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Democratic reforms in American literature: 1900-1912

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Thesis

DEMOCRATIC REFORMS IN AMERICAN LITERATURE 1900-1912

by

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Pre-face

The purpose of this thesis is to present in a single account a review of some of the democratic reforms which were advocated by certain writers during the first ten or twelve years of our present century. By the use of the word, "literature" it is meant that class of writing distinguished for its beauty of style or expression particularly the forms of the essay, drama, fiction and poetry. In this paper I confine myself to the essay and the novel. The period covered was a transition period in American literature. The poetry between these years was in the middle of a change from the pretty, moralizing poetry of the nineteenth century to the new realistic, "shocking" poetry of 1912. Thus the poetry is worthy of only slight mention. American drama was not in evidence to any great extent until 1915. No attempt has been made to include every author who published a political novel or essay. Only the most well-known have been included. Single stories and essays were written for the many magazines in the general race to increase the circulation but of these not many remained of interest even a few years later.

The interest in and advocacy for democratic reforms found in the essay and novel in this period was due of course to the current muck-raking movement. It has, therefore, been found advantageous to include a general historical background in order that the relation between the literary works and their
contemporary period of history may be seen clearly. It seems that the discussion of governmental corruption, of strikes, of "boss" rule, and of confusion might be particularly analogous to the present postwar period. It might come to the mind of a reader that were these writers, who were busy during the period 1900-1908, to return to the United States they might realize what a very small impression their words had made on the American voter, for they would no doubt find a similar situation in the government and in the politics of to-day.

The material used here has been derived from published collections of many articles, short stories and serial stories which appeared first in the magazines of those years. Secondary accounts of the muck-rake movement have also been used particularly C. C. Regier's *Era of Muckrakers* from which some of the best material was derived.
Chapter I

General History

The years following the Civil War brought a change in American economic life. The Civil War, itself, gave a great impetus to industry and to railway construction. The tariffs of the war years for the purpose of revenues were continued and gave manufacturers a high protection against foreign competition. The demand for war supplies, for iron, steel, railway materials, textiles and for food quickened every enterprise in the North. Great fortunes made out of speculations in loans, contracts for government supplies, and in land-grants placed an enormous capital in private hands.

The building of railroads after 1860 kept pace with the growth of the population and the increase in manufacturing. At first there were railroads connecting only the strategic centers of the country such as the Boston and Albany and the Philadelphia and Reading. Then they quickly pushed into the West where there were no large cities and no prospect of developing a profitable business within the immediate future. This rapid railroad expansion was not due solely to private enterprise because the cost of doubtful or profitless undertakings was thrown as far as possible onto the government. The frauds connected with the manipulation of land-grants to railways and the shameless sales of legal privileges were numerous during this period but there were no tangible records left.
After the War, capital in industry as contrasted with wealth invested in agriculture, increased enormously in amount and in political influence. The great fortunes from 1860 on were made in business enterprises, therefore the most energetic and the keesest minds were attracted by the dominant method of making money. The agricultural regions thus lost some of their best political leaders. The increase of wage workers brought about by the increase of industry meant a rapid growth of city populations. The demand for labor stimulated immigration from Europe. The new industrial development meant a change in the way of living for a large group of people. An immense population was now housed in tenements and in rented houses. The workers organized themselves into trade unions and labor parties. Large scale poverty, degradation, strikes and lockouts were characteristics of the period.

Between 1860 and 1870 the industrial proletariat made himself felt as a political and economic factor. As early as 1872 a party of Labor Reformers appeared in the campaign while a few years later the Knights of Labor came into existence. In 1877 there began the first labor struggles in that long series of campaigns which have marked the relations of capitalists and workingmen during the past seven decades. In this year came the trouble between the management of the Baltimore and Ohio railway and its employees over the threatened reduction in wages. The last and perhaps the most formidable result of the industrial revolution was the rise of enormous combina-
tions and corporations in industry as well as in transportation. In 1879, for example, certain oil interests in Cleveland, Pittsburgh and Philadelphia began to control their competition by agreement through their officers. Three years later they formed a closer organization, a trust. Within five years there were trusts in cotton oil, linseed oil, lead, sugar, whiskey and cordage. After 1870 a period of ruinous competition had set in, crooked financeering, misappropriation of construction funds by directors, and the purchase of bankrupt lines by directors of large companies and the resale of them at great advances. The 14th Amendment which, some say, was fathered by men, who had the welfare of persons other than the Negro in mind, was interpreted in such a way as to aid the corporations and big business. From 1861 to 1913 the Republican Party controlled the Presidential office except for two terms. This party was fortified by the support of manufacturing interests and by the support of capitalists anxious to swing forward with the development of railways and of new enterprises.

Few decisive efforts were made to placate the poorer sections of the population by distinct class legislation. The effects of the alien contract labor law and the Chinese exclusion act were not widely felt. The accumulation of vast fortunes, many of which were gained by fraudulent manipulation or shady transactions within the limits of the law, was bound to bring a political cleavage. The domination of the Federal Government by the captains of machinery and capital was destined to draw
out a counter move by the small farmers, the middle class, and the laborers. The protest found political expression in the organization of third parties. The oldest and most persistent of these was the Prohibitionist Party, started in 1872. In 1872 came the "Labor Reformers" party which soon went to pieces because it was based on only a temporary platform and had no general philosophy of politics. In 1880 the "Greenbackers" came along with a more specific and a more extensive declaration of labor rights.

The first revolutionary ideas didn't get very far until the decline of prosperity in agriculture. The Populist Party which turned out to be the strongest of all the third parties held its first national convention in 1890. Both the Republican and Democratic parties were distrusted by those who wanted simplicity, honesty, and economy in the government. These two older parties were regarded as being under the control of the "money power." Finally the agricultural and industrial interests united under the leadership of William Alfred Peffer. The platform of this party included the free coinage of silver, a tariff revision, government ownership of railroads and telegraphs, a postal savings establishment and other common labor desires. It all could be summed up into three general demands, 1, financial reform; 2, government ownership of rail and telegraph; and 3, the elimination of corporate and foreign ownership of the land. General Weaver and James Field, the Populist candidates for President and Vice-President, did well for
a new Party in the election of 1892. The East (thinking them communists) both laughed at and feared the Populists.

By 1896 the People's Party had gathered its forces for the campaign. The Republican Party, managed by Mark Hanna, advocated the gold standard and a protective tariff. Mark Hanna also advocated a union of politics and big business. The Democratic Party, which had no leader at first, wanted free and unlimited coinage of silver and gold and a tariff for revenue only. William Jennings Bryan went into the campaign on the free silver platform. The Populist Party felt that they had nothing more profitable to do than to indorse Bryan, the Democrat, and his free silver issue. The election of 1896 had as its key issues money, monopoly, railroads, and the tariff.

The Panic of 1893 had given the Populists an impetus, for panics always ruin the chances of a President for reelection and usually ruin the chances of the party, too. The Populists had nominated the young and eloquent Bryan, as had the Democrats, but they had nominated a different vice-president. Bryan made an excellent showing by his eloquence but McKinley had more money behind him to finance the campaign.

McKinley, the friend of Big Business interests was finally elected. If the nation-wide depression had lasted until the election, the People's Party might have been victorious. The administration under McKinley advocated a higher tariff and continued to favor Big Business. The Spanish-American War took the minds of the people away from their domestic
grievances for a short period. The end of this war and the close of the century found the middle class, farmers and laborers still facing the problems of monopolies by trust and corporations, unfair practices by the railroads, and corruption in the government and in politics. The country was ready for the reform which was to come with Theodore Roosevelt and the "muck-rakers."
Chapter II
The Beginning of Muck-Raking

After completing McKinley's term, Theodore Roosevelt in 1904 was elected President on a reform and "trust-breaking" platform. The American people had become more interested in reform for various reasons beside the fact that the number of grievances held by them against the government were increasing rather than decreasing. First, the educational system had been improving, for more people were now going to grammar or high school. Second, the amount of correct information on many and varied subjects was increasing due to the growth in the number of fact-finding organizations. In 1884 the Federal Bureau of Labor Statistics had been created. The American Historical Association, American Political Organization, American Economic Association and the American Statistical Association had been established lacking only the ability to popularize their results. Third, the churches, whose clergy were important instruments of public opinion, began to realize that they must deal with social as well as religious problems. Fourth, and most important in connection with the muck-raking movement, the reading public had been enlarged by the cheap magazines like McClure's Magazine and the type of material contained in them.

S. S. McClure, John Brisben Walker and Frank Munsey came out with cheap magazines in this order: McClure's in
May, 1893, Walker's in July and Munsey's in September. Because of the success of Sir George Newnes as editor of Strand and Country Life and William T. Snead with Review of Reviews, S. S. McClure felt that a cheap magazine would be popular in America. The development of photo-engraving, which was much less expensive than the older wood-engraving, made the cheaper publication possible. The new process also enabled the publisher to make pictures direct from the photographs which were cheap instead of from drawings which were costly.

McClure had begun planning his cheaper magazine with John S. Phillips in 1892. McClure had been working, often at a loss to himself, for eight years in syndicating short stories and serial novels. The new magazine began with $7,300 as its entire capital but with a great fund of material from which to draw. The magazine at first was to be made up entirely of reprints of the most successful stories and articles that had been used in the syndicate. As if it wasn't hard enough to start the magazine on the small amount of cash which McClure and Phillips had, in 1893 came the nation-wide panic freezing the ordinary sources of money. However, luck was in their favor for Professor Henry Drummond bought $2,000 worth of stock and loaned McClure $1,000. Despite the competition which John Brisben Walker offered by selling his Cosmopolitan at 12½ cents, McClure's Magazine struggled through the fall and winter of 1893 and 1894. Early in the summer of 1894 everything seemed hopeless. All human source of help seemed to be exhausted,
When A. Conan Doyle sent them a check for $5,000. Thus McClure's Magazine survived its crisis.

S. S. McClure had succeeded in getting such excellent contributors for his first number as H. H. Boyesen, Gilbert Parker, Sarah Orne Jewett, Professor Henry Drummond, Joel Chandler Harris, Gertrude Hall and Mrs. R. L. Stevenson. In 1894 with no idea of where her salary would come from, McClure hired Ida Tarbell. He felt her work had benefited from her study of the methods of French historians which were then so much in advance of the American methods and he was also convinced of her soundness of judgment.

