



William Dean Howells.

From a photograph by Cox, New York

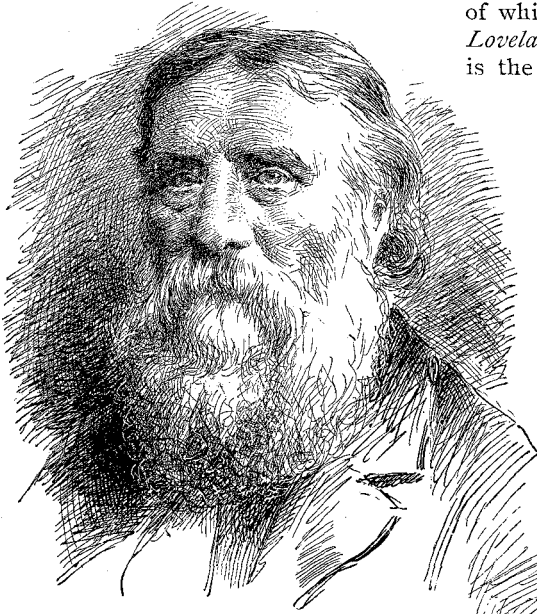
THE NOVEL.

The great typical form of contemporary literature—The wonderful development of the novel—How it began, and what it has become in the hands of its English and American masters.

By Margaret Field.

LOOKING at the vast numbers of novels that are read today, and the seriousness with which they are received, not only in the high places of criticism, but by the last tribunal of all

—the minds of the people—it begins to appear that of the various classes of literary production, all of which are its seniors by ages, many are being merged into the novel.



George Macdonald.

And rightly so.

The life of every age can be judged by the records it leaves in art and literature. Poetry accords with some ages, philosophy with others, and narrative history with others. In ours has come the day of the novel. It has come to be the favorite text book upon almost every subject, as well as an entertainment.

It seems almost impossible that the novel should only date back about one hundred and fifty years. "Pamela," published in 1740, was really the first of the type, although there had been premonitions of it in stories and poems for ages, and "Robinson Crusoe" had come near being a novel. Since that day of great invention it has grown from its artificial state into the freest and most natural expression of literature.

"Pamela" was written by Samuel Richardson, a printer, who was fifty one when he conceived the idea of writing that series of "letters from a beautiful young damsel to her parents" which became the companion of all sentimental women and the admiration of all critics. He wrote two novels beside this, both

of which have given names to a type. *Lovelace*, created in "*Clarissa Harlowe*," is the accepted synonym for rake, and everybody knows what sort of a man is a *Sir Charles Grandison*, honorable and stupid.

Fielding followed Richardson with a burlesque which, ridiculous as it was, taught the author as well as the world that he was a novelist. "Joseph Andrews," the parody of "Pamela" in which *Pamela's* virtues are transferred to her brother with grotesque effect, was the forerunner of the famous "Tom Jones." Thackeray said that his idea of heaven was an eternity where Fielding went on writing "Tom Joneses" for him to enjoy.



Anthony Trollope.

Smollett followed hard upon Fielding, and for a quarter of a century novels were produced that held the attention of the reading public in a day when such men as Gray and Hume were writing. Then for forty years there was a lapse, broken into by only one recognized novel—"Evelina," by Fanny Burney. We find this a very stupid and tiresome tale today, but it was heralded in Queen



THE EARLIER NOVELISTS OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY.

Nathaniel Hawthorne.

Bulwer-Lytton

Sir Walter Scott.

Washington Irving.

James Fenimore Cooper.



FIVE GREAT NOVELISTS OF THE LAST GENERATION.

Charles Kingsley.

Charles Dickens.

Wilkie Collins.

Charles Reade.

William M. Thackeray.



A GROUP OF CONTEMPORARY NOVELISTS.

Robert Louis Stevenson.

Henry James.

Frank R. Stockton.

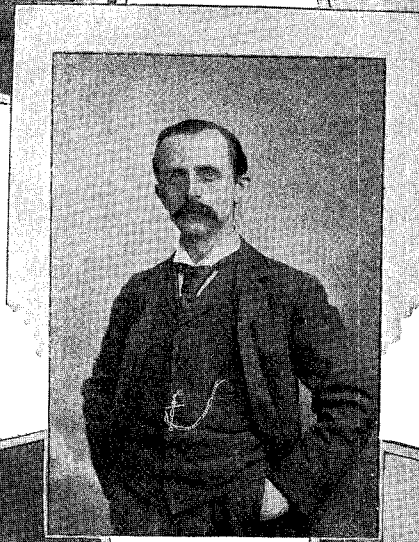
George du Maurier.

