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FRENCH - THESIS

A study of four contemporary French writers
and the position of their work among the
tendencies of contemporary French literature.

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OUTLINE

INTRODUCTION.

The problem to be investigated - A study of four contemporary French writers and the position of their work among the tendencies of contemporary French literature.

B O D Y.

PART I. - Facts showing Edouard Estaunié as a writer of the psychological novel.

Introduction.

1 - Life and training of Estaunié.

A - early life and influences.

- 1 - austere ancestors.
- 2 - strict home environment.
- 3 - student at Jesuit college of Dijon.
- 4 - student at Ecole Polytechnique of Paris.

B - literary and active life since that time.

- 1 - engineer in "Postes et Télégraphes".
- 2 - director of Paris telephone service.
- 3 - head of telegraph service between English and French lines during the war.
- 4 - in charge of commission to aid Alsace-Lorraine after the war.
- 5 - avocation as writer during this period.

Body.

1 - Writings of Edouard Estaunié.

A - Measure of their success.

- 1 - Crowning of "L'Empreinte" by French Academy in 1895.
- 2 - award of "Vie Heureuse" prize to "La Vie secrète", 1908.
- 3 - award of "Prix Née" by Academy (1919).
- 4 - election to French Academy (1923).
- 5 - opinions of critics.
 - a- H. Bidou
 - b- P. Trocmé
 - c- M. Prévost

- B - The principal themes of Estautnié's work.
 - 1 - Discipleship.
 - a - as shown in three books:
 - 1' "L'Empreinte".
 - 2' "Le Ferment".
 - 3' "L'Épave".
 - 2 - The interior or secret life.
 - a - best shown in "La Vie Secrète".
 - 3 - Loneliness.
 - a - illustrated by stories in "Solitudes".
 - 4 - Suffering.
 - a - best shown in "L'Appel de la Route".
- C - Estautnié as a psychologist.
- D - His style.
- E - His ideas on the novel.
- F - His influence on contemporary thought:
 - 1 - French.
 - 2 - American.

- PART II. - Facts showing Maurice Genevoix as :
- 1 - A war writer of distinction.
 - II - A regional novelist.

Introduction.

- 1 - Life and training of Genevoix.
 - A - early life spent in Loire region.
 - B - student at Ecole Normale of Paris.
 - C - officer at the front.
 - D - several months spent in hospital.
 - E - voluntary service in Franco-American Fraternity Commission.
 - F - return to Châteauneuf-en-the-Loire.

Body.

- 1 - ~~Thetrag~~ writings of Genevoix.
 - A - Reason for which written.
 - B - Subjects emphasized in them.
 - 1 - his own life at the front.
 - 2 - the sufferings of the soldiers.

- C - Measure of their success.
 - 1 - opinions of critics.
 - a - Lavisse.
 - b - Lanson.
 - c - Firmin Roz.
 - d - R. Maublanc.
- D - Genevoix's war books as literature.
 - 1 - form
 - a - construction.
 - b - style.
 - 2 - content.
- E - Comparison with other war books.
 - 1 - "La Vie des Martyrs" by Duhamel.
 - 2 - "Le Feu" by Barbusse.
 - 3 - "Gaspard" by Benjamin.
 - 4 - "Les Croix de Bois" by Dorgelès.
- F - Influence on modern thought.

II.- Genevoix as a regional novelist.

- A - Reason for writing this kind of novel.
 - 1 - reaction against war theme.
 - 2 - great love for Loire region.
- B - Measure of success in this field.
 - 1 - award of Prix Blumenthal to "Némi des Rauches".
 - 2 - award of Goncourt prize to "Rebeliot".
 - 3 - favorable criticism by reviewers.
- C - Comparison with:
 - 1 - "La Brière" by A. de Chateaubriant.
- D - Genevoix's regional novels as literature.
- E - Influence on modern thought.

PART III.- Facts showing Pierre Hamp as a writer of the social novel.

Introduction.

I.- His training in sociology.

- A - Early years as pastry-cook (b. 1876)
- B - Student at "Université Populaire" in Paris.
- C - Several years as railroad employee.

D - Service in the war.

E - Work as apostle of the working-men.
1 - mediator between capital and labor.
2 - sociological writings.

Body.

1. Writings of P. Hamp.

A - Reason for which written.
1 - as a means of securing justice for the workingman.

B - Measure of their success.
1 - opinions of critics.
a - Dial. e - N.Y. Times.
b - Nation f - Beaunier.
c - Survey g - Hageot.
d - Freeman h - Crémieux.

C - Comparison with writings of Emile Zola.

D - Hamp's writings as literature.
1 - influences.
a - his own youth.
b - the Goncourts.
2 - qualities.
a - verisimilitude.
b - sincerity.
c - subjectivity.

E - Influence on modern thought.
1 - French.
2 - American.

F - The ideas of Hamp.
1 - Contempt for literature as an end.
2 - conviction that we live through the sufferings of others.
3 - advocacy of a period of apprenticeship.
4 - interest in problems involved in the introduction of machinery.
5 - his religion of work.
6 - "la pathologie du travail".
7 - his hatred of war.
8 - his opposition to love and women.

PART IV.- Facts showing André Maurois as a writer of the biographical novel.

Introduction.

1.- Life and training of Maurois.

A - Liaison officer between the French and English armies during war 1914-1918.

Body.

1. The writings of André Maurois.

A - Measure of their success.

1 - award of Prix Paul Flat in 1953.

2 - opinions of critics.

a - P. Roz.

b - New Statesman.

c - N.Y. Times.

d - Spectator.

e - Bookman.

f - Atlantic.

B - Maurois' writings as literature.

1 - qualities.

a - imagination.

b - gentle cynicism.

c - humour.

d - psychological analysis

C - Comparison of Maurois' "Ariel" with a similar book.

1 - "Glorious Apollo" by E. Barrington.

a - points of similarity between the two books.

b - points of difference.

D - Influence on modern thought.

1 - French

a - life of Litat by Guy de Fourtales.

2 - German

a - life of Heinrich Heine.

3 - Canadian

a - E. Barrington's "Glorious Apollo", "Exquisite Perdita" and "The Divine Lady".

4 - American

a - Elinor Wylie's "The Orphan Angel", an imaginary life of Shelley in America.

CONCLUSION.

The conclusion reached by study of the facts given in the foregoing pages is that the writings of E. Estaunié, M. Genevoix, F. Hamp, and A. Maurois hold an important place in contemporary French literature.

