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The first thirty years of the nineteenth century compared with the first thirty years of the twentieth century in French literature

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THESIS

THE FIRST THIRTY YEARS OF THE
NINETEENTH CENTURY

COMPARED WITH

THE FIRST THIRTY YEARS OF THE
TWENTIETH CENTURY

IN FRENCH LITERATURE

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I. Introduction.

Ebbes and flows, schools and counter-schools, these are the incessant in art, religion, literature. The long, brilliant ocean-wave of classic perfection wipes out all traces of whatever went before it on the sand of man's intellectual progress. Then its beauty slowly recedes until it reaches the low-water mark, the unfruitful period of pure technique, when all originality seems dead, form seems more important than thought, and style more looked up to than content. Soon, following this stagnation-period, comes the reaction, once more a wave sweeping the shore as did the classic, but this time with the newest new. That this New also will presently become "too academic", and slip back into its own low-water, is obvious; the true interest of each of these waves lies in the treasures it may leave behind, giving the irredescence of the lovely Old to the possibly too crude New.

II. Direct comparison of the Two Periods.

The two periods which this paper proposes to study are exceptionally interesting as transition-periods between two great eras; though the present one, which we are now somewhat excitedly pulling through is extraordinary for its immediate productivity as well as for its potentiality. The late 1700's were a period of science, common-sense, and desire for human liberty. The mid-1800's were a deep wave of romance and imagination; the first thirty years of which we are to talk led out of one and into the other. A most obvious transition-time was this, from 1800 to 1830; for lovely as were the few great names in its poetry, sonorous and serious as were those in its history and criticism, still
they were "very few"; whereas the periods just before and after were rich and full, varied and strong. Whether or not this present is really a transition, between the extreme realism of the last schools of the last century, and some new wave as yet unseen, is a little hard to judge. There is a decided swing-back to Symbolism and Naturalism, both of which have further possibilities. There are, particularly in philosophy and biography, evidences of a return to beauty of form, and richness and variety of logical thought. These lead one to think that this may be the crest of the wave, the new epoch, itself. Yet that seems doubtful; there are still too many perverse and contradictory signs. Signs which show that the literature of the moment is not yet fully at one with the minds which it must express; that have the ear-marks of the transmutation-stage. Marks, for example, of eagerness for renown rather than a desire to work for the work's sake; hasty idiosyncracies of talent, where there should be the sure originality of genius. Happily for me it is not my task to say just where stands each of these periods on the ladder of French literary progress; but, more simply, to compare them with each other—and even that, not too exhaustively.

In such a comparison of two literary ages, it is only fair to examine also the period directly preceding each of them. For those foregoing years are often to the epoch following, what the inheritance is to the child; and go as far toward explaining it as can any investigation of the more immediate environment. In the case of the second of the two stages of French literature which this paper discusses, the years just before were especially important. Upon the first thirty years of the nineteenth century, however, the late 1700's were
not so much a direct influence (though they were that too) as an indirect one, through their action upon a dominating power—that is, upon the various governments following the Revolution. That time just before the Revolution was one of generous aspirations, but also of hostility toward all overbearing authority; filled with ambition and progress, it likewise had a violent antipathy to any ambition which might step out of bounds. An age of deep thought, of thought scientific, philosophic, liberal, its men were powers whose force carried on long after they themselves were dead. And Napoleon, and his successors, knew that such writers would be a danger to any tyrannic rule; they saw to it that no such incendiary stuff should be made public, as had been written by the great men of the day before. Yet, if such dangerous thought (dangerous to them) was hobbled, still they could not kill the love of humanity, the generous sentiments and emotions, the scientific accuracy of study and examination into facts, which those older men had kindled in the minds of those to come after them. The revolutionary spirit, the anti-religionism and the rebellion against too heavy authority, which had made of the late 1700's "une littérature de propagande, une arme de combat", these had to sleep during the times of tyranny. But the beauties of grace, and especially the clear style, to which literary activity had been reduced through suppression of thought, carried on into the next period. And as for the sceptical and thoughtful attitudes of mind of those older men, those—hibernating, perhaps, under Napoleon—went on, one might say, forever!

As for our own day, that, as I have said, has been tremendously

* René Doumic, "Histoire Littéraire Française"; page 306.
influenced by the men who preceded it. They have acted as strong propulsions toward some things—and as equally powerful repulsives! After the days of the Empire and its de-natured literature, the Romantic school held the center of the stage for some decorative years; then, after the middle of the century, the influence of the Romantics, great as it had been, began slowly and unwillingly to lessen, though there are still faint traces of it. The various schools of Realism, in science, art, and literature, grew more and more dominant. Much of the work of today is still under the dominance of those schools, taking from them their ideal—which is precisely a fleeing from ideals. We still feel, through modern literature, the Realist, who made his goal the painting of man "as he is" i.e. at his worst. The present "Slice of Life", when at its best, has its inspiration from the Naturalists of that older day, sanely and frankly studying the ordinary and habitual, and reproducing those facts with objective fidelity. There is today perhaps no Realist as forceful as Balzac, whose face—delightfully and perfectly portrayed by Rodin (the bust is in the New York Metropolitan)—shows as clearly as his writings his ironic pessimism. But although Balzac is dead, his influence is still very much; these last thirty years, in French literature; though perhaps more so in the theater, than among the novelists where we should most expect to find him. Zola too, and first of the Naturalists, if he could again walk this earth, would assuredly recognize many followers—Leon Hennique, for example, and Andre Gide. The fullest sources of inspiration to the modern authors, however, seem to be the Analysts and Psychologists, studying the emotions in their
effects and results in the outside world, or putting their thought on the situations of life in their effects on those same emotions—two sides of one question. Paul Hervieu, of whom we shall speak much later, is most noticeably of this last group. These later schools of today have, of course, been greatly aided and refreshed, encouraged and given new material, by the popularisation of psychology and psycho-analysis. The older writers used brains, intuition, sometimes medical knowledge, often even pure imagination, to figure-out "les interieure des hommes". Today's authors have everything to help them, from the auto-analysis of a self-confessing criminal, to the libraries of a Freud. And their works betray it. I mentioned that the schools of the last century acted in many cases as repellents, as well as stimulants—Vers Libre, sentimentality over the Child, dreamers of the type of Maeterlink, Symbolic and "pure-music" poetry, all show, in their violent and bitter reactions against the strictly realistic, that the world—even the French literary world—grows weary of a life sans ideal, sans illusion, sans everything! But that rebellion (except in art) is as yet but weak; realism is still much the stronger. Perhaps a perfectly balanced literature, wherein self-expression may dream of beauty and illusion, and where logic and science may express reality with dignity—a literature attune to both the emotional man and the intellectual—may prove to be the Wave-Crest of a new epoch to which our immediate chaotic literature is leading.

C. Direct influences.

After this somewhat hurried glance over what we may call hereditary influences, we must come to others, even more important—those which acted directly upon the men of 1800-1850, and those which hold sway over the present. These are,
briefly: - the spirit of the times, in both cases; literary and other ideals; foreign literatures; and anything else which may go to make up the immediate environment.

Of the many things which may make or break the authors of a given period, one of the most obvious and forceful is the censor, whatever its form. Napoleon feared the press, for reasons already given. His censorship was strict, harsh, unhesitating. Chateaubriand, Benjamin Constant, Madame de Staël, all felt his displeasure, in the form of exile; as did many lesser men. So Victor Hugo also was exiled, in a later day. The press of today (except in time of war) knows no such one-man autocratic ruling. Under the eyes of the critics, it says practically what it pleases, whether on the stage, in the reviews, or in any other of its surprisingly multifarious forms--of which new ones are constantly appearing, since this is, as Florian-Parmentier says somewhere, "un âge de petits talents". True, Léon Daudet bitterly remarks, "La censure de l'argent a, en somme, remplacé la censure de l'état,infinitement moins vigilante et tyrannique". But Léon Daudet is notoriously bitter; indeed, that is why he is so bitterly notorious. And although there is some truth in what he says, yet it is with the newspaper-press that such censorship concerns itself, rather than with the author-group; whereas Napoleon trusted no writer, no matter how genial a genius he seemed to be. And the same held true of the Restorations.

2. Le Mal du Siècle vs. an age - by its smothering or its laisser-faire, the spirits of the of doubt and mater-men of our two periods differed greatly from each other. Al-

* Léon Daudet, "Le stupide dix-neuvième siècle", pg. 76.
although it may be that the "recherche du moi" first conspicuous in the early 1800's and so much a part of the spirit of that time, is still an underlying factor in the twentieth-century interest in psychological problems. Then too, the Mal du Siècle, the German Weltenschmerz, which so heavily weighed down those other men, has lately been visible again, though totally changed in its manifestations. This is surely directly traceable to the effects of war. In Napoleon's era, France was being bled white of all her finest men. Any hope of relief from this tyranny, or hope for that longed-for liberty of man for which the Revolution had bled and died, looked utterly unattainable. Germany, Austria, Italy, Russia, alternately struggled hotly against Napoleon's armies, or fought sullenly in them. So that the great dreamers of those lands, as well as of France herself, were sick with impotent despair, with indignation, and shame. Fatigue, helpless humiliation, futile longings to spread clipped wings—what other forms could such smothered emotions take, especially in men of noble minds, except that indefinable ennui of life, le Mal du Siècle, Weltenschmerz? After this last war, soldiers and thinkers saw the glory of war as a hideous thing; saw the "ideals" they had hoped they were fighting for made ridiculous by profiteers and materialists; saw themselves not as heroes, but as weights around the neck of the country; and, worst of all, saw the world as "all wrong" with neither strength nor understanding of how to put it right. And there too came a form of Mal du Siècle. In speaking of that state of mind among the men of our earlier period, Paul Bourget says (and he likewise thinks there is abroad today its somewhat disguised counterpart), "Jusqu'à la révolution les
Écrivains n'ont jamais pris la sensibilité comme matière et
et comme règle unique de leurs oeuvres; c'est le contraire
depuis 199; et de là résulte un je ne sais quoi d'effréné, de
douleur, une recherche de l'émotion morale et psychique, chez
les nouveaux, qui est allé s'exaspérer jusqu'au morbide."

In the beginning of the last century, that "recherche d'émotion" was either frankly subjective, or idealistically con-
ceived as covering all humanity. Now, it makes itself manifest
more as an objective research; and its authors, belonging to
an age which demands force rather than charm, prefer to
trace their cynicism or their melancholy to its logical
source, rather than "sublimate" it, or console it with vague
idealizations.