In his Autobiography McClure told about the beginning of "muck-raking." At the time of the World's Fair, 1897, the Armour Institute of Technology was established. McClure sent Arthur Warren to Chicago to write an article on Mr. Armour and the Institute. This gave McClure the idea of having articles written on the greatest American business achievements. It was suggested in the office that the business achievements and methods of the Standard Oil Company and more especially the great care that had built up their methods of economic handling and distribution be written up in an article. Ida Tarbell was selected as the author because of her childhood life in the oil district and the relation of some of her relatives to the oil business. Lincoln Steffens began his articles on municipal corruption at the same time. Both of these series were meant to be strictly informative. Thus began the literature of exposure
for the articles caught the attention of the public. Other magazines such as the Ladies' Home Journal, Everybody's and Collier's took up the movement.

This type of literature began exposing the sordid and depressing rottenness of our politics and the hopeless apathy of our good citizens. As the number in the field enlarged, the stories became more sensational in order to retain attention. There are two points in the literature of exposure worthy of note: 1, its extraordinary copiousness; and 2, the fact that so few of the writers who pointed out to us our social sores seem to have any kind of salve in their hands. It soon came to pass that "exposure," like so many other arts existed for its own sake. The tendency was to make the sober and sane citizens believe that our political and our business evils couldn't be grappled with successfully because the moral fibre of the people had deteriorated so much. It produced the effect of "so far gone nothing can be done about it." At the height of the period Theodore Roosevelt, when the factual literature of exposure which had started about 1900 gave way to sensational literature, classified all writers, good or bad, as "muckrakers." On March 17, 1906 at a private dinner of the Gridiron Club Roosevelt took as the theme for his speech the following passage from Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress:

"the man with the muckrake, the man who could look no way but downward with the muckrake in his hand; who was offered a celestial crown for his muckrake but who would neither look
up nor regard the crown he was offered but continued to rake to himself, the filth of the floor."

Although in later speeches President Roosevelt denied that he had meant to include all the writers of "exposure," this incident is generally agreed upon as the turning point of the reform movement. The muck-rakers had included in their pile of filth everything from social reforms right through to attempted reform of the national government. Many have said that is was S. S. McClure and the subsequent group of "muck-rakers" who gave the general air of reform to the Roosevelt administration. President Roosevelt, himself did a large amount of talking and speech-making about reforms but the list of actual governmental acts passed in his term of office is not a formidable one. It is pretty safe to say, however, that the Meat Inspection Act, Food and Drug Act, and the Amendment for the direct election of Senators may be accredited to the energies of the writers of "exposure."
Chapter III
Lincoln Steffens

Lincoln Steffens was undoubtedly the foremost of the so-called muck-rakers. Even in his early youth he had had the desire to seek after the real truth concerning the many subjects which interested him. In the play times of his childhood Steffens used to imagine himself as the character or hero whom he was worshipping at the moment. For instance, at one period he lived the life of Napoleon. Later in his life he applied this same technique and put himself into the place of those he interviewed. It is said that he won the confidence of those people with whom he came in contact by feeling himself no better than the most iniquitous of them and by telling them so.

Lincoln Steffens, born in San Francisco in 1866, spent his boyhood on a ranch near Sacramento where he learned to be a good horseman and where he indulged his taste for drawing. After he was expelled from a military school for drunkenness, he was tutored privately for the University of California by an Oxford man who really initiated Steffens into intellectual life. When he got to the college, Steffens would only study those subjects which interested him, in these reading many extra books, but neglecting those he did not like or in which he had no particular interest. He scorned studying and "grinding" merely for the sake of a degree. For this reason Steffens got himself a really thorough education in a limited field. After he had
received his Ph. D. from the University of California, he studied Philosophy abroad at Berlin, Heidelberg, Leipzig and the Sorbonne. When he landed in America after three years of foreign study, he had a wife, but no job nor any visible means of supporting her. It was then, 1892, that he became police reporter on the New York Evening Post. Later he was city editor of this paper. At this time, having met Theodore Roosevelt and Jacob Riis, he became interested in social reform. Between 1898 and 1902 he was city editor of the New York Commercial Advertiser and then managing editor of McClure's Magazine for four years. Until 1911 he was the associate editor first of the American Magazine and then of Everybody's.

Steffens began his career as a muck-raker while working as desk editor for S. S. McClure. McClure thought he would become better qualified for his position if he became familiar with how magazine staff-writers did their work. Thus he was given simply a roving commission. Ida Tarbell, then working on her Standard Oil articles suggested an article on "certain admirable aspects" of the city government of Cleveland, but Steffens had heard in Kansas City, Missouri of the remarkable work Joseph W. Folk was doing in St. Louis. Consequently he hurried to that city and did an article which he called "Tweed Days in St. Louis" on the revelations brought out by Folk's trials of grafters. McClure then sent him back for another article to cover fully the subject, calling the second article the "Shame of Minneapolis."
It was McClure's policy to pay the writers for their study rather than for the amount of copy they turned out. He felt that thus being relieved of all financial worry the writer would be able to master his subject to such a degree that he could write on it if not with the authority of a specialist at least with enough accuracy to inform the public and at the same time meet with corroboration by experts. S. S. McClure, himself, speaks of the beginning of the literature of exposure as follows: "the origin of what was later called the 'muck-raking' movement was accidental. It came from no formulated plan to attack existing institutions, but was the result of merely taking up in the magazine some of the problems that were beginning to interest the people a little before the newspapers and other magazines took them up."

The number of his magazine articles on city government grew as time passed and he continued his interest in this field. Finally in 1904 a collection of these articles known as the Shame of the Cities was published by McClure, Philipps Company. The purpose of this series of articles is stated in the introduction by Steffens as follows: "to sound for the civic pride of an apparently shameless citizenship." In the articles he brought out that the corruptness in American politics can be blamed only on the people for the commercial politicians in power offer good or bad government as is desired by the people. As a result of these articles Steffens came to the conclusion that American citizens have an inner pride and self-respect and
can "stand" the truth. These virtues, he felt, can become the power of the government. Among prominent men in politics and in finance in such cities as St. Louis, Minneapolis, Pittsburg, Philadelphia, Chicago and New York, Steffens seems to have found slaves to direct questions which were answered to the limits of indiscretion.

He had entered into his inquiry with the idea of simply showing up the professional politician believing that it was this type of person who deceived, betrayed, and preyed upon the people; but he come out with the opinion that the politician was merely a tool in the hands of businessmen. Steffens showed in these articles that it was the businessman who corrupted the politician, used him as a tool and taught him to receive dishonest dollars and to betray his trust rather than the politician who preyed on the businessman. He has also pointed out in these articles that the people will stand for and even welcome the horrible truth.

Steffens wrote this series, first published in *McClure's Magazine* in a strictly reportorial style, straightforward and direct. The book is a passionless, unprejudiced, clear statement of facts. Although he started a fiery outburst of accusations and retaliations, Steffens at the time was merely reporting an existing situation. It was criticized vehemently by John White Chadwick in *Current Literature* as follows: "it is designedly a stench in our nostrils, a foul heap .......... the sickening details of the abuses, failures and crimes of
municipal government and misgovernment in six great American cities." This is an example of how the articles affected some apparently intelligent people.

John Chamberlain, in an article in the *Saturday Review of Literature* in 1934, takes exception to Steffens' idea of democracy and the political bosses. Chamberlain said that Steffens had pictured the political boss as the 'representative of privilege,' one whose job was to betray the common people into the hands of the 'interests.' Steffens wanted his bosses to be straight-out class representatives, but he also wanted democracy. Chamberlain asks how there could be a political democracy if the different groups or classes had no mechanism through which to register their pressure. If a group has demands to make which conflict with other groups' demands, there are only two courses of action open to them as Chamberlain saw it: either the group goes to open war against the opposing group or it calls in a broker, a professional compromiser to fix things upon a "bird-in-hand basis." Mr. Chamberlain further accused Steffens of wanting a secure world in which men and women were at social ease, outspoken and free, but where they were denied the right to employ a political broker when their desires conflicted with the desires of others.

Steffens, being a thorough-going, intelligent interrogator, soon found that the confusion of political corruption

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1. author of *Farewell to Reform*
and bribery in the cities invariably led to bosses of the state and even on into Congress. Therefore he began a series of articles for McClure's which were published in book form and entitled *Struggle For Self-Government*. Mr. Steffens ironically dedicated it to the Czar of Russia who was at the time reorganizing his empire after the Revolution of 1905. He told the Czar to go ahead and grant his people everything they wanted. The Czar needn't worry for the people would, then, be sure to give their privileges away to certain individuals.

In these articles Steffens compared the relative state of democracy in various sections of the country. His investigations covered corruption in Missouri, Illinois, Wisconsin, Rhode Island, New Jersey and Ohio. In the first article on Missouri he described the "System." Here as elsewhere he found "corruption installed as the motive, the purpose, the spirit of state government." He found that dishonest legislators were members of either party in the pay of big business. He brought out the relation between the cities and the states when he described how Charles Yerkes got a fifty-year franchise for his street railway in Chicago by getting state legislation. Steffens had gone to Wisconsin with the impression that Robert LaFollette, then governor of the state, was a crook, but he found from LaFollette's enemies that the governor was really trying to establish a fair and representative government in that state. This seems to be a good example of Steffens' ability to get the truth from anyone. In Rhode
Island, "A State For Sale," he found that the farmers were as corruptible as any other class of people. They sold or maybe mortgaged their votes to bosses who sold them to the businessmen who returned a poor and corrupt government. In New Jersey, Steffens found business and political interests capitalizing on that state's strategic position between Philadelphia and New York.

Although Steffens spent most of his time bringing to light graft and corruption in government, he did attempt to prove that there was hope for democracy. In his Upbuilders, published 1909, the stories of certain honest, loyal and courageous reformers were told. He showed how such men as Mark Fagan, Everett Colby, Rudolph Spreckels and W. S. U'Ren went direct to the voters in their stores, factories and homes.