F. Marion Crawford.

Charlotte's day, by no less a critic than Dr. Johnson, as an immortal work.

In 1811 Jane Austen brought out "Sense and Sensibility," and in 1814

the first novel by "The Great Unknown" saw the light. For ten years novels dropped from Scott's pen seemingly as rapidly as it could move. With



FIVE NOVELISTS OF TODAY.

Captain Charles King.

James Matthew Barrie.

Dr. Conan Doyle.

Jerome K. Jerome.

Thomas Hardy.

him began a veritable renaissance of the novel which was felt on both sides of the Atlantic. James Fenimore Cooper, the son of an American pioneer, read "Waverly," and seeing in the new country about him material for no less stirring romance, began his remarkable series of books. Not far behind him came Washington Irving with his stories of Dutch New York, which can scarcely be called novels. These two were the real founders of American fiction.

These were the days of romance writing, when heroes were created. Nathaniel Hawthorne, whose "Scarlet Let-



H. Rider Haggard.

From a photograph by Elliott & Fry, London.

ter" no American novelist has ever come near equaling, maintained the traditions of Cooper and Irving, but in quite a different field. The morbidness of the Puritans fascinated him. The mysterious life of the human soul was his theme; and it seemed in his hands that the immaterial became real, and the material a mere shadow.

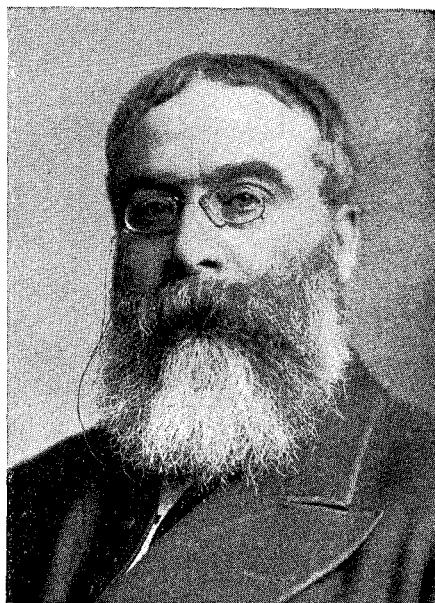
We are saying now that we are again entering upon a period of romance reading; that we enjoy it

as the reaction from realism. If authors and publishers could only be made to understand it, the public has never tired



W. Clark Russell.

From a photograph by Elliott & Fry, London.



Walter Besant.

From a photograph by Elliott & Fry, London.

FIVE WOMEN NOVELISTS.

Margaret Deland.

"Ouida."

Dinah Maria Mulock.

"George Eliot."

Mrs. Humphry Ward.



James Ritchie

of romance. It has always made the sweets of literature. There has never, at any period, been a romance really deserving the name, which has not been a success. Richard Blackmore's "Lorna Doone" appeared at the height of the craze for realism, and ran into thirty editions. The whole under world of fiction is romantic in its tendencies; and sometimes an author writing for a small audience finds himself with a large one. Robert Louis Stevenson, for instance, wrote his first romances for boys.

After Scott came Bulwer-Lytton with his two distinct sets of novels; then Lover and Lever, and next the great pair, Dickens and Thackeray. Thackeray was a novelist to whom, if to any one, may be given the name of being greatest of them all. He combined every gift that belongs to the master of fiction. He saw life from an individual standpoint, he saw it artistically, and he reported it delightfully.

Dickens' novels are brilliant fragments. Half the time he had no idea, when he put his hero into a position, how he intended to get him out of it. His characters were often unnatural, but they were consummately drawn. Wilkie Collins, who was his intimate friend in later years, had much to do with the evolution of the Dickens novel. It began as a sketch, and ended as a story with a plot, sometimes so involved that it was borne down by its own weight.