One of the most telling ways of tracing differences in
epochs, is to illustrate them by comparing two men, as anti-
theses; for antithesis is always interesting, whether in ideas,
epochs, or authors. And seldom can one find contrast sharper
than that between the discontent of the early 1800's as
represented by Chateaubriand, and the 1900-spirit with Paul
Bourget as its Disciple. And that, all the more clearly be-
cause these two men both ardently wish to bring their
fellows into a better state of mind—and particularly of
morals. Both feel the truth, definitely stated by Bourget
himself, "sous l'arrière-fond de toute belle œuvre littera-
taire se cache l'affirmation d'une grande vérité psycholo-
gique". Only, their ways of stating that verity, were anti-
thetical indeed! A melancholy born of supersensitive nerves
emotions, and sentiments, which found it hard—too hard—to
kick against the pricks of human living, has a pitiless
hold over them both. In Chateaubriand we find it as that
*Paul Bourget, "Essais de psychologie moderne" pg. 148.
strange and fanciful temper, *le Mal du Siècle.* Bourget, on the other hand, has built on it a sad and wistful cynicism. In a desire to improve their human world, in that meloncholy temperament, and in the inescapable urge to write, these two are brothers. But there the family likeness ends; twins they assuredly are not. Like the period of which he was a son, and like the schools of which he was father (or foster-father at least), Châteaubriand sought refuge from the ugly facts of existence in a great and noble ideal and beauty; in a splendid rush of musical sound, gracious tableaux, exquisite dreamings. Perfection of wording, fair dreams of fair endeavor, these were the magic of Châteaubriand, as wide in thought as it was varied in theme and scenery. Wide, too, in variety of literary form, as are few modern writers in this age of specialisation. For he was a majestic poet as well as a great novelist; and a distinguished philosopher as well as poet. Man is a fallible creature, and he is sadly culpable toward his companions. He is discontented; and the paths in which he walks are seldom either straight or rosy. The authors, then, must somehow help him, since books are (or should be) potent counsellors. But of these two authors, the one—Châteaubriand—would lure his readers into the way they should go, by making that way one of ineffable charm. Paul Bourget, on the contrary, would warn them off by carefully analysing the extreme ugliness of the Wrong Road. A period such as those early days, longing for it knew not what, and already feeling the stirrings of that far-reaching force, the Romantic School, was one pre-eminently ready to be moved deeply and permanently by beauty and strangeness, by a call to the emotions, more than to realistic
exactitude; a call to the gracious spirituality of man rather than to pragmatic philosophical ethics. If Châteaubriand sometimes failed curiously in correctness of argument; if the peoples, lands and souls which he so wonderfull created, are not always of the stuff of which real humanity is made, nevertheless he saw, with Edmond Rostand, "Même quand il a tort, le poète a raison".

Great exactitude was not the forte of Châteaubriand; nor had he the severely analytical turn of mind that fills Bourget. The latter is essentially the product of an investigative age; one that demands to know exhaustively the why underlying all acts and reactions. The research-spirit is abroad in the lands, and Paul Bourget is deeply imbued with it. That research-spirit, though it may limit one's horizon, has its excellent points, even in a novelist. It is well to know the "interiors" of men and women. And although we may feel now and then that Bourget's women all have a curious resemblance, that he depicts a quantity of similar individuals rather than a variety of types, — still, the women of Châteaubriand were likewise little varied; and were as often too much of the skies as are Bourget's too much of the earth. It is a fine thing to look the facts in the face; and sometimes even a splendid thing. For it is never a good plan to lose oneself, as did often those earlier men, in a vastness of idealistic dreams, based on misunderstanding how the machine, Man, may or may not be made to work. And yet facts, if one is too narrow in the choice of them, do lead to a factitious line of argument; statistics may prove but a suggestive falsum; all women are not "a rag,

* Rostand, preface-poem to "L'Aiglon".
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a bone, and a hank of hair", nor all men the masculine equivalent thereof. Perhaps the old times day-dreamed too much, with Châteaubriand; but it seems to me that Paul Bourget and his school let us dream too little; let us see too continually how little is the greatness of soul to which man can attain. If facts are facts, then surely are the fait and gracious ones, as true as the ugly and ungracious, if less blatant and obvious. What ideals Man has reached, are amazing; what Man still can do—will never be found out by throwing over idealism—which last is what Bourget, and the modern psychologists, evidently want us to do!

Differences in censorship, in spirit, and in variety, are not the only ones to be found between the men of our first and those of our second periods. Birth too has had an influence. Among the older men who wrote strongly and enduringly, very many bore noble and aristocratic names; few, today, are of that same class. That is not regrettable, for the present time; on the contrary, for there is a plausible, a probable, theory that the important thinkers and creators in all lines have for the most part come from the practical and virile middle-classes, and from the slow but steady-thinking Men of the Land. Nor does that difference in birth imply that these last two classes were any less important as backbone, any less vigorous in mental strength, than than now. It simply means that they were otherwise occupied. Napoleon was making of them the sturdy, wise, and sound masses of his army— all-over-the-world. Flambeau, romantic and practical, the thinker whose emotional sensitiveness had to yield to a fiery desire for "le lux" of mad adventure, is no mere creation of Rostand, but one of the
truest types of the French Bourgeoisie; and the peasant, in his simpler way of life, is akin to him. Fine men to build an army from; and excellent men from whom to draw authors, philosophers, and scientists. But Napoleon willed that they should be the former, under his regime; and the writing therefor had to be done mostly by the grandes et petites noblesse. Not all, though; Villermain, about whom I should like enthusiastically to talk, later; and Guizot of "la vieille bourgeoisie"; and Victor Cousin whom the dictionary gives as "fils d'un ouvrier-joailler"—are all quite noticeably by evidence of their very names, simple men by birth. And Victor Hugo too was of "famille tres modeste".

Liberal thought, interest in the practical problems of wide importance, desire to see the spread of new ideas and theories, whether in science, sociology or art, all belong naturally to the Bourgeoisie; on whose shoulders for so long has lain so much of the building and carrying on of the world's work. Here and there among the aristocracy (particularly in the period of which we have been speaking) have been wise and deep-thinking men; now and then have kings and emperors helped the growth of liberal thought, and free thought, within their own domains. But, generally considered, the greater in name have been the less in creativity. And that would be doubly true in the reign of a Bonaparte (or the semi-kings who came after him); who, much as he might desire an aristocracy about him (for he had his worldly-social ambitions as well as his worldly-conquering ones), was nevertheless most unlikely to handle very gently any humanity-wide hopes, in a group of men whose fathers would have looked upon him with horror. All of which goes to show why there...
were but few great authors at that early time; why those few were chiefly of the aristocracy; it seems also why they were so very great; since it would take a strong mind and character to overcome the down-dragging fear of the censor, the heavy despair of the aristocrat, and the general fatigue of mind and body. Today, the writers feel another kind of burden—that is, the weight of the responsibility for explaining and exploring everything in man and nature—even the un-explorable; the weight of the duty, as Sam Walter Foss amusingly puts it in one of his poems, to "jump in and make the old thing go". That has long been the duty of the upper and lower Bourgeoisie, backed by the sturdy aid of the peasant, acting as a balance-wheel and necessary brake. Many of the modern men show that they feel it; and some few of them handle it well, as authors and thinkers. A few others of the Bourgeoisie—notably J. R. Bloch, a very interesting essayist among the moderns—feel that the ascendancy is already slowly passing out of their hands into those of the peasants and lower classes. A "People", now growing literate, thoughtful, class-conscious as a literary brotherhood, is coming up, in all lands. The French Bourgeoisie, for the time at least, are dulled by a post-and pre-war (1870; 1914-1918) nerve-wrecked moroseness; deepened by the spoiled-child attitude of the capitalist's son to whom all things have come too easily, while his nature (the natural nature of Young-Ones eager to fight the world) demanded dragons and difficulties. This particular group recognises its own failings, its own need to get into harness; but it does not quite know what harness;

* Jean-Richard Bloch, "Carnival est Mort".
and feels itself too out of touch with the less materially-satisfied classes, who are so much coming to the fore, to write for them, or of them; and so leaves it to them.

Literary influences are elusive and difficult things to trace, at any time. And particularly so perhaps in transition-periods, whose very shifting phases make for vagueness in all that has to do with them. For the 1800-1830 group, whatever literary influences came to them were mostly from Germany and England—and on the whole, from the earlier generations of those countries, at that. That Madame de Staël was practically the first, certainly the first in importance, to introduce German thought into France, is a mere common-place of literary knowledge. She traveled much in Germany, read much, knew many great men there; and must also have known in France the great German writer of travels, and weighty student of science, Von Humboldt, who for a long while lived in France, and wrote in French. He it was, with the help of de Staël, who transplanted into French philosophy the general German philosophical methods, which were of metaphysical width, rather than pragmatical logic.

Even more vital than philosopher and scientist to my mind, were the many who translated into French the English and German poets and dramatists. The English were already freed from the too-classic conventions, both on the stage and in writings—and it was just during this formative phase of French literature, when the Romantic School was alertly watching for chance and precedence in breaking loose from such conventions, that such men as Benjamin Constant, Pierre Lebrun, Barante, turned to Schiller and Lessing as spiritual leaders from Germany; while Delille, de Vigny, and Letourneur were translating Shakespeare and Milton from the English.
Probably the German theater, romantic rather than classic in style, was as bitterly opposed in France as was the theater of Hugo. But how it must have encouraged the latter! True, Constant was afraid to produce the plays of Schiller as they were. The old French dramatic ideal, with its one chief character, its one chief passion, its unities of time and place, he could not shake off from his shoulders; and into that conventional form he forced the Whole-life-gamut of the German idea. Yet, if his courage did not go quite so far as to produce it on the stage (our Benjamin Constant, daring and steady of thought, but vacillating and unsure of action, how he shows himself there!), at least he certainly knew of this anti-classic ideal; he read it, talked it, spread it by interesting others in it, and so helped to refresh the French stage. Chateaubriand was undoubtedly aware, actually and emotionally, of Goethe. His own sensibility made him particularly perceptive of Goethe's younger, Weltschmerz period. The impassioned subjectivity of "Werther" made part of that same Recherche du Moi which ran all over France, with Chateaubriand himself its finest master of writing.

So, through philosophy, science, drama, and poetry from Germany and England, a new outlook was given to French thinkers of that period—an outlook of width, of escape from classicism, of ideals, and of subjective emotions exquisitely expressed.