This early muck-raker used the Socratic method of dialogues in some of his articles and in his political stories published in McClure's in 1914, 1915 and 1916. These stories, "The Dying Boss," "The Reluctant Briber" and "The Boss Who Was Bossed" tried to deal with human beings in the act of making moral decisions that affected their conduct with other people. John Chamberlain said that Steffens' stories were pitched at the right angle and were working in the right direction but because he wasn't a novelist he couldn't carry out his plots in subsequent activity.

The Socratic method is also seen in Steffens' Autobiography and according to one review includes the Socratic temper
and humor. This autobiography gives an excellent primary source of all the details of his muck-raking career and is rich in inside stories of trials, revolutions, scandals, movements, war and peace. It is a textbook on journalism, a treasure-house for the historian of that wave of social idealism that shook America from 1900-1917 and a case-book for the psychologist of political types. It may often arouse dissent, but is never dull. It is written with graphic force and is often tense or humorous. Steffens applied all the ethics and philosophy he had studied to the problem of political corruption. As a result he found that the original cause of it all was not Adam, not Eve, the woman, nor the serpent, the Devil, but the apple that is the greed for money. As a muck-raker he doesn't pretend to offer a cure-all for the evils he describes but does offer the hope that such advances that have been made in the United States would carry the country on to a more perfect democracy.

As a member of the "Muck-rake Pack" Steffens is set far above the others. He is one of the minority who wrote only the truth as he saw it and who took time to study the situation and learn the details. His work I believe may be classed as real history written from a contemporary point of view. He was a great impersonal reporter of the social and political upheavals of his age.
David Graham Phillips, novelist and journalist, was born in Madison, Indiana in 1867. After receiving his Bachelor of Arts degree in 1887 from Princeton, to which he had in his sophomore year transferred from Asbury College, he accepted as his first assignment a murder report for the Cincinnati Times-Star. He then spent three years on the Commercial Gazette where Murat Halstead, the editor, called him a born reporter. In 1890 he was first put on the staff of the New York Tribune and then on the New York Sun covering human interest stories at the Jefferson market Police Court. In 1893 when he joined the staff of the World he was sent to London as a special correspondent by Joseph Pulitzer who later also promoted him to the editorial staff. Pulitzer, however, became grieved and displeased because he thought Phillips had him in mind when he wrote the Great God Success, a newspaper novel published under the name of John Graham. A period of free-lancing followed in 1902 when Phillips wrote for various magazines such as Saturday Evening Post, McClure's Magazine, Munsey's, Everybody's, Success and Harper's Weekly. In addition to his magazine articles, Phillips wrote twenty-three novels and a one-act play. His life and career ended abruptly when he was shot by Fitzhugh C. Goldsborough who resented Phillips because he thought the author had slurred his family in some of his novels.
Mr. Phillips had written many novels before 1906 but it was his series of muck-raking articles for *Cosmopolitan* that really made him famous. The idea for the series was originated by William Randolph Hearst who wanted his magazine, the *Cosmopolitan*, to initiate a number of exposures that would be as he said "the most vascular and virile." Hearst had the Senate in mind as the object of the exposures since this body, next to the Supreme Court, was the most important cog in the machinery of "the politics of acquisition and enjoyment." Phillips was actually not the best man for the job. It should have been Steffens who would have turned out more reliable material, but Phillips had the best Hearstian epithets which were more desired than plain, hard facts.

Phillips at first refused entirely to undertake the job, but upon a second request he relented in so far as to put an abnormally high price on his services. In the end he agreed to write the article if someone else gathered the facts. The fact-gathering was done by Gustavus Myers, a trained researcher. Mr. Phillips did become sincerely interested in his work after he had started it. He found himself speaking as a citizen outraged by the abuse of legislative and corporate power.

This series turned out to be the storm-center of the bitterest discussion and recrimination that had ever fallen to the lot of any American writer. It was to this series that President Roosevelt was referring when he gave the name of "muck-raker" to the entire group. Phillips, himself was hurt
and embittered by the abuse to such an extent that he refused to write any more articles.

The initial attack was made on Chauncey M. Depew who, Phillips said, was secure from the finger of scorn only in the Senate Chamber after the visitors had left and he was alone with his colleagues. Phillips cited the fact that the Senator from New York was a member of seventy directories which brought him more than $50,000 a year in attendance fees alone. He called this "part of his payment for serving his master, the plutocracy." The second attack was that on Senator Nelson W. Aldrich of Rhode Island who had been singled out because of his connection with the Rockefellers and because of his tariff legislation. Aldrich, a Republican, was called the right arm of the "interests" and Senator Gorman of Maryland, a Democrat, was called the left arm. He called this interest in business affairs which the Republicans and Democrats alike displayed the Senate Merger admitting that not all the Senators belonged, but accusing the majority of them of belonging. He declared that the "roaring eloquence" and the "sham battles" of the body were intended only to "befog and blind" the people.

In the later articles he named and characterized some of the principal members of the merger. Spooner of Wisconsin was described as the "chief spokesman of the organization" and Bailey of Texas as "chief spokesman of the democratic branch." The record of Joseph Benson Foraker of Ohio, he declared, showed "no act of friendliness or even neutrality toward the
people in the struggle with 'the interests.'" Henry Cabot Lodge was characterized as "the familiar coarse type of machine politician disguised by the robe of the 'Gentleman Scholar.'" Phillips reviewed the records of these men and of Allison of Iowa, Cullom of Illinois, Stone of Missouri, Senators Hale and Frye of Maine and Vice-President Charles W. Fairbanks of Indiana. He called attention to questionable transactions and attempted to show how these men had gone about advancing the industrial and financial interests of the wealthy classes of the country.

Cosmopolitan declared that this series was stirring the country as it had never been stirred before. Some students of the era state that by these articles Phillips purified the Senate while others have pointed out that the bitterness of his attacks helped to discredit the whole muck-raking movement. Still others say the only effect of them was to undermine the respect for the government and thereby encourage lawlessness. It is a fact, however, that in 1913 an amendment providing for the direct election of senators was adopted. It may be assumed, then, that the exposures of six or seven years earlier did something to prepare the public sentiment for the change.

"The Treason of the Senate" series was distinctive in the field of muck-raking. Most of the other much-rake articles were necessarily limited to specific indictments and to specific individuals. The authors were usually anxious to show that their indictment went so far and no further. Phillips,
however, went the entire way. He made clear from the start that he was against corruption, in every shape or form as it sprang from a system. He applied his creative talents to the Senators themselves and painted them as personalities before he showed them as inevitable resultants of a "process" of governmental decay. He forced on the reader the realization that the mere removal of present Senators would not in itself accomplish permanent reform. It was certain that Phillips advocated a thorough, unequivocal change. There was eloquence and human description in "The Treason of the Senate" besides "austere" documentation.

The popularity of the series increased rather than diminished for each issue aroused further storms of discussion. Suddenly in November of 1906 the series ended. It did not receive a reprint in book form like other muckraking exposes because it was too vile and incriminating a work. By all his work, Phillips had set himself apart as incorrigible and uncompromising. After "The Treason of the Senate" had been published literary criticism revenged itself on him by means of a studied and deliverate contempt for his novels. "The Treason of the Senate" represented the high point of muckraking in its exposure phase. Phillips had voiced all the indignation felt by citizens who had been confronted by the revelations of corruption in every avenue of public and private life. With the conclusion of these particular articles "the citizens had been made acquainted with their country. They knew now that events
a thousand miles away affected them directly and they reacted to news with a maturity that had been wholly lacking a few short years before."1 This series marked the turning point in muckraking. The focus now shifted from exposure to reform although exposure remained the essence of muckraking. The reforms aimed at were so broad, so interrelated, that they predicted a full change in American life and thought.

1. Regier, C. C., The Era of Muckrakers
Chapter V

Finley Peter Dunne

By 1902 Martin Dooley, the people's philosopher of Archey road and Hennessy, his faithful listener, were firmly established "In the Hearts of His Countrymen." Finley Peter Dunne, the author of the Dooley essays, was not a muck-raker in the ordinary sense of the word. In fact, Mr. Dunne had gone through the intellectual development of many of the agents of exposure six or seven years earlier. None of them, even the most philosophical, Steffens, would ever go much further in his analysis of the causes of political corruption than Dunne had in his articles for the Chicago Post in 1897. His relation to the muckraking group was through the fact that the Dooley articles had helped to create a reading public thus preparing a way for the realistic type of muck-rake writing which was to follow. The later type of writing turned out to be less genial and tolerant than Mr. Dooley's remarks and more directly pointed toward specific evils and policies.

Mr. Dunne even criticized the muck-rakers. One thing he didn't like about them was the silly assumption that some of them had that political officials were naturally corrupt, and that what was needed was more businessmen and business methods in politics. He was also disturbed by the constant assumption of many of the writers that these evil conditions were characteristic only of democratic countries like the
United States. Mr. Dooley thus makes this point: "...... I've got to tell ye that this counthry, while wan iv th' worst in th' wurruld, is about as good as th' next if it ain't a shade betther. But we're wan iv th' greatest people in th' wurruld to clean house, an' th' way we like best to clean th' house is to burn it down." He also continues by saying "but I want to say to thim neighbors iv ours, who're peekin' in an' making re­marks about th' amount iv rubbish, that over in our part iv th' wurruld we don't sweep things undher th' sofa."

Finley Peter Dunne, born in 1867 in Chicago, had the usual amount of public school education. In 1884 he became a reporter for the Chicago Herald and for the next eight years served successively as a reporter, editorial writer, and city editor of five other Chicago papers. In 1896 he became the editor of the Evening Journal. Four years later he was made editor of the New York Morning Telegraph for William C. Whit­ney. Along with Ray Stannard Baker, Ida Tarbell, Lincoln Steffens, John S. Phillips and William Allen White, Dunne took over the American Magazine. Here he conceived his place among this galaxy of muckraking stars as somewhat of a brake on the greater enthusiasm and energy of his colleagues for reform.

To trace the origin of Mr. Dooley, one must go back to the Chicago Evening Post days of 1892. Here Dunne wrote daily editorials which were witty, ironic and satirical. These editorials were a daily sensation because of the freedom of ex­pression allowed due to the Post's official independence in
politics. The Post's editorial page was different from others to begin with. It was short and pithy, not abbreviated sentences but two or three brief paragraphs. It was also a highly sophisticated editorial page with nearly one-half of it satirical or humorous. Dunne's editorials were mocking in their satire; they were joking, waggish in tone, lively and intelligent and read with interest and pleasure.

