrating native life and the relation of different types of Indian people to their English rulers. There are not many stories in the volume; but the variety is never-less very great—each story illustrating the character of a different race in its portrayal of a type. *Wee Willie Winkee*[3] is a title which may be new to somebody. Willie Winkee, or Billie Winkee as he is more generally called, is the name of a household spirit, of familiar goblin, in English folklore—corresponding to the "Golden Dust-Man" of more Northern folklore. When it is time for children to go to sleep, they say that Billie Winkie puts a little dust in the eyes of the little ones—a pinch of magical dust; and then they go to sleep. Kipling has given the name of this spirit to the child hero of one of his stories; and the whole volume is a book of stories of children—English children in India. Some of the children are children of great captains or high officials; others are children of common soldiers — rough and vulgar exteriorly, but possessing fine traits of character which belong to the race. Some of the stories in this book are certainly representative of the experiences of Mr. Kipling's own childhood;—all are thrilling and wonderful as bits of art. But far the most powerful tale in the book is a narrative entitled *The Drums of the Fore and Aft*, — a story about two little drummer-boys who saved an English army from utter defeat by an act of heroism resulting in their own death. It is a very terrible story; and the description of the

[1] *Soldiers three: a collection of stories setting forth certain passages in the lives and adventures of Private Terencc Mulvaney, Stanley Ortheris, and John Learoyd.* Allahabad, 1888.

[2] London, 1888.

[3] Allahabad, 1888.

Afghan charge must have been written by somebody who saw the horror with his own eyes. *The Story of the Gadsbys*[1] is the history of the courtship and marriage of an English cavalry officer in India: it has considerable merit; but it is not equal to the other volume; for the writer was too young at that time to depict with full justice certain features of Indian society. A noteworthy feature of the book is that the whole of the book is written in the form of conversation: it is a series of dramatic dialogues. Much more important is *Life's Handicap*,[2] — the first large volume of short stories published by the Macmillans. In this volume the writer showed even greater genius than in anything previously undertaken. The title of the book is a racecourse term; — life being represented as a race in which everybody is more or less "handicapped," that is to say, overweighted. And, as this title implies, all the tales refer to the difficulties of life in India, and how brave men meet the obstacles in their way, while weak men fall by the wayside. In this wonderful book it is not easy to make a choice: all the stories are masterpieces. But perhaps the narrative entitled *Without Benefit of Clergy* is the most memorable. It is simply the story of an English official who has an Indian mistress and a child by that mistress. He loves both of them very dearly; but he must keep his relation with them a secret; and when they die of cholera, he must keep his sorrow to himself. I do not think that Kipling ever wrote a more terribly pathetic narrative than this. The next volume, *Plain Tales from the Hills*,[3] consists of the stories somewhat shorter than those in the preceding book; but the variety is even greater. All the stories are supposed to be Indian experiences; and the title refers to the Hills of Simla, where Anglo-Indian society most congregates in the hot season. I had forgotten to speak of *Under the Deodars*;[4] but this is a good place in which to mention it, — for the two volumes have very much in common. A startling feature of both is the freedom with which the author, himself

[1] Allahabad, 1888.
[2] *Life's handicap, being stories of mine own people* 1891.
[3] Calcutta, 1888.
[4] Allahabad, 1889.

an Anglo-Indian, ventures to criticize and to expose the vices of Indian society. But there are also a wonderful number of pictures of native life,—stories of great crimes discovered by detectives,—stories of magic,—stories of usury, and the hatreds born of usury,—stories of marriage under difficulty, and stories of unions without marriage which result in tragical ways. The next volume *Many Inventions*,[1] may not be able to rank with *Life's Handicap* in certain directions; but it is one of the most startling of all Kipling's books. The most striking story in it is a piece entitled *The Finest Story in the World*—an account of a young man who was able to remember his past lives and to talk about them. His friend, the author, was naturally delighted to get such an opportunity for literary work; and he tried to write a story about the past life of this interesting young man—getting him to talk a little on the subject every evening, as chance allowed. But an Indian friend said to him, "You will never be able to get the whole of that story unless you write it very quickly indeed. That young man remembers his past life only because he has never loved any woman—the moment he will get in love with any woman he will forget everything." And so it happened. Before the story was written the young man engaged himself to a girl and forever forgot all about his past life. All the stories in this book are very strange; and some of them are extremely funny, while others are horrible. The scenes are mostly laid in England. *The Day's Work*[2] was the last volume of short stories published. It is a curious book, because it makes a romance out of purely technical subjects — steam engines, steamships, incidents of salvage and insurance. There is a story illustrating the life of a railway engine, a story illustrating the life of a steamship: inanimate objects are made to talk in the most wonderful way, and they talk about duty and effort and the moral signification of existence. Also there is a story about horses; the horses talk, and tell their experience and their ideas of duty.