This present century, one of international newspapers and reviews, of exchange-professors, and unending translations, has literally a world of literature to choose from; and influences have run madly from one country to another. Russian ideals especially have hit them all hard. Realistic
in spite of certain mystical leanings; cruel and pessimistic, morbidly tragic and frankly stark, it has yet never for a moment let go of the technical principles of writing nor of the theater—more than one could say for most of the products of other lands, I think! It has managed to keep integrity of form with originality and depth of tragic thought—a combination peculiarly to the mind of the modern Frenchman, and likely to influence him deeply. The perfect dramatic workmanship of Tchekow, the splendid though dolorous style of Dostoisewski, and the impractical, sincere humanitarianism of Tolstoi, all are part of the multiform Russian spirit; and all have their appeal for other nations—above all, for France. So, too, there is a breath of Italian conception through modern French writings. We read Serao, deeply plunging into the "occult depths of the human soul"; D'Annunzio, battling with words and arms for his country, pouting forth an extraordinary fulness of musical poetry, leading the van with his strong and vivid theater. And then so many others—Fucini, Pirandello, Barrili, Salvatore Farina—! Unexpectedly rich in influence over French writings, all of these. These are the chief direct influences. Others there have been also, from other lands. But those, chiefly indirect; either acting upon the periods before us which have in turn reacted upon the present; or filtering to the larger numbers of authors through the works of the few—As, for example, France knew Byron, through translations; or as it knew Chatterton, only through de Vigny; or as Marcel Proust disguised our own Poe, and then presented him to France.

D. Comparison of Forms and Styles.
1. Dignity vs. Force.
his horizon or interfere with his joy in life; nor does the modern author in France seem to feel quite so hurried, either in style or in actual rapidity of production, as does his contemporary in the United States. Those Great Old Fellows had more time than the modern Frenchman, though. They had all life to produce in; and their readers were willing to give days, or weeks to happily reading a book. Which may explain why, in those days, styles were noted for clarity mixed with charm, perfection of expression, and a great slow dignity. All these things are a delight to the leisurely—a delight, even where the content is not as significant as one might wish; or where the whole lacks what the present moment calls "snap". The reasons for the present "snappiness", noticeable in France as well as over here—though perhaps less so—are evident. Newspaper-styles have long been at work on literature; long from our point of view, at least, going back even farther than Kipling, or the French Feuilletonistes. Newer, and more subtly disintegrating, has been the influence of the "Chose -Vue"—The cinema, swiftest way to tell the longest possible story, is one of the most powerful types of this "Thing-Seen". For what written description could make so living, to the stupidest imagination, the strangeness, fascination, differences, of far lands, far peoples, strange happenings? How long, how involved, would have to be the sentences that could express all the shades and complexities of thought and situation which a "movie" makes live in the space of one vivid moment!

Comic sheets are funnier, with less effort to the mass-mind, than ever a written tale can be. And few are the wits who can compete—unless their work be very brief and forceful—with
the amazing cleverness of the cartoon. No wonder then that writers today in nearly all countries feel that they must speed-up, must give to their styles brevity and force rather than imaginative amplitude.

Possibly that haste also explains the origin of the "Stream of Consciousness" idea, the "Slice of Life" form. This strange new germ has attacked novelist, short-story writer, dramatist. This current of Consciousness theory insists that no novel, no tale, no play, shall have either plot nor plan; there shall be no beginning—merely a jump into the middle of something; no climactic ending, just a stop in rising sweep of actions playing dramatically into each other, simply a series of happenings more or less (usually less, to the weary reader) important and enlightening. True the short-story camouflage best—indeed, often excellently well—the discomforting effects such of this germ; for here may be created a personal, subjective, suggestive atmosphere within so small a space that the reader feels the emotional tension as quite sufficient in itself, with no need for plot nor drama. The Italian Modernists, who have much influence over French writers, are especially endowed with this ability. Pirandello, for example, successfully creates an emotion alone, so vital, so poignantly interesting, that one does not realise the lack of an individual behind that emotion; nor is one aware of the nothingness of background-causes or events. Not all novelists, dramatists, or tellers of short sharp tales, have fallen victim to this germ; not even in the United States, where it has been particularly virulent; certainly not in France. But even the dramatists, who should know it least, are not immune—as witness Sacha Guitry, in

* Notice such men as Giraudoux, Bourget, Pérochon, Estaunier.
France; or the author of "Street Scene" here—not to mention Jean Giraudoux, and Eugene O'Neill! Of course it is briefer, perhaps simpler, certainly more up to date, to describe a bit out of one's mental flow, or an isolated touch of life, instead of producing the careful-rounded, unified wholes which were the accepted literary productions of the earlier group dealt with in this disquisition. Curiously enough, as long as the thing described—event or emotion—is isolated, that is all that the Anglo-Saxons seem to care about; Italy and France still seem to prefer at least a touch of real and thrilling drama. In this country, one of the most important transgressors in this line is Gertrude Stein—more brutal, I think than almost any author in France. Equally prolific, she is more vigorous, though less steady and suave, than her fellow-writer Joseph Hergesheimer, who has of late been unusually industrious in presenting to us young feminine Streams of Consciousness. In Italy, the strongest of them and one of the most influential for France, as I have said, is Pirandello—in his capacity of sketch-writer, bien entendu, not as dramatist. He writes intimate, deeply-thoughtful sketches of poignant personal tragedies, usually among the middle classes. He, and those Frenchmen who follow him (and they are many) have no love for great heroics, as had the early 1800's, nor for glorious sacrifices; but in these sketches, French or Italian, often lies a marvelous talent for showing the depth and sharpness of despair in the ordinary human heart. No morbidity in Pirandello (though alas his French disciples often have much of it), no too-sentimental touchingness; but strength and potency of description in a world of dismay and pain. Rather like him

*Note especially, Pirandello, "Et Domani, Lunedi"-
though lacking his peculiarities of style (such as the intensely personal opening, or the extraordinarily pertinent psychological observations with which he begins a tale), is the French writer Louis Hémon, author of, among other things, the tense little volume entitled "La Belle que Voilà", with its sharp analyses and its harsh small tragedies. Ernest Peronchon also excels in this Slices of Life. He, however, adds a surprising dash of atmospheric imaginations to his situations; a cloudy feeling that more has been implied than said, although enough has been said to prevent any touch of frustrated curiosity on the part of the reader. Peronchon's characters, unlike those of most of his contemporary countrymen, are of no especial "world" neither of High Society, nor the demi, nor the middle-classes; although occasionally they are recognisably peasants. As a rule they are creations of themselves; sufficient and sufficiently strange, unto themselves. And in that, they are more unlike those of the 1800's even than are the others of today.

With the desire for speed in writing encouraged by the "Chose Vue", goes naturally the need for hasty production—and, above all, anxiety to be at the head of the line of contemporary fame almost before (sometimes a long way before) the artist has learned his trade. This is as evident in art as in writing, in poetry as in prose. Art exhibitions, in France as well as here, are full of so-called finished works which the artist of the last century, if he were not too deadly ashamed of them to exhibit them at all, would surely have labeled "sketch", "ébauche", or some other name by which we might know that he did not consider them the highest perfection to which he could attain.
b. In poetry, I believe the now-dying phase of Vers-Libre was caused by this same longing to be suddenly well-known (I will not say, famous; some of it looks too much like notoriety). Surely that must be part of the secret back of the astonishing poetry of Robert de Montesquiou-Fezensac, "Chercheur d'émotions rares, et amateur d'un art compliqué".

Such eagerness for public approval is possibly also one of the main reasons why the authors of the present day so often run to what we call the "rubber-stamp", the lack of variety in type of work. It takes time to become either a poet or a novelist; but only half as long to become one of these, as to get oneself known as both. For which reason, writers today have only one specialty; whereas such men as Alfred de Musset et Merrimée, not to say Victor Hugo and Châteaubriand, were artists of a high order in more than one field of literature. With their minds fixed on their work, not on their own fame, the men of 1800-1830 were in no vast haste to come before the public in one "individual" costume. They sang for the joy of singing; wrote prose when the song did not flow to melody; took their time, and produced a thing of beauty for its own sake. Or, if not great enough to bring forth great works, at least they spent much time on polishing and perfecting their little jewels of technique. Quality, not quantity, would have been their slogan—if they had been sufficiently materialistic to think of slogans, which most of them were not. The men of this moment, and of this century thus far, want to get there first. And, as the great ones likewise sincerely desire to put forth good work, they must perforce confine themselves to one branch only.
Among our contemporaries, there is, to be sure, now and then a well-known name which is important in several different lines of writing. Such a name is that of Romain Rolland, the History of Music, the theater, biography, as well as novels for which he is famous, have all tempted his vigorous and powerful pen. And, although to us in this country his popularity may have looked unusually rapid in its growth, it is nevertheless true that in variety of works, and in length both of the production-periods and of the books themselves, he is by no means kin to the rubber-stamp men of whom I have spoken. André Maurois too may come under the same heading as Romain Rolland, in this respect; although the greatest power of Rolland lies in his wonderfully analytic novels, while Maurois has produced his best results in biography. In spite of the fact that the styles of the two are different—very—still, in thought and ideal, in the sympathetic portrayal of human life, in clear and studied analyses, and in a certain gentle irony (less gentle, and almost bitter, in Rolland, less frequent in Maurois), it seems to me that these two authors move in the same wide world. On the other hand, Pierre Villetard, tender and delightful; André Lichtenberger, clever, keen, yet sympathetic; and Julian Greene, with his cruel sharpness of vision and his unsparring descriptions of whatever sentiments and reactions that vision sees—all are men of importance at this present moment, yet all men essentially of a rubber-stamp. Fortunat Strowski says,* * "S'il y a un conseil qu'il faut répéter à nos jeunes écrivains, c'est de se renouveler sans cesse."

And he makes it clear that such a renewing must be above all in variety, in all branches of literature. This variety the

*Fortunat Strowski, "Renaissance littéraire de la France contemporaine", page 168.
D.-5-
Differences
in
Styles-
a. Imagination
vs.
Sordid
Reality.

men of the last century, especially during the first thirty
years, considered necessary, to rounding out their work. Except
for the historians: they found their own field varied
enough. The men of today scorn that advice; but their scorn
looks like a sign of disability, rather than one of disinclina-
tion; a sign of sheer haste, rather than an inescapable
urge in any one direction.

