THE NOVEL, IN RELATION

TO THE DISSEMINATION OF LIBERAL IDEAS, 1790 - 1820.

Presented as a thesis for the Ph.D. degree, by E.M. McClelland.
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ABSTRACT OF THE ARGUMENT

The thesis deals with the part played by the novel, 1790-1820, in the dissemination of liberal ideas. The term 'liberal' has been used to cover the theories concerning the nature and destiny of man, his natural rights and the proper constitution of the society in which he lives. The ideas have been identified in their 18th century form, their philosophic origin traced, their effect estimated and their popularization, in the works of Godwin and other political reformers, illustrated.

It has been shown that novelists were aware of current opinion, not only from a knowledge of the written works of the reformers, but from a common body of thought made familiar to them by such means as the work of the Political societies in enlightening the public, the literary coteries, the Conversation Clubs, the Westminster Forum and other debating societies; by reviews, pamphlets and tracts; by events indicating serious social unrest; by the publicity attendant on prosecutions for libel and other causes célèbres; by their connection with Methodism; by their effect on educational theory.

Liberal ideas have been traced in various kinds of novel; in deliberate propaganda, in those revealing such opinion without particular urgency, or reflecting it unconsciously; in those attacking, or offering antidotes for, the new philosophy, and in the satires. Changes in, and modifications of, themes used earlier have been noted. The material used is new and a critical estimate of it is submitted.
2.

The thesis aims at establishing two things; first, that the dissemination of these views did not cease, as critics have stated, with the reaction against the French Revolution, but persisted until after 1820; secondly, that the novel, used deliberately with an extra-literary purpose, is influenced by an unusually close connection with the historical background, shown in the use of current events and living people as material for plots and characters, and that this influence, by preserving the heterogeneous nature of the novel, retards its development as a literary form.
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A characteristic of our own times is the tendency to think of men in groups and to give those groups entity by affixing to them a descriptive label. We are increasingly concerned with statistics; we calculate the 'norm' for achievement in this or that field, for a particular age-group; we deduce the kind of behaviour typical of people in a specified income level; we even, on the evidence of their habits, postulate the presence of hidden frustrations in members of certain selected groups, such as artisans or housewives. Personality itself is said to exist only in relation to a group and character to consist of the sum total of an individual's reactions to the various groups of which, from time to time, he willy nilly, becomes a member. In fact, the group has acquired a sinister importance. Although this is an extreme, and to many an erroneous, point of view, it must be conceded that the idea on which it is based is sound. The mind of the ordinary man is constantly influenced by the community in which he lives and cannot properly be understood apart from it. He is profoundly affected by the relationships, both public and private, into which he enters; he has inherited, and is moulded to a considerable degree by, the beliefs and prejudices of his age; and his reactions to events, and to his own circumstances, further influence his personality. In short: "The material upon which he works is the whole complex of conceptions, religious, imaginative and ethical, which forms his mental
So, between the literature and the general social condition of a nation, there is a very close bond and the literary historian is concerned not only with the ideas that find utterance through the poet, the novelist and the philosopher but also with the point of view, and with the constitution, of the society that produced him. Moreover, the way in which literary or artistic ideas are embodied often depends on the kind of difficulties experienced in life and the motives which prompt men to try to understand and solve them. The turn taken by social history in any age is, in part, due to the ideas and opinions that are in the ascendant. In short, 'The adequate criticism must be rooted in history.'

Speculative ideas are like hormones, they work unaccountably but powerfully and are creative in their effect. Our concern is with their expression in the minor novels of the day. There, the views and principles of the ordinary man are reflected. The age was one of great intellectual energy and the zest with which philosophic ideas were pursued is one of its most interesting characteristics. Hazlitt might comment on its "love of paradox and change, its dastard submission to prejudice and to the fashion of the day" and stigmatize it as 'an age of talkers, not doers' but he paid tribute to its resilience and to its spirit of enquiry. When many ideas ferment, however, in the same vat, there is a danger to existing order. Instead of an ode or a play,

1. 'English Literature and Society in the 18th C.' Sir Leslie Stephen, 1904, p.8.
2. Ibid. p.6.
   p.194 (Section on Coleridge).
there may be thrown up a revolutionary plan or, at least, a programme of reform and then, at any moment, the latent unhappiness of a society may cause its members to seize the opportunity to initiate a period of rapid change and risk everything to bring about the realization of their own doctrines. At such a time, dissemination of opinion is rapid and the most abstruse ideas become part of the mental equipment of the man in the street. Our study of liberal views and their permeation of the novel begins in just such a time. The French Revolution, watched with interest by liberal-minded Englishmen, seemed at first to represent the triumph of freedom over despotism, of enlightenment over error, and reformers in England, aware of intolerable conditions in industry, of the oppressive legal system, of rapacity and of injustice, and of the smouldering misery of the poor, expressed their views frequently and forcibly, advocating a clean sweep of existing institutions. At the same time, increased opportunities arose for the dissemination of these opinions and they reached a wide public. Essays, pamphlets and tracts; reviews and periodicals; letters, memoirs and the daily press all contributed to the torrent of ideas that flowed over the country. Whether the channel was what Oliver Elton has called 'pure or applied' literature, all the issues that were occupying the leaders of thought of the time were popularised to a surprising extent and, by the beginning of the nineties, have become a social force. Liberal views have seeped through to the working man and though, in the process, they have been limited to practical reform, they are the impetus behind the great movements of
the time, the abolition of slavery, toleration in religion, and the continual agitation for education and for parliamentary reform.

Among the vehicles of expression, the novel takes its place. During the previous decade, it had sunk to a very low level, owing partly to the dearth of writers of quality and partly to the dishonest tricks of booksellers and publishers who, anxious to exploit the unexpected chances of making money offered by the circulating libraries, published anything in the way of a story and often served up their trash more than once under different titles. Now, inspired by the great concepts, liberty, equality and fraternity, men capable of translating into popular form the ideas of the philosophers turned their attention to fiction and deliberately wrote novels to illustrate their theses.

Their energy transformed the novel. As it gained a little in public esteem, it again attracted more able writers and became a popular way of earning a living. The pattern was simple enough and hundreds followed it, jumbling together all the fashionable ingredients, including liberal notions. It was not necessary to understand the terminology of ideas; it was enough to be sure that the expression of them would find a market and many an industrious hack writer, quite unconscious of the implications of his remarks, 'assembled' a novel and gained a reputation for 'advanced' opinions. Others, by their rather smug repudiation of some shocking idea, or a series of pious reflections on the iniquity of well-known reformers, reveal their knowledge of current thought as much by their disavowals as others do by their panegyrics. The fascination of tracing them lies, not
so much in discovering their universality as in observing the
modification, and in some cases recantation, of view as between
treatise, polemic and best-seller. For inconsistency is rife.
Mutually exclusive views exist side by side in the same novel and
curious transmutations occur which make it possible for writers to
illustrate the doctrine of progressive deterioration by the portrait
of an American Indian in a paroxysm of enjoyable sorrow.

Most popular authors wrote for a living. It is true that
the remuneration was usually very small unless the work were subscribed.
In spite of the reputation of booksellers for rapaciousness, by the
end of the century, a writer whose output was reasonably prolific
could make a living. A market was also arising for periodical
literature. Important men were beginning to reward political force
rather than literary merit for, in 1790, votes were far more important
than lyrics. So the prose writer, and especially the propagandist,
acquired a status unexpected and largely undeserved. Women invaded
the market too and numerous prefaces bear witness to their financial
motives. Mrs. Inchbald and Charlotte Smith reveal their poverty
frankly and solicit the charity of the reviewer on the plea of need.
Others, like the unknown author of 'Adonia, a Desultory Story', 1801,
claim to write for the benefit of a friend. A sign of the times is
visible in the preface to the 'Exhibitions of the Heart', 1800, by
Miss Hutchinson, who gives as her reason for writing 'the hope of
aiding a tender mother and beloved sister, to support a calamitous
reverse of fortune, the consequence of the war and my father being
detained a prisoner in Holland. When the motive was financial, the temptation to try and make the book sell by the use of current thought proved irresistible to many writers. There are passages which show how ill-digested and misconstrued some of the theories were. But to be in the mode was everything and authors picked up abstract ideas and adapted them to the fashion with Procrustian simplicity and ruthlessness. It will be seen that this literary opportunism exerted a marked influence on the novel form.
CHAPTER I

1. The lines of the enquiry.

2. Liberal ideas identified; their philosophic origin.

An examination of the fiction of three decades, 1790 - 1820, suggests two interesting lines of inquiry. First, it appears possible that the radical and revolutionary elements in the novel have been over-estimated and that the length of their life has been under-estimated. Critics have taken the view that, for a time, the wholly doctrinaire novel had a vogue but that the expression of radical ideas in the novel can be confined to, at most, a decade. It is here submitted that with the possible exception of Holcroft, no author achieved a purely doctrinaire novel and that, except in the satires, the radical element was always subordinate, a flavouring of Jacobinism imparted by means of interpolations, chorus-like commentaries and ejaculations, and other ways native to the immature novel form. Moreover, far from dying out, it persisted strongly in the interval between the Napoleonic wars and the first Reform Bill. The propaganda novel, as we now know it, never really existed. Instead, there are collections of ideas superimposed on a story or added to it, but without sufficient unity to convey a coherent, much less a concentrated

message. For the medium of the propagandist in the years under
discussion was the tract or the pamphlet, the series of letters or
the sermon and it is precisely in the interpolation of these in the
novel that the whole of the literary embodiment of ideas in character
and incident is foiled. Speculations on the ultimate destiny of man,
fierce indictments, not only of the age, but of civilization itself
appear; they are dealt with in an extra letter attributed quite often
to an unsuitable mouthpiece or in the sententious soliloquy of a 'type'
hero, or in a discussion between two characters arbitrarily chosen,
brought into prominence with scant regard for relevance to make good
the intention stated in the preface. Promiscuous didacticism may be
a strong seasoning; it is not the main dish. In the satires, there
is some weaving of view into the tissue of the plot but that is only
possible because the main purpose is ridicule and that, in itself, is
a unifying idea. The novel form was too young and too shapeless for
consistent propaganda. A comparison with some 20th C. popular
documentaries serves to illustrate its weakness in the 18th as a
purveyor of doctrine. Graham Greene in "Brighton Rock", shows up the
sterility of our modern way of life, by the story of the sordid life,
and violent death, of a 'spiv'. The book presents a picture of a
world which reduces a man to hopelessness and despair in early youth,
and leaves the reader disquieted and contrite.1 In "The Citadel"2,
A.J. Cronin robs us, temporarily, of our faith in the whole medical

1. 1939. See also "The Power and the Glory", 1940.
2. 1937.
profession by his description of hospital life, and habits like those of the surgeon, who, with criminal conceit, merely to prove his point in an argument about a disputed diagnosis, persists in his opinion against all advice and kills his patient on the operating table. Similarly, the disintegration of culture and the gradual degradation of man is foreshadowed by Canetti. Rex Warner gives us a dreadful picture of a society in which integrity is a public danger and the herd destroys the individual for no other reason than a hatred of his freedom of opinion. There are curious parallels in the two ages as far as the fashion for attacking institutions is concerned. Caleb Williams is astonishingly like a modern 'terror novel' in that it is a psychological thriller with a political motive, shot through with the fear of an individual for another individual. But in all these there is a vital difference in presentation. The novel is now a dominant literary form, perhaps the most dominant of all and it wields a power unknown in the 18th C. The picture it paints of 'this world's general sickness' cannot be disregarded, or given a cursory attention like the digressions of Charlotte Smith or R.C.Dallas, which are inserted in a way that gives the best opportunity of evasion to the reader bent on skipping the moral. By now, the form has been stripped of all unnecessary adjuncts, the plot narrowed beyond hope of relief, the characters reduced to the minimum. As a result, the message to be conveyed is so concentrated and so focussed that the reader is often submerged beneath a feeling of guilt and despair. The 18th C. novel

is but a flat narrative told round a frieze of 'cut-outs', necessarily static but made to stand out in relief by the beam of the author's panoramic camera which picks them out, illumines them for a brief moment and relegates them to obscurity once more. It is not built to relay propaganda. But it can reveal the philosophic idea; it can illustrate the need for reform; it can exhibit the sort of puppet best fitted to wear the virtues associated with idealistic doctrines. This is the extent of the 18th C. novel's contribution to the whirlpool of liberal thought. At its worst, it is what Hazlitt calls "a patchwork of plagiarism, the beggarly copiousness of borrowed wealth". He suggests that nothing comes amiss to the writer of novels and that the reader may find echoes of ancient beliefs jostling stories from the romantic ballads and political lampoons, until the whole resembles "a gaudy staring transparency, in which you cannot distinguish the daubing of the painter from the light that shines through the flimsy colours and gives them brilliancy". So, amongst many other elements, eulogies of, and diatribes against, the theories of the reformers abound from Holcroft to Peacock, from Mary Wollstonecraft to Lady Morgan.

The second line of inquiry is equally interesting. There is abundant evidence of a belief in both the moral turpitude of the novel and in its dangerously seditious character. At almost any point between the years 1790 and 1820, writers and critics could be cited who complain of the pernicious effect of revolutionary, blasphemous or immoral opinions as expressed in the novel. Mathias says simply


Everyman Edition (Section on Godwin) p.191.
"Godwin's dry page no statesman e'er believed,
Though fiction aids what sophistry conceived." ¹

Polwhele, describing the women writers of the late nineties at the feet of Mary Wollstonecraft, listening to a lengthy harangue, deplors the effect on them of her views as they have turned from their wholesome writing to purvey scepticism and sedition. They are all affected by her doctrines:

"E'en veteran BARBAULD caught the strain,...
And ROBINSON to Gaul her Fancy gave,
And traced the picture of a Dost's grave!
And charming SMITH resign'd her power to please,
Poetic feeling and poetic ease;
And HELEN, fired by freedom, bade adieu
To all the broken visions of Peru;
And YEARLSLEY, who had warbled, Nature's child,
M interrogation; her minstrel ditties wild,...
Now stole the modish grin, the sapient sneer;
And flippant HAYS assumed a cynic leer." ².

Hannah More laments that novels, formerly only dangerous in one sphere, that of morality, "are now become mischievous in a thousand. They are continually shifting their ground, and enlarging their sphere, and are daily becoming vehicles of wider mischief. Sometimes they concentrate their force and are at once employed to diffuse destructive politics, deplorable profligacy, and impudent infidelity" ³.

Some writers, in their prefaces, avow their intention to counteract the wicked views disseminated by fiction. George Walker states that his novel, "The Vagabond" is written with "a desire of placing in a practical light, some of the prominent absurdities of

many self-important reformers of mankind, who, having heated their imaginations, sit down to write political romances which never were, and never will be practical.\(^1\). A similar purpose is stated in the preface to the second edition of "The Stepmother".\(^2\). The novel was written to counteract the pernicious effect of modern philosophy.

Years later, when the events of the French Revolution are being viewed in a very different light from that of the 90's, an author can still write: "Novels and romances have, of late years, been too frequently rendered the vehicles of revolutionary and infidel principles\(^3\). Mrs. West gives several diatribes against the sins of novels. "One of the misfortunes," she writes, "under which literature now labours is, that the title of a work no longer announces its intention; books of travels are converted into vehicles of politics and systems of legislation. Female letter-writers teach us the arcana of government.....And last, though not least in its effect, the novel, calculated, by its insinuating narrative and interesting description to fascinate the imagination without rousing the stronger energies of the mind, is converted into an offensive weapon, directed against our religion, our morals or our government, as the humour of the writer may determine his particular warfare.\(^4\). The kind of opinions relayed appear to her "more dangerous than total ignorance to the morals of the middle classes, among which the readers of such

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1. Preface to "The Vagabond", London 1798.
2. By Helena Wells, 1800.
   See also prefaces to: "The Count of Valmont; or, The Errors of Reason";
   "Gyphery; or The World as it Goes", Anon. 1798. (Anon.1806.
   "Romulus; A Tale of Ancient Times", P. Mill, 1800.
works are mostly found". In the preface to "The Infidel Father" she maintains: "The rage for novels does not decrease." Though she does not consider them to be the best vehicle for promulgating sound doctrine, "yet, while the enemies of our Church and state continue to pour their poison into unworthy ears through this channel, it behoves the friends of our establishments to convey an antidote by the same course." Quite frankly, she admits that the story is subordinate to this aim.

By the end of the period under discussion, the expression of liberal views in the novel is so widespread and so discreditable that we find novelists boasting of the absence from their works of anything that would shock the reader. In 1811, Mrs. Brunton, in her novel "Self Control", prides herself on the fact that the reader will find in her work no "sickly effusions of meretricious liberality."

The evidence of a universal belief in the iniquity of the novel is overwhelming. In the eyes of the moralists its growing popularity only added to its menace as a subversive agent. A curious fact emerges, however, from a perusal of even the most notorious publications; the wickedness so often insisted upon, and so much deplored, is quite out of proportion to the strength of the condemnation. Taking some of the offending passages at their face value, it is difficult to see precisely what it was in them that moved reviewers and the public to such vituperation. Most of them are digressions and consist of heterogeneous ideas mixed with references

1. "Letters to A Young Man", Mrs. West, Lond. 1801, Pref. p.xxi.
to the works of the reformers and to the utterances of the more notorious demagogues, with all of which novelists seem surprisingly familiar. Readers, too, must have become aware of the insidious doctrines from another source than the novel or else, except on the subject of female chastity, on which anyone might be expected to hold instinctive opinions, they would have been unable to understand the didacticism and the satire, the implications and the innuendoes that fill the pages of these forgotten tales. The outcry against the novel was but part of a wider witch hunt. Many other forms of literature were used to disseminate these theories and incurred the wrath of the reviewers and of the authorities and there seems to have been an interesting, because unconscious, transference of blame. It may have been due to fear; fear that the insidious appeal of a romance would blind the unsuspecting public to the danger of imbibing infidelity or Jacobinism with the sweet draught of love. The discrepancy between the dreadful warnings issued by the Press and the actual sins of the novelists; the detailed knowledge of theory and the awareness of the fluctuation of opinion shown by author and critic alike, suggest a common 'pool' of knowledge and ideas so permeating all classes that, even when they are quite unconscious of the fact, writers are constantly reflecting ideas from it. Sometimes, novelists dipped into it consciously with the purpose of making their works conspicuous. It was better to be 'advanced' or even, in the robust language of the 'Anti-Jacobin' a 'public pandar' than be dismissed with the word 'negligible'. This common body of opinion
was accumulated in various ways and some account will be given of
its sources. Reference must be made to the stirring events of the
period. The years that we are considering saw the beginning of the
French Revolution with all its promise of a millenium, to which the
best minds in the country paid allegiance; the bitter disillusionment
that set in after the execution of the King and Queen and the
subsequent excesses; the rise of Napoleon and the long arduous
struggles that ensued; the changes at home consequent on the accession
of wealth and the transfer of power from the landed to the mercantile
classes; the invention of machines; the effects of the factory
system on the conditions of life and the ugly temper that showed
itself at intervals, begotten of poverty and nourished by indignation.
The Home Office papers, Reports of Inquiry, Parliamentary Journals,
the minute books of the societies and evidence given at the trial of
those prosecuted for seditious libel; all these add their eloquent
testimony to the case to be found in the Reviews and the daily press.
They are of great interest. They show the thought of the age in
reality, as compared with its delineation in fiction, and they help
to determine the accessibility of information.
What, then, are the ideas that scored such a groove in the life of the day? They seem to combine a philosophy of history and a theory of moral and aesthetic values. The perplexing problems of human existence that have puzzled thinkers since very early times reared their heads again when first Hobbes and then Locke, by attacking Cartesian philosophy, opened the door to a host of speculative ideas that seemed to render insecure the very foundations of human knowledge. One of the most interesting is that family of ideas that may be represented by the word Primitivism, and its associated doctrines. Until the economic developments of the 18th century transferred power from agriculture to machinery and thus made a return to a former way of life not only impracticable but difficult to visualise; until science and political theory began seriously to encroach on the, hitherto, inviolable preserves of religion and moral philosophy, this idea had been practically unchallenged. It assumed that the earliest condition of man and human society was the best and it advocated a return to the simple life. It placed the blame for the obvious evils in the life of man on the abnormal complexity, and the sophistication, of civilisation. Great stress was laid on the corrupting influence of luxury. Towards the end of the century, the suggestion that much of the selfishness and undue privilege to be observed is the result of private ownership has gained ground. An easy step brings this view into contact with the ideas of discipline and mortification advocated
by the Church in its desire to spread the doctrine of detachment from
the material, the better to understand and experience the spiritual
life. Its association, later, with the views of the Dissenters is
readily understandable. In short, civilisation is the achievement
of man, not of God; its ills are responsible for a progressive decline,
not only of individuals but of the race; remove them, and human
nature, infinitely perfectible, will expand and flourish. For reform
by reversion is possible and manifestly desirable. Many descriptions
of the natural state are offered; all stress the dignity of man and
his spontaneous reaction to good. The Platonists assert that as long
as man's mind retains its primitive cast, he is able to follow those
natural instincts of goodness which God has implanted in every soul.
Hutcheson supposes the natural state to be "A state of Goodwill,
Humanity, Compassion, mutual Aid, propagating and supporting Off-spring;
Love of a Community or Country; Devotion, or Love and Gratitude to some
governing Mind, and we arrive at it as naturally as we arrive at our
stature or shape." 1. This theory of progressive degeneration is a
favourite one with novelists. Some idea of its popular currency may
be gained from Chesterfield. "If we give credit", he writes, "to the
vulgar opinion, or even to the assertions of some reputable authors,
both ancient and modern, poor human nature was not originally formed
for keeping; Every age has degenerated; and from the fall of the
first man, my unfortunate ancestor, our species has been tumbling on,
century by century, from bad to worse, for about six thousand years." 2.

1728, p.199.
Reprinted from "The World", 1756. (See also, for deteriorationist
view, article by Frazer Tytler, in "The Lounger" I. No.19. 1787).
Controversy about the essential nature of man was stimulated by the assertions of the more hysterical Dissenters that the heart of man was very wicked and could only be reclaimed from its natural sin by continual watchfulness and discipline. The theory postulates a kind of natural benevolence that came to be regarded as one of the primary laws of nature. Later, it is applied to the identification of public and private interests and is responsible for the belief that the good of the whole will benefit the individual and bring him his greatest happiness, and that, therefore, the common good is the supreme law.

Important presumptions follow. If there is a natural tendency towards good and a light of nature by which even the most ignorant may know natural law, peasants and primitive tribes are more likely to live nobly than civilized man, who has degenerated until he can no longer discern the laws of nature. The deterioration was felt to be hastened by the extreme luxury and ostentation that followed in the wake of the new commercial prosperity of the late 18th Century. The necessity of a return to simplicity and the need to revive and invigorate the natural benevolence of man become popular themes in literature.

Accounts of Utopias appear frequently and the savage is brought purposely into contact with a sophisticated society, sometimes by means of the flimsiest literary device, in order that he may, by his astonished reaction, underline the weakness or the absurdity of their laws, customs and habits. Strange irony, indeed, that brings into the same bed the theory of brotherly love, held in some quarters with passionate force, and the doctrine of unrestricted competition,
relentless strife, every man for himself in industry which produced a condition that may be fitly described as servitude for the masses.

The life of the idea of universal benevolence as a literary theme is longer than its persistence in political thought. Hume dealt it a severe blow when he expressed his extreme scepticism about this natural regard for others, alleged to be innate. "In general," he says, "it may be affirmed, that there is no such passion in human minds, as the love of mankind, merely as such, independent of personal qualities, or services, or of relation to ourselves. 'Tis true, there is no human, and indeed no sensible, creature, whose happiness or misery does not, in some measure, affect us, when brought near to us, and represented in lively colours; But this proceeds merely from sympathy, and is no proof of such an universal affection to mankind, since this concern extends itself beyond our own species."\(^1\)

Malthus also struck at the theory with his ideas of the relation of population to the means of subsistence and it finally died down with the breakdown of unrestricted competition as a working system, and the scientific discoveries of Galton and Mendel on the subject of heredity with their implicit suggestion that the extermination of the less valuable stock is the means by which nature progresses.

Another philosophic controversy debated the exact nature of the powers by which men can recognise the moral law. The theory of innate ideas so dear to the Cartesians, had received a shock when Hobbes raised his questions; what is a man's native endowment which

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enables him to make decisions; when he has made them, what factor determines his actions? Hobbes answered them simply enough. A kind of egoistic hedonism accounts for his distinctions and self interest is the motive behind his actions. Such assertions are an attack on any form of religious belief and there are numerous thrusts and counter-thrusts in the duel between sceptics and divines on the precise nature of this faculty in man. Sometimes, as by Locke and Hume, its very existence is denied, but where it is admitted, it is variously described as 'the Voice of God', the 'light of Nature', Reason or, simply, 'the organ of perception'. Whichcote, Glanville and Culverwell consider that the organ of perception was synonymous with the moral law. Others that the passions were the means of communication between a man and his Maker and, therefore, enabled him to recognise the good, the true and the beautiful. So a great respect for feelings and emotions grew up. Pamphlets and sermons are full of declarations that emotion is the exciting force of all action. Hutcheson is convinced of it. Hume, possibly the only confirmed and consistent sceptic, maintains in his attack on the doctrine of innate ideas that we know nothing beyond what occurs in our own minds and experience and that all our knowledge is framed out of impressionist ideas revealed in the senses. That is to say, our only guide to any reality is the unceasing stream of feelings of which we are conscious, which may cohere in groups and become customary. Thus, feelings are all important. He considers that reason is but an inert force and that it has only a transient influence on the passions. "I shall endeavour to prove," he writes,
"First, that reason alone can never be a motive to any action of the will; and secondly that it can never oppose passion in the direction of the will."¹ His conclusion is simply stated: "Reason is, and ought only to be the slave of the passions, and can never pretend to any other office than to serve and obey them."² Right and wrong, he asserts, are distinguished by feeling by means of what he calls "particular pains and pleasures".³ In his view, "Moral distinctions, therefore, are not the offspring of reason. Reason is wholly inactive, and can never be the source of so active a principle as conscience or a sense of morals."⁴

This theory that consciousness is composed of streams of impressions has been called the ethics of feeling and the consequent exaltation of the passions pleased both those who regarded them as the means of spiritual communion with a Creator and those who wished to confine to emotions and to experience man's whole knowledge of himself. Feelings are the signs of innate goodness. Shaftesbury states the conviction of thousands when he asserts: "But be persuaded, in the mean time, that wisdom is more from the heart, than from the head. Feel goodness and you will see all things fair and good."⁵ Hence came that well-beloved theme of sensibility; here is encouraged the great vogue of the ultra-highly strung. No hero or heroine could afford to be without the whole equipment of sighs and tears and

¹. Ibid. bk. II, part III, section III, p. 413.
². Ibid. bk. II, part III, section III, p. 415.
³. Ibid. bk. III, part I, section II, p. 471.
⁴. Ibid. bk. III, part I, section I, p. 458.
fainting fits. The portrayal of over-delicate feeling, the exaltation of the hyper-sensitive and, ultimately, of the morbid, is to be seen in full bloom in the closing years of the century and in a series of sporadic flowerings well into the next. Mary Wollstonecraft's definition serves to show what the popular writer made of the belief in the paramount importance of the passions. Speaking of sensibility, she says: "I should say that it is the result of acute senses, finely fashioned nerves; which vibrate at the slightest touch, and convey such clear intelligence to the brain, that it does not require to be arranged by the judgment". Those who possess such temperaments are enviable: "Exquisite pain and pleasure is their portion; nature wears for them a different aspect than is displayed to common mortals." Of such, in the minds of numerous writers, are the elect.

This pride in a susceptibility to emotion so powerful as to render its possessors unfit for the normal business of life, and in constant danger of rapid decline into a mysterious death occasioned by violation of feeling, is a marked feature of the novels. A tendency to identify what is noble with what is natural is responsible for the interesting fusion of ideas by which the virtue of simplicity is identified with its exponent, that is to say, the noble savage. The incongruity of attributing extravagant emotional outbursts and the display of generous benevolence to Indians engaged in scalping or burning their prisoners, or in any other of the manifold habits of a primitive tribe, is rarely perceived. The base passions are always

laid to the charge of civilization. This fusion of ideas may be seen in 'Percival, or Nature Vindicated,' by R.C. Dallas. The author gives it as his object in writing to 'paint a high picture of Nature' and, after analysing human perfection, claims that Percival is perfect because he has cast off all that is base by cultivating those habits and feelings that prevail among men in a natural state.

Side by side with the 'ethics of feeling' and springing from the same source, the philosophical controversy on the nature of man's innate endowment, is the cult of reason. Before the 17th C. the subordination of the individual to an authority external to himself had been universally accepted. But the 17th C. saw a fundamental change of opinion. Theories were promulgated about the state of nature, the contractual origin of society and the rights of people. Hobbes described a state of nature in which man was anti-social and governed by his natural instincts, that is to say by the laws which reason detects as being necessary to the preservation of life. Natural liberty must, to a certain extent, be curtailed when any state is organised since it must be surrendered to a sovereign power who will preserve peace and see that covenants are kept. This is not a social contract since no promise is made by the power, but it is a recognition of the power of reason to make men see the necessity of submission to authority. Similarly, the appeal to reason is made by Locke. He also begins his theory with the state of nature but not a state of strife and discord. He conceives one governed by natural laws and

1. 1801.
by reason. Each man living in it has individual rights. Among them is the right to his own labour and to the things for which he has given that labour. In return for protection by the state, the individual is prepared to give up his individual right of self-protection by force. This marks the end of a state of nature. A social contract replaces a system of authority. Rousseau goes further and expressly states that no good can exist independent of reason and that even conscience cannot develop without its aid.\(^1\) This firm belief in the power, and the over-riding importance, of reason as the finest instrument of judgment unimpaired by the distortions of the passions finds utterance perhaps more frequently than any other doctrine. A cult of reason spread to the working man and was behind the manifestations of unrest revealed in magistrates' reports. It spread to the educationists and engendered a whole literature of pedagogy. The appeal to reason is the principle underlying teaching method from Day and Edgeworth to Lancaster and Elizabeth Fry. It is significant that the appeal is made to the untrained reason and it is assumed that the minimum of reasoning ability will be enough for man to perfect his nature and to get into contact with his Maker by its aid. It also formed part of the creed of the Utilitarians with their insistence on the pleasure- pain criterion of right and wrong. "Nature," writes Jeremy Bentham, "has placed mankind under the governance of two sovereign masters, 

\(^1\) Vide "Emile". "La raison seule nous apprend à connaître le bien et le mal...... Avant l'âge de raison, nous faisons le bien et le mal sans le connaître, et il n'y a point de moralité dans nos actions" Vol.II, p.47.
pain and pleasure. It is for them alone to point out what we ought to do, as well as to determine what we shall do. On the one hand the standard of right and wrong, on the other the chain of causes and effects, are fastened to their throne. They govern us in all we do, in all we say, in all we think; every effort we can make to throw off our subjection, will serve but to demonstrate and confirm it. In words a man may pretend to abjure their empire; but in reality he will remain subject to it all the while. The principle of utility recognises this subjection, and assumes it for the foundation of that system, the object of which is to rear the fabric of felicity by the hands of reason and of law.¹ He took no account of history or, even, of continuity of thought. He wanted everything determined by an appeal to reason on the evidence of fact and dismisses all abstract or a priori arguments. To him, man stands as a reasoning and calculating animal following the course of action least painful to himself. It is a dreary, cold view of human nature, suitably labelled 'Utilitarian'. Self-interest is the mainspring of human action. "The sympathetic affections", he says, "are not, cannot be, as strong as the self-regarding affections. The wealth transferred, the means of subsistence circulated, the abundance produced for the sake of others, are trifling, when weighed against the amount of that which is set in motion for our own sakes."² The denial of the imaginative and

emotional significance of man is a corollary of rationalistic thought. The Deists believed in a religion of nature founded on reason; they denied inspiration and revelation. The orthodox Church accepted reason as the supreme principle of approbation of the divine in man.

So much, then, for the thinkers who deplored the deterioration of mankind and advocated a return to the state of nature. Facing in an opposite direction, stand those who, equally dissatisfied with the present, look to the future and visualise a direct road to ultimate perfection. Their views are supported by two important doctrines; the doctrine of final causes and the belief in the immutability of the species. Both of these put forward the hypothesis that man takes his place in the middle of a graduated scale of creation. He is destined for the glorification of his Maker and a final absorption into His being. Below him, are various classes of existence, each endowed with slightly more sensitiveness than the one below, down to the merely animate. In each class, there is a primate, as, for instance, the lion among animals, the rose among flowers and so on. Above him, are the angels, purely spiritual beings, linked to men by understanding but free from all attachment to the lower faculties, able to apprehend God without the aid of figure or symbol, and arranged in three hierarchies. Thus, every object, however seemingly unimportant, has its place and purpose in the shape and design of the whole, and all things work together for a final end in God. A constant upward striving goes on and continuity in creation is ensured by it. The "great chain of being" with God the final, as He is the first, Cause accounts for all forms of life, from
the highest to the lowest and leaves no gap in creation. Evil for any species is incident to its place in the chain. The ultimate end of this striving after good is a state of perfection. The creed becomes confused in the 18th century when extreme rationalists end the scale at man, dispensing with the spiritual hierarchies and insisting on the perfectibility of man by his own efforts. They declare that perfection will come through the accumulated inheritance of generations and that the process, though slow, is sure. It may lead to an ever increasing complexity of life, and may be impeded by periods of retrogression, but it is inevitable. The tool of progress is reason, the highest faculty of man. One of the most interesting of the progressionists is Erasmus Darwin, who says that the species can only be perfected by conflict. He has realized the constant struggle that goes on in nature; the strife between individual and individual, the difficulty of survival. He is convinced that all life has arisen from one living filament and that it contains within itself the faculty of continual improvement. Priestly bases his belief in the perfectibility of the species on the importance and power of the human intellect. "The human species, itself," he writes, "is capable of a similar and unbounded improvement; whereby mankind in a later age are greatly superior to mankind in a former age, the individuals being taken at the same time of life."¹ The factors that will bring about this progress which is "not equable, but accelerated, every new improvement opening the way to many others,"² are education and the influences of society and government, all of them

Introd. p.4. See also p.5.
² "Miscellaneous Observations Relating to Education", Lond. 1778, P.3
inoperable in a state of nature. So, he, too, is prepared for the increasing complexity of life, especially as he observes that all progress is from the simple to the compound and that uniformity is a characteristic of the animal world; "But it is the glory of human nature, that the operations of reason, though variable and by no means infallible, are capable of infinite improvement". He concerns himself very seriously with the problem of progress and considers the best means of providing the kind of society in which it may work unimpeded. In a letter to Burke he makes evident his concern for society. "To make the public good the standard of right and wrong", he writes, "in whatever relates to society and government, besides being the most natural and rational of all rules, has the farther recommendation of being the easiest of application." Like Bentham, he believes that the welfare of the state could be assured by the artificial identification of interests when there is no natural one.

All these ideas of progress and of perfectibility appear at one time or another in the novel. Out of the abstractions of philosophic thought, there emerged, not only conceptions of the ideal state, but blue prints for its creation. Ready to hand, when the demagogue is inspired to attack existing institutions, or the novelist to embody an idea, there are themes of topical and extreme interest: universal benevolence, the noble savage, sensibility, Utopias, the deification of reason, progress and the perfectibility of the species. They are not all suitable for fiction and suffer in consistency by ruthless adaptation

to the requirements of a plot, but they are all transmuted into popular form and are used as propaganda for a variety of purposes. The work of the reformers who stand halfway between the Philosopher and the popular writer publicised them. There is a whole literature of what might be called "directed metaphysics" written for reviews, published as treatises, or circulated as tracts, either by way of direct sale or, by the more devious, but surer, way through the societies. The objects of attack are topical evils; political injustice, the marriage laws, the treatment of prisoners, the decadence of the nobility, infamous practices like duelling and many others. They are judged according to the conception of natural right or of ideal good. They appear in pedagogic literature and in the novel. There is no doubt that they gained a very wide currency.
CHAPTER II

1. The popularisation of liberal ideas in the work of the Reformers.
2. The dissemination of liberal ideas: the chief agents.

Among the publications of those who set out to spread speculative ideas with the purpose of reform, the work of Godwin is of especial interest because, having expressed his creed in a book which had a phenomenal success, he tried to incorporate his views in a series of novels and we are able to watch the passage of some of them from philosophy, through political economy into fiction.

"Political Justice" was published in 1793, at three guineas a copy. When the Privy Council, horrified at the views expressed, considered prosecuting the author, Pitt was of the opinion that there was no great danger of a wide influence on the public as they would never buy such an expensive book. Yet it sold four thousand copies and was hailed as the greatest book of the century. "No work in our time," said Hazlitt, writing thirty-two years afterwards, "gave such a blow to the philosophical mind of the country as the celebrated 'Inquiry Concerning Political Justice'... Truth, moral truth, it was supposed, had, here, taken up its abode; and these were the oracles of thought. 'Throw aside your books of chemistry', said Wordsworth to a young man, a student in the Temple, 'and read Godwin on Necessity'." ¹ An astute criticism follows. Godwin soared and

¹ "The Spirit of the Age", Hazlitt, 1826, p.185, Everyman Ed.
sank because he, "by directing virtue to the most airy and romantic heights, made her path dangerous, solitary and impracticable." Although Hazlitt can see that Godwin has "sunk below the horizon and enjoys the serene twilight of a doubtful immortality" he believes his value to be permanent, even if his opinions are extreme: "What, then? Because those opinions were over-charged, were they, therefore, altogether groundless?" And again: "...it by no means follows, because reason is found not to be the only infallible and safe rule of conduct, that it is no rule at all." He stresses the ruthlessness of the logic that takes no account of human frailty or variability but admits that Godwin carried with him "the most sanguine and fearless understandings of the time."

In spite of its materialism the book seems to have had a curiously moral effect. Crabb Robinson was inspired by it. "In one respect," he says, "the book had an excellent effect on my mind - it made me feel more generously. I had never before, nor, I am afraid, have I ever since felt so strongly the duty of not living to one's self but of having for one's sole object the good of the community."

On a reader anxious to discover at first hand the reason for this appeal, he has a mesmerising influence. The deliberate discarding of all considerations which might qualify an opinion, the rigorous direction of illustration to the point at issue and the extreme familiarity of

1. Ibid. p.184.
2. Ibid. p.183.
3. Ibid. p.187.
the human sensations and thoughts of which he makes use by way of
example produce the same impression on the mind as riding in a rapidly
moving tram-car produces on the body; a feeling of directed activity
on a well marked track in a series of powerful spurts. His sentences
have all the force of slogans and are still used as such by the
Rationalist Press of our own day. His work is still quoted in
anarchistic circles, in Heretics' Clubs in the Universities and in
other similar bodies who see in the chaos of 1950 a justification for
a clean sweep of the governments that have brought the world to such
a pass, and of the very conception of Government itself. Godwin owes
much of his appeal both in his political writings and in his novels to
the solemn intensity of his manner. His ideas seem to be pumped out
of him as by some sterile machine, passionless and deadly. They
suggest themes both serious and satirical. In his discussion, for
instance, of the desirability of the fluctuation of property according
to need, he suggests that many people have secretly called in question
the arbitrary division of property established in society and have
wished to appropriate to their own use the superfluous possessions of
others. Numbers of satirical novels were founded on this theme
alone, the triumph of the cynical and the unscrupulous over the good
and gullible. There are numerous examples of the vagabond hero who
puts into practice the engaging theory of benevolence in his own
interests. Fenton, in George Walker's "The Vagabond", applies it
to everything that he desires, including the person of the heroine.

Godwin insists on the iniquity of all forms of co-operation

1. Lond. 1798.
or association and it is startling to find that he extends his condemnation to the work of an orchestra as a vicious example of the subordination of the individual to a group. One of the greatest tyrannies is marriage, the destroyer of personal liberty, and he attacks it uncompromisingly. "The abolition of marriage in the form now practised," he writes, "will be attended with no evils," and, though in subsequent editions the sentence was rephrased, the idea was never wholly recanted. Then, almost thinking aloud, he tries to decide whether the result of sweeping away the bond would be an increase in promiscuousness or a series of mutually accepted, and terminated, short partnerships. There is, in his opinion, no danger of licentiousness because "the parties, having acted upon selection, are not likely to forget this selection when the interview is over." This view of the superior attraction of willing co-habitation to forced compliance is quoted, and embodied, in many novels. Writers range themselves on one side or the other. Sometimes they recognise that, as Hazlitt says, 'women may degenerate from 'Corinna into courtesans' when restraints are removed; sometimes they consider that their heroines gain in stature by voluntary cession of their legal right to security in favour of dignity and self respect. We have a whole range of characters from the 'free' Mrs. Blagdon in

'Walsingham' by Mary Robinson\(^1\), to the young innocent tempted to listen to liberal views and obviously doomed from her first acceptance of the specious arguments of a seducer;\(^2\) or the reclaimed hussy like Ellen Percy\(^3\), who waits in vain for her lover in a draughty post-chaise near Barnet and, having been saved from a life of misery by the merest chance that the news of her father's bankruptcy leaks out in time to discourage the wicked Lord Frederick de Burgh from eloping with her, is allowed to redeem herself so that she may admit to all the danger of Jacobinical principles. Even she does not earn her redemption easily! She is first given a series of discourses of shattering intensity on religious and moral topics, all with special application to her own case; then she is subjected to a period of more than customary severity as a governess and, finally, she is made to endure the pains of incarceration in a madhouse until solitude and the sounds and sights of lunacy combined reduce her to a proper state of contrition. It is a relief when the author allows her to meet, and eventually to enter into matrimony with, a firm-minded man.

Most of Godwin's ideas appear in fiction and a brief analysis of his argument will illustrate the source from which come the snatches of philosophy to be found in conversations or letters in scores of novels. His first chapters paint a gloomy picture of a state in which man preys on man and the vicious triumph. The poor are oppressed and

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1. Lond. 1798.
3. Discipline, by Mrs. Brunton, Lond. 1814.
hungry; the penal system savage and unjust; the government ignorant and tyrannical. Wars and the threat of wars are constant. Then he declares all these evils to be unnecessary. If the incidents of life could be purged of 'improper tendencies' there would be no evil for vice is, unquestionably, no more in the first instance than error of judgment. Character is always the result of environment and events and can be altered and perfected. 'Sound reasoning and truth, when adequately communicated, must always be victorious over error; Sound reasoning and truth are capable of being so communicated: Truth is omnipotent; The vices and moral weakness of man are not invincible; man is perfectible, or, in other words, susceptible of perpetual improvement.'

A cherished tenet follows; the superiority of persuasion over compulsion and of encouragement over despotism. He believes every kind of coercion to be wrong and condems anything that would interfere with the utter freedom of the individual. Reason should be the sole spring of action. With a clean sweep he would abolish Monarchy and Aristocracy because, leading through luxury to self-interest and hypocrisy, they involve moral corruption. Governments would also go and with them all systems of legal punishment. Even emotions like gratitude and friendship impose restrictions on those who feel them. He believes that 'If truth were universally told of men's dispositions and actions, gibbets and wheels might be dismissed from the face of the earth. The Knave un-masked would be obliged to

turn honest in his own defence. Nay, no man would have time to grow a knave. Truth would follow him in his first irresolute essays and public disapprobation arrest him in the commencement of his career. He pursues this line of thought remorselessly, even to the point of absurdity. He solemnly describes a time when, the mind having triumphed completely over matter, life would be indefinitely prolonged, while the passions, and particularly sensual pleasure, would die away so that, ultimately there would be neither birth nor death.

Equally far-reaching in its effect on the novel, is the application of this theory of individual freedom to the whole question of the position of women by Mary Wollstonecraft in her "A Vindication of The Rights of Women" published in 1792 and reprinted sixteen times before 1892. Showy and provocative as it is, the case she presents was never adequately answered. In it, she makes a passionate protest against the theory that Chesterfield echoes when he says: 'Women, then, are only children of a larger growth;—A man of sense only trifles with them, plays with them, humours and flatters them, as he does with a sprightly forward child; but he neither consults them about, nor trusts them with, serious matters....' All the force of her personality is to be felt in her denunciation of the fallacy of the natural inferiority of the female mind. 'Reason,' she claims, 'is not of a sexual nature, is unchanging, eternal and the same for all.' She exposes the contempt implicit in the ridiculous gallantry shown to

women by men and rails against the ignominy of the position of many women forced to consider marriage as almost the only means of subsistence. With great courage, she suggests the wisdom of relaxing the rigid control of the passions at times and she shows great compassion for those unfortunates who are ruined by a false step almost before they know the difference between virtue and vice and are driven to prostitution by need and the attitude of a cruel society. This passionate espousal of the cause of justice for women provides splendid material for the novelist and characters based on her views serve as beacons or warnings according to the outlook of the writer. The enmity of her critics and the admiration of her disciples were the result of her claim that a woman has the right to make her stay in any marriage coterminous with her love. Her own life with its emotional entanglements gave colour to the belief, widely prevalent, that she was a profligate woman attacking the very props of society; yet she respects the marriage tie as 'the foundation of almost every social virtue'. Her criticism is constructive and unembittered. The remedy for the evil is more sensible education and she gives practical suggestions that include the teaching of the facts of sex to children through the observation of animals, and the adoption of a system of co-education. She deplores the intermittent severity of some parents and the undue indulgence of others. Her theme is dignity and true decorum, grace and modesty with self-respect. Some idea of the effect

2. Ibid. P. 139. footnote.
of the book may be gained from the reference to her by her contemporaries. Her name is reviled over and over again. She is a symbol of promiscuousness, a bogey with which to frighten the 'young female'. Reviewers trace any taint of scepticism or immorality straight to her influence. Characters in novels clearly designed for a career of dissipation and an early grave, are said to have been started on the downward path by the perusal of her works or even by the adoption of her views quoted, for his own purpose, by the seducer. Hannah More frankly called her one of those 'philosophising serpents' that threatened the peace of the country. Polwhele pictures her at the head of a 'female band defying Nature's law' and bids the reader

'See Wollstonecraft, whom no decorum checks,
Arise, the intrepid champion of her sex.
O'er humbled men assert the sovereign claim
And slight the timid blush of virgin fame.'

He scoffs because she foresees a time when women will

'Surpass their rivals in the power of mind
And vindicate the Rights of Womankind.'

In a footnote, moreover, he deplores the influence on the simple country-born Mrs. Yearsley, protégée of Hannah More, of the 'Arch-priestess of female libertinism.' The Anti-Jacobin Review and Magazine never mentions her without obloquy. One of its reviewers points out that the very company she keeps condemns her. He writes: 'While this

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1. The Unsexed Females, Polwhele, 1798, p.13 & 15.
2. Ibid. p.20.
patriotic lady resided with the enemies of her country, her most intimate acquaintances were Helen Maria Williams, Mr. Thomas Christie, one of the most zealous advocates for the French principles, and Mr. Thomas Paine. In fact, she is accused in the same article of 'Jacobin morality.' 'Her doctrines' says the reviewer, are almost all obvious corollaries from the theorems of Paine.' She was much beloved, however, in some quarters and the eulogies of her admirers are just as extravagant. A typical example may be quoted from the article on her work in the 'Analytical Review' for March, 1798.

The writer takes a formal farewell of one who has 'asserted the rights, and received an uncommon portion of the wrongs of women' and, in the course of his remarks, makes a prophecy: "Thy name is pursued by the censures of the licentious and the malignant. But better things approach, and thy vindication is secure. Thy name shall yet be mentioned with those who have been distinguished for virtue and talent; and under this persuasion, we are contented, that for a time thou should'st suffer the reproach of married and unmarried prostitutes."

The very suspicion of being in accord with Tom Paine was enough to damn her. He was the perfect demagogue and inspired either extreme rancour or great admiration. He was raw and crude in style but he more than made up for any deficiencies of taste by the power of his attack and the soundness of his dramatic instinct. He devoted his life to the cause of political freedom and his energy was unflagging.

2. Art. III.
His was a scorched earth policy. He closed his mind to the lessons of experience and radiated confidence in his own ideas. His importance to this study lies in his belief, constantly re-iterated, in the power of reason and in his exaltation of the simple savage state. The sin of luxury, the corrupting power of civilization, the decadence of the ruling classes all come in for their share of vituperation. Though he wrote no novels, there are echoes of him in hundreds. Sometimes, there are direct references to him. Even the chapter, astonishing in his day, on specific reforms is reflected. Detailed plans are given in it for such things as maternity benefit, workhouse factories and a graded income tax. He was a Crusader and a reformer, a champion of the poor. His splendid abstractions fired the imaginations of more creative writers. His arrogance bred confidence and men like Place and Holcroft admired him. So did Carlyle, though annoyed to a degree by his hysterical outbursts which suggested a desire to free the next world as well as this one. Paine and Godwin entirely ignore experience. Godwin in his ascent to the heights of idealism deliberately dons blinkers; Paine needs none, he starts blind. They both remain unaware that the truths uttered with such seemingly irrefutable force of logic are conditional and relative and not absolute. In spite of their desire to give individuals priority over institutions, they both fail to understand society because they disregard history. They introduce a curious bargaining note and fiction faithfully reflects the dreary alternative presented by the exponents of the rationalist position; either the picture of every man looking after himself in the persons of
sordid adventurers, masters of intrigue or merchants cheating their way to wealth and then storming society or characters who snugly remove themselves from the society of their fellows in order to devote themselves to the good of the race, presumably by remote control, in the persons of philosophers, recluse or itinerant. Yet the "Rights of Man" sold 150,000 copies and Mathias pays Paine a supreme compliment. "We are, no longer," he says, "in an age of ignorance; and information is not partially distributed according to the ranks, the orders, the functions and the dignities of social life. Our peasantry now read the "Rights of Man" on mountains and on moors, and by the wayside; and shepherds make the analogy between their occupation and that of their governors."

The work of the reformers became the liturgy of the working man and these philosophic ideas were disseminated in many ways until a common pool of thought supplied writers of all kinds with their principles and their interpretations of those principles. It is interesting to note some of the ways in which this body of opinion was assembled.

2. "Vaurien", Disraeli, 1797.
One of the most important contributions to the common body of thought was made by the societies which sprang up all over the country as a result of the French Revolution. Their aim seems to have been to promote reform by the dissemination of liberal principles as well as by suggestions of practical improvements in the institutions of the country. There were in London, before 1789, several very respectable bodies. The Constitutional Society had sunk to a small group during the '80's but it had received a new impetus on the outbreak of the Revolution, and restated its intention to animate the people, and sponsored a scheme of federated societies with conventions of delegates to spread education in liberal ideas. For this purpose, the subscription was fixed at five guineas to enable the society to send out free tracts. It became powerful under the leadership of Adams and Horne Tooke. Sheridan, Cartwright and Fox were firm adherents. By 1791, it had become a great force and was thereafter prominent in the history of reform. Similarly, the London Revolutionary Society, which had met every year since 1688 for a dinner and a sermon at a cost of half a guinea, increased its members on its centenary and planned to make its opinions widely known. It was recruited largely from the ranks of the Dissenters smarting under their unfair exclusion from Parliament, civil office and, indeed, almost all municipal activity. In 1789, on the outbreak of the Revolution, the annual meeting was made something of an occasion and Dr. Richard Price, a Dissenter with
a European reputation, was invited to support a motion that 'The French National Assembly should be congratulated on the victory of liberty and justice over arbitrary power and on the encouragement provided by its example to other nations to secure their inalienable rights.' His sermon touched off the gunpowder. In answer to it, Burke wrote his 'Reflections on the French Revolution'; Tom Paine took up the challenge and produced 'The Rights of Man' and the waters of controversy roared in full spate. Yet the speech was not anarchistic, nor, even, subversive. Its cold detached style did not lend itself to provocation; it is the material that is inflammatory. He asks the old question 'Who is my neighbour?' and answers it by a defence of the cosmopolitan outlook, and an attack on narrow patriotism. Love of country, he says, should be ardent but not exclusive. Great principles such as liberty of conscience, important to him as a Dissenter, the right to resist evil, to choose governors and to criticise them must be spread through the world by 'informing and instruction'. Anxious to combine his intellectual conclusions with the duties of his faith, he exhorts all would-be reformers to put their own lives in order so that their teaching should not be vitiated by deserved censure on moral issues! As a kind of 'Nunc Dimittis', he rejoices that he has lived to see millions demanding liberty and respecting the value of reason and conscience. The effect of the sermon was far reaching. It was reported on, attacked, approved of, reflected in tract and novel. The occasion, it must be remembered, was fraught with excitement, for the attitude of all liberal-minded
men in 1789 was affected by the events taking place over the Channel. A ready acceptance of anything said in the name of 'Liberty, Equality and Fraternity' was assured and something of the eloquence inspired by any burning question of the moment was imparted to the most trite remarks. The Revolutionary Society flourished.

The Society of the Friends of the People also played its part in the spreading of ideas. All over the country, coteries were formed; reports and pamphlets poured forth and were read by an eager public. As a typical example, the London Corresponding Society may be quoted. Its prime object was to promulgate by correspondence with other societies the views of reformers and their reasons for those views. The law forbade any federation or combination of political bodies but the sending of letters was not illegal. The title was unfortunate as it was construed into meaning that the purpose of the society was to correspond with the French Government and not a little of the hostility it excited in Government circles was due to that unwarrantable suspicion. Some account of its history and proceedings may serve to illustrate how the ideas in question were made so universally known.

It was founded by a Scottish bootmaker called Thomas Hardy, a simple uneducated workman but a man of great integrity. It aimed at the education of the working men in political ideas and its subscription was therefore fixed at 1d. a week with a shilling entrance fee. The clientele was drawn chiefly from tradesmen, mechanics, small shop-keepers. A register seized by the Government after the arrest of Hardy in 1794, shows the names of watchmakers, weavers,
compositors and carpenters, breeches-makers and others. It also attracted, and retained, men like Blake, Holcroft, Ritson, Thelwall and Paine. Francis Place joined in 1794 and became chairman of his branch. It is from the interesting collection of manuscripts left by him, and from the published addresses of the Society, that the detailed information of the plans, minutes and the publications of the Society may be gathered. There are the transactions of the Society, part of an autobiography, letters, collections of material for memoirs, and newspaper cuttings. In them, the quality of the response to the ideas of its leaders is clearly indicated. Integrity is the keynote. There is a consciousness of the danger of holding such opinions and of the extreme peril of promulgating them. A report of the Constitution, printed by Thomas Spence, gives some indication of their good sense. There are Articles and there are forms of admission stating the duty of a member under order. "Submission to any measure does not imply silence" says one rule, "as to the propriety or impropriety thereof." Another runs: "A noisy disposition is seldom a sign of courage, and extreme zeal is often a cloak of treachery." The right of every man to claim "Equality before the law, wether (sic) in claiming its protection or submitting to its sentence" is stressed. He should also be able, according to another article, to publish his views freely and "to exercise his religious worship without molestation or restriction and to enjoy his property, subject only to such contributions as may be impartially levied for the Public Service." Practical details of organisation follow: "We recommend that the members shall meet in
divisions consiting (sic) as nearly as convenient of thirty Members each, and that the management of its affairs be vested in one COMMITTEE of DELEGATES, ONE SELECT COMMITTEE and ONE COUNCIL, subject to REFERENCE to the DIVISIONS and TRIAL BY JURY. Each division had its chairman and its delegate, who was also the treasurer and paid in subscriptions to a central fund. They met weekly on Thursdays. The minute book shows the variety of their business and the width of their influence. They consider letters from societies in Birmingham, Sheffield, and Coventry, and from many London Societies. They exchange copies of tracts and Addresses to the Nation. The one adopted by the Society as its particular manifesto was written by Margaret who was so well aware of the implications of his words that he refused to put his name to it. Hardy sent it to Horne Tooke for criticism and gave his own name in the covering letter and it was he who put Hardy’s name at the bottom when he sent it to the printer. They discuss the best methods of disseminating tracts and they vote sums of money for the relief of those prosecuted for publishing them. The Secretary of Division 30, who happened to be a compositor, offered to print from 140-200 copies of any report for 10/6d, because he believed that ‘this Plan will be the means of accumulating and disseminating such a powerful Source of original Information and political Conviction that the Society will greatly increase in Wisdom and in Numbers.....’

1. Add. Mss. 27813. p.13. et seq. (e.g. 15, 22, 14, 18. Item 17 in Duty of a Member).
2. Ibid. p.73.
3. Ibid. p.11.
4. Ibid. p.75.
By the end of May, 1795, the Society consisted of seventy divisions with an average weekly attendance of over 2000 members. It was considered the parent society of a flourishing family, and Burke 'in one of his mad rants in the House of Commons' was inspired to call it 'the mother of all mischief'. Possibly he knew of its potentialities at first hand for a newspaper cutting suggests that he himself had belonged to it. Their tracts and reports reflect the thought of the day sensitively. At first, idealistic in tone and somewhat remote from reality, they grow warmer and more practical. By 1794, they are singing 'Ca ira, Carmagnole', the Marseillaise and toasting the 'armies contending for liberty' with a supreme disregard of the identity of the adversary. They took trouble to educate themselves. They initiated a system of book subscriptions and the books bought in this way were lent to the members in rotation before they were consigned to the subscriber. At the dwelling places of those who could accommodate a number of people, they arranged Sunday evening parties, with readings and discussions. One gets the impression of inquiring, upright men, brave and dignified. A letter from Place to Noble refers to the constant readings and discussions and says: 'This course of discipline compelled them to think more correctly than they had been accustomed to do; it induced them to become readers of books, and the consequence, the very remarkable consequence, was that every one of them became a master, and permanently bettered his condition in life.' Long after he had left the society,

2. Ibid. 27837, 48.
3. Mar. 10th, 1836.
Place lived up to his belief in the value of discussion and kept a library in the upstairs front room of his shop at 16, Charing Cross, and spent hours cataloguing and arranging publications in order that anyone who cared to call might have the latest information or point of view. He accumulated a personal library that was consulted by many reformers and he spent as much time as he could in it. His habit of keeping people at arms' length enabled him to keep his sanctum from the knowledge of most of his ordinary customers in the difficult times from 1810 - 1817. To enlighten others was his self-appointed mission. He shared with James Mill and Jeremy Bentham an absolute faith in the power of reason and felt that all evils would right themselves if only everyone were taught to read, if all kinds of opinions were allowed expression and if, by means of a just representation, people might give effect to their views. His little library was frequented like a coffee room. He could put his hand on anything at a moment's notice. By means of the company that assembled, he organised the printing of pamphlets in a simple manner. In a letter to Benjamin Hawes, 24th April, 1839, he recalls the days in Charing Cross: "When it was thought advisable to print a tract for distribution on any subject, a notice was put up over the fireplace, e.g. 'It is proposed to print for distribution an extract from the Report of the Select Committee on Metropolis Police Officers'. This was read by those who came, and they who approved of it put down a sovereign. Some hundreds of pounds were collected in this way and many tracts

1. A description of the library and its frequenters may be found in "Lord Melbourne", by Henry Dunckley, 1890, p.150 and 151.
were carefully and usefully distributed." 1.

All over the country, societies sprang into being, and the links between the London societies and the provincial ones were very strong. There were flourishing bodies in Manchester, Sheffield, Birmingham, Coventry, Norwich, Bristol - the list might be extended indefinitely. Their influence was enormous. Norwich was covered with a network of branches, all off-shoots of the Revolutionary Society. Birmingham's Constitutional Society was both powerful and wealthy. Derby had a Society for Political Information. Glasgow Friends kept in close touch with London. The Edinburgh Friends took the leading part in arranging meetings with the Societies from other parts of the country and at the first Convention of Edinburgh, eighty were represented. Streams of addresses went to France. Their reading included Locke, Hume, Rousseau and Helvetius as well as the ubiquitous Tom Paine, purchased by subscription and conveyed in succinct digests or suggestive and provocative slogans. But whatever their zeal for reform, their utterances are so innocent of practical application that the alarm of the government seems, at this distance, out of all proportion to the danger. The news of the excesses in France had disturbed the balance of its judgment and the second Convention of Edinburgh convinced the House that revolution was pending. The Convention was called in 1793 to voice demands for the reform of Parliament. The London Corresponding Society called a meeting in Hackney fields to elect its delegates. Over four thousand people attended and Margaret and

Gerrald were elected. They went to Edinburgh and met with disaster. The part played by the Government in the affair cannot be justified. The Convention duly met and proclaimed its programme. The meeting was not disorderly; the resolutions were much the same as those passed at any meeting of a Society but the authorities took fright; the Convention was broken up by the magistrates and the leaders arrested. At the subsequent trials, the official accuser was Robert Dundas, son of the Home Secretary. A contemporary comments on the disgrace that the trials brought to Scottish justice. Prejudice was obvious and he declares that there were 'not mere casual indications of bias, but absolute straining for conviction'.¹ One of the Judges, Lord Braxfield, went out to dinner on the evening before the trial of Muir and, finding that one of his fellow guests was a member of the jury, discussed the case with him and expressed his conviction of the guilt of the accused. Though the propriety of his remaining on the Bench for that trial was questioned, he was allowed to proceed by a decision of his fellow judges. As might have been expected, the sentences were savage. Five outstanding men, including the two London delegates were found guilty and sent to Botany Bay for fourteen years. Gerrald made a memorable speech in court; it illustrates the sincerity and high courage typical of the delegates of societies. "Moral light is as irresistible to the mind as physical is by the eye," he said; 'all attempts to impede its progress are vain. It will roll rapidly along and, as well may tyrants imagine that by placing their feet upon the

¹ 'Memorials of His Time' Lord Cockburn, 1855, p.91,92 and footnote.
earth, they can stop its diurnal motion, as that they shall be able, by efforts the most virulent and pertinacious, to extinguish the light of reason and philosophy which, happily for mankind, is spreading everywhere around us. In the same tradition, is the conduct of the delegate from the London Constitutional Society. A letter from Horne Tooke, its President, to the London Corresponding Society, on Friday, Feb. 14th, 1794, tells that, although he had been allowed to return to London on bail and thus could easily have escaped arrest, he voluntarily surrendered, in full knowledge of the sentences already inflicted on Palmer and Muir. The news of the results of the trials shocked moderate men in both countries. The statements of belief made by the victims were given prominence in the press and the publicity thus given spread the views quickly. The whole affair was described by the societies as an attack on freedom of speech. The London Societies closed their ranks and prepared, in defiance, to hold a convention themselves. Hardy sent out appeals for pledges of support. On April 14th, 1794, a great meeting was held at Chalk Farm. It was this meeting that made the Government decide to act again. Certainly, there was indiscreet talk and the resolutions were strongly worded. Agents provocateurs were sent and spies faithfully reported the most trivial detail. The Correspondence of the Society was tapped and its publications subjected to severe scrutiny. A period of suspicion followed. For the luxury of singing 'Go George, we can't endure ye' or sticking a notice 'To Let' on the door of Newgate, men were put in the pillory and heavily fined. Respectable men turned informer and
statements assumed a sinister importance in Whitehall that they lack in their context. A rumour that arms were being made by workmen in Sheffield spread over London and the Government hesitated no longer. On May 12th, Hardy and Adams, the Secretary of the London Constitutional Society, were arrested. A Committee of Secrecy was appointed to examine the situation on May 15th. On May 16th, it made its first report. As a result, seven leading members of the Corresponding Society and six of the Constitutional Society were arrested, and charged with High Treason. Holcroft, Horne Tooke and Thelwall were among them. On May 17th, Habeas Corpus was suspended. The interest in the situation was universal. The whole question was of importance. What concerns us is the extent to which liberal opinions were made familiar to the general public by the notoriety of such trials. The Societies spent money sub-poenaing witnesses for the defence of their members. In the manuscripts left by Place, there are accounts of sums of money voted for the defence of Hardy. Twenty pounds went towards the expense of sub-poenaing witnesses and five pounds and some odd shillings provided a room for the witnesses during the trial. All comments are sensible and measured and reflect great credit on the Committee. Great publicity attended the trials. Freedom of speech was in danger. Chief Justice Eyre made a sinister opening speech in which he reviewed the dangers of inflammatory incitaments and seemed to interpret the charge as one of general agitation. It was Godwin who, writing to "The Morning Chronicle", pointed out that

the words 'High Treason' bore a special meaning, that is to say acts against the life of the Sovereign or against the life of the realm and, therefore, could not be so construed. If they could, then any free discussion would be dangerous and any attempt to bring about a fundamental change, however peacefully affected, would be treasonable. There is, here, a touch of eloquence that gives the letter a claim to be treated as literature. The result of the trials is well-known. Hardy was acquitted; the charges against Holcroft and three others were dropped and, after long wranglings, the others were all found not guilty. Some idea of the interest aroused may be seen in the account given by Crabb Robinson of his own feelings in the matter. He writes: 

"During the first trial I was in a state of agitation that rendered me unfit for business. I used to beset the Post Office early, and one morning at six I obtained the London paper with NOT GUILTY printed in letters an inch in height, recording the issue of Hardy's trial. I ran about the town knocking at people's doors, and screaming out the joyful words." 1

The vindictive reaction on the part of the people to even the suspicion of treason showed itself in more violent ways than any advocated by their victims. Hardy's shop in Piccadilly was attacked by a mob and his wife, pregnant at the time, died of shock. Typical of the excesses committed by the populace, was the burning of Priestley's house in Birmingham, and the destruction of many years' work, because he had attended a reform dinner. Meetings alleged on

fantastically slight evidence to be seditious were broken up by the military, or even by infuriated citizens. Justice was not even-handed. A note appended to a letter from the Birmingham Society to the London Corresponding Society, says that when the disturbances occurred in Birmingham, "the chief arguments of the rioters to the magistrates was, 'you did not shoot us when we were rioting for Church and King and pulling down the presbyterians meetings and dwelling houses, but gave us plenty of good ale and spirits to urge us on - Now we are rioting for a big Loaf, we must be shot at and cut up like Bacon Pigs.'" 1

The Pitt and Grenville Acts and the second suspension of Habeas Corpus led to other massed meetings of the Society. A meeting called to obtain signatures on petitions against the Acts is described in a tract called 'A Meeting of the People', published for the Society by Citizen Lee. Thalwall, Hodson and Ashley from the Constitutional Society stood at three different rostra to explain the implications of the Acts and their effect on the rights of man. Then the resolutions were put to the gigantic assembly, 300000 strong if the writer is to be believed. The speech of Citizen Jones is of interest. He makes the point that their object is not revolution and that they wish to avoid any appearance of disorderliness as it is only by strict decorum that they can win the support of the right kind of people. The author himself is struck by the quality of the audience and is moved to comment: "The philosophic and reflecting mind had never perhaps

a finer opportunity of contemplating the mental energies of so vast a number of fellow creatures as on this memorable day."