Now the power to make inanimate objects, or animals, talk in such a way that the whole thing appears to be perfectly

[1] 1893. [2] 1894.

natural,—that it interests just as much as the talk of real person could interest; that is one of the most magical and most rare of literary faculty. Only a very great genius can do this without writing nonsense. This is the great art of the Fable, the Parable. In ancient times the most famous example of it was the *Fables of Æsop;* in mediæval times, the greatest example of it was a quaint romance of *Reynard the Fox.* In the early 19th century the greatest example of it was in the story of Hans Christian Andersen. But Kipling has proved that he has the very same faculty as Andersen, — only with certain exotic qualities entirely his own. Any man having his power can write extraordinary books for children; and Kipling has written two. These are called respectively *The Jungle Book*[1] and *The Second Jungle Book.*[2] Thousands of children read them; but grown-up people, and great scholars too, also read them and delight in them even more than the children can, because they can see deeper meanings in them. There is something very strange in the qualities of fables written by very great men, such as Gœthe;—the story seems to enlarge their meaning according to the capacity of the reader's mind. A child can find pleasure in it. An ordinary man or woman can find greater pleasure in it. A scholar will find still more pleasure in it. But a very great philosopher and scholar will enjoy it most of all. Now there is really something of this quality in the *Jungle Books.*

I suppose you know the word "jungle" means a wild uncultivated districts in India, where high grasses and brakes and young bamboos hide everything, and where tigers, snakes, and all sorts of creatures live. It has often happened in India that little children, lost in the jungle or carried away by wild animals, were not killed, but were brought up by animals. There may be some truth in the Roman story that the founder of Rome was suckled by a wolf. Wolves have been known to suckle children. If you think this very unlikely, ask yourselves whether a cat will not sometimes suckle a little dog. Deadly

[1] *The jungle book. With illustrations by J. L. Kipling, W. H. Drake, and P. Frenzeny* 1894.
[2] *The second jungle book. Decorated by John Lockwood Kipling, C.I.E.* 1895.

enemies are cats and dogs; nevertheless I have several times known cats to bring up puppies. It is well proved that female wolves have done this in the case of children. Children brought up among wild beasts become very much like wild beasts in many particulars; but they are likely to obtain extraordinary development of certain faculties — sight, smell and agility. Kipling supposes a little boy brought up among wolves in India without altogether losing his human powers of speech and thought,—and able to learn the language of all animals. Of course this is not possible; but in a fable a certain amount of the impossible is quite lawful. Well, these two delightful books tell of the boy's experiences with wolves, bears, tigers, panthers, elephants, and wild monkeys—until the time when he becomes a grown-up man, and goes back to his own race, to marry a wife, and live the life of mankind. Few books in the English language are more interesting than these. But you will find that the interest is chiefly due to the fact that every chapter is a parable of human life, an explanation of duty and an explanation of necessity. And the preaching is of effort and of courage and truth. Everybody should read those books. But I must tell you that besides the animal stories, you will find one marvellous human story in *The Second Jungle Book* entitled *The Miracle of Purun Bhagat*, which is said to be founded on fact. It is a story of an Indian Prime Minister who, in the very hour of his greatest power and glory, suddenly left the King's palace, stripped himself naked, put on the robe of a Buddhist pilgrim, took a begging bowl in his hand, and wandered away into the wilderness never to return to civilization. For in the mountains he settled at last, in a little hermitage, to pray and meditate, and make friends with the wild beasts and monkeys and birds that came to see him. He talked with them, but never again spoke to any man. At last, in the time of a great catastrophe, wild animals saved him, and enabled him to save others. It is a very wonderful story and very touching; and there is no fable about it at all.