None of his writing was mean, personal or petty. It was that of an intelligent man of the world mocking pretense and sham. It was not flippant although Willis Abbot thought it too flippant to be classed as a serious political force. The subjects were serious; it was the expression that was comical. When deeply moved, Dunne wrote editorials that lacked his usual light touch, but still reflected his enthusiasm for plain speaking. Since he had this new editorial freedom, the tendency for Dunne to attempt Irish dialect was strong. The opportunity was put in his hand by the managing editor, Cornelius McAuliff who, planning to increase the circulation with a new Sunday edition of sixteen pages, asked Dunne to write weekly humorous pieces in addition to his daily editorials.

The first humorous article was a dialect piece, called "Frank's Visit to Grover" pretending to record what an Irishman had said in a saloon about Frank Lawler's visit to President Cleveland to see about the Chicago Post Office appointment. Mr. Elmer Ellis, Dunne's biographer in Mr. Dooley's America, believes that by all right this piece was the beginning of the
Dooley articles. It contained some good mimicry, some high-grade satire and also a touch of the high humor that was later one of the finest characteristics of Dooley pieces. Dunne says that Dooley originated in a saloon near the Chicago Tribune office where a James McGarry was the keeper. Actually it was the second dialect article for the Sunday Post in which a comment of McGarry's was used.

Also connected with the saloon was a John McKenna, a small-time Irish politician who liked to bait McGarry and who was therefore an object of the saloon-keeper's anger and contempt. McKenna didn't mind the use of his name and therefore became the one active character unquestionably drawn from life and traveling under his own name. The pieces, read with interest all over Chicago, came to be known as the McNeery (name used for McGarry) articles.

Part of the humorous appeal was in the brogue and idiom and part of it in the use made of well-known local characters' names. The subjects in these essays were varied although at first they were mostly opinions on politics which were hard to put into the mouth of a recognized character. When the Sunday edition of the Post had to be discontinued, Dunne's humorous articles were put into the Saturday paper thus proving the real popularity of them. McGarry's tolerance, however, had limits and his personal dignity became affronted as more and more people called him McNeery and as he thought more and more people were laughing at him. The public men attacked openly by
name couldn't admit that they objected to such good-humored dialect from the comic Irishman even when it cut a little.

Unwilling to hurt his friend, McGarry, Dunne decided to change the name of his character and the locality around which he had centered his scenes. Therefore on October 7, 1893 Martin Dooley was born - a bachelor, a saloon-keeper and a Roscommon Irishman. There have been many suggestions as to who Dooley resembled in character, but actually he was a compound of the qualities of many real men, not the least of whom was Peter Dunne. At this time the Dooley articles were just other editorials in which Dunne could often express ideas and urge points of view not easy or even possible to put into regular editorials. Some of the pieces contained human misery and sentimentality but the great majority of them contained humor, pure, simple and great.

They were mostly humorous stories, anecdotes, or tall tales but in some of the more serious ones, Dunne liked to attack local evils which aroused his indignation because these were much freer and more effective than the regular editorials. Between 1892 and 1900 there was no single force for improvement more effective than the Dooley essays. In his regular editorials Dunne spoke directly against the corrupt Common Council in Chicago and the men who controlled it, but his Dooley pieces were more effective against the Council. Less frequently he spoke against the Illinois State Legislature because this body was less regularly corrupt. He reserved his Wittiest scorn for
the source of corruption in both the Council and the Legislature, Charles T. Yerkes, whom he attacked with stiletto-like side remarks. He extended his bombardment to all those elements of respectability in the city who profited from the system.

The Chicago news-reading public of the 90's was used to solemn editorial denunciations of city crooks and boodlers, but it had through the years developed a partial immunity to them. After 1893 Chicago had in Dooley's utterances a different type of attack, widely read and then memorized by amateur elocutionists who recited Irish brogue. Dunne also cast a skeptical eye on most reform movements and presented them as they were, another method of political promotion.

The Dooley articles often expressed profound fatalism, saved from becoming a defeatist cynicism only by an intensely emotional sympathy for the under-dog and a love of humanitarian values. Mr. Elmer Ellis feels that some of the implied ideas in these essays were close to philosophical anarchism but he goes on to point out that Dunne made hilarious fun of the solemn anarchists of Chicago and satirized as well the socialists with dull oratory and "fuzzy" ideas of political strategy.

After 1894, Mr. Dooley was a treasured institution of Chicago but the author of the articles was known only to news- men. Part of the reason for this condition was that Dunne, himself, didn't want to be known as a humorist. He considered himself a serious writer, not a wit, in spite of the frequent
resort to humor in his editorials. Concerning Dunne's personality, Hamlin Garland says, "He had the sober temperament of the Celt. I felt in him a sadness of outlook, a fatalistic philosophy which was curiously at variance with his writing." Mr. Ellis says that he was never a clown but was more sad and serious thus giving a greater background of solemnity for the flashing wit produced at a moment's notice. His was the type of humor which found its expression in the witty characterization of institutions and individuals.

Mr. Dooley and his friend Hennessy became national figures when the Spanish War led to a series of essays which swept the country like a prairie fire. The humor and philosophy of Dooley suited the public temper of the day. The excess of emotionalism, examples of bombast and bluff, wartime oratory and journalism and the striking cases of incompetence in Washington all lent agility to Dunne's imagination. The first collection of Dooley's comments, "Mr. Dooley in Peace and in War," was published in November, 1899. Mr. Dooley had certainly become famous. He was even read and enjoyed by the English people whose only criticism of him seemed to be that he wasn't cordial enough to his government. It was well known that Secretary Gage read Dooley essays at the end of every Tuesday session of the Cabinet.

Henry Seidel Canby said of the Dooley essays, "marvelous little satires, each perfectly constructed, with a twist in the end as incomparable as the last line of a sonnet." In 1938
Franklin P. Adams also speaks of the construction of these essays by saying: "He revered the art of saying things perfectly; he hated slovenliness of thought and expression, ....... he had such lofty ideas of writing that he almost never was satisfied with his work." Franklin P. Adams in his article in New Republic of May 4, 1938 goes on to say that Mr. Dunne gave the impression of being informed, that he was wise, vested with authority, superior, cynical and controversial. His careful and precious use of words and his crystal clear witticisms, models of brevity were characteristics of his essays. Adams felt that few writers wrote more maliciously and bitterly than Peter Dunne and Ring Lardner but the expression of that social consciousness as articulated in Dooley essays would never have been printed unless written in dialect.

The advertisers, politicians, and social leaders were made to think it was all in fun but Dunne really resented injustice, loathed sham, and hated the selfish stupidity that went with them. Anger and warm sympathy for the under-privileged underlay almost all Dooley sketches. Although most of them are dated and out-worn, they can bring back countless memories of whole episodes and trends of political, social and literary history.
Chapter VI
The Politician in Fiction

In 1900, 1901 and 1902 the politician began to make his appearance in popular fiction. The respectful attention of the critical press and the fact that the stories were read by a rather large number of people showed that there was more than the interest of curiosity in the political story. The novelists were awakening to the possibility of the American politician as a figure for fiction and the people were ready to give him a hearing as a romantic character regardless of the newspapers' stories about him.

There were certain reasons why politics should have a popular appeal. In the first place, the number of persons drawing a part or the whole of a living from occupations directly or indirectly dependent on politics or from the opportunities resulting from political influences was between one-half and three-quarters of a million. Secondly, politics in some of its many manifestations touched society at almost every point. Third, no single occupation reflected so definitely in its personnel and in its performances the national temperament and the changing attitude of the public mind toward larger questions of the times. Fourth, no other occupation was responsible for the distribution of as large amounts of money. Fifth, and most important from the point of view of the novelist, the American politician led a life full of excitement and...
sharp contrasts standing out boldly in episodes that were pregnant with suggestion and in situations that were dramatic in the extreme.

In the past sixty years there had been not more than two dozen novels concerned with American politics and of these not more than half a dozen dealt with the politician, meaning all those who occupied public offices, controlled them or created them. Francis Churchill Williams gave an explanation for this neglect. He said that the average professional politician conveyed the impression of "unloveliness." They never paraded qualities that invited admiration. It was, therefore, easy, thought Mr. Williams, for the novelist to believe that all professional politicians lived wholly for the game and the gain. They thought the politician's only qualities to be those of a briber, bully, or thief. To this conception, the role of home life, of husband, or of father was incongruous. Thus when the era of "muckraking" began, the novelists lost their distaste for the unlovely and pictured the politicians realistically. The novels produced in the early 20th century were mostly poor in quality and feeble in underlying thought, but during the Rooseveltian decade they were important to the understanding of the tone and color of the years of the muck-rakers.

The political novel of this period was a branch of the "problem" novel. They were also some of the early novels of the

1. author of J. Devlin, Boss
realistic and naturalistic school of writers who have been advancing and increasing in number since the beginning of the century. The leading writers of political novels, Whitlock, Phillips, Churchill, and Tarkington, later wrote some problem novels which weren't political. But while the muck-rake era was at its peak, they ran with the pack.

The political novel had a relatively honorable ancestry in the preceding century. Disraeli is commonly given credit for inventing the species. George Eliot's *Felix Holt* was political in a sense. Trollope and George Meredith experimented in the field while in America Henry Adams brought out *Democracy* and Samuel Clemens and Charles Dudley Warner, *The Gilded Age*. Hamlin Garland put the Populist revolt into *A Spoil of Office* with dubious success.

The political novel of the early 20th century flourished for about four years until Taft brought a more conservative tone to national politics. They educated people who hadn't the inclination or ability to follow the more precise exposures of the magazine writers in the sinister implications of boss-rule, of the connection between Big Business and the "slush fund," and of the general necessity of "turning the rascals out" and electing "good" men to office.

In addition to the four main political novelists already mentioned there are certain writers who produced only one of two rather good political novels. For instance, Gertrude Atherton's *Senator North* shows uncommon understanding of the subject
and a good grasp of character. In it are many interesting pictures of life among Congressmen within and without the legislature. It presents a portrait of a United States Senator which may almost be identified with its original. The potency of this character is chiefly due to the skill with which the writer has blended the weaknesses of the man with the strength of the intellect. Official life and society suffer but the novel is piteously true.