INTRODUCTION

Judging the literature of one's own time is a precarious task. Contemporary French fiction is a particularly difficult field because of the addition of a war literature to the already complex literary history of the period.⁽¹⁾ The four years of war had another important effect upon literature besides adding to it a new-old genre - the "roman de guerre". They tore down many literary idols, and dispersed many literary schools. In the place of these respected institutions youth proclaimed its freedom to write, untrammelled by traditions. For a few years an impartial observer could not detect the growth of any new schools to which "les jeunes" were attaching themselves. Gradually, however, the normal instincts of admiration and imitation reasserted themselves and one perceives the quiet growth of tendencies and schools. Some of these are only slightly different portraits of old friends but others indeed are new faces.

Among the groups of writers who are influencing

1. La littérature française en ce quart du XXème siècle apparaît comme une mer agitée où toutes sortes de courants s'entrecroisent, se heurtent et se forment une masse bouillonnante dont l'écume et les vagues rendent bine difficile l'observation des mouvements profonds et durables. Bernard Fay in "Les Maîtres de la littérature française contemporaine", published in The Romantic Review, April-June 1926.

contemporary French literature, now that Anatole France and Paul Bourget are no more, may be mentioned that of the Nouvelle Revue Française. This coterie was in existence before the war, but since 1918 it has increased in vigour. It numbers Proust(1), Gide, Giraudoux, Jules Romains and Pierre Hamp among its most important members. Each of these men is a sufficiently original writer in his particular field to elicit profound respect from the literary public, and together they cement a union which is one of the strongest in present-day literary France. A publishing house under this group's patronage is presenting to the public the French writers whom it considers the most worth-while and is in addition devoting itself to securing worthy French translations of the best English and Irish writers of to-day.

In this study of four noteworthy writers of the contemporary French novel, I shall treat only one of this group - Pierre Hamp. As I shall attempt to show later, he seems to me to be characteristic of it in his following of a tradition in French literature, while at the same time adding to it a distinctly original note.

Marcel Proust, too, though not directly, has a slight part in this thesis through one of his disciples, André Maurois. Maurois was influenced by Proust and in his turn will undoubtedly have a strong effect upon literature.

Another of the writers I have chosen, Edouard Éstaunié, is

1 Proust died in 1924, but his influence is still strongly felt.

also similar to, though I believe has not been influenced by André Gide, one of the Nouvelle Revue Française group. Although not so widely known a psychological writer as André Gide, Estaunié is, I consider, fully as capable a one. Gide's influence is uppermost now, but Estaunié cannot fail to be ranked very high by posterity.

And finally I give a place in my study to a war novelist, Maurice Genevoix. This writer has produced five books about one sector of the French front, which are an epic in their simplicity and sustained literary value. He, like Estaunié, is not a self-assertive author and must wait until time reveals his worth.

In this thesis I shall endeavor to show that the four novelists I have chosen are indicative of the trend of contemporary French literature and that they have this in common, that while continuing certain traditions of the past, they add to French literature something new and original.

EDOUARD ESTAUNIE

In Edouard Estaunié we find a student of his fellow-men. He is a writer who concerns himself not with social studies of a scientific nature as does Pierre Hamp, nor with a few great men as does André Maurois, but with the minds of people of the kind almost anyone of us might meet. As Estaunié is a man who believes that artistic work is sure to manifest itself, he has not concerned himself with seeking honors for his work. He has laboured rather to make it satisfy his own artistic conscience.

The result of this policy and of thirty-five years in which a few hours a day were given to writing is M. Estaunié's contribution to French literature - ten novels, two volumes of short stories, and "Petits Maîtres", a book of impressions written after some time spent in Holland. Throughout his work one feels the author studying his characters as a physician studies his patients. He seeks the reason for visible effects and yet hesitates to pronounce a judgment for fear of overlooking some hidden factor. Men's exterior life Estaunié considers as but a cloak for the deeper interior one. Keen psychological insight and a strong idealism mark all his writings.

M. Estaunié's family and his training account for much of his attitude toward life. Both his grand-fathers were very stern men. His father's father, although a native of the cheerful province of Gascony, was an austere

Life and Training
Jansenist, and his mother's father, from Burgundy, was leading a puritanical life when Edouard was a boy. What understanding the lad might have received from his own imaginative father was lost, as he died before the child's birth. Edouard was brought up under the direction of his maternal grand-father and was spared none of the rigor which M. Monthieu, converted after a very worldly youth, thought suitable.

Estasunié's mother managed to bring some tenderness to him, however, and his gratitude to her was shown by many little actions. For example, as a boy he saved the few pennies he gained for excellence in class work at the Jesuit college of Dijon for two years that he might buy a present for his mother. During the time he later spent at the Ecole Polytechnique in Paris he returned every Sunday to visit her. The dedication of "Les Choses Voient" is a tribute to his gentle mother whom he lost while he was writing this book.

Estasunié's years at the Jesuit college of Dijon serve as the background of "L'Empreinte" and the years then passed at the Ecole Polytechnique assisted him in painting the characters of "Le Ferment". His boyhood and youth, while brightened by some pleasures, were on the whole more strictly regulated than even the French code of child discipline requires.

Since his completion of the course at the Ecole Polytechnique, Estasunié's life has been chiefly an active one.

Active Life his many interests seem to have been, however, not a hindrance but an advantage to his writing. He became an engineer of the "Postes et Télégraphes"; he was appointed director of the telephone service of Paris; later he was made principal of the "Ecole d'Application", a school of engineering. During the War 1914-1918 he was head of the telegraphic service between the English and French lines, and after the war, had charge of a commission to aid Alsace-Lorraine.

In the midst of these activities Estaunié continued to give two hours a day to writing, and the result, like that of Charles Lamb who could give only his evenings to literature, is eminently satisfactory. Some critics say, and it is perhaps true, that the numerous contacts made in his varied positions gave to Estaunié's creative faculties a wider range of characters from which to select than he would have had by devoting himself to letters.

Awards for his literary Work The first novel of this author, "Un Simple" (1890), appeared six years after he left the Ecole Polytechnique. His third novel, "L'Empreinte" (1895-1896), was crowned by the French Academy and "La Vie Secrète" (1908) was awarded the prize of the "Vie Heureuse". In 1919 his works won the Prix Née, awarded by the Academy for the most original work in thought and form. Although Estaunié's reputation as a writer was becoming more and more widespread, yet his selection to the French Academy did not take place until 1925. This is largely explained by his character which recoiled from seeking favor among the

Academicians.