The Acts were not repealed in spite of numerous petitions and led to the decay of the Society. Place resigned from it in 1797. In July of that year, a large meeting was held in a field near St. Pancras Church. The Middlesex magistrates intervened and arrested all those who were on the platform. Worse followed. After the abortive rising of the United Irishmen, some agitators were trying to raise the same kind of trouble in England. The transactions of the Society all stress their wish not to be drawn into anything of a treasonable nature and it seems very unlikely that there would have been any evidence of their complicity in a treasonable plot, especially one with such a limited objective. The authorities feared that, with French help, the Society might be trying to form a band of United Englishmen with the same objective, armed rebellion. The Government, kept informed by spies, waited for the right moment. On April 19th, 1798, at a meeting where they were discussing, ironically enough, a plan to volunteer for national defence, the Committee was arrested en bloc. The Society never recovered.

As far as this study is concerned, the interesting part of the publications of this, or any other society, is the flavour of philosophy and liberalism which may be distinguished. Even after the cogency of the working men's grievances and the emotionalism of the Dissenters had narrowed the stream into the channel of practical

1. 'A Meeting of the People', 1795.
reform, there are indications of interest in the wider view. There is the belief in the power of reason, a pathetic conviction that education will cure all ills and that man's nature, relieved from the miseries of poverty and the vice that it brings, will, in time, be infinitely good. There is an insistence on personal integrity and mental discipline. When John Binns, one of the delegates of the Corresponding Society, was arrested at Birmingham, he had on him a letter of instructions to delegates which is included in the evidence given in the Report of the Committee of Secrecy, 1799. It runs: 'The question whether the next generation shall be free or not may greatly depend on the wisdom and integrity of your conduct in the general missions which you and your fellow delegates now take upon yourselves.' Delegates are called upon to strain every nerve to 'awaken the sleeping spirit of Liberty.' They are to be ready to pursue this common object 'if it must be to the scaffold, or rather, if our enemies are desperate enough to bar up every avenue to inquiry and discussion, to the field at the hazard of extermination.' The Report constantly emphasises the dangerous connection between Jacobinism and Dissent and its interpretation of the papers delivered by Dundas caused it to give the following opinion: there was the clearest proof 'of a systematic design, long since adopted and acted upon by France, in conjunction with domestic traitors and pursued up to the present moment with unabated perseverance, to overturn the laws, constitution and Government and every existing establishment,

civil and ecclesiastical in Great Britain and Ireland. They comment on the industry of the Societies in the dissemination of views and on their success. Particularly, they object to the instructions given to their 'itinerant missionaries sent to various parts of the kingdom.' Even allowing for the undue alarm of the authorities, it seems clear that the Committee recognises behind all the incitements to agitation something that has the quality and enduring properties of a creed. Perhaps the lines written by Charles Lloyd, the friend of Lamb, in 1799 give the best estimate of the prevalence of philosophic and political argument:

'There is abroad

An evil spirit; a spirit evil and foul,
Who, under fair pretence of modern lights
And vain philosophy, parcel[s] the dole
Of human happiness, (that quality
Sought for six thousand tedious years in vain)
With lavish distribution, who, with speech
Dressed up in metaphysical eloquence,
And eked out plausibly with abstract phrase,
Would snatch from God Himself the agency
Of good and ill.'

This constant airing of opinions did not and with the societies nor with the fierce reaction against Jacobinism caused by the outbreak of the war with France and the advent of Napoleon. Up and down the

2. "Lines Suggested by the Fast Appointed on Feb. 27th, 1799."
country, men drawn together by a common interest in progress, formed private clubs, literary coteries or debating societies. Darwin and his friends, Boulton, Edgeworth, Watt, Priestley and others composed the Lunar Society and met once a month to exchange their views on scientific theory. Their topics of discussion included the innate equipment of human beings, the maintenance of the state of equality in face of the inequality of endowment, the possibility of a French invasion, the duty of patriotism and the final end of man. Similar subjects claimed the attention of the little colony at Norwich which included the Taylors, Sir James Mackintosh, the Martineau family, Dr. Alderson, Mrs. Opie's father, and the cultured Dissenters connected with Warrington Academy, an establishment founded to give Non-Conformists a University education. H. Crabb Robinson tells of a book club at Royston to which he was invited, in 1796 to speak in a debate. The subject is interesting: "Is private affection inconsistent with universal benevolence?" The audience consisted of eighty six people, five of them Dissenting ministers. Later, he frequented the Westminster Forum and spoke on several occasions. During the next fifteen years, he was so wearied by the constant outpouring of eloquence in debate and in defences in Court that, in a speech to the Academical Society on the question, "Which among the Arts of Oratory, History and Poetry is most capable of being rendered serviceable to Mankind?", he talks of "The evil of accustoming a people to the stimulus

of eloquence." Another of his notes is: "A senate of orators is a symptom of national decay." Sometimes debating societies went too far and caused repercussions in Parliament. John Gale Jones, President of a London debating society, advertised a discussion on freedom of speech based on the action of the First Lord of the Admiralty in excluding strangers from the House during the debate on the result of the ill-fated Walcheren expedition. He was summoned to appear at the Bar of the House. He did so and made a speech which Sir Francis Burdett revised and subsequently published in Cobbett's 'Register'.

The House then sued Sir Francis for breach of privilege. A majority of 38 voted that he should be consigned to the Tower. The whole matter at once became widely known for he refused to go, barricaded himself in his huge house in Piccadilly and threatened to meet force with force. Place describes the calling out of the militia, the mounting of guns on the Tower gates and the flooding of the moat.

Further publicity was given to this affair by two articles in "The Satirist." They are mentioned here because they provide information about an incident which is a very fair sample of the kind of episode that found its way into fiction. References in novels to Sir Francis himself and to this particular event are numerous, particularly in the satires. One of the articles, dated June 24th, 1810, appeared in the July issue, under the title, "Sir Francis Burdett's Splendid Procession" and describes the celebration arranged to welcome him on his release from the Tower, whither, in spite of his opposition, he had been conveyed by the military, and to escort him back to Piccadilly.

Some "friends of freedom and equality" having assembled at a house in Picket St. to arrange a procession form a committee which undertakes to advertise for 'gentlemen' to go to the Tower. They offer as inducement carriages and gin free and new seats in the breeches of those attending on horseback. An attempt made to secure the presence of Jack Ketch fails, though he assures the Committee of his willingness to attend on Mr. Jones and Sir Francis should another occasion arise. About a hundred horses taken from hackney coaches and dogmeat carts assemble, manned by a vast body of "the most respectable pickpockets in the metropolis". Sheriff Wood meets them and they make their way to the Tower, waving banners of a seditious nature. Sir Francis is pacing the ramparts brooding on revolution and on his predecessors on Tower Green. Looking down on the "awful aspect" of his rabble of friends, he is so moved, that he departs quietly by the back door and the return procession has to be held without him. An attempt is made to exalt John Gale Jones to the seat of honour but his appearance is so insignificant and repelling that he has to be put in a hackney carriage with his name written on both sides in chalk, lest he should be mistaken for a "monkey in a consumption".\(^1\) It is full of innuendo and represents the great demagogue as a schemer masquerading as a philosopher. The crowd grows disorderly as it approaches Piccadilly and the militia is called out.

This spirited account is followed by another called "The Ovation of the Empty Chair",\(^2\) an ode describing the return journey

2. Ibid. Jan. 8th, 1811, p. 11.
of the procession. Some of the stanzas give little vignettes of
the protagonists; for instance,

"C—T—t they view, of Middlesex,
A major who would cross the Styx
So that he might bring back the shade
Of famed Wat Tyler, or Jack Cade."

or again:

"No Cobbett, blistering now, was near,
Breathing sedition in his ear,
With purpose dark and undefined,
Swelling the vacuum of the mind."

It is the satirical evaluation of what men like these stood for that
is interesting. Scorn is poured on their suggestions that freedom of
speech has been impeded; that no court of law would have given a
verdict on the evidence considered conclusive by the House of Commons,
and that Parliament, therefore, is convicted of tampering with the
right of man to freedom from oppression. The justice of the treatment
accorded to Sir Francis was debated up and down the country. It is
hardly to be wondered at that the "Second Report of the Committee of
Secrecy" states that the debating societies 'still require further
animadversion and correction.'

There were also numerous conversation clubs. Perhaps the
best example is the King of Clubs. It was patronised by men of
reputation who talked politics and aired their views on metaphysics
and created a kind of informed opinion. The witty and popular
Sidney Smith was a member. Moreover, the publishers and booksellers
so approved of this discussion that they threw open their houses to
literary men and held weekly meetings for their clients. Longman,
London agent and part proprietor of 'The Edinburgh Review', held Soirees that were attended by almost all the poets of the day. Southey describes them to Coleridge in the warmest terms. Murray held a daily drawing-room at 4 o'clock at 50 Albemarle Street to which intelligent people flocked. Joseph Johnson had his evenings and Robinson's house was a general rendez-vous. Little coteries of writers formed the habit of visiting Phillips to hear his liberal views. In fact, on a humble scale the homes of these men echoed the more aristocratic gatherings of Holland House and Bowood.

Not only was there opportunity for publicising opinions in speech, there was also the chance of rushing into print and trusting to the reviews to give fame, or notoriety, to the polemics offered. For there was money in reviewing, for the proprietor! Until the advent of 'The Edinburgh Review' in 1802, which inaugurated a different system and paid its writers generously, the Reviews were in the hands of the booksellers and faithfully reflect the opinions of their proprietors. Thus, 'The Monthly Review' under R. Phillips was the vehicle of Liberal and Dissenting opinion. He was an outspoken man and had incurred the wrath of the authorities before he went to London. Formerly a bookseller in Leicester and Editor of a paper, he printed 'The Rights of Man' and circulated it to the Yeomanry and Infantry of the County and even frequented market ordinaries to try and convert farmers to his way of thinking. He was convicted of sedition and after serving his sentence of eighteen months, he sold up, came to London and began again. Aiken was his editor and he drew on well
known men for his articles: Godwin, Holcroft, the Taylors of Norwich, Dyer, Priestley and, sometimes, Coleridge. Another publication with the same prevailing tone was his annual 'The Spirit of The Public Journals' so weighted with Jacobinical articles, according to 'The Anti-Jacobin', that the number for 1797 contained 148 extracts, only 19 of which were from loyal journals. With Joseph Johnson, he published, and disseminated, thousands of tracts. Johnson was also a Dissenter and personal friend of Godwin, Mary Wollstonecraft and their circle. He published the works of Price and Priestley and was the Editor of the ill-fated 'Analytical Review'. In spite of periods spent in gaol, he kept up his business and was a most important man in the literary world. 'The Critical Review', the 'Town and Country Magazine' and 'The Annual Register' were under the direction of George Robinson, the cheerful, energetic bookseller whose house was a general rendez-vous for all those interested in liberal opinions. Other reviews and magazines ranged themselves on the side of Church and State. Chief among them was the brilliant 'Anti-Jacobin Review' started by Canning with Gifford as Editor. It ran only from Nov.1797 to July 1798, but was followed by the equally vitriolic, if more pedestrian, 'Anti-Jacobin Review and Magazine' which showed as a frontispiece to its first number a cartoon of a blowy woman holding a candle to light up the bats and toads in the dark and cobwebby recesses of the cellars of Jacobinism. The paper continued until 1821 to lash with its acid tongue all those authors or editors who showed the slightest leaning towards liberalism or Dissent. The
London, The Gentleman's, the Projector, Public Characters, - one could quote many others. Authors are constantly complaining of the attacks made on them. Often, in novels, the reviewer and bookseller vie with the seducer and the dissipated cleric for the highest place in the ranks of villainy. A letter from a contributor who signs himself "Sean" to the 'Anti-Jacobin Review and Magazine' on the subject of critics complains of the savage articles of reviewers from which there is no appeal and for which there is no means of retaliation other than pamphletising the writers, a revenge similar to that 'proposed by the ancients, who, when applied to by a gentleman for justice against a tyler who had fallen from the top of a house on his relation and killed him, was advised to get on the house and fall on the tyler in return.' Moreover, it seems to him that, as the purpose of the Reviews is obviously to propagate the politics of the proprietor, it would be better if, instead of putting at the head of an article 'Gifford's Juvenal', the Editor should simply say, 'Critical versus Gifford' or 'The Anti-Jacobin versus Rhodes'. With their eulogies and their denunciations, they wielded an enormous influence. One of D'Ibsen's characters, Johnson, a bookseller, says to the hero, Charles Hamilton, 'You know that all the arts and sciences, all the wit and genius of the age, are absolutely under control of the Rivingtons and the Robinsons, brothers and booksellers.' and, again, in discussing his own job, "Sir, I am the writer, (which you see is no synonym of author) of a library." Fortunes were made by booksellers and publishers,

1. Vol. 17, April, 1804.
not only by the important ones who owned the Reviews, had country connections with flourishing wholesale businesses, but also by men who dealt with old books and conducted a retail trade and cashed in on the public craze for tracts and pamphlets and twopenny periodicals. Ephemeral papers like 'Pig's Meat or Lessons for the Swinish Multitudes', 'Hog's Wash', or those which followed each other with such rapidity from the premises of William Hone sent the authors to gaol and thereby gained enough publicity to enrich the printer. Hone's 'Register' to which Place contributed five numbers sold several thousand copies in a few hours. James Lackington, although he primly records his determination never to touch any 'prohibited, democratical' work, is conscious of the profits to be made in that way. The son of a drunken cobbler, he was apprenticed to a Taunton shoemaker. He became converted to Methodism and, under its influence, taught himself to read and write. Eventually, he came to London and lived in great poverty for some time until, having invested a guinea in a bag of old books and borrowed £5 from Mr. Wesley's fund for the needy he sold his stock, accumulated £25 and opened a bookseller's shop in Chiswell St. He never looked back. His business methods are of interest. He tells how he always sold for ready money and at a low price. By the time that he moved to his shop in Finsbury Square somewhat grandiloquently named the 'Temple of the Muses' he could afford to spend £1,200 in an afternoon at a sale. He notes, and approves of, the improvement in the attitude to female education in some quarters.

1. Spence, Three Vols. in Id. numbers, 1793-4-5. In end of Vol. 2 is an advertisement for a new one called Eye Salve.
2. By Daniel Isaac Eaton.
and he expresses pleasure in the enlightenment of the minds of the poor through education, though he does express a qualm at the use of the power of close reasoning in matters of religion and political concern. In fact he realised that it may lead to scepticism; 'Mr. Wesley', he says, 'often told his society in Broadmead, Bristol, that he could never keep a bookseller six months in his flock.'

The profit on pamphlets was certainly tempting, especially when combined with the number trade. Alderman Kelly is a good example of opportunism in publishing. He brought out sections of great works, beginning with the Bible and Fox's Book of Martyrs and sent the numbers round from door to door. To each of his canvassers, he gave stock on credit of from £20 to £100 and insisted on ready money being returned. Kelly's Family Bible consisted of 173 instalments, offered at £5 the lot. He sold 80,000 copies and a little calculation shows that his gross receipts were about £40,000. Even when half of this sum had gone on the salaries of the canvassers, and £20,000 on the paper tax, there was still a good margin. This hawking of wares from door to door became very popular and was extended to many other kinds of publication. Before long:

"Bibles with cuts and comments thus go down,

Men light Voltaire is numbered through the town."  

Another method of distributing pamphlets was by auction. Thomas Tegg, dismissed by Lane from his job with the Minerva Press because of his innocent exposure of a piece of false witness in a court case,

2. The Library, Crabbe, lines 191-2.
took a business of his own and, when it failed, as it did, owing to his quixotic action in backing a bill for a friend who afterwards defaulted, took out a country licence and went round auctioning his stock, at that time, principally composed of shilling pamphlets and copies of 'The Monthly Visitor'. His first sale was at Worcester where he made £30. By this means, he ultimately made enough to pay off his debts and return to London. There was never any scarcity of material, for tracts and pamphlets were run off in record time, and were often in the streets before the news of the events that occasioned them. Parliamentary reports were 'stigmatised', a favourite verb, almost as soon as they were issued. An amusing example of the promptitude of supply is to be seen in the pamphlet of 'The Whole Life of Nelson' composed by Thomas Tegg and put on the streets within a few hours of the news of his death at Trafalgar. Tegg simply bought a 'Naval Chronicle', made a digest of its information, caused an engraver to make a portrait, added a few political comments and sold 5,000 copies. Another pamphlet that had a phenomenal success was a clever skit called "Dame Europa's School," in the curriculum of which many unusual studies were offered, written by Pullen, a minor canon of Salisbury Cathedral. Having tried in vain to get a printer in London to take it, he gave it to a humble little bookseller in Salisbury to publish on commission. The sale was extraordinary. After a short time, the printing was transferred to London and so popular did the tract become that it inspired thirty seven imitations. Thus, public opinion, hitherto slow in being formed, was kept up to date by the immediacy and
the accessibility of information. Place's comment, in 1817, when he was comparing the success of the Government campaign against political freedom culminating in the Gagging and the Six Acts, with that of the years 1794 and 1795, was that "they failed in exciting alarm in the country, the people had become too well informed to be imposed upon and their attempt was, therefore, a total failure." Men like Spence, certainly, did their best to educate the public. He had a bookstall at the top of Chancery Lane and used to pack his pamphlets on to a vehicle of his own devising. It was "very like a Baker's close barrow - the pamphlets were exhibited outside, and when he sold one he took it from within, and handed and recommended others, with strong expressions of hate to the powers that were and prophecies of what would happen to the whole race of Land Lords." The titles of some of them are sufficiently illuminating. "The Rights of Man, in Verse" and, later, In Prose. "The End of Oppression", 2d. "The Meridian Sun of Liberty or the Whole Rights of Man, Desplayed and most accurately defined," 1d. "The Restorer of Society to its Natural State, in a Series of Letters to a Fellow Citizen," 1801, and then, after his release from Newgate, whither his last pamphlet had consigned him, "The Important Trial of Thomas Spence", 1803. His theory of society was based on the nationalisation of land and its division into small parochial units without landlordism. Irascible, unsociable, entirely convinced of the inevitability of progress, his is a noticeable

1. Add. Mss. 27809, 46.
2. Letter from Hone to Place, 27306, 515. Sept. 1830.
3. Another was, "The Rights of Infants; in a Dialogue between the Aristocracy and a Mother of Children," 1797.
personality. As an irritant to the government, he was unequaled. At his funeral, just behind the coffin a pair of scales was borne to emphasise the justice of his views. His little copper tokens engraved on one side with "Small Farms" and on the other "Full Bellies" long outlived him. His theories outlived him, too, and bid fair to be carried out in our own day. A similar notoriety attended the publications of William Hone, the author and disseminator of the political pamphlets illustrated by Cruikshank; "The Political House that Jack Built", which ran through fifty editions, and "A Slop at Slop" which achieved almost as many. He was so successful that he was able to sell a collected edition of his works in 1820.

Like the members of the Second Committee of Secrecy, one is impressed by the indefatigable pains taken to reach a wide audience. Evidence is to be found on all hands. Bishop Porteous, writing to Hannah More, in 1794, and deploiring the threatening aspect of affairs, says: "There is a central set of booksellers, that are to the full as mischievous as your hawkers, pedlars and matchwomen, in vending the vilest penny pamphlets to the poor people, and I am told it is incredible what fortunes they raise by this sort of traffic, and what multitudes of the lowest rabble flock to their shops to purchase their execrable tracts."¹ Hannah herself is surprised when she comes to arrange for the sale of her own "Cheap Repository Tracts", to find the rate of payment in force. "We were mistaken," she says, "in thinking them cheap enough for the hawkers. I find they have been used to get three

hundred per cent on their old trash; of course, they will not sell ours, but declare they have no objection to goodness if it were but profitable. This cynical attitude distresses her and she makes a small lament: "Vulgar and indecent penny books were always common, but speculative infidelity brought down to the pockets and the capacities of the poor, forms a new aera in our history." She then arranges to have her work bound in two different ways; one for the extreme poor and the other for the middle classes. She wrote with the intention of counteracting the effect of the pernicious views spread with such energy. She is struck by the methods of distribution adopted by unscrupulous money-makers. Loads of pamphlets were sent round on asses to the country villages; copies were dropped not only on highways but in mines and coal pits. Sometimes they were pushed in through the doors or windows of houses. Some support is lent to her statements by the reviewer of two pamphlets in "The Anti-Jacobin Review" for August, 1801, distributed with the express purpose of promoting schism and thrown impudently through the windows of the houses of orthodox churchmen, one of whom forwarded his copy to the editor. Hannah More was a practical woman and succeeded in underselling her rivals. She sold two million copies of the "Cheap Repository Tracts" in one year.

2. Ibid. The same letter.
3. "A Dialogue Between Formality, Gallic and Evangelist on Village Preaching", 1d., or 3 shillings the hundred.
   and "A Circular Letter from the Independent Ministers of the County of Warwick." 1d.
   On the last page of the second, there are advertisements of thirteen others.
Her success was not limited to England either. When Clarissa Trent visited her on Dec. 4th, 1816, Hannah showed her a copy of her 'Sacred Dramas' translated into Cingalese, written on palm leaves and presented to her by Sir Alexander Johnstone, Governor of Ceylon. Bishop Porteous writes enthusiastically about the "Tracts" in Jan. 16th, 1797 and says: "The sublime and immortal publication of the "Cheap Repository Tracts", I hear of from every quarter of the globe. To the West Indies I have sent shiploads of them." He speaks in the same strain in his address to the clergy of his diocese in 1798.

As for her other venture into popular morality, "Village Politics" by Will Chip, its sales were augmented by the Government, who circulated many hundreds of thousands by means of magistrates and parsons of parishes. At the end of 1817, conditions among the working classes produced an outbreak of seditious publications similar to that of the 90's, and Hannah More was again urged to provide an antidote. She re-published 'Village Politics' under the title 'Village Disputants'. "I did not think," she writes, "to turn ballad-monger in my old age; but the strong and urgent representation I have had from the highest quarters, of the very alarming temper of the times, and the spirit of revolution which shows itself more or less in all the manufacturing towns, has led me to undertake as a duty a task I should gladly have avoided."

The Committee of the Church of England Tract Society in their report for Jan. 1814, give details of their scale of prices for their

publications. A tract of four pages sold for as little as one shilling a hundred to subscribers and one and fourpence to non-subscribers. Even weighty affairs of twenty-four pages were only six shillings a hundred to subscribers and eight shillings to non-subscribers, in fact less than a penny each. A great deal of money could be made by publishing two together, one taking an opposite point of view from the other. Reviewers frequently take them in pairs. Thus, in 1815, Cunningham wrote one called 'The Velvet Cushion' a pamphlet of an allegorical kind satirizing the follies of the day through the mouth of the cushion. Reviewed with it, is one called 'A New Covering to the Velvet Cushion' in which the cushion declares itself to have been converted to Jacobinical views owing to scruples first aroused by certain passages in the Burial Service, the Office of Confirmation and the Visitation of the Sick. Even in the determined efforts to counteract Jacobinism made by Churchman, the Government, historians like Bisset, novel-writers and others, the vigour of what they are opposing may be estimated. Side by side with violently worded, often innocently seditious, diatribes, there are pamphlets offering antidotes for the poison. A study of this pamphlet literature is fascinating. Some authors argue that the apparent advantages of the rich are quite unreal because their souls, stultified by ease, are unable to profit by their material assets; their desires are dead and their susceptibilities are worn and tired. So is underlined the good fortune of the poor who have nothing to fear if they have health and strength and 'innocency of mind'; a recurring and undefined
phrase with, one suspects, a topical connotation. There are glimpses of the fatalist view of poverty which, later, was to dominate politicians. Malthus insists that population increases faster than the means of subsistence and that, therefore, poverty is inevitable. To prevent race increases beyond the danger point, governments should not wholly resolve poverty as it is a deterrent to excessive breeding. Shelley, appalled at the significance of these arguments, said simply that he would rather be damned with Plato and Lord Bacon than go to Heaven with Paley and Malthus.¹ The labours of Hannah More to inculcate the authoritarian view of life are just as intense as those of the Jacobin pamphleteers. Her dialogues in 'Village Politics' are provocative and arresting and lead one to regret that she never overcame her contempt for fiction and gave us novels, though perhaps her lack of humour would have been too great a handicap even in that age of cautionary fiction. The 'Cheap Repository Tracts' are awe-inspiring in their concentration of purpose. All the facts of poverty and terrible working conditions are admitted freely; they provide a springboard for the description of fortitude and sublimation of desire. One of them deals with the life of a Lancashire girl nine years old at the opening of the story, who works for fifteen hours a day in a mine for two shillings a day. Various scenes of misery are painted. She sees her father killed. After fourteen years of heartrending toil, she breaks down in health and is forced to leave her employment.

¹. Preface to 'Prometheus Unbound'.
Then her reward comes; because of the glowing tributes to her humility and her endurance, she is given work in a family as a maid and is happy. So, as Hannah, primly concludes, 'There can be no situation whatever so mean as to forbid the practice of many noble virtues'. The shiftless habits of the poor are illustrated in 'The Way to Plenty' and the object of another, a ballad this time, called 'Turn the Carpet' is "to vindicate the justice of God in the apparently unequal distribution of good in this world by pointing to another." This world is a carpet inside out and the design will not be apparent until after death. Many deal with the ideal priest and his functions, for one of her most cherished plans was to re-instate the clergy in popular esteem. In a letter to the Bishop of Bath and Wells, 1801, she explains: 'as works of imagination had been employed to induce a contempt for the clerical character, I thought these fictitious characters the most popular vehicles in which to convey an antidote to the reigning disease, and that by assiduously infusing this spirit into the very amusements of the lower classes, I might thus lead them insensibly to the habit of loving and reverencing the clergy." The most characteristic account of her work is to be found in 'The Mendip Annals' in which are described the means adopted by herself and her sisters to educate the poor into a proper spirit of acceptance of their lot. A grim picture emerges of life in the Cheddar villages. The poverty of the people is heart-rending. In one of them, Botany Bay, or Little Hell as

it was called, two hundred people were crowded into nineteen hovels and lived on wages of a shilling a day. She undoubtedly did great work with her Schools, her soup kitchens and her sewing parties and her accounts of the measures taken and of the needs that inspired them breathe a spirit of sympathy which redeems her from the charge of smugness. But nowhere is there the slightest suggestion of criticism of the authorities, temporal or spiritual. Death sentences for stealing butter, unjust dismissals, loose living in an endeavour to forget, temporarily, the evils of life, all occasion in her the same response; great and practical sympathy combined with the reiteration of her conviction that all is ordained for a purpose and that even intolerable factory conditions and ferocious punishments will ultimately contribute to the good of the victim. It is as if Miss Edgeworth's Moral Tales were transferred from the nursery to the factory and rendered macabre in transit. There is a description of a scene in a glass factory; a powerful piece of writing evoking all the strain inseparable from roaring furnaces and constant writhing movement. Its 'most horrible and infernal appearance' has evidently made an impression on her. Yet the only critical comment she makes refer to the indiscipline and the greed of the workers and their self-indulgence in "dainties of a shameful description". Obliquely, she lets us know that the hated liberal opinions have reached the Gorge in her account of the regrettable behaviour of one Robert Reeves and his friends. While they were engaged in burning the effigy of Tom Paine,

and raining down imprecations on his head, they drank to his perdition too freely and became hopelessly intoxicated. Hannah’s strictures, publicly voiced, on the subject of shameful spectacles, produced remorse only to be appeased by a whole series of Bible readings. The viciousness of the ideas of the reformers is exhibited in “The History of Mr. Fantom and His Man William.” Mr. Fantom is a tradesman who, having acquired a copy of “The Rights of Man,” sets out deliberately to follow its precepts. As stock in trade, he stores in his mind all the commonplace arguments against the truth of Christianity and in favour of complete liberty and uses them to corrupt his man, William. William is an excellent pupil, throws off all restraints, becomes a thief and then a murderer and is condemned to death. Mr. Trueman, a neighbour, induces Mr. Fantom to visit William on the night before his execution but sends him home again when he perceives his total lack of common humanity, adjuring him to finish his treatise on “Universal Benevolence and the Blessed Effects of Philosophy” and ending with the words: “And mark ye, be sure you let the frontispiece of your book represent William on the gibbet; that will be what our minister calls a practical illustration.” Hannah then proves her belief in the reformative value of the tract by causing neighbour Trueman to print William’s last confession and a resume of the causes which have led him astray, and to give copies of the pamphlet away free at his execution.

Among the tracts published in 1817, is “The Death of Mr. Fantom, the Great Reformist” in which the philosopher recants, burns his books and

1. Ibid. p.94.
dies screaming for mercy. ¹

Hannah's panacea was religious instruction and the very definiteness of her opinions was a prop for the weak. She had the gift of inspiring others to devoted service. Her Sunday schools spread education and it seems a poor reward that her motives should be impugned by members of her own church and that she should be accused of encouraging the very opinions that she had set out to kill. The Blagdon controversy added its quota to the publicity given to Jacobinism and dissent.

The tracts which take the authoritarian view insist that the only way to stop the worship of reason and the desire to abolish institutions was to lay continual emphasis on the supreme importance of the soul's final destiny. Escape from the burdens of life with its inevitable inequality must be made through the spiritual faculty and writers call for a moral regeneration of the people. More churches are demanded to safeguard the moral welfare of the young in much the same way as we, in 1850, plead for clubs and playing fields. The Mayor of Liverpool even writes to the Home Office asking for them, giving as the reason the desire to prevent people from going, in overwhelming numbers, to the meeting houses of the Dissenters.² In 1818, the Government made a substantial grant for the provision of new churches.

The general unrest of the period undoubtedly contributed to the spread of liberal opinion. An interesting indication of the

² See also p. 133 for the effect of Tom Paine's views on the mind.
extent to which the theories reached the public may be seen in a letter taken from one John Pilkington, seized when Habeas Corpus was suspended in 1817. It is quite illiterate but shows that the writer has at least a nodding acquaintance with Manichaeism. He discusses "that orrid doctrine" ....... "that the good and evil that was in the world was the effects of two opposite principles in the deity."\(^1\) In records of civic disturbances, attributed in large measure by the authorities to Methodism, philosophic ideas stand out from the practical complaints and the demand for specific reforms. Time polishes the lens of judgment. It is now apparent that Methodism was a timely antidote to the disease of Jacobinism. Its belief in justification by faith; its emphasis, not on the perfectibility, but on the frailty and folly of man and his ultimate responsibility for his own wrong doing, were directly opposed to the theories of the reformers. But the sect attracted the agitator as well as the fanatic and the abuse of the methods adopted by itinerant preachers obscured the true nature of the movement. In reality Methodism taught the brotherhood of man and gave spiritual satisfaction to thousands of the unhappy poor. As far as the tracts and pamphlets of the period are concerned, the term Methodist came to stand for Jacobin and suffered the fate of the legendary villain to whom accrues a body of fictitious material, each accretion smelling more strongly of brimstone. Magistrates from all over the country wrote in to the Home Office to deplore the dangers of itinerant preaching and to give evidence of the guilt of the

\(^1\) H.O. 40, 9.
Methodists in spreading discontent. Correspondents to the Reviews and Magazines make the same charge. To select one example, typical of hundreds, 'A Constant Reader' writes to 'The Anti-Jacobin Review' in Sept. 1801, to declare that he has had an opportunity, having spent his youth among Dissenters in a small town in Essex, of 'witnessing an universal clamour against the conductors of public affairs; indeed, so much so, that it was a rare thing to meet a man friendly to his country.' He objects to the acceptance of French principles among them and to the fact that 'since the splendid system of equality has been broached, .......blind ignorance has assumed the privilege of enlightened knowledge.' Another 'A Friend to the Established Church' complains of the practice of the overseers of the workhouse in his area, part of Portsmouth, in inviting an itinerant preacher to attend every Sunday evening to preach to the inmates. He is indignant that the magistrates have given permission as it is well known that such preachers are a danger on account of their disaffection. Elections produced a spate of sermons and street-corner 'philippics on the subject of the rights of man. Nottingham, one of the homes of Dissent, was the scene of various iniquities during the general election of 1802. Many of the riots were said to have been instigated by the Methodists. Small as it was, it had one hundred and forty public houses, most of them considered by the magistrates as seminaries of disaffection and disloyalty. Demands for equality, the exaltation of

1. H.O. 42, 90, 151, 170. See also 44, 8. A copy of a sermon preached by the Vicar of Hinckley was sent to the H.O. as a suspicious document.
reason, eulogies of universal benevolence, they all creep in to the reports of the disturbances. A significant ceremony was held in the streets. A large branch of a birch tree was carried in procession to represent the tree of Liberty, and a girl dressed, or undressed, as the indignant witness described her,¹ to represent the Goddess of Reason walked under a Republican tri-coloured standard whilst various slogans were chanted. The tree was planted to the tune of 'We'll down with all kings and millions be free'. The author of the pamphlet, giving an account of the incident, quotes others to illustrate the disrespect shown to Church and State and the application to current evils of the wild theories of an egalitarian society. He cites an incident that took place when a mob of riotous people gathered in one of the Churches to elect a Churchwarden. One of them sat for four or five hours holding a small loaf draped in black and suspended by a string, calling out again and again to his companions to notice the richness of the Church and the smallness of the loaf and to draw their own conclusions. Bowles says that to be a member of the Church disqualified a man from any chance of public office. Attacks on religion came from all sides and range from reasoned statements against the authoritarian point of view to the frankly scurrilous, like the contribution of "Melanthon" to "The Satirist" for April 1806,² telling of most improper behaviour on the part of a Doctor of Divinity and ending with the assertion that it is better to listen to the ranting

¹. Captain Johnson, in evidence before a Committee of the House, quoted in "A Postscript to thoughts in the Late General Election as Demonstrative of the Progress of Jacobinism." W. Bowles, 1802.
². p.143 and 144.
of a poor frenzied cobbler than "to afford the slightest countenance to wretches whose character and behaviour mark them as objects far more deserving of the pillory and the hangman's stripes than of the sacred pulpit or the doctor's hood." The frontispiece to this issue shows the figure of a cassocked Harlequin. The article which it illustrates tells how the author and his friend Roland go to a meeting of a society and are made to take off their shoes and culottes to signify their contempt for luxury and their willingness to return to a state of nature. They find seven members sitting round a table bearing a statue of the Goddess of Reason bearing a phallus in one hand and a red cap in the other. Scattered about, are various books: "prominent were the records of the Corresponding Society, large quartos containing political adverbs and propositions, the works of Voltaire and Paine." The high priest was known among the order by the name of St. Francis and he taught his disciples from a political horn book. It is hardly surprising that one of the stock characters in novels is the vicious clergyman. Some of the literature put out by the Methodists contains oblique reference to liberal ideas. The 'Anti-Jacobin Review and Magazine' notices, in June, 1809, a tract on 'Caricatures, Methodist Fanaticism and Prophanation' and quotes the author as saying that he does not know whether to admire most the indifference of the Magistrates who tolerate the exhibition of them, the effrontery of the shopmen and shopwomen who do not blush to sell them, the sensuality of the fancy in which they were conceived, or the lust of invective by which they are

encouraged. He has been struck, moreover, by the actual impiety of one placard advertising the Day of Judgment as a drama. He condemns men who study the Scriptures and then become 'perverters of God's Word to wit', especially as the circulation of such material is not confined to an obscure country town or to the lanes and corners of our cities; they are exhibited in the most public streets of the metropolis of a Christian country, at a time when our Courts of law are sitting, when our Commons and Lords, spiritual and temporal, are assembled in Parliament and the publishers are patronised with impunity. The placard itself is a satire on birth and privilege and betrays its methodist origin in a ghoulish enjoyment of doom. The King of Kings has commanded the performance on the Eve of Time, in the theatre of the Universe, of the 'Great Assize; or Day of Judgment.' The theatre, consisting of pit and gallery only, will be laid out after a new plan. The gallery is 'fitted up for the reception of people of HIGH (or heavenly) BIRTH; and the pit for those of LOW (or earthly) RANK.' Separate doors admit the company; the door into the gallery is narrow and leads to the right, while that into the pit is 'very wide and commodious' and goes left. No-one may enter through the right hand door who cannot 'pronounce shibboleth in the language of Canaan, or have not received a white stone, or a new name, or cannot prove a clear title to a certain portion of the land of promise'. Act one was to be devoted to the speech of an Archangel with the 'TRUMP OF GOD'; Act two, was to show a procession of the Saints in white and Act three an 'assemblage of all the UNREGENERATE'. The
music deemed appropriate is 'a dreadful discord of cries accompanied with weeping, wailing, mourning, lamentation and woe.' An oration by 'The Son of God' concludes the performance and points the moral. It consists, largely of the 25th chapter of St. Matthew, and consigns all those on the left hand side to the everlasting fire, 'prepared for the devil and his archangels'. The true Dissenting fervour breaks through the satire at the end in the instructions for securing tickets and the author explains that those for the pit may be had at the easy purchase of 'following the vain pompoms and vanities of the fashionable world and the desires and amusements of the flesh to be had at every flesh-pleasing assembly' but that those for the gallery may only be obtained by complete self denial and an acceptance of the discipline of Christ.

Other satires and parodies on the Scriptures were less innocent and the Liturgy was frequently perverted for the sake of political agitation. Many of them were disseminated, chiefly by those who passed for Methodists, and they serve to strengthen the impression on the mind of the public that radical notions, scepticism, and infidelity, as the novelists describe Methodism, were closely allied. The most common skits are based on the Prayer Book; the Litany and the Athanasian Creed are popular frameworks for political attacks. The practice of satirising the Offices was even more attractive when it became apparent that there was money in it. Crabb Robinson was briefed to speak, on Nov. 25th, 1817, in mitigation of punishment for one Williams of

Portsea who had made a fortune out of two parodies, one on the Litany and a particularly scurrilous one on the Athanasian Creed in which the Trinity was represented by the 'incomprehensible' trio the Lord Chancellor, Lord Castlereagh and Lord Sidmouth under the nicknames Old Bags, Derry Down Triangle and the Doctor. In spite of Crabb Robinson's plea, he was sentenced to eight months in Winchester gaol for the Litany and for the Creed he received a further four months and a fine of £100. Crabb Robinson also records Hone's three trials for similar publications, on Dec. 18th, 19th, and 20th and comments on the injustice to Williams of his acquittal on all three charges. ¹ Canning himself wrote a parody on the Benedictine in 1798, condemning the disciples of Lepaux, with the refrain:

"All weeping creatures, venomous and low

Paine, Williams, Godwin, Holofer, praise Lepaux."

Even if the actual texts were not concerned with religion, the very fact that they were written by well-known Dissenters deepened the conviction of the alliance between Methodism and Jacobinism. Certainly, a very high proportion of scurrilous printers seem to have paid lip service to the sect. One of the most notorious was Richard Lee, twice turned out of the London Corresponding Society for his religion as it seemed to the authorities indistinguishable from treason. He called all his establishments, and he was constantly on the move, 'The British Tree of Liberty' and published tracts and pamphlets of a most provocative type; some of them periodicals already proscribed like 'Pig's Meat' or 'Politics for the People'. The titles of some of them

are self-explanatory; 'The Happy Reign of George the Last', an attack on kingship and inherited privilege; 'Citizen Guillotine, or A Cure for the King's Evil' or ' Petty Clout and Dun Cuddy' a satire on luxury, self interest masquerading as philanthropy, and tyranny. In this, we are shown 'the inviolable attachment and constant loves of the Treasury Shepherds' for their sweethearts, Polly Power and Sally Plunder, two insatiable sirens who, however seemingly compliant, somehow evade giving complete satisfaction. A series of diatribes against institutions is published as 'The Rights of Kings; of Princes; of Nobles; of Priests; of Swine.' A good series is made of 'Extracts from Piggot's Political Dictionary'. Some of the definitions are worth noticing.

In one tract called 'A Warning to Tyrants', Newgate is defined as follows: "The English Bastille. A large handsome stone building elegantly fitted up for the reception of lords and pick-pockets physicians and strumpets, honest citizens and foot-pads, Jacobites and Jacobines, who form the bulk of the nation under the name of Dissenters and Anti-ministerialists". His publications are not all scurrilous but they are all concerned with popular philosophic ideas. One called 'Ten Minutes Advice to the People of England' by Common Sense, 1795, has a eulogy of the rights of man, and in them the author includes liberty of speech, and a statement that reason is the highest organ of perception in man. He pictures the degradation of the species which would follow any attempt to deprive people of their opportunities to exercise reasoning powers. Another called "Holcroft's Folly", by William Belcher, discusses Holcroft's suggestion that virtue is utility
and that most crime is error not vice. Poor Citizen Lee! In due course, he was apprehended for 'The Rights of Kings' and served his term. When things again got too hot for him, he managed to reach America, whether D.I.Eaton had preceded him, but he fared much the same in that land of promise. His epitaph, as far as we are concerned, is to be read in a laconic notice in the Anti-Jacobin Review in May 1799, under the heading 'The Following Communication from an American Correspondent in Philadelphia' which says 'Eaton, alias Hog's Wash, is here in rags. Citizen Lee, who formerly lived at the Tree of Liberty in London, now lives in New York gaol'. It is an ironic fact that the Correspondent, William Cobbett, came home later and served a term in prison for much the same offence.

The point need not be elaborated. Liberal opinions were rife; they were held with particular force by the Methodists and circulated by their itinerant preachers; the effect of mis-used idealism was to make people disaffected and to strengthen the spirit of resistance to authority already engendered by misery and need. Government spies reported to their various immediate employers the signs of sedition¹ and magistrates sent in illuminating bills like those from Colonel Fletcher of Bolton for their own efforts in 'nursing' plots in order to get full information of the plans of suspects.² There was plenty to report, for the rhetoric inseparable from an emotional faith took philosophy in its stride and every ardent preacher felt able to discuss

2. H.O. 33, 33.

A particularly interesting reference is to the pension of £20 paid to the orphan of the spy who gave evidence against Hardy etc. H.O. 42; No.67.
the most abstruse doctrines. That was the thing that most impressed a Frenchman who visited England in 1819 and set down his impressions of English life and customs. He was astonished by the ready acceptance given to anything uttered during a Methodist meeting and comments:

'Souvent un ouvrier qui ne sait ni lire ni écrire se croira tout à coup appelé à instruire ses frères, il se levera au milieu de la congrégation, prononcera ce qu'on appelle un discours d'inspiration sur des matières abstraites qu'il ne comprend point, et on l'écoute avec complaisance, avec édification, parce qu'on est convaincu qu'il se sent inspiré.'

It must not be supposed that these publications were issued with impunity. Prosecutions for seditious libel were notoriously frequent; and the trials that they occasioned added to the publicity of the views expressed. Spence is a good example of a harassed printer. In 1792, he was imprisoned for selling the 'Rights of Man'. In 1794, he was sent to prison again for his periodical, 'Pig's Meat'. In 1801, he went off to gaol once more for his tract, 'The Restoration of Society to a Natural State'. Place comments on the trial and is indignant at what he considers a miscarriage of justice. An 'ex officio' information had been laid against Spence by Edward Law, afterwards Lord Ellenborough, charging him with being a 'malicious, seditious, and ill-disposed person'....'seditiously desiring and intending to incite a spirit of discontent and disaffection in the minds of the liege subjects of our said Lord the King.' This, Place declares, is a matter of opinion, not fact, and 'Publishing a book is no offence, no law says bookselling

1. 'Une Année à Londres', A.J.B. de Fauconpret, 1819, p.100.
is a crime, yet publishing a book was the only thing proved, no
evidence was given that anything the book contained constituted a
criminal offence.... 1" Carlyle was convicted of blasphemy for
publishing 'The Age of Reason'. Coombe was so often in prison that his
work as Editor of the Pic-Nic Club was carried on from the precincts of
the King's Bench. Gilbert Wakefield, Unitarian professor at Hackney
College, a rabid political fanatic, was sentenced in 1799 to two years
in Dorchester gaol for a pamphlet attacking the Bishop of Llandaff.
Crabb Robinson went to arrange living quarters for him and encountered
the two young editors of 'The Courier' come to do six weeks for
seditionous comments in an article on the Emperor of Russia. Hone was
a consistent gaol-bird and his sentences made him so notorious that his
sales were enormous and he was able to sell a completed edition of his
works in 1820. Men of substance were also convicted. Leigh Hunt and
his brother, Cobbett, Phillips, Johnson and many others suffered
penalties of varying length. They were not mere agitators; they were
convicted, not so much because they libelled particular people, but
because, through their remarks, they revealed, and spread liberal
opinions. For the most part, the public were sympathetic to the
victims. Even D.I. Eaton, one of the most scurrilous of printers,
eight times convicted, received friendly treatment from the crowd when,
as part of his sentence of eighteen months for the publication of the
second part of 'The Age of Reason', he stood for hours in the pillory.
Crabb Robinson walked to the Old Bailey to see him there and says: "As
I expected, his punishment of shame was his glory. The mob was not numerous, but decidedly friendly to him. His having published Paine's 'Age of Reason' was not an intelligible offence to them. In 1817, he quotes the fears of a colleague of his who "considers the indisposition of the London juries to convict in cases of libel as a great evil." Many of those prosecuted were acquitted, partly because the penalties were severe. They would have been more drastic if Southey had had his way, for he considered the Government seriously endangered by the writings of Cobbett and still more by the 'Examiner'.

In the course of a gloomy conversation with Crabb Robinson in Sept. 1816, at Keswick, he expressed such alarming and depressing opinions that the diarist notes them down with shocked comments: 'Jacobinism he deems more an object of terror than at the commencement of the French Revolution. I was more scandalised by his opinions concerning the Press than by any other doctrine. He would have transportation the punishment for a seditious libel!!!' Having digested these statements, he writes, later: 'I think that he is an alarmist, though what he fears is a reasonable cause of alarm, viz. a bellum servile stimulated by the Press....The people, Southey thinks, have just education and knowledge enough to perceive that they are not placed in such a condition as they ought to be in, without the faculty of discovering the remedy for the disease, or even its cause'.

Crabb Robinson was himself struck, on occasion, by the ordinary man's

knowledge of doctrines and his ability to express them. On May 17th, 1817, he was at the arraignment of Watson and three others for high treason, after the Spa Fields Riots and he remarks on their behaviour in court: "All of them, on being arraigned, spoke like men of firmness and with the air of public orators - a sort of formulising tone and manner." 1 Again, there is an entry: 'Walked to Hammersmith and back. On my way home, I fell into chat with a shabby looking fellow, a master bricklayer, whose appearance was that of a very low person, but his conversation quite surprised me. He talked about trade with the knowledge of a practical man of business, enlightened by those principles of political economy which indeed are become common; but I did not think they had alighted on the hod and trowel. He did not talk of the books of Adam Smith, but seemed imbued with their spirit.' 2

This fear of education of the masses is based on the view that literacy will inevitably lead to the spread of dangerous opinions and encourage ill-informed discussion of speculative ideas. There was no discrimination between legitimate reform and Jacobinism. As Lord Cockburn writes in his 'Memorials', 'Jacobinism was a term denoting everything alarming and hateful, and every political objector was a Jacobin. No innovation, whether practical or speculative, consequently no political or economical reformer, and no religious Dissenter, from the Irish Papist to our own native Protestant Seceder, could escape from this fatal word.' 3 He quotes, in an amusing foot-note, from Mrs.

2. Ibid. Vol.II. April 29th. p.228.
Fletcher's 'Autobiography', a rumour that arose about her mother who was suspected of Jacobinical tendencies; that she had bought a small guillotine to practise beheading chickens, rats and mice against the great day when French principles should prevail. The only safeguard was to keep the masses in ignorance but the great interest in, and clamour for, popular education bid fair to defeat this project. There were, of course, champions of working class education; Robert Raikes had set on foot the Society for Promoting Schools and his Sunday Schools were already firmly established by 1790; Whitbread had done his best to introduce compulsory education on a national scale, only to have his bill mutilated by the Commons and rejected by the Lords, partly because of opposition from the Church who feared a consequent loss of power in the local clergy. There was also Brougham, one of the founders of the first orphan school, vigorous member of the Lancastrian Association, formed in 1806, and of the National Society for the Education of the Poor in the Principles of the Established Church, 1811. But for the most part, the movement towards literacy was considered dangerous and, as the impetus came largely from the Methodists, the whole idea acquired a sinister connotation in the eyes of the authorities. Preaching or teaching, what did the name matter? The purpose was political and the matter conveyed doctrinaire. Even the desire to read and write was suspicious. One of the most pathetic pieces of evidence of sedition in the section of Home Office papers devoted to this period is a well-thumbed copybook, filled with

1. 'Memorials of his Time', p.75, Chap.2.
pothooks and words in a groping hand, impounded from a workman suspected of treason. The whole theme of the importance of education and of its best aims and methods will be examined later, as the novels are full of theories and accounts of practical experiments closely in accord with the views of the Reformers. The ideas of Rousseau were accepted here; the cult of the passions, following Hume, was advocated there; the existing schools condemned everywhere. A very interesting experiment in mass-produced education may be seen in the accounts of Lancaster's school in St. George's Fields. His system depended on the use of monitors who first imbibed the lesson themselves and then conveyed it to their groups so that one master could, with ten monitors, teach a thousand children. He would print a spelling book or a primer on one side of the page only and then paste the sheets so printed on a series of cards and exhibit them so that the whole school could read at the same time. Lancaster himself was a Quaker, son of an Anabaptist father and a Methodist mother, and one of the features of his system so shocking to the Mrs. Trimmers of the day was the absence of any kind of religious exercises; no recitations of the Creed or Commandments; no services, not even a moral talk now and again. Instead, he believed in personal influence and the use of incentives, orders of merit, silver medals given for good work in 'checking vice.' Psychologists would shudder at some of the penalties inflicted on a recalcitrant. Sometimes a log weighing from four to six pounds would be hung round his neck; or his legs might be fastened with

wooden shackles. Worst of all, tied in a sack, he might be placed in a basket on a pulley and hoisted to the roof, where his own meditation and the loudly expressed contumely of his fellows reduced him to a more suitable frame of mind. Never-the-less, Lancaster's school was so successful that Elizabeth Fry, when called upon to help the prisoners in Newgate, went to study his methods and used them with spectacular success in her work with the women felons. He was even prepared to submit plans for revolutionising the shape of the buildings and suggested an arena-like form to admit of simultaneous teaching for very large numbers. He estimated the cost of education for each child for one year, if the number were 300 or less, at seven shillings; for any number over that he gave four shillings as the figure. His system and that of Andrew Bell who carried on similar methods at the Madras House School, are referred to so frequently that it is interesting to speculate why they roused such fierce resentment in some quarters.

Place proposes the establishment of a school run on the lines of Lancaster's system, and suggests a huge polygonal room with nine concentric circles of desks, controlled by a master in the centre in a revolving chair.  

Other educational theories sprang from the soil prepared by the philosophers, and characters in fiction are introduced to illustrate their merits and their disadvantages. Moral disaster is often traced to a faulty upbringing and in the novels which are written by deteriorationists, there are even heroes and heroines who are educated

in a social vacuum either suspended in a cage safe from all contact with sophistication or isolated from prejudice by being brought up in a country of which they do not know the language, until their developed judgment renders them proof against contamination. Whatever the theory followed, in fiction as in history, the topic of education was of supreme concern and appears, among other liberal ideas, in the great campaign to preach the importance of the individual.

No novelist could escape the influence of the febrile excitement that marks the period or remain unaware of the ferment of opinion. As we have seen, the theories preceded the French Revolution and survived the reaction from it. Everyman, agog for ideas, continued to accept them with avidity and to relay them to others without questioning for a moment his own ability to understand them. As the old century died and the new one came in, all things worked together for publicity. The reading public increased; professional journalism took the high-road; the mail coaches carried to the provinces newspapers and periodicals and so helped to form a national opinion by, as it seemed to De Quincy, dispersing the ideas of some powerful intellect. The Methodist movement with its emphasis on itinerant preachers carried abstract ideas to the poor and imparted warmth and colour to lives that were, in all else, bleak and sterile. Sunday schools and evening classes offered opportunity to the illiterate. Everywhere, intellectual discontent was fostered by material need and the result was a craving for escapist literature, or for emotional release by means of the violent polemic. So, the novel prospered.
Some writers provide an escape from life's sordidness by tales of love and mystery ludicrously ersatz but conscientiously moral; others induce satisfaction with the present by exposing the folly and viciousness of the 'advanced' opinions of the day, when put into practice in a given set of circumstances. The satirical novels set out to show up the unattractiveness of the alternatives to the existing order and the abuses that inevitably follow when restraints are removed and freedom replaces goodness. The development of the novel form was hampered by this straining after purpose and topicality and it is not until the passing of the Reform Bill and the subsequent lowering of the national temperature that the commentary and the tract no longer crowd the canvas and distort the shape of the novel. The necessity of didacticism and the conventions of morality strangled it as an artistic form but had no effect on its popularity. These forgotten tales exhibit signs of the times and, though the period under consideration can boast of no writer worthy of survival as an artist, yet they are of interest in that they speak to a sympathetic ear of the extravagant hopes and the hysterical fears of a generation.
CHAPTER III

The vogue of the novel; the spread of the reading public; types of publication; the use of the form for an extra-literary purpose; kinds of novels so used; methods of approach classified.

The reading public continued to widen and a craze for fiction affected every class of society. Productions poured from the Minerva Press; circulating libraries multiplied and their records prove beyond a doubt the universal popularity of novels. They appear to have supplied a very large proportion of the younger part of the population with maxims, ideas and principles, with topics of conversation and rules of action. The increase in the sale of books is attributed by Lackington, among other reasons, to the introduction of fiction into schools. But the appeal of the novel seems to have been irresistible in all ranks and at all ages.

Many well-known writers admit a voracious appetite for fiction. Leigh Hunt read Fielding, Smollett, Voltaire, Charlotte Smith, Bage and others. "I had subscribed, while at school," he writes, "to the famous circulating library in Leadenhall Street, and I have continued to be such a glutton of novels ever since, that except where they repel me in the outset with excessive wordiness, I can read their three volume enormities to this day without skipping a syllable." Perhaps

his passion for fiction was due to the habit adopted by his father of reading aloud to the family. The poet Crabbe, seldom passed a day without dipping into a novel and as his son testifies, "even from the most trite of these fictions, he could sometimes catch a train of ideas that was turned to an excellent use." He was "never very select in the choice of them."¹ The most rabid pamphleteers were not immune from the prevailing passion. Hone confesses that, in the intervals of writing tracts, he read incessantly and rapidly. "My desire for works of this class was insatiable," he confesses, "and I believe there were none then existing in the English language which I had not sought out and perused."²

In vain did Mathias call them "receipts for whores"; Miss Mitford's book lists show that she read some twenty-four a month. Clarissa Trant and Jane Austen reveal the same addiction. Byron affected to be a connoisseur of novels. Perhaps the prize award would have gone to Macaulay who, in spite of his severe upbringing in all the tenets of the Chalham Sect, and his father's continual strictures upon them, read all that he could get hold of and claimed to be able to recite whole chapters of the work of Mrs. Meeks. On one occasion, he and Emily Eden, the sister of the Governor General of India, met at a book sale in Calcutta and bid against each other for a copy of Kitty Cuthbertson's "Santo Santiago". It was knocked down to Macaulay for a fantastic price and he considers it well worth the money. A few

   F.M.Hackwood, 1912, p.54.
notes made on the back page convey an idea of his interest in the sensibility of the characters. He has set down the number of fainting fits per head during the course of the story. He found no less than eleven for Julia de Clifford, four each for Lady Delamore and Lady Theodosia, one for Lady Enfield. The evidence of sensibility is not confined to the weaker sex, for Lords Glenbrook and Delamore both succumb twice and even the comparatively phlegmatic Henry Mildmay falls prone on one occasion.

A similar tale is told by the publishers' lists and by the number of editions printed. "The Beggar Girl and Her Benefactors" sold 2000 copies at thirty-six shillings a copy, on the day of publication. Out of an edition of 5000 of "Camilla", all but 500 were subscribed for. There are many examples of books running through a number of editions within six months of publication. "Coelibs in Search of a Wife" went through sixteen in a year.

Denunciations of the habit of reading novels are to be found in abundance. The reviewer of "Right and Wrong; or, The Kinsman of Naples" in "The Anti-Jacobin" refers to "The universal and inextinguishable passion for novels" and complains that "these vile productions are as eagerly procured and as greedily devoured by the waiting woman and the chamber-maid as by the honourable, and right honourable ladies whom they serve." In his preface to "The Duellists; or, Men of Honour",

2. Mrs. Bennett, 1797.
Lucas deplores the fact that "the readers of novels constitute the greater part of the youthful community." The danger of such reading on the youthful mind is the theme of many a sermon and of many a moral preface. Mrs. Brunton puts the conviction of hundreds when she complains that poison of every kind has been conveyed to the young by the medium of novels. Bissett, the historian, devotes part of his novel, "Douglas; or, The Highlander," to a description of his heroine's schooling and the effect on her mind of the novels which she has, unwisely, been permitted to read. Mary Hays allows her imprudent Emma Courtney to become a voracious reader, devouring from ten to twelve every week.

One of the most prolific authors of the period, Mrs. Meekes, comments on the universality of the novel and considers it as a cure for 'ennui'. Her remarks give some information about the public taste. Readers may select, she says, "either the marvellous romance teeming with ghosts and spectres, or the satirical adventures of a political Quixote, replete with wit and judgment, or else the more simple narrations founded upon events within the bounds of probability...." Thus, she reveals that the taste for the novel of ideas is as strong as ever and that political theories still compete favourably with other themes for public approbation.

Voracious and catholic, the taste for novels spread downwards,

1. 1805.
2. In the preface to "Self-Control", 1811.
3. 1800.
embracing men and women alike. In one of the numerous publications

designed to equip the youth or the girl for the struggle of life,

Mrs. West, with whom the subject is something of a King Charles’

head, says that the middle ranks of society are the chief readers and

accuses men of being just as romantic and silly as love-sick girls.

At one time, she says, the bad effects of novel-reading used to be

confined to women, "but, of late, a very genteel set of male students,

wrapped in their dressing-gowns, by lolling on a sofa in red morocco

slippers, with that formidable weapon against annui, a modern novel,

in their hands, contrive to kill that monster, Time."¹

Servants and apprentices were great readers. A book

sweetened many a tedious wait for employers abroad on fashionable

pursuits; interminable meals, protracted routes and masquerades. One

reviewer, writing somewhat disparagingly of "Woman; or Ida of Athens"²,

says that, though he is sure the book will not please the educated,

the author will find compensation in the "additional circulation which

it will promote in the no-less literary class of milliner’s apprentices

and lady’s waiting maids."³. Numbers of little libraries supplied

the humble artisan or the footman. Usually, they were combined with

some other business so that their clientele was ready made. Miss

Flinders, in Walpole St. catered mostly for the ladies of the upper

servants’ hall and delivered her novels with the dress-making that she


2. Sidney Owenson, 1809.

undertook for them. Sunday newspapers and lollipops swelled her
profits. Miss Miniver ran a similar concern, combining her library
with a school for girls and a brandy-ball business in Newcastle St. Strand.

Not only was the novel read by uneducated people, it was also
written by the semi-literate. Reviewers comment on the matter first,
then the tone and then the grammar. If the author is a woman, they
are usually kind about errors but to their own sex they are frequently
devastating enough. The average professional writer was still poor.
Coleridge lamented, in 1817, that language having become "mechanized,
as it were, into a barrel-organ, supplies at once both instrument and
tune. Thus, even the deaf may play, so as to delight the many......
and it requires but an ordinary portion of ingenuity to vary
indefinitely and yet still produce something, which if not sense, will
be so like it, as to do as well. Perhaps better; for it spares the
reader the trouble of thinking....."¹. Perhaps his standard was high.
But the reviewers, forced to notice trash month after month, agree with
him and break out at times to condemn the writers for their attempts.
Their point of view is illustrated by the remarks of the reviewer of
"The Mistake; or Something Beyond a Joke": "If the farrier's boy will
quit his horseshoe, and conceive himself fit for a higher business,
whose fault is it that he lacks the comforts, or even necessaries of
life?" The best service that a critic can render him is to persuade
him to "return instantly to that calling for which alone he is qualified."².