And if there is a difference in spirit between the two
epochs we are considering, that same difference is manifest
in the styles, as much as in viewpoint and subject-matter.
Two main ideals of style can be traced clearly among the men
of our first group; one, full of imaginative charm and a
tender gaiety; the other, somber and sad, despairingly super-
sensitive. Yet both are essentially idealistic; both suave and
graceful, whether in verse or prose. The styles of today revel
in short crisp sentences (very unmusical; very difficult if
one reads aloud); with an extraordinary preference, in many cases
for a dirty realism and a general sordidness—no wonder that
the poets of France are beginning to revolt from it! Apropos
of this, it is interesting to note that the phase of the
risqué—the sex-risqué, if one may call it so—appears to be
wearing itself out in France, after so many generations; but
it seems to have changed its country, to come over to us.
Finally, we are forced to realize, particularly in reading
aloud, that the old styles were pleasanter, more flowing, more
cleverly and wittily worded. Stendhal claimed that the finest
modal for style, was Le Code Civil. Clear, I admit, and un-
ambiguous, but hardly graceful or thrilling. Though I know
that it is a relief to find that ambiguity of phraseology
is not as prevalent in prose as in poetry. Take this Code
Civile style, mix it lightly with Marcel Proust's idea that
art is to "paint life as it comes, without selection," and
one has a fair view of some of the peculiarities of some--
many--of the modern stylists. Proust is by no means the only
one to advocate that amazing choice of "no selection";
which would have been looked upon with utter dismay by the
men of Chateaubriand's time. For if one does no selecting,
whether in writing or in painting, if one makes no lovely or
revealing arrangement of the facts, wherein lies the art?
Representation, in itself, is not art, unless the artist puts
into it a je ne sais quoi of newness, of fresh expression; un-
less he so rearranges things (as Nature has no desire to do)
in truly meaningful proportions that mere life suddenly re-
veals itself as Life with a Capital-letter. Art should be
interpretation, not mere representation. The latter is just
Nature; and Whistler says,* "Nature is very rarely right; to
such an extent that it might be said that nature is usually
in wrong." And the recognition or non-recognition of that
theory lies one of the fundamental differences between style
in the earlier periods, and styles at the present moment.

Even more enlightening than form or style, is a study of
the favorite subject-matter of a man or a period--the
content of the novel or poem. Chateaubriand, Lamartine, de
Vigny--or, later, the grave and clear-cut writer, de Heredia--
chose as essential content of whatever they were writing,
the expression of an ideal; that was the preference of their
times. Now, the preference is for a description, generally an

*Pennell, "Art of Whistler", pg. 91.
analytic description, of types, habi  - an expression for which we are, I believe, indebted to M. André Maurois.

Stendhal first, and now M. Maurice Barres, are responsible for an ideal which M. Rene Doumic, with fiery disapproval, calls "La glorification de l'énergie". An ugly ideal, impressively insinuating, in which brute energy, no matter how used, is put forward as the great glory of mankind. In part, this ideal is probably due to the comparatively recent world-wide passion for sports. It would scarcely have appealed to Madame de Stael— or men like Alfred de Musset! Some other authors, notably d'Annunzio in Italy, Paul Bourget, André Gide, Francis Carco, and Les Marguerite in France, have evolved another ideal, perhaps equally regrettable— "La Théorie du Pardon" (again I use of phrase from Doumic, used in "Les Jeunes" and in a lecture of which I have the notes). In this theory, all immorality, and more particularly that of a wife, must be pardoned and condoned; apparently because her husband, having married her, is therefore responsible for her faults; or sometimes because she simply cannot help being unpleasantly human! These, to be sure, may be considered as modern ideals, expressed in literary form. But they are hardly what those Earlier Writers would have thought "ideals"; and they are usually put forth by modern authors not as ideals, but as type- and case-studies only. But then, no ideal is as attractive to a modern, as any "type-case", just

Most of what has been said of rubber-stamps, styles, and subject-matter, refers to novels, poetry, and short-stories. Biography, history, and philosophy are of different stuff. "Where there is no vision, the people perish"; and it is a
significant and interesting inquiry, to follow from century to century the fall of the Mantle of Vision from one group of authors to another. In the early days of French writings, in the days of Froissart and Commines, that Mantle had fallen from the sang-poets to the historians. Imagination was theirs, wit and dramatic force, and unerring wisdom in the choice of words and incidents; so that atmosphere, character, and charm were created. True facts, not dry statistics; real men, but treated as though their chroniclers were also their creators and knew all their inmost secrets of thought and action. Partly was this due to the real naivete of those men as authors; partly to real genius as writers. In the seventeen-hundreds too it was the historians—closely pressed by the poets—who held the Vision. During our first, eighteen-hundred, period, there were indeed still historians, and great ones they were, too. Yet the mantle of vision did not truly belong to that field, at that time. Rather had it fallen upon the novelists, who were even on those first thirty years of the century, the best dreamers;

Today it seems to be the turn of the Biographers to wear the old dreaming-mantle of vision. For in spite of sporadic romantics in other forms of literature, the writers of biographies are today our real romancers, our greatest dramatists—yes, even those of them who do actually write plays, like Drinkwater, in England. If you want a thrilling drama, with plot and unity, climax and vivid incident, a living hero human in charm, strength, and weakness, you will find them all heartily offered to you in the works of Strachey, Maurois, Ludwig; or, among the still great, but possibly lesser men, look to John Erskine and Charles Maurras, and J. Lucas-Dubreton. These authors
it may be, are less bound to the one-bite-only ideal, because they are concerned with the whole life of a man; and a life is essentially a unified whole, no step of it totally isolated from the rest; which holds true even from the viewpoint of a Behaviorist! Perhaps too the biographer unconsciously feels that he has more time to plot, dream, and create, than has the novelist or dramatist, for after all a life is not the creation of a day, even in the writing of it; he is justified in living awhile with his man. Or possibly these writers knew that their subjects are of enduring importance; that they need not compete with the swift momentary flash, demanding but a short hold on the attention, of the Chose-Vue as brought to us by the cinematograph, the cartoon, the advertising-poster. The life of a great man is not a thing of the moment, but of all time; and so does not need to make the shabby grab at our interest, as do the invented tale or play. Such a being life is vitally important to all who wish to know the world and the growth of mankind, is in itself drama, history, charm, and the Vision—and so its chroniclers may well discuss it with the care, love, and wise craftsmanship, that all these men do give to it.

The method of the modern biographers is much like that of today's historians; both are interpreting, as well as chronicling, facts and figures. And both owe much, for method and inspiration, to the historians of that group of 1800-1830. Madame de Stael, and Thierry, stand probably as the greatest of these. The former, as logically clear and sharp as she was generous and humanitarian, used history largely as a means for expressing her wide ideals for the progress of mankind—the socio-historians, now, tread in her tracks, whether they
know it or not. A formulor of thoughts and theories, she cared more for these than for the description of peoples and epochs. Thierry, on the contrary, though fully as lucid of thought, and certainly as fine a logician as Mme. de Stael, was less interested in theories, however much they might explain or further man's progress, than he was in history as a tale—true, an instructive tale—that is told. Historic truth and exactitude he insisted upon, of course; and serious, reasoned criticism. But he made his study one of peoples rather than of social problems; and mingled a felicitous art of imaginative narrative with the historical facts. So, he built of the whole, something equal in charm to the works of the men of the older times, pointing out to his contemporaries and successors—particularly his successors of today—a new type of history, lit by that truth so neatly stated by Dr. Feissinger, in a lecture on Paul Bourget—* "L'émotion crée la lucidité. Le médecin se berce de l'illusion que la froideur de l'observation est la condition de la justesse. Rien de moins exacte. La froideur fait la sécheresse, et non pas la ressemblance". This same epoch knew other fine writers of history—Guizot, Mignet, Villermé; though the last was more critic than historian. Emotion, observation, and lucidity, they had them all. And although, as I have said, the Vision seemed rather to belong to the novelists of that era, still were the historians of great importance; and much of that importance lay in what they started, as inspiration for the men of our time. And neither they, nor their immediate successors—in biography or history—have been troubled by that Germ Of Short-Snap which has troubled

*Quoted by Fortunat Strowski, "Renaissance Litteraire, Page 133."
other branches of our modern literature.

The study of the novel alone, in its long and most important development, would be sufficient to keep one thoughtful mind busy for a long time. Here, having so many other kinds of writing to discuss, the novel can only be swiftly glanced at. Yet even so it is worth while to take a quick survey of its changes from century to century. The beginnings of the true novel lie in the seventeenth century, although at that time there was still a lack of understanding as to its real purpose, its real business in life as a literary form. The authors—D’Urfé, Mlle de Scudery, La Calprenède—knew neither what to do, nor how to do it; but they had found a new form, destined to become a very great one, from the early 1800s to this moment. Also, their works had charm and verve, plenty of changing events, and richness of imagination, if little reality. In these things, they were nearer to the first of our Two Periods, than to us. In the latter part of that century, these qualities were somewhat dimmed by what one might call the marriage of the novel with the a sort of contemporary history; good for the history, perhaps, but impoverishing for the novel. And then came the birth of two new forms—the Roman de Moeurs, and the Roman de la Nature. That first form of these two, was very closely followed in the 1800-1830 period, dealing as it did with ideas, philosophical theories, and criticism of social abuses; in preference to the portrayals of characters and events, which we know best now.

The eighteen-hundreds, as far as the novel is concerned, should be divided into three sharply differentiated periods: the Napoleonic; the Romantic—dominated by Victor Hugo; and finally the Realistic Schools, from which grew the modern
The Napoleonic age (i.e., the first half of the 1800-1830 period) was one having little vitality or originality—two things which Napoleon trusted not at all in literature, nor elsewhere except in his own hands. Château-briand and Benjamin Constant (whose name so belied his actions, although his ideas were steady enough) were the only novelists worth noting, during those years. But, if the content of books was poor, it seems to me nevertheless possible that the very repression brought to bear on them may have had an excellent effect upon the so-rich era which followed. It seems quite probable that the richness in form, the grace and beauty in style, with which men under the Emperor had to content themselves when they dared not put their best efforts into ideas or theories, may have been in large part responsible for the splendid florescence of the Romantic School.

The various Realistic Schools which sprang up during the last half of the eighteenth century, bring us down to modern times. And here we find two or three types of real importance.