Henri Bidou in his account of Estaunié's reception into the Academy says that M. Estaunié is one of the most severe and sombre of the French novelists. He continues, "le plus sombre des romanciers a eu, le deux avril, la plus brillante, la plus frivole, la plus élégante des réceptions..... Les personnages de M. Estaunié sont construits en profondeur, et leurs plans secrets sont en discordance avec leurs façades muettes." (1) P. Trocmé maintains he is "le plus docte des psychologues, mais un psychologue austère..... Il n'est pas de plus probe écrivain, ni de plus profond. Il a fouillé la vie en scientifique, en érudit." (2) Other critics (3) agree that Estaunié's character studies are profound and that he is a master of psychological analysis. In his early novels, this sombreness and depth of analysis sometimes have a depressing effect on the reader. Both with his growth in other respects, increased skill in the use of this power is also noticeable. Time and labor have taught him that a study is most effective when the writer realizes when to stop his analysis.

In explaining the work of Edouard Estaunié an approximate grouping of his novels is all that is possible. We

1 "La Réception de M. Edouard Estaunié à l'Académie Française" par Henri Bidou, "Revue des Deux Mondes", April 15, 1925.

2 "Les Nouveaux Académiciens", P. Trocmé, "Revue Bleue", Dec. 15, 1923.

3 vide "Discours de M. Estaunié à l'Académie", Marcel Prévost, "Revue de France", Apr. 15, 1925. Also "Histoire de la littérature française contemporaine", by René Lalou, p.p. 625-626.

shall consider first the theme of discipleship as he treats it. Next, we shall endeavor to explain his inquiries into the interior or secret life. Third, we shall speak of Estaunié as a follower of the romanticists in his attitude on the importance and the solitude of the individual. And finally we shall treat the writings that best interpret his ideas on suffering.

Estaunié has given us in "L'Empreinte", "Le Ferment", and "L'Epave" three novels concerned with the first of these subjects. "L'Empreinte" is a skilful study of the effect of one type of education on a young man's mind. In this book Estaunié freely uses his memories of the Jesuit collège in which he began his education. The story follows minutely the changes in the soul of Léonard Clan beginning with the time when as a student in the Jesuit collège of Nevers, he tries to decide his vocation and carrying him on to the much later period when he enters the Jesuit order. While he is attending the Jesuit school, Léonard Clan is strongly impressed by the almost military discipline of the professors. He feels called to join their ranks, but whether it is from a desire to serve God more perfectly or because the spirit of the order finds an echo in his own mind is not clear to him. The boy feels, however, that one of the fathers is urging him to join and therefore decides not to become a Jesuit.

After completing his studies in Nevers, Léonard goes to Paris, where he attempts to follow various careers, but is equally unsuccessful in all. He loses his courage and

then his belief in an all-wise Providence. A brief time spent among former student-friends whose lives reflect their atheistic beliefs forces his mind back to the acceptance of a Supreme Law-giver. He returns to his former home in Meyers, and there finally enters the Jesuit order. Estanié does not say whether he remains, but the impression of his unhappiness is felt. If he remains among the Jesuits only as the choice of the lesser of two evils, he is much to be pitied.

I consider many things in this novel as true, and many as untrue. It is to be expected that after several years' training by such thorough schoolmen as the Jesuits there would be a certain mark on the students, just as there is on the boys from the public schools of England, or on the young men who graduate from our great universities. But that the Jesuit order should willingly so affect any young man's life that he would be unable to achieve success in any field except as one of its members is untrue. The discipline of the order is very rigorous and is suited to only a small number even of those young men who wish to enter the priesthood. Léonard Glan's story, although it shows some defects in the Jesuit system of education, is a picture of the extreme pliability of the mind of youth.

(2)

"Le Ferment"

A second example of the theme of discipleship in Estanié's work is found in "Le Ferment". This book gives the changes in character wrought on a product of the state education in France. Lucien Bartot, a young man of

peasant extraction, has spent almost all his waking hours since childhood at study in school, lycée, and finally in the Ecole Polytechnique of Paris. His struggle to find honorable employment which will give him a suitable living after his fifteen years of study is the subject of this book.

The young man is forced to leave France in order to make a start in his profession. After twelve years of monotonous toil in Belgium his salary is still too small to permit him to marry. He decides finally to give up trying to make a living honestly and visits a casino where he plays for many hours. With beginner's luck he wins enough to take him back to Paris and into a group of speculators. The things to which he stoops in order to enjoy some of the pleasures that his education has taught him to desire and to value, are a discredit to France and to other countries where intellectual work is underpaid.

(3)

The other story of this group is that of a young woman who has sacrificed her personal life in order to be her father's faithful disciple. At the beginning of the novel, Thérèse Wimereux is facing the life remaining to her after the death of her father. She had been brought up by him and was his most intimate friend from her childhood. She grew to consider him, a believer in benevolent atheism, as the only guide worth following. M. Wimereux took advantage of his daughter's devotion by keeping her at work for him and by failing to encourage her to make

"L'Epave"

friendships with people of her own age.

On his death it was found that M. Wimereux's benevolent atheism had deprived his daughter of everything save a very small income. It would be impossible for her to live on this amount unless she left Paris for Saint-Julia, a distant village where she still owned a small house.

After considering that the portion of happiness left to her since her father's death, is small, Thèrèse bravely decides to live out her father's teachings and to endeavor to spread them in this tiny village. She is rebuffed time as time again by the astonished peasants. One day she discovers among her father's papers a message to herself. She hopes to find in it some doctrine which will show her a way to a fuller life and to happiness. These are the precepts M. Wimereux recommends to his daughters: First, that everyone should develop his or her life harmoniously and make every part of his or her being live equally. Second, that all have the duty of being "solidaire", that is, of taking their responsibility in the acts of others, even of those apparently the least connected with them. To these he added the observations that all religions pass, and that morality alone keeps its status. Furthermore, he continued, human beings are perhaps only instruments and are destroyed after they have lost their usefulness. What aid is there in this message for a woman who has given up all natural ties, all 'harmonious development' to be her father's disciple? Surely there must be some reward

for such renunciation as hers!

Comparison
with
"Le Disciple"
by
Bourget

A comparison of these three books, "L'Empreinte", "Le Ferment", and "L'Epave" with "Le Disciple" by Bourget is interesting. In each of Estaunié's stories, as in that of Bourget, the character of the principal person has been moulded by some one or some institution, and in each case the character of the youth has been such that it has followed the instruction given to its logical conclusion. There is the same result - catastrophe. Estaunié wishes to show, I think, as Bourget probably did, that present-day education does not have sufficient consideration and respect for the pliability of the youthful mind. Those entrusted with the education of these young people forgot that immature minds have not years of experience behind them to modify their actions. When youth is convinced of the truth of a principle, it wishes to follow this idea to the end. Educators have the duty of showing their students where moderation is needed, or of refraining from inculcating a doctrine which may lead to moral suicide.