¹. Biographia Literaria, Chap.II, p.38. See also p.49.
There was no standard to go by. Anyone could take advantage of the unprecedented opportunity to make money. The Critical Reviewer in a notice of "The Heir Apparent" by Mrs. Gunning says that "as the circulating library must now be yearly supplied at wholesale prices, he who writes fastest is the best man."¹ One heroine expresses openly her motive in writing: "Nature", she says, "gives me imagination, you bless me with a friend, and the Minerva offers liberal encouragement; and I repeat, when I have too much time, and too little money, why, beshrew me, I will turn novel-writer."²

For the very poor, there were the blue books, the sixpenny reprints of the stories published by the Minerva Press. There was also a vast collection of what were misleadingly called tracts simply because they were pious in tone and didactic in intention, and too slight to be called novels. In reality, they were short stories, some of them with sequels. Two million copies were sold of one by Legh Richmond called "The Dairyman's Daughter", a tale dealing with a misguided life and a noble end which is a telescoped version of almost any of Lane's publications. A second venture of his called "Domestic Portraiture" inspired Charlotte Bronte to write to her friend Ellen Nussey, "Beg, borrow or steal it without delay." Mrs. Trimmer made a great deal of money out of this kind of fiction. The stories were interesting enough to attract the same kind of reader as those who followed the Beggar Girl breathlessly through seven volumes of

¹. 1802, Vol.35. August, Art.48.
vicissitudes. The heavy moralising was not repellent; it was considered moving. One of these stories "The Sinner's Friend" achieved the distinction of being translated into thirty languages. Few could resist such alluring titles as "The Serpent at Home" or "Satan in the Hairbrush."

The fashion for reading fiction is responsible for the character of the novel-ridden girl. Sometimes, she is a frank caricature like Julia Dawsins in "Self Control" by Mrs. Brunton, 1811. In her, the constant reading of romances has induced preposterous affectation. Having little strength of character, she is always posing as the heroine of the last read tale. At one time, "after perusing 'The Gossip's Story', she, in imitation of the rational Louisa, suddenly waxed very wise - spoke in sentences - despised romance - sewed shifts - and read sermons. But, in the midst of this fit, she, in an evil hour, opened a volume of the Nouvelle Heloise, which had before disturbed many wiser heads. The shifts were left unfinished, the sermons thrown aside, and Miss Julia returned with renewed impetus to the sentimental."

She could quote the names of many heroes and, on one occasion, "she ran on till she was quite out of breath, repeating what sounded like a page of the catalogue of a circulating library." In the same way, Margaret, younger sister in Sarah Green's "Romance Readers and Romance Writers", is so bemused with romantic fancies that she builds castles in the air at the sight of a strange shirt on a line and apostrophises

1. By Vine Hall.
3. Ibid. p.73, Chap.9.
4. 1810.
it as "Oh garment of my beloved!" Uncle Ralph, catching her with a novel in her hand, is seized with a fit of petulance brought on by her silliness and throws the offending book on the fire. Then, slightly ashamed, he says he will pay for a new set of 7 volumes. "But can you, sir" said Margaret, "can you restore to me those ecstatic moments of fond delusion, which that book imparted to my pensive mind?" 1.

Another favourite character is the girl corrupted by reading novels. In her case, the novels are of a particular kind; those which advocate the loosening of restraints or those, often translations, which demand sympathy for an abandoned hero or heroine and, so, throw a false glamour over sin. Olivia, in "St. Clair" 2 believes in the possibility of platonic love between the sexes. She is betrothed to an army Colonel, an honourable man and a suitable match, but she is attracted by St. Clair because he talks philosophy to her and lends her novels. When the Colonel remonstrates with her on the subject of the liberal views she expresses, and points out the wickedness of Rousseau's opinions, especially those conveyed in "La Nouvelle Héloïse", she tells him, somewhat severely, that the effect of a book on weak minds is no indication of its merit. The conventional tragedy follows; suspicion, a duel, the death of St. Clair, the decline and death of Olivia with the usual recantation of view left behind for the sorrowing survivor.

Sometimes the corrupted girl is brought in deliberately as a foil to the heroine; sometimes she is an extra stock figure introduced by way of general warning. In "Men and Morals" 3 Lathom tells the

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2. Sidney Owenson, Lond. 1825.
3. 1800.
story of Gilbert Oxmonde, a glover and hatter in Cheapside, a quite uneducated man, rather uncouth in his manners. He inherits a baronetcy and an income of four thousand a year. At first, he tries to live the fashionable life without losing his integrity but he finds this impossible and his descent into real vice is rapid. His daughter Eliza follows him to disaster. She has been educated by reading novels and her rather ill-defined principles have been undermined by the influence of meretricious fiction on her weak mind. Since her values are all wrong, she makes an unwise marriage, is attracted by the glitter of the stage and becomes vicious. The warning is severe and emphasised to an overwhelming extent.

Burlesques of the character appear at times. Ultra-romantic widows and aspiring servants like the scatterbrained Felicia and her faithful maid Babet exclaim their way through many a satire. Footmen crave to be heroes and find their girls imbued with ambition to be heroines so that they ultimately satisfy each other by mutual adulation. Whatever the kind of portrait painted, its introduction illustrates the ubiquity of the novel.

With improved communications, copies of novels were comparatively easy to get. London booksellers had country agents and boxes of books were sent all over the country. Even in the most remote parts, it was possible to buy books from the travelling salesman whose arrival was something of a social occasion. G. Elaikie, describing the early days of the firm of Elaikie and Son, tells of the stir caused by the arrival

of the bookman. He experienced no difficulty in selling his wares.
"In fact", writes Blaikie, "so far from requiring to seek out customers at their dwellings, the customers came, cash in hand, to the traveller's lodgings..." If he was late in arriving, he often sent the town crier to announce him and "not only did existing subscribers flock to obtain his books and parts, but many people came to have their names entered as subscribers."

It is not with the fluctuations of taste or the vagaries of the market, however, that we are chiefly concerned. The spate of popular literature provided the opportunity for reformers to flood the country with liberal ideas and they made full use of that opportunity. Novels were beginning to go into the average household, slowly until the turn of the century, rapidly in the early years of the nineteenth century. Many of them were impregnated, as we have seen, with the liberal ideas picked up from a common pool of opinion and authors, like carriers, often passed on the disease without themselves succumbing to it. A close study of the relevant novels reveals different aims and methods in the dissemination of ideas and a rough classification has been attempted.

There are the novelists who seek to promulgate their views by direct propaganda and there are those who reflect the same opinions, sometimes purposely, sometimes unconsciously, by means of interpolated comment or by the introduction of type heroes and heroines, unreal as the abstractions of the Moralities. There are examples of both kinds

1. "Origin and Progress of the Firm of Blaikie & Son".
   W.G. Blaikie, 1897, p.13 and 14.
right through the period and, though the views expressed have been influenced by the events of those stormy years, 1790-1820, they are still recognisable and are as strongly held at the end of the period as at the beginning. Against these works may be set the novels written to counteract the effect of the principles of the reformers and these take the form either of antidotes to, or of attacks on, the new philosophy. In addition, expressions of what may be called 'specialist' views on certain themes of permanent interest, like the position of women, education, or the chances of immortality, may be found expounded and opposed in the cockpit of the novel with what the reviewers, invariably with distaste, refer to as 'enthusiasm'. Then, numerous satires deal faithfully with the absurdities of the fanatics. Perhaps the prevailing taste of the day for irony accounts for their popularity. From Walker to Peacock, there are satires ridiculing liberal opinions by putting them into practice in circumstances that will reveal their folly. Something was imparted to the native view by the numerous translations that flooded the market. Kotzebue, Goethe, Pigault le Brun and Madame de Staël and a host of others were admired here, reviled there, but were not ignored anywhere.

In short, the ideas persist and may be recognised in propaganda or in denunciations of that propaganda. Their persistence is surprising. The inception of the age of machinery was responsible for changes in the social, economic and political fields. The Methodist movement radically altered the conventional outlook on religion. But the ideas of the perfectibility of man and the paramount importance of
the reasoning faculty, for example are held right through the changes and through the disorder attendant upon them. Perhaps the length of their life may be ascribed partly to the optimism of the age; the belief, which nothing seems to shake, in the importance of man in the scheme of creation, his innate goodness and his ultimate happiness. By 1820, it is abundantly apparent that misery is increasing, that the institutions of society are responsible for a great deal of it, so that it is possible to detect a note of bewilderment in the search for a solution of the problems of the community. But there is no doubt until the 1830's that, given an enlightened government and universal education, the difficulties of life would be overcome. The deliberate use of fiction to ram home this opinion is interesting. The term novel does not always guarantee a story. We may sympathise with the author of "The Milesian Chief", 1812, who complains of the equivocal nature of some publications and seems to think that the practice of irrelevant comment on liberal matters has spread even to the reviewers who "merely assume the title of the work as a motto for a political, theological or belle-lettre Essay, (as the case may be), and then - They write = good Gods! how they do write!"

1. Preface; dedicated to the Quarterly Reviewers. p.ii.
CHAPTER IV

PROPAGANDA. The Work of BAGE, GODWIN, HOLCROFT, MARY HAYS, MARY WOLLSTONECRAFT, CHARLOTTE SMITH.

The term 'propaganda' has been used to denote those novels which seem to be informed with a positive desire to convince; those in which the plot has been deliberately controlled to provide opportunity for the expression of liberal opinion. They have been considered in distinction from those revealing the same views incidentally and without any particular urgency. In them, is to be seen the open statement, either as a detailed commentary on various forms of oppression, intended to have a cumulative effect on the reader and stir him to action; or as a guide book to Eldorado conceived in the light of the reformers' creed. Political and economic difficulties give urgency to any form of writing dealing with the social scene and those of the years 1816 and 1817, for instance, are as great as those of 1790-1800 and inspire publications quite as radical as those of the early reformers. The material that the novelists use to illustrate their theses, changes slightly through the period. The world of business and commerce is opened up to the writer. War occupies the thoughts of all and the possibility of invasion affects the expression of views on freedom. By 1820, the spotlight is picking out in its beams the definite ills of life and suggesting remedies for them rather than focussing the light on Utopias; there is a great increase in the number of novels attacking the Church; the West Indian and the woman
of colour pose new problems. Attacks on tyranny and ruthless plans for dealing with specific forms of oppressions are more frequent than the earlier cries for the clean sweep of all the institutions that occasion them. Pruning is advocated oftener than uprooting. Malthus and Jeremy Bentham have had their effect and writers are less ready to believe that a fresh start would necessarily mean a society appreciably nearer to perfection. The concepts of equality and justice appear more frequently than that of benevolence. But there is still the same emphasis on the perfectibility of the species and the same interest in the purpose of life and the destiny of man, the doctrine of Necessity, the nature of innate equipment and the organ of perception by which man apprehends his Maker.

Robert Bage started to write novels in his fifties, to take his mind off his business troubles. He had revealed his liberal opinions in five novels before he produced, in 1796, by a deliberate union of doctrine with story, a book designed to set forth a social and political creed. It is interesting to see the effect of this deadly concentration of purpose. "Hermasprong; or Man as He Is Not" is less pleasing than the others and, although four of his novels lie just outside our period, it is against the background of his earlier work that "Hermasprong" must be studied for so we may see the effect on the novel form of the attempt to manipulate character and incident for one particular purpose.

Bage appears to have been a likeable man, not at all the

1. 1796.
iconoclast that his views, extracted from their context, would suggest. The tolerance and good humour that kept his servants with him into old age and endeared him to men like Hutton and Scott, give a distinctive quality to his work. He has the gift of making reasonable and acceptable what, in other men's mouths, was considered dangerous and wild. He can paint a picture of a Utopia, as he does in "Mount Hamneth", where men cast off all conventions, live the simple life, toiling for the good of the community in the morning and spending their leisure with their wives studying and producing works of art, without any of the ridiculousness parodied so mercilessly ten years later. Owing to this persuasiveness of style, even his learned women escape the usual condemnation. In just this moderate way, he represents the mental development of Foston. The process of stripping from him all the prejudices that have inhibited his mind is reasonably, and temperately expressed. It is not until the mellowing process is said to be complete that we realise that most of his religious convictions have gone too and that we have acquiesced in their destruction. Bage's opinions are not considered revolutionary until after the publication of "Hermesprong" and in fact they are not so, although, even outside this novel, the whole liberal outlook may be seen in his work. They consist of sensible comments about the stupidity of the administration of the country; attacks on the corruptness of officials; satirical speeches on parliamentary extravagance, the avarice of nabobs, the iniquity of the system of elections. There is a liberal philosophy implicit in his satire, but there is no sign of the
revolutionary temper, the belief that such evils as he describes are inherent in the structure of society and can only be removed by the destruction of the existing framework.

He takes his stand on the rights of men; the dignity and importance of the individual. He disapproves of undue humility because it undermines self-respect and is a direct temptation to tyrants to indulge their taste for power. In women, he considers it masochistic and especially deplores the satisfaction with which wives and daughters immolate themselves on the altar of marital and filial piety. In this connection he pours ridicule on the merciless convention which dooms a woman who has yielded to a lover to complete ostracism and, in novels, to death from the fever which inevitably rises with repentance. Cara, the Persian girl, after she has been seduced, speculates artlessly on her chances of escaping the customary fate of English women in similar circumstances. Bage offers her in marriage to Foston to demonstrate that women are not dolls. They have minds as well as bodies. A woman may fall, but should be able to pick herself up again without any of the "humiliation and abasement, in the recollection of her errors," demanded by Scott much later.¹

Bage believes that life itself is educative. Intercourse between man and man, nation and nation, promotes goodwill. Though he does not, as yet, apply the word, he is preaching universal benevolence when he denies the right of any man to contract out of a difficult situation. He makes his characters plunge into the arena to fight for the public good. No outcasts or recluse philosophers are to be found.

Any comments on society are made in the midst of society. Bage makes it clear that, in adversity, the common round, like digitalis, revives and stimulates the human heart. Common struggle and common aspiration engender sympathetic insight.

In the novels before "Harmsworth", his liberal views are not allowed to distract attention from the plot. They are incidental. The blame for James Wallace's failure in law is laid on his guileless nature; from the tale of his pitiful inadequacy and from the sympathy accorded him, we infer the iniquities of the profession. Similarly, when he has given up the struggle to compete in a company of lawyers crooked, shrewd and merciless, and has taken a post as servant to a lady, he is slowly shown the necessity of finding other employment because of the gossip that arises when a young man of any station is in constant contact with an eligible woman. So we get a picture of the worthlessness of the fashionable life. When he eventually gets his Judith, there is, in the background, a rejected suitor, a dissipated young nobleman, consigned to the dogs in Paris to make us realise the corrupting power of wealth and luxury. It is in this oblique way that we are made aware of Bage's opinions, for doctrine never chokes these earlier novels. The human interest comes first. Tyranny, for instance, is often portrayed but in such a way that the individual character stands out as a real person afflicted with certain weaknesses, and not merely an idea dressed up in men's clothes. Birimport, newly returned from India, full of self-importance, yet with a secret fear that he is mistaken in his estimate of himself, creates a little world
for himself, cut off from all possibility of ridicule or slights, and lords it over his wife and servants with the despotism that has become indispensable to him. The value of international amity is preached in "James Wallace" and the figure of Lamounde is introduced to show the influence of the merchant as an ambassador of goodwill. He reveals his little idiosyncrasies, irritability, disconcerting penetration into motive, exacting business habits, and shows himself to be a person and not merely a type. So, again, Miss Colerain begins as the conventional heroine. Aware of weakness of principle in her lover's character, she attempts to reclaim him from his dissipated habits by imposing on him a period of strict discipline. But she soon gives up her plan. Like all Bage's heroines, she has a fund of sound sense. As soon as she realises that a patrimony inherited early, and the consequent escape from the tutelage of a domineering mother, are providing her Sir George with the opportunity for a rake's progress, she marries him to keep a watchful eye on him.

Bage in didactic vein spares no effort to point his moral. Yet his characters live and his ability to tell a story in a racy, kindly way, his wit and his gift for shrewd observation revealed in satire, give him a claim to considerable literary merit.

But in "Harmsprong; or, Man as He Is Not," he has voluntarily put himself in shackles. By concentrating within the narrow room of a single tale his views on most of the liberal topics current in his

1. "Man As He Is", 1792.
3. "Man As He Is".
4. 1796.
day, he has produced a reference book rather than a novel. The pace of the story is slow; the characters sit about and talk and, unlike his other creations, lack individuality. They tread the boards mechanically. Occasionally, a stray gleam of personality is to be seen, as for instance in Miss Fluart, but the stage garment is smartly whisked back into place and the puppets proceed.

The "Monthly Review" found this admirable and praised the unity of theme and consistent manliness and high-mindedness of the hero. There is unity, but there is also petrifaction. No character changes or develops unless one accepts as change the half-hearted repentance of Lord Grondale on his death-bed, a time when even a sceptic must surely be allowed to take some precautions; or the advance from admiration into love that may be presumed before Miss Campinet marries her Hermaprong. There is no change of view either. Instead, there are discussions, speeches and letters. The term 'novel' hardly applies to the book; miscellany would suit it better.

The plot is simple enough. Lord Grondale, a tyrannical old satyr, lives with a daughter and a former mistress, now decently pensioned off as his housekeeper, in Campinet Castle. A friend of the daughter, Miss Fluart, spends a great deal of her time with them and Lord Grondale is making advances to her. One day, when Caroline Campinet's horse runs away with her, a mysterious young man turns up in the nick of time and rescues her. His name is Hermaprong. His history is then revealed. His father had left his native land of Germany after a quarrel with a treacherous younger brother which
involved him in a duel and caused him to offend his father beyond hope of forgiveness. He had gone to America and, after some time, happening to meet an Indian fur trader at the house of a friend, had gone with him and settled down in his Indian village. There, Hermasprong was born and bred. When he became a man, he visited Europe to find somewhere to settle down and then came to England. Liking it, he decided to stay. Finally, having distinguished himself throughout the story by acts of nobility and philanthropy, he is discovered to be the child of Lord Grondale’s elder brother, whom the wicked Lord had defrauded. By this time, he has fallen in love with Caroline and, after the death of Lord Grondale, marries her.

Most of the novel is devoted to his comments either to Caroline or to the sycophantic Dr. Blick. This theme, the introduction into a plot of a young man bred to a simple hardy life among a primitive people to be a commentator on the English scene and to show up its faults, appears at intervals all through the period. Hermasprong does it very thoroughly. His very appearance points the moral. Fleet of foot, swift in reaction, capable of great feats of endurance, he strides about with great vitality. His impressions are presented in long harangues, prompted by recognizable stimuli. Thus, chapter xxvii is wholly devoted to a discussion on progress and happiness, chapter xxviii deals exhaustively with the question of the deference due to rank. Dr. Blick’s sermon on the anniversary of the Birmingham riots with its peroration, ‘But what can be expected from men who countenance the abominable doctrines of the ‘Rights of Man’? Rights
contradicted by nature, which has given us an ascending scale of
inequality, corporeal and mental and plainly pointed out the way to
those wise political distinctions created by birth and rank.', gives
Hermesprong an opportunity to dilate on the natural rights of man.
The phonograph is turned on whenever a few people are gathered together
and each record bears its topical theme.

One of them deals with the nature of man. Bage believes that,
though obviously imperfect, it could be infinitely improved if laws
were revised, if the power of reason were allowed to work untrammeled
and if education were offered to all. Moderate and practical, Bage
stops short of the doctrine of perfectibility. One of his comments,
after a discussion between Hermesprong, Woodcock and Blick on metaphysics
and politics seems to suggest an impatience with the abstract. He
says: "So the rest of the evening was spent with cheerfulness, the
conversation turning principally on the everlasting subjects,
metaphysics and politics, of the first of which man can know nothing, -
and of the last, will not. At least, it is so in England, at the
moment I am now writing; the order of the day, as they say in France,
being determined ignorance." 1

We may put on another record. 'I cannot learn,' says Hermesprong,
'to offer incense at the shrines of wealth and power, nor at any shrines
but those of probity and virtue. I cannot learn to surrender my
opinion from complaisance, or from any principle of adulation. Nor
can I learn to suppress the sentiments of a free-born mind, from any

fear, religious or political. Such uncourtly obduracy has my savage education produced.¹ There is an obligato from the obsequious Blick: "I maintain that it is to the leaving their simple manners, that the present degenerate races of mankind owe so much of vice and misery."² There is a fatal sequence to be noted. Riches lead to luxury; luxury produces inertia and political apathy; apathy breeds corruption; corruption begets wicked policies and the whole country suffers as it is now suffering by concentrating on becoming the workshop of the world and so precluding any intellectual pleasure or advancement for the masses who are perforce doomed to continual and unremunerative labour. The anxiety of Lady Chestum to cling to the idea of privilege of birth is here revealed. Money, she feels, is anybody's that can get it and no criterion of taste or breeding and 'To be sure, it is a monstrous shame to see new families spring up like mushrooms.'³

One of the most interesting is the one about woman. Filial devotion and duty are, surprisingly, dismissed as old fashioned, a 'pretty sentimental flight that, and might have had something in it fifty years since. Daughters now don't grow miserable for such slight causes as a father's displeasure.'⁴ With relish, Bage shows us an exacting parent and we see Sir Philip Chestum submitting to the tutelage of a mother unable to remember his age, who hears his Catechism every day and doses him twice a week, well into middle age. Bage rails against the position of women in society and supports Mary Wollstonecraft

1. Ibid. p.103.
2. Ibid. p.117.
3. Ibid. p.179.
4. Ibid. p.170.
In showing how little liberty of mind is allowed to them. He maintains that they carry their minds in prison, minds - "which, instead of ranging the worlds of physics and metaphysics, are confined to the ideas of these roots and Ramalagh's, with their adjuncts of cards, dress and scan- I beg pardon, I mean criticism."\(^1\) Sharply outlined are his views on chastity. He finds it ridiculous to suppose that a girl who has succumbed to a lover is finally ruined, and he lets his characters pick up the threads of their lives after their lapses. It is incredible to him that women can really be persuaded that their destiny is meant to be warped by mental starvation and fear of the economic consequences of spinsterhood and that "their highest glory is to submit to this inferiority of character, and become the mere plaything of man."\(^2\)

He pleads for better minds and places the responsibility for woman's folly where it belongs. "The change, if change there be, must begin with men." Parents must make less distinction of sex in the education of their children. Woman would "leave the lesser vanities and learn lessons of wisdom, if men would teach them; and in particular, this, that more permanent and more cordial happiness might be produced to both the sexes, if the aims of woman were rather to obtain the esteem of men, than that passionate but transient affection usually called love."\(^3\)

This view of married friendship was not repeated often during our period. It is interesting to note that it is expounded by a man and by a woman, and not pursued further, possibly owing to the red herring of freedom for women, until it is raised again by John Stuart

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1. Ibid., p.191.
2. Ibid. p.192.
3. Ibid. p.193.
Better education is pleaded for, over and over again, but the reason advanced is that it would provide a living, or a safeguard against looseness of principle. Bage has a glimpse of something more positive, the complementary nature of the sexes in spiritual and moral as well as in the physical sphere.

War and the miseries attendant upon it form the theme of another series of speeches. What has clearly made the greatest impression on him is the stupidity of conflict and the exploitation of the ordinary folk by self-seeking politicians. The only excuse given for armed strife is oppression. He gives an account of an insurrection in "Hermsprong" which has many a parallel in the reports of magistrates mentioned earlier. News of a riot of miners in the neighbourhood reaches the castle and causes great concern. The magistrates are represented as hesitating and cowardly. We are kept in a state of suspense by daily items of news. On the third day, comes the intelligence that there are French agents among them. Hermsprong is said to be going round offering them money and advising them to emigrate to America where life offers a better chance.1 This little episode shows how much in touch with life Bage was. There are few references to public unrest in the novels consciously disseminating liberal ideas. Only in the satires do we come close to reality.

Deliberate purveying of doctrine might be expected in the novels of Godwin. In 'Caleb Williams', he certainly embarked on the sea of fiction with intent; his rudder was political purpose, his destination the harbour of reform. 'It is but of late,' he writes

1. Ibid. p.512.

2. "Or, Things as They Are" 1794.
boldly in the first preface, 'that the inestimable importance of political principles has been adequately apprehended. It is now known to philosophers that the spirit and character of the Government intrudes itself into every rank of society.' Conscious of the unlikelihood of this fact being recognised by the masses, who read no works of philosophy or of science, he proposes to 'comprehend, as far as the progressive nature of a single story would allow, a general review of the modes of domestic and unrecorded despotism by which man becomes the destroyer of man.' Thus, with his usual care for explicit statement, he underlines his intention to disseminate his liberal ideas. He chooses a milieu that will allow him to do so; he carefully arranges the scene to show up certain social evils. Yet the whole work belies him. It is not a doctrinaire novel. In fact, it is less choked by theory than any other so advertised. The radical opinions expressed are of secondary interest, if not merely incidental. The effect of wicked systems is movingly described but only to illustrate his real theme, the highly imaginative and gripping one of the relentless and silent enemy pursuing his innocent and sensitive prey. Here is the same powerful and controlled energy as that displayed in 'Political Justice'; the same rutted track and the same series of powerful impulses but an incomparably more macabre effect. Everything that might reduce the intensity is stripped away; no humour is to be found, conversation is reduced to a minimum, action allowed only at carefully regulated intervals so that we get the

1. The preface was suppressed for a time as it was considered dangerous, in May 1795, to print it owing to the trials of Hardy and the other reformers. It appeared Oct. 1795.
impression that we are looking at a series of slides under a microscope, considerably more than life-size. We seem to be studying life, but arrested life. Doctrine is lost sight of for long intervals. When it does appear, it contributes, not to the general abhorrence of tyranny, but to the reader's sympathy with the fugitive as an individual and as the victim of a personal enemy. The interest is focussed on the state of two minds, not on the state of society. Godwin confesses, in the preface to the reprint of 1832, that his chief concern was in the psychological conception of a hero engaged in a series of adventures of flight or pursuit; 'the fugitive in perpetual apprehension of being overwhelmed with the worst calamities and the pursuer, by his ingenuity and his resources, keeping his victim in a state of the most fearful alarm.' In preparation for the projected novel, he read the Newgate Calendar and the lives of pirates. "In the meantime," he says, "no works of fiction came amiss to me, provided they were written with energy. The authors were still employed on the same mine as myself, however different was the vein they pursued; we were all of us engaged in exploring the entrails of mind and motive, and in tracing the various recontres and clashes that may occur between man and man in the diversified scene of human life." In order to "explore the entrails of mind and matter" he adheres to the use of the first person in all his novels the better to indulge his desire to display "the analysis of the private and internal operations of the mind" and speaks of employing his 'metaphysical dissecting knife in tracing and laying bare the involutions of motive." When the story was dramatised by
Colman under the name of 'The Iron Chest' it was not a success, because the sustained and hidden conflict, the heart of the book, could not be rendered in dialogue. When the tide of Godwin's creative imagination receded, the story was exposed, pitifully thin, tediously didactic. Godwin took no account of the fundamental needs of a sociological novel. To have due weight, its characters must be average men and women, their lives and circumstances must be ordinary that the reader may identify himself with them when they are crushed by the obnoxious systems denounced by the author. He has deliberately made his protagonists quite exceptional in themselves and has placed them in juxtaposition tied to each other by a very special relationship. By representing them both in the grip of an obsession, he has done his best to nullify any general impression that man is the victim of society. We merely see one particular man persecuted by another individual. Each has his turn as oppressor; Williams when he baits his employer with hints, analogical conversations and contrived situations; Falkland when he shows how dangerous to the possessor is knowledge of a guilty secret. Caleb Williams is a romance not a treatise.

The plot is well contrived. Falkland, a gifted and honourable man, has been brought up to admire inordinately the principles of chivalry and so attaches a false importance to an unsullied reputation. He incurs the enmity of Tyrell, an odious neighbour, because, on several occasions he opposes him and effectually prevents him from committing certain vicious actions. On one occasion, however, Tyrell
humiliates him in public by a physical assault which he is unable to
prevent on account of his puny stature. That same evening, Tyrell is
assassinated. Falkland is accused of the murder but is cleared of
suspicion. Later, two of Tyrell's tenants, father and son, are hanged
for the crime. Falkland becomes prey to melancholy. Caleb Williams,
a boy of humble birth is befriended by Falkland and taken into service
as a secretary. His new master's behaviour intrigues him and,
stricken with curiosity, he prises into the past. From various sources,
he pieces together the story of Tyrell, suspects his master of a guilty
conscience, tests his theory by innuendoes and a lynx-like watch on
Falkland's reaction to them. Goaded to extreme fury by catching Caleb
attempting to break open an old chest, Falkland tells him the whole
story. He has murdered Tyrell and has allowed Dawkins and his son
to suffer for his crime. 'If ever,' says Falkland, 'an unguarded
word escape from your lips, if ever you excite my jealousy or suspicion,
expect to pay for it by your death or worse.' He then explains
that he will never allow Caleb to leave his service and he will hate
him for ever. Caleb tries to escape, is caught, accused falsely of
theft and thrown into prison. He makes several attempts to escape
and eventually does so. He is saved from recapture by a philosophic
brigand but is again betrayed, and has to flee once more. He makes
for London; earns his living as a writer; is hunted down by Gines
one of the robbers who, incredibly, adopts alternatively the careers
of thief and thief-taker and is in Falkland's pay. Again and again,

Routledge, 1903.
Caleb is forced to flee. A price is put on his head and handbills spread the story of his alleged infamy. Eventually, he is arrested but is released because Falkland does not proceed with the charge. He starts a new life but finds that the pursuit is still on and that Gines has been instructed to follow him everywhere he goes and calumniate him so that he is ostracised. He is prevented from leaving the kingdom. Finally, he comes forward, accuses Falkland of murder and has him brought before a magistrate. Falkland, by now a physical wreck, confesses, goes home to die, and Caleb is overcome with remorse.

The novel has great vitality and can still be read with interest. There is a curious mixture in it of humanitarianism and sadism. Secure in his knowledge that he can control the characters, Godwin lets them suffer dire calamity and specialises in the cruelty of hope deferred. It is a detective tale in reverse.

To some extent, however, the extra-literary purpose stated in the preface has been achieved. The states of mind that form the main interest of the book are exaggerated by the evils in the structure of society which allow men like Tyrell to hound his innocent niece into a debtor's prison or Falkland to use the machinery of the law for such an evil purpose as the continued concealment of his own guilt. The crookedness of Lawyers, the horrible conditions in the prisons and the hideous incident of the hanging of innocent men are all described. Interpolated tirades rail against institutions and organisations. Caleb's cell is described in detail, and provides occasion for comments on imprisonment in general. Below the surface of the ground, a mere
7\frac{1}{2} by 6\frac{1}{2} ft. with no window and therefore no light, he finds it preferable to the room in which are herded together, in noise and confusion, the vicious and the unfortunate, the healthy and the diseased. We are spared nothing. Caleb endures fetters, a padlock and staple which allow him to move only eighteen inches. The tyranny of the governors, the vice of the warders are all stressed and Caleb is caused to break off from his deliberations on the fatal curiosity that has brought him to this pass, to utter some of the sentiments to be expected of the author of 'Political Justice'. Thus, he decides that it is possible to love and venerate even a murderer and that it is not necessary to punish crime with death. 'I conceived it to be in the highest degree absurd, or iniquitous,' says he, 'to cut off a man qualified for the most essential and extensive utility merely out of retrospect to an act which, whatever were its merits, could not be retrieved.'

To any complacent Englishman who thanks God that there is no Bastille in England, he cries, 'Go, go, ignorant fool! and visit the scenes of our prisons!...... Is that a country of liberty where thousands languish in dungeons and fetters?\textsuperscript{2} He dilates upon the frivolousness of the charges, the capriciousness of the reasons why cases are postponed from one Assizes to the next and the hopelessness of proving innocence of a charge preferred by a man of property. He exclaims: 'Where shall his friend find leisure and much less money to fee counsel and officers and purchase the tedious dear-bought remedy of the law?.....

For myself, I looked round upon my walls, and forward upon the premature

2. Ibid. Vol.IX, Chap.11, p.250.
death I had too much reason to expect; I consulted my own heart, that whispered nothing but innocence; and I said 'This is society. This is the object the distribution of justice, which is the end of human reason'. Falkland's footman visiting Caleb in prison is horrified at the discrepancy between what he has been told and the grim reality. 'They told me,' he cries, 'what a fine thing it was to be an Englishman, and about liberty and property and all that there; and I find it is all a sham.' Most of these passages are digressions. Sometimes, they begin as individual laments and are then applied to society at large. Considering his possible fate, a few weeks in a miserable prison and then an ignominious death at the hands of the public executioner, Caleb says: 'My resentment was not restricted to my prosecutor, but extended itself to the whole machine of society....I saw treachery triumphant and enthroned; I saw the sinews of innocence crumpled into dust by the grip of almighty guilt.' Sometimes, they are interpolated reflections like the panegyric on the simple life uttered when he begins to emerge from the state of horrified despair caused by his imprisonment and begins to withdraw his mind from his sordid surroundings. Artificial society destroys tranquillity and health; nature preserves them 'and teaches man how few are his real needs. Similarly, the brigand philosophises on the ills of sophisticated life. His distinction between thieves without a licence and thieves according to law points the accusation implicit in all these

passages that there is no such thing as impartial justice in society as at that time constituted.

Godwin was a Necessarian and reveals this view also. Collins, Falkland's land agent, once a friend of Caleb's, has been sent to the East on business. When he returns, he is horrified by Caleb's supposedly criminal behaviour and he is given an opportunity to express the point of view. To a plea for sympathy he replies: 'I regard you as vicious; but I do not consider the vicious as proper objects of indignation and scorn. I consider you a machine; you are not constituted, I am afraid, to be greatly useful to your fellow men; but you did not make yourself; you are just what circumstances irresistibly compelled you to be. I am sorry for your ill properties; but I entertain no enmity against you, nothing but benevolence.'

As in "Caleb Williams", so in all Godwin's novels; the presence of liberal views may be detected and opportunities are made for their expression, but there is always a counter interest of such power that they make little impression. One of the most interesting indications that this was so even in his own day is the statement of the reviewer in the notice of "St. Leon" in that scourge of reform, the "Anti-Jacobin Review and Magazine". He begins with the openly expressed fear that 'the source whence it proceeded, could produce nothing that was not dangerous to our morals, our politics, and our religion;....' but feels compelled to admit that 'exclusive of some few opinions, which shall hereafter be noticed, the evil it contains is little.'

Even when he has made his objections to these opinions, he is able to

say 'in defiance of the philosopher.... that the ravings of infidelity, the hypocritical cant of oppression are always uttered when the speaker has lost his reason by his own wickedness, or the mind is weakened by affliction.' A proud and restless desire for distinction pervades Godwin's novels. He craves to be impressive and strains after incredible situations in the description of which his taste for morbid introspection may be indulged. St. Leon is a good example of the conscious attempt to be original. The hero is a youth of promise both physically and intellectually and is born to great estates and an honourable name. He wins distinction in battle, succeeds to his inheritance, goes through the usual period of dissipation and then marries Marguerite de Damville and settles down to the life of a country landowner. A period of domestic bliss follows but this is shattered when, having visited Paris to put their son in a school, he succumbs to the lure of the tables and gambles away all his substance. Marguerite is a tower of strength. They go to Switzerland, buy a small property and prepare to live the simple life. A storm destroys the house and all the crops. Hunger is rife in the neighbourhood and they are driven out by the natives. They find another home on the shore of Lake Constance and live for seven years in great poverty. Just when St. Leon is bewailing his folly, a mysterious stranger arrives, claims help and shelter and, in return for hospitality, gives St. Leon the secret of eternal youth and unlimited wealth on condition that he does not reveal it to anyone, even his wife. From that moment, every possible misfortune falls on him. Immediately after the

1. Ibid. p.28.
death of the stranger, he becomes an object of suspicion to the authorities, the mysterious source of his sudden wealth causes trouble in his family, his son leaves him, and his wife dies of grief. He is arrested by the Inquisition on suspicion of witchcraft and imprisoned for twelve years. He escapes, rejuvenates himself and settles in Hungary. There, in accordance with his views on general benevolence, he decided to finance a famine-stricken province and make it self-supporting. Again, the mystery of the source of his wealth causes suspicion and hatred. His motives are misunderstood. He feels the inevitable loneliness of his lot and makes a friend of Bethlehem Gabor, described as 'an enemy of mankind'. Gabor, inspired by sheer hatred, abducts him and imprisons him in a dungeon in his castle and gloats over him for years. Unexpectedly, he is rescued by his own son who has risen to the rank of Colonel in the army. The castle is burnt down and Bethlehem Gabor perishes in the flames. Unable to reveal himself to his son on account of his eternal youth, St. Leon prepares to resume his restless wanderings.

The emphasis is on suffering and loneliness. When the events of the story allow the interpolation of radical opinions, there are passages expressing them. But they hold up the action and are not part of it. After the account of the battle of Pavia, there are several diatribes against war and denunciations of those who bring it about. During his imprisonment by the Inquisition, St. Leon attacks organised religion in general, and Roman Catholicism in particular, on the grounds that any authoritarian point of view is oppressive. The
rights of men to freedom of opinion are forcibly expressed by the hero while he is being taken to the Auto-da-fé. The experiment in planned economy is described in detail and has reference to the problems in England in 1799.

Significant changes of view may be noted, however, in this novel. The preface accounts for the frequent eulogies of the married state and the desirability of second marriages when it states that he has wanted for more than four years to modify the ideas expressed in "Political Justice". But there are other recantations and the reader is astonished to find views on the subject of friendship, gratitude and moral weakness directly opposed to those expressed in "Political Justice". Friendship is eulogised throughout as a necessity of human nature and the hero yearns for exclusive terms. The Philosopher who held that universal benevolence was superior to any individual attachment and considered all intimate relationships tyrannical and oppressive because they impose restraints and obligations that restrict freedom, writes pages on the instinctive reaching out of the soul towards friendship. Such an association is the 'stimulating and restless want of every susceptible heart' and he laments that life in this respect is 'a wretched imposture', and believes that 'disparity of situation and dissimilitude of connections, prove as effectual a barrier to intimacy, as if we were inhabitants of different planets.' In the same way, Mandeville and Deloraine extol the advantages of friendship.

Similarly, gratitude, denounced in 'Political Justice' as unnatural and wrong, is expected as a normal reaction to benevolence.

in St. Leon. Its conspicuous absence is the cause of long passages with a cynical flavour: 'Let no man build on the expected gratitude of those he spends his strength to serve....There is a principle in the human breast that easily induces them to regard everything that can be done for them, as no more than their due, and speedily discharges them from the oppressive consciousness of obligation.' Nor was this ingratitude passive. 'I had looked for happiness as the result of the benevolence and philanthropy I was exerting, I found only anxiety and a well grounded fear for my personal safety.' Later, he draws the conclusion and the recantation appears complete: 'My latest trials in attempting to be the benefactor of nations and mankind, not only had been themselves abortive, but contained in them shrewd indications that no similar plan could ever succeed.' The doctrinaire thief also admits that human nature itself may be a bar to progress. Ruffigny deplores the existence of certain passions which wreck philosophic plans. Godwin the Dissenter, aware of the frailty of human nature, replaces, at times, Godwin the Utilitarian. For this is very far from the confident cry of the Reformer that man may ultimately be perfected by the combined influence of reason and education. Moreover, it is not only in passages of declamation that the admission of innate wickedness is to be heard. It is present, by implication, in the delineation of the type hero to be found in all novels; the flawed character, set to endure the all too dire calamities induced by his own sin. Falkland is a murderer and allows two innocent men to die that his own reputation

1. Ibid. Vol. IV. p. 79, 80.
may remain unblemished. Caleb Williams is unable to mind his own business. St. Leon craves for the power that unlimited wealth and perpetual youth will confer on him. Mandeville, the most interesting example of all, is eaten up with the arrogance that can brook no competition without hatred and is driven mad by the frustration of impotence against goodness. Even Fleetwood, the least violent of the heroes, is morose and selfish and suspicion of his young wife ruins his life for a long time and almost ends in tragedy. In all these cases, there is an admission that evil is inevitable, a suggestion that men are predestined and cannot escape their fate. Mandeville says that some men are linked together by evil and that their destinies are inseparable. There are long passages on the subject of affinities. In general, tragedy is attributed to the mysterious working of fate rather than to the evils of environment. It is interesting to find suggestions as to how a man may best bear existence with patience. It is necessary for him 'that he should conceive himself to be something, that he should be persuaded he is not a cypher in the muster roll of men.' On the subject of personal responsibility for wrongdoing, Godwin has a foot in both camps. He states that the motive for any good action is always self regard; 'self applause is our principal support in every liberal and elevated act or virtue,' he writes in St. Leon. Yet he appears to believe in a Supreme Principle that guides the universe and is responsible for the 'exalted nature' of man. 'It is our special prerogative' says Mandeville, 'that we can converse

with that which we cannot see, and believe in that the existence of
which is reported to us by none of our senses.... All that passes before
the senses of the body is a scenic exhibition;... Invisible things are
the only realities; invisible things alone are the things that shall
remain. 1.

In spite of this dismissal of the primary importance of the
passions, Godwin's characters are made to run through the whole gamit
of feeling. Lip service is occasionally paid to the theory of the
supremacy of reason over the passions, but, for the most part, the
expression of emotion is the raison d'être of the story. Sensibility
triumphs in every wracked temperament. Rushing down mountains in
thunder storms, lying motionless on precipices for hours at a time,
spending wild nights brooding at an open window, sitting with starting
eyeballs and prickling skins at the gaming tables, pouring tears in
torrents, casting themselves to the ground in fits and paroxysms,
raging, fighting, nobly bearing cicatrizes to the grave, they gnash
their way through the story and give delight to the public and also
to the author. Godwin himself was a curious mixture of the cold and
the ardent. His behaviour at times was as violent as that of his
characters. He is said to have seized a knife and threatened to stab
himself in the presence of Shelley if he did not receive a loan. Hone
once had an opportunity of meeting the 'perfectibility philosopher'
and records with painful astonishment that, when he entered the room,
Godwin was 'violently energising under a momentary disappointment, in

itself so trivial, that, if it had caused similar passion in a child, such violence would have been inexcusable. Before I left the house, I learned that similar paroxysms of ungoverned temper were habitual to him. He was discovered by Crabb Robinson in a state of morose fury over the news of Waterloo. Again and again, his characters remark on the enjoyment to be gained from concentration in solitude and we feel that it is Godwin himself speaking. Secure in the lair of thought, he goes through a kind of intellectual pregnancy. 'There is something indescribably delicious' he causes St. Léon to say, 'in this concentration of the mind. It raises a man above himself; and makes him feel a certain nobleness and elevation of character, of the possession of which he was, to that hour, unconscious.' He maintains that 'Nothing truly great was ever achieved (sic) that was not executed or planned in solitary seclusion.' He was inspired always with this consciousness of power and his work shows a rugged strength and enduring vitality. The intellectual position of Godwin is difficult to assess. He seems to veer from the positive to the negative in his liberalism; in his treatise, he advocates anarchy undiluted; in his novels, he preaches a kind of defiant suffering made necessary, but not originated by, the evils of society. The title of revolutionary cannot with accuracy be applied to any of his novels.

The same discrepancy between attitude and reputation may be seen in the novels of Thomas Holcroft. Openly dubbed revolutionary,

1. W. Hone, His Life and Times, P.M. Hackwood, 1912, p. 55.
tried for High Treason on the strength of his vehemently expressed opinions on the iniquity of institutions and his membership of the Constitutional Society, he incurred so much obloquy that the sale of his works and the success of his plays were seriously affected and he thought it prudent, at one time, to go abroad for a short period.

Yet he was never an advocate of violence and his novels show a belief in evolution rather than revolution. He saw progress as a gradual amelioration and he deprecated force. To him, wickedness was the result of error and of circumstances and could only be cured by enlightenment. "Man is happy in proportion as he is truly informed," he wrote after his trial; "ignorance is a misfortune, not a vice; punishment, violence and renown inflame the passions and perpetuate the mistakes they are designed to cure." Again, in a letter to a friend, written in 1799, he admits that he "shuns the acrimony of political dispute, and the circles in which it is indulged." His aim is gentle instruction and a reliance on the ultimate triumph of truth: "To the utmost of the little liberty I have, it is my desire to inform, with the hopes of benefiting mankind; and this end cannot be attained by making them angry. In action, heart, and principle, I am, or would become, the friend of men. The only enemy I encounter is error; and that with no weapon but words, my constant theme has been, let it be taught not whipped." Frank Henley, at Clifton's bedside, asks, "Can the world be better warned by a body in gibbets, than by the active

1. For instance, the failure of "Knaive or Not", 1797, taken off after a few nights. See review in the "Anti-Jacobin", July, 1798, Vol.I.
virtues of a once misguided, but now enlightened understanding?¹

Hazlitt sums up the whole programme in his continuation of Holcroft's Memoirs and shows that most of it could be included in the injunction 'Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself,' with the proviso that a neighbour is anyone who needs assistance. The attacks on institutions to be found in all his novels are due to a sense of frustration. As he causes Frank Henley to exclaim, everything in which governments interfere is spoiled. The idea grew in his mind to such an extent that he projected a history of bad governments and accumulated a vast number of books for the purpose. Frederick II was to have been the excuse for a survey of despotism and its devastating effects were to be shown in a series of accounts of wars. The book was never written. But his views found expression in his novels, all of which were written with a frankly didactic purpose.

Anna St. Ives, published in 1792, is one of the most unlikely love stories in fiction. Perfect control of the passions by reason, though admirable as a speculative idea, fails as a theme for a novel. For interest and sympathy seem always to be reserved for passions out of control and analytical argument, however pertinent and topical the subject of discussion, is a poor substitute for emotional stress. Anna is imbued with the doctrine of general benevolence and believes in the supreme importance of the mind. She is wooed by Coke Clifton, a worldly young man with great gifts, infinite resource, a sense of humour, but entirely lacking the requisite sense of responsibility to his fellow

man. Anna sets out to train him in philosophical ideas that he may become an agent for promoting the welfare of men. Deploving his mental indiscipline, she decides to marry him in order to reclaim his mind. She never doubts her ultimate success; she believes that the principles she advocates are irresistible, their general acceptance inevitable. Her only qualms concern her ability to put over her point. "My chief difficulty is," she admits, "I do not yet know how to give full effect to my arguments, so as to produce such conviction as he shall be unable to resist. Let me do but this, and I have no doubt of his perfect acquiescence, and resignation." Before the proposal is to be mentioned to her father, Anna suggests, they must "mutually compare their thoughts! and 'scrutinize, as it were, each other to the very soul." Clifton is, at first amused by her intensity; then he is baffled and frustrated by her apparent ignorance of the nature of passion. Everything is to her a matter of the purest reason.

Frank Henley, the son of her father's bailiff, loves her, too. She realises that his devotion is unsuitable but, for all that, is unaccountably drawn to him. In fact, she has to remind herself of the doctrine of necessity and the inevitability of circumstance, when she is moved by his repeated requests that she will marry him. Henley behaves as incredibly as the heroine. In his frequent appeals to her not to throw herself away on a libertine, he reveals his idea of marriage. The warmest term that can be applied to his description of the relationship is friendly co-operation, in a partnership for moral

purposes. He does maintain that his bliss will be great but is at pains to point out that it will be subordinate to the great joy of spreading moral enlightenment. "When I reflect," he writes, "on the wondrous happiness we might enjoy, while mutually exerting ourselves in the general cause of virtue, I confess the thought of renouncing so much bliss, or rather such a duty to myself and the world, is excruciating torture." The astonishing love story proceeds. Anna dismisses Frank, sealing her farewell to him with a kiss. Commenting artlessly on the enjoyment she experienced on that occasion, she declares "The chastity of my thoughts defied misconstruction and the purity of the will sanctified the extravagance of the act. A daring enthusiasm seized me. I find my affections, my sensibilities, peculiarly liable to these strong sallies." Frank's emotions find relief in argument; Clifton calls him the 'great Mogul of philosophers'; his thirst for doing good is never assuaged. In the outpourings of Anna and Frank and in the comments on those outpourings by Clifton, Holcroft has written his prospectus of liberal thought. The ideas are familiar. Riches, rank and birth have no virtue in themselves and should not confer privilege. Undue regard for them is one of the most vicious of human prejudices. Possessors of them become effete in time and, here he repeats an old argument, are burdens in any community. Frank, having stumbled on a duel, stops it by sheer weight of words, lecturing the participants unmercifully. "I was endeavouring to show,"

2. Ibid. p. 28.
3. E.g. in "The School of Arrogance", 1791.

"Potato-like, the sprouts are worthless found,
And all that's good in them is underground."
he writes later to Anna, "the pernicious tendency of the prejudices of mankind, and inadvertently touched upon the absurdity of supposing there could be any superiority of man over man, except that which genius and virtue gave." Other opportunities occur and both Anna and Frank make full use of them. Coke Clifton listens and retails the opinions, with comments, to his friend Fairfax. The equality of mankind and the theory of natural rights stick in his throat, and he writes peevishly, "He is one of your levellers!.....The savage, the wild man of the woods is his true liberty boy; and the orang outang his first cousin." Disquisitions on property abound. A typical example is Anna's prophecy; "Personal property shall no longer exist when the whole torrent of mind shall unite in inquiry after the beautiful and true, when it shall no longer be diverted by those insignificant pursuits, to which the absurd follies which originate in our false wants give birth, when individual selfishness shall be unknown and when all shall labour for the good of all."

Carefully controlled circumstances provide opportunity for the expression of views on the penal system. A Highwayman is captured by the 'blood-hunters'; the term is Frank's, who are actuated by the hope of the usual fee of £40 for capturing a felon. His conviction is made to rest on his identification by Frank. In his description of the affair, Frank says: "Thou knowest how I abhor the taking away of the life of man, instead of seeking his reformation." He then refuses to identify the prisoner, visits him in gaol, befriends him

and gives him a severe reprimand. He describes it somewhat primitively:

"It was not all censure: soothing, reasoning, and menace were mingled."¹

The whole text is saturated with doctrine. Frank Hanley, refused by Anna for outrageous reasons, is yet able to bring himself to acquiesce in her decision and proposes to go off to the wilds in the time-honoured fashion, not, indeed, to shoot big game but to found an ideal community among the American Indians. Not to be out-done, Anna announces that she will console herself for the prospect of an unpleasant married life by emphasising to her husband the value of the golden age of primitive simplicity and convincing him of the necessity to return to the state of innocent nature.

The novel is redeemed from tedium by the character of Coke Clifton. Anna, even when sermonising, is attractive to him and his amused tolerance of what he considers, at first, rather engaging foibles and his good-humoured attempts to comply with the extraordinary demands made on him give his letters sprightliness and charm. He decides to humour her and 'catch a metaphysical quirk'. He sets himself a target of a truth a day and boasts that he has mastered the concept of equality. "I am already become a new man" he writes, "My whole system is changed....and, while my weary heart is tickled with my success, the lengthened visage of inspired Quaker when the spirit moved was never more demure."² He is whimsical about his treatment³ and promises to think of nothing until he can think as she wishes him to think. But he is too apt a pupil and, almost at breaking

point, he suggests that marriage is also a prejudice and baffles her momentarily. Eventually, he tires of compliance and resorts to the conventional tactics of the would-be seducer. He kidnapes Anna, and gets Frank immured in a private mad-house. Frank, however, escapes, rescues Anna and in the ensuing struggle, Clifton is wounded. At the mercy of the two young philosophers, on a sick-bed, he is caused to suffer a real and lasting change of heart. He begins to regret his wasted talents and his preoccupation with self. Before long, impressed at last by their utter sincerity, he is ready to shoulder his responsibility for his fellow man. He succumbs utterly to the arguments of Anna for "On paper or in speech, she is the same; energetic, awful and affecting." Though deprived of his bride, he is left full of respect for the outlook of his successful rival.

Though it strays to the edge of satire, the novel succeeds as propaganda because, if not ourselves convinced of the validity of the argument, we are obliged by the author to watch the success of this policy on the unregenerate. Holcroft shows great integrity of purpose. He makes the pupil wayward but very alluring; gives him sympathetic insight and sturdy common sense. For three quarters of the book, Clifton holds all the cards and is much more reasonable than either Anna or Frank, and infinitely more worldly-wise. His conversion is, therefore, all the greater triumph and, even if we cannot bring ourselves to believe in it, it is a fitting finale to the didactic theme.

"Hugh Trevor" is inspired by the same purpose. Comparing it with Anna, Holcroft himself calls it a sequel; "for as that is intended
to develop certain general principles by exhibiting imaginary characters, so the latter has a tendency to enforce the same conclusions, by depicting the vices and distresses which are generated by the existing institutions of society. Every institution is then exposed and Hugh Trevor is subjected to shock whenever his idealistic notions are dispelled by experience. The life of an undergraduate is fully described and the impression conveyed is one of waste and futility. For a time, Trevor is attracted by the warmth of the Methodists and, with more zeal than wisdom, espouses their cause. Emotional catharsis appeals to him more than the arguments of 'subtle arguers' and his imagination is inflamed by the rhetoric of impassioned ministers. He remains an adherent until he is rusticated for a year for attending a Methodist meeting. Enforced absence brings him to a more philosophical frame of mind and he afterwards refers to this period as a 'dereliction of intellect.' He is then placed in a series of situations when, by the sacrifice of his integrity, he may achieve success in his profession. Each time, he proves himself unfitted for that particular life on account of his uncompromising honesty. He is unable to profit by nepotism and he lacks elasticity of conscience, so the Church is closed to him. His conviction that crime is but error and punishment, unless reformatory, is inexcusable denies him from a career in the law-courts. He cannot succeed in commerce because he can neither close his eyes to sharp practice nor allow

himself to profit by the ignorance of the public. In fact, he has to be pensioned off by the author at the end of the novel with an opportune legacy, surely a betrayal of purpose.

The book does convey doctrine because there is sympathy in it. Less fantastic, and more human, than Anna St. Ives it contains moving passages of straight narrative and enlists sympathy for Hugh Trevor. The best things in the book are the child's experiences in an unhappy home, his lack of security and his longing for affection; the arguments with Trotman on questions of morality in law; the life of the playhouse with Glibly's descriptions of the shifts of seedy actors; the history of Wilmot. Its weaknesses are a lack of unity and a superfluity of argument.

A significant development in Holocroft's view of the nature of man may be noted in "Hugh Trevor". He becomes so preoccupied with the correlation between wickedness and error that he seems to relinquish his original contention that a man is neither good nor bad at birth but becomes inevitably what the institutions of society make him. Instead, he admits that the heart of man is innately good: "Man becomes what the mistaken institutions of society inevitably make him; his tendency is to promote his own well-being, and the well-being of the creatures around him; these can only be promoted by virtue; consequently, when he is vicious, it is from mistake, and his original sin is ignorance." In 1798, having on one occasion met Dr. Towers at Debrett's, he makes the following entry in his diary: "He asked me

if the universal defection had not made me turn aristocrat. I answered, that I supposed my principles to be founded in truth, that is, in experience and fact; that I continued to believe in the perfectibility of man, which the blunders and passions of ignorance might apparently delay, but could not prevent;" Then comes his partial recantation: "...and that the only change of opinion I had undergone was, that political revolutions are not so well calculated to better man's condition, as during a certain period, I, with almost all the thinking men in Europe, had been led to suppose."
The great value of human life is emphasised in all he wrote. In 1805, he announces in the preface to "Brian Ferme" that his purpose is to draw the attention of all thinking and humane men to this worth and to point out the moral tendency of all human laws. The hero has the usual mental attainments but unrestrained passions. He is allowed a good deal of rope, commits both good and evil actions, is guilty of felony at last and is brought to trial. Saved on a point of law, he reforms and resolves to devote the rest of his life to making amends to mankind for his past misdeeds. The book is turgid and uneven in quality, but it is notable for the first hint of criticism of the new society. Side by side with the familiar attacks on the callousness of officials and the evils of the penal system, there are comments on the new tyranny of the rising capitalist class and the autocracy of merchants which bids fair to out-do that of the landed proprietors of previous years. There is a tired note, a consciousness of the

constancy of error however different the circumstances in which men are placed. The novel illustrates Holcroft's mature conclusion that life itself, for even the wisest, the happiest and the longest lived, is short, uncertain, and chequered with good and evil. He sees it as a kind of dream that ends in a profound and eternal sleep. There is no indication in any of his novels that he believed in a personal immortality. He thinks in terms of beneficent principles, forces that shape human destiny. He believes in the superiority of mind over the body, but shows no concern with the individual soul. Through a long and trying period of infirmity, he clings to his theory that pain can be ignored with an effort of will.

Hazlitt pays him a fitting tribute: "He was a man of too honest and too independent a turn of mind to be a time-server, to lend himself as tool to the violence of any party; his habits and studies rendered him equally averse to political intrigues or popular tumults; and he had no other desire than to speak the truth such as he saw it, with a conviction that its effects must be beneficial to society." A study of his novels endorses this opinion and shows him to be the reverse of revolutionary. In spite of his vehemence and his irascibility, he emerges as a benevolent pedagogue.

Among the writers of deliberate propaganda, must be reckoned Mary Hays, friend of Mary Wollstonecraft, ardent disciple of Godwin and member of the little circle of reformers centred on him. Her work is interesting because it shows what happens to philosophic ideas

in the hands of a popular writer. In close touch with the advocates of liberal theories, she imbibed sufficient doctrine to enable her to expatiiate on the evils of society, the remedial influence of reason and the importance of the passions, but she is wildly inconsistent and is apparently able to reconcile conflicting, and even mutually exclusive, ideas. Thus, though she declares herself dedicated to the worship of reason, she seems to preach the over-riding importance of the passions.

Her own experience provided her with two examples of unrequited love and the subject becomes something of an obsession with her. Her first love affair was with John Eccles, whom her parents considered unsuitable. She carried on a clandestine correspondence with him for a year, then wrung a reluctant consent from them. He died, however, shortly before the wedding day. The second affair was more mysterious as she never divulged the name of the man. Godwin tried to find out without success; Crabb Robinson named William Friend; Lamb suspected Charles Lloyd. Coleridge and Southey speculated freely. According to them, her conduct was quite unrestrained and her letters to Lloyd quite "a la Rousseau". Her personality spills over into her novels. Unbalanced and emotional, her mind became a repository for every fleeting theme.

The common element in her outpourings is an aggressive tilting at security. Something reckless and undisciplined in her own nature predisposed her to anarchy and destruction. Her energy in criticism and controversy is remarkable. Under the pseudonym of Eusebia, she

1. Letter to Manning, 1800.
answers Gilbert Wakefield's "Enquiry into the Expedience and Propriety of Public Worship," and airs her views on liberty with an uncalled-for belligerence. George Dyer brings her a copy of "A Vindication of the Rights of Women" and she contrives to meet the author at the house of Johnson, the publisher, and, thereafter, espouses the cause of her sex with such extravagance that her name is reviled in the press for years.

Crabb Robinson, who liked her, records that she professed these principles with more zeal than discretion. "This brought her into but disrepute among the rigid and her character suffered, most undeservedly. Whatever her principles may have been, her conduct was always perfectly right." In 1796, we find her writing to Godwin for a copy of "Political Justice". He calls on her, strikes up a friendship, encourages her to write to him and introduces her to Holcroft and other reformers. She brings Mary Wollstonecraft to the circle. Thus, she is exposed to the purest breeze of doctrine. All is acceptable; all is relayed. She combines a belief in the perfectibility of man with an adherence to the tenets of the Necessarians. Her intention is to propagate her views and help to bring about the millennium and it is the abandon with which she pursues her purpose that repels. Coleridge expresses his dislike forcibly; he thinks "dispectively" of her intellect and hates to hear "a thing ugly and petticoated exayllogise a God with cold-blooded precision and attempt to run religion through the body with an icicle." Yet Southey, toying with the idea of writing novels, finds her sympathetic and discusses with her plots suitable for

a philosophic romance. He even offers her a home in Keswick when her financial position becomes precarious.

Like a distorting mirror, she reflects radicalism in all she writes, imparting to it a kind of febrile excitement born of her own inordinate love of sensation. Her novels read like diaries. Particularly is this so of 'Emma Courtney'. In the language of extreme sensibility, she demonstrates that the dictates of the heart must be followed at whatever cost; that the only crime is to curb the expression of love. Once love and benevolence become the prime motives of human action, all evils will disappear. She quotes Rousseau to show that energy in love is the characteristic of a noble soul. In the preface, she announces that Emma is meant to be a 'mixed' character conceived in reaction to the perfection of heroines of novels; that her errors are "the offspring of sensibility; and that the result of her hazardous experiment is calculated to operate as a warning, rather than as an example." ¹ But there is no warning in the tale. Rather, we are expected to justify Emma's behaviour and rejoice in her preservation at the end of the book.

Emma's mother dies in childbed and her father, unwilling to saddle himself with the care of an infant, consigns her to her uncle and aunt who educate her. They both die in her eighteenth year and she goes to live in the household of another uncle, a Mr. Morton, where she is very unhappy. She meets an elderly philosopher and discusses with him all kinds of liberal opinions. When he is not at her uncle's

¹. Pref. p.8.
house, she writes to him and he answers her letters at length. A
Mr. Montague woos her but she refuses him and then rescues him from
the suicide that he attempts. She falls in love with Augustus Harley,
the son of a neighbour, and proceeds to put into practice her views on
women's right to freedom. She dilates for pages on the evils that have
resulted from the erroneous conception of chastity as a sexual virtue
and from "the too great stress laid on the reputation for chastity in
woman." She never leaves the man alone. She pleads, she pursues,
she abases herself. She writes him passionate love-letters and her
ardour is whetted by a mysterious reserve on his part. To be near
him, she goes to live for a time with a married sister and even works
three hours a week as a governess. When her frenzy and despair are at
their height, she discovers that what little money he has will revert
to a cousin if he marries. Then, her own money is lost in a Bank
failure and she marries Mr. Montague. Soon afterwards, a secret
marriage of Harley's, contracted in his youth, comes to light and he
is forced to yield most of his income to his relative. He is then
disposed of in the conventional way by the author. Involved in a
coach accident at Emma's door he is brought, mortally wounded, to her
arms, that he may confess the love repressed so long. In an orgy of
tears, she promises to bring up his son. Unfortunately, Montague,
overhearing these words, believes that she has been unfaithful, and is
estranged from her. He then seduces a servant girl, murders their
child and eventually kills himself in remorse. Emma proves her
resilience. No decline shortens her days. We leave her, having
buried her own daughter at the age of fourteen, busily writing cautionary letters to the adopted son, Augustus the younger.

Attacks on political institutions abound. She traces most of the miseries of mankind to them and she bewails their permanency. In fact, she preaches anarchy as fiercely, though more confusedly than Godwin. No-one should resign his understanding in any way to the guidance of another; "he, who tamely resigns his understanding to the guidance of another, sinks at once, from the dignity of a rational being, to a mechanical puppet, moved at pleasure; on the wires of the artful operator. - Imposition is the principle and support of every varied description of tyranny, whether civil or ecclesiastical, moral or mental; its baneful consequence is to degrade both him who is imposed on and him who imposes. Obedience, is a word, which ought never to have had existence."¹

She raves, there is no other word for it, on the subject of war and the tyranny of governments who tolerate the press-gang.² The professions all come in for scathing criticism. Considering what shall be done with the young Augustus, she condemns them all: "The study of law, is the study of chicanery. - The Church, the school of hypocrisy and usurpation! You could only enter the universities by a moral degradation, that must check the freedom, and contaminate the purity, of the mind......."³ She eventually allows him to become an architect, a calling that seems to her to provide a compromise between

tyranny and trade. She states her conviction that the end of life is general utility but, with a fine disregard for consistency, having excluded any culpability on man's part for the calamities and the evils that befall him, she yet traces with a kind of naturalistic fatalism the consequences of his vices and his folly. "I allow, pleasure is the supreme good," she writes, "but it may be analyzed - it must have a stable foundation - to this analysis I now call you! This is the critical moment, upon which hangs a long chain of events - This moment may decide your future destiny and mine - it may, even, affect that of unborn myriads!" And again: "Virtue can exist only in a mind capable of taking comprehensive views. How criminal, then, is ignorance!" She quotes Paine, Holbach, Rousseau, Holcroft, Mary Wollstonecraft and many other speculative thinkers.