Of these types, one has more or less escaped The Germ—that is, the Roman de la Campagne, successor to the Roman de la Nature. A leisurely, thoughtful set of novels, in content and descriptive powers very like the short-stories of Bazin, Coppée, Maupassant, or Alphonse Daudet. Those tales of the latter half of the last century, however, differ from the present novel of The Land, in that they were describing a people still virile; a group (or rather, group-like) still very much itself, and very proud of that self; a peasantry still up and coming, on the farm. Whereas now, René Bazin, François
Coppée, Anatole Le Braz, and that exquisite describer of
Lorraine, Émile Mousel, who are the foremost men now inter-
ested in the peasants, are writing with all the resigned sad-
ness of men talking about types that are slowly but inevi-
tably passing out of sight—"La Terre qui meurt". Cities and
industrial centers, factories, and the liveliness of mechani-
cal industries, are drawing the youth and strength from the
farms in France. One-man gardens, one-family trades, the indi-
vidual work that made France so intensely an individualistic
nation, are vanishing; and with them (very gradually, to be
sure) the many sharply-defined peasant-types that so delight-
ed the authors of Maupassant's day. And the men of today
write of them regretfully and understandingly; and charmingly
as well; with none of the haste or flurry that would sit so
ill on peasant-thought or peasant-farm.

The Roman de Moeurs is a more personal type than the Roman
de la Campagne. But personal more because the writer takes a
personal interest in it, than because he actually puts him-
self subjectively into his books—though sometimes he does
just that. Irony and pity are the key-notes, both here and in
France; with a decided spice of bitterness, in many cases.
"Strong", "amer", "d'une sympathie chaleureuse", are the ad-
jectives I find most often used by the critics, applied to
contemporary authors, Julian Greene, for example, and Eduard
Rod, are typical as students and painters of harried souls.
And by the way, in view of the present scientific interpreta-
tions of mankind, I think the many-meaningful French word
"L'âme" infinitely preferable to our word "soul" with its
spiritual connotation—in this connection, I mean, bien
entendu! Whether one reads the works of Abel Hermant, lit
with a keen and cutting irony, and René Boyslave whose style is so startling a refutation of Marcel Proust's; or whether one turns to the women, and looks gravely and strenuously at the vigorously-drawn world of Collette Yver, or watches with half-tender, half-baffled amusement Gyp's unhappy and futile characters; wherever one turns, never, never is there any escape from the Problems of the Soul, nor from the atmosphere of shaky social customs, in all classes and all groups. And here, speaking of social, and soul-problems, I should like to ask a question, to which I have myself been unable to find a satisfactory answer, but which seems to me pregnant of many things, more especially as the question is apparently growing less in France, and stronger here:—Why is it that modernism is developing so uncleanly a desire for the description of the soiled? Is it For sheer obscenity? French art had it—Matisse, Renoir, Gauguin; and now our young painters (I would not willingly call them artists) are absolutely crawling with it. French literature had it—and still has, though less. The women, too, both here and there. How can one mind write poems as purely free from the animal-passions as those of Madame de Noailles, books as cleanly touching as some of hers—and then conceive stuff of such repugnant nastiness of detail as some others she, and other women, have produced? Is it the same thing which makes a Stephen Vincent Benet write "David", and then turn to exquisite lyrics? The answer is too deep for me.

Possibly that soiled-desire is in someway connected, by attraction or revolt, it is hard to say which, with the new group that now reigns above nearly everything else,
co-regent with scientific and pseudo-scientific thought—that is, the tale, essay, and general literature of the Child. Neither America, North or South, nor France, Italy, Russia, are free from the fret and worry of him. This is the day of the child; in education, in the home, in books. No country is free from the idea that the child is "father of the man"; and it would seem that, as "father", he must be master of the house. Even in the Russian theater, the child stands out. His poetry, by himself, is in the magazines—his, usually, in England and in France; hers, most often, here. He writes, and paints, and builds sculpture, for public appearance; he who would express himself long before his infant years can possibly have awakened in him anything to express, or to express with; unless he be that most rare of things, a true genius. And not only does he write, but he is written about. Arnold Bennet has produced some inimitably-drawn child-sketches; so delicately done, so deliciously suggestive, that even one wholly out of harmony with the cult of childhood cannot but rejoice in them. And just within the last few months, Thomas Beer has created for us two totally delightful youngsters. Usually, however, the children are more than a little too obvious, too all-pervasive, both here and abroad. Of the adolescent age—here, a real problem; in France, an unhappy group, if one may judge by literature—I am not speaking. Some very sane and wise, some very lovely books have been written of them, in many languages. But practically all such books are written with the straightforward intention of helping to solve a problem, to straighten out the difficulties; and so are not strictly among the child-hood tales per se. The real Cult of Childhood, with a few rare exceptions, is becoming sheer sentimentality; with
here and there what looks like cringing to a master--The Master of the House. Italy is full of it. Though as in France, the greater part of the Italians seem to be singing more or less emotional swan-songs, lamenting (sometimes almost to tears) over their own childhoods. Of the Italians, the two finest, to my mind, are de Amicis and Chiessa. The former is so well known that I could scarcely say anything about him without plagiarising. Chiessa has also his followers in France--his are short, anecdotal reminiscences of childhood and youth, simply told. A proper sentiment, a bit of naïve and affectionate humour; there is nothing dramatic here, nothing deeply moving; but yet, an insight into the everyday emotions of very-young Italian boyishness.

The Italian authors, even when over-emotional, leave us with the feeling that the Italian child is rather a normal creature. About French children, I do not feel so sure; though it is perhaps because it is only the supersensitive, the all-but-morbid child, who interests the writers; and that is why we find so many of that sort in their books. Anatole France, writing of his unique small boy who was himself, shows us a child already foreshadowing the man--or is it only that he was described through that man's grown-up eyes? At least, "mon ami", although precocious, is far more normal, to Anglo-Saxon eyes, than are most of the others. Gyp creates chiefly girls--preposterous, impish, often delightful "enfants terribles", usually with impossible mothers. To me, the youngsters invented by les Marguerites, André Lichtenberger, Bazin, Etaunie, are pitiful; pitiful in spite of the fact that most Frenchmen, speaking of them, appear to consider them the natural thing. Pitiful--and yet they verge on the horrible,
so un-normal are they. They are fit children to become
those self-analytical, egoistic morbidities, which are the
adolescents described by the moderns—particularly by men
like André Gide, Paul Bourget, Jacques de Larretelle, or Louis
Chadourne.

For the most part, the modern theater is as fond of
soul-problems as are the novels; and certainly it revels in
Les Moeurs. Take, for example of the first, "L’invitation au
voyage", by J. J. Bernard. Monsieur Daniel Mornet calls it,
* "D’une simplicité pathétique", and I willingly subscribe
to the simplicity. The outwardly uneventful tale of an utterly
bored young woman whose husband is too business-like—and too
calmly enduring—to satisfy her soul, this play shows plainly
how far a silly woman can go in imagining herself adored
there where in bald truth she has been scarcely noticed;
how far she may dream herself in love with just any man who
has the charm of being unrelated to her—especially by
marriage. She goes nowhere, does nothing, suffers bootless
agonies of loneliness and boredom. And at the end, neither
loving nor loved, she finds herself for comfort and con-
solation into the arms of the hitherto unconsidered husband.
The husband, if he was correctly interpreted as I saw the play
given, has been either astoundingly good at hiding his feel-
ings, or quite pleasantly blind to this tempest in a teapot;
probably the latter.

Problems again, wherever one goes, whatever one does,
whatever one reads, has the simplicity which allied itself
with artistic charm and force disappeared forever from our
sight? Alas, to find problems even when going to the theater—
and to the French theater, too! Has Ibsen done that to us, I

* Mornet—"Histoire de la litterature et de la pensee
francaises contemporaines" p. 156.
wonder? Roughly speaking, the French theater, to my way of thinking, falls into four very definite main groups. First, those—particularly among the Belgians—who follow Maeterlinck into a misty land of graceful shadows, fatefully pursued by the depths of their own strange, inexplicable characters. All pitiful, all bewildered, all in the woods of a fantastic world, which one nevertheless suspects of being Maeterlinck's idea of life. Secondly, there is a wide-spread group in many lands, whose first prophet is d'Annunzio, closely followed by François de Curel. The characters created by these men, in their dramatic changes which are still so obviously attributable to the shiftings of an inwardly consistent nature, remind one forcibly of the theories of Gestalt-psychology, so distinctly are they built on a plan of matching-up their reactions to the objects 'round about them. These characters are as helpless as those by Maeterlinck; but less naively so, for they understand themselves more clearly; they have at least an inkling of the various "patterns" of which they are a part. And though perhaps no more contented, they are more philosophical, less mystified, and occasionally more efficient, about it all. Next, there is the school, probably greater in numbers than any of the other three, which "knows what life is"; cynics, in the sense that they expect no idealistic happiness for those they write about; and have no delusions as to the beauties of the social world. And yet they are idealists, too, for they believe an ideal to be a necessary and a lovely thing, and have no use for men who have no generosity of soul. Idealistic beauty of character, generous and lovely deeds and aspirations, will
fail more, they will lead often to materialistic destruction, no doubt of that; but yet they are worth-while—almost exclusively worth-while, Henri Batzille, at first a classic dramatist, but slowly growing over-enamoured of Symbolism, belongs to this school; and so too does the ironic Anatole France, in his more straight-thinking, practical-minded way. Finally, we have the rather small number of men, like Briex and Hervieu, whose theater would point a moral as well as adorn a tale; who would, in fact, prefer to point the moral. These have the reform-spirit. To this théâtre à cesse belong, naturally, but few writers; it is not a form likely to appeal much to the public, to whom the theater is a thing to enjoy, wherein to escape problems, not seek them. Mind-weary, back-weary people seldom take kindly to being advised or "improved" during their vacation-hours, unless it is done with the enthralling dash and vividness of speech and action of a Molière or a Beaumarchais—qualities unfortunately lacking in the serious-minded, grammatic-of-speech men of this modern time. Aside from these four main types, there are a few straggling extras, impossible to class exactly. Both in France and Italy, for example, there are evidences of a theater of the people; the lack of which J. R. Bloch seemed to feel so heavily, before the war. True, the "movies" are having a heavy hand in this—notice particularly Maurice Chevalier in "Innocents of Paris"; a kindly play, with no psychö-social problem to addle the brain; emotional, merry, sad—and "très people." In Italy, such a theater is a revival—or perhaps actually a survival—of the old-time strolling players. Strolling they still are, and peasant, and age-old in theme.