In France, during these years, the novel was showing itself as the most complete medium of a people's expression. The great names at the head of French literature in this century are novelists. Balzac, George Sand, and Flaubert were masters of the art. Today Zola might be called the most masculine of the novelists, as Paul Bourget expresses everything that we mean by the word feminine in its most exquisite sense. Zola writes not of men or women, but of masses. His people are results, and he shows us the immense social machinery which has moved them. He writes the drama of a race. The main interests of modern man occupy his pen, and while his novels are

brutal at times, and faulty with an overweight of detail, they hold the story of an epoch. He is great, colossal, a genius; a Titan playing with worlds.

Thomas Hardy easily stands at the head of the English novelists of this decade. We are hearing a great deal, at the moment, concerning "Trilby" and "The Manxman," and "Marcella" is only off our tongues, but the authors of none of these are novelists in the sense that Thomas Hardy is a novelist. People have created creeds out of Thomas Hardy's novels, as experience of life might have given them creeds.

His reputation was made by men instead of women. Women are generally supposed to decide a novel's fate, because they have more time to read than men; but it is doubtful if the idea is altogether a true one. We know that Lord Tennyson was, and Mr. Gladstone is, an assiduous student of novels, though neither of them could be accused of idleness. Again, take "Trilby" for an example. Women would never have given that beautiful piece of unreality its vogue. *Trilby* appealed to them, generally, only after she was passionately admired by men. She appealed to men because Du Maurier so skilfully revived, for the moment, the glamour of youth. *Trilby* was the *Trilby* youth believed her to be. In every page there was a point of view which men had left behind years before. Withered emotions bloomed again. The old chords were struck. In this "Trilby" is great; much greater than that minute and truthful depiction of one of the fence corners of the world which Mr. Howells calls a novel.

A novel cannot be a novel without dramatic life; lacking this, it is simply a study. Balzac has been compared to Howells, but it was only by those who have a superficial knowledge of the great French master. Balzac's great work, the "Comédie Humaine" was in itself one novel. Sometimes, in reading a single volume of Balzac, it may seem that some of his situations are unimportant; but when the whole great work is put together as the author meant that it should be, in logical sequence, it is seen that nothing is without its value.

He was the critic of his time, the moral historian, the real novelist.

Critics arise now and then to protest against love being made the central motive of the majority of novels. It was a fashion that nature set when she made it the central motive of the world. It is the life of the race, and all conditions spring from it, or from its lack; but nature treats it with far more judgment than the average novelist. She gives it its due in the beginnings of stories; the novelist gets his perspective wrong, and makes it the end of all things.

There is always a certain charm in a fresh love story, and there is a fascination in the record of a strong man or woman being influenced, sometimes against the struggling force of their entire natures, through that mysterious attraction we call love. To expect the world to tire of love stories is to expect it to lose interest in the first stirrings of spring in the air. Humanity does not grow old. Youth comes with the seasons, with the same innocence and curiosity that Eve knew in Paradise; and youth requires its story books to tell it what it wants to know.

Thackeray used to say that he asked of a novel only "plenty of love and blood." As a matter of fact, the two elements are hard to mix. The man who can write love stories can seldom describe a fight. Rider Haggard, whom Andrew Lang calls "Homeric" as a teller of "blood," weaves little love into his tales, while Stevenson disdains women altogether.

F. Marion Crawford can tell a love story, "A Roman Singer" being a model. Captain King tries it, and succeeds in giving a pleasant and wholesome sugar paste for young palates, adding an army flavor. James Matthew Barrie, in his "Little Minister," has made a love story that charms.

Anthony Trollope, Dinah Maria Mulock, and George Macdonald have writ-

ten love stories which we like to remember, and which sell steadily by the side of the "new fiction"—whatever the two words in conjunction happen to mean at the moment. Sometimes it is Mrs. Humphrey Ward or Mrs. Deland, with their protests against orthodoxy; sometimes it is Howells and James, with their leisurely saunter through a few months in the life of somebody who is not particularly interesting to anybody; sometimes it is in the clarion call of the "new woman," flaunting her sentiments from the housetops.

The historical novel pleases for two reasons. Reade, who wrote a manly story every time he put his pen to paper, made the success of his life in "The Cloister and the Hearth." Kingsley's "Hypatia" is at this moment appearing in a new edition.

Dr. Conan Doyle is the best historical novelist of today. He has made alive characters who were dead to us and dim in history.