These opinions are couched in violent language. So also are the descriptions of the conduct of the heroine. She exhibits the most unbridled sensibility. Her desires "broke no delay". She is addicted to throwing herself on the floor and passing nights in self-examination or "cruel conflict". On one occasion, she records: "I shut myself up whole days in my apartment, at Morton Park, or wandered through its now leafless groves, absorbed in meditation - fostering the sickly sentimentality of my soul, and nursing wild, improbable, chimerical visions of felicity, —" Her outpourings of passion after her first meeting with Augustus are offensively crude and her

attempts to describe the processes of the naked, vibrating heart are
jejune. Every opportunity for tears is exploited to the full.
Montague weeps when Emma refuses him, and she out-weeps him. Rescued
from suicide by his violent inamorata, he weeps again and they take
it in turns to hold the dripping stage. Beautiful deathbed speeches,
like those for her aunt and for the small Emma, are stained with the
crude dye of extreme radicalism. On reading "La Nouvelle Héloïse",
Emma exclaims: "Ah! with what transport, what enthusiasm, did I peruse
this dangerous, enchanting work! — How shall I paint the sensations
that were excited in my mind! — the pleasure I experienced approached
the limits of pain — it was tumult — all the ardour of my character was
excited."¹ Voluptuousness colours the opinions and the style.

"The Victim of Prejudice", 1799, caused an even greater stir in
orthodox quarters. The Monthly objects to it, as it objects to all
novels with the theme of the emancipation of women, because it seems
to suggest that "love which is a transient passion, is to be complemented
in all cases at the expense of the regulations and institutions of
society and a respect for virtue and decorum is to be classed in the
list of vulgar prejudices."² The implicit condemnation of order and
control offends the reviewer of the 'Anti-Jacobin'. He comments on the
education of the heroine "according to the plan of Rousseau; no check,
no controul; freedom of enquiry and extravagance of hope, however
dangerous, and however fallacious, are the prevailing features of this
performance; the same indiscriminating and mischievous censure of

everything society has hitherto deemed sacred and necessary to its existence, is here most lavishly displayed." He ends peevishly: "To your distaff, Mary, to your distaff.¹ It was the dangerous eloquence on the subject of women's right to love that shocked the public. Some allowance must be made for the temper of the time and also for the national character. In the French version, the only edition available, the translator has not seen anything "free" in the novel. He states that the author's aim is a noble one, to destroy the prejudice against victims of seduction, and says that the book may safely be put into the hands of children: "Je n'aime point les romans. En général, ils gâtent le goût, ils rendent l'esprit faux et corrompent le cœur. Celui-ci ne présente aucun de ces inconvénients."² The effect of the book must be, he thinks, to make the reader more disposed to respect innocence and practise virtue.

Mary, the heroine, is educated by her guardian, Mr. Raymond on the model of Rousseau. Like Thomas Day's orphan, she is taught endurance and fortitude. She learns to brave the rigours of the climate, to ride unbroken horses and perform all kinds of physical feats until her spirit is quite fearless. Her companions are two children whose education Mr. Raymond has undertaken for a friend of his; William and Edmund Pelham. Mary falls in love with William. Her guardian tells her that she cannot hope to marry him on account of her unfortunate ancestry. She is the daughter of a criminal hanged for the murder of her seducer who deserted her and drove her to prostitution.

². Preface to French Translation, p.v.
Mary, overwhelmed with grief by this news, consents to be sent away for a time to enable her to cure herself of her passionate love. Unfortunately, while she is away, her guardian dies and Mary, left unprotected, falls a victim to the desires of Sir Peter Osborn, a rake. She claims, however, that her mind is still uncontaminated, refuses to live with him and makes brave attempts to earn a living and recover from the experience. He pursues her with vindictive malice and, finally, has her arrested on false charges of debt. We leave her in prison, going rapidly into a decline.

Like many of these would-be doctrinaire novels, it over-reaches itself. The motive is confused and the sympathy misplaced at times. Yet from the welter of emotionalism emerge the same ideas as those expressed in "Emma Courtney". Constant appeals are made to the God of Reason, the God of Nature, or, simply, the Great Principle according to the mood of the invoker. The sensibility is excessive and, even allowing for Gallic fervour on the subject of love, overpowering.

The emotions of William and Mary are said to have had a physical effect. Chidden by a neighbour for stealing grapes, Mary goes home in a ferment of feeling, and says: "Je fus saisie de frissons qui furent bientôt suivis d'une chaleur ardente; ma poitrine était oppressée; j'éprouvais des éclancements autour de mes tempes et à peine pouvais-je respirer."

A doctor is called and, alarmed at the symptoms, diagnoses scarlet fever. Words strike her like electric shocks, her pulses leap

1. (La Victime du Préjugé, 1799.
(The Victim of Prejudice, Vol. I, p. 27 & 28, 1799)
2. Ibid. p. 61 & 62.
intermittently throughout the story, her circulation is impeded by anguish. She and William have bouts of weeping. She describes them:

"Au milieu de nos transports, nous mélangons nos larmes, larmes plus pures que la rosée des cieux; larmes délicieuses! qui devaient la source des plus doux ravissements. Nous nous plongions dans un délire enchanteur."  

The whole business of the law-courts, the penal system and the oppressions to which women are especially subjected by the cruelty of men are all dealt with at length. When Mary tries to earn a living and realises how ill-equipped and defenceless she is, the propaganda becomes pointed and over-elaborate.

There is nothing clear-cut about these two novels. They owed their notoriety not only to the opinions expressed but also to the unhealthiness of the tone and to the passionate scenes which may be dimly distinguished through the common atmospheric gas of doctrine.

One of the most interesting of the propaganda novels is that written by Mary Wollstonecraft and published by Godwin as part of an edition of "The Posthumous Works of the Author of 'A Vindication of the Rights of Women,' 1798. Two of the four volumes are devoted to "The Wrongs of Woman; or Maria, a Fragment." In the preface, the author announces firmly her extra-literary purpose, and, indeed, explains that the story has suffered by her adherence to her object for she could have "made the incidents more dramatic" if she had been willing to sacrifice her main intention, that of "exhibiting the misery and

1. Ibid. Vol.I, p.117.
oppression peculiar to women, that arise out of the partial laws and customs of society. In the invention of the story, this view restrained my fancy; and the history ought rather to be considered, as of women, than of an individual." Although this is the primary object of the propaganda, the story deals also with the iniquities of government, the theme of the victim of society, the exaltation of reason and the wickedness of war.

The plot is, primarily, contrived to embody the ideas of "A Vindication of the Rights of Women," Maria is unhappy at home because her father has brought home a new and unsympathetic stepmother. She is unduly gratified, therefore, by the attentions of George Venable. She does not know that her uncle has secretly bribed him to propose to her, with the offer of £5000 in cash. She marries him only to find him worthless. He exhibits all the vices. He is unscrupulous in money matters, adept at confidence tricks, unfaithful and even brazen in his pursuit of wantons of the lowest class. Squalid of person and dirty of habits, he lives in a Hogarthian atmosphere entirely repellant to his wife. Her money, consigned to his care by the law on marriage, is soon spent. When she tells him that she intends to leave him, he plots to get possession of her last remaining capital, tied on her exclusively by her uncle, by proving her incapable of administering her estate. He manages to have her abducted and shut up in a private madhouse. There, she meets Jemima, her wardress, described as "An insulated being" who, because of the stigma of illegitimacy and the ills which it has brought in its train,
"despised and preyed on the society by which she had been oppressed,"¹. She also meets a fellow patient, the liberal-minded Henry Darnford, also an innocent victim of the rapaciousness of relatives. The three of them provide the opportunities for conveying opinions and the story is purposely allowed to drift until the point of view has been well emphasised.

Thus, Maria writes her memoirs for the ultimate guidance of the infant daughter from whom she has been forcibly separated, and produces the manuscript when Jamima brings her news of the child's death. In them, she exposes the supreme crimes against her sex, matrimonial despotism of heart and conduct. They degrade the mind and are intolerable. She traces a vicious circle. No opportunities of rising in the world are open to women except one, "the fostering the libertinism of man," and because of this limitation "Society makes monsters of them, and then their ignoble views are brought forward as a proof of inferiority of intellect."². Her defence of sexual emotion in women and the condemnation of false refinement are familiar to the reader of the "Vindication". They are included in the memoirs to urge her daughter to take experience while she can. "When novelists or moralists," says Maria "praise as a virtue, a woman's coldness of constitution, and want of passion; and make her yield to the ardour of her lover out of sheer compassion, or to promote a frigid plan of comfort, I am disgusted."³. She is also disgusted by the prolonging

of the married state without love; "The magnitude of a sacrifice ought always to bear some proportion to the utility in view; and for a woman to live with a man, for whom she can cherish neither affection nor esteem, or even be of any use to him, excepting in the light of a housekeeper, is an abjectness of condition, the enduring of which no concurrence of circumstances can ever make a duty in the sight of God or just men."\(^1\)

Her second argument is equally cogent. A woman is but a chattel; her husband can rob her with impunity, "and the laws of her country - if women have a country - afford her no protection or redress from the oppressor."\(^2\). The story is contrived to show Maria, stripped like a tree in the wind of all but one bare leaf, her life. The grim alternative to this intolerable lot is painted. Her sisters, women of ability, shrinking from the trades of milliner or mantua maker as degrading to gentlewomen, become governesses and wear out their youth in the struggle to preserve even the travesty of independence provided by their calling. Maria describes the fate of her youngest sister; ill and unhappy, no longer able to teach, unwanted in her father's house, seeking, and obtaining from him only with difficulty, a room to die in.

These opinions were so widely associated with the name of Mary Wollstonecraft and so horrified public opinion that they have distracted attention from her equally vehement exposition of political

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1. Ibid. Vol.II, Chap.16, p.41.
2. Ibid. Vol.II, Chap.12, p.16.
themes. For the whole history of Jemima, though designed primarily to illustrate the steps to prostitution, also enlightens us on the state of the workhouses, the system of poor relief and the treatment of the sick in hospitals. Jemima hurts her leg, waits weeks for admission though her need is urgent, is forced to pay heavy fees, including a burial fee of £1.1.0, in advance and, having endured a contemptuous brutality from all concerned, is ejected half-cured because she is unable to pay for the amount of laundry deemed necessary by the matron. The next stage in her history is, understandably, the workhouse and we watch with her a pauper’s funeral. Here is intensified the Godwinian theme of man’s inhumanity to man. Here is exemplified the flame of benevolence extinguished by greed and self-interest. Here is the suggestion that it is the duty of any state either to provide security for all or to dissolve itself as a useless incumbrance. The same criticism, however, must be levelled at Jemima as at Caleb Williams. She is too exceptional a character to represent the average woman. In fact, the novel as a whole suffers from the author’s impetuous intention to load the scapegoats to the limit of their capacity, and at the same time to endow them with quite unusual resilience and courage. The figure of a highly intelligent prostitute regarding her sojourn in a house of ill fame as a period of general improvement in refinement, learning to read, and to profit by the literary conversations of her next 'protector' with his guests, is an interesting, but hardly an average conception. This part of the novel is informed with passionate sympathy for the oppressed in general.
There are digressions provided to allow of comment on various forms of tyranny. A single instance will serve to show the kind of theme. Maria's old nurse tells the story of her sister Peggy who goes to meet her husband at a port on his return after years of absence in the West Indies. As the boat on which he has sailed comes up the Thames, the press gang goes aboard and, before he even lands, he is forcibly enlisted and sent out to the war in America. He is killed in the first battle.

Another opportunity for the dissemination of liberal ideas is contrived in the early stages of the liaison between Darnford and Maria. Jemima acts as a go-between and brings books from him to her. In the margins are comments on all kinds of liberal ideas. Among others, are observations on the "present state of society and Government, with a comparative view of the politics of Europe and America." The inevitable "La Nouvelle Héloïse" reaches Maria and inspires panegyrics on Rousseau, "the true Prometheus of sentiment." It is not surprising that sensibility plays a great part in the story. It is considered a sign of greatness of soul. Maria's description of her states of mind are powerful and sultry. Frequently, she "appeared, like a large proportion of her sex, only born to feel." Shut in a room by her irate husband who has just learned of her intention to leave him, she says: "I was all soul, and (wild as it may appear) felt as if I could have dissolved in the soft balmy gale that kissed my cheek, or have glided below the horizon on the glowing descending beams. A seraphic

1. Ibid. Vol.I, Chap.2, p.32.
satisfaction animated, without agitating, my spirits." The end of
the tale has a familiar ring. She and Darnford are able to escape
and they set up house together. He goes away on business and stays
away unaccountably. In his absence, she is sued for adultery.
Defending herself in court, she demands the right not only to leave a
dissolute husband but to fulfill the duties of a wife and mother with
another man. With the judge's retort that it is a mistake to let
women plead their feelings as an excuse for the violation of the marriage
vow, and with his repudiation of French principles, in public and private
life, the manuscript ends. Two connected sentences and a few scattered
'teeds' give suggestions of various endings, and, finally, a connected
passage tells of Maria's desertion by her lover, her attempted suicide
and her rescue by Jemima with the news that her child is not dead after
all. We leave her taking hold of life once more.

The courage of the book is superb. Not all the vituperation
that besmirched her name could stop the effect of this propaganda.
Later, we shall see the repercussions of her theories in the society
she pillories. There is nothing passive about her. She demands
equality as well as justice and stands boldly for the recognition of
the mental independence of women and their ability to rise in any
profession open to them. She is not bitter but she is ruthless.
She gives the impression that she would sweep away any institution that
showed itself incapable of adapting itself to the progress of mankind.
She also shows the integrity that would condemn or approve without any

1. Ibid. Vol.II, Chap.11, p.53.
personal motive. Her death in her thirties robbed the reformers of one of their most powerful adherents.

It has been suggested that Charlotte Smith stands on the fringe of the revolutionary circle and she has been absolved of the charge of propaganda largely on the grounds that she subordinates doctrine to the interests of the plot and that, in any case, her opinions, political rather than liberal and philosophic, show a marked change between 1792, the year of the publication of "Desmond" and 1798, that of "The Young Philosopher". A progressive decline in revolutionary ardour has been perceived in her work.\(^1\) A different view may be held, however.

Three of her novels seem, on a close examination, to bear the marks of deliberate propaganda: a determination to plead a cause through the medium of fiction, and a concentration of energy on controlling incidents and characters to bring home to the reader the appeal of that cause. Nor can the change of opinion be wholly substantiated. Her sad little preface to "The Banished Man" does not constitute a recantation; it merely states disapproval of the course taken by those admired French revolutionaries in putting into practice their ideas. Scattered through all three novels, are indications that she deplored the wrong done to the cause of philosophic liberalism by anarchy and her reaction to the hideous events of the Reign of Terror is the same as her reaction to any other tyranny and oppression.

Her views as expressed in these three novels are philosophic. She has made use of current events to illustrate them because of the

\(^1\) By Allene Gregory & F. Hilbish, and others.
tempting immediacy of the material. She has not been able to refrain from an undue concern with those forms of injustice by which her own life was made complicated, her wrongs and distresses at the hands of the law, but if her obvious sympathies are allowed for, it is apparent that her descriptions and episodes are all related to the fundamental doctrines of freedom, of human progress and of the importance of the individual. Though she describes "Desmond" as a series of slight sketches of manners and opinions as they fluctuated round her, she says: "I have given to my imaginary characters the arguments I have heard on both sides; and, if those in favour of one party have evidently the advantage, it is not owing to my partial representation, but to the predominant power of truth and reason, which can neither be altered nor concealed."

"Desmond" is a web of opinion spun round a tenuous thread of story. Mrs. Geraldine Verney is unhappily married to a man who is profligate and unscrupulous. He appears to have no affection for his wife and his three children. She is admired and loved by Desmond, an honourable young man who goes on a tour to France to try to get her out of his mind as he holds the marriage tie to be sacred. He visits Montfleurie, a French Count and comes into contact with people of all shades of opinion, who discuss their views with him. This state of affairs continues for the greater part of the novel. Interesting discussions take place. The author's mouthpiece appears to be Bethel. Interspersed with accounts of conversations between people of varying

1. Preface to "Desmond", 1792, iii.
outlooks are letters containing news of Geraldine's trials and her reflections on the whole duty of woman. Finally, the field of opinion having been traversed, the action of the story is allowed to continue. Geraldine's husband flees to France to escape debts of honour that he cannot pay and she is left unprotected. Desmond returns and helps her secretly. Summoned by her erring spouse, she goes to France to meet him, is captured by bandits, among whose ranks she recognises her husband. Desmond rescues her, the husband is mortally wounded and repenting of his behaviour to his wife, commands her and the children to Desmond's protection.

The whole story is told in letters, most of them frankly doctrinaire. Certain broad principles emerge. The right of all men to freedom from oppression is constantly stressed. Particularly, they are entitled to freedom from the tyranny of governments. A state should be founded on the will of the people, a social contract; the temple of liberty "will arise on the site (sic) of the barbarous structure of Gothic Despotism." With unflagging zeal, she attacks all those who make use of the Constitution or of any kind of power to further their own ends. She makes a careful distinction between anarchy and a determination to be free. Bethel says: "This will surely convince the world that the 'bloody democracy' of Mr. Burke, is not a combination of the swinish multitude, for the purposes of anarchy, but the association of reasonable beings, who determine to be, and deserve

to be, free." He describes the scene when the captive king was
brought into Paris after his abortive flight and, impressed by the
quiet, controlled behaviour of the people, he expresses the belief
that a permanent constitution will now soon be established and visualises
a state in which power is dependent on the will of the people. In
this connection, continued reference is made to the American constitution.
In "The Young Philosopher", even more eulogistic descriptions are to
be found. Madore's father calls it the only free association in the
world and makes America the home of his adoption because there only
can he find universal benevolence and uncontaminated simplicity.

Comparing life in England with life in America, he says that "when he
reflected on the degradation to which those must submit, who would make
what is called a figure in this country; that they must sacrifice
their independence, their time, their taste, their liberty, to etiquette,
to forms and falsehoods, which would to him, be insupportable, he
rejoyiced that he had made his election where human life was in
progressive improvement." His desire for international amity and
universal benevolence is greater than love of country; in fact he will
teach Delmont "that wherever a thinking man enjoys the most uninterrupted
domestic felicity, and sees his species the most content, that is his
country." In both novels, but particularly in "Desmond", there are
long tirades against the things which interrupt this felicity;

injustice, the wicked penal system; lettres de cachet and terrible

prison conditions; the procrastination and duplicity of lawyers, especially in the Courts of Equity and Chancery; unequal taxation; the corrupt motives of administration. An analysis of the causes of the French Revolution made by Montfaucon, gives rise to the statement that an uprising in France was inevitable. After the reign of terror Mrs. Smith still asserts that no-one with liberal views could have withheld approval from the attempt to overthrow oppression and that a plain issue has only been clouded by subsequent horrors.

Not only does she state this belief in liberty as one of the fundamental rights of men, she has the courage to reiterate it when the reaction is at its height and the victims of oppression belong to another section of society. With great integrity, she shows in "The Banished Man" the effects of injustice and malice on the dispossessed and hunted émigrés and claims for them the same right to freedom; freedom from the rapacity and greed of the governing class. There is no change of opinion here, only a change of protegé. Tyranny is tyranny wherever it is to be found and she makes short work of false claims to the title of emancipator. "How could that government be established on the voice of the people," she says, "which the people were everywhere rising to oppose? How could men call themselves the representatives of their country, who could retain their power only by dying the scaffold with blood?" Commenting on the forlorn plight of D’Alouville, stripped of home and kindred, Ellesmere makes a

significant remark. He realises that the Frenchman must regret his friends and his estates but emphasises his own grief: "I, as an Englishman, deplore the injury done to the cause of rational liberty throughout the world." It is this theme - the betrayal of the principle of liberty that inspires her reports of unrestrained vice and brutality among the ignorant wielders of irresponsible power and not a change of heart. Unscrupulous leaders are as wicked in a republic as in an autocracy and she condemns them for their offensive insolence, their substitution of licence for liberty, their self interest and their greed. The old sailor sums it up: "Liberty," he says, "Liberty....Bah!...tell me what good we have got by it." But belief in the principle stands four-square throughout, even if, at times, she allows her personal grievances to preoccupy her mind. Her horizon is admiringly, limited by peevish complaint of those who, through self-interest or a too easy acquiescence in ills that do not affect them, the rich and their parasites, place-men and pensioners, prelates and attorneys, remain deaf, not only to the call of reform but also to the "reception of those truths which may promote it." Never-the-less, she sees clearly and tempers her enthusiasm for the great concepts of liberty, equality and fraternity with warnings that mere destruction will not bring about the millennium; the abolition of hereditary titles and the confiscation of estates will not, in themselves, lead to either social or economic equality. Only universal benevolence working within the framework of

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a social contract can achieve it.

Similarly, she attacks war and the threat of war. By repeated emphasis on scenes of violence both in America and in France she strips conflict of its glamour, exposes the illusion of glory, and condemns the false ideas of honour which give rise to armed conflict. Her fiercest censure is reserved for those politicians who dupes the masses into the belief that war is necessary for the preservation of freedom in order to make profits out of the sordid business. Orlando, in "The Old Manor House" tells of his adventures in the army in America and records his horrified reaction to the ferocity of the Indians to their prisoners, to the senseless slaughter of thousands of human beings in the pursuit of a quarrel they do not even understand and he expresses forcibly the humanitarian point of view in his outbursts, pages long, on the exploitation of the individual. The Hungarian, passing through a Europe laid waste by war, utters the same condemnation of those responsible for the carnage and the misery that he sees around him.

The whole plot of "The Young Philosopher" is devoted to deliberate preaching of liberal ideas. The author has selected as an underlying principle on which she has built her story the universal injustice and callousness of sophisticated life, far worse, in her opinion, than the spirit of jungle law; and, as a corollary, its destructive effect on the dignity and the individuality of man. It follows that she preaches the importance of the right kind of education and the necessity of a return to the simple life.

2. Letters of a Solitary Wanderer, 4th Story, 1797.
Delmont, a young man of good family, buries himself on a farm in a remote part of the country because the writings of the philosophers, especially those of Rousseau, have convinced him of the desirability of the simple life. He has refused to enter any of the professions and proposes to farm a small estate. His friends, Armitage, a writer with a reputation for free-thinking on account of the expression of speculative views, and Mrs. Glenmorris, a lady of fortune kept out of her rightful inheritance by the injustice of her relations and the dishonest tricks of lawyers, share his liberal views. Mrs. Glenmorris and her daughter Medora are living on money sent to them by Mr. Glenmorris from America, for they are only staying in England long enough to allow them to get possession of their estate. In spite of the opportunity of a good match with an heiress, Delmont proposes to marry Medora. Suddenly, the remittances from America cease, Delmont is defrauded by his unscrupulous elder brother and Mrs. Glenmorris is subjected to appalling treatment by her relatives. Finally, however, she recovers her inheritance, Glenmorris comes to fetch his family, Delmont marries his Medora and they all emigrate to America, the land of the free.

The upbringing of Delmont is consistently Rousseauistic. His mother drills him from infancy in the ideas of the philosophers. She has encouraged him to be critical of what he hears or reads and to govern his passions in the light of his reason. So, he has grown up to dislike any restraints other than self-imposed ones, and has reached the conviction that most, if not all, rules are imposed by those in authority merely to indulge their love of power. Eton makes
him a revolutionary; Oxford tones him down a little but makes him a philosopher. He is the familiar figure of the simple great-hearted man. To the neighbourhood comes another prototype of natural goodness. Medora has also had a Rousseauistic education in America and has drunk in liberal principles from the cradle. Her reactions to the corruption of sophisticated life point the moral. Her innocence does not prevent her from being in grave danger of abduction and incarceration in a house of ill-fame, a fate she narrowly escapes. In all that she says and does, she shows a consciousness of man's inhumanity to his fellows. To her condemnation of so-called civilised life is added her father's. He gives a fierce denunciation of the English way of life and emphasises the superiority of life in America in reasoning which is primitivistic. To the argument, when he has refused to stay in England, that his mind may atrophy in uncivilised surroundings, that he will be starved of congenial and intelligent company, he replies: "I deny it, however. The great book of nature is open before me, and poor must be his taste who cannot find in it a more noble study than that of sophisticated minds which we call society here, ..... where all greatness of character seems lost...." The same strain may be heard in other novels by Mrs. Smith which cannot be considered propaganda, notably in the character and adventures of Wolf-hunter, the noble Indian in "The Old Manor House". Love for the species is essential for goodness. "You agree with me," says Glenmorris, "that true philanthropy does not

consist of loving John, and Thomas, and George, and James, because they are our brothers, our cousins, our neighbours, our countrymen, but in benevolence to the whole human race, 1. These portraits of the naturally good are etched against a background of human malice and greed.

Sometimes another likeness is drawn as a foil to the product of the simple and liberal outlook. Mrs. Smith can compress into one figure without sacrificing verisimilitude the objectionable qualities of a sect. She attacks hypocrisy as valiantly as Hannah More, and attacks it in the open, not sheltered on all but the fighting front by the sentry box of orthodoxy. Mrs. Crewkhere, compound of malice and false sanctity, pretending to a holiness so ardent that the common feelings of humanity were not purified but consumed in its blaze, gives the author an opportunity to condemn the passion and the prejudice of those who mix religion and politics for their own advantage. She regrets the disappearance of "that spark of friendship for human kind, that particle of the dove kneaded into our frame, along with the element of the wolf and the serpent." 2. In contrast to Medora, the silly romantic Miss Goldthorp who sets such store by her £50,000, is introduced. As in "Desmond" and "Marchmont", there is a succession of fraudulent lawyers who play their part in the sustained antithesis of the sophisticated and the simple, the honest and the unscrupulous.

As far as marriage is concerned, Mrs. Smith is in the van of reform and her opinions will be examined later in connection with the special theme of the freedom of women. It is sufficient, here, to

note that she attaches great importance to the passions and her novels are full of sensibility. "Desmond" is one of the wettest books. Geraldine weeps continuously and, thereby, unconsciously, induces in the reader some sympathy for the erring husband. Fanny, embarking for France, is forced to wear a veil to hide the ravages of tears. The damp cheek is to be observed among the men also. Desmond and Verney allow the trickling tear to disfigure them. These manifestations of sensitiveness are not confined to the doctrinaire novels; they are indicative of the author's respect for the passions and occur everywhere. Fainting fits, the usual mysterious collapses after emotion and the equally mysterious recoveries therefrom, and outbursts of violence, very dear to the women novelist, are to be noted. Dalamere, who acts like a lunatic and dashes his head against the wall until he is punch drunk, every time he is refused by Emmeline, is a normal figure and his conduct conforms to the idea of what is fitting.

The deliberate intention of the author to propagate liberal opinions can not, then, be doubted. Delmont alone seems to prove it. He is educated according to the ideas of Rousseau, taught the prime importance of reason and the nature of true freedom. He proves an apt pupil, disregards all conventions, and lives by the light of his own intelligence, standing for peace and goodwill to all. He marries a simple, uncontaminated girl from the wilds, miraculously brought into contact with him, and he goes to live in the only state in the world where the government is vested in the people through a social contract. This cannot be an accidental portrait of the Philosopher and the author's
unfortunate obsession with property rights cannot obscure the
fundamental liberality of her outlook and the intentional proselytising
of her method.
CHAPTER V

PROPAGANDA, cont. Typical novels of less literary value with the same purpose; kinds of plots; the work of John Galt; Lord Erskine; Sidney Owenson; the awareness of the economic situation, T.S.Surr and "The Magic of Wealth"; Mary Shelley.

The liberal idea of a gradual progress towards perfection is embodied in fiction of a quality inferior to that of Godwin and his disciples. Many novels were published dealing with this theme that have no literary merit and have not, indeed, in the creative sense survived, but they have great interest for the student bent on assessing the appeal, and the influence on the general public, of a philosophic idea. "Berkeley Hall; or the Pupil of Experience" may be cited as a typical example. It seeks to purvey the doctrine that the spread of education, facilitated by a wise and enlightened government, will induce the spirit of universal benevolence even in commerce and will, in time, lead to the perfectibility of man. There is in it an echo of Bage in the importance attached by the author to international contacts and the mutual respect that comes from understanding and tolerance. The standard of literary ability is considerably lower, however, and the novel is absurd at times because the author transports his characters over the world at such a pace and with such obscure motives, that the reader is confused and irritable. It is saved by

1. Anon, 1796.
its earnestness of purpose.

The heroine, Letitia, has a treacherous friend, Miss Moody, who manages to make her doubt the fidelity of her lover, Tim, the hero, and the grandson of Dr. Homily, owner of Berkeley Hall, one of the stately homes of America. Tim is distraught and consents to go with his tutor Dr. Soulby, on the now almost standard tour of primitive communities, in search of a way of life that will bring happiness. Dr. Soulby is the stock figure of the visionary philosopher and makes the usual speeches about life untrammeled by the forms or the yokes of ancient institutions where they may see fulfilled "the true nature and the life of man." In pursuit of the ideal community, they travel over the Americas, penetrating even to the Arctic circle and seeing primitive beings of all sorts, both mythical and actual. The community chosen to illustrate the liberal view is the tribe of Red Indians by whom the whole party is taken prisoner and some interesting sidelights of theory are to be perceived. At first, the members of the party appear to be doomed. The ceremony of scalping is explained to them and they prepare to die. Each side then behaves with magnanimity. Tim shows such courage that the Chief of the tribe sees in him the prototype of the son whom he lost some years before and decides, for his sake, to spare the whole party except one, Dr. Soulby. There follows an analysis of the motives for excluding him from the general pardon, which is reminiscent of the views on labour expressed by Hobbes, Paine and others. He is a parasite because he cannot do any

of the things which entitle a man to survival in a simple community; he cannot work with his hands, his senses are no longer acute and his courage is affected by nerves. He lives by "the hands and heads of other men", his only contribution being "tooth-work and tongue-work". Further emphasis on the superiority of primitive men is then provided by Tim's negro servant, Sancho, who voluntarily offers himself as a substitute, because he feels that anyone able to spread the right ideas is an asset and because Dr. Soulby, having lived in a civilised community, has never had a chance. This point of view, backed up by the sacrifice offered, gains respect; the chief releases the tutor and orders a feast to celebrate the exhibition of such all-round benevolence. The white men, however, betray their imperfect trust in brotherly love by departing unobtrusively during the festivities, accompanied by an aged chief, his daughter and her Mohawk lover. Back at Berkeley Hall, yet another situation is contrived whereby comments on civilisation may be uttered. The old chief, Tonandorio, is shown the wonders of sophisticated life, remains unimpressed and says: "Brother you and I have little and we sit loose on the earth. These fine things are like roots of the great tree; they fasten the man to the earth and make it hard for him to quit it. He that has so much to love and so much to lose, must have much to fear. You and I have nothing to fear but guilt and dishonour." The drift of this and other arguments seems to be towards the provision of just enough to live on by a benevolent state and a concern for the propagation of the right ideas.

This kind of propaganda abounds. Oppression is a key word. By tyranny and fear, man's finest qualities are destroyed and the progress of the race is retarded, or, alternatively, its deterioration is assisted. The literary device used to allow of the dissemination of ideas varies considerably; so does the kind of target. The climax is usually the same, a movement towards emigration to America or to some other land of the free.¹ The author of "Disobedience", 1799, takes as the compelling motive for flight the tyranny of parental authority. Mary, the daughter of Sir James and Lady Caroline Seabright, refuses to marry Lord St. Albans, her parent's choice of suitor, because she loves her William. She is no bread and butter miss and the story is notable for the intellectual energy she shows in countering the arguments of her parents on the nature of obedience and the duty of women. She preaches the necessity of freedom; freedom of opinion and of action. Nothing prevents her, or William either, from giving utterance to her liberal views. When her repertoire of declamation is exhausted, she manages, in spite of the deprivation of money, the restriction of liberty and the constant surveillance imposed upon her, to elude her parents, join William and triumphantly emigrate to America.

Another example, "What Has Been",² shows the same intrepidity on the part of the heroine. She is an even better object lesson for she has experienced the fashionable carefree life before she is brought

¹. For this theme, see also "The History of Perrotta" or "The Bellows Mender" by H.M. Williams, 1801, and "The Emigrants" by G. Inlay, 1793.
². Anon, 1801.
to see its vacuity by her lover. When she has been sufficiently instructed in liberal thought by him, she cheerfully relinquishes her riches and finds a truer scale of values in poverty.

At times, in the poorer novels, the wish to convince is so urgent and strong that the author becomes frankly scurrilous. The worst examples of this kind of treatment are those attacking religion, or rather the organised Church, as one form of tyranny. It is noteworthy that in even the vulgar attacks on the institutions of the Church, the most virulent condemnation is reserved for doctrine. It is suggested over and over again, that priests encourage superstition and impose on the credulous masses in order to retain their power. The appointment of a notorious murderer as the head of a Franciscan community is the device by which B. Frere shows up what he considers the fallacious doctrines of Christians. In "The Man of Fortitude; or Schecon in England", 1811, he exhibits fraudulent miracles, the exploitation of charity and all the cruder kinds of hypocrisy and the book has a sneering tone. Sandwiched in between descriptions of the gullibility of believers are adulterous passages on Rousseau and impassioned speeches defending the Deistical position.\(^1\)

Perhaps a clearer example of the use of a story to bring home to the ordinary man or woman the philosophic ideas concerning human destiny is "The Loves of Celestine and St. Aubert", by Charles Phillips. Published in 1811, it shows quite clearly the persistence of the

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\(^1\) N.B. He deals just as faithfully with a Methodist parson, Mr. Chubb, whose frenzied sermons send the hero into a madhouse, in "The Adventures of a Dramatist; or a Journey to the London Managers", 1815.
opinions of the reformers. It is a tragedy carefully contrived to show that the existing framework of society is too rigid and cramping for rare spirits to exist in and that only its destruction can hasten the time when man can be free to progress to the state designed for him by the Creator. The motif of the novel is the contribution made by the effort of people with the philosophic outlook and the courage of their convictions to that steady and inevitable progress. For a beginning has been made, and a hemisphere emancipated. Others will follow. Rousseau receives the usual measure of idolatry and the fact that he was suffered to live and die in poverty is given as a strong argument for the necessity of a revolution in the country that could permit such neglect.

The novel begins with the funeral of Celestine who has been a nun for the last two years. Her grave is near a lake. Soon afterwards, on the shores of the same lake, the body of an aged monk is found. On it there is a note to the effect that the writer has committed suicide and that he wishes to be buried by the side of Celestine. A manuscript comes to light conveniently which "speaks the language of Nature and is addressed only to those who believe her dictates superior to those of man." Their story is a sad one.

St. Aubert, a young officer, meets Celestine, the daughter of his deceased father's military friend, and falls in love with her. The love scenes are full of sensibility and are crude in the extreme but they are meant to show the importance of the passions as part of the innate equipment of man.\(^1\) Troubles break out in France and St. Aubert,

\(^1\) See Vol.I, p.111 and 112.
when he is needed to protect Celestine, is sent with his regiment to the American war. The Reign of Terror then begins. Celestine's father is sent to the Guillotine, and she is, herself, in danger of denunciation. She hears that her lover has died of wounds after an engagement. In despair, she marries La Motte, a member of the National Convention but finds herself unable to endure the life on which she has embarked and prepares to poison herself. First, she raises a monument to St. Aubert in her husband's grounds. Before she can swallow the fatal dose, and she is an unconscionable time in doing so, St. Aubert who has been sheltered and cured by friendly Indians, returns and makes himself known to her. They at once stake the superior claim of passion over a loveless marriage and become lovers. La Motte challenges St. Aubert and is killed in the ensuing duel. St. Aubert flees to America and is heard of no more. Celestine bears his child, but it is still born. Inconsolable, she retires to a convent and astonishes all with her holiness.

The plot offers obvious opportunities for propaganda. As a young officer, St. Aubert has much to say on the subject of privilege and declaims loudly against the tyranny and the dishonesty of the government. He puts the point that revolution is essential since the weight of power can be upset only by shock. Significantly, his heroes are Paine and Condorcet and the second volume is devoted to long passages explaining and endorsing their views. Freedom is his watchword; even the freedom to take one's own life. There is no suggestion in any record he says, that Christ rebuked Judas for so doing.
Celestine echoes Mary Wollstonecraft when she claims the right of a woman to extra-marital relations when her husband is repugnant to her. The author shows her, apparently with approval, deceiving her husband, bearing an illegitimate child, claiming the protection of the Church whose tenets she has steadily ignored, to illustrate the thesis that freedom includes the right to sacrifice all for love.

The sojourn among the Indians gives St. Aubert the chance to sample, and to proclaim, the virtues of the simple life. The nobility of unspoilt man is a well worn theme but still an immensely popular one. On the whole, in spite of the satire which it inspired, it lasted as long as the theme of perfectibility itself; the primitive community represents the state 'ab quo' and is as important as the 'terminus ad quem'.

One of the neatest ways of presenting a case for liberal ideas was to compose fictitious memoirs, carefully arranging the phases of a career to illustrate the various doctrines. This trail was well blazed by Holcroft and there are many imitations of "The Memoirs of Bryan Perdue". Usually, novels of this kind have a cynical or bitter note and many of them, intended to convey radical notions, manage to convey only the dog-in-the-manger spirit of their authors. One of the best of these is "The Liberal Critic; or the Memoirs of Henry Percy" 1812, by Thomas Ashe. He claims in the description on the title page that it contains "a correct estimate of the manners and principles of the present times." A great deal of the three volumes

1. 1805.
is taken up by the author's interpolations written in a kind of sceptical bantering style. He imagines the kind of reaction his doctrinaire novel may cause: "What impudence to pretend to be acquainted with the sciences, religion, politics, and affairs of state! - How absurd to insculcate the love of virtue in a novel, or to affect to reform the age in a work whose province should be to amuse, and not to instruct!" He then indicates that any such "great cry" would leave him unmoved.

Major Percy, ordered to America with his regiment makes political and military animadversions on the war and then retires from the service in disgust. From his secluded retreat in Wales where he proposes to live a simple life he rails against the government and issues a series of warnings to legislators. "It is under a government, deaf to the voice of the people," he says "that things begin to stagnate and to corrupt; for it is a rule as invariable in politics as in nature, that a want of proper motion does not produce repose and stability, but a motion of another kind; a motion unseen and intestine which does not preserve but destroy." His view of the perfect society is a self-supporting community in which a continual exchange of mutual benefits takes place: "Whilst every man is improving his own private industry for the common good, the whole body of society testifies its gratitude to him, by supplying him with all the other helps he stands in need of." This view recurs again and again. It also occurs in

"The Soldier of Fortune", 1816. It is expressed by the hero, Don Carlos: "It was my belief, that every man without exception, owes his labour more to society than to himself, and that, in consequence, he should consider himself born for the public good. The more he consecrates his cares to the public good, the more distinguished and illustrious he will be...... I encouraged my benevolence to extend to all mankind."¹ It is the duty of Parliament to see that this ideal is put into practice but, unfortunately, no-one need look to the government for any liberal action. It is oppressive and corrupt. It sees its duty and refuses to do it. "How long" he asks, "has Parliament heard of, and published, and lamented over its own due corruption and degeneracy? And yet it will never reform itself. It will wait, with folded arms, the coming of another Cromwell, and look on with stupid insensibility while a revolution rabble sap the foundations of the fabric, and level the once proud edifice with the earth."²

After this fine fighting start, the story begins. Its part is a minor one. The Major's son is to be launched in the world and, with many admonitions, is sent to Cambridge with a view to entering the Church, though he has no vocation for it. This is the opening chord of another dirge. The author contends that a high proportion of the clergy enter the Church in this way and states that it often becomes the concurring opinion of a numerous congregation "that 'their

¹. The Soldier of Fortune, Vol.I, Chap.6, p.46 and 47.
². The Liberal Critic, Vol.1, Chap.2, p.179.
parson" was intended by nature and the nature of things, for any other situation in life than that which he so improperly, and pertinaciously, fills." An amusing passage disposes of all the other professions according to the character of the entrant. Imperious youths are obviously designed for the army, agile, unpolished and intrepid ones for the Navy. "A lad," he asserts, "sanguinary and cruel, addicted to anatomise birds and dissect insects, is named for a surgeon and apothecary." A lawyer must have "much cunning and chicanery, a cold blood and a character sordid and severe." Those who have not the requisite qualities for the other professions become clerics. As a result, the Church is full of apathetic nonentities or secular-minded and ambitious tyrants. A long procession of wicked and inept clergy files past the reader and prepares him to some extent for the failure of Henry. Quite early, he incurs the jealousy of his vicar and gives up all hope of his support in obtaining a living. Then, he gets himself appointed as private chaplain to the Duke of Northumberland who finds him extremely callow and advises him to put aside his books and go out and about to learn about human nature from people. During this phase, Henry experiences life and the propaganda becomes intense. The chief lessons he learns concern the prevalence of self-interest and the absence of the liberal outlook. He considers the passions and the part that they play in human affairs. He goes to conventicles and studies them there; Mrs. Richmond's Chapel and its services are a revelation to him. He is horrified by the practices of the Methodists.

2. Ibid. Chap. 3, p. 47.
and declares that their exploitation of the passions leads to immorality, "and that from the nymph of King's Place to the cyprian of Bagnigge-Wells, there is not an unfortunate but what studies devotion in a conventicle, and acquires her morals from the teachers of the evangelical schools."¹ His point of view is not without originality; he sees excessive sensibility in religion as a subtle form of tyranny. Certainly, his descriptions of the love-feasts, the bouts of quietism, the groaning according to a standard gamut, all suggest the oppression that any kind of competition in emotion can impose.

His next move is to Ireland to the post of Chaplain to the garrison of Dublin. There, he excites hostility and alarm by his review of the general oppression prevailing in Ireland. The familiar diatribes against institutions and the corrupt methods of those who uphold them pour forth from him with an obligato by the author. The clergy are pilloried as tyrants and hypocrites who construe rationalism into leaving well alone.² A final rant on the dishonesty of officials costs him his job and he goes home to his parents, by now settled in Bristol.

He has not yet finished, however. We have still to hear his reasons for giving up his profession and for turning to the tilling of the soil, far from the evils of sophistication. He marries his soulful Clara and so provides himself with the perfect, permanent audience for his opinions on innate goodness. They live happily on the land and "their amusements abroad were not to overbear the weak and

ride over the poor, but to enjoy the varied scenes of nature, and to visit the injured, the unfortunate, or the oppressed, who found them always ready advocates and munificent patrons."

The novel is merely a vehicle of ideas, a résumé of most of the views current at the time. As fiction, it fails because it is cluttered with characters who have no literary purpose and scenes that are no sooner beheld than they are faded out to make room for the moral comment. The impression that the author may at any moment break into a slightly sneering lecture robs the book of sustained interest and spoils the characterisation. But it has a toughness that compels attention and it manages to convey a sense of urgency. The underlying suggestion is one of anxiety for reform.

Another example of the kind of publication for which the term 'novel' is merely a courtesy title is "The Majolo" by John Galt. The Critical Review confesses that it is unable to assess it and calls it a mixture of philosophy and fiction. Its pages are full of speculative and liberal reflections on the nature and the destiny of man and the reasons for the slowness of his development to perfection. Galt has theories about innate tendencies and wishes to convince us of the correlation between physical and mental equipment. To do so, he has made his hero a Majolo, that is one of the peasants of Sardinia elected to be educated at the special school in Cagliari reserved for able children of the poor, who work as servants in wealthy families in the vicinity and are released for a certain time each day to attend

2. 1816.
lessons. They are all talented boys. The author tells how he took shelter during a storm in the hut of an old peasant woman and, there met the Majolo who told him his life story. The plot is slight in the extreme and is obviously only intended as a vehicle for theory. The Majolo tells of his career; how he has been secretary to various men and with them has travelled all over Europe and, on the way, has had opportunities of studying different types of personality. What he has seen has confirmed his views on the nature and destiny of man.

One of his reiterated opinions is the idea that the instinctive tendencies of a man's character have a pronounced effect on his conduct and his fate. So he is led to the doctrine of Necessity. He says "I am a fatalist. I see in the progress of the events of my life, the links of a necessary series." Man is predestined. "There is nothing more deceitful," says the Majolo, "than to trust a man on account of his qualities; in every case where you do so, and leave out of consideration what appears to be his destiny, you will never cease to repent the connection." Moralising on this doctrine abound. The Majolo consistently maintains that to deny the doctrine of necessity is to deny God's wisdom and foreknowledge and believe that he created things without knowing what purpose they might serve. At the deathbed of Baron Alterbro, the Friar in attendance speaks of the progress towards perfection of the race. "The design of the universal frame of the creation," he says, "is perfect, but the work is not yet finished. What we therefore deem faults in the system, are,

doubtless, necessary to a progressive state in which all things are proceeding from the shapelessness of an earthly conception towards the excellence of a heavenly maturity. 1.

Because of this belief in the doctrine of Necessity, the Majolo, like Holcroft, would absolve the criminal from responsibility for his actions and from blame. Crime is a disease and should be cured, not punished. All vices are but "erroneous conclusions of the understanding". He is utterly opposed to the imposition of penalties and tells the pathetic story of a little kleptomaniac midshipman, dismissed his ship for petty theft, who is allowed to go from bad to worse and is finally convicted of felony and transported to Botany Bay, though he cannot help himself when the urge to take something assails him. The Majolo considers him a patient, not a criminal. "The punishment of the vicious" says the Majolo, "is not inflicted on their own account, but to furnish a motive of fear to the innocent. I have no faith in the system of penitentiaries, which is the fruit of such notions as yours, because I regard vice as a moral disease: which, like any physical malady, the constitution may have virtue enough in the end to overcome. But the patient is not to be cured by killing another patient before his eyes." 2. He objects to imprisonment in what he calls 'moral lazarettos' where the same penalty is inflicted indiscriminately on all. The attitude of fear and contempt with which a man who has committed a crime is regarded, should be replaced by gratitude, for any felon is a public benefactor in that he presents to

the student of mankind first class material for research into the
disabilities of the mind. Substantially, this is the point of view
of Holcroft, Ritson and Godwin.

The influence of Drs. Lavater and Gall with their theories of
the recognisable accordance between the physical structure of a
man and
his moral and spiritual equipment is to be seen in the Majolo's
postulation of mysterious affinities and antipathies. He tells the
story of the devastating effect of the appearance of a complete
stranger on an Englishman, during a performance of an opera in
Naples; he grows visibly more and more disturbed and emotional
and, finally, goes out and shoots himself. Intrigued by the incident,
the Majolo
scrapes acquaintance with the stranger and induces him to accompany
him to a prison to see a convict who, he happens to know, resembles
the dead man. The convict is seen to be similarly affected. Much
later, the stranger is discovered to be guilty of vicious and evil
deeds. The Majolo completes his tale with the suggestion that man is
endowed with more senses and passions than he is aware of. Sometimes
these presentiments have good consequences. Indeed, on one occasion,
the Majolo's own life is saved by a sudden and inexplicable intuition.
His master Count Waltzerstein has died of poison and he has been
accused of the crime and thrown into prison. Confronted with the
accuser and his witnesses, according to the legal practice of the
country, he becomes aware by some supernatural means that one of them,
a footman called Antonio, is the guilty man. He accuses him and
Antonio breaks down, confesses to the crime. In prison, he affirms
that his destiny is inescapable and that he has always had a mysterious certainty that he would be hanged. He conjectures simply: "Perhaps I have been made for the devil," said he mildly, and with a modest and unaffected simplicity; "and it is not my fault, if I am doomed to perdition. I would not go to Hell if I could help it."2.

After the murder of Count Waltzerstein, the Majolo meets an Englishman called Mittford and goes with him to England. This affords him the opportunity of studying the nature of government and he comments freely on Parliament and the state of the country. He considers English statesmen the meanest in all Europe. "They have the fear of the people," says he, "so constantly before their eyes to such a degree, that they sometimes forget the higher principles of public duty....Thus, there has grown up a sort of deification of the people of England in politics,...which governs the interests of Europe."3. He dilates on the nature of political freedom and particularises oppressions. In a long passage dealing with tyranny of various kinds, he states: "The most abominable oppression is that of forcing civilisation or improvement beyond the events and wishes of the age."

In contrast to the more usual mixtures of the marvellous and the romantic, may be seen examples of fables and fantasy which preach the cure of a sick world by means of the remedies advocated by the reformers. Two kinds of treatment may be distinguished among the

2. Ibid. Vol.II, p.28, Chap.3.
numerous stories of this sort. There is the allegorical method where
the author causes the hero, usually an abstraction, to set out on a
quest either to find a solution of life's ills or to 'ride abroad redressing
human wrong'. For instance in "The Travels of Humanius; in Search of
the Temple of Happiness, an Allegory", by Charles Lucas, 1809, the hero
seeks for an ideal and, in his search, runs through the whole range of
human suffering. There is little story. The whole novel comprises
a catalogue of the ills of society, speculations on their origin and
pages of reflection on their permanence. Humanius suffers a series
of disillusionments when he sees the feebleness of human charity and
the strength of the motive of self-interest. He comes to the conclusion
that there is no hope of happiness this side of the grave because nothing
can stop the progressive deterioration of the species except its
reunion with, and absorption in, the Creator.

Another effective treatment of the liberal outlook is to be
seen in those novels which describe a supposedly imaginary country,
obviously England in disguise. The evils enumerated are recognisably
those of our own country and they engender the same opinions as those
put forward by the early radicals. One of the most popular of these
fables is "Armata; A Fragment" by Lord Erskine, 1816. As a novel,
that is to say, a work of creative imagination, it has little to
recommend it except, perhaps, the device by which the hero is enabled
to reach Armata. The method is analytical, the tone calm and faintly
satirical at times. As propaganda, however, it is important. The
state of England in 1816 is described in great detail and, though
occasionally the author's obvious patriotism is at war with his liberal opinions, and he contradicts his thesis by implication, so that a panegyric of his mother land may jostle a fierce passage denouncing her philosophical and political errors or condemning her surrender to the principle of self interest, yet he stands in the liberal tradition. He eulogises Fox, applauds the principles of the French Revolutionaries, extols America for her successful fight against tyranny, rejoices openly at the blow to Parliamentary interference with individual liberty dealt by the acquittal of Hardy and his fellow reformers and deplores the new oppressions imposed by the growing power of unrestricted commerce.

There is no plot. The novel has a beginning; the voyage of the hero to Armata. It has an end; the return of the hero from Armata. Part Two makes plans to take him there again. All the rest consists of a resume of the history of Armata and a consideration of her difficulties. Yet it was so popular that both parts went through four editions before the end of the year.

The narrator tells how he sailed in the "Columbia" from New York on Sept. 6th 1814, on route for China, via New South Wales. All went well until Feb. 10th when a storm arose which tore their rigging and left them helpless. They drifted for five weeks and were then overtaken by another more terrible storm. During a period of total darkness, their vessel was caught in one of two mysterious currents, flowing in opposite directions and separated from each other by jagged rocks and foaming whirlpools. The channel was about fifty yards
wide. The ship was swept onwards at the terrifying rate of twenty-five or thirty miles per hour and, as they were propelled in this way for three months and two days, they estimated that they must have traversed a distance of over seventy thousand miles, three times the circumference of the earth. Fortunately, the narrator, through sheer interest, took full bearings. Emerging at last into a wide sea as smooth as glass, they barely had time to notice that the heavens were full of strange planets and stars, as well as some familiar ones, and to come to the conclusion that they were no longer on the earth, when the ship suddenly foundered and all were drowned except the narrator who was washed ashore and lay unconscious for some time. When he comes to he is welcomed to Armata by a man speaking perfect English. He turns out to be a Scotsman, who, carried as a child of three with his parents to this country in the same way as the narrator, and unable to get back to earth again, has grown up in Armata. He is now the sole survivor of his party. In his possession, he has a journal, left by his father, containing invaluable information. The narrator's own idea was that they had come upon a sort of appendage of the earth, connected with it by the double channel and he pictured the shape of the planet as a twin headed shot. But the suggestion of Norvan's father written down in the diary convinces him that he is wide of the mark. The entry runs: "When I consider the unexampled rapidity of the current, with its dismal chaotic boundary, and that we were involved in it for almost three months, emerging at once into a sea where the heavens above presented new stars, and those of our own in different magnitudes
and positions than any they could be seen in from either of our hemispheres, I am convinced, beyond a doubt, that I am no longer on the earth, but on what I might best describe as a twin brother with it, bound together by this extraordinary channel, as a kind of umbilical chord, in the capacious womb of nature, but which, instead of being separated in the birth, became a new and permanent substance in her mysterious course.\textsuperscript{1}

The document then gives the history of the country and it is here that liberal opinions are propagated. We are meant to learn from the example of Armata, so we are taken through the "singular revolution" in which, as in England in 1688, "a nation in arms against its sovereign and reducing him to terms of submission, had the discretion to know exactly what to demand, and, by demanding nothing more," were able peacefully to secure great privileges. This is cited as a great bloodless victory over oppression, the triumph of the rights of men over tyranny. Lord Erskine's legal training here shows its effect. He goes on to compare with this revolution other insurrections: "convulsive paroxysms of tumult and disorder, more destructive than the tyranny overthrown, and often ending in worse; because civil societies cannot be suddenly new-modelled with safety. - Their improvements, to be permanent, must be almost insensible, and growing out of the original systems, however imperfect they may have been."\textsuperscript{2}

Nevertheless, his attacks are keen and pointed. He goes through the war with America, disguised as Hisperia, and the tyrannical

\textsuperscript{1} "Armata", Lord Erskine, 1816. Pt.I, p.26 and 27.
\textsuperscript{2} Ibid. Pt.I, p.37 and 38.
behaviour of the mother country is emphasised. Tirades follow against greed and the love of luxury, the adoption of meretricious values of life. He advocates the return to the simple life and brotherly love. A plea for humanitarianism and benevolence is made several times. There is, however, the little dose of caution against licence and the harm done to the liberal cause by the unrestrained violence of its adherents. It is reminiscent of Dr. Price, who would have his reformers see that their own lives were in order before embarking on the reformation of others. "The first step," he says, "towards public reformation of every description, is a firm combination against rash and violent men - Very many of them, (perhaps the bulk) are perfectly well intentioned, but not, for all that the less dangerous to the cause they would support."

The French Revolution figures as the revolt in Capetia. The causes are given, the struggle approved as inevitable, with the familiar admonition against lack of control. The programme issued by the rioters is based on liberal principles: the right to protection from injustice and tyranny, the claim to the products of one's own labour or to a livelihood gained indirectly therefrom, and the surrender of authority willingly to a state founded on a social contract.

A devastating picture follows of the condition of Arrata after the conclusion of the war with Capetia. It is England in 1815. Calamity dire and unexpected reduces politicians to impotence and bewilderment. The document says of the situation: "Peace came at

1. Ibid. Pt. I. p.66.
last, so often invoked as the source of every blessing; but how shall I find credit when I tell you that scarcely had she finished her dove-like flight, and alighted amongst us, amidst universal acclamations, when our prosperity vanished like an enchantment. 1. Every note in the liberal scale is then struck. Emphatically, he claims the right of each man to a living from his own toil and condemns the iniquity of capitalists who exploit the poor in their mad race for profit. He considers the government unrepresentative, calls it short sighted and out of its depth because it is composed of people of the old order, not yet fully aware of the nature of the changes around them. He maintains that public charity and poor relief, especially the repulsive system of hawking paupers round the country to their birthplace, do not constitute true benevolence. He inveighs against the policy adopted with regard to corn and agriculture in general. At intervals, he inserts passages of declamation. After a description of the misery of the poor he talks of the folly of allowing a "retrogression of agriculture" and is led into reflection on the subject of the revivifying nature of death and decay when "every animal that dies; all vegetables, and they have lives also, every substance which dissolves and becomes offensive, every heterogeneous mixture, which upon the surface would stagnate and become malignant, brought back by human wisdom into their allotted stations, become the future parents of a renovated world." 2.

At this point, the manuscript, which the narrator has sent to

1. Ibid. Pt.I, p.118.
the printer to be published, has become illegible from immersion in sea water. The writing is miraculously restored when an old beggar woman, offering to sell the liquid in a bottle left to her by her father to the author, spills it over the documents on the table. The print becomes legible at once. So, Part Two is made possible. It is concerned with more practical matters than the first part. It discusses cruelty to animals, the powers of magistrates, dress customs and other topical themes, but they are not philosophical.

The novel ends with plans for the fitting out of a commercial fleet by the Admiralty to carry trade to the new world.

Altogether, the book is noteworthy for its deliberate exploitation of the novel form to purvey opinion by means of fantasy. Lord Erskine makes no secret of his purpose. He addresses himself to the "whole public of this great country, and through that public to the whole civilized world,"

"He has chosen the form of a novel in order to reach a wide public though his theme is not a literary one. As he engagingly says: "no human learning or wisdom employed upon realities can, now-a-days look much further than to an indemnity for the paper and the types. - High reputation, indeed (a rare phenomenon!) with the aids of hot-pressed foolscap, a broad margin and expensive engravings, may force a passage for history through the libraries of the great, but Novels alone are the books of universal sale."

The selection is as deliberate as that of Holcroft or of Godwin and illustrates the continued interest in liberal ideas.

1. Introd. Part I, p.3.
On Dec. 15th, 1806, a Dublin paper, "The Freeman's Journal" printed, under the signature 'M.T.' a vituperative attack on the author of a recent publication called "The Wild Irish Girl". The article accused her of attempting "to vitiate mankind", to undermine morality by sophistry "and that under the insidious mask of virtue, sensibility and truth". From this beginning, grew a controversy. The Journal printed impartially, articles in defence and further attacks. Perhaps Miss Owenson's replies or those of her friends managed to get under M.T.'s skin. Certain it is that he returned to the attack again and again, and that his rancour went far beyond the legitimate bounds of criticism even in that swashbuckling age of reviewing. The novel is full of liberal and political views vehemently, even aggressively, expressed and thus provides some excuse for the abuse heaped upon it. Sir Richard Phillips, having accepted the manuscript on the strength of Miss Owenson's previous novels, was so shocked by the freedom of the opinions expressed that he withdrew his original offer. The Dublin booksellers refused it, to a man. Finally, Johnson, well known for his sympathy with liberal opinion, offered the author £300 for it. This was too much for Phillips. He repented of his pusillanimity, claimed a prior right to the book and published it after all.

As one reads the charges levelled against Miss Owenson, one can imagine that the years have rolled back; they are indistinguishable from those which were hurled at the reformers in the 1790's. From that time, she was a marked woman. The initials masked the identity of John Wilson Croker and he continued his attacks in "The Quarterly
Review" whenever she published a book. His most malicious notice was the one written on the publication of "France" in 1813. The familiar accusations are thundered out: libertinism, Jacobinism, atheism. Nor was he averse from dishonest means to besmirch her name. For instance, he deliberately omits four significant words from a quotation from her description of a religious festival procession, in order to support his contention that she was cynically irreligious. In his review, the passage runs "The priests, to their horror could not find a single virgin, and were at last obliged to send to a neighbouring village to request the loan of a virgin." Later, one was produced, not a very satisfactory one: indeed, the quotation continues; "a little the worse for wear; but this was not the moment for fastidiousness, and the Madonna was paraded through the streets." The original text contains the words 'to carry in procession' after the first word 'virgin'.

The chorus of disapproval increases in volume. Blackwood's is equally censorious. The Edinburgh Magazine calls her "a petticoated, ultra radical author". Another critic, B. Owen Maddyn refers to her as "A female Voltaire - reared in a province and fed on potato diet." The most interesting indication of the effect she had on her contemporaries is the parallel drawn by the "Anti-Jacobin" between her and the early revolutionaries. In the review of "Florence McCarthy", 1819, the critic suggests that some of the opinions stated in the novel are reminiscent of those expressed in "France" and refers to the Quarterly's notice of that work. He endorses that paper's verdict, delivered after a careful and accurate examination; that it contains
all the corrupt motives which led to the French Revolution. "Florence McCarthy" he says, is obviously an answer to the article for it contains a caricature of Wilson in the person of Crawley, the vicious political agent of Lady Dunure. He then goes on to deplore the dissemination of such views. "What Lady Morgan is now", he says, "such was Helen Maria Williams in 1793. What Helen Maria Williams is now, if she lives, Lady Morgan is quickly approaching." He regrets that Sir Charles did not restrain these "ebullitions of his lady" and comes sadly to the conclusion that, if he would permit "France", he would permit anything.

Whatever a modern reader may make of these accusations, it cannot be denied that, to her contemporaries, she appeared to hold dangerously liberal views and to have used fiction deliberately to disseminate them with all the ardour of a missionary spreading a creed. In her own words, she wrote before Moore had sung the wrongs of Ireland, "awakening sympathies which reason could not rouse, and making the ear a passage to the heart and understanding". She gave a personal note to liberal propaganda and her success is indicated by the fact that she roused also antipathies that reason could not subdue. Account must be taken, however, of two factors when her work is considered. First, except for three novels and the book "France" and a later one called "Italy," her plots are restricted to Irish affairs and were written with the deliberate purpose of calling attention to a country's wrongs, so that an emotional element is present. The circumstances of the time intensified this element for as she states herself: "At the

moment "The Wild Irish Girl" appeared, it was dangerous to write on Ireland, hazardous to praise her, and difficult to find a publisher for an Irish tale which had a political tendency. For even, ballads sung in the streets of Dublin had been denounced by Government spies...1. So the public reaction is likely to have been more violent than is, perhaps, warrantable. Secondly Miss Owen's temperament contributed largely to the odium attached to her opinions. She had all the Irish love of a fight and was frequently led into belligerent statement when the views she uttered were comparatively orthodox, as, for instance, on the subject of marriage, and would have occasioned little comment if they had not been decked in the full panoply of tribal war. Undisciplined, violently partisan and flamboyant in language, she was invigorated by enmity. She is rarely life-size.

Her leading ideas are independent of the setting of her stories. She sees Society as corrupt and arranges the usual parallel between the virtues of the simple life and the evils of sophistication. Her method may be seen clearly in "Woman, or Ida of Athens", 1809. An English diplomat spends a holiday in Athens with his host, an Athenian, exiled for political reasons to Venice. There, in romantic circumstances, he makes the acquaintance of Ida Rosemeli and falls in love with her. Though he employs all the Godwinian arguments about liberty in love and the constraints of marriage, he is unable to seduce her and returns sadly to Venice, but not before he has fulfilled his function of uttering a point of view and providing Ida with opportunities for

1. Ibid. p.XXV.
declamations on the passions. The history of Ida is then related.

In her infancy, her mother had died and her father, wishing to marry again, had entrusted the child to the care of her maternal uncle, opportunely returned from England after heartbreaking experiences. He had been educated there, and had formed two very strong attachments, one for a friend and one for a beautiful woman. They had run away together. Doubly betrayed, he sank under the blow, fell ill, travelled all over Europe in the effort to recover his spirits and finally returned to Greece to die. The baby gave him a new interest and he is fully restored to health while he is engaged in providing for her the ideal education. When she grows up, she begs successfully for the life of Osmyn, a slave, about to be put to death as a runaway, falls in love with him and enters into the most alarmingly philosophical correspondance with him, when his master leaves the district and takes the slave with him. Osmyn then passes through some incredible adventures, wins his master's affection, is freed, is discovered to be nobly born after all and returns to marry Ida.