*Through One Administration* by Mrs. Burnett is an arraignment of the public and social conditions in Washington. The evils arising from the dispersal of official patronage were lined with a firm hand. *An American Politician* by Marion Crawford is an account of Boston society and tolerably accurate political scenes. *The Kentuckians* by Fox, an illumination of contrasting types is similar to Booth Tarkington's *Gentleman from Indiana*.

Walter Barr's *Shacklett*, a story of the Middle West has some very realistic political pictures which are among the best things in the book. In it the author has tried to give a fair idea of the politician as a man and has introduced the reader to a shrewd observer of men and conditions. He has tried to bring in other things beside the trickery by which the politician is popularly known. It was his intention to show that political ambitions even in the most successful leaders don't always dominate to the exclusion of unselfish purposes.

*Autocrats* by Lusk is the story of municipal corruption
and the power of money in politics at large. It shows careful study of certain phases, but is less satisfactory than Shacklett.

Robert Barr's *Victors* is the story of a politician who is transplanted to New York City from the country. There he takes root and flourishes vigorously under influences unmistakably suggested by the phrase from which the book takes its title, "To the victors belong the spoils." The story is interesting with some revelatory scenes of municipal political methods. The character study is not very distinctive, however.

Paul Leicester Ford's *The Honorable Peter Stirling* was the first novel to show at all adequately the municipal politician as a man and the first to give that figure the lonely setting of its unprofessional environment. This was done without an excuse for deficiencies of scene and largely without prejudice. The conditions against which Peter fought and which were described so vividly will remain as long as a democratic government exists. Peter, himself, with certain concessions to the ideal will continue to stand for the honest and earnest political reformer who is something more than a theorist and who is above all human. Peter Stirling worked with the poor and corrupt of New York City during one of its corrupt periods. A character as intelligent and refined as Peter could probably never be found under similar circumstances in the "machine" wards of our big cities. But for this and for many other discrepancies noted in sentimental chapters of Peter's life, the
readers will forgive the author because of the general quality of interest infused into the book.

Francis Churchill Williams has in *J. Devlin, Boss* done the obvious thing by telling the story of a boss so common to American life, but with considerable success. He has with apparent knowledge set forth the life and adventures, the successes and sorrows, the good deeds and the personality of J. Devlin, a boss. Although he was a born politician, J. Devlin had politics thrust upon him. He started as a newsboy on the streets, then was an office boy in one of the news offices where he soon realized the value of money as a source of power and became, therefore, a sort of banker for the other office boys. A city politician admired Jimmy Devlin's nerve and, therefore, took him in as a sort of handy man. By keeping his head and eyes open, Jimmy Devlin reached a position where he was able to strike out for himself. He didn't want to have a boss; he wanted to be one. He finally did become the power in the city, the dispenser of patronage. He became a United States Senator for one term and reached the height of his greatness when he had a hand in the work of the celebrated convention which nominated Garfield after the convention had been incited to madness by a speech in which Conkling placed General Grant in the nomination. Jimmy Devlin was not quite a happy man in spite of his success for the girl, whom he had admired in his early struggling days, married another man who turned out to be a bad lot. The Boss did favors for her husband and son.
The deterioration of the father, and the development of his child into a good man, through the efforts of his patron, furnish the necessary opportunity to the author to introduce a certain skillful contrast in character and environment. In spite of willingness to do kindness to a friend or forget the injury of an enemy, Jimmy Devlin never forgot J. Devlin. He assimilated a considerable fortune and kept adding to it. In his case it was easy enough to get the facts, but it was hard to get the legal evidence. There is no doubt that Jimmy from many points of view was a good man but many queer things happened in his office and many were the cases which Jimmy settled "in Back." Whatever may be said of "practical politics" it is well to remember that there are many true men in it. This is the political philosophy of Francis Churchill Williams.
Chapter VII

Phillips as a Novelist

When we analyze the career of David Graham Phillips, we find that he was first and foremost a reporter. He saw current events with a keen and appraising eye and, therefore, made his novels timely, accurate and discerning. Three years of service on the *New York Sun* contributed to his equipment as a writer for here he ran the gamut of human experiences amid fires, murders, suicides and political conventions all of which he saw and remembered. His knowledge of life was almost uncanny.

Isaac Marcosson, Phillips' honey-tongued biographer, said that he was wise and cynical but tempered with tolerance and good feeling; that he was simple and sincere. He could acquire and appraise facts but he hated to probe for them. Marcosson felt that "Phillips' judgment about politics was invariable sound. He had an accurate intuition about public men and public affairs." David Graham Phillips was, on the other hand, a novelist and Marcosson felt that it would be Phillips, the novelist, who would be best and longest remembered.

Mr. Phillips did have a long procession of novels which, although now seemingly forgotten, were a reflection of the foibles, the weaknesses, the vanities, and also much of the strength of his country and its people. Timeliness was the

1. Marcosson, Isaac, *David Graham Phillips and His Times*
first and foremost motive of his art. Phillips never meant to be superficial nor did he ever cease to be a reporter. His productivity caused him to be called a "two-books-a-year man." He invariably had two manuscripts going at one time for he had rigid working hours never waiting for an inspiration.

His first impression of a novel was set down in the form of a play. He followed closely the technique of a playwright by describing all scenes, drawing diagrams of rooms and frequently incorporating into the novel a considerable part of the dialogue. Hence the directness and forcefulness of conversations, the suspense, and the dramatic climaxes are explained. The influence of his journalistic training is seen in his titles which were inspirations, having the vividness of graphic newspaper headlines in that they visualize an episode. His instinct was to write purpose novels. His interest in social and economic problems in some respects was keener than his interest in people but no story ever was shaped in his mind in the form of an abstract principle or an ethical doctrine. He always started with an episode or a character.

Mr. Phillips was devoted to depicting and studying big ethical or social problems of his own country and generation. He did this in a broad, bold, comprehensive way with a certain epic sweep and magnitude. No one was more deeply earnest in this purpose, nor did any strive more patiently to do the work in the best, most forceful, most craftsman-like manner than Mr. Phillips.
However the results fell somewhat behind the intentions. Mr. Phillips was hampered by knowing too much about his people, their habits of life and their methods of thought. As Phillips himself said, the characters were always taking matters into their own hands and insisting upon his setting down on paper all sorts of happenings quite extraneous to the story. Thus his greatest difficulty lay in confining himself to such details as were strictly relevant to his central purpose. He learned to do, says Frederic Cooper,2 "a broad, Zolaesque sweep of phrase and action, the sense of jostling crowds and ceaseless activity, the endless panorama of city streets, the whole trick of treating humanity in ranks and battalions as though the crowd was a natural unit of measurement." Phillips, himself, admitted that his whole conception of what a novel should be was French rather than Anglo-Saxon.

He was not merely a clear-eyed, impartial observer of life but was always a partisan and a reformer. His interest in the problems that he was seeking to set forth was so keen that he found it impossible to keep himself or his ideas out of his novels. There is a slight running comment going all through the narrative portions of the stories that keeps the reader reminded of both his personal outlook on life and of the annoying fact that he is trying to think for them. This uncontrolled tendency to inject personal equation into the novels now and

2. Cooper, Frederic, Some American Story Tellers
then sets the reader tingling with sudden antagonism in the midst of some of the strongest scenes. It is always worth while to set forth as strongly as possible in a story certain existing social conditions which the author in his heart condemns but nothing is gained by insisting that the reader must condemn them also. This interference on the part of the author produced certain modifications in the construction of his plots. It led him to picture not what the average people were doing under existing conditions, but what somewhat unusual people would in his opinion have done under conditions just the reverse of those that exist.

Phillips recorded precise case-histories of the stock-juggling and of political fixing, of monopolization and of industrial politics. He possessed the rare power to picture the egoistic life and the motives behind unjust acts and sordid crimes of commercial life or at least so B. O. Flower, one of his contemporaries, thought. His style was pleasing, simple, direct, transparent and convincing. To some of his readers his novels were apparently interesting for they found a large market. Some of his readers evidently either liked to have their thinking done for them or were wholly sympathetic with Phillips' prejudices. B. O. Flower extravagantly praises this author by saying that "at times he suggests the power of the true genius who is able to create colossal typical characters." 3

Regardless of all this Phillips was a leading muck-raker even in his novels, but he was a reporter by instinct. He was one of the shining examples of a reporter who turned to fiction.

The fact that reform was in the air was enough to make him a muck-raker. Granville Hicks has remarked about Phillips' acute sensitivity to whatever happened to be the journalism of the moment. The Master Rogue which came in 1903 was the author's earliest foray in fictional muck-raking but The Plum Tree, 1905 was the first one of a political theme. Phillips was like Churchill in his belief in the "honest" men but Phillips attempted a more grandiose theme than the corruption of a single New England state.

The Plum Tree is the story of a young country lawyer who has been driven by poverty to accept an assemblyman's salary from the hands of a "boss." When his conscience forces him to vote against a bad bill, he is thrown out of office. He then becomes a reform county prosecutor but fails in the re-election and accepts instead the position as lawyer for the power company which he had been actively fighting. He makes a rich but loveless marriage, becomes a United States Senator but in the end, looking back on the seething furnace of corruption through which he has passed, he finds his only comfort in the love of a girl whom he had renounced in his days of poverty.

In telling the story of Harvey Saylor, a president-maker and the brains and power of the majority party, who shakes the political plum tree, it is as if Phillips wished to expose the
entire system at one swoop. Phillips, for all his reportorial training and ability, is less circumstantial than Churchill. He has none of Churchill's detail, which came straight from an immersion in political campaigning and party maneuvering in a legislature. In *The Plum Tree* there is a quality of strenuousness, a feeling of forever straining to scent out some new abuse to flay in the public prints.

John Chamberlain feels that Phillips was a catch-as-catch-can journalist, riding a movement until it subsided, then hastening to find another bandwagon. Both the praise and blame of him were as hectic as the themes of his books. Frank Harris, editor of the *American Pearson's Magazine*, considered him the best American novelist, thinking his understanding of women particularly good. Most other critics thought his understanding of characters, especially women, was particularly bad.