There are some popular authors of fiction whose work in some directions is inimitable, but who are no more novelists than a pencil sketch is a great painting. Among these are such short story writers as Frank R. Stockton and Jerome K. Jerome. They are delightful entertainers, but the novel they do not know.

We hear a good deal today, from the writers of namby pamby literature about the English speaking people crying down "strong meat for men." They intimate that if they were only allowed, they would write virile, powerful novels, full of keen observation and dramatic force. They talk about "writing down to their audience." Yet George Eliot never seemed to find it necessary to "write down" to anybody, and she found her audience.

It may be generalized that the English speaking public will welcome any novelist who tells the truth. Being truthful, it is impossible to be immoral.



THE AFFAIR AT ISLINGTON.*

By Matthew White, Jr.,

Author of "One of the Profession," "Allan Kane's Friend," etc.

SYNOPSIS OF CHAPTERS PREVIOUSLY PUBLISHED.

GILBERT DEAN and Estelle Osgood were lovers in the old days, but a quarrel parted them, and, deprived of the girl he loved, Dean married Louise Dartmouth. For a time he was contented, but while traveling in the West they attend a theatrical performance at Beverley, and in the leading woman of the company Gilbert recognizes his old love, Estelle Osgood.

Dean and his wife leave Beverley on the train which bears the "Borrowed Plumes" company, and Gilbert contrives to see the actress without exciting his wife's suspicions. The interview is a painful one to both, and yielding to Estelle's entreaties Dean leaves her, as he thinks, forever.

But fate wills otherwise. They are thrown together for a brief period by an accident to the train, and when finally Dean and the actress separate he is more hopelessly enthralled than ever.

Some weeks later the "Borrowed Plumes" company plays in Albany, which is not far from Dean's home at Islington. In order to see Estelle once more, Gilbert goes to Albany on the plea of a business engagement with a friend, Eugene Ilford. Shortly after his departure a telegram arrives, which Louise opens. It contains the simple announcement that "E. O." will be in Albany that night. In the newspaper the wife reads of Estelle Osgood's presence in that city, and a fearful suspicion possesses her.

After twenty four hours of misery her husband returns, and she accuses him of his perfidy. But Dean has been forewarned of the message by the actress, and he allays his wife's suspicions by telling her that the telegram was from Ilford, and attributing the difference in the initials to a telegrapher's blunder.

Louise reproaches herself for her suspicions, and is happy again, but Dean wonders if there is a more wretched man in all the world than he.

IX.

THE days following Gilbert's return from Albany were joyous ones to Louise. Despising herself for her unjust suspicions, she was constantly discovering new evidences of her husband's affection. For Dean was careful now to be liberal in bestowing these. But in spite of that one night's contrition, his heart was still in Estelle's keeping. He had written to her the next morning, telling her not to distress herself about that telegram, for no harm had resulted. And she had replied, and thus the correspondence went on as briskly as before.

These letters from Dean were Estelle's most valued treasures. She looked upon him as the last link connecting her with the old

life, that life where women were always respected, and no coarseness of speech was ever suffered to come within their hearing. Her present environment had been sufficiently irksome before that night when the company played in Beverley. But then she had only become weary of it at times; now it was continually hateful to her. Yet she saw no escape; she was absolutely dependent on her salary, every penny of which must be carefully guarded lest she might not have enough to carry her through the long summer vacation. Relatives she had none, except those that were poorer than herself, and they had cast her off since she had gone on the stage.

Her present companions were friendly enough; too friendly at times. Harry Vane's attentions were odious to her. He had a wife traveling with another company. Estelle's soul sickened within her when she was driven to remind him of this fact, and he replied, "Well, my dear, I accord her the privilege of consoling herself as I am trying to do."

Contrasted with men such as these, Gilbert Dean seemed godlike, weak as Estelle recognized him to be. But then that weakness was betrayed only in yielding to his regard for her; and a woman can easily forgive such a failing in a man. His love, hopeless as she knew it to be, was the one thing now that made life worth living. It would be like stilling her very heart beats to put it out of her soul, and so she did not try. Although the thought was never formulated into an expectation, she knew that some time, somewhere, and soon, she would see Dean again. And Dean shared this hope—or rather not hope; with him it was an intention.

So the winter passed, and when spring came Estelle wrote that early in May the company were to play a one night stand in Islington. The local opera house had been renovated, and had been offered on such favorable terms to manager Roberts, that he

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