It is a curious and pretentious story. The liberal views are conveyed by Ida in her speeches to the Englishman and in her letters to Osmyn, and by Diako, the uncle who is the prototype of the natural, simple man. His conviction is stated clearly: "Virtue and felicity are of nature! on every side, vice and misery are of man." Again: "Nature has only given us desires, whose gratification is enjoyment; but society in its gradual estrangement from her dictates,

passions which become the scourge of those who cherish them; man, naturally beneficent, becomes a tyrant—man, naturally free, becomes a slave; and religion, which is of nature, conveyed through the senses to the soul,... becomes an incomprehensible dogma, propagated by cruelty and fanaticism; disfigured by human invention on every side, breaking the tie of human sympathy, scattering discord and disorder through nations, founding its merits upon earthy privation, and imposing its belief by eternal terrors." \(^1\). Everywhere he has gone, he has seen moral disorder produced by the prejudice and corruption of society. Yet he continually expresses a belief in the gradual progress towards perfection of the species if man would study nature: "It is, from the harmonies and conformities of nature," he says, "that man should borrow his political and moral adaptations, and learn from the Legislature of the Universe those beneficent laws, which should form the social compact of mankind." \(^2\). His recipe for this return to the pristine state of innocence is a mixture of the "combinations of genius, the inventions of art, the intelligence of wisdom and the supremacy of virtue," allowed to work together uninterrupted by organisation. In the perfect community private interests will be willingly sacrificed to the public good for universal benevolence "proceeds only from that secret impulse, by which Nature urges man, to enlighten and to cherish his brother man." \(^3\). Ida strikes the same note. "Let us refer to Nature," said Ida, "who places no

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boundary to enjoyment but what its own excesses create. Let us refer
to society, which, imitating Nature, retributes on the individual the
injury he has done to the community.....Enjoy, is the law of Nature;
restrain is the law of society; it is the perfect harmony of both
that bestows felicity on man."1"

The education of Ida also follows closely the models advocated
earlier by the reformers. She is brought up entirely without coercion
and taught never to restrain the passions. They constitute that part
of human nature designed by the Creator to keep man in touch with
himself. It follows that feeling precedes reasoning and is the guiding
force by which a child may be directed.2 Any evidence of sensibility
is welcomed as a sign of spiritual awareness, a proof of fineness of
soul. The author associates with it the most admirable qualities of
human nature and believes that love of liberty is inseparable from
great sensibility of heart. The display of such sensibility on the
part of Ida and Diako moves the reviewer to regret that the "wise and
just political doctrines of liberty and toleration, which should be
taught only with a weight and dignity corresponding to their importance,
are fruitlessly thrown away in impeding the progress of a novel."3

Another of her leading ideas concerns the nature of the innate
equipment of man. He is endowed with passions in order that he may
have sympathetic insight into the nature of his fellows and thus
develop universal benevolence. "The Wild Irish Girl" illustrates this

idea. The Prince of Innismore and his daughter are the last members of an ancient and honourable Irish family whose fortunes have steadily declined since the days of Cromwell, when the heir was killed during a skirmish with English soldiers and part of the estate was annexed by the victorious General M. They are living in a few rooms of the ruined castle. At the time the story opens, Lord M., the descendant of General M., has sent his son Horatio M. to Ireland to sober him down after a period of dissipation. In one of his rambles round the neighbourhood, the young man comes upon the castle and sees, through a casement, Mass being celebrated for an old man and a beautiful girl. Struck by the picturesque and romantic scene, he climbs to the window to see better, falls and breaks an arm. He is taken in and given hospitality. Concealing his identity, he stays on and falls in love with Glorvina. Then he has to go back to England for a time on business and returns to find that the Prince has been arrested for debt and that the Princess has promised to marry a mysterious stranger twice her age in order to recoup the family fortune. The old man is released and Glorvina prepares for the wedding. Horatio, however, interrupts the ceremony, claims the bride and discovers that the bridegroom is his own father who, ignorant of his son's affection for Glorvina, has chosen this way of healing the ancient family feud. Lord M. behaves with great nobility. He gives up his bride who promptly marries Horatio. The Prince dies of emotion at the ending of the feud.

Though the novel is an apologia for all things Irish and breathes ardent patriotism throughout, there are significant passages which reveal
the liberal outlook. The two lovers, shut up together for long periods in a solitary castle discuss with each other and with old Father John the nature and destiny of man. The importance of the mind is emphasised. Glorvina's strong one is an emanation of divine intelligence. She is represented as full of sensibility. She claims that she possesses in her mind the faculty of perception of the spiritual to a high degree. On hearing poetry, she feels the presence of the Divine. "The perusal of Ossian's 'Song of other Times', the last pale rose that outlives its season, and bears on its faded breast the frozen tears of the wintry dawn, and Collins's Ode to Evening all awaken in my heart the same train of indescribable feeling, of exquisite yet unspeakable sensation! Alas! how solitary is the pleasure of feeling thus alone and the utter impossibility of conveying to the bosom of another those emotions by which our own is sublimed."¹ This paves the way for a discussion on the transference of thought without verbal expression, by means of the passions. "May not the sympathy of a kindred sensibility in the bosom of another," says Glorvina, "meet and enjoy those delicious feelings by which yours is warmed, and, sinking beneath the inadequacy of language to give them birth, feel like you in silent and sacred emotion?" The priest considers that the sympathy between "two refined, elevated and sensible minds, in the sublime and beautiful of the moral and natural world, approaches nearer to the rapturous and pure emotion which uncreated spirits may be supposed

to feel in their heavenly communion, than any other human sentiment with which we are acquainted.\textsuperscript{1} The passions are the means of approbation of the spiritual, the awakening medium of worship and, though human hearts now beat with a "limited throb" they will in time "be animated to the nobler pulsation of universal philanthropy....."\textsuperscript{2}
This theme recurs. In "The Missionary", the author's favourite tale, a young Portuguese monk is shown in a struggle between his senses and his religion and a compromise solution is reached by the suggestion that the passions are themselves hallowed. Never-the-less, Miss Owenson, rigidly orthodox on the subject of chastity, prudently places Luxima, the beloved, in the way of a missile intended for the hero and kills her off, to ensure victory for the faith. Hilarion becomes a recluse philosopher.

Not only does she believe in the perfectibility of the species, she sees it progressing all round her. It is occurring too fast for philosophers to keep up with, though she admits that there is much to be done before "the interests of humanity can be based upon a system, consonant with nature and conducive to general happiness."\textsuperscript{3}

The right of every man to freedom from oppression is everywhere emphasised, but is especially vehemently expressed in the novels dealing with Ireland. "Florence McCarthy", 1819, is one long catalogue of oppressions which make the poor utterly miserable. Fulminations against the tyranny of absentee landlords, the worse cruelties and the

\begin{enumerate}
\item Ibid. p.\textsuperscript{250}.
\item Ibid. Letter XXVI, p.\textsuperscript{311}.
\item "Woman and Her Master", Pref. p.\textsuperscript{8}, 1840.
\end{enumerate}
avarice of unscrupulous agents, the ill-regulated Government and, indeed all government, are its chief features. It had an enormous sale, ran through three editions within the year and justified the unprecedented sum of £1,200 said to have been paid to her for the manuscript. The usual panorama unfolds itself; scenes of famine and misery alternating with those of the luxurious living of the English in Ireland. In this novel, her passionate espousal of the cause of the oppressed approaches the revolutionary; in the reiterated suggestion that the greatest need of Ireland is that of a leader and a spokesman. The plot concerns the return home of a famous general, FitzWalter, to claim his patriarchal estates, seized when he was kidnapped as a child and sold into slavery. He has taken a romantic vow to marry the daughter of a nobleman who has saved his father's life. This is Florence McCarthy. She behaves so oddly and appears in so many improbable guises that the plot is hopelessly confused. It is of no importance. This is a patriotic novel written by a bitter crusader.

The evils against which she tilts are, in this case, specifically Irish, but the narrowing of the channel must not obscure the connection of these ideas with the great liberal stream.

Generally speaking, novelists rarely seem to be aware that they are living in a changing world and that the infringement of the rights of the individual which they deplore will grow steadily more serious because of changes in the very structure of society caused by the influx of wealth. There are some examples, however, of novels which show an awareness of the situation and whose authors make an attempt to relate
the old creeds to it. The reader usually finds traces of this awareness in the odd comment, the interpolation of the writer's opinion rather than in a formal doctrinaire novel. But an interesting piece of propaganda appeared in 1815 under the title of "The Magic of Wealth". It deals with the evils of the economic situation.

The author, T.S. Surr, had previously written four novels. Although they are humanitarian in outlook, they betray little sign of liberal opinions and are made up of the usual popular ingredients, romantic love stories, mysterious parentage, sudden reversals of fortune in favour of the good at the expense of the wicked. The most popular was "A Winter in London", 1806. Nine editions were printed in one year. In the preface to the ninth edition, he maintains that he writes merely for enjoyment and even admits that he dissents from the opinions of those who consider a novel as a means of instruction. He comments on the system of making "prattling philosophers in petticoats". He laments that, once, a man's home was a comfortable place, and women's pursuits made it so, "whereas this mania of philosophy has a direct contrary tendency, converting our parlours into chemical laboratories and our drawing rooms into debating societies." His work is considered unexceptionable and he gets a clean bill of health even from the "Anti-Jacobin Review and Magazine". It is surprising, then, to find him entering the lists with a very different purpose. In the Preface to "The Magic of Wealth" he says: "In submitting to the Public a fifth production, under the popular form of a NOVEL, the author hopes that, as far as this species of work can properly be rendered a vehicle of

2. 1815
opinions, he has not neglected the opportunity, which it furnished him, of making it an auxiliary of TRUTH. He then dedicates the book to Sir William Paxton as a "humble tribute to practical philanthropy."

The story steps at once into the ring. A mysterious stranger given to philosophic soliloquy and eccentric in dress and conduct arrives, clutching a little red trunk, at the house of Mr. Perryman the haberdasher, gives the name of Lytton and asks for lodgings. Apparently, he is possessed of unlimited wealth and is prepared to spend it freely doing acts of benevolence. He rescues a young man called Lancaster from the workhouse, takes away with him the old porter whom he discovers to be a merchant fallen on evil times, and befriends a milliner's assistant, in love with Lancaster, who turns out to be the old porter's grand-daughter. His altruism continues. At a sale, he buys Moreton Hall, the family seat of the Beaumont family, now extinct. He renews an old friendship with the Countess of Orville and her young brother, members of the Oldways family whose ancestral home is in the neighbourhood of Moreton Hall. He soon discovers that Squire Oldways is being steadily reduced to penury by rising costs, the declining rents of his tenants and the speculations of his new neighbour Francis Flimflam, a banker who has settled in the vicinity. This man's career has been noteworthy. He represents a new kind of oppressor, the unscrupulous speculator. His father, an illiterate shopkeeper, apprenticed Francis to a London Banker and, as soon as the young man had learnt some of the tricks of the profession,

"turned the dowlas and broad cloth out of one side of his shop; perched a little boy with his pen stuck in his ear behind the counter, wrote up 'The Bank' upon a bit of board at the window; and began giving his customers, pieces of paper directed to his son Frank in London." Finally, Francis took over the bank and the concern flourished, especially when Sir Christopher Cringer, a 'Parliament man', and the receiver of taxes for the county, became a sleeping partner. Francis by this time, is a very wealthy man. His latest scheme is the creation of a new watering place, Flimflamton, and, with this object in view, he has bought up all the properties and leases that he can get hold of. The plans are complete for theatre, baths, concert rooms, chapel and libraries, and building has begun. Lyttleton embarks on a silent struggle with the banker and defeats him by means of his superior wealth. He sets out to show the instability of credit since it only exists by the credulity and trust of others and can be destroyed overnight by a breath of suspicion. Flimflam eventually goes bankrupt and Oldways is restored to a modest competence.

As a finale, there is a scene of revelation when the stranger discloses all. He is the long lost nephew of Oldways, son of a clandestine marriage between Catholic Sophia Beaumont and Protestant Charles Oldways. The child is, at first, cared for in the home of a humble farmer but is eventually taken away by the Jesuits, his mother having died and his father having become a prisoner of war. He is brought up in Italy with a view to entering the Church. After various

advances, the boy becomes Secretary to the head of the Order, Emilio di Salvini, who has appropriated the wealth of the Jesuits while conspiring for their overthrow. At his death he leaves all information concerning the money to his secretary, enclosed in the red trunk. Lyttleton accepts it, as it will enable him to "serve the cause of truth, of justice, reason and humanity."

In this strange compound of the realistic and the marvellous, are to be found the familiar liberal opinions. Lyttleton is the recluse philosopher out in the world on a particular errand with a time limit attached to it. With ejaculatory comment and sustained soliloquy, he underlines the folly and error of man in an apostrophe: "thou strange heterogeneous congregation of similar shaped animals, called mankind." He claims to understand the human heart: "I mark with philosophic eye, your pigmy projects, and smile to see the microscopic power of such passions exhibiting them to you as mighty objects of ambition!....Oh! 'tis a glorious privilege to stand aloof from such a world; - to be a looker on at such a play!" 1.

The novel is notable because its author is an orthodox thinker who has suddenly become aware of his own concern for the rights of man and sees them infringed, not by the old tyrannies but by new ones. The threat to liberty in the power of money is more sinister than the oppressions of a government because it is hidden, and defence is difficult. To pin down responsibility for economic chaos is rarely possible. Lyttleton acts as a Chorus, pointing out inroads made by

commerce on the old way of life "and that consequent alteration in the state of society, which cannot fail of producing, one day or other great political results." The underlying theme is the right of man to security; a right put in grave danger when even banks take wild risks and, instead of being guarantors, become speculators. One of the incidents told to illustrate the helplessness of the ordinary men in the face of the power of wealth concerns Farmer Wilson's imprisonment. He has sued Flimflam in the courts for diverting a stream from his farm, and thus rendering the most fertile part of it arid, in order to improve the view from the back windows of his new villa. All Wilson's savings are swallowed up in costs, he loses the case and goes to gaol. Burr also emphasises that wealth, helped by a venal press, is one of the new stepping stones to power in government. Matthew Mason, writing to his uncle, Flimflam's lawyer's clerk, suggesting that Lyttleton should be induced to start a newspaper, assures his uncle: "... in this publishing and suppressing age, to command the press is a readier way to wealth, than any trade to which I could have been apprenticed."  A later comment takes the matter further. The author declares: "for, since the magic of wealth has opened such a new and strange ascent to power and greatness, through this Court of Public Opinion, popularity necessarily supersedes justice; and the efforts of eloquence, and the dexterity of special pleading, find far more lucrative employment in the columns of a newspaper, than in the courts

Parliament is represented as too obtuse and too unrepresentative to amend matters. Corruption and apathy attend its election. Seats are openly bought and sold. The possession of Moreton Hall carries with it the right to nominate two members to Parliament and the privilege is included in the amenities quoted by the auctioneer at the sale. Trafficking in seats is mentioned as a profitable sideline for the Methodists. When speculation is rife about the mysterious new owner of Moreton Hall who was obviously prepared to outbid any rival, various conjectures are made as to his purpose. Farmer Wilson's son says frankly: "I'll take ten to one, that he's an agent for the 'Saints', who are up to everything in the borough way. I've had better offers from that quarter than any other party in the kingdom; many a thing of the sort I've seen knocked down in this very room to their associated interest; and as to advowsons and presentations in the church, there's no coming up to their prices." 2

The novel is packed with long harangues on political and philosophical subjects. The author identifies himself with the views of Fox. One of the most enthusiastic eulogies is that in praise of Romilly whom he admires for his benevolence, his passion for freedom and his unshakable belief in the goodness of human nature. Only in his rigid morality, does he differ from earlier reformers. Woman is enshrined in his mind as a noble, patient figure, the conventional wife

2. Ibid. Vol. I, p. 188.
and mother and to this vision he clings throughout.

Perhaps this chapter on the doctrinaire novels may fitly end with a glance at a fantasy which belongs in thought and temper to our period, though it was not published until 1826, — Mary Shelley's "The Last Man". It is a story on a grand cosmopolitan stage. It shows the progress of human endeavour according to a preordained plan and the ultimate extinction of the race. It is packed with liberal opinions put in the mouths of all and sundry. It contains all the features that we have seen to be characteristic of the novels of the period; a crowded stage, swiftly moving scenes, interpolations of opinion and comments on the action. The story is tedious and long-winded. Yet the novel has a grim sincerity that saves it from being banal.

England in 2073! The last king has abdicated and has taken the title of the Duke of Windsor. His son, Adrian, of a philosophic turn of mind, approves the action of "a great and wise nation asserting its right to govern itself." The plot deals with the adventures of Adrian and his two friends, Lord Raymond and Lionel Verney, and most of the opinions promulgated are to be found in their discussions or soliloquies. Adrian is the politician. He holds theories of abstract government. The author says of him: "In solitude, and through many wanderings afar from the haunts of men, he matured his views for the reform of the English Government, and the improvement of the people...."

When his mother planned to recover the crown, "he gave not only a brief

denial to his mother’s schemes, but published his intention of using his influence to diminish the power of the aristocracy, to effect a greater equalisation of wealth and privilege, and to introduce a perfect system of republican government into England. 1

In due course, he stands for the office of Lord Protector of England and his policy includes schemes of public utility, the abolition of poverty, the facilitation of travel to encourage universal benevolence, and the education of the poor. There are three parties: aristocrats, for whom Lord Raymond stands, democrats, and republicans whose candidate is a Mr. Ryland. The scene changes rapidly. We are shown elections, riots, trials for libel, combinations of workers all reminiscent of the state of affairs in 1817. Adrian is elected.

Lionel Verney is responsible for other views. He goes for a period of two years to Vienna as Secretary to the Ambassador and sees the Greek wars at first hand. So we get the usual fulmination on the stupidity of armed strife. But his greatest contribution to the pool of liberal thought is his speculation on the innate qualities of man and on the nature of his mental endowment. He considers that there is something in a personality which craves to be recognised as significant; the essence of the individual which is valuable. It has its origin in the passions which are attuned to the Creator’s Voice. Nothing can satisfy it but benevolence and goodwill to all men. In truth:...”neither the lonely meditations of the hermit, nor the tumultuous raptures of the reveller, are capable of satisfying man’s heart. From the one, we

1. Ibid. Chap. 3, p.80.
gather unquiet speculation from the other, satiety. The mind flags beneath the weight of thought and droops in the heartless intercourse of those whose sole aim is amusement.\(^1\) He quoted Goethe as saying that we cannot be happy unless we love and says: "I did not love but I was devoured by a restless wish to be something to others."\(^2\).

The obverse side of this yearning for benevolence is a propensity towards pain and misery which is also part of man's endowment. "We are not formed for enjoyment" says the author, and appears to endorse the theory of the progressive deterioration of the species. The certainly pronounces the doctrine of Necessity. Existence is a chain of circumstance and none may displace a link of it. Adrian, given to solitude and brooding reflection, writes down some of his thoughts, and Verney's sister Perdita finds the paper with its jottings. "Life"—it began thus—"is not the thing romance writers describe it; going through the measures of a dance, and, after various evolutions, arriving at a conclusion, when the dancers may sit down and repose. While there is life, there is action and change. We go on, each thought linked to the one which was its parent, each act to a previous act. No joy or sorrow dies barren of progeny, which for ever generated and generating, weaves the chain that makes our life."\(^3\) Raymond speaks in the same strain. Life and birth and circumstances are beyond a man's control. Even his education is achieved by others or by experience. His very choices are predetermined. At the end of the novel when utter

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desolation is described, in the midst of the gloom a voice seems to say: "Thus from eternity, it was decreed; the steeds that bear Time onwards had this hour and this fulfilment chained to them since the void brought forth its burden. Would you read backwards the unchangeable laws of Necessity? Mother of the World! Servant of the Omnipotent! eternal, changeless Necessity! who with busy fingers sittest ever weaving the indissoluble chain of events!"1.

The plot is slight. Raymond after some unfortunate episodes leaves the country and goes to the Greek wars. He is reputed killed and Perdita, his wife, goes in search of news of him. The rumour is false; he is only wounded. They enjoy a period of great bliss, during which we are given pages of declamation about the passions. When he is eventually killed, she builds a cottage near his tomb and refuses to leave it. Lionel has her conveyed during her sleep to a ship bound for home but, when she wakes, she is inconsolable and jumps overboard.

Lionel Verney returns to his wife and children and takes an interest in humanitarian schemes. It is, by this time, the year 2092 and all the world is at peace. Then the final calamity begins. Plague breaks out in Eastern Europe, spreads rapidly and finally reaches England. The outbreak is so virulent that a state of national emergency is declared and Adrian is magnificent. The measures taken are interesting. So is the description of the behaviour of certain types of character, notably that of Mr. Ryland who is quite craven.

All efforts to stop the disease prove useless. Slowly, the whole world dies, except for Verney. He wanders miserably about Europe, makes himself a home in the deserted Colonna Palace in Rome and sits down to write the account that we have read. Then he plans to tour the whole world in a small craft to try to find one survivor. So we leave him declaring himself "the servant of Necessity, the visible laws of the invisible God."¹

Throughout the period then, as we have seen, novelists used fiction as a medium to hurl denunciations of various kinds at their public. They aimed at the exposure of the results on human life of the guiding principle of self-interest, of the love, and abuse, of power, of the flight from simplicity, of faulty principles of education or the lack of it altogether; of all the ills begotten of greed and perpetuated by tyranny. Perhaps it is suitable that the passing of the world that saw the reasons for misery in man-made institutions should be described by the daughter of Godwin and the wife of Shelley.

¹ Cf. "The Purple Cloud", M.P. Shiel, 1890.
CHAPTER VI

1. The reflection of liberal opinion in novels other than doctrinaires.

   The work of Mrs. Inchbald; Mrs. Opie; Mary Robinson; Charles Lloyd; Charles Brockden Brown; Dr. John Moore.


   1.

   The reflection of liberal opinion in novels that are not wholly doctrinaire appears to be a kind of guerilla warfare against various traditional ideas, accepted modes of conduct and existing institutions. The sallies of novelists are spasmodic; the barrage intermittent, and not always precisely sighted. In the skirmishes, however, may be recognised the views more urgently conveyed in the novels already examined. In the case of books reflecting such opinions, the expression of a point of view does not always form an integral part of the plot. It may take the form of an intellectual conviction debated, now and again, as a side issue. It may be a sudden, but passionate, interpolation inspired by a chance comment, in the middle of what reviewers call "unexceptionable" views. Or it may be a lengthy, but parenthetical, account of a positive educational system, inserted to account for the subsequent actions of one of the protagonists. Authors rarely consider the whole range of themes within the framework of a single plot and there is a good deal of confusion owing to the practice of the tenth-rate writer of swallowing, and regurgitating,
ideas which ensure a wide circulation for his novel but of which he fails to understand anything but the market value. The looseness of the connection between theory and plot in many novels may be seen by comparing the first and second editions of Courtney Malmuth's "Family Secrets". Fourteen points dealing with ideas current in liberal circles were omitted from the second edition, to the manifest advantage of the novel.

In many books, especially in those by women writers, there is an added complication in the acceptance of the rigid standard of morality, rooted in fear and insecurity, which undermines the very props of liberal thought as soon as the rights of women are considered. Deep-rooted prejudices, labelled religious convictions, but biological in origin, narrow the outlook of novelists and present the reader with the anomaly of extreme radical opinion on all other themes existing side by side with implacable conventionality on the subject of the marriage tie and the 'end and aim' of women. So, there is inconsistency.

Similarly, the importance of the mind and the duty of cultivating it, preached "ad nauseam", is often dropped precipitately when women are concerned, in favour of the idea, inculcated with severity, that the nature of the 'young female' is too volatile to hope for any intellectual grasp and that her duty is two-fold; to refine her spouse by her nobility of character, and to produce, and rear, the next generation.

By the end of the 18th Century, this view has been seriously challenged, but it remains strong throughout, and beyond, the period under discussion.

1. 1797.
Mathias puts the general view concerning women writers with liberal opinions. "Our unsexed female writers," he says, "now instruct, or confuse, us and themselves in the labyrinth of politics, or turn us wild with Gallick frenzy." Not content with a general condemnation, he names the worst offenders: "Mrs. Charlotte Smith, Mrs. Inchbald, Mrs. Mary Robinson, Mrs. etc. etc., though all of them are very ingenious ladies, yet they are too frequently whining or frisking in novels, till our girls' heads turn wild with impossible adventures, and are now and then tainted with democracy, and sometimes with infidelity and with loose principles." He is supported on all sides in this denunciation of wickedness in novels written by women. The accusation that under a spurious delicacy women cloaked a greater propensity to vice than men is repeatedly made.

Even so, it is difficult to see why Elizabeth Inchbald, for instance, earned the sobriquet of "scavenger of democracy". She wrote two novels, published a collection of plays, and translated, or prepared for the stage, some twenty more. Writing frankly for a living, she attempts no artifice, utters liberal views considerably qualified by her own adolescent ethics and her Roman Catholic inhibitions. Her nature was impulsive and defiant. Seditious tendencies were found in several of her plays, notably, "Everyone has His Fault", 1793, but they are confined to a general censure of the conditions in society. In one of them, "The Massacre", 1792, she certainly draws a lurid picture of atrocities in the Tower and makes animadversions on the

system allowing such inhumanities, but, on the advice of Holcroft and Godwin, she withdrew it from publication. Perhaps this insensitiveness reveals a blind spot: she could assess the effect of an emotional scene with sureness of judgment but was less able to estimate the effect of an idea on a reader. She shows the capriciousness of a beautiful woman requiring constant admiration and indulgence yet, wilful, something of a solitary. She is as perverse and attractive as her own Miss Milner. Easily moved, yet tough in fibre, she has a sound instinct for the dramatic and her two novels have a moving quality. The liberal opinions that she expresses seem to be founded as much on a natural rebelliousness of character as on intellectual conviction. She is the supreme individualist.

The plot of "A Simple Story" is too well known to need retelling here. The downfall of Miss Milner and the rewarding of Matilda are attributed to the effects of good and bad education. The claim is made repeatedly and is emphasised in the last sentence of the book by the use of block capitals. But this is not the prevailing impression of the novel. The reader is more aware of the conflict between two proud and wilful natures; the beautiful wayward girl with a heart of gold and the winning appeal of true innocence, and the stern, idealistic priest, trained to control the passions and to eradicate vanity. The interest is, simply, in the love-story. Will the craving for adulation and gaiety that spoils Miss Milner be cured by the love of Dorriforth, or will his severity and rigid sense

1. 1791.
of decorum destroy her first?

The other characters are skilfully used to increase the tension. Mrs. Horton, when the clashes of temperament occur, is always rising and fiddling with things to distract attention and to lower the emotional temperature. Miss Woodley is a useful go-between and Sandford, Dorriforth's tutor and mentor, acts, first, as her sternest critic and then, belatedly, as her devoted champion. The lovers are not static. Development takes place as on the stage, in a short time. Miss Milner is said to have been undone by faulty education but we cannot believe it. She is too obviously suffering from innate defects of temperament that could never have been remedied, even by a course of the sort of 'sound principling' that Hannah More, for instance, would have administered. Nor does the second part of the story convince the reader that the right kind of education has preserved Matilda. We see in her signs of her paternity, the effects of adversity and a good spice of the Roman Catholic faith conferred by the careful Mr. Sandford. The comparison between her fate and that of her mother is incomplete. Their circumstances differ vitally.

The twentieth century critic is struck, not with the presence of liberal views on education, but by the fact that such ideas were read into the novel by Mrs. Inchbald's contemporaries, and their wide circulation thus demonstrated.

"Nature and Art" is a different matter. There, the plot has been contrived to allow for the simultaneous comparison of two modes of

1. 1796.
thought and consists of a series of deliberate antitheses rather than a connected theme. Liberal ideas are implicit throughout and are often stated baldly.

Two brothers, sons of a country shopkeeper who has died insolvent, seek a living in London. Both are gifted; Henry, musically; William intellectually. Henry, an openhearted, benevolent man, earns with his fiddle enough to keep them both and to send William to Cambridge and to give him his start in the Church. Then their paths diverge. William, snobbish and ungrateful, rises in his profession and marries into a county family. Henry marries a poor but very gifted girl whom William and his wife refuse to meet socially. Henry, having lost her in childbed, and having ruined his hand in an accident, goes out to Africa to live a simple life and try to found a new community. After some years, Henry sends back his boy, a younger Henry, to be brought up with William's son. The story then follows the usual pattern. The stranger comments artlessly, but pungently, on all he sees and generally underlines the lack of value in the standards and customs of life in England. He represents the well-endowed child of nature, without fear or guile and full of sensibility. The young William comes off badly by contrast. He is wilful, greedy and self-indulgent and spends his time in the frivolous pursuits expected of a gentleman of the day. The whole way of life adopted by the upper classes is heavily censured by implication.

The expected test of their training is next imposed. Both young men fall in love and, in their behaviour, are again contrasted.
Henry woos Rebecca, the youngest daughter of the curate with a view to marriage; William seduces the village beauty, gentle Hannah Primrose, and deserts her and his child. William's arguments are purely Godwinian.

In due course, William becomes a lawyer, then a judge. A faithful portrait of him is drawn. He is revealed as having the kind of mind which best operates the cruel penal system, a mind unhampered by emotion and limited to the capacity of ad hoc decision, prejudiced by training and tradition as far as the principles of abstract justice are concerned. Unaware of her identity, he is called upon to sentence Hannah to death for counterfeiting. For, deserted and despised, she has fallen into prostitution and into the company of the depraved and has finally come to the gallows. She represents the victim of society. The stages in her ruin, the sordidness of her surroundings and the evil of her associates, her final experiences in court and in prison, related with telling economy, all show man's inhumanity to man and are an indictment of the government which can ignore conditions such as these. The child pines away after his mother's execution and the author thus illustrates the effect of cruelty on the innocent. William is stricken with life-long remorse, for he receives a letter from the convicted felon after her death revealing her identity.

It only remains for Henry, who has gone out to Africa to find and bring home his father, to marry his Rebecca and settle to the simple life of tilling the soil.

The invasion of doctrine spoils the book. The thesis novel
Neither did not suit Mrs. Inchbald's style. The building up of a point of view or an argument by means of incident and sustained explanation is foreign to her nature. She is impulsive; mistress of the art of sudden revelation of emotion in gesture; skilled in the suggestion of tension without words at all; capable of the understatement that emphasises the poignancy of a situation. Patches of her canvas are left for the reader to fill and he fills them, but not with logic.

In spite of her defiant spirit and her fondness for the emotional coup-de-grace, she is no extremist. Her radicalism is allowed only a limited field. Miss Milner is so obviously good and pure that her alleged wantonness, relegated to the interval between the two parts of the story, is frankly incredible. Conceived as a warning, Miss Milner does not constitute one. She almost steals Matilda's thunder.

Rebecca is a model of propriety. Hannah is caused to stray from the path of virtue but she is spared nothing of the inevitable consequences of her initial lapse. There is nothing liberal about the author's views on woman. Her recognition of the consequences of the loss of chastity is as complete as that of Hannah More.

Mrs. Opie is an interesting example of conflicting modes of thought in the mind of one person. Her father, Dr. Alderson, was a member of the little coterie of well-known liberal-minded intellectuals in Norwich, at that time, called Little Athens on account of its progressive society. He was a Unitarian, imbued with radical and humanitarian ideals and his circle included such men as the Taylors and Dr. Aiken. Amelia acted as his hostess. She knew the Gurneys,
was quite intimate with Betsy, afterwards Elizabeth Fry. They read Rousseau, Godwin and Tom Paine; Voltaire's "Lettres Philosophiques", as Betsy testifies, was one of their favourite books and they were fascinated by the humanistic conception of Nature. When Amelia left Norwich, at the age of twenty-eight, to marry the painter Opie, a rough, but high principled, country-man recently brought to London by Peter Pindar, she merely exchanged one liberal society for another. For Opie was full of humanitarian and radical theories, which he expressed devastatingly, and his house became a centre for the friends of reform. So Amelia met them all. She knew Godwin and Holcroft, Mrs. Inchbald, Johnson, the publisher, "Perdita" Robinson, Ann Plumptre, with whom she visited Paris and met Helen Williams. Thus, all her life she was brought into contact with people with the radical outlook. She had a lively, enquiring mind; a vital interest in people that took her to Newgate with Elizabeth Fry, to the workhouse in Norwich, and to the criminal courts. Yet in her fiction which comprises five novels and five volumes of short stories, there is little indication that she wishes to disseminate her views. Two only of the novels concern themselves with liberal theory, "Adeline Mowbray", 1804 and "Valentine's Eve", 1816. The first of these, "Adeline Mowbray", leaves the reader in some doubt as to the author's intention. Some of the short stories seem to suggest interest in the idea of the right to develop personality without interference or the idea of the tyranny of certain institutions. But the whole implication of her work is ethical rather than liberal. She is obsessed by the moral. She confesses herself that she must,
when she writes, paint a man "as he ought to think and feel, not, perhaps, as he would." Perhaps she is influenced by the hope that pointing the way to perfection will hasten the journey thither. Her life bears witness to a strong interest in liberal ideas. As late as 1850, she showed an eager interest in the views of the Simonians, a French sect which held theories like those of Spence on the equalisation of property and the nationalisation of land. Perhaps her changes of religion are an indication of her preoccupation with the moral. She became a Methodist in 1814 and a Quaker in 1825.

At a first reading, "Adeline Mowbray" seems to be an apologia for the new philosophy. Mrs. Mowbray is an exponent of Godwinian theories on freedom from restraint especially from that of marriage. Her attitude is, however, seen to be a pose as she herself confesses when the damage has been done and her young daughter, infected by the dangerous virus of radicalism, puts her principles into practice. Adeline meets Glenmurray, a young philosopher who has written a book against marriage. They fall in love and a problem presents itself. His love is unselfish and he wishes to sacrifice his principles to give Adeline the security needed in society. Hers is also unselfish and she cannot bear to be the means by which he becomes false to his ideals. So they dispense with the ceremony, to the horror of Mrs. Mowbray who, in her distress, reveals that she adopted these ideas merely to enrich her conversation and to earn the reputation of being enlightened. However, the pair are very happy until Glenmurray contracts consumption

and another problem has to be faced. Afraid for Adeline and the coming child, he recants, wholly, and with great earnestness begs her to marry him. Adeline refuses to let him be false to the principles of freedom that they both hold. Later, against her will, she accedes to his dying wish that she should marry his cousin Berendall. Once protected by marriage, she is miserable. The security for which she has sacrificed her principles proves illusory, for Berendall tires of her and deserts her. Grieving for Glenmurray, upset by her mother's apparent animosity, for her appeals for help have been returned unanswered, Adeline sinks into the usual decline and goes home to die. Her mother welcomes her warmly. Owing to the duplicity of a relative she has never received her daughter's letters. But it is too late. Adeline dies leaving a small daughter to her grandmother's care.

Before her return home, she sends to an admirer, Colonel Mordaunt, the usual letter explaining the purpose behind her actions and commenting on the folly that has brought her to an early grave.

On the surface, the novel appears to preach the iniquity of radical views. In the beginning, we are told that Mrs. Mowbray herself studied the wrong things. She interested herself in the mechanism of the human mind and in the true nature of virtue. She speculated on "systems for the good of society and the furtherance of general philanthropy" and other "fatal and unproductive studies."¹ She even tried to reform her own old parents and set them down to read Locke on "The Conduct of the Human Understanding."² Similarly, when the young

Adeline looks round Sir Patrick O'Carrol's library, she is shocked by the licentious French novels lurking under every cushion, and Mrs. Opie, somewhat primly, explains that, though enlightened, she is not abandoned. She had "read Rousseau's Contrat Sociale but not his Julie; Montesquieu's "Esprit des Lois" but not his Lettres Persannes; and had glowed with republican ardour over the scenes of Voltaire's "Brutus" but had never had her pure mind polluted by the pages of his Candide." So she is shocked by his selection, which includes "La Nouvelle Heloise" and the "Confessions". The Quaker point of view is put into the mouth of Mrs. Pemberton and, again, we seem to see censure of the new opinions as applied to freedom of conduct. Adeline is, to her, more blameworthy than a simple prostitute, ruined by passion and persuasion because she errs from a "vain glorious head" and takes pride in her iniquity. The conventional view is expressed in the continual insult offered to Adeline by acquaintances, and even servants, and she is made to bear the final responsibility for leading another into sin by her example.

Yet, in spite of all this, the impression remains that Mrs. Opie is sympathetic to the current liberal views even if she makes an exception in the case of marriage. Her standpoint appears to be "not that I love freedom less, but that I love morality more." The implications of the story seem, at times, to be at variance with her stated convictions. Adeline is entirely happy in her life with Glenmurray and is safe until his health fails and he loses his money, calamities which fall alike on the seducer and the lawful husband and

1. Ibid. Vol. I, Chap. 9, p.155.
may not justly be attributed to the absence of a wedding ring. Moreover, the marriage with Berendall, entered into with the express purpose of gaining protection is a failure. Her security dissolves; he deserts her and leaves her with a child to keep. Adeline adheres, obstinately, to her opinions throughout. Even in her letter of recantation written to Captain Mordaunt, she attributes her disaster, not to any fallacy in the system she had advocated but to prejudices existing in society. She would like to see them destroyed. In fact, her change of mind which is partial not complete, is occasioned only by the difficulty of providing for the children of those who are not bound by a legal tie. It is ironical that she at last learns that man's passions are not necessarily lasting from her husband and not from Glenmurray. That philosopher, having fallen in love, does earnestly beg Adeline to marry him but even he says of his theories: "..... though I believe those which are unchanged are right in theory, I think, as the mass of society could never, at once adopt them, they had better remain unacted upon than that a few lonely individuals should expose themselves to certain distress, by making them the rules of their conduct."[1]

"Valentine's Eve" presents the same conclusion, a recognition of the superior claims of morality as a basis for conduct over those of philosophy, expressed with an indulgent ear for the new ideas.

The two girls Catherine Shirley and her foster sister Lucy Merle stand for the two outlooks. Lucy gives vent to all the liberal principles of the period, and Catherine opposes her with the precepts of the Sermon

on the Mount. Since the plot does not concern the special problem of chastity, Mrs. Opie does not feel obliged to distress Lucy and allows both girls to marry well.

Occasionally, in the short stories, there are traces of liberal views. In spite of their implacable morality, they do convey, in their emphasis on sensibility and on individual freedom, in their recognition of man's inhumanity to man and the necessity of the alleviation of the suffering of prisoners, some of the theories of the reformers. In "A Wife's Duty", Helen Pendars is caught, with her dissolute husband and his latest mistress, in Paris on the outbreak of the Revolution. She stays there through the Reign of Terror and Mrs. Opie describes their life. They live over a baker's shop and see most of the notorious figures of the day. Robespierre, Danton and others are frequent visitors to the shop. The story is interesting as a revelation of the author's attitude. She approves of the ideals of liberty, equality and fraternity but does not commit herself to any statement about putting them into practice.

Typical of her short stories are "The Welcome Home" and "The Quaker and the Young Man of the World." Training of character in the ideals of general benevolence is advocated but the stories are cautionary tales rather than theses. "White Lies" is more unusual. It is notable because the admiration expressed for a truthful nature is the prelude to an expression of the love of abstract truth. Eleanor, the intriguer, is shown up to be utterly unreliable in her statements. The motive for her lies is a desire to be important. She is allowed
to entangle herself thoroughly and is finally sub-poenaed by both sides in a law-suit and exposed in court. Most of the interest, however, lies in the conduct and attitude of her long-suffering husband. He accepts her as his cross, expects no reformation on her part and lives with her without believing a word she says.

Mrs. Opie was acclaimed in her own generation as a master of pathos. She certainly knew how to play on the emotions and sometimes, as in "Father and Daughter", she gives no relief from the strain of sympathy. Domestic tyranny, first steps to vice, commercial disaster, imprisonment in a madhouse, mysterious disease, loss of memory, early death, deserted orphans make their call in turn on the reader's store of emotion. All this, like the rest of her work is tinctured with humanitarianism and sound Quaker principles. But her part in the dissemination of liberal thought is less than one would have expected from a woman of her radical sympathies.

When Mary Robinson's daughter published "Memoirs of the Late Mary Robinson, Written by Herself with Some Posthumous Pieces", the Anti-Jacobin reviewer called it frankly "the tale of a strumpet" and gives some indication of the reputation born by the author. She was considered one of the most dangerous of the women writers of the day because she purveyed the doctrines of freedom of action in all spheres of life, including marriage, and the levelling out of all distinctions of rank and title, with equality of opportunity for rising in the world. Her memoirs give us a picture of her personality and reveal her own

1. 1810.
opinions. Enthusiastic and warmhearted, reckless and resilient, she emerges from the pages as a champion of the oppressed. On the question of equality, she is rabid; she is interested in the development of reason and in education. She gives some evidence of wide reading and has obviously soaked up liberal thought like blotting paper. Her life is interesting, and pathetic. She went on the stage, made a secret marriage, ran a school, entered on a period of profligacy, lived for twelve months as the mistress of the Prince Regent and died, in extreme poverty, at the age of thirty. Her outpourings are a guide to contemporary thought. At one time, her house was a rendez-vous for the dissolute and the shady as well as for well-known radicals. She knew Godwin and Mary Wollstonecraft and most of the members of their little circle. Her novels have the distinction of causing more censure in the press than those of any other novelist except Mary Wollstonecraft.

Two of them, especially, show liberal ideas: "Walsingham; or, The Pupil of Nature", 1798, and "The False Friend", 1799. Her views are inserted into an incredible plot in "Walsingham": Sir Edward and Lady Aubrey of Glenowen Castle in Wales, adopt Walsingham, the orphaned nephew of Lady Aubrey. In spite of the malicious hatred of the housekeeper, Mrs. Blagden, the boy is happy until the birth of a child to Lady Aubrey and the death of Sir Edward in the hunting field. His life is very lonely from that time onwards, for the new heir is brought up in Switzerland and Walsingham is left in Wales under the care of his tutor, Mr. Hanbury, a young clergyman. In due course, he falls
in love with Mr. Hanbury's sister, Isabella. At this point, Sir Sidney comes of age and returns to England and he and Walsingham become devoted friends, in spite of a certain amount of jealousy over Isabella. Suddenly, Lady Aubrey, whose behaviour has given rise to some concern, marries Edward Blagden, the son of her housekeeper. She is, plainly, miserable, falls ill in circumstances which suggest poisoning, and, thinking that she is dying, confesses her secret. Sir Sidney is a girl but has been passed off as a man for twenty years to prevent the family estates from passing to a distant heir. Mrs. Blagden has known of the deception and has blackmailed her ever since the child was born. Precautions are taken against an unknown poisoner, Lady Aubrey recovers, Blagden is opportunely killed, and Mrs. Blagden dies also. Walsingham transfers his affections to the erstwhile Sir Sidney and marries her.

Scattered through the pages of this improbable tale are comments and speeches which reveal the author's beliefs. Nature is a generous parent and teacher. Only prejudice and self interest, both fostered by sophistication, prevent man from learning her great principle of universal benevolence. If there could be a return to the simple life, and the faults of civilisation were eradicated, "the circle of enlightened humanity would enlarge, till vice and folly would be extinguished in its lustre." This universal benevolence evinces itself in all the traits of kindness and love to be seen in human character. The basis of all philosophy is a universal love of the species and she claims that every faculty of the soul is delighted by

1. "Walsingham" Vol.I, Chap.4, p.78. 2nd Edit. used.
the power of doing good. She distinguishes between true philosophers who recognize the influence of nature on the soul and the necessity of obeying her precepts and those impostors who utter high-sounding platitudes and fail to practise any kind of mental discipline. There are eulogies of the French Philosophers: "Had not such men as Rousseau and Voltaire existed the earth had still been shackled by tyranny and superstition."\(^1\). On the other hand there are ironic speeches in praise of Mr. Gant, the philosopher. We are told that "Rousseau never wrote anything like the immortal Gant,"\(^2\) and: "Tis such men as Mr. Gant that are born to settle the equilibrium of the human brain, and to give new nerve to the centre of cogitation."\(^3\). His magnum opus is "A Treatise on Things Incomprehensible; or A Metaphysical Inquiry into the Manners and Political Opinions of Unknown Nations." Mary Robinson's point is that words are endlessly and futilely spun to explain the world intellectually; that systems are debated and creeds formulated without regard to the lessons of Nature and the example of primitive and innocent man. Mr. Doleful illustrates the folly of such speculations. He considers the universe and finds it "a great accident" or "an air-born bubble" or "a tennis ball for the capricious hand of Nature." Dr. Pinpermel describes it as "now whirling on the pivot of reason, scattering the clouds of superstition to the surrounding chaos of undefinable space."\(^4\). In all this speculation, the implication runs, there is neither comfort nor remedy for the ills of life.

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Mary Robinson's passion for equality and justice leads her into the "warm" tone so much deprecated by reviewers. Rank is anathema to her. The only distinctions recognised should be mental ones. Neither birth nor prestige necessarily confer any benefit on the mind. "Take," she says, "the offspring of the noblest parent, and the hovel born child of adversity - educate them with equal liberality - and the chance is even that the one exhibits all the attributes of reason, all the graces of illustrious virtue, as proudly as the other."¹

On education, she follows, and quotes, Rousseau. No controls must be imposed on the child. She underlines the importance of isolating him from the evil influences of society until his reasoning powers are sufficiently developed to protect him and her suggestions are reminiscent of the fantastic conditions described in earlier French novels.² The duty of preserving the mind from evil contacts and of cultivating it to its highest degree of power in one of her favourite themes. For her, the pains and pleasures of existence are due to the 'terror of mind'.

In her remarks about women, may be plainly seen her adherence to the doctrines of Mary Wollstonecraft. Women do not err from innate depravity but from a mixture of credulity, vanity and ignorance. They should be forgiven if they fall as men are forgiven for libertinism.

². E.g. "The Man of Nature", trans. from French of Beaumarchais, "L'Élève de la Nature," by James Burne, 1773, in which the seventh and last child is shut up in a cage for fifteen years and later sent to an uninhabited island with only a dog to keep him company, and "The Triumph of Truth", trans. 1775 by R. Roberts, described in The Critical, April 1775, when a small girl is shielded from all contact with religion or philosophy by dumb servants and 'vetted' books, but yet is enlightened by natural reason.
Though there are few men who would "take to their arms a repentant wanderer, and allow, that a life of sober virtue has power to compensate for the criminality of a single moment..." yet there are many, to her mind much more to be blamed, who "will readily resign their domestic treasure to the licentious embraces of another, and even glory in the boast of being married to a sanctioned wanton! Which of the two is the more honourable character, I shall leave modern sophists to determine; my opinion has long been decisive on the subject."¹

Her contempt for the life of a woman tied to a man she despises is shown in her frequent statements that an irregular union is much to be preferred to a loveless marriage. Emphatically, she demands education for women as a prelude to the provision of alternatives, other than prostitution, to the career of matrimony. She makes her liberal-minded characters say over and over again that there is no reason to suppose that women are incapable of profiting by the same kind of training as their brothers. Isabella Hanbury's father may be quoted as a typical example. He sees no objection, supposing a girl to have mental gifts, to educating her as a boy would be educated and leaves instructions that his daughter shall be given a full and liberal education: "Let her be taught to feel," he commands, "that she is born with reason which should break through the trammels of custom, and assert its equal rights with those tyrants who would enervate her mind, and bend her lofty spirit to the yoke of ignorance and slavery."²

Gertrude St. Leger, the heroine of "The False Friend" is modelled

on Mary Wollstonecraft and utters the same thoughts on love as are to be found in "Maria; or The Wrongs of Women". The extreme confusion of the story, however, blurs the outline of theory and we are left with the impression of a feckless girl saved from disaster by a series of fortunate circumstances. The plot is only followed with great difficulty. Gertrude has been educated in Ireland but at the age of seventeen is brought home to London by her guardian Lord Denmore. She falls noisily in love with him. Lady Denmore, piqued and furious, elopes with a handsome parson. A superfluous character, a Miss Wills, appears to be equally in love with the parson and with Lord Denmore. Somewhat mysteriously, her reaction to Lady Denmore's annexation of one of her beloveds, is to persuade Gertrude also to elope. The motive on Gertrude's side is quite obscure, and the reason for her prompt return, still a virgin we are assured, is yet more so. On her return, she finds that Lady Denmore has died and that her husband is arranging for the funeral. The height of absurdity is surely reached when Gertrude, wishing to pay her last respects to Lady Denmore, is overcome with awe on entering the death-chamber, drops her candle and accidentally twangs the string of a harp with the result that the corpse, immediately restored to a state of health and vigour, sits up and moralises heartily. Her sermon over, she rises and again elopes with the Rev. Mr. Treville. In pursuit of personal liberty, the characters elope so often that the reader is hard put to it to remember the identity of the contracting parties.

Shortly afterwards, Lady Denmore dies more permanently and
Gertrude, for some obscure reason, feels that she will be held responsible. Terrified by the possible anger of her guardian, she disappears, and goes through a series of extraordinary adventures. Finally, she ventures to return home and is forgiven. Then, her father, Sir William Legar, returns from India with a vast fortune. But Lord Denmore, stricken with a very belated contrition, discloses that, in fact, he has been a false friend to Sir William in that he once seduced his wife in his absence and that Gertrude is his own natural daughter and not his ward. The inevitable duel follows. Lord Denmore is killed; Gertrude dies of grief. The persistent clergyman winds up the story by eloping for the third time with a married woman but at last meets the doom he deserves by being drowned off Yarmouth on his way to Lisbon. The author, one feels, is determined to be both daring and original. Altogether she provides five elopements, various duels, one mortal, seven people killed by other means, three wounded but left on the way to recovery and five assorted prisoners. She thus strains credulity to the utmost. Her cultivated mystery-mongering and her abuse of the device of dramatic suspense bring her novels to the verge of ridiculousness. Yet there is throughout her stories an undefinable flavour of liberalism. Her characters are meant to be representative figures. Her favourite sermon on equality is illustrated by the person of Lord Arcot, a dissolute peer who stands for all that is pernicious in the system of hereditary, and undeserved, privileges. The worldliness and hypocrisy of the Church are to be discerned in the outlook and conduct of Treville. She disseminates her views because
she really feels that reform is necessary and not merely to catch the market. They are interpolated on every possible occasion. They show no deviation from the norm. There is nothing especially noteworthy about them except their alliance with pure melodrama. They are interesting, however, as further evidence of the invasion of fiction by 'popularised' philosophy.

Many a novelist enjoyed success because he or she happened to be singled out from the mass by reason of some fortuitous circumstance or other, rather than by means of any superior gift. Charles Lloyd, for instance, enjoyed an hour of fame because of his association with greater men and his relationship with the notorious Mary Hays, both of which he has exploited in his novel "Edmund Oliver". By nature conservative, and limited intellectually, he dips into the pool of liberal thought to which he is introduced by men like Coleridge. He reflects other people's radical ideas almost unconsciously, even while he is proclaiming his own adherence to orthodoxy. Allowance must be made for a singularly ungenerous nature; a temperament riddled with vanity, capricious and spiteful. Sometimes, when he appears to be giving his own conservative opinions he is working off a grievance against someone else. An interesting account of him and his relations with Mary Hays is to be found in "The Polite Marriage" by J.M.S. Tompkins.¹

In "Edmund Oliver"², he has put into the mouth of the hero's friend, Charles Maurice, most of the liberal sentiments held by Coleridge and has appropriated them to himself. In reality, his

¹. In "Mary Hays, Philosopher"; 1938.
². 1798.
behaviour was more like that of Edmund Oliver than Maurice. By the
publication of the book Coleridge was deeply offended. He saw in it
references to himself and never forgave Lloyd.

The novel is a veritable hotch-potch. Almost every liberal
notion appears in it somewhere and this mixture may account for the
unusually diverse opinions in the reviews as to its prevailing spirit.

Gertrude, believed to be a portrait of Mary Hays, sincerely holds, and
practises, Mary's doctrine. Daughter of a rigid and sour Roman
Catholic, she has renounced the 'superstition' of religion in favour
of complete freedom to express herself and to develop her higher nature
in this life. For the soul needs elasticity and must not be cramped
by ties of any sort. Even promises or filial obligations are
intolerable fetters. She invites D'Oyley to form an extra-marital
connection with her and talks volubly about the voluntary nature of
such an alliance. There is a good deal of violent denunciation of
bonds of all sorts. It is unthinkable to her that "any being
susceptible of infinite progression" should bring herself to stoop to
the "contemptible thralldom" which would chain one person to a "fellow
animal". In much the same way, she rants on about rank and the evils
of the hereditary system. Her lover is similarly imbued with liberal
ideas. His speeches touch on tyranny and, in one of his letters to
his friend Claremont, we learn that he belongs to the Society of the
Friends of Freedom and has signed their petition for peace. This is
an interesting allusion to find in a novel. Usually such references
are vague in the extreme and radical bodies anonymous. However,
D'Oyley goes further; openly prophesies revolution and alludes to the "State-Blood-Hunters" who "lie in wait at every corner." These views are put into the mouths of characters obviously destined to be discomfited and, by themselves, would suggest nothing of the author's intellectual or emotional position. We expect them to be refuted in due course. But, with the exception of those dealing with the chastity of woman, they are not refuted. Indeed, in a dialogue between D'Oyley and Edmund, on an occasion when they meet at Gertrude's lodging, it is Edmund who goes furthest in his attacks on wealth and rank, in his demand for the rights of man to equality, and his scorn of those who pretend that freedom exists in the state at that time. He raves about monopolising landlords and merchants out for self-aggrandisement. He advocates political non-resistance working through individuals.

Charles Maurice, the hero's confidant, reveals a belief in the doctrine of general utility. Much of his philosophising is to be found in his letters to his wife Rebecca. On one occasion, he speculates on moral beauty and writes: "Evil and good to us, to inferior beings, are relative terms, denoting less or greater degrees of pleasure." The greatest pleasure comes from communion with nature and the pursuit of the simple life for cities are the "graves of all the moral attributes of human nature. However the mind may retain the belief of a deity as a speculative principle, the sense which feels him present in such situations must inevitably desert us."
Bit by bit, we may piece together the whole fabric of liberalism. Edmund after his disillusionment about Gertrude, enters on a period of profligacy and then disappears. In a bout of fierce sensibility, he has enlisted in a cavalry regiment. There, a most unusual recruit, he is painfully initiated into barracks-room life. His duties, and the expressed ideals of the regiment, cause him to relieve himself of his opinions on the iniquity of war. With his sentiments, Maurice identifies himself for, at length discovering his friend, he urges him to buy himself out and return to a more worthy life, by means of the simple exhortation: "Come, then, with me, Edmund, and be released from this company of earthly friends."  

There is even a portrait of a recluse philosopher in Roger, Edmund’s brother, to whom all social intercourse is irksome. He is described as one of “that incalculable number whom the injustice of mankind has ruined.”

The account of the school set up by Edmund’s sister Ellen and her husband gives the author an opportunity to disclose his ideas on education. Following Rousseau, Ellen rejects all practices that smack of compulsion. There are to be no punishments, in fact no coercions of any kind. Discipline will be naturally effected by pure reasoning. Somewhat startling is the scheme by which steadiness of temper is to be developed; the children are to be shut up alone for two hours a day to reflect in solitude.

Familiar outbursts of extreme sensibility occur. Edmund adopts all the usual practices, shuns society, flings himself down to

the ground, rushes through woods calling on a superior being whose nature is undefined, weeps and shows signs of incipient distraction. One example will suffice. He himself describes the state to which Lord Cathcart's order that Gertrude shall see no more of him reduces him. "My mind," he says, "had been strained to a pitch, at which it could not long remain; my reason must have given way had not nature again interposed: my body was emaciated; and, though a few days before I had all the appearance of florid vigour, I was now sunken to a skeleton; and as my intellectual phrensy left me, tottering with my very weakness."¹

In short, the novel suggests the assiduous labours of a literary magpie. It is difficult to estimate which of these views are genuinely held by the author and the reader feels some sympathy with the Anti-Jacobin reviewer who peevishly lists the tendencies of Godwinism and anti-Godwinism displayed and ironically awards a slight meed of praise to Lloyd for "informing the reader what portraits he intended to draw; a discovery which it might have been difficult for him to make without this previous information."²

Another indication of the widespread effect of the doctrine of the reformers is to be seen in the great vogue, on both sides of the Atlantic, of the work of Charles Brockden Brown. He has but a small literary gift and is inhibited by a curious blindness to the ordinary, but his liberal opinions give his novels their topical interest. He is especially concerned with the mystery of the working of the human

mind; with the destiny of man; with the cause of suffering humanity. He deals, at some time or other, with most of the familiar themes and his novels need not be described in great detail. It is sufficient to note the ideas that occupied his mind. Most of them are born of his humanitarianism.

"Alcuin", 1797, is a dialogue on the social position of women and on the reformation of the marriage laws. His point of view is that of Godwin; without the vehemence of "Political Justice" he advocates voluntary partnerships and easy divorce on the grounds of the immorality of forced cohabitation where hatred or contempt exist between man and wife. He stresses the rights of women to security from the brutality of men. This theme recurs in "Ormond; or The Secret Witness" where the villain is a social and political fanatic. He has revolutionary views on religion and on marriage and expresses them on every possible occasion. Thwarted in his desire to set up an irregular union with a girl who is affected by what is invariably called "animal magnetism" but repels him, never-the-less, he becomes the usual fiend-like Gothic villain, murders Constantia's father and attempts to kill her, too. She manages to kill him in self-defence. The importance of dreams, the working of the sub-conscious mind during sleep, and the effect of the supernatural on the emotions are illustrated in another novel, Edgar Huntly, 1799. Here too are disquisitions on the primitive life and portraits of Indians, notably one of an old woman, almost the only character in the author's range to show individuality.

Perhaps Brockden Brown's admiration of, and debt to, Godwin is
most manifest in "Wieland"; or the Transformation", 1798, and "Arthur Mervyn; or Memoirs of the Year 1793", 1800, both of which deliberately set out to reveal the miseries of mankind and the tyranny that causes them. The novels have none of the imaginative power of Caleb Williams and their plots are unconvincing, but they show the same purpose. "It is everyone's duty" says the author, "to profit by all opportunities of inculcating on mankind the lessons of justice and humanity." In the case of "Arthur Mervyn", we are introduced to a fine but susceptible mind driven to crime and suicide by the machinations of an arch-villain, Carlin who performs a double duty in providing the sinister voices, by means of ventriloquism, that drive Wieland to his doom, and in illustrating the theory of Necessity. For Carlin is the lonely figure driven by a fatal destiny into quite motiveless evil rendered necessary, says the author, somewhat obscurely, by the injustice of others. The only novel element in this villain is that he enjoys himself throughout and so destroys the unwilling sympathy accorded, for instance, to Byron's Cain. He is like Bethlehem Gabor in his gloating. There seems to be a suggestion in his mental processes of the dangerousness of gifts when they are unrestrained by moral strength. The quest of knowledge and an undue reliance on the powers of reason can be spiritually dangerous and can lead men to strange beliefs that undermine their virtue and contribute to the fulfilment of their pre-ordained destiny. The condition of the world is such that vice is not only possible, but remains unpunished. All this speculative matter is interpolated into

an absurd plot. The novel is a terror novel laid in America and the author has been ingenious in replacing the usual moated castle frequented by armoured spectres and mysterious chests full of severed limbs, by subterranean rivers, mysterious voices, esoteric rites and macabre customs. The Wieland family almost deserve their fate because of their extreme gullibility. One and all, they can believe anything. The elder Wieland falls a victim to some obscure creed that frightens him immoderately but to which he clings with ardour. He builds a temple on a cliff and communes there in secret with his God. Then he dies in flames generated by a kind of spontaneous internal combustion described as "the irregular expansion of the fluid that imparts warmth to our heart and our blood caused by the fatigue of the preceding day, or flowing, by established laws, from the condition of his thoughts." Already profoundly affected by the death of his father, the younger Wieland begins to hear insistent whispers urging the necessity of sacrifice. They occur more and more frequently until, imbued with the idea that he has been chosen by Fate as an executive, he kills his wife and children. The scene in which he murders his Katherine attains real power in its delineation of the effect of prolonged nervous excitement on an unstable mind. When he realises that he has been tricked, he kills himself. Carlin observes the fatality and remains unmoved and unpunished. The story presents a picture of unrelieved gloom conveying the view that the events of life are both predetermined and inescapable.

In his journal, Brockden Brown confesses that he is pleased with his labours until the "transcendent merits" of "Caleb Williams" occur to him and then his satisfaction dwindles away. His statement is borne out by his novel "Arthur Mervyn; or Memoirs of the Year 1793" which shows evidence of imitation. It is a study of the inhumanity of man to his fellows, undertaken with the explicit purpose of awakening the public conscience. Scenes of misery are described, with comments on the state of current opinion on intolerable social conditions. The most impressive are those dealing with the outbreak of yellow fever in Philadelphia. He spares the reader nothing. Rauisating medical details; scenes of horror in hospitals; unspeakable burial parties snatching away for interment the bodies of people not yet dead; all these give the novel the force that unrelenting realism confers.1 Similarly, the sordid squalor into which Arthur is led and the scenes of vice in tenements and thieves' kitchens are notable. There is a likeness in the actual plot between this novel and "Caleb Williams". Arthur Mervyn's father, who has been a widower for some years, marries a servant girl and the young Arthur cannot accept the position. He leaves home to seek his fortune in Philadelphia. He becomes destitute, catches the fever, is saved from destitution by Welbeck, a wealthy philanthropist living luxuriously in an opulent home. Mervyn becomes Welbeck's secretary. Like Caleb, he finds time heavy on his hands and takes to studying his employer. By degrees, he becomes convinced that Welbeck has something to hide and, again like Caleb, he determines to

discover the secret. Finally, he does find out what has happened. Welbeck has committed forgery and to keep himself safe, has shot the only man who could bear witness to the crime. Then follow the same sort of adventures that we find in "Caleb Williams"; the same intimidation, the same oath, the same flight and a similar pursuit. There is no comparison, however, in the artistry of the two novels. Arthur Mervyn gains none of our sympathy; he is an opportunist and displays a cunning quite foreign to the inquisitive, but fundamentally honest, Caleb. Nor can we sympathise with Welbeck. His crimes are due to greed. There is none of the pathos attached to Falkland with his horror of a tarnished name. The novel has none of the imaginative insight of 'Caleb Williams' but it is interesting as showing the extent of Godwin's influence.

"Clara Howard", published in 1801, gives the author a further opportunity to tilt against inequality. The English social scene is reviewed and he deliberately provides for a much-debated marriage between the peasant boy, Hartley, who has been befriended and educated by an English nobleman and the step-daughter of his benefactor. He emphasises the triumph of democratic ideals by depicting the marriage as unusually happy.

In his interest in states of mind in which the reason over-reaches itself and induces madness or fanaticism, he forgets the whole world between normality and disease. What is not stereotyped is, to him, pathological and he lacks the insight to make it credible.

More detached comment on most of the liberal ideas afloat is to
be found in the novels of Dr. John Moore. His opportunities for observing his fellows had been many and various. As soon as he became a qualified doctor, he took a post as surgeon's mate in the Duke of Argyll's regiment and was recommended from there, to the service of the Duke of Albemarle, Colonel of the Coldstream Guards. With him, he saw active service at Flushing and Breda and experienced the hardships of army life at first hand. He spent some time in the Duke's household in Paris. Later, he travelled for five years, from 1772 to 1778, with the Duke of Hamilton whose sons were his patients. A keen student of the characteristics and customs of different nations, he made the most of his opportunities and wrote novels to give expression to his conclusions. Their sub-titles bear witness to his intense interest in men and manners.1. He wrote with a quiet irony revealing an acute mind. An observant and amusing commentator, he handles his material like a compère assembling the items for a programme.