The
Secret
Life

In an article in the "Revue Bleue"⁽¹⁾ on the work of Estaunié, M. Firmin Roz calls this author "un romancier de la vie secrète". It is in this respect, as a student of the inner life, that I wish now to consider M. Estaunié. Throughout his writings Estaunié shows that he considers our secret or interior life to be the one which really

1 "Un Romancier de la Vie Secrète", Firmin Roz in "La Revue Bleue", 9122, p.92.

directs us. Between the years 1902 and 1908, especially - that is, between the publication of "L'Epave" and "La Vie secrète", Estaunié was studying some manifestations of the interior life. He was trying to arrive at some original conclusions on the subject. In "La Vie secrète" we have many of these conclusions.

Throughout this book one may note the effects produced when a hidden force suddenly manifests itself. The author introduces us to three friends who have known each other intimately for several years, and yet who in the first chapter begin to discover phenomena in each other that they had never before suspected. "A la lueur d'un éclair, leurs âmes venaient de montrer des replis insoupçonnés. Tout à coup, l'idée les effleurait qu'ils ne se connaissaient pas."(1) Then Estaunié admits us to the hidden life of each one, which until this time had been outside the knowledge of every one except its possessor. Two of the friends, in a crisis, admit this existence to each other. Estaunié remarks their astonishment. "Ils se regardèrent. Etaient-ce bien eux qui avaient vécu côte à côte et cru se connaître? Une autre vie, affleurant à leurs fronts, venait de les transfigurer."(2) But of course neither understands the other's need of this inner refuge.

One of these characters is very much surprised when he is forced to the conclusion that his friends as well as he may have an inner life. He is jealous that what

1 "La Vie Secrète", p.12.

2 *ibid*, p.47.

he considered his singular privilege might be "un bien commun" and that others might also possess an "éden inaccessible". This lonely old man is awakened to a strange fact by the anxiety of his friend the abbé Taffin for the arrival of a certain letter. He realizes that things, apparently trivial to those about us, may be of the greatest consequence to our secret life. "La Vie secrète" is a revelation to many others besides old M. Lethois that each person may have an Eden to which he retires and where no one may follow him. Estaunié compares the interior life to the fields and the trees, whose cycle of change seems so natural to us. Suddenly an upheaval occurs and an entirely new country is before us. "Ainsi la vie secrète, en silence, travaille le sol sacré des âmes. Longtemps masquée par la vie coutumière, elle éclate, renverse, sauve ou tue."(1) The importance of this interior life, Estaunié considers, is underestimated. It should be taken into account in guiding youth and in helping those who have suffered to reconstruct their lives. It is one of the chief powers of the soul and should be recognized as such. Estaunié says of this secret life that it is a "force redoutable qui règne au plus profond de l'âme pour forger sa destinée, mais que nul n'aperçoit; car, enfermé dans son drame, chacun méconnaît l'autre."(2)

1 ibid p.406.

2 ibid p.407.

In several of the books he wrote subsequently to "La Vie secrète" Estaunié develops this thesis. He introduces us in "Les Choses Voient" to an old house in Dijon and allows some of the discarded articles of furniture to reveal the secret life that had taken place in the house. In "L'Appel de la Route", he relates the stories told by three friends who try to interpret the inner lives of people they had observed carefully. Estaunié brings these friends to the conclusion that their observations, however minute, could not discover the hidden truth of these lives. In "L'Ascension de M. Baslèvre" the author traces the life of a man who is judged as having no deep interests. He shows us then the interior life led by this man. Those who know him best are not aware that M. Justin Baslèvre, a staid public official, hides under his cold and correct manner a tender affection for the memory of a woman he loved. Many more instances might be cited in which Estaunié describes people of ordinary exterior and then demonstrates that these exteriors are only masques for their unusual inner lives. Marcel Prévost has used a similar theme in his "Le jardin secret". Estaunié, however, makes this one of the chief articles in his literary creed.

The existence of a secret life within human beings gives each person solitude even among those dear to him. By its very nature this life cannot be shared. Although the solitude gained in an interior life is at times an "éden inaccessible", it sometimes becomes by its

connection
of
Secret
Life
with

inaccessibility a source of loneliness and of suffering.

Loneliness
and
Suffering

This is the idea which Estaunié develops in many of his stories. Whereas the solitude accompanying the secret life is to a few of his characters, as M. Baslèvre, a source of pleasure, it is an occasion of suffering to most of them.

Estaunié follows the teaching of the romantic school in his belief in the solitude of the individual. Alfred de Vigny, among others, gave expression to this idea in his "Messe". R. Robert Vallery-Rodot says that the words of Pascal "On mourra seul" might serve as a thesis for all of Estaunié's work. In his unusual treatment of loneliness lies much of his originality. He tells in "La Découverte" how a boy of nine years, perhaps himself, discovered that each person must live his own life and must die alone.

Loneliness

He dedicates an entire volume to "Solitudes". These are masterful studies of original situations, but the reading even of two or three of them leaves a depressing effect. In the group of stories beginning with "Le Silence dans la Campagne" and in "Labyrinthe" Estaunié continues the development of this thesis. "Le Labyrinthe" is an original character-study intended to prove the intensity of mental suffering which a man will endure before he will tell those closest to him the source of his trouble. Although following a literary tradition in treating the individuality and loneliness of each person, Estaunié is original in his choice of subjects and in his method of analyzing characters.

The fourth and last point of view from which I shall endeavor to explain Edouard Estaunié as a psychological novelist is in respect to his ideas on suffering. His treatment of this phenomenon shows that he considers it a mystery which he finds may be just as intense in peace as it is in war.(1) He proves that its origin may often be sources ignorant of the evil they are causing and that its effects are far reaching. Suffering is allowed, however, according to M. Estaunié, as a calling of the soul to detach itself from things of earth and to ascend the road that leads beyond this life.(2) "L'Appel de la Route" is the book which in my estimation best explains Estaunié's ideas on this subject.

The three parts of the same story are related in "L'Appel de la Route" by three soldiers just returned from the war. Their recital has no connection with the war, first, because these young men wish to turn their thoughts away from that subject, and then, because as one of them says, "Le vrai tragique se rencontre surtout en temps de paix, là où personne ne le soupçonne."

The mental anguish in the recital of the first young man is caused by the silence of the two principal characters. These two people, a father and daughter who are very much attached to each other, unwittingly bring intense suffering to each other. Estaunié resumes the theme of this involuntary cause in the following words: "tous, spontanément

1 vide Preface to "Solitudes".