*Jean-Richard Bloch, "Carnival est mort", essay on the theater.
and joke, if also often extremely topical. What "themes de
people" such strollers, and the cinema, can produce, will like-
wise be a possibility, and a lively one, to the legitimate
stage. Especially in a country like France, where the peasant-
ry are beginning to take their place in a literary world, and
where Le Peuple are eager to better themselves, yet less
anxious to become a part of another (self-styled finer)
class than is true here. We have also always with us the
Reviews; and a sort of play, particularly popular in Paris,
based practically on the Reviews in plan or idea— a play-
of-the-moment. Enormously popular at first sight, with its
ironic wit or broad and timely farce of wording; enormously
entertaining because full of exact knowledge of the very lat-
est in politics—above all intensely national and immediate
politics—society, and art. But, precisely for these reasons
which make for its momentary popularity, qualities which are
as evanescent as the last political blunder or the latest
slang, this theater has produced little or nothing which will
last—unless it be a type. Such men as Sacha Guitry get much
fun out of it, and much publicity; but I doubt if even they
take it very seriously.

As for the theater of 1800-1830, that too was in a transi-
tion period, like the rest of the literature of the time. As
such, it was full of potentialities— for growth, for original-
ities, and for rows! After Diderot, and with Scribe as its
Master of Forms, it was moving, in spite of moments of choler
and resentment, toward the drama—these, and the social-theater,
shining whose greatest and most shining light was Dumas Fils, born too
late to be included in this paper. La Harpe, de Jouy, Marie-
Joseph Chenier, clinging to the strength of a passed age,
to which the first two more rightly belonged, tried to hold
The stage back to the antique and classic, stately and dignified. The censor, the vested-interests of the old-time theater, the actors and actresses accustomed to the conventions of the theaters of Molière, Racine, or Beaumarchais, all united in hostility against the new—especially against that new which was represented by the romantic drama, as led by the fighting-spirit of Victor Hugo, stimulated by the example of England and Germany, heretofor mentioned. That romantic theater, the soi-disant historic drama, eventually triumphed, under Hugo and Dumas Père. Just before this period, had come Diderot, spokesman of Le Drame, that true fore-runner of the modern theater, in that it interested itself primarily in the bourgeoisie, and that it demanded local-color, absence of anachronisms, and appropriate stage-settings, in all of which traits Scribe too rejoiced, as did also, and merrily, that following historico-romantic school. Above all, Diderot and the Romantics gave birth and nurture to the form known as Le Drame, cross between tragedy and comedy, progeny of both. By its situations, critical and difficult, by its struggles between honor and desires, Le Drame (equally alive in the early 1800's and the early 1900's) is child of tragedy. In its delight in wit, in the hope it holds out for a happy ending, in amusing touches, it is not far from comedy. Diderot was firm in thinking that Le Drame should be a moral lesson idea in which some of our moderns have come to agree, and others to find place for ridicule—for, as Doumic says in one of his inimitable lectures, "such a drama has every chance of being most charming—even of being beautiful; but much more, of being a frightful bore!" Perhaps that is why it did not last.

*A series of lectures given during the summer of 1926, of which I have the notes.
long in its earliest form; from it springing both the historic plays, the problem-play, and most of our modern forms.

Of that Romantic-historic drama, Victor Hugo was the mighty protagonist; of the problem-play, Paul Hervieu is one of the most conspicuous and characteristic authors. True, in comparing these two so-different writers, it must not be forgotten that Hugo was a novelist—not a dramatist first and foremost, as is Hervieu in spite of the fact that he opened his literary triumphs in the world of the novel rather than as a playwright. Hugo wrote for the stage in epics and epopees, as he did his novels and poems. No sordid detail of precision of fact, no minute studies, for him! Faguet says of him, "Like a great decorative artist, he paints in frescos, simply, largely, simply". Foreign lands and times, though only more or less accurately drawn, heroes and hero-worship, glorified Hugo's stage. Its people, all in superlatives, whether of good or bad, talked in martial music or in singing sweetness of verse; never in prose, nor prosily. In harsh contrast to this stands Paul Hervieu, the thoughtful, emphatic portrayer of rationalized pessimism. Banal, his plays sometimes are; forced in tone; now and then surprisingly unconvincing in characterization. But always carefully and analytically considered; always the minute case-studies of the student (the disillusioned student) of human life. Modern, with the before-the-war modernism still going today, though there is now a vague breeze of change in the air. Whether writing about the Haut-Monde, the Demi, or the Petit, whether the medium be novel, play, or essay, the modernist writes of his own day and time, examining seriously the psychological and fatal quirks in man and his destiny. In reading modern authors, in all countries, how often we find

* Faguet, "Litterature française", page 261.
the characterisation, "strong and precise student; given to impersonal and logical deduction; careful in detail." Men saying, like Hervieu himself, 1: "It is not the humorous which charms me, it is verity and force."

After studying the theater, it is but natural to turn to poetry, although the modern theater comes nearer to the prose-writers, not only in spirit, but in style. As did not the drama of our First Period? For dramatists of that day still followed the lure of poetry, loved a gracious swing of words, a rich vocabulary, a charming turn of phrase.

In looking over a chronological table of the writings of that period, one has a startled feeling that the literary world was entirely given over to a rivalry in output between Châteaubriand and Mme. de Staël: — 1801, "Atalé," by Châteaubriand; 1802, "Delphine," by Mme. de Staël; 1805, Châteaubriand's "René"; 1807, Corinna," Mme. de Staël; 1809, "Les Martyrs", Châteaubriand; 1810, "de l'Allemagne", de Staël; 1811, "Itinéraire de Paris à Jérusalem", Châteaubriand once more. And now at last, slowly, begin to creep in the other vital names, particularly the historians and critics. Among the poetic writers flourishing during the Consulate, the Empire, and the Restorations, there are very few who have come down to us in living works. Châteaubriand, of course; we have already seen that the times were full of him. The profoundly subtle and piquant Béranger; Lamartine, the exquisite, ardent artist in poetry, whose touch turned everything to gold; and de Vigny the perfect etcher of gems of verse, enamoured of ideas and ideals. And, later, the omnipresent Hugo. But the rest were mainly artisans of style; or dilettante charmers whose works

1. Henning, Introduction to "La Course du Flambeau", p. XV.

were various and vivid; but not men having the deep originality of genius. For example, there was Casimir Delavigne, much admired in his own time for his somewhat declamatory style, habile versification, brilliance of detail—but having an utter lack of original ideas, or perhaps of any ideas. Possibly, however, Delavigne is not an exact example, for since his theater is better known than his poetry. Perhaps Desaugiers is better, lively and sparkling writer that he was, poet of light and graceful loves. Or Parny, pure in style, sceptic, past-master of ironic and witty raillery. "Sparkling, brilliant, witty", these are the adjectives that just naturally come to mind, when writing about the multitude of poets during those years—at least, until the Romantic School comes in, too late to count for this paper. No profound thought, no intimate probing into psychological questions, not very much diving into the waters of symbolism, where so many of our present men are seeking new worlds to conquer in new forms of self-expression.

For, today, because of that desire for new forms, founded on a profound realisation of new depths to express, there is a curious return to the symbolic school, in all its legitimate and illegitimate branches, from Baudelaire and Verlaine to Dadaism. It was felt by the men who wrote on literature, as well as in literature itself, even before the war; it is more felt now. J.R. Bloch, in "Carneval est mort", quotes the Italian artist Papini, explaining Futurism, as saying, "Le Futurisme est bataille contre les vieux et les vieilleries; amour du mouvement et du tumulée. Futurisme est affirmation de la souveraineté de la fantaisie, et dépréciation de la réalité photographique." Especially significant, that last sentence,
Art and poetry are not so far from each other; and I think they are both swifter than the prose-forms to become aware of a change in the spirit and in the fundamental temper of their times. There is, both in France and in America, a turning away from the sensuality that has for so many years been blatant in French writings, and has only lately been conspicuous among English-speaking authors. The carnal spirit has been over all countries—and even now I note, in the New York Times Magazine for September 22, the regrets expressed over the death of a Dutch poet, van de Woestijne, whom the newspaper correspondents cite as having "all the pessimism of post-war youth, their almost carnal sensuality, their weariness of life"; and some significant titles of his works are given, such as "The Man of Mud", "Substrata". I must regretfully admit that I do not personally know the works of this poet; but the notice about him is too indicative of the times not to be remarked. Here in the United States, some of our poets, notably Edwin Arlington Robinson, are returning to a Browningesque form—although hélas they somewhat lack Browning's genius. This is at least a suggestion of a revulsion from the direct-obscene, as also from the narrative-style. In France the change is still more noticeable—and the fight between the young poets and their elders has grown unusually bitter, since the war, killing-off as it did all but the very old and the very-young, has left no middle-aged buffer-group; or at any rate too few of them to bridge adequately the great gulf in attitudes of mind. More even than in the last century the young poets of today are feeling a Mal du Siècle. Some are sane, though extravagant in sentiments and emotions; some, pure mystic; some semi-hysterical; but all are violently react-
against all that has been, as well as from the prose-realisms; all are trying to escape from the everyday, and particularly from the every-generation. It is an escape feverishly sought by a generation whose post-war Weltschmerz, supersensitiveness and general restless discontent, are exasperated by the modern diving into psycho-analysis, and intensified by the realisation that the Era of Idealism which so many looked for after the heroics of the war, was a vague and impossible dream. From Dadaism to faultless lyrical mysticism; from the radiant spiritual candor of Francis Jammes to the sober exaltation of Paul Claudel; from the difficult symbolic sighs of Charles Peguy, to Paul Fort and his rhythmic poetic prose (or is it prose-formed poetry?)—they are all akin; all, as Bernard Fay puts it, "aspirent à se libérer de la servitude du monde extérieur, pour jouir de son âme".