The vagaries of the mind and its response to circumstance and environment especially engage his attention. He is of the opinion that the ills of the world can only be mended by the inculcation of the spirit of universal benevolence and the development of the power of Reason. To this end, he would direct all education. He presents portraits of children marred or ennobled by their upbringing and exhibits the effects of heredity and background. He might be writing in 1951 when he deplores the use of gain as an incentive and the encouragement

of competition in the training of children. Edward is the result of good education just as Zeluco is the result of mis-management. He condemns, especially, the education given to girls because it stultifies the understanding and puts a premium on folly by giving a false importance to accomplishments. There is no reason to doubt their intellectual capacity and he draws a serious portrait of a clever woman in Miss Clifford, who refuses the wealthy Lord Deanport because he is beneath her intellectual level, in spite of having had a university education.\(^1\)

"Mordaunt", 1800, has been especially assembled to reveal ideas. It consists of three series of letters, all containing comment on topics of general interest, and a volume of memoirs thrown in as a makeweight. John Mordaunt writes to his friend, Colonel Sommers to tell him of his tour abroad, spent mainly in France, and to give his reflections on the French Revolution. He makes the acquaintance of a Marquise and helps her to escape to England. Her memoirs are then offered. When she reaches the house of a friend in Richmond who has offered her an asylum, she embarks on a correspondence with her hostess who is away on a visit to Devonshire. The third series is provided by a selfish and unprincipled woman of quality, the Countess of Deanport, and Counsellor James Grindell, exiled to Wales by the necessity of paying assiduous attention to a dying relative from whom he has considerable expectations.

The events witnessed by Mordaunt in France cause him to reflect

\(^1\) "Mordaunt", 1800.
on the whole nature of government. His conclusion is unequivocal. It exists merely to promote the interests of men. It is a social contract subject to termination like any other. "The great end and object of government", he says, "ought to be the happiness of the governed. We conceive the diffusion of happiness to be the grand purpose even of creation. When the avowed object is the promotion of general happiness in every government and institution, individual happiness ought to have a proper weight." He perceives that every administration, however corrupt, will claim this intention in theory and says firmly that theory is not enough. It behoves every government to inspire trust in its intentions by illustrating in practice its essential faith in liberty. A gesture which would inspire such trust at the present time, when fear of revolution made repressive measures doubly tempting, would be the arming of a volunteer force in England to repel the threatened invasion. "It would quiet every apprehension respecting public liberty;" he claims, "for what government would put arms in the hands of those it meant to enslave?" For, although he recognises the expediency of an arbitrary government in a time of emergency, he hates tyranny and is convinced that the excesses in France have put back for years the establishment of democratic principles, particularly in Great Britain, where "The very chimney-sweepers in London have become aristocrats, from hatred to their brethren the blackguards and sans-culottes of Paris." A firm belief in liberty

of thought and conscience is implicit in his anecdotes of events which occur during the Reign of Terror and the whole of Volume II, devoted to the escape of the Marquise, breathes the same spirit. Through these mouthpieces, Dr. Moore makes his plea for liberty and benevolence. This concern for the freedom of the individual leads him to observe the conditions of the lives of soldiers. The discipline he considers tyrannical, but he concludes that, though enslaved, the army is happy. Indeed, he seems to reserve his severest strictures for the exploitation of the soldier in peace time, when his country has no need of him. There are stories in "Edward" of seamen with wooden legs run down by arrogant chaise drivers as they try to beg enough to eke out their miserable pensions, and of Chelsea pensioners receiving only 4½d of their 6d a day after all the "stoppages" for shoes and shirts and other necessaries have been deducted. Old Nic is a typical figure of the illiterate, ill-treated soldier, exploited but contented. He serves, like many other characters in these novels, to emphasise the innate goodness of the human heart.

The question of the abolition of slavery was a burning one in the last years of the century and discussion of the arguments for and against the use of slave labour are to be found in both "Edward" and "Zaluco". The character of the rich Mulatto, in "Edward", who buys an estate and takes up his residence in the English country-side is introduced to provide opportunity for discussion of the life in the West Indies with a retired planter living in the neighbourhood. They

argue about the slave trade and air their views on the colour question. The mulatto seems to be accepted in the society of the district even though he takes a series of mistresses and has a brood of copper-coloured children. They, also, are assimilated without difficulty. Dr. Moore does not suggest any feeling against half-caste children. 1

The subject interests him profoundly. In "Zeluco", part of the scene is laid in the W. Indies and the author describes Zeluco's behaviour to his slaves. The settlers enter into long discussions on the use of slave labour. 2 A spirited defence is put forward and reference made to the safeguards against cruelty adopted by the better type of owner but the author's opinion is plain. No safeguards can excuse the unwarrantable interference with personal liberty entailed by any kind of coerced labour. Man has a natural and inalienable right to freedom. Incidents in the lives of negroes are narrated to show the mockery of the laws regulating the treatment of slaves. 3 The policy of the average owner is to force the negroes to their utmost exertions and then replace them when they die in harness, because it is more economical to do so than to apportion their tasks to their strength and so preserve their vigour for the normal span. "If the reign of many European proprietors of estates in the West Indies were faithfully recorded," he writes, "it is much to be feared that the capricious cruelties which disgrace those of Caligula and Nero would not seem so incredible as they now do." A penetrating passage describes the bad

1. They appear in ordinary boarding schools; e.g. Miss Tropic, a Mulatto in "The Countess and Gertrude", L.M. Hawkins, 1811.
3. Ibid. p.125.
effect of absolute authority on the person wielding it. There speaks
the doctor, the student of nervous reactions. In another speech,
Zeluco stoutly maintains that the slaves are much better off than the
common people in Europe, and especially in England. 1

The only cure for inhumanity is the speeding of universal
benevolence. Here, the author puts a foot firmly in both camps by
identifying benevolence with religion. He takes the same kind of view
as Sydney Smith, rationalist and humanitarian. The conduct of life is
of more importance than religious tenets and he sees no reason why
creeds as far apart as Methodism and Roman Catholicism cannot find some
common ground. Colonel Seidlitz, in "Zeluco", discussing with his
Roman Catholic wife the Divine purpose in the unequal distribution of
goods in this life concludes that it is "to afford mankind opportunities
for the exercises of benevolence, gratitude and other virtues." 2 A
parson discusses theology with her and hopes, somewhat surprisingly,
that, after tuition, she will be able to decide to which of the two
faiths she will adhere, on rational principles. Mr. Barnet has the
same belief in benevolence as part of the Divine plan. He construes
it, simply, as continual well-doing followed by a reward in heaven and
thinks of the advantages in terms of "accumulated interest and a large
premium."

Nowhere is there a suggestion of inspiration in religion or of
an appeal to the emotions. Mordaunt considers that a belief in
religion is natural and necessary and he, too, thinks of it as universal

benevolence at the behest of a Creator to whom homage should be paid. His objections to Atheism are largely due to this identification, for he cannot conceive of one without the other. Deny God, and take from life all possibility of goodwill. For this reason, he especially deprecates the Fêtes de la Raison, openly blasphemous, and aimed at loosening the hold of religion on the masses. Their deliberate policy of indoctrinating the young with the belief that the existence of a God and of an after-life are superstitions based on fear appals him. He tells of an atheist who ascended into the pulpit in the Church of La Roche and expressed his intention of exposing the myth of a Creator. Challenging God to prove His existence by striking the speaker dead, he waited until it was apparent that he was to remain unharmed, and then sneeringly bade his audience dismiss the superstition of religion from their minds. The subject recurs frequently and the number of references to current views on atheism is indicative of the author's interest. Mordaunt continually speculates on such questions as the origin of the universe, the nature of the First Cause and the chance of immortality. In one of his best letters, he writes: "One of the most avowed apostles of atheism in the Convention was a kind of madman who assumed the name of Anarcharsis." He derided the doctrines of Christianity and declared that the world came into being fortuitously by the "mere rattling of atoms" and laughed at the concept of a hell. Yet he was baffled by the argument that the atoms, rattling again, might

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2. After the Scythian Philosopher. Mordaunt comments on the current fashion of adopting classical names and says that his shoemaker was Brutus, and that he had two other tradesmen called Grecchi.
just as fortuitously produce a hell."

In these reflections on life and its purpose, the rationalism of orthodoxy is displayed. It was the day of 'reasonable' religion, devoid of unseemly 'enthusiasm'. The zeal of the leisureed classes might produce the austerities of a Clapham Sect, but never the sort of emotional attack made in the Tabernacles. Dr. Moore is tolerant, but in spite of the moderation of the views expressed in his novels, he did not escape censure. Mathias affects to believe that his work did not reach a wide public, but takes pains to castigate him all the same, because of the ridicule implicit in some of his accounts of customs and institutions. Mathias writes:

"Few mark the Journals of the dubious Moore,
We scent the tainted gale from Gallia's shore;
Through England, as his "Various Views" advance,
We smile, but trace the mannerist of France." 2

The 'tainted gale', in spite of other changes of climate, continued to blow steadily. A surprising number of novelists use material connected with the French Revolution, well into the nineteenth century. There are memoirs of émigrés, like those of Monsieur de Brinboc, published in 1805, which advertised itself as "Containing views of English and French Society." There are accounts of the events of the Revolution and justifications of the execution of the King as in "Easton", 1810. The private iniquities of the revolutionaries continue to attract a morbid public. In the story of "The Irish Heiress", 1799, 4

3. Anon.
4. Anon.
a young woman is loved by Egalité, who sends Robespierre to her to solicit her favours for him. The topic of imprisonment, too, is a very popular one. Apart from its interest as a romantic theme, it gained in importance from its alliance with the liberal ideas of freedom from oppression and the necessity of penal reform. 1. "The Satirist" in one of its reviews illustrates the continuing appeal of the French Revolution as a theme for fiction. Judged by the rage of the reviewer, the book in question would seem to have been a serious threat to peace. It is not available, but the notice contains some interesting information about the plot. The novel is called "The Red Book; or, The Government of Francis the First, Emperor of England, King of the Scotch and Irish" by J. J. Stockdale, 1807. The author relates a dream in which the circumstances of the French Revolution, with all its horrors, arise in England. Bobheart, the leader of the revolutionary party, wishes to make England an orderly republic and applies to Napoleon for help. Evidently, Napoleon replies that such a project is impracticable and offers his brother Jerome as king. This offer is refused but Bobheart does nominate a priest, Francis Brutatus, as emperor. Later, he is obliged to poison his protégé because he becomes too powerful. Napoleon sees an opportunity to invade the country and, it is the sound of his entry into London that wakes the author and ends the novel. According to the "Satirist", the original publication was suppressed, but the book was, later, published with some objectionable passages.

expunged.

An interesting side light on the thought of the period is to be seen in the suggestion, often repeated, that the English were "behind other nations in the great science of happiness." Philosophy seems to have been no protection against the weariness of mind that makes for despair. "Many of us", writes Mordaunt, "tire of life before it is half over; and a greater proportion abridge its duration voluntarily than of any other country." Signs of pessimism appear in the emphasis laid in novels on the prevalence, and danger, of ennui and in the frequent condemnations of the use of laudanum and other drugs to combat it. It also seems a possible cause of the frequency of madness as a theme and the use of the private mad-house as a scene for morbid events. It looks as if the reliance on reason and the belief in its over-riding importance in the equipment of man, constituted, in themselves, a strain too great to be sustained by the majority.

See also the hero's meditation on the subject in "Walsingham", Vol.III, p.251.
Topical interest in the theory of universal benevolence and the brotherhood of man was increased by the great humanitarian movement towards the abolition of slavery. Examples of scenes like those in "Zeluco" and discussions like those in "Edward" might be multiplied, for nabobs and mulattoes become hackneyed figures in the novel.

Attention was focussed on native races, particularly on those of the West Indies, and accounts of events, real or imaginary, in the lives of planter and slave, creep into plots with which they have scant relevance. This intensification of interest in the native affects the companion theme of the noble savage. For the most part, statements of belief in the superiority of the natural man took the form of deliberate propaganda, and have already been considered in the work of novelists as widely separated as Bage and Mary Shelley. But the theory crops up steadily throughout the period in novels other than those of the reformers. Utopias are described, set in the wilds, and treated sometimes seriously and sometimes satirically. Pages of apostrophe to the natural man are inserted into accounts of the wicked and perverted life of cities. Such novels as "The School for Fathers; or, The Victim of a Curse", 1786, illustrate the belief in the natural benevolence of the simple races. The heroine's husband is taken prisoner during the American war and she is left defenceless in a wild part of the country. She is discovered by the Indian, Logan. He calms her fears at the sight of his warlike tribe by assuring her that
he is not affected by her nationality or by the enmity between their respective races and ends with the simple words: "I see you are in distress; that is country enough for an Indian to pour the balm of consolation into the wounds of adversity."^1^n

Perhaps, by the beginning of the new century, the theme has become slightly fossilized, preserved below the level of reality and valued as an ideal. Its popularity certainly endured. A stream of translations from the French kept it in the front of public favour. An edition of Voltaire's novel under the title "The Sincere Huron", published in 1802, was quickly sold out. Counterparts of "The Man of Nature" abound, novels in which the hero is sedulously guarded from all contact with sophisticated life that he may reach maturity with his innate goodness unspoil'd. There is, for instance, "La Nature et Les Sociétés; or, Ariana and Walter", published in 1615. It contains a description of the perfect kingdom of Guzerat, where virtuous behaviour is the norm. The familiar contention that goodness is inborn and not dependent on climate or education is proved by the introduction of a girl, discovered to have been, somewhat mysteriously, suckled and reared by a lion, who emerges from her retreat at the age of eighteen, fully mature and with astonishing reasoning powers.

There are, however, variations in the motif. It is affected by the spate of travel literature which deluged the market during the period. Numbers of pseudo-historical accounts of

journeys to uncivilised regions appear. Official records of expeditions seem to have been eagerly read as fiction and, for some time, there is a certain amount of confusion between the real and the unreal. Travellers’ tales had a great vogue. Sometimes they were authentic accounts of adventures, but, very frequently, they consisted of heterogeneous material pirated from pamphlets, reports or memoirs and strung together on the flimsiest framework of fiction. They, perforce, concern themselves with native races. Public interest in the theme may be gauged by the success of the swindle that was perpetrated in 1815 by the so-called Prince Sanders. He claimed to be a native of Hayti and an accredited agent from the King of Hayti. He was lionised by London society. Wilberforce took an interest in him; the Duke of Sussex befriended him. He had come, he said, to persuade artists and men of letters to settle in Hayti. He actually accepted specimens of work. After a time, he published a volume, "By Authority, - Haytian Papers". Then he disappeared. The hoaxer was never discovered.

Records of actual voyages found a ready sale. A typical instance of literary opportunism is cited, to show the kind of account that appealed to the public. In 1813, the "Briton", Commander, Sir Robert Staines, was sent out to the East to find, and deal with, the American frigate "Essex", which had been plundering English vessels engaged in the fur trade. On the way, a call was made at Pitcairn Island where Christian, the leader of the mutiny on the Bounty had taken refuge and founded a colony. One of the ship's company, realising the market value of information about such a community, wrote a detailed
account of its aims and constitution under the title of "A Narrative of the Briton's voyage to the Pitcairn's Island." Such practices were very lucrative; there seems to have been a demand even for the veriest trash. Communities were readily discovered, or founded or, indeed, invented, and described with a delusive air of reality. One of the most absurd is, surely, the island of the Melologues, where the inhabitants are so far on the way to perfection that they have risen above the need for ordinary speech and converse with each other by means of instrumental music. The fusion of the philosophic idea of natural goodness and the Crusoe motif may be noted in this kind of tale. To select one, at random: "Hannah Hewit; or The Female Crusoe, Being the History of a Woman of Uncommon Mental and Personal Accomplishments; who, after a Variety of Extraordinary and Interesting Adventures in almost every Station in Life, from Splendid Prosperity to Abject Adversity, was cast away in the Grosvenor East Indiaman, and became for three years the Sole Inhabitant of an Island in the South Seas; written by herself." The profit claimed to be the result of this remarkable experience was the releasing of her natural goodness overlaid by the wickedness of sophistication and the development of her powers of inspired reflection.

Sometimes, traces of the philosophic theme may be discerned even more clearly, as, for instance, in "The Adventures of Cooroo, a Native of the Pellew Islands", published in 1805. An English vessel, The Antelope, is wrecked off the Pellew Islands. The crew manage to

1. By Lieutenant Shillibear, 1817.
2. "The Knights", by R.C. Dallas, 1808.
get ashore but speedily set about making rafts to enable them to reach the mainland. One of them, Blanchard, chooses to remain, in what he considers a human paradise. Finding the loneliness intolerable, however, he makes a friend of Cooroo, one of the natives, and begins to educate him to increase his desirability as a companion. The boy reveals the familiar equipment; noble spiritual qualities as well as intelligence of a high order. This part of the story is a little intellectual idyll, terminated by the murder of Blanchard by the rest of the natives. Cooroo, having tasted the sweets of mental sympathy, proceeds to educate, in his turn, a native youth, Boolam, also an uncorrupted noble savage. The events of the story, here, become obscure and irrelevant but the adventures of the pair include being carried out to sea in a drifting boat while they indulge in high-brow discussions on the subject of the nature and end of man.  

Even if the scene is not wholly laid in the wilds, authors frequently include a volume of travels, sometimes quite divorced from the rest of the story, to meet the demands of public taste. "Charles Ellis; or The Friends, comprising the Incidents and Observations Occurring on a Voyage to the Brazilis and the West Indies", by Robert Simple is a good example of a dual appeal. Most of the plot takes place in London and consists of the usual progress from virtue to vice of a debauched nobleman whose career acts as a warning to an equally foolish, but essentially noble Charles. To develop better principles than those imbibed in England, the hero embarks on the usual travels and

1. See, also, "Providence Displayed; or The Remarkable Adventures of Alexander Selkirk", by Isaac James, 1801, and Keate's "Account of the Pellew Islands", 1788.
is taught by his experiences to place reliance on the dictates of the "untainted heart" which are obviously superior to those of philosophers praising the calm and dispassionate investigation of the reason.

This appeal of actual experience is strong in the novels of John Davis. He spent the period 1798-1802 in some of the less-known parts of America and published, in 1803, his "Travels for Four and a Half Years in the U.S.A." He dedicated his work to Jefferson and in it paid a tribute to the qualities of the uncorrupted savage. He says that the Indians provide us with valuable material for the study of primitive men; a study hitherto confined to classical records of the Scythians and the Germans. In support of his claim that the Indians rival the "most polished races" in the "softer emotions" he tells the story of a conference summoned on the occasion of the conclusion of a treaty after a war with the Indians, at which an exchange of prisoners was to be made. The children of the white prisoners, brought up by the Indians as hostages, were reluctant to leave their Indian villages, and the Shawanese chief asks the British leader to treat them carefully that they may become reconciled to their new life.¹ In "Walter Kennedy, An American Tale,"² largely autobiographical, he tells how, in his childhood in Ireland, he was fascinated by stories of the North American Indians brought home by some of his father's friends. Having developed a hopeless attachment for a married cousin, he resolves to travel and experience at first hand the joys of the simple life. He embarks for New Orleans. On the way, he learns from the Captain of the

1. Travels for Four and a Half Years in the U.S.A. p. 299-301.
2. 1805.
recent abortive insurrection of the blacks of Carolina to recover their liberty. This recital gives him a chance to utter his views on slavery and oppression. He reaches America and resolves to settle in an Indian village to live the simple life. Taking Quipey, an Indian youth, as his guide, he goes in a canoe up the Chetimachas, a tributary of the Mississippi. In the midst of accurate accounts of the topography and vegetation, he introduces the liberal theory of primitivism. He rhapsodises on native integrity, on the right of every man to the proceeds of his own labour, on the debasing of ideals in civilised life and claims to be enjoying for the first time "composure of mind and concentration of ideas." The effect is, unfortunately, spoilt by his passion for authenticity, for, every time he enters on one of these eulogies, he is forced to desist by the appearance of a snake or a crocodile. He builds himself a log-hut and settles down with his Oomcoqua. So we have a cross between a memoir and a novel, a fusion of philosophic moralising and a recording of experience. A similar combination is to be seen in "Montgomery; or, The West Indian Adventurer",¹ where the dilations on the virtues of savages are interrupted in each volume by two or three voyages to England with detailed commentaries on the events of each voyage.

These examples show, not so much a change in the theme as a shifting of emphasis. The original 'noble savage' motif claimed the ruin of the nature of man by civilisation and the necessity of a return

¹. Anon. 1812.
Cf. "Henry, Count de Kilinsky", by Mrs. Murray, 1810, in which the hero, imprisoned in Siberia for his political activities, escapes in a balloon, flies to America, drops in Missouri, and travels extensively before returning to marry his betrothed.
to a state of nature. By the end of the 18th C. there is a dim understanding of the logical conclusion of this theory, that is, that a beneficial organised community is impossible and we hear more of the reverse of the idea, the therapeutic value of contact with nature and of the primitive life. There is a trace of 'escapism' in the repeatedly expressed desire thus to repair the damage of civilised life by contact with Nature for a time.

Primarily, the first-hand experience of the character of the savage is used in the novel to illustrate the wickedness of slavery or the evil of any other oppression exerted for the sake of gain. But primitivist doctrine is also to be seen in these exposures of the rapacity and cruelty of the white man and the idea is rammed home that he owes his viciousness to the ills of civilisation, and the love of luxury. It is also to be seen in the noble qualities invariably accredited to the native victims. They are represented as responsive to kindness, loyal to a degree and conspicuous for their extreme fortitude. Even when they figure in scenes of riot and bloodshed, the provocation is described in the blackest terms and the tone is one of sympathy for the native. Henry Montfort, in "The Daughter of Adoption"¹ at first convinced that he must assist in quelling a revolt of slaves in Jamaica, is so appalled by the behaviour of his fellows that he refuses his help and flees from the island in horror. Two interesting points may be noted in this story. In it, there is a scene of torture which recalls those in novels written much earlier.

¹. John Beaufort, LL.D. 1801.
extolling the heroic endurance of the American Indian. It is inserted here to point the contrast between the behaviour of the simple man and his so called superior. The white men have regained control after scenes of great carnage and have brought the ringleaders, Aboan and Otahbu to public execution. They are to be broken on the wheel. After horrible torment, Otahbu is allowed the mercy of a stroke which ends his agonies, but the sufferings of Aboan are prolonged for hours by a sadistic crowd. The significant point is the magnificent courage with which Aboan shames his tormentors. Both Henry and his young friend Edmunds deplore the effects of civilisation on the passions. The second significant point is that the ordinary man can hold with sincerity two conflicting views. Theoretically, he may be aware of, and may approve, the concept of equality; he may, practically, demonstrate by many acts of kindness and goodwill his acceptance of the duty of benevolence, yet is unable to think of a being with a skin of a different colour from his own as a man at all. An English sailor, unable to endure the deliberate torture of Aboan, rushes in and kills him.1 Later, Henry and Edmunds meet him on board the ship in which they have embarked for home. Praised by Henry for his merciful action to a fellow being, he retorts that though, with difficulty, he might bring himself to call an Irishman, a Scot or even a Welshman a fellow being, he could not consider a negro in that light at all. "As for these black lubbers," he says, "why, everybody knows they are nothing but a sort of monkies; though they do jabber a little;" His reasons for his

view are conclusive. "When I was a boy, and used to go to Church on Sundays," he continues, "I remember to have heard the parson there read from the pulpit, as how God created man in his own image: and I should be glad to know, sir, whether you or any man in his senses ever believed as how God Almighty was a blackamoor, and had great thick lips and a flat nose, like these here fellows?"

Another variation of the theme discloses itself in connection with the question of mixed marriages. There are examples in novels of the introduction into an English family of an Indian girl or a Creole to illustrate the natural nobility of the savage woman. Usually, she is a model of virtue, beautiful and accomplished. Whether she is full-blooded nigger or half-caste, she is represented as dignified, full of sensibility and fine instincts. At times, a foil is provided in the person of an addle-pated society miss capable of no thought beyond the prospects of a good match. The unpleasant characters plainly consider the native girl as only one remove from the brute creation but all are won over by her behaviour and her attributes and the inference is that the unspoiled child of a simple race is superior to her English sister. Perhaps this kind of doctrine is best conveyed in an anonymous novel, published in 1808, called "The Woman of Colour; or Olivia Fairfield." The heroine is the daughter of a rich Jamaican planter by one of his slaves. Her mother has been educated by her father and is painted as a noble figure. She has conveyed to her daughter all her fineness of soul. When her father dies, Olivia discovers that, by the terms of his

1. Ibid. Vol.II, pp.42 & 43.
will, she must repair to England and marry her cousin Augustus Merton, or forfeit her legacy of £80,000. She sails for England and is variously received. Mrs. George Merton insults her and contemptuously conveys her opinion of her guest by ordering a plate of boiled rice for her breakfast. Even Augustus, with everything to gain by the match, is observed to heave a sigh at the sight of his intended bride. But whatever her reception, Olivia remains dignified, comments intelligently on the reactions her appearance causes and calmly acknowledges her kinship with the "swarthiest negro that was ever brought from Guinea's coast!" Her point of view is made quite clear: "All, all are brethren, children of one common parent." She represents the same theme; that noble faculties are innate and develop irrespective of colour or of creed. Augustus comes to see her great worth and also her attractions, for she is tall and graceful, with eloquent eyes. They are married and the doctrine of equality seems to have been accepted. Here, however, the author cannot go quite far enough in translating into practice such a theme. Some concern either for the effect on her sales of this picture of a happy mixed marriage, or a recognition of the practical difficulties involved in countenancing such a manage in English society, causes her to try to get the best of both worlds. After a brief spell of married happiness, Augustus is discovered to have contracted a private marriage in his youth and to have married Olivia bigamously, though in the sincere belief that his first wife was

2. See also "Memoirs of a Scots Heiress", Anon, 1791, where the heroine, Miranda, a beautiful negress is actually at the altar with her intended husband when the author causes her to swoon and die, overcome by the sudden realization of how complicated her future life will be.
dead. Olivia is forced to retire. Her character stands even this
test and her great nobility demonstrates the theory of the noble savage
in adversity as well as in prosperity. She accepts an allowance of
only £200 a year, a bare subsistence, refuses to marry another suitor
because her heart will always belong to Augustus and prepares to live
out her life doing good works. She sets up a 'school of industry' in
the neighbourhood and is respected and beloved by all.

The question of the position of women opened up a fascinating
field for novelists. The views of Godwin and Mary Wollstonecraft had
achieved a wide notoriety and are reflected in hundreds of novels.
The exaltation of passion is one of the commonest themes and authors
delight in creating circumstances in which a woman, flouting the
conventions, remains triumphantly happy in an illicit connection with
the man of her choice. Freedom of action is accorded to the married
as well as to the unmarried and, sometimes, among pairs, there is a
general reshuffling of partners. Love should know no barriers;
marrige without it is immoral. Many of the opinions revealed owe
their origin to a vague Rousseauism, founded on an imperfect knowledge
of "La Nouvelle Héloïse", that advocate of perfect freedom or of
consummate evil according to the point of view of the reader. The
novel was known in England as early as 1760. In November of that year,
"The Monthly Review" gave it a brief adulatory notice. Many impressions
of it were printed and it had a tremendous vogue. The number of
references to it in novels of all shades of opinion is impressive.
It attracted and repelled to an extraordinary degree. The figure of
Julie excited such interest that she has hundreds of counterparts. The mere possession of a copy of the book by a character in a novel comes to be a sign either of native depravity or of simplicity so marked that disaster is imminent and inevitable. Some comment on its scope is pertinent, therefore, to any inquiry into the dissemination of liberal ideas.

In it there are three fields of thought. There is the Naturistic propaganda inspired by the background of St. Preux's agony; the attunement of passion with external nature. The scene is set in a remote country district at the foot of the Alps. As St. Preux suffers or experiences ecstasy, the district is rent by storms or tranquillised by the effect of moonlight on beautiful scenery. Nature is represented as the Voice of God and only civilisation is corrupt. Then, there is the point of view of Julie. Influenced by her conviction of the hallowed nature of love as the prime passion, and as the chief means of approbation of the Divine, she enters into an illicit relationship with St. Preux. Coerced by her strict sense of filial piety, she brings herself to give him up and marry M. de Wolmar, her father's choice. Incredibly, still loving St. Preux, she brings herself to accept him in a triple ménage as the tutor of her children. In brief, we see her pass through guilty love, contrition, confession, renunciation, restoration to an honoured place in society and, after a noble, beautiful, and premature death, to beatification. The third phase is that devoted to Julie as the perfect wife and mother. She is no longer interesting as a woman and seems to have endless time on her
hands for she becomes the author's mouthpiece for liberal views on
religion, education and politics. Her husband plays his part. He
is the target for some of her best doctrinal arrows as he is a confirmed
sceptic. But he is too tough for her, and, on her death-bed, she
bequeathes the problem of converting him to St. Preux.

All this is drenched in sensibility. Free expression of all
his passions is one of the natural rights of men. The prohibitions of
society, however created, prevent the individual from developing his
ego and are, thus, indefensible. Rousseau does not solve the great
problem of reconciling the idea of the free expression of love with
respect for the social order, in the arch of which marriage and family
life form the keystone. The outcry against the novel suggests that
the theoretical belief in the efficacy of contrition and the Christian
doctrine of the duty of forgiveness went down like a ninepin before the
encouragement to loose principles thought to be involved in the
rehabilitation in society, and even in marriage, of a guilty woman.

In some quarters a compromise was arrived at; a woman may be forgiven
but must not be noticed after her lapse. The extreme view is that
taken by the reviewer in the notice of "Scenes of Life" by T. Harrell,
in the Anti-Jacobin Review and Magazine: "A seduced female should never
be publicly exhibited but in terror to the spectators."\(^1\)

There is a consciousness of daring about the novels that adopt
fully the view of the right of women to freedom of action. The author
of "Geraldine", 1798, states boldly, in the preface: "The leading object

\(^1\) Vol. 22, Sept. 1805.
of the work is to show that, if a woman has been compelled, or even induced, to sacrifice her affections to the commands or wishes of a parent, she may, without deviating from the most perfect virtue, leave the husband to whom she has plighted her troth and betake herself to the arms of a favourite man." The heroine carries out the intention stated. Through the medium of eleven pairs of correspondents, we learn that Lord Grey has approved the advances made to his daughter by a Mr. Fitz-Aubert and that she is delighted because she is in love with him. Unfortunately for her, his Lordship then receives a better offer, communicates the fact, without embarrassment, to the lovers, and marries Geraldine to a Duke's heir. Geraldine tries to accept her fate but is unable to endure the situation. Failing to subdue her love for her first suitor, she elopes with him, deeming the loss of social respectability a small price to pay for happiness. A divorce is obtained by the enraged husband; Geraldine marries her lover and the author obviously considers that justice has been done. At each turn of the plot, there are disquisitions on the iniquity of forcing the affections and disposing of human beings as if they were inanimate possessions. The story is also punctuated by political opinion and ravings against tyranny.

The same theme is to be found in an anonymous novel, "The Picture of the Age", 1800. The chief feature of the plot is the organised collusion of the parties to procure a divorce. The heroine's

1. For a similar treatment of this idea, see 'Self-Deception', by Emma Parker, 1816, and "Emily de Varmont; or, Divorce Dictated by Necessity", Trans. 1798 (Pub. in France 1791) by Jean Baptiste Louvet.
right to leave an unloved husband is emphasised. Her lover is invited to live with the married pair in a menage a trois until a divorce is arranged. The idea of liberty of affection has here been widened. A friend of the heroine's marries her deceased husband's nephew, and the novel contains a plea for the abolition of the prohibited degrees.¹

Even if the end of the story is not so patently contrived to make a divorce possible and so to do away with the appearance of guilt, the right of a woman to remain an honoured member of society after a lapse is stoutly claimed. A typical novel claiming this right is "The Force of Prejudice" by Wildman, the bookseller.² In it a woman takes her experience, recovers her rectitude and still commands the respect of society. If the reviewers are to be believed, this kind of story was so common that it constituted a public danger. It is difficult to see, however, that it excited passion as much as plots of the kind that J.N. Brewer, for instance, produced in "A Winter's Tale", 1800, where the heroine experiences the horrifying thrills of attempted seduction no less than nine times and escapes at the last, triumphantly virgin. The Anti-Jacobin reviewer regrets her escape and thinks that the warning of her fate would have been greater if she had succumbed and died in the conventional fashion.

Seraphina, in "The Daughter of Adoption" is in the direct line from Mary Wollstonecraft's Maria. She has been adopted, in romantic

¹. See also "Delworth; or Elevated Generosity", T. Southwood, 1809, and "St. Irvin; or, The Rosicrucian", P.B. Shelley, 1812.
². 1800.
circumstances, by Mr. Parkinson who has retired into the wilds above
San Domingo and become a recluse philosopher. In his youth, he was
destined for the Church but during the course of his theological studies,
he became agnostic and renounced his intention. He and his wife
bring up the child on the plan of Rousseau and she is described as a
female philosopher. She shows an acute mind and exquisite sensibility.
Henry Montfort meets her in wild surroundings and falls in love with
her. The family is forced to flee by the insurrection of the negroes
and Parkinson and his wife are killed. Seraphina is rescued by
Henry and consents to go with him to England. Henry fears that a
marriage contracted with any other woman than one chosen by his father
would cause him to be disinherited, so Seraphina declares herself ready
to put her principles into practice and live with him without a legal
tie. She will only accept a private and humble establishment. "If
Henry will be true," she says, "I can be happy in this little cottage.
If he will not, what parchment bond can make him so? - what register
or certificate can console me for his affections lost?"1. When Henry
inherits a small legacy from his mother and proposes that they shall
marry, she refuses. She takes the opportunity, however, of admonishing
him for his profligate habits and urges him to live within his income.
Pointing out that the true joys are those of the mind, she says: "Look
more to intellect, my Henry, and less to sense - walk with the
philosophers and the Muses, instead of revelling with bacchanalians."2.

Though Henry does eventually persuade her to submit to the "jingle of mystic phrases" she is vindicated by the author for this lapse. "It was not", says he, "the bond of security that she desired. Like another Eloisa, she despised all security but the bond of the heart." 

Sometimes it is difficult to believe in the serious intention of the author in novels dealing with extra-marital relationships.

Mrs. Parsons, translating one of the works of Auguste La Fontaine and adapting it to English taste, presents an incredible plot designed, presumably, to show the same idea, the supreme importance of the passions. The heroine of "Love and Gratitude; or, Traits of the Human Heart" 1806, has casual relations with a total stranger. Later, she meets him in her own social circle but neither recognises the other. They fall in love. Discovering that she is pregnant, she confides in her own mother and in his. They assist her to have the child in a different part of the country. When a son is born to her, she returns, tells him the whole story of her early lapse. He expresses great delight, acknowledges the child, prepares to marry her and accepts her at the altar from his mother who has crowned her with a chaplet of myrtle as a symbol of chastity.

The figure of the girl who loses all for love becomes a popular one in the novel. Editions of Kotzebue and the translations of Delphine² and The Sorrows of Werter³ increased the avidity of the

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3. First trans. from a French Version, 1779, possibly by C. Graves. N.B. Tran. in 1801, by W. Render, D.D.
of the public for stories exhibiting her. The theme is hackneyed and would not concern us were there not a considerable number of novels which use the plot simply as an opportunity for revealing their opinions on the right relations of the sexes and the natural rights of woman. The arguments used by the parties are often purely Godwinian and entitle the user to serious consideration even when the author, aware of the impracticability of his theories, allows his characters to conform to convention in the closing chapters by dying, he in a duel, she of a decline. A good deal of liberal opinion is revealed, for instance, in John Brisled's "Edward and Anna; or, A Picture of Human Life," published in 1806. Quite literally, his novel was born of fever, for he wrote it in bed during an illness and completed it within a week. It is a story of star-crossed lovers and, in it, in spite of a conventional ending and some pious observations by the clergyman husband, the author reveals his intimate knowledge of, and we suspect his sympathy with, the point of view of Godwin. A beneficed clergyman of 45 marries Anna, a child of 17, and proceeds to neglect her. Anna droops, so her husband calls in Edward, a young doctor, to prescribe for her. He falls in love with her and she with him. Using the stock arguments of the Rousseauistic school, he persuades her that chastity is less important than the free expression of passion. On

1. The popularity of this kind of novel may be seen in the poem called "Reform — a Dialogue", 1819. It is a paraphrase of Horace's VIth Ode, Bk.III. The stanzas beginning "motus doceri" appears thus:—

"No more with pure and holy fire
Must Hymen's altar glow,
But German waist and Moore uninspire
The wanton thought and loose desire,
That work the virgin's woe."
the flimsy pretext of teaching her Latin, he is able to prolong his
stay for some time but, eventually, he is obliged to go to London to
earn his living. They exchange passionate love letters. Anna is
sure that their love is innocent. Catastrophe comes suddenly. Anna’s
two children die; her brother hears of her liaison and challenges Edward
to a duel. Both combatants are killed. Inevitably, Anna dies of a
broken heart. The sympathy of the reader is directed towards the
lovers all the time. The husband is made so unattractive that he
receives none and he is caused to alienate the reader by his statement
that Anna and her children are in hell where penalties of extreme
severity are also being reserved for Edward. This is the kind of
novel censured by reviewers for showing a dangerous sympathy with
iniquity.

When Hannah More, in an attempt to counteract the danger of
liberal opinions on the subject of marriage, wrote her "Coelebs in
Search of a Wife", she deliberately chose the novel form because she
realised the attraction of fiction and hoped to reach the widest public
by coating the moral pill with the sugar of romance. Her success was
phenomenal. Sixteen editions were published before the end of the
year and the book inspired dozens of imitations. Not all of them can
have pleased her. Two are of particular interest in the study of the
reflection of liberal ideas. In both, the authors air their opinions
and provide a series of dissertations on controversial matters linked
together by the sketchiest of plots. In "Nubilia in Search of a

1. 1809.
Husband", 1809, William Mudford says simply: "The following work has no title to the name of a novel. Its incidents are few, and its characters fewer." He has views and he intends to relay them but he thinks that they may be more popular if he connects them with a narrative. "But the narrative," he says, "as the reader will very soon perceive, was a subordinate object. It was considered merely as a vehicle for the conveyance of opinions upon morals, society and literature." In the upbringing of a girl, education for marriage necessarily plays a large part and it is the author's views on the ideal form of education and his conception of the rights and duties of women that are relevant here. For Nubilia's father is described as a philosopher and gives vent to the theories of the reformers. He asserts the importance of reason and the necessity of preserving a child from excessive emotion until the judgment is fully developed. Nubilia must never "take a single step upon the mere authority of precedent or precept" but must study the reason for an action and judge it rationally. Abundant proof is forthcoming of the working of the intellect in a child as young as three or four years; in fact, he claims; "and in nine cases out of ten, I have seen this progress of reason take place before the eighth month." He admires Rousseau and follows him in his adulation of the simple life. "Human happiness is a seed," he says, "that must be sown in solitude, it must be nurtured in silence."
Various aids are suggested to help a girl to develop reason and emotion in the right relationship. Music will furnish an antidote against sluggishness of soul for "there are moments when we are unfit for strict application, when we are unfit even for rational discourse," says Nubilia.  

* So, also, did signs of mortality and Nubilia encouraged a cult of sensation. She confesses that she loves to hold a mouldering bone in her hands and that there have been times when she has "longed for dissolution" to the sound of an Aeolian harp. She thoroughly enjoys her father's funeral and makes the naive admission, "I am fond of these ceremonies." She has visions at sunrise and experiences religious exaltation, though always out of doors. She is specifically warned against the dangers of dancing to anyone possessed of keen sensibility. Her father pictures a ball-room as a place where "corruption is sucked in at every reeking pore of the body as it glides along. The eyes are pandars to the soul and every sense is depraved....Intemperate wishes fill the bosom, and thoughts, far remote from virtue, take possession of the mind."  

On his deathbed, his father makes a speech two pages long on marriage and, also, leaves her a paper on the subject. In these and in his own behaviour, we see the familiar views. Women are entitled to entire freedom of action. Their present folly is due to unwise education. Nature is a sure guide to conduct. Marriage, he says, "is set in opposition to Nature." He advises her: "Give the widest

possible sphere to human love and affection; let its objects be
multiplied; - why not? If you forbid, you can only produce deception;
you cannot root out the fixed habits of nature."\(^1\). Mary Wollstone-
craft herself might be speaking in the following: "The woman, who is
not the guardian of her own honour; who is chaste only while she is
watched, and while she remains untried, is already a libertine in her
heart; the virtue of such a woman could give me no pleasure."\(^2\).

Intellectual friendships with men should be encouraged and the duty of
cultivating the mind is incumbent on all. In the letter written in
answer to a friend who reproaches him for carrying on an intrigue with
a married woman, and left to Nubilia at his death, he replied that he
loved the woman and that the ceremony of marriage is unimportant. It
is but ritual and has little effect on the personality. "Does the
human heart" he asks, "undergo a metamorphosis after the ritual ceremony
of the church? Is the ring a magic circle whose properties are potent
enough to confound all feeling, to hoodwink the mind, to corrupt the
natural sentiments of the bosom?"\(^5\).

All this is mingled with political comment on the nature of
government, the rights and duties of man, the folly of rank and titles
and the prostitution of talents for gain. Nubilia's wedding, at the
end, is almost an afterthought and we leave her unconvinced that she
will ever experience the sort of love described by her father as "a sort
of aerial existence." Rather do we feel for the reviewer who found her
"cold as a cloud of snow...." and maintained that she was "more like a

3. Ibid. p.185.
philosophic member of the blue-stocking club than a young woman commencing the impassioned career of life... She indeed marries at last; but it is after a great deal of talking rather than searching."¹

Not so is Coelibia Sandford. She also chooses a husband but she is so full of sensibility that the novel in which she figures would be prurient if it were not ridiculous. It is intended to be a glorification of the married state, and certainly Coelibia is actuated by the most orthodox motives in her choice. Having rejected one suitor because his principles are not sufficiently steady, although he is undeniably brilliant, and another, because of an arrogance of temper begotten of a too conscious rectitude, she accepts a third because she discerns in him, after the most searching scrutiny, the alliance of exquisite sensibility with unimpeachable integrity.

Having made up her mind, she lets herself go: "A delirium, soft and delightful, stole her from herself; her limbs forgot their weight—lifted from the earth, she seemed to float upon the air with a vague, indefinable sensation."² She demands a special licence and the wedding is arranged without delay. "No glaring taper," we are told, "revealed the confusion of her cheek: in darkness, and from memory, the priest repeated the ceremony that gave her to her lover, and she retired unobserved to her chamber — Let no unhallowed foot intrude upon the consecrated ground; closed be every eye and hushed be every ear - let no tongue attempt to speak what no imagination can conceive."³ Apart from the display of sensibility, Coelibia would not have displeased

Hannah More. But the figure of her father would have done so. He is a philosopher and he is responsible for the dissemination of liberal opinion throughout the novel. He was interested in the study of human nature, "and even when he occasionally entered the vortex of dissipation, or engaged in the labyrinth of business, he made pleasure and ambition subordinate to the study of human nature, and to tracing out that beautiful chain which, in the moral no less than in the material world, links the cause to the effect." His views on education conform to the familiar pattern; no restrictions, training of the judgment and reason, quickening of the sensibilities by contact with nature. The only deviation from the norm is to be seen in his advocacy of sex teaching to children, not through the much feared study of botany, but with a special emphasis on the creative power of man delegated to him by his Maker and the rightness of pleasure in passion.

Mr. Sandford admired Berkeley and Hume and all who furthered the cause of intellectual freedom. He was writing a book on the philosophy of the mind and frequently read papers to his daughter on some abstruse subject. One of his essays was on the theory of vision; another on the existence of telepathy. Sometimes, he wandered about the London streets in a philosophic reverie on the nature of the universe. On one such ramble, he stumbles over the form of an unfortunate woman who has taken poison. He brings her home. She dies and leaves behind her a manuscript which tells her sad story. She has left her husband

2. A similar series of discussions between a free-thinker and an orthodox Churchman is described in "The Acceptance" Anon, 1810. Trevanion, the Atheist is not defeated in argument by Dorrington and is allowed to die without conversion.
to live with a really good man whom she has persuaded into a connection with her. When he induces her to return to her husband, and leaves her, she fails to do so, and plunges into prostitution for want of any other means of livelihood. She is rescued from arrest by her lover but he kills a watchman by accident during the mêlée and is himself arrested and tried for murder. She cannot live after his condemnation so she takes poison. The story reveals Henry's belief in the doctrine of Necessity. He thinks that events are predetermined and people live at the mercy of a destiny that they cannot control. Coelibibia also subscribes to this view and tells how, over Mary's grave, she hears a voice saying: "Your destiny is accomplished; wandering star, return whence you arose." Henry's destiny is obviously a happy one for it preserves him from the hangman and brings him, by a chance meeting at the British Institution, into contact with Coelibibia whose third, and accepted, suitor he becomes.

Speculative opinion in the novel is invariably connected with loose moral standards by the opponents of reform. It is also connected with free-thinking in religious matters and the portrait of the sceptic is as popular as that of the woman who dispenses with the marriage bond. He is more frequently found inserted as a warning in the many antidotes to liberalism published by redoubtable writers with reformative intent. Lord Fetlock, in "Liberality and Prejudice", by Eliza Coxe, 1813, is such a figure. But there are sympathetic

2. "I should be ashamed to peruse, much more to repose any belief in such a catalogue of obscenity and crimes," he says of the Scriptures, "and a farrago of absurdities, absolutely undeserving the attention or consideration of a man of sense." P.258, Vol. I. And "chance alone gave me my being", and "the stroke which robs me of life, consigns me to annihilation." P.259.
portraits of atheists in novels otherwise conventional enough whose arguments are not refuted and indeed often seem to win the day when brought into conflict with those of the clergy. Mr. Mowbray, in "Geraldine", by Mrs. M.J. Mackenzie, 1820, is labelled free-thinker and some care is taken by the author to show the iniquity of his ideas. It is said that he "unites all the coldness and calculation of Hobbes with the active and sarcastic spirit of Voltaire" and that he considers religion as "nothing more than a useful political engine. Hope and fear were powerful auxiliaries in governing the minds of men, and whether these passions were brought into play by the doctrines of Moses or of Christ, of Brahma or of Mahomet, appeared to him matters of perfect indifference."¹ He contested the whole doctrine of the Fall of Man and the consequent corruption of human nature. In his opinion, the world is run by self interest and there are but two categories of people, fools who do not know where their interests lie and knaves who do. The universe is the result of an accidental coalescence of atoms and its end will be as fortuitous as its beginning. Throughout the novel, he engages the other characters in highbrow discussions of matters of this kind. He gives his views on Methodism, on the Cartesian philosophy, on the licentiousness of the stage and on the theory of dualism. One of the most interesting because it reveals a knowledge of various heresies, is waged between Mr. Mowbray and a good, orthodox Churchman, one of the beneficed clergy. They discuss the nature of evil and the existence of a personal devil. Mr. Mowbray denies him and then, alternately, defends him, from a sense of justice which will

not allow him to blame a being for all the mischief in the world unless he is allowed to be both omniscient and omnipresent. If these capacities are conceded to him, then he must be like the Creator in essence and therefore, possibly, a part of the Deity. At this suggestion of Manicheism, Mr. Maitland is routed and falls back on faith. "To tell you the truth," he says, "I think you are now getting out of your own depth, as well as out of mine. Clever as you are, you might as well attempt to take the gauge of the ocean with a cockle shell, as to solve these sort of questions."

Similar discussions take place between Edward and the parson in "Edward and Anna" and in "The Acceptance", by the anonymous author of Carolyn Ormsby, 1811. Less pleasant tirades against religion may be seen in "The English Gil Elas; or, The Adventures of Gabriel Tanzant", John Coton, 1808.

The same point of view is put forward with some power in Sarsfield, by John Gamble, 1815. Immortality is denied and the existence of a personal God is also decried. Instead, a belief is expressed in an intelligent first principle. The author describes the working of a supernormal power of sympathy which gives the hero astonishing intuitive powers. "Sarsfield" has great sensibility.

He is constantly worshipping nature and allowing his thoughts to dwell with melancholy pleasure on death and dissolution. He wishes to part from his beloved Miss Ormsby, when he must, in the open air to the sound of sweet music and not in a dark chamber. He has his wish for, while

she waits to be married to him at the altar in a darkening Church, amid silent guests, conscious of an undefinable uneasiness increased by the eeriness of the wind and the guttering candles, he is murdered on his way to the wedding in an open and deserted field. She is summoned thither by a mutual friend, who finds him by chance and rushes stained with blood to the Church. Fatalism is the keynote of the novel. 1.

This interest in argument of an abstruse kind is a noticeable feature of the novels of the period and it seems to increase rather than to diminish. When arguments are not defiant expositions of liberal theory, they tend to be pedagogic. They nearly always fall into self-contained little sections. They provide material for family discussion and may have been an answer to the demand for literature that could be read aloud. At any rate, an author interpolating such discussions reveals a reasonably high intellectual level and the prestige of the novel rises steadily in spite of the fulminations of the reviewers. The great champions of law and order and of strict moral views contributed largely to this rise by their deliberate use of the novel form to further the cause of morality. Unfortunately, the creative spark is seldom to be seen in their work and pedagogy takes the place of art.

1. For an extreme example of the fatalistic view, see "The Man of Sorrows", Aldred Attendale, 1808. The calamities are described as fortuitous, and could have been avoided.
CHAPTER VII

1. Attacks on, and antidotes to, liberal ideas; methods adopted; the work of Mrs. West, R.C. Dallas, Robert Bissett and others.

2. Some stock characters, and devices.

1.

Against the siren song of speculative opinion, amplified so alarmingly in the novel, the whole orchestra of moral theory was employed. Slow to tune up, it reached its full powers in the early years of the nineteenth century. Many of its members were already well known in other literary spheres and deliberately turned their attention from pamphlets, theses, series of letters of advice to young men, or strictures on the habits and education of young women, to disseminate good sound morality by means of this disturbingly popular form. In the eyes of zealots like Bissett, the trash has become dangerous. So, there is an influx into the novel of intellectual writers, stirred by the serious purpose of purveying morality through fiction. Their attitude affects the development of the novel in that it postpones the emancipation of the form from the shackles of didacticism. Entertainment, they say, must necessarily be one of the aims of a novelist; it should not be his first.

Although the moral theme is limited by its own content, and, consequently, there is, in the novels of those writers who deliberately uphold it, a similarity in method of attack, yet it is possible to make
some distinctions between them. Liberal ideas on the subject of 

tyranny, for instance, or on the wickedness of institutions, or on the 
necessity of abolishing government altogether, are usually counteracted 
by means of lengthy declamations in favour of law and order or by means 
of over-coloured accounts of the results of the Revolution in France 
with a running commentary of statements that anarchy is the inevitable 
result of the application in practice of speculative ideas on the rights 
of man. There is increasing emphasis on the fear of revolution, 
especially after 1815, when the effects of the peace, a series of bad 
harvests, the operation of the Corn Laws and bad industrial conditions 
combined to produce serious social unrest. Again and again, we find 
characters maintaining that any attempt to change the order of the 

social pyramid is presumptuous and dangerous. Novelists deliberately 

preach contentment and there are demands for some measure of control 
of the press to prevent the dissemination of liberal views by unwise 

comment or by wilful proselytising. Readers are enjoined to stop 

"craving for a new religion, a new government, a new system of morals, 
or a new code of law. Some of those things are in their nature 
invariable..." 1. To show up the folly of radical theories, a 

contested election is thrown into a story, now and again. The 
democratic candidate is invariably a rogue.

Theories about the perfectibility of the human species and 
universal benevolence are especially fiercely attacked, because they 
run counter to the principles of the established Church. Any belief in

either the progressive deterioration of the race, or its movement
towards perfection, is shown to be incompatible with the Christian
view of life as a preparation for eternity; that is, for an ultimate
state of bliss, where victims of inequality and injustice in this life
will find compensation. The tone in which this conflict of doctrines
is discussed is invariably ethical. The devotional note is absent.
Indeed, many novelists reserve as much censure for the 'enthusiasm'
of the Dissenter or the 'holy mysteries' of the Roman Catholic as for
the 'scepticism' of the free-thinker. In fact, what they are deplored
is liberty of opinion itself. They are intolerant and misinformed.
In their desire to make everyone conform to a common pattern of belief,
they reflect faithfully the public attitude to non-conformity of any
kind. Perhaps Sydney Smith, priest and wit, whose reputation for
humour spoilt his chance of a bishopric, best exhibits the intransigence
of the general view in matters of opinion and the absurdity of the
prohibitions attached to certain forms of creed. He shows the folly
of suggesting that the holding of sceptical, or unorthodox, views
necessarily makes a man dangerous or untrustworthy and considers that
the practice of depriving Dissenters and Roman Catholics of all chance
of public office is as foolish as the custom of transporting reformers.
In 1807, he published a series of five letters, purporting to be written
by a Peter Plymley to his brother Abraham, a country parson. They
were so popular that, in 1808, he wrote five more and published a
collected edition. Sixteen editions followed and the work had such
a wide circulation that the Government made serious efforts to trace
the author and to prosecute him. The secret of his identity was too well kept, however. In the letters, Peter comments artlessly on all sorts of absurd prejudices and inconsistencies of conduct. One of them tells how a small English frigate, with Perceval as its captain, prepares to meet a French vessel. Having clapped into irons some twenty or thirty of his best sailors, who happen to be Catholic, Perceval gives the order to fire. Then he "rushes through blood and brains, examining his men in the Catechism and the Thirty-nine Articles, and positively forbids anyone to sponge or ram, who has not taken the Sacrament according to the Church of England". With an air of innocence Peter suggests that if only a Catholic Justice could be seen on the Bench of Magistrates and it could be "clearly ascertained that he had no tail, only a single row of teeth, and that he loved port wine, he would be reckoned a jolly fellow." Lest the rustic Abraham should find it difficult to believe in such intolerance, Peter assures him that the attitude to Dissenters is even worse. "When a country squire hears of an ape," he writes, "his first feeling is to give it nuts and apples; when he hears of a Dissenter, his immediate impulse is to commit it to the county jail, shave its head, to alter its customary food and to have it privately whipped." The same intolerance is to be seen in the novels. The slightest deviation from the views of the orthodox Church is sufficient to earn the title of "free-thinker" and to incur immediate, and heavy, censure. Subtle distinctions of creed are seldom noticed and the less able, but no less zealous,

moralists tend to put all unorthodox views together and condemn them en bloc. An extreme case includes within the framework of one plot such irreconcilable elements as Druids and Roman Catholic nuns.¹.

By far the most popular target for the novelists attacking, or providing antidotes to, liberal ideas is the Rousseauistic theory of education. It had attracted fanatical adherents like Thomas Day who had said that if there were any danger of all the books in the world being destroyed the one he would like to see saved would be "Emile". The system seemed to him likely to produce a perfect compromise between the brutality and ignorance of the savage and the corruption of civilised man. His friend Edgeworth went further and actually brought up his son according to the system advocated in "Emile". At the age of nine the boy had "all the virtues of a child bred in the hut of a savage, and all the knowledge of things which could be well acquired, at an early age, by a boy bred in civilised society."² Unfortunately, he was not disposed to obey. The effects of the system were deplored by moralists and there are innumerable references to them in novels. Some writers present parallel pictures of children and invite the reader to compare them, in much the same way as the reformers posed side by side the simple child of nature and the meretricious product of civilisation. A noble girl, carefully nurtured, is contrasted with the undisciplined and untrained child, devoid of principle, and doomed to be drawn into disgrace by the sceptical views that she swallows and the company she keeps. Their

¹ "The Welshman; A Romance", W. Earle, 1802.
subsequent careers are followed up. The good girl of the nursery becomes the Griselda of some man's home and the undisciplined child becomes the wanton.

Another method adopted is to create a character who, for some reason or other, suffers repeated changes of environment and so is brought into contact with differing systems. Orphans are popular figures in this kind of novel as their transference to one household after another is easily credible. Each change of background gives the author a chance to insert his personal opinions and we find debated such subjects as the desirability of tuition at home as opposed to education in any kind of seminary, or the qualities that make for a good teacher or governess. These views, usually sententious, are foisted on the reader without compunction under some such heading as "An Enquiry into the nature of Education in our Public Schools" or "The Best Method of Educating Children to Avoid the Taint of Infidelity". For this is the age of the amateur enquiry. The Press is full of accounts of investigations undertaken; into the conditions in foundling asylums, the incidence of immorality among the daughters of clergymen, the wasteful habits of the poor, or - what you will.

The burning question of the education of women is exhaustively discussed. Two kinds of critics show themselves; those thinkers who acquiesce in the frequently-stated judgment that women lack intellectual grasp and emotional stability, and relegate them to the role of enabling men by their superior refinement and sensibility and those more vigorous minds who wish to put the matter to the test and give women opportunities to expose the injustice of such a dictum. It is
interesting, hence, to see that some of the fiercest critics of Mary Wollstonecraft's views on women's rights in general take up the same position as she does in discussing their education. Hannah More, for instance, repudiates the idea that there is, necessarily, any difference in innate capacity between the sexes and makes it plain that she believes that the folly of women is directly due to the contemptible triviality of their education. The great difference between the liberal view and that of Mrs. More, lies in the conception of the purpose with which education should be given to women. Mary Wollstonecraft believes in a woman's right to develop her capacities regardless of men and of the marriage market; Mrs. More advocates such development to reduce the chances of immorality and to make women satisfying companions to their men, instead of domestic pets.

As for the question of general education, doubts are expressed as to the wisdom of educating the poor at all. The same fear that underlies the actions of the government throughout the period, - the fear of sudden and irretrievable loss of control - is to be seen in the speculations as to the effect of opening the eyes and ears of the labouring classes to anything that would increase their already seething discontent, and of rendering them articulate enough to express their resentment.

In spite of their tautology and their tedious moralizing, these novels have vitality. They succeed because, though constantly interrupted by the sermon, their plots are full of incident and, for the most part, the action in them is both swift and vigorous since the
nobler the character to be tried, the more impressive must the trial be. There is also one undoubted advantage for the reader in having the moral dose securely bottled and labelled; it can be the more easily avoided, and therefore need not nauseate. The best of them are informed with a sense of mission. Their authors sincerely believe that the dissemination of liberal ideas is doing incalculable harm and that the situation must be tackled. Every form of publication seems to them tainted, even children's books.¹ They consider that it behoves serious writers to use the same weapon as their opponents, that is to say insinuating fiction, in defence of religion, patriotism and morals.

Out of the mass of material available a few typical examples have been selected, to illustrate the kind of attack made and the nature of the antidotes supplied. Purely moral novels have not been included, only those whose authors seem to be writing with the serious purpose of either exposing false prophets, or proposing a way of life which will preserve those who follow it from the dangers of unsound philosophy.

Mrs. West is one of the most redoubtable of the champions against liberalism. "A Tale of the Times", 1799, has a portrait gallery of victims of the new philosophy. Geraldine, the daughter of Sir William Powerscourt has been carelessly brought up, first by a flighty mother, and then by various governesses. She makes a good match with the Earl of Monteith. Her marriage settlement ties £2,000 a year on her, exclusively. For a time, she proves an admirable wife.

¹ E.g. A parent writes to the Anti-Jacobin, April 1799, complaining of a child's book "Prince Abdul & The Princess Selima; or, Virtue Rewarded" in which there are seditious statements. An assembly of 500 men is held up to contempt, and the villains bear names which are those of the sons of George III in reverse. Vol.II,p.450.
and devotes herself to good works. She founds a model village at
Jamestown, where everyone is contented with his lot and has a perfect
trust in the benevolence of his social superiors. There is a portrait
of a good clergyman, whose function, in addition to the considerable
part he plays in the story, is to act as an example to his fellow clergy
and to defend the Cloth from all attacks based on the actions of the
black sheep of the profession. ¹ His daughter, Lucy, a thoroughly good
and sensitive girl is provided as a foil for Geraldine. Then the
villain enters. He is a philosopher of sorts, with a keen eye for his
own interests. He has been in Paris, "contemplating the sublime
spectacle of a great nation emancipating itself from the fetters of
tyranny and superstition."² Arrived in England, he starts contemplating
Geraldine's £2,000 a year and forms a plot to abduct and seduce her, and
then, after the inevitable divorce, make her his legal wife in order to
get his hands on her portion. Geraldine is an easy victim presumably
because of her defective early training. At any rate, he achieves
his purpose, actuated as he says, by the laws of general benevolence;
"That system of universal benevolence which supersedes all written
precept, gains ground. To that do we appeal, and not to the insane
morality of specific injunctions, which foolishly and even wickedly
attempt to bring individual actions under the limitations of the general rule.
Man in society must retain all his natural rights, and the restraints
that circumscribe these rights must soon submit to the resistless

voice of public opinion. 1. Geraldine, however, is found by Mr. Evans and taken home and it becomes sadly clear that there is no need of a divorce. She is forgiven by both husband and father and dies in the usual decline. Lord Monteith then pursues Fitz-Osborne, who escapes to France. Fate overtakes him, however. He is imprisoned and sentenced to death under Robespierre’s regime. To escape the ignominy of the guillotine, he swallows poison, and, while he awaits his end, is informed that he has been pardoned. Having got his deserts, he is made to recant the false philosophy which, founded on the "visionary perfectibility" of the human race, rejects the restrictions which wisdom imposes on men.

In the character of Prudentia Homespun, Mrs. West repeats the technique in "The Infidel Father." 2 With many digressions, and moral disquisitions, Prudentia tells her story in a gentle, bantering style. The infidel father is Lord Glanville who lives a cat and dog life with his wife because each has unearthed a secret highly discreditable to the other. He is the stock false philosopher, cloaking self-interest under high-sounding theories and manners "formed in the school of Lord Chesterfield." He is a complete sceptic: "He had imbibed many of his early opinions from Shaftesbury and Bellingbroke; his prejudices against religion received insuperable strength from the sarcasms of Voltaire; and in the varying sophisms of Rousseau he had found convincing arguments against revelation." 3 For political reasons,

1. Ibid. Vol.III, p.239.
2. 1802.
he supports religion and tries to promote, by its means, a sense of duty in the poor. The home he provides for a growing daughter is a dangerous one and his training proves disastrous. He educates her in the new ideas. Prudentia describes them in full. Caroline is taught to believe in the absolute liberty of the individual, a liberty which extends even to the right to take his own life if he so desires, and in the invalidity of all creeds that preach restraint. So she imbibes a contempt for religion. In addition, she is taught to accept the theory of the absolute volition of reason. She is led to associate good and evil with natural law. Her attachment to her father must be "quite distinct from the ties of nature" because those ties are "merely the bond of prejudice." Nor is it to be the result of duty, "because duty implies obligation, and must therefore be unsuitable to the nature of an independent, reflecting being."¹ Prudentia's comment on all this sets the tone: "After Lady Caroline's regard for her father had been purified from the scum of natural affection, and the dross of filial duty, common observers could not perceive that there was any left."²

The usual contrast to this menage is then provided. Lord Glenville's secret is an early marriage and a deserted wife and son. The son has grown to manhood and has been killed on active service in America but has left a daughter, Sophia. She is brought to the castle by a virtuous clergyman, Brudenell, and her grandfather is forced to acknowledge her and give her a home. She has been very differently

2. Ibid, p.139.
educated, by Mr. Brudenell. His system appears to have been mostly negative. Thus, he claims: "I never puzzled you with abstruse inquiries into the nature of truth; but I taught you, that without this quality, you could not hope to appear with joy in the presence of its divine Author. I did not build your virtues on a total seclusion from all bad examples; for I know that human nature is frail, that the best of us transgress." Again, he did not "aim at eradicating her passions. He did not encourage her to rely on natural rights. He looked on her as the germ of immortality." It is Mr. Brudenell's sermons to Sophia and his admonitions to Caroline that convey the antidote.