*The Plum Tree* illustrates as nothing else could the vagueness of Phillips' theories of government. Granville Hicks points out that the attitude of Senator Saylor, who tells the story, shifts with bewildering speed. Now he looks on delivery of a Mid-Western state into the hands of Big Business with contempt for his own part in the deal; now he regards his career as a sort of Nietzschean justification of himself. But Saylor is chronicling his ascendancy to power in his middle age when his point of view would long since have hardened. Saylor's father had been an old Republican, a man of ideals whose son went into politics for revenge, since the way to honest prefer-
ment as a public servant has been blocked by a corrupt politician. Young Saylor wanted power so that he might revenge himself by preening his feathers on the topmost bough of the plum tree, in full sight of the vultures whom he has tumbled off. To win his goal, he learned all the effective off-color practices in the book. Saylor, who is only a means to an end, is not shaped by the logic of biological development and mitigation of circumstances. He was rather taken as an arbitrary expostulating figure.

The causes of his "selling out" to corruption early in life which should have been the story were not exhibited in word or action. Phillips, through Saylor, the narrator, simply tells us a fact or two about the Senator Boss' youth. One feels that this character was selected in order that the novelist might have a good vantage point from which to view the springs of political corruption from the ward to the White House. Hicks says The Plum Tree omits "none of the steps in the creation of political power." In a broad sense this is true but it lacks the stray, revelatory detail that illuminates more than itself. The reader misses the humor of the "Wood-chuck" session in the New Hampshire State Legislature, the feature which John Chamberlain feels redeems Coniston "from the junk pile."

The Plum Tree is obviously the work of a reporter who "gets up" the facts from outside and who has "gotten up" the philosophy behind it for the occasion. All that Phillips offers as a cure is an "honest" politician but how this politician is
to keep his party honest, or how he is to maintain his ranks without the usual trick of dispensing patronage is not disclosed. Nor does the author explain how the "honest" politician is to finance his campaigns without giving at least a few implied promises in return for the sinews of war. Phillips has not become a cynic which is the only thing left when no answer can be given; rather he simply goes on hoping. Mary Moss says of it in the *Atlantic* for January, 1906, "Story, in a sense, there is none; style, in a literary sense, there is none; merely a serviceable prose, straightforward and energetic." A review in the *Arena*, a muckraking magazine, for June, 1905 says: "It is in our judgment far and away the most important novel of recent years because it unmasks present political conditions in a manner so graphic, so convincing, and so compelling that it cannot fail to arouse the thoughtful to the deadly peril which confronts our people."

Phillips' novel, *Social Secretary*, is another of his which deals less directly with politics. It is a delightful story of the daughter of an old Washington family who undertakes to carry a western senator's wife to the top of the social wave and who succeeds in her task. The story is told by the secretary in extracts from her diary. The various types of people found in the struggle for social and political supremacy at the national capital are well and amusingly drawn. The average opinion seems to be that this one was not up to the level of his previous novels.
Mr. Phillips has followed the popular demand in that he wrote on finance, insurance and monopolization to follow the trend of the era. He will remain better known for his "The Treason of the Senate" due to its historical value than for his novels.
Chapter VIII
Winston Churchill

Mr. Churchill made his reputation with his romances, but some say that he did his best work in purpose fiction. He knew New England politics first hand for, when he moved to Cornish, New Hampshire, he found the political situation there interesting and therefore took an active part in its politics. He was a representative for the town of Cornish in the New Hampshire State Legislature and was barely defeated for Governor of New Hampshire in 1908. Thus he both wrote and fought against political bosses and large corporations that meddled in politics for their financial betterment.

Roosevelt, the trust-buster, excited Churchill's ethical imagination. He had the theoretical preference for the little fellow, the small businessman and farmer who had become uneasy in the shadow of the trusts. He was always quick to identify his cause with morality in general. He based his political convictions on a few simple axioms such as these: the Republic was founded by wholly disinterested men with the common welfare at heart; the Constitution was the embodiment of disinterested political wisdom and was therefore as safe as Gibraltar if we could only get back to it; and the way back to it was to elect honest, disinterested men to public office. His whole formula was based on the wholly unrealistic supposition that the United States of 1904 was a nation of single individual interests held
in leash by individual consciences that somehow worked freely
in the sight of a just God.

Mr. John Chamberlain felt that this was a primitive
agrarian answer to a misunderstood and almost wholly corporate
situation. Mr. Churchill didn't ponder a situation before making up his mind. As the novelist and repository of the Progressive conscience, he didn't think the matter through to its economic base before planning his fictional campaign. What he did do, according to Mr. Chamberlain, was to stencil a pat agrarian answer in a situation in which each man was dependent on a complex of forces beyond individual control. Churchill was naive enough to suppose that most people, poor in worldly goods, would still have the "simple guts" to deny themselves the easiest path to a portion of the goods. He argued that plain people by the exercise of the vote could turn rascals out of office and elect honest men even though they might starve in the chaotic interlude before things were working once more. In his novels he was virtually proposing that those in power should vote themselves out of power.

Mr. Churchill, born in St. Louis, Missouri, in 1871, spent the first sixteen years of his life there. At the Annapolis Naval Academy he was among the first five or six in his class. He participated in various sports during his college career such as fencing, horseback riding, playing tennis and football and rowing for the crew. After his graduation he worked on the Army and Naval Journal for a while, but left this
position to join the staff of the *Cosmopolitan Magazine*. After publishing in 1904 *The Crossing*, a historical and romantic novel, Churchill found himself as a popular novelist thrown into a decade whose clamor was for muckraking. To answer this demand Churchill brought out *Coniston* in 1906 and *Mr. Crewe's Career* in 1908.

These two political novels are the best attacks on corrupt politics that we have. They are interesting from the standpoint of being a good anatomy of the boss and the corporation rule in America from Jacksonian days to 1910. The books are sweetened with miraculous changes of heart on the part of his somehow fundamentally Christian villains and this sense of miracle robs the novels of all internal consistency. Mr. Churchill's novels are born of an inexhaustible patience, a dogged determination to be true to his own stern exactions both in style and in substance. This is a self-evident fact for there is no escape from the prevailing sense of careful documentation, of plodding diligence and of endless repolishing. The novels present themselves to the public with such an air of solid dignity and conscious worth that they involuntarily call to mind the portly, middle-aged, prosperous gentlemen in immaculate frock coats, who typify the so-called Pillars of the Church. There is in his books a streak of "literary pharisaism," a certain air of seeming to thank God openly that these books aren't like others.

Plots are not Mr. Churchill's strong point. They give
the impression of wandering aimlessly along the highways and byways of life, most of the time with no clear structural reason for turning to the right rather than the left. There seems to be no preconceived goal toward which the various threads of story are converging. He is not, however, unaware of this rambling plot-structure. To the contrary, he likes to remind the readers that he pulls the wires that make his puppets dance. He even interrupted himself occasionally to regret, between parentheses, that the space limit of his book will not let him tell the readers more about some particular character whom he has just introduced, but assures them that they will meet the character again in a later volume.

Churchill's books are studies in human character but a second and equally important function of his books is to picture the life of a period, the net results of a national or social development. All his critics agree that he has succeeded admirably in handling big backgrounds. His books have been defined as comprehensive panoramas of American history, each standing as a vivid summing up of some national or local crisis. He uses, with conscious purpose, the double theme of first, a big, basic idea underlying some national or ethical crisis; and second, a specific human story, standing out vividly in central focus with the larger, wider theme serving as the background. One important element in his novels is the sense of the unexpected and inexplicable, that infinitude of daily happenings, of accidents and coincidences, the meaning of which in the ulti-
mate pattern of life must always baffle us. He has the ad-va-
tage of a careful style, and a scrupulous regard for truth. He is one of the novelists of this period who had a widespread popularity which hasn't waned.

Coniston is a prose epic of political corruption in New England during the Jacksonian age. In it says Frederic Taber Cooper in his book, Some American Story Tellers, the reader gets a "sense of life and of conflict; of the impulses to do right clashing with the instincts of self-protection; of a grim party battle for political survival of the fittest; and of an entire State, its banks, its franchises, its governor, its legislature all reposing in the pocket of one man, the undisputed party boss." The story begins in the middle of the 1830's when Jethro Bass, modeled on an actual boss, Ruel Durkee of Cornish, New Hampshire, uses questionable methods to overthrow the old theocracy in the town of Coniston and get himself started on his political career. In his rude tannery, in the little village of Coniston, Jethro made his first decision which cost him the first Cynth. By buying up mortgages among farmers, by doing a favor here and there, and by cultivating the main chance of power, Jethro Bass manages to dominate the Jacksonian overturn in New Hampshire. Jethro was fair to his henchmen, forget to foreclose his mortgages, and was always, for a vote, disposed to letting the interest go over.

It is, therefore, hard to feel the proper disgust toward this boss. By the same methods, which Churchill thought were
quite reprehensible, Jethro extends his influence to other reaches of the state and by 1860 he and his lieutenants dominate the nascent Republican Party. After a life in which his politics outweighed his love, great as it was, he at last retires from the political field in a voluntary sacrifice of his power to the second Cynthia's happiness. Mr. Bass holds key to the situation because of his power in the rural districts and by this power he is able to force the railroad "interests" to yield to his will. He uses his power finally to smoothe the road of love for Cynthia Wetherell, daughter of his own first love.

The two stories, one of political manipulation and one of redemption of the old boss through love, run parallel converging abruptly and speciously at the end. The interior struggle of the boss is never more than indicated. Some critics say this book leaves politics where it was, but after all no writer can overthrow the venality of a politician by his pen. The purpose advocated must be capable of realization without a major shift in human nature. The novel is full of strong characters such as Bob Worthington, Isaac Worthington, old Ephraim, and Ezra Graves. The warm heart and shrewd unscrupulous mind of Jethro, and the noble spirited girl who loved him while she despised his methods are the truly great things of the book.