The field of criticism is a very material form of literature, at this present time; yet one treated with a cursioriness very surprising to my mind, by the average writer or editor of histories of literature, In the beginning of the nineteenth century, that field was not fully marked out; men were beginning to look at it, but were as yet hesitant as to what were its rights, duties, and privileges. And yet, one of the wisest critics France has ever known, Villemain, belongs to that period. In writing at all on criticism, one is continually tempted to quote him; he said so much, and so well. This, for example, "Une censure impartiale triomphe des critiques passionées; elle distingue et place les hommes;" (here one thinks of Florian-Parmentier and his "La critique doit hierarchiser les talents"). "Elle répande, elle autorise, ." Villemain, "Discours sur la critique", page 31.
The lessons of taste, if they have become a literary genre, are observed, and the authors who have written on this subject are not respected by us. It seems that justice is the law of every writer, and that the one who writes about books, rather than doing so himself, is not an enemy of nature. Among those who spoke of Whistler, when they cried, "Mais il faut vivre!" he replied, "Je n'en vois pas la nécessité." And take this, likewise from Whistler—"If written in French, would it not sound like Villémain?"—"That writers should destroy writings, for the sake of writing, is reasonable. I should not in any way disapprove of the technical criticism of a man whose whole life was passed in the practice of the science which he criticises; but for the criticism of a man whose life was not so passed, I would have as little regard as you would if he expressed an opinion on law." Villémain himself was indeed a man of letters; a sound and thoughtful writer, his own taste cultivated carefully until it had become, as he said a critic's taste should be, so rare, so fine, so understanding in perfection and beauty, and yet so much a part of himself, as to become a second and unconscious nature. It would be amusing if one might today confront him with Florian-Parmentier—herself a critic, but angrily disapproving of most criticism. Parmentier \\

"Ainsi..." un jour viendra-t-il où la critique sera visité de la grâce, de la flamme vivifiante du génie qui lui rendra la lucidité? Qu'ant à aujourd'hui un être inintelligent, ignare, dépourvu d'imagination ou de sens-

1. Villémain, "Discours sur la critique," pg. 31
sibilité, c'est ce qu'on appelle en général un critique". (Shades of Whistler and Léon Baudet, could anything be more scathing than that?) But Villemain turneth away such wrath, explanitorily. En effet, la critique éclairée ne saurait exister que longtemps après les bons ouvrages, qui l'instruisent de la manière dont elle-même. A l'époque où le premier chez-d'œuvres apparaît, elle n'est pas encore préparée——mais lorsque les grands écrivains——l'ont instruite, alors elle puisse dans l'étude et l'admiration de ces modèles un art plus réfléchi pour apprécier leurs successeurs. The men who followed Villemain, those who were born just a few years too late for me to include them in this early-eighteen-hundred group, such men as Saint-Beuve, were excellent critics, and had already learned many things from "ces grands écrivains; et l'étude de ces modèles". Yet it is interesting to note that Villemain himself, who might well be called (after Boileau, and with Victor Cousin the eclectic philosopher, and historical critic) the founder of literary criticism in France, was as truly great, and as surely a finished critic par excellence as any to come after him, when criticism might be supposed to have become a more finished product. In a sense, I suppose, the angry M. Florian-Parmentier would have condemned those two earlier critics, Villemain and Cousin, as "classics"——creatures for whom he appears to guard a particular dislike——; for they were both lovers of skilled workmanship and of accomplished works; and had perfected their taste by a study of the great point of view of men of all times, already renowned. To M. Parmentier, as to a great many others at this moment, an admiration for The Classic——

1. Villemain, "Discours et mélanges littéraires", pg. 34.
especially in the field of criticism, has done much harm to literature, because, to judge a work of art according to a priori rules, leaves no room for understanding of new departures, and so limits "good stuff" to those works that resemble things already done and recognised. None of us, however, may love "understood" works of art, in which the artist has truly learned the technique of his trade, however we may regretfully deprecate the casting-aside of all rules of the trade, no one of us, however "classic" his tastes, dares deny that the past of criticism (but not under such men as Villermain and Cousin) has given M. Parmentier and his friends good reason for their bitterness. Barye, 1. most perfect and exquisite sculptor, struggled desperately, and for a long time vainly, against a world of criticism which found his loveliest things "propos- terous", because his time thought that only the human figure had a right to representation in sculpture, and could not see that the decorative element (Barye's mightiest genius) was at all important, or even a praiseworthy thing, in animal-statues.

Whistler, I have already too much quoted; and we know what classic-criticism did to him. Music, too, from Wagner to jazz (to keep only within the modern), has always drawn back its skirts from innovations—evidently fearing, and not without reason, that such new types were among the types of monster which we "first endure, then pity, then embrace". And in all this, it is but natural that literature should have done its share of misrepresenting the new. Yet, would even Parmentier, I seriously wonder, want all criticism formed by his favorite, Intuition?

There are contemporary critics who should satisfy him in this respect—some rather good ones, indeed. Paul Scudery, the

"critique battailleur", or the younger man, G.L. Toutain who prefers to make his studies "intuitional, and according to metaphysics". Sounder and safer, in the long run, is the criticism du bon gout, if only because less personal—plenty of the purely personal-intuitional form will always creep in between the lines, as the men of 1800-1830 well understood. They would have smiled rather pityingly, and perhaps with some little irritation, at that "modernism."

At present, it seems to me that those two types of criticism—let us call them, for convenience, classic and intuitional—express themselves for the most part in two different fields, the classic preferring to do it in books, and the other putting its main efforts into reviews. This of course can not be arbitrarily said to cover all——. Where M. Léon Daudet stands, for instance, there can be no doubt, and yet he puts his criticisms in books as well as in magazines; and both M. Fortunat Strowski and M. René Doumic have been found writing for the Reviews; the former, even in English Reviews, as also has M. André Maurois, whose interest for us however lies elsewhere. From the Libelles of the last two centuries, to the Mercures and Feuilles-libres today, always have the Reviews been the ironic discouragers, or the enthusiastic欢迎ers, of newcomers—men or ideas—in the press. But always are their ideas more or less ephemeral; though it has often been they who put a man in the way of getting a pension which left him free of worldly care in the old days, or of being stayed and comforted by prizes, in these. Possibly one of the reasons for the unstable quality of review-criticism, probably not known to Villemain's day, is its extreme vulnerability in the line of give-and-take——
you give me your support, and I'll take you into the good graces of the public. Doumic speaks mockingly of this in his delightful chapter on "les cent quarante et un", in "Les Jeunes", where he points out so many young men whose works, "brilliant, astounding", can be found in the Roaring Reviews but nowhere else. It is an interesting fact that Doumic's book, published in 1895 in its first edition, hails as really important (in spite of the praise of their fellow-youths) just those men whom we look upon now as truly worth-while; André Gide, for example, and Paul Adam. At the same time, it is Doumic's own quotations from Les Jeunes themselves, in praise of each other, that show us that they too are sometimes right. On page 285, for instance, Doumic gives us, quoted, "Les amis de M. Albert Samain savent de lui des poèmes qui ont la rigide perfection de ceux de M. Leconte de Lille; et ils en savent qui ont la beauté plastique de J. M. de Heredia". And, "Ronsard aurait signé les vers de M. Raymond de la Talhade". And behold, for those same traits are those men acclaimed, now that they are grown-up and recognized! At any rate, we may safely say that the art of criticism has enormously spread since Villermain; and that it is immensely influential, and necessarily so. Villermain and his day made it very solid, very serious, very authoritative—and extremely fine and worth-while. Today's sometimes yields to too great a temptation to follow a parti-pris; like M. Thibaudet, who, though sound and sincere, cannot refrain from symbolism; and who darkens his own straight-thinking for us by too modern a phraseology, too subtle an ideology. Or like André Gide, whose own works now and then make us wonder if he hasn't too great a trust in the new, simply because it isn't old. But such slips are
human; and, truth to tell, they are amusing and intriguing in themselves. Sometimes—often—great injustices have been done; but by both types, and that cannot well be helped, seeing that a critic is a fallible man. But of all forms of literature, it seems to me that literary criticism is one of the most deeply important; and one of the most delightful to read, whether unshakently moral and unpardoning anti-slipshod and anti-morbid, with M. René Dousi; or hotly unrelenting and sarcastically iconoclastic, with M. Léon Daudet and M. Florim-Parme-tier.

In thinking over all this mass of differences between our two important groups herein discussed—1800-1830, 1900-1930—two points have grown, to me, increasingly noticeable: the immense gulf in point of view as students and as writers; and the astonishing way in which both groups run true to form, as Frenchmen.

The earlier group was a fellowship of scholars, students of the classics, widely humanitarian in studies and in sympathies; that of today is a generation of erudite men, specialists above all (as those older men emphatically were not), eyes fixed on the minutie of detailed facts in their own fields rather than on the broader, deeper inter-relations of such facts for mankind. It seems to me that this difference in point of view can be traced clearly through the three notable periods, late 1700's, early 1800's, early 1900's. The 1700's initiated the habit of worrying about social and moral questions—looking at them, however, en masse, with an eye to Man, not men. And they searched not for psychological reasons, but for a way out of the problems, a real solution for human nature, very objectively. During the 1800's those questions were already becoming subjective, although
they were still considered problems to be solved, not merely probed for causes; subjective, yes, but idealistic still, and broad in philanthropy. Today (and notably also in the last years of the last century), literature is insisting that there shall be problems of the "soul," analytical, explanatory, psychological problems to be probed, particularly from their more brutal side; and that with little care for solving them, or for any way of getting out from under the brute. The solution of the unhappy questions of life, which was of intense personal and humanitarian interest to those early men, has little place in the writings of these moderns. They have washed their hands of solutions--have left them to the sociologists. They turn up the hidden dirt, but refuse to sweep it away; they prefer destruction to construction. And especially do I think that, in comparison with those others, they are enamoured of knowledge rather than of wisdom. Exceptions there are, of course; but this is true of the great majority--of the general spirit, certainly.

And yet, as I have said, they do run true to form, even today. First and foremost, the French writer is a great writer, a splendid technician in his chosen field. 1800 or 1900, he very seldom is over-careless, or treats his medium of expression as though it mattered to him not at all. He has, as Faguet would say, "Le respect de sa plume"; with the natural result that he is almost invariably worth reading, and not often a bore. In those places where neither content nor style may appeal in themselves to some particular reader, even then he is frequently forced at least to admire the writing as such, the author's method of handling his subject. So too both periods--and all other periods of
French literature—are animated by a swift intellectual curiosity, sharpened and disciplined through long student-years spent in reading, thinking, writing; in merciless keen logic, whereby the authors learn not only to understand, but also to make himself surely understood. One other quality have these two periods in common—the tenacious, undimmable French trait of—unexpectedness! That quality of having diverse qualities. Few French authors, or lecturers—and therein lies their charm—will willingly create the banal, the expected. Stimulating turn of phrase, or unusual theory, it is the different that he will achieve. Not only because he seeks it (M. Hervieu, for example, quite pointedly does not seek it; and unfortunately he often arrives at that everydayness for which he strives!), but because it is in the French character to write of universal things looked at through the racial glasses of the individual. And each underlined word ought to be written in capitals.