A third system of education, the fashionable one, is to be observed in the comic sub-plot. Kitty Muggleton, the daughter of wealthy but low-born tradespeople, has been unable to get a husband though, she herself declares, she has "steered through all the changes, languishing, vigilant, sprightly and affable beauty." In despair she tries placidity and captures an ironmonger called Jones, crude but possessed of a fortune. She changes his name to Fitz-John and christens her children Melisandriana and Artremidorus. Conscious of her own trivial education at the Miss MacFrisky's Academy, she imports Mr. Babble to educate her children in a more enlightened way. He undertakes to form the character of any child to take the right imprint "as easily as blancmange does the shape of the mould in which it cools." He begins by getting rid of all the Bibles in the house. Children must be

restored, according to Mr. Babble, to a state of nature or, rather of "virtuous savagism" and then regenerated by philosophy. All acquired propensities must be rejected. Eating, for instance, must be restricted and asleep controlled. Endurance must be taught by pain. The children must be made to perform such uncomfortable actions as walking barefoot over gravel or be thrown into a tank and made to swim whatever the temperature. Moral qualities are simply due to an arrangement of particles in the brain and must not be given any particular importance.

Mr. Babble continues in office until his endurance feats result in an accident, in which the boy is badly scarred and, thereby, rendered morose for life. His successor is a retired prostitute who gives a conventional training and saves the girl from the moods and sulks which mar her brother.

The setting being contrived thus to illustrate the worthlessness of both the training in speculative ideas given by Lord Glenville and the stunts of Mr. Babble, the action runs swiftly. Caroline, after a self-willed career, is tricked into compromising circumstances by Lord Montolieu, an unprincipled fortune hunter. She discovers his perfidy, and loses her mental balance. Returning home in a frenzy, she reproaches her father for deceiving her with his theories, stabs herself and dies at his feet. The old man is reduced to misery and repentance and renounces the wicked theories that have had such a disastrous effect and

C/f. the treatment to which Thomas Day subjected the orphan whom he adopted in order to teach her fortitude. He dropped hot sealing wax on her arm and shot at her skirts with a revolver. For an account of his experiment, see Chap. V. of Hesketh Pearson's "Dr. Darwin", 1930, and Michael Sadleir's "Thomas Day, an English Disciple of Rousseau", 1928.
dies lamenting.

Additional moral doses are given by means of digressions frankly acknowledged as such by Prudentia. She will say, after pages of moralising: "I have lately got into such a rambling humour that my story makes small progress"; or, "I seriously interdict all ladies who are past the age of eighteen, from using the privilege of skipping either Mr. Brudenell's dialogues or my digressions. I here assure them that they were not added in consequence of a remonstrance from my bookseller that my manuscript was too scanty; but that they are, in fact, the original stamina of my work, without which my labours would lose all their intrinsic value."¹

Another novelist, R.C. Dallas, the friend and confident of Byron, tells of a father who did not allow his daughter to read novels herself, but read some of the best of them to her, taking care to omit those parts that he considered unfit for perusal by a pure mind, and explaining to her the reason for the omissions.² It is to supply the sort of fare that will not need expurgation that R.C. Dallas, himself, uses the form. His aim is always to "give a just and exalted idea of Marriage, to justify the Rules of Society, and to elevate Human Nature."³

In "Percyval; or, Nature Vindicated", he discusses liberal ideas freely. The novel is in letter form and many of the letters are extra-narrative. His views may be summarised. Equality is a myth; even Nature ordains differences of ability and of station. Orders and ranks

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are inevitable in any community and are a stabilising factor. They bear responsibilities as well as privileges. Government is the prerogative of aristocrats since they, alone, have the inherited traditions, the ability and the education that make for statesmanship. No government can hope to rule if it allows itself to be influenced unduly by the voice of the people, for the opinions of the lower orders are at the mercy of the winds of faction. Wise restrictions imposed on personal liberty for the good of the community do not constitute tyranny.

A certain naivety marks his views on perfectibility. He considers it possible but defines it as a liberation from all base passions, an exaltation of the rational principle until it merges into a knowledge of the Divine. Both Percival and his Julia Bovil are said to have gone a long way along this road to perfection. They show intense distrust of the passions. Julia puts filial obedience before the claims of the lover and states her readiness to live single rather than lacerate her father's heart by disobeying him in the matter of a suitor. Fortunately, she is not put to the strain of implementing her words, for Percival agrees with her and, moreover, finds favour in his own right. The novel challenges the whole Godwinian theory of the frustration caused by ties, parental or marital. Women who have been disobedient to their parents, women who have disregarded the marriage bond, even women who have merely proved unreliable in their promises, are ruined with distressing frequency. In the education of children, the subjugation of the passions and the development of control are the
most important lessons to be taught. He makes an attempt to suggest a way of dealing with passions, if the natural outlet for them in marriage is denied to a woman and there is, in Miss Coverley, an interesting case of sublimated love, a very rare theme in the novel of this period, when unmarried women are derided roughly and, what is worse, themselves feel that they must accept derision as reasonable. The eldest Miss Orr, admits the necessity in "Zeluca; or, Educated and Uneducated Woman". She is four or five and twenty when the author says that, if she had been married, she "would have been considered in the prime of life and beauty: as it was, a prophetic shrug doomed her to the disgrace irremediably attached to a single life when marriage is no longer optional; and taught her to feel that, however respectably she supported the desertion of youth and admiration, she must prepare herself for contempt. She had too much sense to excite ridicule by contraverting the justice of such a criterion for opprobrium." The attitude of Miss Coverley is more dignified. Warm-hearted and intelligent, she loves Percival but, finding that his affections are given to Julia, she deliberately sets about developing her mind and, by cultivating intellectual interests, steers her frail life between the Scylla of ridicule and the Charybdis of bitterness.

The same awareness of liberal doctrines, and acute disapproval of them, is implicit in "Aubrey", 1804. It is the story of a younger son, educated for the Church, who falls in love with a girl, marries her privately while he is still at Oxford, and then finds himself, by

1. Anon, 1815. Based on "Zeluca" by Dr. Moore, 1789.
the unexpected death of his brother, heir to the great wealth of his recluse uncle, Arthur Aubrey. When the news of his marriage reaches the old man, he is disinherited. A subsequent reconciliation takes place however and Aubrey lives extravagantly on his expectations. On the death of his uncle, however, no will can be found revoking the earlier one that cut him off with a shilling. Penniless, he tries in vain to get a benefice. After great hardships, he is offered the curacy of Melford and tries to live on the stipend. He is sinking hopelessly into debt when he inherits a small estate in the West Indies which has formerly belonged to his mother. The money from the sale of this keeps him until the discovery of a will, hitherto fraudulently concealed by a lawyer, which gives him his uncle's fortune. In an interpolation, is told the story of his friend Cowper. He has also married a poor girl for love and has lived with her in great happiness until obliged to go out to Portugal to assist his father and sister in an affair of honour. There, he is himself entangled with a wanton Portuguese. News of his unfaithfulness reaches Fanny; she dies of grief and the shock causes his daughter to die in a decline. He is made so miserable by these calamities that his repentance is complete, and he is used as a warning, to show the effect of wrong thinking on the subject of restraints and on liberty of action. The evil results of passion unregulated by firm principles is the theme of his story. Aubrey, himself, shows up the abuses in the Church, nepotism, the futility of the fashionable life and the necessity of a creed by which life may be measured. Even the chapter headings emphasise the motif: "Slight
actions indicate the soil of benevolence" or "However obscure the ways of providence, a sound mind naturally endeavours to trace them."

"The Morlands", 1806, reveals the author’s attitude on the subject of education. Young Morland is at Oxford studying Divinity. He passes through several phases. First he is orthodox and enthuses about the principles of the Church. As his studies proceed, however, he becomes apostate. Deliberately, he suspends belief until his reasoning powers shall be sufficiently mature to detect the fallacies in the Christian dogma. Finding this spiritual vacuum too trying, he accepts as valid a kind of Pantheism in which Nature is identified with the supreme good. The beneficent influence exerted by this belief causes him to consider the nature and destiny of his fellow men. He decides to study the views of the philosophers. He reads Locke and the French philosophers and is steeping himself in speculative thought when his benefactor and guardian dies intestate and he is obliged to leave Oxford without a degree and set about earning a living. As he is quite unqualified, he has to become a footman. Then, life begins to teach him the erroneousness of his conclusions and we see him weaned from dangerous radical notions. Finally, he returns to the faith from which he started; a belief in a Divine plan for the world and a conviction that the destiny of man is to worship his Maker and fit himself for another life.

The deadly seriousness with which writers regarded their self-imposed mission of attacking "infidelity and scepticism" is perhaps to be seen most clearly in the novels of Robert Bissett. He was a man
of repute before he entered the realms of fiction. Master of an
Academy in Sloane Street, Chelsea, he was interested in history and
had compiled, in six volumes, a history of the reign of George III.
He is, clearly, a government man and his tone is warmly partisan. The
chapters dealing with the French Revolution trace the effect of the
pernicious doctrines of Voltaire, Rousseau, Helvetius and others in
literature and estimate the extent of their circulation in England.
In 1796, he published a "Sketch of Democracy" designed to show the
viciousness of that form of government. Wholehearted support for the
authoritarian point of view in politics and religion, may be seen in
his writings. Even in the nation-wide agitation for the abolition of
slavery, he appears to have remained uninfluenced by the current views
on the liberty of the individual, if the two anonymous tracts "A Defence
of the Slave Trade" 1794, and "Essays on the Slave Trade", 1795,
attributed to him on the strength of some initials on the title page
are, indeed, his work.

His purpose in writing novels is to reach a section of society
unlikely to read serious history and to subject them to a moral and
political training. "The object of my attempt", he says in the
preface to "Douglas; or, The Highlander", "is BRITISH SOCIETY; to
draw the intellectual and moral virtues, by the operation of which it
is upheld, and to mark the follies and vices by which it is disturbed."
The novel is a handbook compiled from the author's prejudices. Almost
every liberal theory is introduced to be ridiculed or denounced.

1. Vols. V & VI.
2. 1800. p. XXIV.
Democratic characters are brought in, like the republican barber, Mr. Shaw, or Tom Croft, the revolutionary shoemaker, and their utterances are recorded at length in order to show how dangerous radical theories, essentially unsound in spite of their surface attractiveness, become when they are interpreted by the ignorant for the benefit of the still more ignorant. Tom Croft is a disciple of the great Mr. Sattlewold, the philosopher engaged in writing a book to prove that there is no such place as heaven or hell either. He considers it essential that the general public shall be released from the fear of penalties for unconventional behaviour. He preaches free love and the uninhibited indulgence of the passions. He disseminates views on the rights of men, for he is an author. His line is fiction and he has just produced a "history-book of a Welshman". Douglas asks his informant, Dr. Vampus, what the book is about and receives the answer that "It shows what wicked good-for-nothing villains your lords and your bishops, your varcity doctors, and the like of these be." Mr. Croft's devotion to the Master dates from the comforting visit paid by Sattlewold to Neighbour Snatcham in Newgate, whither he had been conveyed for the crimes of adultery and cow-stealing. He had greatly encouraged the prisoner by justifying both actions on the grounds of man's inalienable right to freedom from restraint.

Charles Douglas arrives in London to study law in 1792. By means of observations on the state of the society in which he moves, and his reactions to the arguments in which he is involved, the author again

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becomes prosecuting counsel. One of his fiercest denunciations is directed to the contention of the reformers that the authoritarian point of view is vicious because it stifles freedom of thought. Charles is made to show that "... the supporters of new governments, or rather no governments at all, are much more parrots of argument than those of old," for they all accept blindly the authority of the particular philosopher they happen to admire and are, to that extent, themselves accepting the authoritarian view. Croft acts on that of Subtlewould. "When Charlotte Self-praise gives us, in her novels, the badness of Kings, Priests, Nobles and Gentry, she repeats what she has heard from Voltaire, Rousseau, or, without going so far away, from Tom Paine, or Tom Croft...." There is no indication of the exercise of any critical faculty in the outpourings of those who adopt these views. "In the Constitutional and Corresponding Societies, I am told, that the authority of Tom Paine is as much regarded as ever the authority of Pope or Cardinal, was by the most bigoted Catholic, and that the fulminations of Priestly among the Socinian Dissenters, are received as conclusive argument, as much as those of Ralph and Ebenezer Erskine, among the Scotch seceders."

Bissett reveals that he knows the work of Godwin and Mary Wollstonecraft intimately. The hero's friend, Sidney Wilson, approaches Charles for a loan of £200 to pay a solicitor to recover from a girl he has seduced the letters which he wrote to her because they contain the only evidence of his promise to marry her. Without compunction,

he outlines the course he took to bring about the seduction. The first move was to lend her books from the circulating library. "I purposely chose those books," he says, "that relax what they call female virtue, but which is, in fact, nothing else but female pride, founded upon false education, as, indeed, Mrs. Wollstonecraft very evidently makes out in her "Rights of Women". There follows a quotation from the work in question. "In short," says Sidney, "- what with Mrs. Wollstonecraft's divine work, and the sweet, sentimental effusions of female novelists softening the alleged (sic) evil...we obeyed the laws of nature...." In this way he was able, as he puts it, to bring about "the unformal exercise of natural right." 1 A child is born to them and the girl insists on marriage. He promises to marry her, intending to default, as promises are infamous restrictions on personal freedom. Here the author inserts, in a footnote, the passage from "Political Justice" that deals with the question of promises and bonds. Another difficulty is the custody of the child. The mother claims it and occasions another long quotation from "Political Justice" on the iniquity of parental and filial ties. Sidney is unrepentant until, failing to obtain the money, he learns a little about the consequences of imprudent action. Douglas's remarks when he refuses the loan amount to an almost complete refutation of the liberal creed. 2

Other themes appear. The kind of education given to women is discussed and the effect of a diet of novels on their already shallow understandings. The love of luxury and the evils to which it leads

1. Ibid. Vol. III, p. 86 & 87;
are illustrated. It seems a poor reward for such assiduous sermonising that the "Critical" reviewer found it "a vehicle of coarse flattery, virulent abuse, and moral indecency....".

In "Modern Literature", 1804, the deliberate intention of presenting a case against liberal theory is even more clearly discernible. The last volume deserts the plot entirely and consists of a close analysis of Godwinian philosophy. There are pages of condemnation of the rationalistic outlook and of the extolling of emotion following the doctrines of Hume and Rousseau. His fulminations are a further proof of the widespread effect of liberal ideas. What he calls the "spirit of St. Léon" has been diffused through books, pamphlets and periodicals. He claims that it is to be met with in the theatre, heard in spouting clubs and even in Parliament. He tries to account for the enormous circulation of "The Rights of Man" by suggesting that Paine's views are not new but are natural to the chivalrous nature of an Englishman who is always ready to defend the weak and resist tyranny. He compares Paine, surprisingly, with Jack Cade. The flimsy stage on which this declamation is spouted, is the story of the adventures of a young man of respectable family, but small fortune, who takes to the profession of letters and meets many literary figures. He observes the working of the human mind and proves a most loquacious spectator. His concern for religion leads him to attack erroneous doctrine but he also attacks self-seeking or hypocritical members of the Church. The portrait of Mr. Gillyflower, the "clerical harlequin", for example,

is a bitterly conceived one. Venality of all sorts is exposed. The progress of an unsuccessful shopkeeper, or an inefficient mechanic, from trade to Parliamentary journalism, by way of the little gossip paragraph, the cultivation of scandal-mongering footmen, the attendance at balls and masquerades, visits to the theatre and the invasion of the cottages in the coffee houses by means of the retailing of violently radical opinions assumed for the purpose, is followed, with a satirical commentary.

The constant reiteration of sound principles swells the frailest plot to an unwieldy size and the reader is often faced with three volumes of sermonising. Some have nothing but piety to recommend them. Many a bad novel enjoyed a measure of success solely because of its "unexceptionable" views, commended by reviews like the "Anti-Jacobin" in a noisy advertisement. But the good ones, on the whole, create, and preserve, interest either by means of characters who embody the point of view of the writer, in toto, and therefore give unity to a collection of diverse essays on morality, or by the provision of circumstances designed to show that good is certain to triumph in the long run.
One of the most interesting of the stock characters to be seen in these cautionary tales is the recenting philosopher. Eliza Coxe makes use of him in a spirited narrative, in the first five pages of which two characters are murdered and one dies of consumption.¹ Vigour is evident in the style, also, and the censure of prevailing ideas is conveyed by a suggestion of honest scorn as well as by direct denunciation. Mr. Brownley is an example of the political figure who has climbed into a certain eminence by his loud protestations of devotion to "progressive" ideas. He suffers from the disadvantage of continual comparison with his brother William, who exudes a natural goodness, but, never-the-less, for most of the time, he does well enough. He makes a fortune in his biscuit factory, partly owing to a monopoly of the supply of biscuits to the Navy, bestowed on him in return for somewhat doubtful services rendered to a notorious politician during a contested election.² A Mr. Hawke has suggested to him a plan for getting into Parliament himself. Mr. Hawke is able to promise to bear a fair share of the expenses of bribing all other candidates to retire in their favour, for he, himself, has become wealthy by the simple means of defrauding an absent nobleman whose agent he is. His plan has been, simply, to extort, and appropriate, rents in excess of those agreed upon, and to demand payments in return for protection against dangers which he himself invents. Together, they are able to

¹ "Liberality & Prejudice", 1813.
² Cf. the army contract obtained by Sir Samuel Mushroom in "The Beggar Girl and her Benefactors", Mrs. Bennet, 1797.
rid the field of any other claimants, the only dangerous one being
disposed of by the offer of a writership in the E.I.C. at Bengal for
his son. Their machinations occasion a great deal of comment from the
author, and the pointed juxtaposition of William's attitude to ambition
and money underlines the moral. William does not regard his fortune
as 'a stagnant reservoir merely to feed his own avarice, and administer
to his sensuality; but as a perennial stream diffusing in its course
comfort and support to every object deserving of his bounty.'¹

William, in fact, is the antidote within an antidote. To the rhapsodies
of the hero, Frederick Ellis, who is influenced, like his Julia, by the
philosophy of "The Sorrows of Werter", William is able to give a
satisfactory reply. "In a state of nature, I admit" observed William
Brownley, "that you might safely indulge these feelings, and unhesitatingly
endeavour to obtain whatever object excited your desire or inflamed your
heart; but, in a more refined order of things, you must recollect that
abstract principles must bend, and be modified in their application to
the customs and usages of civilised society."² The novel ends with
the customary renunciation of radical views, by Mr. Brownley and also
by Frederick who is taught by Julia, Mr. Brownley's daughter, that
self-indulgence is one of the baser passions and must be rigidly
controlled by principles. Lord Stanley, in "Euston"³ is another
example of the recanting philosopher. He persecutes his nephew to
the verge of madness, lives a life of unscrupulous libertinism owing to
his wholehearted acceptance of the theory of the right of man to express

³ Anonymous, 1810.
himself without fear or restraint, but repents equally wholeheartedly on his deathbed. His demise is unduly prolonged in order to give him full opportunity to utter a condemnation of false doctrine.

Occasionally, the philosopher is a woman, like Olivia in the anonymous novel, "Leonora", published in 1806. She is described as a 'professor of modern philosophy'. Having lived for some years in France, she is confirmed in her belief that institutions should be abolished and that life should be unrestrained for each individual. She herself claims perfect freedom of action and lives accordingly. Rumours of her behaviour and her theories have reached her cousin Leonora in England. Although her mother, a Duchess, warns her against any contact with the "she-wolf of France", Leonora invites Olivia to pay them a visit. A fine time ensues. Olivia shamelessly pursues Leonora's husband and a domestic tragedy is only averted by the earnest admonitions of Leonora. By continual sermons on the familiar lines, she reclaims the brand from the burning.

A more engaging character, though one more frequently met with in the satires, is the hypocritical philosopher. He is painted here as a serious villain, enjoys a short span of glittering life and is then exposed and discomfited. He is usually at pains to learn his "nekke verse" in the form of scraps of doctrine expressed in clichés, or, by a series of oblique references, to claim intimacy with the notorious radicals of the day. In "The Neighbourhood, A Tale",¹ a plausible rascal buys his way into exclusive clubs and impresses the company with quotations from "The Rights of Man" and "Political Justice", sure

¹ Anonymous, 1800.
passports to the approval of any liberal society. In time, he is
elected President on the strength of his abuse of the government and of
the legal system. From this opportunism, it is but a step to
treasonable activities. He begins to organise the distribution of
seditionous hand-bills. His conduct begins to attract the attention
of the authorities. At the first sign of danger, however, his supporters
forsake him, he is disowned by the club and falls into penury and
obscurity. He is immediately replaced by one of the same ilk, an
ambitious grocer with exactly the same programme.

This process is so like what happened to many members of the
real societies of the time that it is difficult to escape the idea that
some of the portraits would have been recognisable to contemporaries.
References to living people are very common, especially to notorious
wantons, statesmen and political agitators. The law of libel was
confused and elastic and writers take full advantage of the fact in
their personal references. Wilberforce figures frequently; generally
he is described with approval. Lord Sidmouth, Governor Aria, and
Sir Francis Burdett are pilloried. The reputation of Sir Francis as,
at the best, a madman, and, at the worst, a dangerous agitator, may
well have been the result of the notoriety of his behaviour when he
defied the government to send him to the Tower on a writ of abuse of
privilege and prepared to stand a siege in his house in Piccadilly.1.

His behaviour in elections and his constant invective in the House all
gave him a literary value. The attitude of the orthodox citizen is

1. See Chap. 2 of this study.
indicated in a letter from an ironmonger to "The Satirist". "I have always done my duty", he writes, "loved my King, and voted against Burdett whenever I had a voice, and a man who can say that, need never fear a reproach."¹ Emma Parker, in "Aretas", 1813, draws a likeness of Sir Francis under the name of Antony Greaves and puts into his mouth statements highly reminiscent of some made during the Westminster elections. Miss Parker calls herself "a regular Pittite" and opposes to Antony the character of a strong party man, Sir Henry Mansfield. In another novel, "Asmodeus; or the Devil in London", he is pointed out among other noted people, by the Devil, to one of his students in training. They are suspended in the air over Hyde Park and are watching the people taking their walks below. Burdett is pointed out as the people's friend and "one of those troublesome sort of beings who, from a superabundancy of zeal, always to do right is almost always doing wrong."²

It is unnecessary to elaborate the point. Interest in, and hatred of, the ideas of the reformers was rife. The most virulent form of attack on them may be found in novels like those of Egerton Bridges or other die-hard Tories who could not contemplate without agony the passing of the last remaining traces of feudalism. They wished to preserve intact the whole system of privilege; ranks and titles and the divine right of kings. More moderate statements in favour of a stable society based on a hierarchy which makes clear a

¹. Nov.1807, Vol.I.
man's place in society and confers on him dignity on his own level without the constant strain from the continual competition of up-thrusting ambition, may be found in novels like "A Winter in London" by T.S. Sur, 1806. It is a mixture of the satiric and the marvellous with a flavouring of nostalgia for the era that is passing. Nine editions in one year testify to its appeal. An old shepherd, forced to watch the supplanting of an ancient and honourable family by the descendant of a market waiter who has enriched himself by speculation and commercial trickery and has managed to buy himself a well born bride by means of obtaining a hold on her father, talks to his dog on the hill-side about the change in the social position. People now behave, he laments, "as if there were no difference between tradesfolks and farmers and gentry and nobility." He says that there will be disaster, for the new landlords own no responsibilities and are actuated by greed and self-interest, unlike their predecessors who "spent their noble fortunes like princes as they were and spread happiness around them." The novel attacks the philosophers and deplores the loosening of restraints. Unfettered liberty brings licence, licence begets corruption, corruption is spread by the knowledge of trickery disseminated by a venal press. The pass-port to riches and to influence is notoriety and that is conferred, for a consideration, by the numerous reviews and periodicals and daily papers. Here, we see another stock figure, the vicious reviewer. A whole chapter is devoted to a description of his iniquity. Ogilvy, a literary man, calls all reviews and magazines

"putrid shambles" and maintains that the only qualification for a successful journalist is "that of a cold-blooded assassin, who will neither scruple to use the tools of a butcher nor the language of a Billingsgate." The application of this censure to the career of a promising young politician is seen in the case of Ogilvy's nephew. He produced a political pamphlet of acknowledged genius on the subject of Colonial policy in the West Indies. Government statesmen were said to be much impressed by its acumen. Then, a reviewer slaughtered it, not as a result of critical analysis, but by inexorable personal abuse and insulting reference to his parentage, his upbringing and his mental attainments. The point of the story is that important theories can be destroyed by an ignorant reporter to whose attacks there is no effective reply. The young man's career was ruined and he ended his life in a madhouse. The novel is full of eerie happenings and includes in its personnel a would-be patricide, an Italian monk, an impostor, a mysterious stranger, a foundling saved from ship-wreck by a Chinaman and a bartered bride. Lofty sentiments are expressed in high flown language and the novel is full of sensibility.

An example of this kind of vicious influence exerted by the press is to be seen in an actual occurrence, which is even more nefarious than the pictures painted by novelists. In 1801, Colonel Henry Greville founded the Picnic Society. The venture was a great success. The subscribers were limited to two hundred and thirty and the subscription

1. Ibid. 13th Edit. Vol.II. Chap. 8, p. 195.
2. Ibid. p. 205. For other examples of a venal press see "The Beggar Girl and her Benefactors" and "The Union" by Mrs. Minifie, 1804.
fixed at six guineas and six bottles of wine or a further guinea, in lieu. They met fortnightly in Tottenham Street for supper and a performance of some sort, musical or dramatic. The functions were advertised in "The Picnic" published by the Society. Sheridan, fearing the effect of this unofficial competition on his theatre, Drury Lane, ordered "The Morning Post" in which he held a controlling interest, to attack the Society. This the paper did by inserting articles accusing the club of running gaming saloons and private rooms. "The Picnic" only survived twelve numbers, and the Society itself failed soon afterwards.

The preaching of contentment through religion forms a large part of the programme of the moralists. Some of the novels written with the purpose of imposing views on the public are merely extended sermons extolling the Church, like "The Union" by Miss Minifie. A spirit of resignation is exhibited by characters, however unexpected, and undeserved, the calamities that fall upon them. This motif of fortitude engendered by conviction is grafted on to the Griseldina theme that runs through the literature of the 18th Century. Rose, in "The Beggar Girl and her Benefactors" is a typical Griseldina. She endures vicissitudes for seven volumes before she is brought to the harbour of matrimony. Belief in the frailty of man and the reality of sin and denunciations of all theories that support the possibility of attaining perfection through gradual material improvement are all to be found in the utterances of poor parsons and the examples of the evil effects of the love of luxury and ostentation in the behaviour of rich absentee.
rectors. The incumbent of Penny, Colonel Buchanan's village, only condescended to "rusticate" in his living for a few weeks in the summer. He voices opinions that might have come from a rationalist or a Deist. His curate lives wretchedly in a poor thatched hovel and spends his time repudiating the principles of his patron. Other discreditable features of the life and ideals of the clergy are illustrated in "Bath Characters; or, Sketches from Life", by Peter Paul Pallet. Dr. Vegetable and Snorum, his clerk, screen the congregation so that only the socially elect may enter their chapel. Again, Dr. Vegetable may be a portrait of Dr. Cogan, the Horticulturalist, who preached at the Unitarian Chapel in Trim Street, Bath. Perhaps the frequency of this kind of study may be accounted for by the desire to anticipate, and so take the sting out of, legitimate criticism by the frank admission of the abuse. 1

The profligate, the worldly or the hypocritical parson is a natural object of attack, both here and in the satires where he provides humour of a very low kind. This applies also to his Methodist counterpart. The lowly origin and the lack of culture of the Dissenting minister is condemned in "Geraldine" by Mrs. Mackenzie, 1820. She describes a noted preacher as a "self-constituted ignorant teacher; metamorphosed from an unwashed artificer into a minister of the Gospel of Christ." 2

It is no wonder that the clergy were often despised or disregarded.

1. For other examples of this kind of novel see "Virtuous Poverty", M. Siddons, 1800; "Rebecca; or, The Victim of Duplicity", Anon, 1809; "Coelia, in Search of a Husband", by A Modern Antique, 1809; "Caroline Ormaby; or, The Real Lucilla", Anon, 1810; "A History of a Clergyman's Widow and Her Young Family", B. Hofland, 1812; "The Abyssinian Reformer; or, The Bible and The Sabre", C. Lucas, 1810; "Frederick; or Memoirs of my Youth", Anon, 1811.

Lady Pelham, in Mrs. Brunton's "Self-Control", gives a common view of them when urged by Laura, her ward, to see a clergyman before she dies. She retorts indignantly: "Do you imagine me to be a Papist? Or do you think me capable of such weak superstition as to place more reliance on a parson's prayers than on your's or my maid Betty's? No, No! Though I may be weak, I shall never be fanatical... this is the true pharisaical cant." She then proceeds to reveal an interesting mixture of the orthodox and the rational view. "A phlegmatic being like you", she says, "may indeed be called to strict account; but people of strong feelings must be judged by a different standard". And again: "I have too high a sense of the Divine Justice to think that our Maker would first give us ungovernable passions and then punish us for yielding to them."

The strongest card played by the moralists is the reward of virtue and especially of feminine virtue. Sometimes, the tone of novelists is lofty and the pursuit of goodness is enjoined for its own sake. At other times, it is the expediency of conforming to the usages of civilised society that is emphasised. At all times, simplicity is admired as it seems to suggest a victory over the desires of the flesh. The heroine of "Elliott; or The Vicissitudes of Early Life" by Mrs. Burke, 1801, goes rather far, however. She gradually withdraws from gaiety of any kind, gives up her jewels, affects unadorned fabrics, eats raw food and generally lives the simple life. The word Quaker is not applied to her but her habits are indistinguishable from those of

the Friends. In these novels the reason for the necessity of wise
restraints is made clear. The world is pictured as an evil place.
Sharks of all kinds lie in waiting to trap the unwary. Novelists
base their sermons on the crude assumption that masculine desire is
perpetual and promiscuous. Laura, in Mrs. Bruton's "Self Control",
1811, left penniless by the death of her father before he has been
able to make good his claim to a contested estate, admits that she
almost thinks of herself as "one who would be noticed only as a mark
for destruction, beguiled by frauds which no vigilance could detect,
overwhelmed by power which she could neither resist nor escape."¹

In addition to novels exposing the viciousness of liberal ideas,
there are positive statements of belief. Those which deal merely with
offences against the ten commandments and bewail the laxity of the
time have not been cited. Only those which include in their moralising
some reference to, or reflection of, speculative opinion have been
considered relevant. In them two kinds of treatment may be observed.
First, the case is put against the "new" philosophy. It amounts to
this; the freedom advocated by Rousseau and Mary Wollstonecraft is a
wicked illusion and the cause of untold misery; Mary Wollstonecraft's
theories may be refuted even from her own works.² Chastity and filial
obedience are an inviolable part of the moral law and no compromise is
possible. Society depends upon the maintenance of standards of
conduct and cannot condone promiscuousness. Marriage is a Sacrament

¹ "Self Control", Chap.19, p.250.
² "Constantia Neville", Helena Wells, 1800, contains such a refutation
and an indissoluble tie. Tyranny must be endured patiently since resignation is a Christian virtue and will bring its own reward in a future life. In this kind of novel, the noble example is all important and heroines vie with each other in exhibiting the right kind of behaviour. The second treatment, attributing moral error to faulty training, the effects of which are irremediable, builds up a series of warnings and traces the careers of those who prove unable to control those base impulses that should have been subdued in the cradle. If the 'warning' is a man, he is sometimes, though rarely, reclaimed by the heroine. She sends him away to undergo severe discipline over a considerable period of time, before he is allowed to repeat the offer, already refused on the grounds of his unsteadiness of principle. This device is almost common form. It is used by all those novelists who wrote treatises on choosing a husband or a wife. Like the characters in the fairy tales, suitors had to prove themselves, this time in moral prowess. In "Self Control", Laura Montreville, convinced, at the age of seventeen, by a slight caress that Villiers Hargrave is, at heart, libidinous, refuses his offer of marriage for fear of possible infidelity after the ceremony. Pressed by her father to change her mind, she at last consents to consider him again after two years' probation, during which time he must not stray from the path of strict rectitude. She lays down specific conditions and insists that his conduct shall be judged by "wise" and "sober-minded" and "pious" inspectors. For the first time in his life, the young man considers his behaviour objectively. His review of his chances is amusing. The passage concerned is very
like one in "Coelebs in Search of a Wife", and Mrs. Brunton acknowledges the debt in the advertisement to the second edition, 1832. 1. He thinks that, with care, he can reach the standard required: "He did not game, his expenses did not much exceed his income, therefore, he could imagine no change in his deportment necessary to conciliate the "wise"." He seldom drank too much so felt tolerably secure on that score. But to be quite safe in pleasing the "soberminded", he decides to "abstain from the molestation of innocent country-girls and decent maid-servants." Finally, to secure the favour of the "pious", he "forthwith made a purchase of Blair's Sermons, and resolved to be seen in Church once at least every Sunday." 2.

Enough has been said elsewhere of the constantly reiterated belief that the novels of the Rousseau school were responsible for moral disaster. "Many thousands of amiable and interesting objects who might otherwise have been the ornament and delight of elegant or of useful society", according to the Anti-Jacobin are deceived by the theories of Rousseau and are plunged into "misery ineffable, to their own perdition and the disgrace of their friends." 3. It is sufficient to note that the theme is as vigorous in 1818 as in 1794. Even such a conventional writer as Susan Ferrier poses the usual group of two contrasted girls with their respective admirers. In her case, they are sisters, the one a model of filial piety, the sweet-natured, high-principled Mary, wooed by Colonel Lennox and the frivolous Adelaide

married to the Duke of Altamont but avid for flattery and attentions which he is too stupid and boorish to give. The result is inevitable. She elopes with Lord Lindore. The reasons for this disastrous step are given specifically; faulty education and the theories of Rousseau. It appears that Lord Lindore has been visiting her in her enforced seclusion at Norwood Abbey, her husband's favourite residence, and has read to her insidious and dangerous romances. During these sessions, "Rousseau and Goethe were studied, French and German sentiments were exchanged, till criminal passion was exalted into the purest of all earthly emotions. It were tedious to dwell upon the minute, the almost imperceptible occurrences, that tended to heighten the illusion of passion, and throw an air of false dignity around the degrading spells of vice....." All this is part of the glorification of the married state and delicacy is praised as a contrast to this kind of coarse passion. The delineation of this delicacy can go to absurd lengths as, for instance, in an anonymous novel called "Julia of England" published in 1809. To prevent the heroine's thoughts from dwelling on marital rights and duties before marriage and thus destroying her bloom of innocence, her careful mother keeps her in ignorance of the date of her wedding until the morning of the day selected, when her first intimation of the ceremony is the sight of a new, and rather more than usually elaborate, dress lying on a chair. Her mother then announces a delightful surprise.

Hannah More makes her contribution to the literature upholding the sanctity of marriage in "Coelebs in Search of a Wife", 1809, but her book is only fiction by courtesy. Its success, in spite of its crushing load of piety, is an indication of the interest in the subject of the rights and the destiny of women. Having reviewed, and dismissed, all manner of girls, Coelebs embarks on a religious courtship with Lucilla Stanley, a walking breviary. From the moment his fancy lights, all her relations take turns with him in discussing Christianity and freedom of opinion in religion. Nice distinctions are drawn between the Creeds of Churchman and Dissenter and heavy blame is placed on those thinkers who have in any way reflected discredit on faith in the existing order. The Anti-Jacobin disliked Mrs. More for all her piety and refers to her "demi-semi-Calvinism,"1. Her views have been commented on earlier and need no recapitulation. They are reflected in dozens of novels. "Coelebs" ran through sixteen editions, nine of them being exhausted before the end of the first year.

The lesson that society needs restraints is reinforced by the infliction of the direst penalties on those characters who flout them. A devastating case of punishment exacted for the sin of an extramarital connection is provided by Mrs. Brunton in "Emmeline", 1819. Emmeline, led away by liberal notions about freedom for women, allows herself to be seduced by Clifford, a divorced man. He marries her, however, and she hopes that the belated ceremony will appease public opinion. They are never-the-less completely ostracised. Sensitive to

1. In the review of "Gwelygorddi; or The Child of Sin", Nov, 1820.
the unfriendly atmosphere of the community, they grow bitter and unhappy. The moral is underlined ruthlessly. The child of a neighbour, a Mrs. Villiers, has an accident and is brought into Emmeline's house. He is too badly injured to be moved and Emmeline tends him assiduously, delighted to have an opportunity of breaking down the hostility of even one neighbour. Mrs. Villiers is quite charming and obviously grateful. When the child has recovered, and has been taken home, the situation reverts to the status quo and Emmeline realises at last that the judgment of society is inexorable. Mrs. Villiers' thoughts are given to explain the position. "Lovely, miserable thing!", she thinks, on one occasion, when she has been struck with the charm of Emmeline, "must thou, so formed to adorn virtue, charm only to disguise the deformity of vice!... Unhappy victim of a sentence wise as it is terrible! - But the nobler the victim, the more solemn the warning! I must not help thee to hide the brand that warns others from thy crime and thy punishment."

The great lesson seems to be the avoidance of contact with the pitch that defiles for it seems to be accepted, that even the most religious upbringing is not always proof against the insidious attacks on the necessity of chastity. The Reverend William Dodd tells, in "The Magdalen; or, History of the First Penitent Prostitute, Received Into That Charitable Asylum", of the daughter of a clergyman who reacted from the restraints of her childhood and learnt to look on religion as superstition and was lured into vice by erroneous doctrines. Unable to redeem herself once the first step was taken, she sank into total

profligacy. The interesting part of stories like this is the attempt to disprove the suggestion of correlation between the restraints of religion and prostitution. So many statements are made about the excessive number of the daughters of parsons who fall into wantonness that the reviewer of this novel is annoyed. He says that he has recently heard a sermon asserting the same thing and declares caustically that he has taken the trouble to look up the facts and has discovered only four such cases in the last twenty-five years.

Curiously, the theme of illegitimate children receives little attention. Most of them die at birth. Some of them never know their parentage because the deserted mother dies in childbirth. Even when the theme does appear, the feature that is stressed is the inconvenience of having no legal status. Anonymity is shown to have disadvantages, as in "Sketches of Modern Life; or, Man as He Ought Not to Be" where Lord Arrowsmith has a natural son by a lady who has already one illegitimate son. The two children are separately boarded out, provided for on reaching maturity and enabled to enter society. They become involved in a quarrel and, ignorant of their relationship, fight a duel. Lord Arrowsmith's son is killed by his half-brother.

The careful nurturing of children is the concern of many novelists and some of the heaviest didacticism appears in descriptions of contrasted systems of education. By means of the same device as that used by the promulgators of liberal ideas, the bringing together of two children of different natures and backgrounds, one noble and

1. Anon, 1799.
sensitive, the other shallow and pleasure-loving, novelists convey their belief in the efficacy of one kind of training and their condemnation of another. Thus, in "The Metamorphosis; or, The Effects of Education"¹, we have two sisters brought up in different homes each by an aunt, while their father is at sea. Isabella is spoilt, but innately good, and is given a good "principling" by Aunt Mackenzie; Julia is brought to the verge of ruin because she has never been made to subjugate the passions or to use her reasoning powers. The author makes her views on the importance of discipline quite clear. She causes Julia, taught by life that her principles are unsound, to say: "I should, therefore, wish to be allowed to go for a little time into the country to one of those seminaries, now so common, for the accommodation of young people who, like me......are too old for school, yet too young to have sense to direct themselves, where I should have an opportunity of acquiring a little more judgment......."² Captain Frankland also makes the point. Returning home from sea, he is at once struck by the improvement in his daughters. His words and the novel: "Never again" he writes to his sister "will I depend on the promises of childhood for the future character; for I am now of your opinion, that, though amiable dispositions may assist in the production of good fruit, as a rich soil aids the labour of the husbandman, it depends upon education and example to determine what the future crop shall be, for, certainly, as we have now a striking instance, they are capable of producing MOST WONDERFUL METAMORPHOSES." The same contrast is provided in "Zeluca; or, Educated

1. Mrs. Mackenzie, 1818.
and Uneducated Woman" an anonymous novel whose author states in the preface his intention to recall the lesson taught by Dr. Moore in "Zeluco" that self-indulgence and unrestrained passions produce inward misery. Zeluca Delvayne is brought up to believe in her absolute right to relieve her feelings whenever she wishes. Her mother refuses to allow any restraints to be imposed upon her and does not remonstrate with the child even when she throws a knife at a servant and cuts her arm. The use of praise as a means of inducing self confidence encourages the already strong vanity of the child and gives her an arrogance that is, later, one of the causes of her fate. Marianne Bassaly is introduced as a contrast. Grand-daughter of a dean, consigned on the death of her mother to the care of her spinster aunts, she receives a superlative moral training which enables her, in spite of a lack of early education. She is taught the opposite of Rousseauism, self control and the formulation of a moral code by which to live. She marries well and lives happily. Zeluca fares differently. She cannot brook any thwarting of her will. She marries unwisely, is profoundly dissatisfied with the amount of attention paid to her by her husband, and behaves with complete abandon. To create a sensation, though pregnant, she drinks dramatically what she calls a "poisoned cup", confesses to Marianne that it is but tartar emetic and rushes out of the house to a hotel to make her husband compunctious. But there she collapses in earnest, having procured a miscarriage. She lives long enough to make the conventional farewell speech regretting the mistaken ideas with which she was reared and making a detailed
analysis of her errors. 1.

Sometimes, the method used to contrast the good and the bad education resembles that of "Sandford and Merton"; a collection of stories interspersed with lessons for children. These novels resolve themselves into cautionary tales. A particularly dull one is "Emily, a Moral Tale" by the Reverend Edmund Kitt, 1809, in which every conceivable warning is given. This kind of tale has a definitely pedagogical bias and teaches the duty of cultivating the mind. To make the moral lesson even more pointed, sometimes the heroine is given a deformed body and yet is able to compete successfully in the marriage market with her more beautiful sisters. In "Juliette; or, The Triumph of Mental Acquirements Over Personal Defects", (Anon. 1802), Juliette has a deformity, but it does not stop her from rescuing from drowning the rich old Lord Marsham, who is so struck by her beauty of mind that he makes her his heir. The story is tedious except for a delightful deathbed scene when the old man angrily refuses all medicines, chases out of his room anyone who weeps and makes everyone speak up in normal tones as he cannot bear muffled voices.

Another form of story follows the career of a girl who has been left penniless. She becomes either a governess in a private family or a teacher in a school and is used to convey strictures on the type of education expected or provided, on the qualifications required, on the low standard of ability accepted, on the callous attitude of the

1. See also "Caroline Lismore; or, The Errors of Fashion", by Alicia Mant, 1815, and "System or No System; or, The Contrast", Maria Benson, 1815.
authorities concerned and on the type of child turned out. Barbara Hofland specialises in this type of story. A particularly forbidding example is "Ellen The Teacher", 1819. Ellen's father, Mr. Delville, goes bankrupt and is forced to accept the offer of a commission in the army offered to him by his son's tutor. He sends his young son into the Navy and his daughter to Miss Collinson's fashionable boarding school. At the age of eleven, Ellen is moved to comment on all she finds there and talks like any Ministry official on the details of the curriculum and the staffing ratio. There are only four teachers, she discovers, to teach everything to forty girls. Of these, two are so ignorant of grammar that she herself could have instructed them and the other two "quite unapproachable", a mysterious condemnation never really elucidated. The child is a prim little miss and comments on an absence of principle and an over-emphasis on expediency. Little beyond a smattering of fashionable accomplishments is taught. In due course, Ellen's father is missing, the bills for her schooling remain unpaid and the child's position as a pupil becomes intolerable. She is harangued on charity and the duty of accustoming herself to an altered station in life as a prelude to being put to help in the kitchen and being sent to sleep with the servants. On one occasion, she is beaten. A festering finger and the chance revelation that she is related to Sir Charles Selby, bring about a temporary reformation in Miss Collinson's behaviour. The surgeon whom she brings in to look at the finger, takes an interest in the child. The improvement is shortlived, however, and Ellen is sent to the workhouse. Fortunately,
the institution to which she is sent is visited by the surgeon who recognizes her and gets her a post in a school. So, at the age of thirteen, she begins to earn her living. The conditions of the work are of interest. At first, she teaches for her board and lodging only. At the end of a year, she receives a salary of ten guineas a year and, after two years, she gets thirty. Her work is so impressive and so morally inspiring that she is recommended to the family of General Conduit. There, she is treated with friendliness and generosity and is able to save enough money to pay Miss Collinson the money outstanding for her own education. Ellen is impossibly virtuous; the characters are mere abstractions; not a gleam of humour lightens the dreary recital. It is only noteworthy in that it indicates the importance laid by the moralists on the efficacy of education as a safeguard against the insidious opinions of the freethinker and the sensualist. Ellen illustrates how, with the philosopher's stone of right training, in her case the early tuition in Christian principles given by her mother, even a small child can transmute into gold the base metal of a fashionable education. It is also of interest in that it shows the continued appeal of sensibility as a theme. Throughout the novel, characters exhibit the keenest susceptibilities without reserve. Some of these exhibitions, in fact, raise pleasant pictures in the reader's mind. For instance, when Mr. Delville is explaining to his children the reasons for his selling up the home, he is interrupted by the entrance of the bailiffs. Overcome by grief, Mr. Delville, standing at the time, sinks into a chair. Thereafter, he is unable to maintain
a vertical position for long; he weeps and falls all over the room, "reduced by the severity of suffering to infantine weakness".

Latitia Matilda Hawkins, indefatigable compiler of memoirs, loquacious and censorious, says that she has written "The Countess and Gertrude; or, Modes of Discipline", 1811, because she is vexed by the failure of education to fit children to meet the serious problems of life. In her opinion, there should be a metaphysical basis for education and "we must be allowed to consider the inhabitants of the world as needing at least to be reminded of the efficient and final causes of their creation." Her purpose being admittedly pseudo-
philosophic, she introduces as little plot as possible. We leap from one state of training to another. The discursive style and the absurdity of the situations created to show the ideal up-bringing, however, make the novel more readable than "Ellen the Teacher". There is the bad training received by Lady Luxmoor, née Nancy Toms, the only daughter of a rich, but ignorant, tradesman. At the age of thirty, she marries Lord Luxmoor, a youth of eighteen, who develops unexpectedly obstinate ideas about the rearing of their son. The child is sent to Mr. Sydenham who takes a small number of especially selected boys into his own home and educates them in sound principles. His system is then described. To solace herself for the loss of her son Lady Luxmoor takes under her wing Gertrude Aubrey, a young relative, and brings her home to keep her company. So, the reader is offered a third mode of discipline.

1. Preface, p.XIV.
It is obvious from the beginning that the author is tilting against the Rousseauistic system of education. She challenges the theory that a child should be unrestrained and allowed opportunities to develop his reasoning powers. Her mouthpiece is Mr. Sydenham who makes permission to take complete control of a child one of his conditions for accepting him. His point of view is stated severely and reads like a prospectus. He sets out to fix the principles, to subjugate the passions and to liberate the judgment. "We hear, at this time," he says, "a great deal of what appears to me absurdity, on the danger of breaking the spirit of children." This ridiculous idea he attributes to the spread of rationalism. Discipline cannot harm a child. He subjects his own family to rigid training. Every evening, his five children, all under eight, are brought down to the drawing room. He places the baby on its mother's lap and his watch on the table. The two girls go to their mother and the two boys stand by him. The King is then toasted. After that, no-one speaks to them; no-one gives them anything. At the end of five minutes, the baby is removed to bed. The others stay for some time listening to the ordinary conversation of the adults. A long prosy footnote commends this practice as a restraint on the conversation of the party, as well as sound discipline for the children. As a contrast, the author describes the system of the French Abbé engaged by the Marquis of Bannerman to teach his son Lord Dwindle. To stimulate the interest of his pupil, the Abbé gives his lessons "viva voce" at unspecified times lest the striking of the

clock should "sink the animal spirits" or blunt the energies of the intellectual faculties.

Gertrude is subjected to another mode of discipline. As a small child she is alternately petted and neglected by Lady Luxmore. She is clothed out of an old chest full of old-fashioned and unsuitable relics of a past age. Left to educate herself, she prowls round the library but is soon aware of its deficiencies. Lord Luxmore, considering it essential for a man in his position to own a library, has simply given the order for £500 worth of "promiscuous literature" to fill a certain space and the bookseller has carried out the contract admirably, filling in all blank spaces with catalogues or even with covers padded out to the required thickness with blank pages and advertisements. Gertrude then borrows books of the servants. A boot-boy contributes a spelling book and, between them, they supply her with legends like Guy of Warwick, The Arabian Nights, the first volume of Robinson Crusoe, and other romantic tales. The effect of fiction on her mind is said to be very bad. She becomes "splendid mendax" and she would no doubt have deteriorated badly but for the advent of Mr. Stirling, an uncle of Lady Luxmore, a literary man. Gertrude learns a great deal from him. He directs her reading and sets her a profitable course. He makes her his drudge, but in the process of copying his manuscripts, correcting his proofs, bleaching prints for him and separating them from their canvas backing, she is able to educate herself. Lady Luxmore is annoyed at her erudition and complains that there is "no speaking to

"Miss" for she is a "lady that understood grammar." The inevitable happens. Gertrude herself decides to write a novel. She decides to write the history of an ostrich father.¹

The story is full of anti-radical views. Footnotes abound and allusions to current events are inserted in them with short case histories of those who have acted on erroneous beliefs.

Although in theory, education is admired, however, the learned woman is caricatured mercilessly. It is not so much the possession of knowledge or ability that is deprecated; it is the revelation of either. Mrs. Pawlett in "Old Nick" by Dibdin, 1801, is a cruel portrait. She is the daughter of a Dean and the wife of a parish priest. Her learning has made her eccentric. Rangy and cross-eyed, grotesquely dressed, she is a travesty of a woman. A walking encyclopedia, she is unable to refrain from instructing her companions. Her magnum opus is a commentary on the Bible. All through the night, she keeps a lamp burning at her bedside in order that she may have light to enter in her notebook such ideas as may come to her in the small hours.² Fantastic experiments occupy her time. She has proved to her own satisfaction, for instance, that a man is an inch taller in the morning than at night and has discovered that there are 4336 bones in the gill of a carp. A farcical scene occurs when, hearing that the bees have swarmed, she rushes out of the study with a copy of the IVth George and sits under a tree reciting in a loud voice holding the book well above eye-level oblivious of the fact that the

bees are swarming on her outstretched arm. Pleas for the real education of women have had some effect by the end of the period, and such gibes are fewer, though the idea of intellectual women still repels. "In the strange times which some say are coming," says a contributor to the Athenaeum, in 1834, "when women are publicly to govern the world, (how long we have privately born their yoke it would not be discreet to tell) and Miss Martineau is to take her seat on the Woolsack, we hope that Mrs. Grimstone will be promoted to the see of Canterbury."

Some novelists take the view that even learning run mad is preferable to the state of mind produced by years spent at school in the working of filigree tea-caddies, the stitching on white canvas of the map of England showing St. George's Channel and "the counties of Lester, Lincon and Buckenham" or the acquiring of a smattering of French or Italian terms and the art of entering a room with poise. The content of the education given at boarding schools is trivial and designed merely for the cultivation of alluring manners. Sensibility is extolled; delicacy cultivated to an absurd degree. Mr. Sydenham's invariable rule never to allow children of three or over to be seen naked but to insist on any necessary inspection for spots or bruises being carried out during their sleep, because he does not wish to "sully the bloom of their delicacy" is by no means an isolated case of absurdity. Since the subjects taught were meant to contribute to charm and exhibit sensibility, it is surprising to find that the study of

2. In the review of "Gleone: or, A Tale of Married Life" by Mrs. Grimstone, No. 355, Mar. 29th.
music, is almost universally condemned. It is said to be both immodest and dangerous; to induce relaxation of soul and bodily languor. The popular belief in its dangerousness may have been founded on the numerous passages in radical novels so shocking to the orthodox praising musical ability as a means of contact with the Divine. Some of them suggest a state of ecstasy quite out of keeping with the prevailing ideal of feminine reserve and often serve as preludes to seduction. Music, if it does not relax morality by inducing a dangerous languor, destroys it by causing a febrile excitement. A typical example of this is to be seen in "The Milesian Chief", Anon, 1810. Armida, daughter of Lord Montclare has been brought up in Italy and has been encouraged to develop her powers as a singer and musician. At a fête in Italy, she gives an astonishing performance. She first plays the lute ravishingly, then hangs it up on a pillar and, accompanied by a hidden band, begins to sing, and proves herself remarkably gifted. Captain Wandsworth, seeing her for the first time, expresses astonishment at her virtuosity. "The torrent of sound that she now poured forth," he says, "the height to which she soared, the rapidity with which she traversed intervals that connected the widest extremes of human voice, the precision with which she marked their minutest subdivisions, and, above all, the ease of attitude and expression which she preserved among her exertions, like a skilful charioteer who commands and enjoys the flight of his coursers, whilst their speed terrifies the spectators, filled the Italians with a sensation which applause could neither
express or exhaust." This is the sort of performance considered too exciting for safety in a modest woman. Armida’s desire to "pour her last breath into a strain of music and waken to the harmony which those bright worlds make to the ears of spirits — to pass to heaven from those scenes where this earth resembles heaven" is blasphemous to an orthodox ear. Hannah More objects not only to music but also to children’s dances. Isabella Spence gives her views on the danger of music in "The Curate and his Daughter". There Sir Charles Dashwood objects to it, not only because it rouses the passions but also because constant practising takes up time which, before matrimony, would be better spent in acquiring womanly skills and, after marriage, should be devoted to the care of husband and children. He quotes the case of a family in which the daughters have lessons from Trenazzani at a guinea for three quarters of an hour.

The censure of schools expressed in the novels is remarkable. It reflects the considered opinion of critics and pamphleteers that they were hotbeds of vice. Tuition at home, however inadequate or inefficient, is stated over and over again, to be preferable to education at a boarding school. It is understandable when one reads pamphlets like that published by J.L. Chirol, one of His Majesty’s Chaplains at the French Royal Chapel called "An Enquiry into The Best System of Female Education, or, Boarding School and Home Education Attentively Considered." The author claims to have collected

information about five hundred schools and solemnly concludes that not
one of them is good for anything. He calls them "hotbeds of every
species of vice." Mary Wollstonecraft makes similar comments on Eton
in her letters to her sister Everina. The condemnation is echoed in
hundreds of novels. A typical example will suffice to illustrate it.
John Beaufort, writing of Eton in "The Daughter of Adoption" says:
"The gaming table and the brothel-house will be considered as strange
places of resort for a schoolboy; but they are ill-acquainted with the
state of morals, even in those public seminaries that are to be met with
in some of our smaller and remote provincial towns, who would feel any
astonishment at meeting with a youth in his thirteenth or fourteenth
year, in either of those scenes of ruinous folly and debauchery."

An unmistakable characteristic of the novelists who write to
counteract liberal ideas is the certainty of their beliefs. Perhaps
it is necessary to state that, between the two points of view, the
speculative and the moral, there are many writers who have no faith in
either, but sadly consider the difference between the progress of
intellect which the imagination may believe possible, and the standard
that man is really capable of attaining. They admit disillusionment,
for they see that the human reason, for all its efforts to penetrate,
and to fulfil, the laws of the universe, cannot prevent the continuance
of human misery. The anonymous author of "Sophia St. Clare", 1806,
puts the point. "Moralists declaim", he writes, "on the vanity of our
passions, but I believe we seldom commit so many errors as in the pursuit

of truth, or the idea which we are disposed to fancy such. We quit
the plain path to bewilder ourselves in the mazes of opinion; we
sacrifice health and ease in the pursuit, and in what does it all
terminate? - in vague belief, uncertainty, chimera.¹

Certainly, in the matter of proselytising, "'tis strange how
oft desire doth outrun performance" and uncertainty and chimera must
often have been the result of the most ardent attempts to convey a
message, especially in the pseudo-allegorical novels that appeared
from time to time. Most of them are too fantastic and obscure to be
taken seriously, but they do constitute further evidence of the desire
to bring home to liberal thinkers the wickedness of their views. One
of the least jumbled plots is that of "The Last Man; or, Omegarus and
Syderia, A Romance in Futurity," Anon, 1606. Idumas, the narrator
goes to visit a grotto, near Palmyra, called the Cavern of Death. By
miraculous means, he is conveyed, once inside, to a chamber containing
a sapphire throne invisibly suspended, the figure of Time gagged and
bound, and a spirit on a tripod who speaks "without the agency of
voice" and claims to "dictate oracles and inspire celebrated politicians".
Idumas learns that he is to see, in magic mirrors, scenes that will
terminate the universe. The first vision is that of Omegarus and
Syderia, the last pair of human beings. Their story follows. It is
fantastic and not pertinent here. What does concern us is the
expression of points of view on human affairs. The evils of history,
for instance, are attributed to listening to maxims of benevolence.

¹. Vol.1, p.164.
A philosopher, Philantor, discovers a fluid that will rejuvenate man, but explains that he has had to suppress it because of the effect of an increased population on the heavily burdened earth. The theories of Malthus then appear. Again, the straining after nobility of mind among human beings is shown to be a disaster and their pursuit of perfectibility a crime. For perfection is only to be achieved at the cost of fecundity. The earth is becoming barren; procreation has ceased and birth is a phenomenon. Suggestions for providing new fertile regions include the diverting of rivers from their beds and tilling the under soil, though a counter suggestion of a controlled massacre of part of the population is made. The strange jumble of events continues like a slow-moving ballet with Time, Adam and the Genius of the Earth treading their measures, emitting comment all the time. The novel ends with the discovery of some tablets recording events that prove the futility of man's craving for knowledge and a stylised fight between the Spirit of Man and Death, which goes through many stages and is concluded by the intervention of God, the vanquishing of Death and the Dawn of Eternity.

The message is neither clear nor consistent, and the novel has no merit, but the attempt to offset the effect of wicked views by religious fantasy as well as by mundane cautions is an interesting pointer to the universal conviction of the need to reclaim the erring and the lost. In novels like this, Methodism contributed its portion to anti-rationalist literature.
CHAPTER VIII


Outraged by the figure of Coelebs, "a traitor to all the laws of gallantry" and an "antidote to social intercourse", the sprightly Priscilla Parlante complains: "but, surely, it is not necessary to Christianity, or moral reformation, that every novel and romance, from two to six volumes, which appears before the public, should be one protracted sermon; which sombre garb it must assume if all the little ambiguous finesse and equivocal circumstances that chequer the occurrences of real life are expunged from the pages of fiction and the effusions of fancy." If we may judge by the popularity of the satirical novel, writers and public alike support her in her view and find food for laughter in those "little ambiguous finesse" and "equivocal circumstances“. For the age had a taste for satire and valued itself, according to Hannah More, on "parody, burlesque, irony and caricature." She deplores them all, but agrees that they amuse, "and we live in an age", she says, "that must be amused, though genius, feeling, truth, and principle be the sacrifice." The mis-use of humour is the eighth deadly sin. In the novel, it particularly offends and occasions many a homily. "Wit ill-used" says R.C.Dallas,

1. Preface to "Ferdinand & Ordella; a Russian Story", 1810.
commenting on the frivolity of the age, "is like opium to a vitiated constitution, it seduces the imagination, lulls reason, and undermines virtue; its mischief is unbounded, and spreads like a pestilence, descending from generation to generation, infusing corruption, into the moral system, and endangering the best political one."

In spite of philippics against it, the taste for satire remains constant and exhibits itself in both poetry and prose. The press teems with collections of lampoons and parodies. "The Rolliad," for instance, that robust saga of the adventures of Colonel Rollo and his family, at court, on the battlefield and on the gallows, first published in collected form in 1795, went through twenty one editions before 1800. Dr. Wolcot, with his mixture of drollery and buffoonery, made a household word of Peter Pindar, and earned for himself a handsome competence and a pension at the same time. Gifford, Canning and Frere produced, in 1797, "The Anti-Jacobin Review" which offered the public brilliant satire for twelve months before the partnership dissolved and the paper's more sober, but more waspish, successor, "The Anti-Jacobin Review and Magazine" settled down, under Gifford, to its self-appointed task of smelling out radical ideas and castigating their exponents. An even more unbridled tongue issued from "The Satirist; or, Monthly Meteor" which ran from 1807 to 1814. Its policy was to raise the blush of shame by merciless ridicule and its intentions are revealed in an answer made, on one occasion, to a critic condemning its indiscretion.

2. Produced by Hare, an early friend of Fox, Ticknell, Sheridan's brother-in-law, and Joseph Richardson, co-patentee of Drury Lane.
and virulence. "Were we to suffer," writes the editor, "the spirit of our satire to be diluted by false delicacy, we might continue to amuse, but we should cease to amend.... Our reply is, 'that it is better the eye of modesty should be shocked by us, than that the heart of modesty should be corrupted by others.'¹ Mathias also reveals this narrow morality as a basis for satire. His poem, "The Pursuits of Literature" attempts to throw into high relief what is noble and good by scorching mockery of the base and the trivial.

Novelists, realising what a fine opportunity the fashion for satire offers, are quick to exploit it by using topical themes and introducing caricatures of their contemporaries without scruple. Most of them claim a moral purpose, especially those who see danger in the radical theories of the day. Struck by the incongruity between precept and practice, and conscious of the plausibility of the arguments of the new philosophers, most of whom they regard as whitened sepulchres, writers weigh in joyfully to show up the mean and the mischievous. The merely scurrilous, of course, also found a market, but they belong to the world of political faction. Their coin is the currency of sporadic gibing with no consistent point of view and they have not been considered. Examples have been confined to those satires which concern themselves with some aspect of man's conception of himself, and of his relationship with his fellows; with the nature of his destiny and with the extent of his failure to carry it out; in fact, to those containing expressions of liberal views. Satires provide a form of attack on

liberal ideas more deadly than the heaviest didacticism of the moralists. The method used is the "reductio ad absurdum"; the material for it is provided by the victim. Too literal interpretations of the ideal system of government are offered to the reader until he is inclined to consider the word Utopia as a synonym for Bedlam. Righteous indignation is expressed against those pusillanimous people who delay the coming of the state of perfection by a selfish resistance to the planners in trifling matters. Then the trivialities are revealed; they prove to be issues vital to the welfare of the individual, such as safety from his enemies or the honour of his wife. A favourite device is to introduce figures to 'carry' certain doctrines. They inevitably become grotesque, especially when they stand for the more controversial, or outré, theories on the origin of life, as put forward by Monboddo, or the connection between the body and the personality, as suggested by Lavater and Gall. The crank is ubiquitous in the satires. The more abstruse the doctrine he espouses, the more ridiculous he becomes.

All the discords and the harmonies of the period reach the ear of the modern reader through these forgotten satires, reproduced by the varying chords of theory run mad. Even if few of them have sufficient art and strength enough to live when the circumstances of their creation have been forgotten, yet by reason of their close connection with living people and with current events, their faithful portrayal of the mental acrobatics of well-known and recognisable thinkers, they are important in a study of the fluctuation of ideas.

With a robust impudence, George Walker, in "The Vagabond", 1799,
ridicules the whole programme of the philosophers. His hero, Fenton, is a personified point of view. He has had the advantage of two tutors. He has been brought up by Stupeo, who has steeped him in the theories of Hume, Voltaire, Rousseau, Godwin and Paine. From them, he has learnt to doubt all creeds equally, and has been convinced that to throw off the restraints imposed by the conventions of society is a necessary preliminary to becoming a philosopher. He knows that Government is a despotism that should be resisted by all right-thinking men. Arrived at man's estate, he puts these principles into practice, and becomes a seditious nuisance. On one occasion, he incites, by an inflammatory speech, a mob of farmers who are bent on protesting against the enclosure award. Riots ensue and he is arrested, but is unrepentant and takes advantage of his trial to harangue the magistrates on the infringements of the rights of men that they connive at daily.