2 "L'Appel de la Route", pp.324-327.

et sans volonté de mal faire, nous fabriquons de la douleur pour ce qui nous approche."(1)

In the recital of the second soldier mutual suffering is again the lot of people united by ties of blood and affection. Here the solitude of souls deepens their anguish. From the depths to which one of them has sunk he proposes the chief question of this recital: "Pourquoi l'être humain ne saurait-il respirer sans créer d'abominables conflits? Pourquoi l'essaimage automatique de la douleur et la nécessité de toujours tuer pour vivre?"(2)

Only in the final act of this drama does light penetrate the gloom surrounding the fate of these characters. Two of them are dead, and those remaining are becoming entirely detached from life. By the fact that they are struggling through an existence that has lost all joy for them, Kstaunié concludes that these three have benefited by their experience. He ends the story with these words, sublime but difficult to comprehend: "La souffrance est l'appel de la route. Si pénible que soit l'effort, marchons, guidés par lui, vers le pays où j'espère que la justice de Dieu perdra son obscurité, parce qu'il y fait toujours clair."(3)

Kstaunié's earliest novels "Un Simple" and "Bonne-Dame" each illustrates opposite effects of intense mental suffering. In the first of these novels the victim seeks in suicide an end of unendurable anguish, and in the second the chosen

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- 1 "L'Appel de la Route", page 125.
 - 2 *ibid.*, page 277.
 - 3 *ibid.*, page 327.

one rises to great heights of virtue by means of her trials. Throughout the course of his work Estannié does not modify his thesis on the universality and intensity of this phenomenon but "L'Appel de la Route" and one of his last stories, "L'Infirmes aux mains de lumière", show development of the idea suggested in "Bonne Dame", that there are satisfactory reasons for suffering.

Estannié is ranked among the psychological novelists of France because he interests himself chiefly in the mental processes of his characters. His original contribution to this type of writing consists in his masterful handling of unusual situations. He has developed great skill in this field and has followed it even to the study of abnormal mental phases. The stories in "Solitudes" and "Le Labyrinthe" are examples of his ability in analyzing minds which are rendered abnormal for a time by some intense emotion. Estannié is rightly considered original in his treatment of such problems. In my estimation, his real contribution to the French novel lies, however, in his able description of mental conditions already treated by other writers.- such states as the influence of environment and teaching on plastic minds, the strong part that the interior life plays in man's destiny, the loneliness of each individual, and finally the mystery of suffering. The three novels, "L'Empreinte", "La Vie secrète", and "L'Appel de la Route", will I feel, be the part of Estannié's work which will mark him as one of the best psychological and idealistic novelists of his time.

Style

In the selections quoted in the foregoing pages from Estaunié's writing one may see that this author is the master of a clear, exact style. His narration is rapid and his descriptions short and definite. Nevertheless one finds in it some examples of beautiful imagery. Sentences the reader will wish to remember may be found throughout Estaunié's works. One such is used at the end of "L'Infirmes aux mains de Lumière". It is used for three purposes: to finish an anecdote, to end the story itself, and to give to a soul some helpful interpretation of the sacrifice it has made. A child has advanced as the reason for the beautiful flowers of Alpine heights, "C'est pour que le monde soit beau quand le soleil le regarde!" and the visitor assures his friend that he, has grown flowers in his soul. And now, he adds, "ayant créé de la beauté, vous aussi ne doutez pas qu'il y ait un soleil pour regarder votre âme."

Ideas
on
the
Novel

The ideas of a master of the novel, such as M. Estaunié, on this form of literature are valuable. Estaunié has expressed his thought on the subject in an article entitled "Le Roman est-il en danger?"(1) Here this author maintains that the novel, having come probably from the Orient, had attained the proportions of a tree with wide-extending roots and wide-spreading branches in France when "La Nouvelle Héloïse" was written. It has since become, he adds, "la forme unique de la pensée, le véhicule nécessaire

1 "Le Roman est-il en danger?" by Edouard Estaunié, in "Revue Hebdomadaire", Feb. 14, 1925.

à n'importe quelle idée"(1) In order that the novel, popularized as it has become, may be understood by the widely varying classes who now read and judge it, M. Estaurié considers it should contain ideas which are comprehensible to all classes.

The privilege of being a novelist our author considers the highest which may be given a person. "Si je pouvais choisir pour quelqu'un entre tous les avantages de la fortune, de la puissance, du succès, du repos, de l'amitié, je n'en prendrais aucun. Je voudrais qu'il fût artiste, écrivain plutôt qu'artiste, romancier plutôt qu'écrivain, et je croirais, pour lui-même comme pour les autres, ne pouvoir rien choisir de meilleur ni de plus beau."(2) Like all other privileges, that of the novelist entails responsibility. In a letter to the present writer, M. Estaurié says he would add to the above article the ever-present thought of that duty. "Il resterait à y ajouter seulement, ce qui n'y est pas dit, que j'ai toujours eu le sentiment profond de la responsabilité de l'écrivain, et qu'en cours de mon travail je n'ai jamais voulu perdre de vue qu'un livre peut être suivant les cas le conseiller le plus perfide, ou l'ami le plus constant."

Nearly thirty five years ago, (1898) G. Pélissier(3) discussed Estaurié as a novelist worth considering. Since that time Estaurié has been improving his work and unceasingly

1 ibid.

2 ibid.

3 "Études de Littérature Contemporaine", G. Pélissier, Tome 1, Perrin & Cie, Paris, 1898.

Influence
in
France

broadening the range of his appeal. Today he is one of the foremost living French novelists. From this distance it is difficult to judge how great is his present influence in France, but considering the number and the honor of the articles on his writing, it is considerable. The best French magazines attest that this influence has always been directed towards the improvement of his chosen field. For this reason and because of his great skill in this field he will be remembered as one of the best exponents of the contemporary French novel.

In
America

A word may be added concerning Estaunié's influence in America. An acquaintance with his work is not widespread, but an appreciation of the first of his novels to be published here in translation was instant.⁽¹⁾ The New York Times, expressing favorable comment similar to that of several other reviews said about this translation, "The Call of the Road' is not a casual piece of fiction. Into a masterfully developed story of human relations is woven a discussion of the value of suffering." This book has also been published in French in the "Contemporary French Literature" series. It is thus being made known and admired by a much wider number than would otherwise have had access to it. This and the others of Estaunié's novels have been brought to the attention of teachers by the Modern Language Journal. We trust that good translations of all Estaunié's works will soon be available so that the

1. "The Call of the Road", trans. by Hiram James, Boni & Liveright, 1924, New York.

influence of this skilful psychological novelist may
be increasingly felt in America.

MAURICE GENEVOIX

In strong contrast with Estaunié, who is a man of advanced age (64 year) and of many years' experience as a writer, is the young novelist Maurice Genevoix, born in 1889. Whereas the writing of M. Estaunié's thirteen books has extended over more than thirty-five years, M. Genevoix has given us ten volumes in as many years.