Intellectual curiosity, fine technique, strong logic, that is one inalienable side of the French character,

evident in both periods. The other side, equally evident in both, is the mystic, the enthusiast, the Great Lover of heroism and of generosity of spirit, for their own unpragmatic sake; the lover of La Panache, the sweeping white plume of Henri de Navarre; and the dreamer of ideals, for whom Bergsonian Intuition may be no dream, but a living fact.

Rabelais and Bergson, de Musset and André Gide, Madame de Staël and Madame de Noailles—all French, all Masters of Words—all unhackneyed!

Finis!
I. Introduction-

Schools and counter-schools-

All history of art, sociology, or literature, shows that man's forward progress is made up of ebbs and flows, schools and counter-schools, an unceasing swing from the classic and conventionalised forms, to new forms casting off old rules, and then a pendulum-swing back to the old, when the new has become too conventionalised itself. So it has been with all French literature; and each high-tide swing came before or after, an in-between, transitional era. Both the groups with which we have to deal in this paper—that from 1800 to 1830, and that from 1900 to 1930, are such transitional periods.

II. Influences exercised over each group by its preceding period-

The first group discussed, is most certainly a transition day. It seems probable that the present one is also; although that cannot be stated so certainly, since it is still contemporary, and there are many signs which point both for and against such a theory. However that may be, the study of the preceding groups, or periods, as influences, is highly important.

The last of the eighteenth century was an age of study, high humane aspirations, not rebellion against unjust authorities. As such, it impressed Napoleon, and his immediate followers to the throne, as dangerous; so that a very strict censor was kept over the press, thus making for a literature strong in grace, beauty of form, charm of phraseology; but weak in original thought, liberal plans, except for the very few
very strong minds that dared defy them, often to their own cost, but to the good of literature and thought. The beauties thus engendered (since beauty alone was permitted to the authors by the censor) and the traditions of form and study from the late 1700's, carried on through the 1800's, practically to the end of the century, working with especial force of course on those immediately following—our first group. As for the influences which the late 1800's exercised over our second period, they were various. From the Realists and Naturalists, we have pessimism from Analysts and Psychologists, and Impressionists, we have taken care of detail and subjective research into "soul problems." Balzac and Zola have their followers today. The historians of that time—Taine, Littre, Renan—have particularly influenced today's biography-forms.

III. Direct Comparison of the Two Groups—

Besides the influences of the preceding periods, there are an infinity of immediate influences to be studied. The first of these is the effect of censorship. The 1800-group, as we have said, was overwhelmed by Napoleon; whereas the present has little censorship save criticism and public opinion.

Another strong influence is the Spirit of the Times—For the first group, this spirit made chiefly for high ideals, the restless discontent of le Mal du Siècle, and an eager search for the happiness of all mankind—this, particularly, because Napoleon's wars kept all thinking men helpless, dismayed, morbidly sensitive. Today, demanding force and an objective research by its authors, makes for a logical pessimism. Châteaubriand, the great writer of poetic-social beauty and idealism, seeking relief from Weltscherz and Napoleon in beauty of
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Dreams, compares interestingly with Bourget of today, whose cynical wistfulness, and minute studies of the dirtiest and saddest of human problems, so clearly represents modern ideals and methods in literature. If Chateaubriand dreamed too much, then Bourget and his school are too lacking in dream-vision.

III.A. Class-differences-

With the exception of a few great names of simple family, such as Villenain, Cousin, Victor Hugo, most of the writing of our First Period was done by the aristocracy, because the Bourgeoisie were too much occupied in Napoleon's armies, while the peasants were not yet truly literate. In the last of that century, the Bourgeoisie were the important authors; they were used to writing and thinking, and above all to social and psychological problems, such as the time desired. Today, war and the too-easy or too-uncertain life of a capitalistic class have again lessened the hold of the Bourgeoisie, though they are still tremendously strong in literature; a literate peasantry, and a literate lower-class, are beginning to make themselves also felt in the field of letters.

B. Literary Influences-

During our First Period, the greatest literary influences for France came from the just-preceding generations, or from the still-older times, of England and Germany—though contemporaries in those lands were also important. Especially did the translating of Shakespeare, Goethe, Schiller, influence the escape of the French stage from the over-strict bonds of convention. As the great German thinkers influenced French thought, widening its horizon in metaphysical speculation. In these modern times, French writing is influenced
by a quantity of other literatures, from the morbid but technically lucid works of the Russians, to the emotional, brilliantly-written, sentimental short-stories from Italy.

Comparison of Forms and Styles

The men of the older day had—and took—time to make their works charming and dignified; they were in no hurry for fame, and loved their work more than renown or money. Now, our men must hasten to make themselves known; their writings must compete with the cinema, advertising-poster, cartoon. This, combined with an undue desire to appear swiftly and violently before the public, has wrought havoc with beauty of style; and has made for a rubber-stamp type of author. It has also, with an astonishing interest in psychological problems of the individual, produced the "Slice of Life" or "Stream of consciousness" idea, wherein an author cuts out from the flow of life, one lone happening—not necessarily dramatic or even interesting—calls it a "Slice of Life", and presents it. These are intensely well written in Italy; fairly well done and very logical, in France; morbidly impressive in Russia; merely isolated and astray, in the English-speaking countries. Such haste in production is also quite possibly expanatory of Vers-Libre, Rubber-Stamps (Romain-Rolland, and Andre Maurois are unusual exceptions to this Rubber-Stamp mould), and short-stories; of works such as those of Viletard, Andre Lichtenberger, Julian Greene or Robert de Montesquieu-Fezansac, all of whom are conspicuous ly men of one-type works only. That haste, together with the present interest in case-studies and probing among the dirt of human minds, is also responsible, in part at least, for the dry, sharp, clear-cut styles of our time, so different from the
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Spaciousness, and graceful flow of worlds at that older date. Today makes no artistic selection; it merely—"follows nature"; in other words, agrees with Proust, where day-before-yesterday preferred Whistler's selective choices.

Subject-Matter

The days of Chateaubriand and de Vigny, chose world-wide ideals as their interest; today is more materialistic. We have now the glorification of human energy (no matter how misdirected) from Stendhal, and Barres; an undue tolerance for sex-mishaps, from Gide, Bourget, les Margurites; and all modernists are over-fond of detail, subjective or objective, and of psychological study.

Literary Forms—1. Growth of History and Biography—

The vision of ideal and dream has come down through the ages, from early historians, through the novelists, and today back again to historians and biographers—particularly the latter. The true beauty of work and thought, the true dreaming of wide ideals, lies today chiefly in the works of such men as Maurois, Drinkwater, Dubreton, Maurras, whose writings have time to be done with leisurely perfection, because, dealing with men of long-lived importance, they need not compete with the breathless speed of the Chose-Vue. Another group that need not haste, are the writers of le Roman de la Campagne. Those of today are dealing with a slowly-dying peasantry; yet their work too must have the unhurried dignity befitting such subjects.

2. The Novel—

The beginnings of the Novel lie in the hands of the 1700's, Mile. de Scudéry, and de la Calprenède—nor did that day yet know what the novel really meant as a literary form.
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came le Roman de Moeurs, still living, followed by the Roman de la Nature, now the Roman de la Campagne; and finally, the true novel-forms, during the 1800's - The Napoleonic era, with much form and little matter, except among the very few; the great Romantic group, with Victor Hugo; the Realistic Schools, from which sprang the problem-types of the present. These problem-types we find everywhere; they search, but not for ideals, they propound questions, but seek no answers; they love to dig in the dirt.

4. The Cult of the Child-

Of all the distinctly modern inventions, Child-literature is the most blatantly new. The Child has sprung to the forefront. America and England have him -- the English variety usually less obnoxious than the American. Italy writes well of him, and not often too sentimentally -- especially Chiesa, de Amicis, Barrili. The French product is a horribly over-sensitive, over-sophisticated small person -- although Anatole France makes him charming, and Gyp makes him really drole.

5. The Theater-

The modern theater goes in for problems, as does the novel, and quite as uselessly, as far as solutions are concerned. There are, roughly speaking, four classes or kinds of French drama -- the mystical-mysterious, under Maeterlinck; the personality-problem, after d'Annunzio; the Idealist-cynic, loving generous souls but knowing them doomed; and the théâtre à thèse. A few other scattering types there are, like the lighter efforts of Sacha Guitry, or the not yet decisive théâtres du peuple. The theater of the early 1800's was light, unoriginal.

Poetry, like everything else, being under strict censor during the 1800's, was gay, witty, lovely, but not deep in thought.
except among the very few. The best poets of that century belong to the latter half—from 1850, or thereabout, down. Aside from Chateaubriand, that First Period had few—Lamartine.
VII.

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de Vigny, Béranger. The poets of today are in violent revolt against realism and materialism; they have built themselves a quantity of schools—a return to Symbolism; Dadaism; religious-fanaticism, or mystic-ideals; vers-libre—anything that is "different", and quite un-practical. Some of it very lovely and musical—music being, according to them all, their chief goal.

Criticism—

Criticism is, to me, one of the most important fields of literature; and one of the most neglected by most histories of writing. Villemain, himself one of the first and finest, held that it should be only in the hands of those who were themselves engaged in the art they criticised; and Whistler thought with him. Villemain also believed that criticism was dependent for its importance on the good taste of the critics, developed by serious study of the fine old authors—as his own had been, and that of Victor Cousin, his nearest-of-kin in that line. Many of the men of today, and notably M. Florian-Parmentier, G. L. Toutain, Paul Scudéry, disagree with Villemain, and with the others of that 1800-1830 period, insisting that "personal intuition" is the one true touchstone for the critic. Another present-day group, lead by Doumic, Gide, and Strowski, follow the men of the older day.

As a rule—though with exceptions—the classic-minded critics write books; the Intuitionists confine themselves to reviews. But, in whichever group, criticism as a literary field has spread immensely since the days of Villemain—though none have improved on him.

Conclusion—

There is one main difference, and one great likeness, between the writers of our First and our Second Periods—The difference lies in the wider, more scholarly, more humanitarian attitude of
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The older men, who were primarily interested in an idealistic, philanthropic solving of the great sad problems of human life, and only secondarily so in the analytical case-study side of them. The men of the present are seeking underlying, psychological causes, not solutions; they are interested in knowledge for its own detailed sake, not in wisdom, and wise humanities.

The likeness lies in the fact that both are, in common with all French authors of all times, most excellent technicians in their trade; logical thinkers, yet great dreamers and idealists—but always and above all, fine Writers.

FINIS.
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