A contemporary critic, William M. Payne, says of Coniston, "A sober estimate will give the book due recognition for its idealism, its close observation, and its genuine human
interest, while not ignoring its coherent structure, its superficial characterization, and its slovenly diction." Actually this novel has something rare in purpose fiction - a hero that is a character. Jethro Bass is not a puppet, instead he holds the sympathies of the reader. It is possible that if Mr. Bass had been a less compelling character and more a vehicle of propaganda the didactic aspects of the book might have been strengthened considerably. The treatment of Bass made it outstanding as straight fiction and subordinated the purpose elements.¹

Jethro Bass, a simple farmer by origin, taciturn, inscrutable, with his streak of sardonic humor, and his slight, unforgettable stemmer is easily the most single figure Churchill had drawn. The two prime factors of this important novel are the big, vital, political issue for background and the unique and dominant figure of the boss for the central interest. What binds the whole together and makes the volume a piece of good construction is that the individual tragedy of the story grows out of the selfsame source as the bigger issue, namely, Jethro's unscrupulousness. The humorous "Woodchuck Session" in which the Truro Franchise is jammed through the legislature by a bit of unparalleled trickery helps to make this more than a mere propaganda novel. The climax of the story achieves the double purpose of effecting a crisis equally momentous to the

¹. Ross, Donald G. "Didactic and Purpose Novels in America 1789-1941" A. M. Thesis Boston University, 1941.
individuals of the central group and to the world at large that forms the story's background.

Mr. Crewe's Career if the same type of a political novel as Coniston bringing out again Mr. Churchill's political theories. Here a state, presumably New Hampshire is under the political domination of a railway. Hilary Vane, the chief counsel for the corrupt machine, has a son, a young attorney, who dares to expouse the people's cause and to defend them against the corporation. Mr. Hilary Vane now occupies Jethro Bass' "throne room" at the capital dictating to committees, seeing to it that the "right" men get the right jobs. The voters of the state are virtually disfranchised voting only for the Republican candidate whom the railroad approves. Mr. Churchill is on firm ground in his anatomy of corruption for there are actual records of the very sort of situation he is describing. Mr. Crewe, a bachelor millionaire, uses the people's newly aroused demand for rights as an entering wedge into politics. The railroad President and his daughter, a charmingly drawn heroine, play important parts in the story, but the chief interest, in spite of the title, centers around the career of Austin Vane as he stands unflinchingly for clean politics and not without a struggle quickens his father's conscience to the point of resigning his office. William M. Payne says of this novel in the June 1, 1908 issue of The Dial: "His book is too long, rather loosely put together, and the manner of its setting forth is almost slovenly at times, but it is a story that
has vitality, is informed by a fine idealism and is possessed of an interest that does not pall."
Brand Whitlock, an American novelist, won his greatest fame by serving unimportantly as the United States Minister to Belgium, the World War having given him a hero's part to play. He was born, the son of a Methodist minister, in Urbana, Ohio in 1869. After he refused to enter Ohio Wesleyan, Whitlock became a reporter for the Toledo Blade advancing to political correspondent on the Chicago Herald. He was admitted to the Illinois bar in 1894, the Ohio bar in 1897, practising in Toledo thereafter until 1905. From 1905 to 1913 he was the reform mayor of Toledo carrying on the policies of "Golden-Rule" Jones who had preceded him. He had the temperament of an artist but was no law-maker. He had been inspired by "Golden Jones" to believe that the fight for democracy must go on. He was a political reformer, who, being fundamentally literary, was acutely conscious of what his work involved.

Mr. Whitlock was more than other muck-rakers. He wanted to step out of his times and produce "pure" art. He struggled for leisure to do his own writing believing that literature, as he conceived it, cool, finished and classical, could be developed out of the broken soil of the era. It seemed to him that muckraking was only a halfstep to frankly political work; therefore, one might just as well go the whole way. It was with no feeling of triumph that he became a municipal statesman and he
wished many times that "Golden-Rule" Jones, with his calm, indomitable faith in his fellow-men, were beside to advise and direct him. Whitlock had inherited the hatred which all the organized groups of the community had accorded Jones.

The sensitive, imaginative Whitlock was never able to read indifferently the malice and misrepresentation which the capitalists, churchmen and Socialists alike directed at him. He saw that the common people, uninspired and unprophetic had at least the virtue of human nature, if not always human kindness. He found himself at war with every organized element of Toledo, but he, himself, always shrank from hurting anyone. He saw no gain to society in the harassment of criminals and prostitutes. He felt that the duty of society was to purify itself and to this task he addressed himself as best he could. He had eight years of work which was as exhausting as it was disheartening.

He declined the nomination for a fifth term as Toledo's mayor in order that he might write novels but he wrote his autobiography, Forty Years Of It, instead. This is a true and sensitive account of his long struggle for achievement. It was meant to be merely a summary of the long years before the new literary career began, but it contained all the art of which he had dreamed. It was not fiction but it had the enduring qualities which some of the major works by his literary heroes possessed.

In 1902, however, he published The Thirteenth District,
a study of the political methods of an Illinois congressional district. Of certain local types this is a performance of merit. It evinces an intimacy with things political which gives it an authoritative value. Whitlock has concentrated his attention on two campaigns for the congressional nomination and election. The course of these campaigns has been followed with a care of detail that is impressive to the reader sufficiently interested in such things not to complain at a lack of sunshine and a paucity of humor. There is a grim earnestness about this story of the rise and fall of a man of ability, but of little moral stamina, which commands respect. Garwood is a man of flesh and blood; one who in mental attitude, in professional equipment and in experience appears typical of the men of his class. It was a pity that the author couldn't have endowed Garwood with some of that cheery stalwart quality which makes sympathetic the figure of big Jim Rankin, Garwood's right-hand man and later bitter enemy. The story is a study of temperaments which gains potency from its freedom from moralizing.

John Chamberlain felt that Whitlock was a poor power philosopher who did not have a firm grasp on his absolutes. He also says that this novel lacks edge and point because Whitlock himself wavered at the point of declaring his values to himself. This was Whitlock's only real political novel although he wrote *Turn of the Balance* which lays more emphasis on the administration of law in the country.
Chapter X

Booth Tarkington

Mr. Booth Tarkington, after spending seven years trying vainly to get a public hearing for his stories, finally decided to go along with the crowd of muck-rakers. He found a sudden demand for the serious type of political novel and for the type of novel which professed to study social and economic problems of American life. It was quite natural, then, that a young man of his position, sobered by discouragement should have tried to meet the specific popular demand especially when the attempt to meet it meant no greater effort than simply to open his eyes and set down faithfully what he could see from his viewpoint on the fence-rail and what he thought about the things he saw.

Tarkington, born in Indianapolis in 1869, was a descendant of the Reverend Thomas Hooker, the noted scholar and orator of the Colonial days. He was educated at Phillips Exeter Academy, Purdue and finally Princeton. At college he brought forth his literary talent by helping to revive and edit the college comic weekly. Between 1893 and 1899 he almost literally sat "on a rail-fence in Indiana." Much of what he wrote at this period was written consciously for practice because his instinct impelled him to acquire a proficiency in the art of writing. His style, which is fluid, changing its color with every turn, is one which comes of good breeding, of having early assimilated the atmosphere of the best literary society.
Neatness, precision, ease, moderation, a lightness of touch and lucidity are qualities which Robert Cortes Holliday, his biographer, attributes to Mr. Tarkington's style.

His Gentleman from Indiana, published in 1899, foreshadows some of the political theme, but it was not until after Tarkington had served a term in the State Legislature that the real stories of politics came out. Gentleman from Indiana is the story of a college boy who goes back to work with the home folks editing the local paper for them. The theme is incredible what with the editor's miraculous escape from death after smashing a vice ring and defying a political boss.

In 1905 Tarkington had his six short stories of western politics published in a collection called In the Arena. He betrayed his "goo-goo" (good government) complex at the very beginning when he quoted with approval, "What we most need 'in politics' is more good men." These stories deal with reformers, machine politicians, lobbyists, law-makers, office seekers, bosses and voters. They deal with the psychology of politics while the underlying attitude of the author, cynical humor, remains the same. The whole group has a note of pessimism. In every case, except one, the tragic failure results directly from a very earnest desire on the part of someone to do right. Tarkington's pessimism is of a peculiar warm-hearted kind without cold cynicism or a contempt for the lowly. His contemporary reviewers seem to agree that the stories are interesting but not of much value. Mr. Holliday says "In The Arena for all
its force and feeling is notable among Mr. Tarkington’s early realistic books for his grasp of the literary virtue of restraint. Tarkington went on from political fiction to general realism as both Churchill and Phillips did. The character of the rest of his work which composes "the tragedy of Tarkington" is another story.

1. Holliday, Robert C. *Booth Tarkington* P. 108
Chapter XI

Alfred Henry Lewis

Alfred Henry Lewis felt himself bound to attack despoilers of the national wealth and honor. He wrote voluminously on railroads, corrupt politicians, and trusts mentioning names prolifically in the manner of a true Westerner. His several books and articles have been generally classified as failures. His shortcomings were in the lack of intelligence and in the inability to diagnose fully. Like Lincoln Steffens, Lewis put all the blame on the "system" demonstrating even before Steffens got around to it that the "good" men were as bad as the "bad" men when their dividends were threatened. He made an estimate of a "boss" that is either an insult or a compliment depending on whether one condemns the man or the "system."

Mr. Alfred Lewis, born in Cleveland in 1857, practised law there until his health broke. He then went West where he spent five years as a cattleman on the plains of Texas, New Mexico, and Arizona. There his rough, lawless kind of temperament, three-fifths of it pure individualism, the remainder a compound of learning and forensic aptitude, found itself. Here he conceived Wolfville, the only thing for which he was in later years remembered. Into the Wolfville stories Lewis put all the color and characteristics of the West and thus turned out a rather good piece of work. Upon leaving the West, Lewis spent a number of years practising law in Kansas City where he subse-
quently was attracted to newspaper work on the Kansas City Star. Later he was made Washington correspondent for the Chicago Times and for other papers.

He had the individualistic and comparatively lawless traits of a Westerner, yet he was not naive for he was born and raised in a large midwestern city. Half-sophisticated, half-primitive Alfred Henry Lewis took a peculiar role among Eastern scribes. In trying to reconcile the ethics of the West with those of the East, he wrote Richard Croker which purported to be a history of the Tammany chieftain and his demesne. It was a fantastic production, a weird attempt to mix philosophy, history and appraisal - Lewis was unable to make up his mind whether Croker should be condemned or praised. He confused personality with principles. He alternately attacked and discussed his man without balance or sequence.