Godwin has convinced him that property should fluctuate according to need so he assists in the fluctuation by turning highwayman. On one of his sorties, he meets with Dr. Alogos, also a philosopher, who, after hearing one or two of his remarks, hails him as an ideal pupil and invites him to his home. Moved by this mutual sympathy, they decide to convert their neighbours to radical ideas by establishing a temple of reason in a barn. They succeed in raising so much seditious activity that they attract unwelcome attention from the authorities. Frustrated at every turn, and despairing of influencing their fellow country men, they decide to emigrate to America, to find, and settle down in, a primitive and virtuous society. In the speeches of Stupeo, who goes
with them, the author conveys his opinion of the inherent dangers of radicalism. They are frightening in their potentiality for evil. Philosophers, says Stupeo, hold the future in their hands; they are intelligent and can sway the populace. "The great mass of mankind are fools" says Stupeo, "and no better than the callous sod on which we tread. It is the part of the great men and philosophers to mould them as they please; and when we have shaken off the influence of everything called principle, are satisfied we have no portion in eternity, and that the fable of an avenging Deity is an old woman's tale, what power, I ask, can control us? We become almost too great for the world; mind seems to rise superior to matter; crime becomes nothing; all that men call murder, incest, lust, and cruelty, is trifling, not more, in fact, than changing the form of passive matter, or cutting down the trees of the forest; for, remember, we cannot destroy anything, we only change its form."

When they reach the new world, one ridiculous adventure follows another. They buy an estate one hundred and fifty miles from Lexington and find it covered with enormous trees. They are forced to clear enough ground to build some sort of shelter and grow crops, and their labours are distasteful to them. "It is plain to me," says Stupeo, "that cultivating the ground is a deviation from the state of nature." One of the women in the party gives birth to a child, but dies because she is unable to do without the advantages of civilization in the matter of childbirth. The child dies also. They go on their travels again

and find a community where everyone is free and unrestrained. All
men are equal. Unfortunately, nothing is going on at all. Lack of
incentive has killed all effort and perfect sloth is the result. They
escape from this lotus-eating atmosphere with some relief. Eventually,
the whole party is captured by Indians, who belie all the reputation
for innate benevolence that they have acquired in the Western world,
by ill-treating them and burning Stupeo at the stake. The chapter
heading telling of this sad event, says simply, "Stupeo quits the
World in a Blazing Idea."¹ Frederick, recalling Rousseau's words
about pity being a natural sentiment, is puzzled by the cruelty he
sees round him, and comes to the conclusion that great philosophers
contradict each other.

Fenton is the whole-hearted anarchist in that he repudiates
all control. He denies the validity of family ties; he gives up
his illegitimate child to the parish, shoots his mother, by a careless
mistake, and then chides his father for showing any distress. He
allows both his friend's fiancée and her father to burn in a blazing
house while he makes up his mind which of them he ought to save as the
more valuable life. Seduction is to him a legitimate action and his
illicit relations with the extremely matter-of-fact wife of a neighbour
give them both an opportunity for uttering some of the views of Mary
Wollstonecraft. The woman is an ardent feminist. "Is there any
sex in soul? she would say, 'if not, what right have those tyrants, the
men, to exclude us from the Senate, the bar and the army'? "²

The novel is noteworthy because it diffuses a sense of danger.

There is a frightening plausibility in the arguments of Fenton and in Stupeo's recognition of the unintelligence of the masses. Though the story ends with the discomfiture of the philosophers, and their determination to warn others of the dangers of the principles that they have formerly adopted, the possibility of the exploitation of the man in the street by a cynical rascal with a specious tongue remains in the mind. Sir George Warrington has a similar novitiate in radicalism, in "The Political Quixote", (anon.1799). He breaks a leg and, while he is convalescing, reads "The Rights of Man" and other Jacobinical works lent to him by the vicar of the parish. As a result he becomes a crusading democrat. It is not necessary to follow him through adventures similar to those of Fenton in his attempts to spread the gospel of equality. It is sufficient to note that he is taken in by his associates, all of whom are rogues, and eventually, comes into conflict with the law. Misled into thinking that he is supporting a peaceable protest to be made by farmers to their landlords against high rents and the unjust operation of the Game Laws, he finds himself in the middle of seditious riots, is badly injured and rescued and tended kindly by one of the men against whom the insurrection was levied. While his wounds heal, he reflects on these events and recants thoroughly.

Both these novels include accounts of riots and reflect the general spirit of unrest abroad at the end of the century.

Elizabeth Hamilton shows accurate and intimate knowledge of the liberal ideas of the time and hits out in all directions in "Memoirs of

1. I am indebted to Miss C.M. McIntyre for an account of this book.
Modern Philosophers," published in 1800. She uses the familiar
device: a small coterie of enlightened souls, discussing endlessly,
and condemning utterly, the existing framework of society. In due
course, its members are provided with a motive for seeking a free
country where they may found a community on the basis of their beliefs.
In this case, Bridgetina Botherim, the daughter of the rector, is a
caricature of Mary Hays. She is "a grotesque, little cross-eyed thing",
steeped in Godwinian philosophy, and consorts with Mr. Glib, an apothecary
who keeps a circulating library, Vallaton, a rascally hairdresser and
Myope, an itinerant preacher, for the purpose of setting the world to
rights. Glib receives from London a copy of the translation of
Vaillant's "Travels from the Cape of Good Hope into the Interior Parts
of Africa" and the little group of reformers hails with delight the
descriptions of life among the Hottentots. They are enthusiastic
about the degree of liberty for the individual which obtains there.
The absence of government or laws, the possibility of changing one's
wife as often as one wishes, appear to them to be the essence of
enjoyment. Myope sends round a circular couched in the grandiloquent
language of the Methodists, urging emigration to this Utopia. In it
he points out all the iniquities of institutions in England, the unequal
distribution of property and the tyranny of the marriage laws. In
contrast, he says: "In the interior parts of Africa, an exalted race of
mortals is discovered who, so far from having their minds cramped in the
fetters of superstition, and their energies restrained by the galling

1. Published in England, 1790.
yoke of law, do not so much as believe in a Supreme Being, and have neither any code of laws nor any form of governments." A little group decides to go, no doubt attracted by the picture of "each congenial Hottentot, energising in his self-built shed." Glib is among them and, in preparation for departure, he gives his circulating library to the society. "The superfluous books," he explains "such as history, travels, natural philosophy and divinity are to be sold for the benefit of the fund. The novels and the metaphysical essays are reserved for the instruction of philosophers." The expedition comes to nothing, however. Vallaton is forced to leave the country, goes to France, the land of the enlightened, and is guillotined. Myope sticks to his doctrines but explains that they are too pure for the present state of society. Brigetina relapses into significant silence.

The satire is directed, chiefly, against the tenets of "Political Justice" and the general eulogy of the natural man to be found in numerous writings of the period. Some of her philosophic rhapsodies are paraphrases of Godwin's remarks, couched in extravagant language. She also quotes Mary Wollstonecraft. Her most pointed absurdities come straight from "Emma Courtney", however, and women's right to free love is debated furiously. Reference is frequently made to the "Great Chain of Being" and the doctrine of necessity, in order to explain the actions of the reformers, no matter how absurd or trivial they may be. Brigetina rushes off in the middle of a tea-party in her father's house to see the Goddess of Reason, imported from France.

1. Ibid. Vol.II, p.36 et seq.
by Mr. Vallaton and answers her family's remonstrance with the statement that "the glorious chain of Causation, generated in eternity" enjoins her to behave as she does and she is, therefore, absolved from responsibility in the matter. Similarly, Vallaton, in France, betrays to the Revolutionary tribunal an old man who has trusted him, and blandly excuses his treachery by claiming to be a machine in the hand of fate, and maintaining that everything that happens has been foreordained, including his action. It is he who expatiates on the fiction of duty, the wickedness of exacting promises and expecting gratitude. He uses Godwin's arguments on marriage to seduce Julia Belmont. The cult of reason is also satirised. A young listener, annoyed by gossip, complains of the "coterie of censorious old maids, established in every little town, who are everlasting making their ill-natured comments on all that passes." Bridgetina will not allow this to be wrong. With an obvious hit at Godwin's description of the effect of public opinion as a deterrent to crime, in a society where the truth can be fearlessly told by all, she says: "They are the enlightened friends of the human race. When laws are abrogated, governments dissolved, these old maids, whose censures are, from the depraved state of a distempered civilisation, rendered unpalatable to a multitude of the present race of mankind, will keep the whole world in a moral dependence on reason. Nor will old maids be then permitted to make a monopoly of censoriousness. A censure will then be exercised by every individual over the actions of a neighbour; a promptness to enquire into, and judge them will be universal. Oh Happy times! Oh blessed era of felicity."

1. Ibid. Vol.I, p.82. "I am but a machine in the hands of fate. Nothing but what has happened could have happened. Everything that is, must inevitably be."

Bridgetina's pursuit of Dr. Sidney is closely modelled on that of Emma Courtney for Augustus Harley. Even the circumstances of the two stories are similar. Bridgetina first meets the young man's mother; hears about him from his letters home, sees him and offers herself to him. She then writes interminable letters full of philosophic rant, on the theory of the pursuit of pleasure and the indulgence of the passions. Every sensation of her frenzied sensibility, she describes to Julia.

The satire succeeds admirably. The views attacked are shown to be in themselves unsound, not merely impracticable or liable to abuse. Elisabeth Hamilton brought to the task of castigating folly an acute mind and a sharp wit. Others with the same purpose fail because they are unable to submit to the discipline of selection in the construction of a plot and so overcrowd the stage and over elaborate the action. In many satires, the edge is blunted by a confusion in the mind of the writer as to his precise target. Francis Lathom attempts to satirise the new ideas in "Very Strange but very True," but, in spite of presenting a gallery of stock figures, including the pursuing woman, determined to get her man, the hypocritical philosopher, the canting parson, and incorporating farcical practical jokes with a great deal of horseplay, he only manages to convey a jumble of unrelated ideas. The best touch is the death of the heroine from rheumatism. In the same way, that pertinacious writer, Miss Sophia King, fails to convince in her satire "Waldorf; or, The Dangers of Philosophy". Perhaps her extreme youth is responsible for her inability to preserve

1. 1803.
2. 1798.
unity of purpose. Her apparent intention is to expose the dangers of infidelity by following the adventures of a young man lured into atheism by bad companions. Unfortunately, she gives the story such a bizarre touch in the introduction of the occult and makes her sinister character so attractive that we are by no means sure of our own sympathies. The satire gets out of hand and the bloodthirsty end does not help to clarify the reader's ideas of Miss King's conception. A similar weakness besets "Dorothea; or, A Ray of the New Light", (anon, 1799) a confused and dreary satire on the rights of women. It degenerates into a dull baiting of all those who appear to wish for any change at all in the economic position of women. Some of these satires lie on the frontier of farce. "St. Godwin; a Tale of the 16th, 17th, and 18th Century", by Count Reginald de St. León, 1800, is one of these. Some farcical jokes are perpetrated and some rather heavily humorous scenes occur in it such as the attempted bribing of gaolers who refuse, with a shake of the head, all blandishments and are subsequently disclosed to be deaf and dumb. Of the numerous novels of this kind, there is no need of further example. They serve to illustrate the fashion for this kind of attack on liberal ideas.

A more unusual example is "The Infernal Quixote" by Charles Lucas, 1801. In the preface, Satan addresses the peers in Hell announcing the beginning of the reign of Anti-Christ and a new attempt to reduce to subjection the only corner of the world not under the domination of evil.¹ This attempt comprises the plot of the novel.

There is nothing unusual in the actual tale. Lord Marauder corrupts the innocence of Emily by leading her the usual vicious books and persuades her to elope with him. They both go to the dogs. She consorts with loose émigrés and becomes utterly vicious; he, deprived of his chance of succeeding to his uncle's estate and fortune by the re-appearance of a long-lost son, becomes a reckless anarchist, is involved in seditious riots and is eventually killed by Emily's one-time suitor, Wilson Wilson.

The book attacks the Constitutional societies and all radical writers who spread dissatisfaction. The "new" thought is to Charles Lucas a form of diabolism; "A species of Wisdom, which man discovers by the aid of his own individual powers, corporeal and mental, without owning the aid of any Being, directly or indirectly." He divides offenders into nine sects and describes them scathingly. They are all vicious, but the most depraved are in the ranks of the "Illuminati, or wonderers at, or specially enlightened." In them he includes Quakers, Libertarians, or "political theorists", Naturals, defined as Philosophers of the return-to-nature school, and Nothings, whose principles are swayed by self-interest, like Godwin. To illustrate the depravity of all but orthodox opinions, he causes one of the characters to produce a document which is "either, or perhaps both, A Methodist's Sermon or the rant of a democratic enthusiast". It can be read either way as, in parts, it contains equivalent phrases, the choice of which is left to the orator.

Thus: ("Satan and his imps of darkness
(Tyrants and their ministers of tyranny are on the watch
(my beloved brethren,
(my fellow citizens, to fasten you in the eternal chains of
(Hall. (garment of Hope)
(slavery. Rouse, be vigilant, put on the (cap of liberty
(Evil
and defy the powers of (Tyranny.) There is much of this, all designed
to show the effect of misrepresentation and the distortion of truth
equally evident in Methodism and speculative thought. 1. In his
dictionary, Faith, Hope and Charity are the same as Liberty, Equality
and Fraternity: Saints are democrats, sinners, aristocrats, and God,
nature. Discussing the inconsistencies of belief, one of the friends
of Marauder, Rattle, says: "What says the Methodist? The blacker the
sinner, the brighter the Saint! the modern philosopher will tell you,
the greater the villain, the better the citizen." 2. Lucas shows the
same awareness as George Walker of the danger of spreading materialistic
doctrines among the uneducated: "The majority of the world", he says,
"are composed of the ignorant, the designing, the indolent and the open
reprobate" and he realises that they are as clay in the hands of the
ambitious schemer. "How dark and gloomy", he writes, "is the prospect
of the human mind left to itself." 3.

He goes to great trouble to list revolutionary writers and to
give an analysis of their thought. Having made an attempt to estimate
their influence, he concludes that the danger of revolution is great.

1. Ibid. Vol.II, p.177.
The readiness of men to cast aside beliefs and principles established for centuries appals him and his satire is both bitter and gloomy. He professes to be a student of current thought and finds it alarming and takes refuge in the taunt rather than the light hearted innuendo indulged in by more frivolous, though not less moral, satirists.

A favourite device was to bring the devil to London, show up his favourite haunts, and follow him in his chosen activities. He is always caused to fraternise with the apparently devout, and to be the mentor of aspiring politicians. One of the most readable of these novels is "Asmodeus; or, The Devil in London", by Charles Sedley. In it, we see Tom Hazard, son of a hackney chair-man, accomplished swindler, and, indeed, a graduate in every form of vice, accosted by Asmodeus in a side street, at a moment of acute financial embarrassment and put in the way of acquiring £500. Asmodeus has been doomed to wander over the earth on a roving commission for a hundred years and is to take any opportunity that occurs for doing mischief. He has just come from promoting a successful revolution and is looking for a friend. He explains that he never seduces the innocent; there is plenty of material among the wicked for him to use. Tom welcomes an alliance and goes with his new friend on a tour of London at slightly above roof level. Asmodeus points out, with appropriate comment, all the institutions that do a devil credit. Among them, are the Houses of Parliament, the Cold Bath Prison, the Law-Courts, the Magdalene and others. They take lodgings in Fleet Street. Various systems of
government are discussed. Notable people are pointed out by Asmodeus when they go out together, and reference is made to the writings of reformers like Mary Wollstonecraft and Godwin, all considered by Asmodeus as very useful allies. Comment is made on suicide, the evils of private mad-houses, the tyranny of prison officials and other topics of topical interest. The novel is ingenious and interesting.

It is this immediacy of material used by satirists that gives them their relevance here. Novels are sometimes indistinguishable from magazines and give the impression of up-to-date journalism. A glance at articles in a typical periodical will give some idea of the resemblance between the two forms of publication. Reference has already been made to the account of Sir Francis Burdett's actions in barricading himself in his house to resist arrest, published in a mock heroic vein, in "The Satirist". This was founded on fact. A further article in the same paper may be cited which is pure fiction, and of which the counterpart may be found in any one of dozens of novels of the period. It might easily be found in the work of Disraeli whose novel "Flim-Flams" consists of just such flights of fancy, or in Eaton Stannard Barrett's "Tarentula; or, The Dance of Fools" as far as the content and method are concerned. The style is "The Satirist's" own. The article is called "The Death and Funeral of Sir Francis Burdett"¹ and deals with the fictitious obsequies of the Baronet, conducted with due solemnity and respect, at midnight on Wimbledon Common. The symptoms of his mortal disease are described. He is said

to have been suffering for a long time from a bad heart. At one time, it was thought necessary, for fear of infection, to remove him to the Tower, but he did not stay there and was able to reach Horne Tooke's house in time to die. He had been well cared for, but his demise was inevitable since his symptoms became increasingly inflammatory and he began to have periodical fits which no-one was able to cure, or even to control. Signs of excesses in him suggested the danger of a systematic undermining of the constitution. In an attempt to control the delirium that finally set in, Dr. Wardle, the inspired quack, had been called in and he prescribed certain drugs. Sheriff Wood supplied them from his chemist's shop but, in spite of all that could be done for him, Sir Francis sank into a gloomy coma and finally died. His friends formed a Committee for mourning and they made arrangements for the funeral. A procession accompanied him to his grave, which was dug as near as possible to the spot where a victim of the iniquitous legal system, Jerry Abershaw, the Highwayman, was hanged. The funeral oration was read by Peter Finnerty. He took up a suitable attitude, and began to read with a fine flourish of his document, only to find that he was reading, by mistake, the writ served on him for a libel on Lord Castlereagh. He righted the matter and declaimed an ode, ending with an invocation to radical shades:

Conduct him safely to the gates of H-ll
His name - his character - his actions tell,
And Satan's self shall tremble - Burdett's shade
Shall still pursue his loved reforming trade,
Triumph, perhaps, ceir man's eternal foe,
AND REVOLUTIONISE THE REALMS BELOW.

1. Ibid. p.114.
The antics and plans of the revolutionary society in "Vaurien" are just as pointed and just as episodic as this kind of article and the constant references, there, to living people, and the little inset anecdotes about them, closely resemble contributions to the reviews. Almost every allusion is a palpable hit.

"Ridicule" says Isaac Disraeli, in the preface to "Vaurien; or, Sketches of the Time". "Is, at least an admirable test of the ridiculous." He sets out to apply the test to the "new philosophies, religions, politics, literature and manners of the age." The sub-title is significant. The novel is a collection of slight sketches, remarkable for their vigour and their verbal wit. The plot, designed as it is to give opportunity for a series of satirical articles, is slight. Briefly, it consists of the advent of Charles Hamilton, a poor relation, to the house of his uncle, Lord Belfield, his meeting with a set of miscreants led by Vaurien, a charming revolutionary, his falling in love with Emily Balfour and the machinations of Vaurien by which he is estranged from her and made to appear a forger, an embezzler and a fugitive from the law. The arrest of the revolutionaries, and the deportation of Vaurien cause the truth to come to light and the lovers are united. This frail story is the quay from which are launched numerous dissertations and anecdotes. Vaurien and his dupes are planning to advance on London in three armed bands, from Charing Cross, the Tower and the Bank, seize power, expel the king with a pension, though this provision of income was only agreed to after a hot argument. 1.

1. 1797.
There are Mr. Subtile, quite recognisable as Godwin, Mr. Reverberator, obviously meant to represent Holcroft, Dr. Bouncer, and Messieurs Rant, Libel, Dragon and Sympathy. The latter has invented a new religion. The gamut of liberalism is played. So self-contained are some of the chapters that they are designated simply as "A Philosophical Conversation." Subtile's speeches are taken from "Political Justice". He believes in the ultimate triumph of mind over body and the perfection of the species. ¹

He would do away with all punishments, with the foolish property laws, and would encourage "making use of the superfluities of others". To support his contention that "Every vice is only ignorance; merely an erroneous calculation of the mind," he quotes Holcroft's words in "Hugh Trevor". ² The sole test of virtue is public interest.

"Gratitude is a solecism in the language of reason" and promises are tyrannical exactions. "But the dome that is to cover the splendid fabric of philosophy, the ne plus ultra of metaphysics," he says, "is 'A demonstration of the non-existence of the being, vulgarly denominated GOD'." ³

The satire on pride of birth is no less pointed. Rascals get preferment; places are bought and sold. The example of the Reverend Ephraim Dandelion who aspired to become a bishop on the strength of his ability to imitate the bray of an ass or the whine of a pig is used to show up the low standard of integrity in the Church. He is not allowed to obtain a diocese but he is given the sinecure of a Prince's chaplaincy.

The character of Charles' father, a parish priest is considered a novelty because he did not behave like many of his juniors who "doubled their livings and who tripled their tythes, adding likewise a few random chaplainships of several regiments, a pleasant prebend, and a comfortable canonry." In fact, he was not "a weasel among the poultry, a rot among the sheep and a mildew in the ear of corn."\(^1\)

Charles Hamilton illustrates the difference between practice and theory on the treatment of women when, by his encouragement of Mrs. Wilson, the "virtuous prostitute", driven to her calling by sheer want to supply the needs of four legitimate children, he shows up the callous attitude of the philosophers. Women who have erred have no rights. Even the heroine feels shame at having rooms in the house of a reformed wanton.

The same resilience marks the style of his collection of articles, dubbed novel, that appeared in 1805, anonymously, under the title of "Flim-Flam or, The Life and Errors of My Uncle and the Amours of My Aunt; with Illustrations and Obscurities by Messrs. Tag, Rag and Bobtail." The novel is illustrated with cartoons and its scope is well indicated in the frontispiece. It represents an elderly gentleman putting on a curious dome-shaped head-dress constructed to envelop the whole cranium and referred to as "portable, philosophical solitude." Before him, on a table, is an enormous commonplace book lying, and heavily pressing, on the back of a palpitating goose which he, clearly, intends to pluck. Scattered about are several skulls, some of them

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1. Ibid. Vol.1, p.2.
sawn half through to suggest Gumper's method of attempting to discover the seat of genius. The inkstand is decorated with the head of an owl to signify wisdom.

The book is a hotch-potch of comment. A 'flim-flam' is defined as a tall story or a lie or a delusion. The narrator lives with his uncle and his description of their household and the interests of his uncle constitute a kind of unofficial biography designed to show the folly of philosophers. For the house is always full. Cranks of all sorts gravitate there and talk. The subjects of their interminable discourses are current topics: reports of societies, accounts of the transactions of philosophic clubs, and articles published by the daily press. Philosophers seem to be affected by some peculiar magnetising force emanating from Jacob's uncle. Experiments of various kinds are also undertaken. In the back quarters of the house, for instance, an orang-outang is being privately educated. The nephew thinks that there are too many philosophers in the country especially in provincial towns. He calls them "découvrés" or "nothing-to-do gentlemen" and is convinced that they are responsible for the revolutionary feeling of the age. He would like to dispose of some of them and suggests absorbing them into small academies, or, indeed into small Bedlams. "In ages less philosophical than the present", he writes, "they opened a vent for these boiling geniuses, by pouring them out into some newly-discovered island: the Canaries, or Virginia, or the Moluccas, where they soon exhausted their souls and bodies..... These newly-discovered islands
served as empires for political-justice-mongers, bishoprics for curates, regiments for disbanded officers and estates for younger brothers: "1.

One of his uncle’s associates, Contour, does found a society called "The Constellation" which meets at the "Cat and Fiddle".

The narrator then outlines the various systems of belief adopted by his uncle from time to time. Once, for a lengthy period, the old man lost himself in the theories of Hume and "considered himself authorised to declare that I, his affectionate nephew, with his learned apothecary, (called in on this occasion) were nothing more than two bundles of ideas, labelled a NEPHEW and an APOTHECARY." The household became for a time clouded in speculations on existence and so bemused did the old gentleman become, that he was ultimately, certain of nothing, not even of his own identity. Finding that he could no longer determine the nature of an idea, he decided to clear his head of confusion by writing a treatise on the letter "I, or myself". 2. His nephew was glad when this phase passed.

Doctrines accounting for the origin of the species fascinated the philosopher. He was led to study one of them particularly, in order to annoy the curate, but he came to believe in its truth. "He espoused a notion of Lord Monboddo’s" says his nephew "that MEN once wore tails! and, going on with this fascinating system, asserted with Darwin and other philosophers of this enlightened era that MEN are only

It then occurred to him to use his orang-outang as a subject of research into the innate equipment of man. He decided to make a Christian of him. But the affair never went to this length. According to his nephew, however, "it came pretty near—if the monkey was not a Christian, he certainly turned out a gentleman...He could understand signs and could deduce consequences from general ideas."¹ This statement is a direct allusion to a passage in Locke's "Essay on the Human Understanding" insisting that a monkey so endowed would "be SUBJECT TO LAW, and in that shape be a MAN, howsoever he differs in shape from others of that name."²

In this general survey of the ideas of philosophers, Malthus has his share of ridicule. Led to the subject by the high price of green peas, the old man turns his inquiring mind to the question of supply and demand, and, thence, to the connection between the means of subsistence and the population. He makes abstruse calculations and comes to the conclusion that the food in the world increases only by arithmetical progression, whereas the people multiply by geometrical progression, so that, in three centuries' time there will be standing room only and nothing to eat. The only solution, according to his friend Tousaway, is a "sharp war of seven years." He approves of war: "It prunes away the incumbering and unproductive branches of society; which we convert into soldiers. We get one, or two hundred thousand burthensome fellows knocked on the head; sing Te Deum and write our

philosophical treaties quietly by our firesides! The system advocated by another friend is delightfully simple. Cæc- nous would abolish all institutions and all laws. If everything were lawful, there could be no crime and nature would regulate everything as she does for the beast and the plants. His cry is, no taxes, no monopolies, no marriage.

The satire ranges, thus, over most of the theories concerned with the mind of man. One of the most amusing chapters discusses the inter-relation between mind and body and the possibility of finding a method of determining in which part of the head certain faculties lie. The suggestion that, if the shape of the head really affects the nature and endowment of the individual, men may owe their genius to the midwife is dismissed as frivolous. Speculation as to the precise seat of benevolence and other qualities is intense. Refuge is at last sought from the thrust and counterthrust of debate, in Dr. Gell’s statement that there are, in the brain, two organs whose precise functions are not even conjectured, so there can, as yet, be no certainty about any of them. The nephew, however, feels that he can make a guess at them, if they conform, as is alleged to the temporal bone; he would label them “Revolutionism and Atheism.” The detached style of the commentator adds to the effect of the satire. He adopts the slightly bewildered air of the devoted innocent and accepts all vagaries with patience.

His aunt is an energetic woman, married by his uncle as a

2. **Ibid. Vol.I, p.50 & 51.**
scientific experiment in compatibility, and she is as avid for knowledge as her husband. She is a caricature of the learned woman, cold, incalculable and intent on carrying out her experiments regardless of the interests of any other person. She delivers herself of theories on the nature and position of women which are meant to satirise the views of Mary Wollstonecraft. They are biological statements and represent the extreme views of rationalists carried to their logical conclusion.

Underlying the satires of men like Disraeli, G. Walker and G. Lucas, there is, however, a serious strain; they reveal a recognition of the dangerous appeal of the specious philosopher. The robust fun does not altogether hide the fear that social chaos, one of the tools of the anarchist and even, to a less degree, of the reckless adventurer, can easily be induced by the dissemination of these doctrines to the masses by irresponsible orators. Intelligence does not always ally itself with virtue nor does it always remain in control of the personality. Violent passions are apt to arise from over much speculation and uncle's hat with its ventilator inserted to keep the brain fresh is a reminder that philosophy will keep the mind in a dangerous ferment unless the cold air of responsibility is allowed to play round the over-heated skull.

The close connection between fact and fancy is apparent also in lighter satires than theirs. Sarah Green makes use of current ideas in her novels and scoffs at the foolish antics of their advocates. Compared with Disraeli, she is but a feather weight, and is content with
her little doses of mockery, without attempting to emphasise the implications of the theories that she attacks. She is quick to see the absurdity of a crank and to expose by a jest the weaknesses of a point of view, but her prosy morality sometimes defeats her object and she relapses into conventional pedagogy.

She makes a direct reference, in her "Romance Readers and Romance Writers", 1810, to the opportunism of novelists who devour eagerly any bits of news that will give topical interest to the novel of the moment. Charles Marsham comments to his brother on an unsavoury item in the morning newspaper; his brother Ralph says that it will assuredly "furnish a foundation for the story of some free-minded novelist, or, as the new school calls it, liberal-minded." But she is not above the same practice herself. In the preface to this novel, she denounces some contemporary writers severely and shows that she has read widely and is conversant with most of the liberal opinions of her time. Her chief interest is in the position of women, though she has time to spare for pungent descriptions of cynicism in the Church and the perilous state of the realm. She takes little runs at her objective but never quite clears it, owing to a curious lack of mental stamina which allows her to relapse into straightforward narrative in the middle of a satirical scene. She rarely sustains her irony for long enough to earn the title of satirist, but her intention was to do so and her successful parts are evidence of the assimilation of liberal thought among rabid, but not necessarily gifted, critics.

The character of Margaret, the novel ridden girl, has already been mentioned. Yearning to experience romantic adventures, she is an example of extreme sensibility, an easy victim for a seducer. She takes as her model, Lady Isabella Emerson, the sister-in-law of the Rector of her parish, a gay woman to whose love of satire, we are told, "the modern quiz and daily hoax" give full rein. Her studies have been all concerned with "false systems" and "deluding sophistries". Her reading has included the works of Diderot and other revolutionary writers. "The effect of such studies on a mind like that of Lady Isabella's may well be conceived; marriage, she held in utter contempt, openly expatiated on the folly of all the outward forms of religion, and was a very pretty female atheist. In a footnote the author observes that Mary Wollstonecraft is responsible for these ideas. In imitation of Sidney Owenson who makes, in "Ida of Athens" a serious distinction between fact and fancy by the laconic footnote "Historique", affixed to authentic items, Mrs. Green labels most of her gibes at recognisable people with the same adjective. Lady Isabella is a wag and it is to her sense of fun that Margaret is sacrificed, for she finds it amusing to persuade the innocent country girl to contract a liaison with the notorious Sir Charles Softon. To further her purpose, she lends her a collection of novels by now considered normal for the purpose of seduction: "Heloise" and "Delphine" and "The Sorrows of Werther" and other translations from the French. Margaret finds the connection delightful until she becomes pregnant and practical.

1. "Romance Readers and Romance Writers", 1810.
problems arise. It is some satisfaction to find that Lady Isabella herself falls a victim to a libertine. The two "betrayed ones" contribute to a scene in the Green Park where they first discuss suicide and then are rescued on the very brink of what is described as the "fatal basin". 1.

The confusion in the doctrines of the Church and its imperturbable apathy are illustrated in the behaviour of the Rector of the parish. He is in no sense a pastor. Often he cursed the hour in which he first put on the cloth. When his sister-in-law talks of Atheism and pins her faith to the new philosophy, he takes no pains to contradict her; indeed he goes as far as to say that she may be right for all he knows to the contrary. 2. His views on the necessity of baptism are equally lax. With much reluctance, he consents to "sprinkle the monkey forehead of Lady Wringham's brat" though he will not go for a similar purpose to the cottage of a peasant. He is once heard to admit "No! No! hang it, if one has no conscience, one must pretend to a little." 3.

Authors and reviewers are other targets. Mrs. Kennedy, writer of "little works" is asked to tell fortunes at a dinner party and makes the interesting statement to the illiterate Lady Wringham that she is beloved by a black man. This is received with incredulity but with satisfaction.

In "The Reformist!!! A Serio-comic Political Novel" 1810, she writes to show the folly of "the Hydra system of reform when attempted

by an enthusiastic individual." Percival Ellingford is the ridiculous philosopher. He sets out to reform London. His programme includes a plan to abolish luxury and to set up universal benevolence. This, he proposes to do by means of the propagation of the principles of the Methodists. He is shown in a variety of absurd situations and cuts a ludicrous figure. Exposed to temptation, brought into contact with notorious reformers, with the dissolute and with the seditious, he goes through the familiar stages. He gives up Methodism; takes to Deism; then to Atheism and eventually goes back again to the fold from which he started, the orthodox Church. During his period of complete apostacy, he meets Sir Frederick Burrell, recognisable as "the pliable slave of a rabble, who constantly murmured against the rich, while they detested and envied the nobility... he certainly did not want humanity towards the sufferings of his fellow creatures; but he misplaced this glorious principle, by making the lower classes imagine themselves more oppressed and worse treated than they really were."¹ He becomes a constant attender at the Westminster Forum and sucks in from the company there atheistical ideas. Arguments on equality are always going on. He hears so much of the rights of man and the interest of the individual that he is satiated and comes to the conclusion that the good of the people is a cliche, "a mere pretext made use of by members of a disappointed opposition only to get into place themselves."² He notices that, while the workmen crowd after Sir Frederick, they do no work; consequently, they draw no wages and their wives quietly pawn their

gowns. Eventually, he is saved by a good woman who marries him.

There are flashes of humour; in the adventures, for instance, of Percival's "tie-for-shames" as the old maiden aunt of the innkeeper calls them; in the little vignettes like that of Lady Sarah McDonald, said to resemble an hour-glass from whatever angle she was seen; in the confusion in Percival's lovesick mind which causes him to reply to Sir Frederick's diatribes on the sufferings of Gale Jones as if he were talking of Paul Jones.  

Altogether, the pertinence of Mrs. Green's work depends on the subjects that she chose to satirise and not on the success which she achieved. The combined purpose of satirising women's claims to equality and extolling the religion that would make her willing to renounce such rights is a common one. It is to be seen in the many imitations of "Coalebs" that flooded the market in 1809. Sometimes, as in "Coelia, in Search of a Husband", the satire is dwarfed by the religious fervour exhibited.

The career of the hypocritical philosopher never loses its popularity. Often, an opulent but illiterate tradesman buys his way into the clubs and becomes a literary man, or into society through marriage, or into Parliament by way of a rotten borough. Sometimes, he appears on the Bench, like Puraling in "The Neighbourhood; A Tale" and finds himself outclassed in dishonesty, to his ingenious surprise, when he takes up his duties.

2. 1809.
3. 1800.
There is an element of the Picaresque in these novels. Perhaps it was not so much the satire that appealed as the shameless impudence of the character involved. When the rogue described is as attractive as the one in "My Uncle Thomas", his opportunism as conscienceless and his wit as scintillating, it is no wonder that the novel which creates him acquires a European reputation. Published in England in 1801, it is a translation from the French of Pigault Lebrun and it had a great vogue. The satire is delightful. My uncle Thomas had come to England to learn the rudiments of liberty and to study the principles of revolution. He puts what he learns into practice and, wherever he goes, having turned pirate, he makes and unmakes ideal communities. During his eventful career, he notices that the most powerful motive inspiring men's actions is self interest, and he sees that self interest may be promoted better in a state of anarchy than in a settled constitution like the ones now in existence. "My uncle" therefore takes care to promote chaos though he gets rid of his tools immediately. He is an engaging villain. One of his better constitutions takes him two hours to make and is a model of conciseness. It consists of few articles. There is the "Recognition of the Rights of Man", one of which is the right to live in plenty without doing anything for a livelihood. The next deals with the problem of government. It proclaims General Thomas, Grand Regulator, "to regulate or misregulate as he pleases". Then follows the Civil and Criminal Code; there are three enactments; the only difference between men is that some want what others have, so no man shall own anything; since magistrates are useless when there are
no disputes and prisons, gaols, lawyers and hangmen are superfluous when there are no prisoners, they shall all be abolished. Here "my uncle Thomas" complacently congratulates himself on getting rid of a lot of embarrassment. The last article "Of Finance" has a word on taxes. The Grand Regulator proposes to put a general and voluntary tax on respiration; voluntary in the sense that those who do not choose to expire need not pay anything.

The creation of such Utopias persists as a theme throughout the period. They become a regular feature of the fiction of the time. The Reviews have innumerable examples, serious and satirical. The personal visit to such communities is a favourite device. The Satirist has its "Mormonia" visited by an ironmonger with an enquiring mind. Other characters yearn to find one, yet never achieve their desire. Holcroft's daughter presents a pleasing satire of an eccentric philosopher who believes that man is only valuable in his natural state and wishes to go to North America to live in an uncontaminated community and like Stupeo and Myope or at least their descendants, declaims on the superiority of the rational American savage.

In spite of Coleridge's severe censure of the age as a time in which "the most vapid satires have become the objects of a keen public interest, purely from the number of contemporary characters, named in patchwork notes, ....and even sermons are published with a double appendix stuffed with names", some of the novels of the early nineteenth century have considerable literary merit apart from their topical.

interest. The novels of Eaton Stannard Barrett are more than period pieces. Merciless at times, and indefatigable in contriving insulting personal reference, he shows a keen sense of the ludicrous, and carries the reader with him on a wave of Irish exultance. The preface to "The Heroine; or, The Adventures of Cherubina" introduces a quaint conceit. The shade of Cherubina addresses us and tells us that all characters conceived and given life in an earthly work "acquire the quality of creating a soul or spirit, which takes immediate flight, and ascends through the regions of air, till it arrives at the MOON; where it is then embodied, and becomes a living creature: the precise counterpart, in mind and person of its literary prototype." From works of metaphysics and other abstract subjects, where there are no characters, the ideas are taken up instead, and are endlessly repeated for the benefit of the Lunarians by the tribe of talking birds. "So that it is not unusual" we learn "to hear a mitred parrot screaming a political sermon, or a fashionable jay twittering a compiled bravura. These birds, then, are our philosophers; and so great is their value that they sell for as much as your patriots." So the systems of philosophers survive. Cherubina is instructed by Don Quixote who has learnt the fact from the birds, that the apple she tries to pick, is, really, according to "The Berkeleyan system of immaterialism," "only a globular idea."

The adventures of Cherubina are full of fun. Determined to be a heroine, she deludes herself that she is an illustrious foundling and

1. 1813.
leaves home in search of her real parents and adventure. She falls in love with Abraham Grundy, who seeing what ails her, christens himself Lord Altamont Mortimer Montmorenci without more ado, provides himself with mysterious documents and, generally, moves, as he himself says "enveloped in a cloud of mysteries." It is not necessary to follow her through her experiences of the marvellous but her extreme and humorous sensibility must be noted. The cult of feeling is heavily satirised in her swoonings and her extravagant language. Particular satire is combined with the general in this respect and some of the scenes are direct parodies of those in best sellers of the time. To give an instance; the soulfulness of Ida of Athens and the exaltation of the passions as the means of contact with the divine delineated in all Miss Owenson's work is satirised when Cherubina goes to a ball. Her dress is Grecian and consists of a large roll of beautiful material swathed round the form, held by a girdle and a jewelled pin and covered with transparent material of a spectral lightness. So Ida dressed. Cherubina is greeted as the patroness of the arts and is solemnly crowned with a wreath as the "paragon of charms". Asked to make a speech, she says: "England, my friends, is now the depository of all the virtue which survives. She is the ark that floats upon the waters of the deluge. But what preserves her virtuous? Her women. And whence arises their purity? From education." She then advises a course of reading presumably to preserve this happy state. It consists mainly of novels. She is greeted with thundering acclamation. Apparently,

N.B. Edition used is the 3rd. 1815.
she is revered for her "exquisite art in depicting the delicate and affecting relations between the beauties of nature and the deep emotions of the soul." She then dances. The passage is a close parallel of one in "Ida". Cherubina goes into an ecstatic trance. "Despising the figure of the common dance," she says, "I meandered through all the intricacies of the dance of Ariadne; imitating in my circular and oblique motions, the harmonious movements of the spheres; and resembling, in my light and playful form, the Horae of Bathycles. With a rapid flight, and glowing smile, I darted, like a herald Iris through the mazes of the set; sometimes, assuming the dignity of a young Diana, I floated in a swimming languishment; and sometimes, like a pastoral nymph of Languedoc, capriciously did I bend my head on one side, and dance up insidiously. What a Hebe! "

It is, perhaps, hardly surprising that she never saw her partner at all. To compensate him, however, she consents to imitate Charlotte this time and waltz. But her overworked pin will not stand the strain: The ladies rush to her and form a human veil. She is supported from the room in slow procession. "It was the funeral of Modesty; but the pall was supported byittering Malice." 

There are jokes at the expense of the reformers and reference is continually made to the ubiquitous Sir Francis Burdett. On two occasions, his speech to the electors of Westminster on October 6th, 1812, is quoted almost verbatim. The lovelorn Betterton, clad in black mask, cloak and feathers, serenades his Cherubina, but she is terrified

and shrieks to such good purpose that he is arrested. The magistrates commit him to prison. As he is being hauled off, he scowls at the Bench and calls the chief magistrate "one of those pensioned justices, who minister our vague and sanguinary laws, and do dark deeds for an usurping oligarchy, that makes our most innocent actions misdemeanours, determines points of law without appeal, imprisons our persons without trial, and breaks open our houses with the standing army." Again, Cherubina, threatened with ejection from her castle summons her retainers and makes them a heartening speech. She intends to stand a siege. She promises to acknowledge the sovereignty of the People and continues: "I promise that there shall be no dilapidated hopes and resources; no army of mercenaries, no army of spies, no inquisition of private property, no degraded aristocracy, no oppressed people, no confiding Parliament, no irresponsible minister. (Acclamation). In short, I promise everything. (Thunders of acclamation)." 

Cherubina is, of course, reclaimed and reverts to plain Cherry Wilkinson. She marries her faithful Stuart and submits with praiseworthy meekness to a couple of stiff lectures on the wickedness of novels.

All this is good tempered and mild. In the political satires, the tone is much more biting. "The Rising Sun" published under the pseudonym of Cervantes Hogg, is a serio-comic romance on the Prince Regent and his escapades are made the pretext for bitter and savage criticism of the social system. The family home of Farmer George is satirically described and obviously represents Parliament. It is

inhabited by a horde of time-servers. Farmer George is beset with troubles. Sedition begins at home, riots occur, instigated by anonymous scribblers who foment discontent. Handbills appear everywhere. All the personages of the story are prominent in the news and can be recognised. Theories on the ideal state come up for criticism and are all shown to be vicious.

A closer satire on liberal theories can be seen in "The Tarantula; or, The Dance of Fools", 1809. Uncle Grumplerius introduces nephew, Mundungus to the beauties of the world. He begins with a homily on the necessity of studying human nature from people rather than from books and proceeds to give us the benefit of his own observations. He observes a great principle at work, the principle of universal folly. Equality is an important idea, he says, and is discussed everywhere. He tells Mundungus of the oath taken by the Aragonese in former times and seems to think it a very suitable one. They used to say: "We, who are as good as you constitute and appoint you our king upon condition that you will preserve our privileges and our immunities, and not otherwise."¹ Pride of ancestry is one of the great obstacles to equality and must be rooted out. The Prince with his "ploughboy qualifications" will sit in the House of Lords where "a fool's eye will weigh against a wise man's no"; and where he will swim in the "stream of absurd prejudice in which he has been brought up to think that merit is not requisite where there is high birth."²

Good education is needed according to Grumplerius but it cannot

be obtained at a University. Between them, novels and coffee house chatter will suffice. Then other evils are discussed. War is a tyranny. Soldiers are oppressed and have lost all spirit so that the army have a new motto "Veni, Vidi, Fugi." Dishonesty is rife; the rights of the individual are trampled underfoot. Women are deteriorating and no wonder, considering their education. "Miss" says Grumblerius, "returns from school almost as ignorant as she went thither, but woefully changed in manners and person. Her natural modesty has given way to a pert, presuming self conceit; her mind is stored with Mary Wollstonecraft's lubricious lucubrations;" The ignorance of teachers is a public danger. He tells of a notice exhibited outside a school in the country, "Young Ladies Bored Here."

His uncle offers to take Mundungus to a debating society, and suggests the Athenian Forum or The Temple of Reason. He does not approve of them. "It is a pity," he thinks, that "many poor devils are so infatuated with the horrors of Horritory - as to leave a good business, by which they might steer their bark comfortably through the current of life, to arrive at the honor of opening a debate." The debate they attend is on women. A propos of the arguments used, Grumblerius quotes a ballad called "Snip and his Rib; a Knock down Argument on Fate" in which Snip is injected with the infection of oratory; "And from morning to night 'mongst this comical set,

He would d——n the Red Book and quote Francis B——d——tt." At this point, the satire becomes merely personal and does not concern us further.

An interesting attack on the theories of Malthus comes in "The Mis-led General." 1808. The increase in the population of the world in the next 1500 years is solemnly worked out. The figure stretches all along the line. The conclusion arrived at is that, at the end of that time, men will be heaped on top of one another "were they no bigger than lemons". The remedy is war and yet more war to "prune the tree of Nature." These opinions are also aired in the mock periodical called "The Comet", published in 1808.

These satires are covertly destructive. The desire to discredit is obvious and strong. E.S. Barrett was a trained lawyer and a gifted Irishman, a combination to be feared. Nothing escapes his dragnet. So fierce and compelling is his mordant humour that we are aware of decadence on all sides. It is pleasant and enriching to turn to a kindlier world, a world of absurd but captivating fancies and endearing foibles, which reveal the quips and quirks of vital, if illogical, minds that crop up in any age, rather than the dangerous obsessions native to a revolutionary period.

Thomas Love Peacock shows no carping spirit. Polished and elegant, he assembles most of the ideas of the philosophers and proceeds to juggle with them with a literary grace unequalled in his own day, and unsurpassed in any. Not that his novels are as different from those of his contemporaries as some critics have thought. There are little coteries of cranks in many of the novels that have been considered here. Even the ideas have sometimes been used before. The philosopher in "Flim-Flams", for instance, attempted to turn an orang outang into a
man and was as conscious of the theories of Berkeley and Monboddo as Mr. Forester. Peacock goes further and actually produces the
transformed animal and lets him speak for himself; but the idea is not
original. It occurs over and over again in the speculation on the
links in the Great Chain of Being. It is the method that distinguishes
Peacock. He produces his personified points of view all at once and
lets them talk, none of them affected by any other, none of them allowed
to stray over the border of good temper, none of them betraying any
desire to alter the state of affairs that he describes or prophesies,
only to present his theory as an artistic whole. Their desire to save
the world by the only possible theory that can affect salvation is
abstract. The allegorical note is entirely missing. The characters
have the temperate charm of cultivated paganism. The method is at
least as old as Aristophanes and its appeal is imperishable. Peacock
loved to play off one system of philosophy against another, conscious
all the time of the absurdity latent in the extremes of either. It is
in placing exponents of conflicting, and fantastic ideas, in convivial
surroundings, inducing an atmosphere of festivity by making the occasion
for the party the Christmas season, or the need for a particular
celebration, or the opportunity to discuss a generous bequest, and then
letting them enlarge simultaneously on their convictions in almost
uninterrupted dialogue, that the author achieves his effect. The
opinions bandied about have no practical bearing on human affairs; yet
they are debated with a sense of the utmost importance and with an air
of extreme gravity that only adds to the fun. The author's point of
view does not matter at all. He is concerned only with incongruity and that is not confined to one set of views or one way of life.

The identification of Mr. Panscope, Mr. Escot, Mr. Toobad and many others with the figures of famous men is a matter of great literary interest. But it is not germane to this study of ideas. We are concerned with the theories that dominate the characters; their vitality and their persistence as well as their absurdity and their relationship with the serious doctrines of the philosophers from whom they derive. Personal caricature will only be noted in passing. It was not Peacock's main aim. "Headlong Hall" was published in 1818. In it we are introduced to Squire Headlong of Headlong Hall in Wales, a man with a taste for philosophy. Having gone to a University in order to become a philosopher, and having found, to his chagrin, that he is no nearer his aim at the end of the course than at the beginning, he tries to console himself by surrounding himself with philosophers. He has invited a large company for Christmas and has filled his house with every conceivable book, musical instrument or piece of apparatus, so that he can provide his guests with the material for abstruse reflection. Between them, they give vent to almost every philosophic idea ever mooted. The theory of perfectibility is propounded by Mr. Foster, and here, no doubt, Peacock is drawing on his memory of interminable discussions with Shelley on the subject. Mr. Foster believes that man will rise to the "philosophical pinnacle" of perfect felicity. He points to all the signs of progress around them, transport, medicine, the increase in humanitarianism, or universal benevolence.
He voices the familiar view that men are virtuous in proportion as they are truly enlightened and that each generation will increase in virtue. In short he is the old perfectibilian to the life. To him is opposed, throughout the novel, Mr. Escot who propounds the views of Rousseau, largely taken from the "Discours sur l'Inégalité" and of Lord Monboddo, his disciple. He considers all the improvements pointed out to him as "so many links in the great chain of corruption, which will soon fetter the whole human race in irreparable slavery and incurable wretchedness." He dilates on the happiness of the natural man before the time when he discovered fire and used it for cooking and "thus surrendered his liver to the vultures of disease". He visualises the progressive diminution in stature of the human race, as well as its deterioration, and prophesies that in time, it will "vanish imperceptibly from the face of the earth." Dancing is anathema to him and the sight of a ballroom seems to him to enforce the lesson of the increasing degradation of the species. There is a comic speech in which Mr. Escot paints a moving picture of the grief of the natural man, that "calm and contemplative animal" disturbed in, possibly, his "first meditation of the simple question of Where am I? Where do I come? And what is the end of my existence?" by the appearance of a capering beau, who has grinned and laboured until "his face glows with fever, and distills with perspiration." His first impulse would be fear; his last, simple astonishment. If he were told that mankind has progressed to a state

1. See chapter IV, "Headlong Hall", 1816.
2. Ibid. Chap.I.
3. Ibid. Chap.II.
where this mode of existence is considered highly desirable "would not he groan from his inmost soul for the lamentable condition of his posterity" 1.

Mr. Cranium, devoted to the doctrines of the phrenologists, promotes a good deal of amusement with his covetous desire to get hold of the skull discovered accidentally by Mr. Escot and said to be that of Cadwallader. He lectures the company on the definition of man. He has brought suitable skulls to illustrate his argument and compares that of a beaver with that of Sir Christopher Wren to show the bump that indicates the quality of constructiveness. Mr. Cranium gets the skull of Cadwallader in the end, by the simple process of barter, appropriately enough as the owner is the extoller of primitive systems. He gives his daughter for it. Mr. Panscope, the mystic, is disappointed of his intended bride by this transaction, but we are told that, when condoled with by the lady's father, "Mr. Panscope begged him not to distress himself on the subject observing that the monotonous system of female education brought every individual of the sex to so remarkable an approximation of similarity that no wise man would suffer himself to be annoyed by a loss so easily repaired." 2. He is obsessed with the inequalities inherent in the social framework. In support of his ideas he quotes authorities from Aristotle to Tom Paine and succeeds, like his prototype Coleridge, in being quite unintelligible at times. He and Mr. Escot agree on the iniquity of the sacrifice of the many to the few involved in the maintenance of a privileged aristocracy and, together,

1. Ibid. Chap. XIII.
2. Ibid. Chap. XIV.
they cry down luxury.

Messrs. Gall, MacLaural and Nightshade, identified as Jeffrey, John Wilson Croker and Southey by critics, add their comments on venality in the press and on the way to influence the masses. Botanical cranks and landscape gardeners, musicians like Dr. Chromatic, with his two charming daughters Tenorina and Graziosa, all endow their crotchets with a philosophic flavour by relating them to the pursuit of the good and the beautiful and the cultivation of the passions. The whole family of liberal ideas makes its appearance.

"Malincourt", 1817, repeats the programme, though the tone is slightly less genial. The chief doctrines that emerge are those of Malthus, those of Mary Wollstonecraft and those of Rousseau and Monboddo, again, in the delineation of the superb figure of Sir Oran Haut-ton, M.P.

Perhaps Peacock may be identified with some of the views of Malthus which Mr. Fax utters throughout the novel. There is a suggestion in the author's style of pleasure in denunciation that is absent from all his other novels and it seems to suggest a personal hatred of the policy of unrestricted competition and inactivity on the part of the government which is gibed at so much more good-temperedly in "The Misfortunes of Elphin" when Seithenyn's sloth is defended. But if the satire here becomes slightly more biting, it does not disturb the tenor of the novel and even Mr. Fax is reduced to absurdity with his eulogies of the celibate and his lament that "the world is overstocked with featherless bipeds".

1. 1829. Chap.IV.
2. "Malincourt", Chap.VII.
Anthelia, wooed by Mr. Forester, the Naturalistic Reformer, is a spirited woman. She makes a plea for better education for women, blames men for the frivolity of women's minds and says: "To think is one of the most unpardonable errors a woman can commit in the eyes of society. In our sex, a taste for intellectual pleasures is almost equivalent to taking the veil; and, though not absolutely a vow of perpetual celibacy, it has almost the same practical tendency." Abducted by Lord Anophel, and in danger of ravishment, Anthelia demands reading matter, expressing a preference for the works of Gibbon and Rousseau. To her captor's threats, she replies that she will not be ready to marry him whatever he does, and that, far from considering that his wickedness would be her disgrace, she would publish the facts in the interest of truth and justice. "Lord Anophel", we are told, "stood aghast for a few minutes, at the declaration of such unfashionable sentiments." This theme recurs. Scythrop, in "Nightmare Abbey", betrothed to one girl, and finding another, a dazzling beauty, in his study, is dazed when, calmly, and in defiance of the conventions, she asks him to conceal her. He naturally asks who she is. She proceeds to lecture him on her independence and her right to do as she likes without explanation, and tells him to call her Stella, a name, plainly not her own. She says: "I submit not to be an accomplice in my sex's slavery. I am like yourself, a lover of freedom, and I carry my theory into practice." Then she quotes an actual statement of Mary Wollstonecraft: "They alone are subject to blind authority who have no reliance on their

1. Ibid. Chap.XV.
2. Ibid. Chap.XLI.
3. 1818.
Her whole personality is that of Mary Godwin and her views those of her famous mother throughout. She is "full of impassioned schemes of liberty, and impatience of masculine usurpation". Scythrop is so fascinated by her energy of mind that, like Shelley whom he represents, he cannot conceal from himself that he loves devotedly, at the same time, two women "of minds and habits as remote as the antipodes". Maid Marian also expresses the idea that women should escape from the bondage of masculine authority. Her romance with Robin is a legislative and executive partnership.

Sir Oran Haut-ton, caught very young in the woods of Angola and brought home by the captain of an English frigate, comes into Mr. Forester's possession on the death of the kindly sailor. Mr. Forester buys him a baronetcy and introduces him to fashionable society in London. He is outré looking, but has such dignity and such an air of distinguished aloofness that he impresses every one, in spite of a complete inability to speak. He is full of sensibility; fleet of foot and brave; chivalrous and unostentatious; all in fact that the natural man, unspoiled by civilization, has been represented to be.

His intelligence is obvious. His ability to think and draw conclusions from observed facts, proclaim him a man. His musical ability serves him instead of speech. In brief, he is "undoubtedly a man, and a much better man than many that are to be found in civilized countries."  

1. "Nightmare Abbey", Chap.X.  
The quotation from Mary Wollstonecraft is from "A Vindication of the Rights of Women", Chap.V, Section IV.  
2. "Melincourt", Chap.VI.
The satire is delightful. The descriptions of Sir Oren are frequently taken straight from "Ancient Metaphysics" and Peacock himself has annotated his text and given exact references. The election at Onevote, the discussions of the policy of a dumb candidate and the suggestions that his disability is his chief asset form one of the best chapters of the story.1.

Reminiscent of the arguments to be found in the novels of Letitia Maria Hawkins on the nature of evil, are the theories of Mr. Toobad in Nightmare Abbey. He is said to have been modelled on Shelley's friend J.F. Newton. Peacock has drawn a comic portrait of a Dualist, convinced that the domination of the world alternates between the principles of good and evil. Unfortunately, he has decided that the temporary supremacy is now being wielded by the devil and intersperses his remarks with ejaculations to the effect that Satan is, at that moment, come among them. Everything to Mr. Toobad shows traces of the "cloven paw". Mr. Flosky, a recognisable Coleridge, is inclined to agree with him about the ubiquity of evil but is always following some ideas far beyond the bounds of ordinary minds and is said to pride himself on being incomprehensible, as he has invented a new system of arranging thought.

So vital a satirist could not forbear comment on the tyranny of government or the evils of various institutions and we find, in his historical tales, some of his most successful burlesques. Only one was written within the years under discussion, "Maid Marian," published in 1822,

1. Ibid. Chap.XXII.
but composed in 1818. The intention of the author is made clear in a letter written to Shelley, Nov. 29th, 1818. "I am writing a comic romance of the 12th Century," he says, "which I shall make the vehicle of much oblique satire on all the oppressions that are done under the sun." His choice of story was undoubtedly influenced by the volume of ballads about Robin Hood published in 1795 by Ritson, the free-thinker and vegetarian. In this edition, the preface is tinged with radical thought and Robin is made to represent the simple honest man defying Tyranny for the sake of principle. The state is featured as a monstrous oppression, dependent for its very existence on spies and sycophants. Peacock follows suit and describes Richard I as "the arch crusader and anti-Jacobin by excellence." Robin and Marian are pictured as reigning in the forest "administering natural justice according to Robin's idea of rectifying the inequalities of human condition." Opportunities are made for the comparison of Peacock's own day with the conditions in England before the industrial revolution. This is also true of "The Misfortunes of Elphin" where the education of Taliesin is described. A typical example is the chapter beginning "As Taliesin grew up, Gwystno instructed him in all the knowledge of the age, which was, of course, not much in comparison with ours." Then follows a list of the things that he did not learn, that is, a list of iniquities peculiar to the end of the 18th and the beginning of the 19th centuries, such as political science, mechanisation of labour, organised war, paper currency and savage penal laws. "They had no pamphleteering societies" and they

1. "Maid Marian", Chap.XVII.
were "utterly destitute of the blessings of those 'schools for all' the house of correction, and the treadmill, wherein the autochthonal justice of our agrastic kakistocracy"... (in other words, rural government by the worst citizens), "now castigates the heinous sins which were then committed with impunity, of treading on old footpaths, picking up dead wood, and moving on the face of the earth within sound of the whir of a partridge." 1

Quotation can give no adequate idea of the wealth of fun to be found in Peacock's novels. It is only possible to refer to the chapters in which gems are set. The argument is close and sustained and must be followed in its entirety. Peacock has, welling within him, a vigorous spring of high spirits, which he directs into the channels of his thought as the fancy takes him. He sees around him material changes but the same old ideas. In the preface to the 1837 edition of his first four novels, published as Volume VII of Bentley's standard novels, he comments on the march of time. The Holyhead mail coach with which he begins "Headlong Hall" no longer runs; rotten boroughs died in 1832. "But the classes of tastes, feelings, and opinions, which were successively brought into play in these little tales," he continues, "remain substantially the same." He then enumerates the kinds of philosophers whose views endure and among them are those whose variations of theme we have followed through thirty years; the perfectibilians, the deteriorationists, the transcendentalists, the

1. "The Misfortunes of Elphin", 1829, Chap.VI.
political economists and the romantic enthusiasts. In "the serener clime of years to come" visualised by Shelley,¹ Peacock has already found recompense. He reveals, in an age obsessed by the dangers of civil strife, the charm of the system monger.

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¹ "Letter to Maria Gisborn", Nov.16th, 1819.
CONCLUSION

"There was, in the period that followed the masterpieces of the four great novelists" writes J. M. S. Tomkins, of the late 18th C., "a real conviction that the novel was played out. The works of Fielding and Richardson were seen as the culmination of a development, not the starting point. Authors lamented that all types had been displayed and all themes used up."¹ Except for the work of a few, novels were merely imitative. Accepted themes were repeated and romanticized and the novel, as a result, lost touch with real life. The events of the period 1790 to 1820, however, because they affected the outlook of the whole nation, in one way or another, exerted a powerful influence on the novel form and brought it back to reality, by the introduction of themes not only of topical, but of universal, interest. Before the novel had time to adjust itself, and settle down in maturity, it was adopted, and invaded, by the moralist, the historian and the philosopher, all bent on using it as a means of didacticism, or of relaying information, or as a weapon of propaganda. Speculations, either revived or originated in a time of unparalleled stress, distorted narrative and, forced to adapt itself to new and unfamiliar requirements, the novel grew unwieldy, developed away, like trees cramped and twisted by their efforts to see the sun between the bricks and mortar of a city estate. The process of adaptation, necessitating as it did the reconciliation of public service and romantic interest, destroyed the unity of conception that alone produces art and so delayed the emancipation of the novel.

from the shackles of didacticism. Writers of the calibre of Jane
Austen and Sir Walter Scott were able to avoid the general influence of
the prevailing fashion, but, even they felt constrained deliberately to
refuse to permit the infiltration of matter extraneous to their plots.
The amorphous nature of the popular novel endures long after 1830. The
characteristics noted in this study may still be observed, but to a
less degree, in the writings of Dickens and Thackeray.

Of the elements that contributed to the unwieldiness of the
novel in the period under discussion, the intrusion of speculative ideas
was especially hampering. Themes of such significance as the eradication
of evil or the amelioration of man were too powerful for the young form.
Yet subjects like these exercised a magnetic attraction for novelists.
Indeed, their appeal seems to be perpetual, for, in our own day, they
still appear and permeate, for instance, the poetic drama. We still
hope to find a way of ensuring that the world may eventually be peopled
by a race of men who will eschew evil, not because it is punishable by
a welfare state, but because they themselves are compounded of impulses
that will cause them to turn away from cruelty and destruction. The
vitality of these theories cannot be better illustrated than in one of
a series of wireless talks, on "Living in an Atomic Age", given by a
twentieth century philosopher, Bertrand Russell, and published in "The
Listener", May 17th, 1951, under the title "Present Perplexities". He
recognises the disappointments and unhappinesses of modern life but
declares that he is not, himself, despairing of ultimate happiness for
mankind. He believes that there is a view of man and of his destiny
distinct from those pictured in the great systems of dogma emanating from Rome and the Kremlin, "which can give certainty and hope, together with the completest understanding of the moods, the despairs and the maddening doubts that beset modern men." His conception is somewhat spoilt, he has observed, by the early training that men have received in the idea of sin, for they have been taught to regard self restraint and self condemnation as virtuous. They have acted on the belief that human nature is inherently bad and that, therefore, society can only be held together by laws and penalties for their infringement.

He then states his creed: "The good life, as I conceive it, is a happy life. I do not mean that if you are good you will be happy; I mean that if you are happy you will be good." Most people are unhappy and many seek alleviation in excitement of some kind or other. "The happy man" he continues, "does not desire intoxication. Nor does he envy his neighbour and, therefore, hate him. He can live the life of impulse like a child because happiness makes his impulses fruitful and not destructive." He is convinced that fear and a sense of guilt prevent this happiness. He therefore demands the rejection of the idea of sin and the substitution of encouragement and opportunity; the liberation of men from fear. "I should make it clear", he says, "not merely as an intellectual proposition, but as something that the heart spontaneously believes, that it is not by making others suffer that we shall achieve our own happiness, but that happiness and the means of happiness depend upon harmony with other men. When all this is not only understood but deeply felt, it will be easy to live in a way that brings happiness.
equally to ourselves and others.... It is only necessary to open the doors of our hearts and minds to let the imprisoned demons escape and the beauty of the world take possession."

Over the centuries, he, surely, holds out a hand to Thomas Holcroft.
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