The finished art of Estaunié's work is not to be found in that of Genevoix, but it contains so much promise that his "Nuits de Guerre" was crowned by the French Academy and he has already, at the age of thirty-seven, received the Prix Goncourt. Another point of difference between these two writers is in their treatment of the war of 1914-1918. M. Estaunié tries to keep from mentioning it in his books, and indeed speaks of it only once or twice. He says in the preface to "Solitudes" that this is really a war book because it was begun in 1914, when he was near the front in Flanders, but the volume does not contain one story about the war. Genevoix, on the other hand, consecrates five entire volumes to recitals of war experiences and a substantial part of two others to studies which have the war as their background.

Life
and
training

Maurice Genevoix was born at Decize, near Orléans, in 1889, and spent the early part of his life in the region of the Loire river. He studied in Orléans, and at the age of twenty-three entered the Ecole Normale of Paris. At the

end of his second year, in July 1914, he had successfully finished a study on de Maupassant and prepared to enjoy the summer vacation.

This holiday was, however, of short duration, for he was mobilized in August, a month later. From that time until the following April he was on the front or near it continually. On April 25, 1915, a serious wound necessitated his complete evacuation. Many tedious months in the hospital followed. He was finally able to enter the Franco-American Fraternity Commission, but reentrance into active war service was a physical impossibility for him. Young lieutenant Genevoix regretted deeply being unable to rejoin his companions at the front. It was as a tribute to those already dead and to those left to carry on the fight that he began, near the end of 1915, his series of war books.

Reasons
for
Writing
on the
War

We may ask what could a young lieutenant who had been in the war but nine months have to add to the mass of war books already published? This was to be, as he himself tells us in the preface to "Les Eparges", a true account of the life which he and his companions led in the infernal region which Verdun, the Marne, and the Eparges, had become in 1914-1915: He wished to give such an accurate picture of this region, he said, that those who had been with him and had survived would thus be able to recall it and those who had not been in the war would be forced to admit that they were reading the account of an eye-witness.

The next question we may ask, is, in how far did

Genevoix succeed in this task? Let us examine what competent critics say of his war books.

Opinions
of
Critics

There is first the preface to "Sous Verdun" (or "Neath Verdun" as it has been translated by H. Grahame Richards) by Ernest Lavisse. M. Lavisse says, "He (Genevoix), supplies us with an invaluable picture of the war..... The writer is endowed with astonishing powers of observation; he sees all in a glance, he hears everything. The intense power of concentration he possesses enables him instantly to seize upon all essentials of a particular incident or scene, and so to harmonize them as to produce a picture true to life. Nothing escapes him - the song or hiss of bullets, the diverse notes of hurtling shells, the breezes that pass, those that follow the explosions, those that have caressed the bodies of the dead 'whose frightful odour poisons the air'; the faces of men in moments of great crises, their words, their dialogues, and finally, the changing appearances of inanimate things, for, are not actions forever associated in the mind with the changing aspects of nature?

"The pre-eminent, outstanding merit of the work, however, consists in the never-failing sincerity of its author.

"This work of Genevoix's glorifies our poilu, reveals him as a man, highly strung and impressionable, capable of panic - the work quotes instances of such panic - but, at the same time, patient despite his temperament, enduring well-nigh beyond the powers of human endurance; a grumbler

against heaven and earth, desiring always to be able precisely to account for all things - in particular he wishes to know where he is going and why he is going! - a jester full of strange quips and cranks, but docile on the whole, loving those officers who show they care for him; familiar with those who permit it, with a familiarity purely deferential; in fine, possessed of attributes and virtues which defy precise definition, wholly admirable without the slightest consciousness of it.... I like, too, the melancholy underlying this work. This war, foreseen and predicted, but whose horrors completely transcend the imagination was there ever equal cause for human sadness?"

Gustave Lanson, head of the Ecole Normale Supérieure of Paris, where Genevoix had been a student for two years, and who is recognized as one of the most able of French critics writes thus in "L'Amérique Latine":

"Deux sortes de livres de guerre paraissent, les dépositions des témoins et les interprétations d'artistes. Certains réunissent les deux caractères tel, l'ouvrage où M. Maurice Genevoix nous présente avec un talent supérieur d'écrivain des choses vues Plus encore que par le pittoresque et le dramatique des tableaux, l'ouvrage de M. Genevoix vaut par la description des moeurs du front et du moral du soldat. C'est un document psychologique de premier ordre."

In the "Revue Bleue" we find this appreciation by Firmin Roz, "Cinq volumes de récits de guerre si poignants,

si vivants, dont M. Genevoix vient de publier le dernier, "Les Eparges". Leur art les apparente non moins que leur intérêt pathétique à ce que nous trouvons de meilleur dans la production romanesque d'aujourd'hui."

René Maublanc says in the "Revue Française de Prague" that he has already written about the first four "romans de guerre" of Genevoix, and he wishes to tell his readers about the fifth one called "Les Eparges". He writes that this book in his estimation possesses a "style fort, musclé, qui évoque avec une netteté et une puissance remarquables toutes les phases de l'action. Oeuvre dense où se pressent à chaque page les notations pénétrantes. Livre de courage qui nous donne, dans sa vérité nuancée l'image du vrai héroïsme, qui nous apprend ce qu'est vraiment la guerre et ce qu'est vraiment l'homme en face de la guerre."

His
War
Books
considered
as
Literature

It would seem as if nothing need be added to the above testimony as to the manner in which Genevoix accomplishes his object of giving a true picture of the war-front. It might be worth while, however, to examine his "récits de guerre" from the point of view of their literary value. A French method of analysis is to consider the "forme or construction and style of a work, and then the "fond", or thought. This procedure is worth undertaking in the case of books such as Genevoix's "récits de guerre", because it is sometimes questioned whether war books can be classed as literature.

The construction of these books is, in my estimation

Form

Construction

best described by the term "roman à tiroirs", or novel composed of separate parts that are held together loosely, as is a chest of drawers. Genevoix does not seem to have followed any plan of giving emphasis to the more important parts of his narrative. He follows the chronological order, recording the facts of his life in the army day-by-day. There is in these books a series of actions, but nothing which may be termed a well-developed plot. In testing these works of Genevoix by any standard definition of a novel, one finds that they are too loosely constructed to receive a high place in literature. However, under the new criteria raised by new conditions, they do find a high place as war literature. This is perhaps not to be surprised at, as Canon Dimnet, professor in the Collège Stanislas, Paris, recently said in a lecture here, for the chaotic condition of the country was such that all existing standards were necessarily abrogated. France was plunged into the past war so quickly that the writers like all the other able-bodied men, had no time to think of anything for many months, except how they could help their country. The entire nation was so "bouleversée" that literature, when it was possible at all, did not appear in the forms which were thought traditional. Bernard Fay also gives expression to this thought thus: "Dans le bouleversement universel des conditions et des sensibilités, tous les vocables étaient vidés de leur contenu. Au milieu de l'immense fracas des canons, des cris d'enthousiasme et de haine, un étrange silence

régnaît"(1). When we take such phenomena into consideration, we are forced to admit that Genevoix's simple recitals of war impressions are suitably constructed.