Not so successful, I think, are Kipling's long stories, or novels. He was intended apparently for a short story writer;

and his genius best appears in short stories. But his long stories have certain great qualities and exceeding strength in it; and we must talk a little about it. The first is entitled *The Light that Failed.*[1] It has been severely criticized by Professor Gosse on account of the brutality and extraordinarily selfish and disagreeable quality of some of its personages. I do not like it. Briefly it is the story of an English artist who becomes blind at the moment of his greatest success, and who then manages to find his way, blind as he is, into the middle of a battle in the Soudan, where he gets himself killed. The whole thing seems as horribly real as it is painful; but there are astonishing pages in it; and the most striking part of the book is its description of the battle between the English forces in Africa and the Arabs of the Mahdi. These parts of the book seem to have been written from personal experience. The English public forced the publishers to change the story when it was first published in a magazine; but the Macmillan edition gives the original version. Another interesting feature of the book is its account of artist life, especially in relation to publishers.

The next novel which appeared was entitled *The Naulahka*[2] — this is a much finer book; but, like several of Stevenson's best novels, it was written in partnership with another man—the partner being Wolcott Balestier, Kipling's brother-in-law. It is a story of a clever American in India; and its pictures of life in an Indian palace are very terrible, very strange and very touching.

The last of Kipling's novels, if it can be called a novel, was *Kim*,[3] — an extraordinary narrative, picturing the inner aspect of the Secret Service in India. I believe that all critics have agreed upon one point: that the book is not properly finished. Finally I may mention that Kipling wrote a story of English school life which is in every way a failure. It is only as a writer of short stories that he is really of great importance. Very probably you have read the famous book *Tom Brown's*

[1] 1891.
[2] *The Naulahka: a story of west and east* 1891.
[3] 1901.

School Days—and it cannot have left a merely pleasant impression, for it gives us a good glimpse of the brutality of English schools. Kipling's *Stalky & Co.*[1] is a much worse book in this regard, with much less merit in another direction. If it shows anything in relation to educational matters, it only shows that the conditions of English school life had not very greatly improved even since the days of poet Crabbe; and we may doubt, in spite of all declaration to the contrary, whether this kind of education is really the best possible preparation for life.

But as a short story teller, Kipling deserves great literary attention; and I think that it is not possible to read him without learning many new things about the art of story-telling. I should recommend him very strongly—were it not for the fact that many of his stories contain so much dialect as to remain obscure to the Japanese student. Nevertheless, you would do well to remember that all the stories are not in dialect; and you can very easily make a selection for yourselves and study them with advantage. It is but fair to remark, in this connection, that stories of Maupassant include quite a number written in dialect, dialect especially of the Norman peasant, as well as dialects used by fishermen and by peasants in other parts of France. Yet all are worth studying.

Here we may close the review of Victorian fiction. The field is an enormous one,—representing tens of thousands of books; and we have mentioned only a few. But remember that those few are typical of nearly all the rest. The great books, the novels or stories worth reading in the way of study, are those that represent the foundation stones of the great House of Fiction. Every one of the names which I have quoted has been representative in this sense; and all the other innumerable names which I have not mentioned are the names of those who only followed or imitated or compounded the methods of the innovators and the masters. It remained only to say a word about tendencies. Some good judges think that the novel is becoming shorter, and will eventually be supplanted

[1] 1899.

by the novelette or the short story. I do not think that this can be safely predicted as a near event; but for the sake of literature I imagine that it is very desirable. The best of what can be done in the way of romance and in the way of long novel appears to have been done already. It is not possible to imagine any startling innovation, except in the way of scientific romance: and scientific romance is best managed in short stories, not in long ones. In the novel again, it is difficult to imagine anything at all new possible to be done,—except in a psychological direction. Long psychological novels, like those of Meredith, are likely to go out of fashion; they have never been popular; and they can scarcely escape the fault of wearisomeness. Really psychological talent shows at its best in short stories;—Maupassant having given great proof of this in France, and Kipling in England. Except Meredith, nobody has done anything in the shape of a purely psychological novel of a really surprising kind. But psychological stories and novelettes have been introduced with excellent results; and the work of Mr. Henry James is a striking example. However, the short stories of Henry James deal with abnormal rather than with normal psychology—that is to say, his stories, although perfectly true to life, picture to us the strange and fantastic aspects of character rather than the natural ones. To sum up, I think it must be acknowledged that in fiction as well as in poetry there has been a steady decline in quality, notwithstanding an increase in quantity. In poetry we have noticed that great poems have ceased to be written: it is only in short lyrical poems that we find anything very good to-day. Just in the same way great novels and great romances have ceased to appear;—it is only in short stories, romantic or realistic, that we now find anything at all remarkable. During this 20th century there will, no doubt, be a literary revival of some kind; but no mortal man can predict what shape it will take; and we are now most certainly in a period of decadence.