Again Lewis attempted muck-raking in his The President and The Boss. In The Boss and How He Came to Rule New York, Lewis has dropped the humor found in Wolfville for satire. This novel is a fictional autobiography of a Tammany savage. He made a mistake in a savage who is top heavy with sorrow and sentiment, gloomy with remorse, while tenderly affectionate with his women, Apple Cheek, Anne and "Blossom" who oddly talks archaic and turgid English of an 18th century parson. The sketches of "Big Kennedy," of the police captains, the "plug-uglies," the Old Mikes, and the Sheeny Joes were done with a surer touch. The Boss was overdone, was an inhuman monster.
Lewis, aiming at impressiveness, overdid it. The Tammany Boss has been essentially a blunt, matter-of-fact, semi-humorous personage. Kennedy, the genial Irishman in the novel, is a truer type than the Boss who, being conglomerate, has most contradictory characteristics and all the distorted effects of such a combination.

The preface is written by the Boss himself who recognizes his lack of easy style and skill with pen and ink. The narration, itself, supposedly turned over to a better writer, is hardly distinguishable from the preface. The phrasing is involved; the author was stepping over his own toes and might have fallen flat if it weren't for the conversations of minor characters who are in keeping with the general atmosphere and who are unusually good. Lewis' desire to be strictly literary, not reportorial has weakened the effect making the novel appear dull when its subject-matter is anything but dull. "His curious, fatuous turgidity has spoiled what might have been a satire worthy of Hudibras, in its day, or the Bigelow Papers."¹

The reader rises from the book wearied by the style and by the depressing state of our American democratic civilization. The story follows the lines of Richard Croker's celebrated career. The author propounded cold-blooded reasons for selfish acquisition or for destroying obstacles in the political path. He acknowledges treachery and theft to be a proper

part of the game. The method of using police for "graft," of blackmail, of persecution, and of false imprisonment by Tammany was plausibly explained as crafty politics. The Boss grows in power, makes deals, sells votes, uses Negro women dressed as men for voters, deals in gas franchises and engages in all sorts of other shady activities. Every known way of making millions is used by him sadly. The Boss thrives in sorrow growing rich and great with the deepest regret. Apple Cheek, "Blossom," and Anne, the women in the story, scarcely affect the narrative. The Boss treats them fairly and is tender and sentimental with them, never turning his savage nature toward them. Mr. Lewis knew his West which he portrayed well in Wolfville but his characterization in this and his other political novels is feeble. The satire which he attempted is on the whole ineffective and unconvincing. Mr. Lewis made a tremendous effort to be literary but has become ponderous instead. This satire perhaps gave the bosses new ideas for their political manoeuvres but made little or no impression on the reading public. They felt in most cases that they would rather be left alone than rouse themselves to an attempt to right things. John Seymour Wood\(^2\) said that if Mr. Lewis had spent more time and labored more over style and form making it a really humorous satiric story he might have been acclaimed a second Butler.

\(^2\) Ibid
Chapter XII

Conclusion

It is clear that muck-raking was not something discovered in the first decade of the 20th century nor was the political novel entirely a new type. This decade was, however, distinguished by the fact that there was a collective movement to expose evils and realities to the public. The greatest energies were put forth by magazine editors and their reporters, but the essayists and novelists who were looking for popular subjects for their work soon joined "the muck-rake pack." By 1908 the movement began to die down but it was revived for a short time in 1911 when the Taft administration took over the Government.

After 1912 the movement really decreased leaving nothing left that could even be called a movement. The novelists were quick to leave the dying cause, many of them turning to problem fiction. After the World War the "debunking" of national heroes and patriotic themes became the vogue. The era of political reform in the literature can be said to have definitely opened the way for the realism and naturalism in literature. Much of the writing of the nineties had been infinitely removed from the realities of life, but the authors of the early nineteen-hundreds were eager to grapple with American problems and to find their subjects on American soil.

1 Chamberlain, John, Farewell to Reform
The laws which were passed by the Federal Government upon the agitation of the muck-rakers have already been noted. But to ascertain exactly the effects of the exposures on business which bore the brunt of the attack is impossible. It was found that the great corporations were behind the corruption in municipal, state, and national politics. It was the opinion of most of the muck-rakers that almost all the evils of American life were directly traceable to the aims and methods of industrialists and financiers. It was in the hope of arousing public opinion and thus changing these aims and methods that they did their work. Charles Edward Russell believed that Big Business changed their methods. Also President Wilson in a message to Congress in January, 1914 summarized the popular opinion when he said, "At last the masters of business on the great scale have begun to yield their preference and their purpose, and perhaps their judgment also, in honorable surrender."

The influence of the novelists in producing any definite action was slight but certain definite results were achieved by the essayists and by the hordes of reporters who had taken up the cause. The direct election of United States Senators; direct legislation through the initiative, referendum and recall; direct primaries; corrupt practices acts; campaign expense laws; commission form of government for cities; and women suffrage have all been attributed as results of the attacks by muck-rakers in addition to the large number of social reforms that were effected.
Muck-raking ceased in 1912 primarily because the people were tired of it. Also, many of the reforms aimed at were being realized. Many of the old evils were returning in new and perhaps better disguises. Many of the muck-rakers themselves were discouraged by the results achieved. Mainly, however, the movement died because the people would rather be left alone than rouse themselves to any reform. For many of the authors, especially the novelists, the exposing of evils was merely a fad. After ten years they and their reading public both tired of it. Some more intelligent people were tired of seeing all the dirt and wanted some constructive solutions offered instead. Of course, many of the writers and editors were superficial and insincere in what they wrote or published, thus hastening the end of the movement. It was true of all the muck-rakers as C. C. Regier said, "Of far-reaching and fundamental philosophy the muck-rakers had little; as a result their movement could be only a passing phase in the long struggle for justice and liberty." Perhaps another stronger reform movement is due.

2. Regier, C. C., *Era of the Muckrakers* P. 210
Abstract of the Thesis

The nineteenth century saw the growth of the United States as an industrial nation. The Civil War had given an impetus to the industries of the East. The rapid increase of industry had shown a correspondingly rapid increase of industrial workers and laborers. These workers found themselves gathered together in large cities and had quickly, therefore, organized themselves into groups and unions. The railroads had also rapidly increased and had spread to every corner of the country. With the railroads had come unfair business practices, corruption in granting of land, and a favoring of the big business over the small one.

The last half of the nineteenth century was the era of making huge fortunes in business. The most intelligent men left the farms to make their fortunes in business. The farmers were thus left without leaders to fight against the big businessmen and against the Republican Party who favored them. From 1861 to 1913 the Republicans had held the Presidential office making the farmers, through high tariffs, pay for the protection of the industrialists. The laborers and agriculturalists tried several times to organize third parties to defeat the Republicans and Democrats for they considered both of these parties to be in the hands of the money powers.

The first third party that anywhere near achieved success was the Populists, who held their first national convention.
in 1891. The Panic of 1893 gave the Populists, who had already done well in their first election, more aid. Panics always have ruined the chances of a President for reelection and usually ruin the party's chances, also. By the campaign of 1896 the Populists had increased their forces. The Republicans nominated McKinley for the Presidency on a gold standard platform. After much controversy, the Democrats nominated Bryan on a free silver platform. Although the Populists had nominated a different Vice-President to run with Bryan, they had to join forces with the Democrats because they advocated the free silver issue so strongly. Bryan had eloquence but McKinley had more money behind him so he won.

The McKinley administration savored all through of Big Business interests. Thus the grievances of the laborers, farmers and small businessmen were in no way lightened. When Theodore Roosevelt, who as the Vice-President finished out McKinley's last term, came along in his campaign with his trust-breaking slogans and promises, the common people voted for him gleefully. Now they would get the reform in government policies that they had longed for. The turn of the century brought a new hope to the people.

It was in 1893 that Munsey, McClure and Walker brought forth their new cheap magazines. McClure struggled through the first two years of his publication on very little money but with a faith that somehow he would succeed. These magazines brought forth a new type of protest in which specific names and
cases were mentioned in contrast to earlier protests which had always been general. McClure's Magazine is given credit for the first fiery articles of exposure since it was this magazine which published Ida Tarbell's "History of the Standard Oil" and Lincoln Steffens' "Shameless Cities" in the same issue.

These articles were the result of intense research for the authors of them had been paid for the study rather than merely for the amount of copy they turned in. The fad of exposing evil and corruption quickly caught fire and spread to other magazines and their writers. The number and scope of the articles increased rapidly, but the statistical value and authority of them decreased as the articles became more wild and sensational. At the peak of the era of exposure, President Roosevelt became exasperated with the writers and gave them all the name of "muck-rakers" using the epithet from Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress. Although the writers themselves accepted the nickname in good fun, this was really the turning point of the muck-raking movement.

The American public of 1900 had been ready for the muck-raking movement. The standard of education had improved for most people had an opportunity to finish grammar or high school. Statistics had been made more available by societies organized for that purpose. The type of material in the cheaper magazines had built up a reading public for the muck-rakers as "Mr. Dooley" had built up a reading public in Chicago. Lincoln Steffens, then, had readers when he published his articles on
corruption in six big American cities, first in McClure's Magazine and then in book form.

In his essays Steffens showed that the politicians were ruled by the businessmen and by corporations. He also showed how the "system" worked in the cities. His investigations finally led him to the states where he found more corruption. He collected his articles on the states into a volume, called The Struggle For Self-Government which he humorously dedicated to the Czar of Russia. At last he turned from the unpleasant evils of government to tell the stories of the reformers in Upbuilders.

Also interested in reform was David Graham Phillips who carried the investigations straight to the Senate in his series of articles, "The Treason of the Senate." In these he exposed the corrupt political deals involving Chauncey Depew, Nelson Aldrick, Spooner of Wisconsin, Bailey of Texas, Joseph Foraker of Ohio and others of the United States Senate. This series was the center of the hottest debates and recriminations of the entire movement. The confusion of criticisms and compliments alike discouraged and embittered Phillips who turned back to his quiet novels. It was this series which had made him famous rather than the novels he wrote. In 1905 he published Plum Tree, the story of a young country lawyer who although beginning honest ended up as the boss who was able to shake the tree to bring down the political plums. It is written in true reportorial style. Phillips' remedy for political evils as expounded
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