Style

The same phenomenon exerted its influence on the style of war writers and made the task of expressing their feelings a much more difficult one. In examining Genevoix's style in the war books we find it to be strong, effective, and colored by the actions and scenes of war. He writes thus of the battle of the Marne when his detachment is commencing to advance: "Nous commençons à progresser. Ça marche, vraiment d'une façon admirable, avec la même régularité, la même aisance qu'au champ de manœuvres. Et peu à peu monte en moi une allégresse qui m'enlève à moi-même."(2)

This is one of the pictures he gives of the midst of the battle. Note the short sentences and the graphic verbs in the passage: "Comme je redescends, un sifflement d'obus m'entre dans l'oreille; il tombe vers la 8ème (détachement) dont la ligne se rompt un court espace, vingt mètres, puis se renoue presque aussitôt. Un autre sifflement, un autre, un autre: c'est le bombardement. Tout dégringole dans nos lignes."(3)

In such passages as the following, which give Genevoix's final impressions of that day, the beauty of nature and the horrors of war walk hand in hand. Here one may

1 "Panorama de la Littérature Contemporaine" by Bernard Fay, Kra, Paris, 1925, p.160.
2 "Sous Verdun" p.39
3 "Sous Verdun", p.43.

truthfully say his style has distinction. "Je marche, je marche, épuisé maintenant et trébuchant. Je bois, d'une longue gorgée, un peu d'eau restée au fond de mon bidon. Je n'ai rien mangé depuis la veille.

"Quand nous arrivons au ruisseau, les hommes se rouent à la berge, et goulûment se mettent à boire, accroupis vers l'eau bourbeuse et lapant comme des chiens.

"Il doit être sept heures; le soleil décline dans un rayonnement d'or fauve. Le ciel, sur nos têtes, est d'une émeraude transparente et pâle. La terre devient noire, les couleurs s'éteignent. Nous quittons Sommaine; c'est la nuit. Des ombres de trainards, en longues théories."(1)

Genevoix's description of the soldier's breakfast on a morning when they were not on the firing-line is also one to be remembered.

"Sous les grands arbres, en arrière du plateau, une autre compagnie du bataillon nous a remplacés aux abords de la route. Matinée fraîche et limpide. Des chants, des éclats de voix, des rires. Les cuistots se sont installés près de nous, à la lisière; ils préparent la soupe du matin. Autour de chaque foyer, des hommes assis, attentifs et graves, tendent à la flamme des tranches de boule qu'ils ont piquées au bout d'une branchette."

Then follows a most delightful exposition on the joy the soldiers feel at having toast for breakfast. And next

1 "Sous Verdun", p.45.

the author shows us this picture:

"Le jus avalé, nous nous sommes assis, Porchon et moi, au pied d'un platane énorme, le dos contre le fût lisse, les fesses entre deux racines moussues qui font comme les bras d'un fauteuil. Nous avons coupé une grosse branche de mérisier, et nous essayons de fabriquer une pipe."(1)

The above are examples of the direct, concise style of Genevoix's war books and of his skill in the description of nature. His style is one fitted to the narration of parts of a campaign. Often the chapters begin with the first streaks of dawn and end with the close of a day, of a battle, or of a military period. The paragraphs, like the sentences, are generally short.

Vocabulary Nor does Genevoix disdain using the vocabulary distinctive to war, the "war argot". Thus, we find him speaking of coffee as "jus", of a field as a "patelin", of a candle as "la camoufle". The cooks at the war front he explains cannot be given their usual title, but are called "cuisistots", potatoes are "patates", a mud hill or 'boursoufflure de boue' they call "un piton", the piece of meat which with bread and coffee is their usual meal, is "un morceau de barbaque".

Content In considering the qualities of Genevoix's thought we find that it is both elevated and vigorous. Love of country, one of the noblest sentiments of mankind,

1 "Sous Verdun", p.193.

permeates his work. Even when he describes scenes of horror, he does so to show what terrible things the soldiers endured for purely altruistic motives. In this respect Genevoix is an idealist. The many sallies of wit and humor are likewise a case in point. They are the generous effort of the soldiers to help one another keep up courage by making light of their hardships. They are, moreover, bright interludes necessary to relieve the grimness of this tragedy. The tone of these books never loses its dignity and elevation.

René Maublanc calls "Les Eparges", the last of Genevoix's récits de guerre, a 'livre de courage'. The same thing may be said of each of these books. The author's actions and those of his companions are courageous to a high degree. Although the soldiers are at times very much afraid, they seldomly fail to act courageously. The officers often display really heroic qualities in the midst of reverses. In his preface to "Sous Verdun", Ernest Lavisse mentions one touching scene that Genevoix describes. In this case, the colonel and the commander of the first Battalion have been wounded during a battle in which the commanders of the second and third battalions have been killed. "A l'expression volontaire des visages, à la sérénité des regards, je comprends que nous sommes tous prêts aux épreuves futures.....Il semble que nous nous serrons les uns contre les autres, fiers vraiment par la foi commune qui vit en nous. Une grâce nous possède qui

nous exalte et qui nous arme."(1)

These books are essentially vigorous in thought. Beside the graphic expression of courage and comradeship in danger, a high truthfulness marks them all. Genevoix does not hesitate to speak of the just causes for complaint which he had noted. For example, in "Nuits de Guerre", which recounts the campaign of October 1914, when the men's health was suffering from the hard life and the glamor of the war had faded, Lieutenant Genevoix was very angry that men suffering from various ailments should all receive the same treatment. Genevoix, the writer, does not hesitate to express his dissatisfaction in the name of truth. In the same courageous manner as he led his soldiers into battle, he criticises those he considers guilty of neglect in this matter. Genevoix also gives his opinion of some of the superior officers of his section, who at times, treated the lower officers and the soldiers as inanimate parts of the war machine. In my estimation he shows himself sincere and virile in expressing his real feelings in such matters. Vigor, quickness and certainty are imperative qualities of an officer's thought. Genevoix's war writings show that these qualities of the fighter have been transferred to the equipment of the writer.

I hope to have shown by these facts and illustrations that Genevoix's "recits de guerre" are marked by the necessary qualities of good style - distinctive and

1 Preface to "Sous Verdun", p.20.

characteristic diction - that they are suitably constructed even though not according to traditional standards, and that their thought is elevated and vigorous. The conclusion naturally reached is that these books may be classed as literature.

Comparison
with
some
other
war
books

The books written in France about the war 1914-1918 are far too numerous to consider in this study, but it is worth while, I feel, to compare a few outstanding ones with the war novels of Genevoix. One which is conceded to be among the best is "La Vie des Martyrs" (1) by Dr. Georges Duhamel, a surgeon who worked in both the field hospitals and in the base hospitals. Dr. Duhamel gives pictures of the temporary shelters where the most seriously wounded were given relief, into châteaux and churches overcrowded with the wounded brought in after a battle, and into the base hospitals where the courageous suffering of many ended in a lingering death. His book is similar to Genevoix's in that it records realistically the suffering and heroism he witnessed. It differs from Genevoix's books in portraying the effects of the war only on the wounded. Dr. Duhamel unites with his realism, some measure of idealistic philosophy, for he notes in many cases the moral beauty that was developed by intense suffering.

There is then the much heralded "Le Feu" (2) by

1 "La Vie des Martyrs" by Dr. Georges Duhamel, 1917, Mercure, Paris.

2 "Le Feu", Henri Barbusse, Flammarion, 1916, Paris.

Barbusse. "Le Feu" certainly appears to be an accurate journal of a war squad as its sub-title indicates, but it is too naturalistic to give a true picture of war. It contains none of the relief in humour or gaiety necessary to man who endure discomfort for a long period. Even the chapter on "La Permission" is depressing. Genevoix recounts sufferings which are just as keen, but his recital is interspersed with occasional bits of "entrain", which are especially needed by the French soul.

Next, we may consider a war book which is not at all serious, "Gaspard" (1) by René Benjamin. In this recital of the adventures of a French poilu, M. Benjamin strengthened his compatriots to continue the fight by reviving their Gallic humor. His hero amused thousands of the French by his wit and never-failing good nature. Benjamin's purpose in writing this book was far different from that of Genevoix. The story does not impress one as a true account of the experiences of any one person, but in its field it is as important as the more serious war literature.

Finally, we note "Les Croix de Bois" (2) by Roland Dorgelès. This war novel approaches the nearest to Genevoix's of any of those mentioned. In his simple, realistic style Dorgelès traces here some of the scenes which impressed him most strongly while he was at the front. He pictures impartially the depression, the exaltation, and the courage of officers and soldiers

1 "Gaspard", René Benjamin, 1916, Brentano, New York.
2 "Les Croix de Bois", Roland Dorgelès, 1919, Albin Michel, Paris.

without blaming anyone for the faults committed under the stress of extraordinary circumstances. "Les Croix de Bois" differs from Genevoix's war stories in being the interpretation of a few significant scenes, whereas Genevoix's books recount the experiences of a minor officer from day to day. Like Genevoix, M. Dorgelès felt himself too close to the scene of action to attempt to generalize in any manner the effect this war-life would have upon those engaged in it.

Influence
on
contemporary
Thought

Let us turn now to the influence which Genevoix's war novels have had upon contemporary thought. Very little material is here available on the subject. We may be certain, however, from the reliability of the French critics who have approved of them that these books were read and favorably considered by literary France. The reviews published in the newspapers "La Liberté" and "L'Intransigeant" indicate that they received a warm reception from the general public in France. The London "Spectator" (1) commented on the faithful translation of "Sous Verdun" which H. Grahame Richards has given in his "Neath Verdun". American critics have also given it a share of their attention(2). Although Genevoix's books are apparently not widely known in America, wherever they are read they are recognized as giving true pictures of the war 1914-1918.

1 "Spectator", Jan. 27, 1917.

2 New York Times, Febr. 4, 1917. Boston Transcript, Febr. 14, 1917. A.L.A. Booklist, April 1917.

When Maurice Genevoix was released from the Franco-American Fraternity Commission at the end of the war, he returned to his home at Châteauneuf-en-the-Loire. Here he sought rest and relief from the strain of four years of war and here he completed the series of war novels which we have already discussed. These peaceful scenes undoubtedly threw his experiences of 1914-1918 into strong relief. Even though people were tired of reading about the disheartening times of the war, Genevoix determined to complete these novels. In the meantime, Genevoix gave his attention to the Loire region, in the quiet of which he was seeking solace and the courage to continue life. He studied the customs of the fishing people who live in little villages along the great river. He found that, besides being the means of their livelihood, the Loire river was to them a personage who treated them well or ill according to its moods. In 1920, Genevoix published "Rémi des Rauches", a beautiful idyl of these fisherfolk. He dedicated it to the Loire river, for her had come to have a personal feeling for the Loire as one who had received him in his need, and had made him feel that here was beauty still unmarred by the recent world cataclysm.

With the completion of "Rémi des Rauches", Genevoix turned again to the war books and worked on them until he had brought them to a successful conclusion. Then, like Dickens ever returning to the slums of London, he again let his thoughts revert to the Loire and found in it a second inspiration. "Rabeliot" (publ. 1925), a

Reason
for
writing
these
Novels

story of the natives of the Sologne district, "most of whom are poachers in a kind of semi-legitimate way"(1), was the result of several months spent among the people of that section of the Loire region. Thus it was that "Rémi des Rauches" and "Raboliot", Genevoix's two regional novels were written, as the author's reaction against the war theme of his other books and in order to express his love for the Loire region.(2)

Measure
of
their
success

Each of these novels was promptly recognized as a work of distinctive merit. "Rémi des Rauches", called "le beau roman de la Loire" (3) by René Maublanc, was awarded the Prix Blumenthal. "Raboliot" received the Prix Goncourt, an award made by ten members of the Goncourt Academy and "destined for a young and comparatively unknown writer."

The New York Times of December 17, 1925, made this comment: "The most coveted literary honor in France was conferred to-day upon Maurice Genevoix, whose novel 'Raboliot' was chosen for the award of the annual prize by the Goncourt Academy."

In the "Living Age" of February 13, 1926, we find this award again mentioned: "Raboliot", the writer in this review says, is "a careful and studious piece of regional fiction, its setting laid on the edge of the Loire, where the author is thoroughly at home, being

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- 1 "Living Age", Febr. 13, 1926.
 - 2 vide Preface of "Rémi des Rauches".
 - 3 "Revue Française de Prague".

himself a native of Châteauneuf near Orléans." His living among the people of the Sologne district is spoken of as being in the true Goncourt style.

Several of the French magazines commented favorably on the prizes which Genevoix's books received. Among them is the "Annales Politiques et Littéraires"(1). In 1922 the "Revue de Paris", a literary magazine of a very high standard, published "Rémi des Rauches".

Such a favorable reception shows that the early predictions of Genevoix's growth as a novelist are being fulfilled.

The pastoral or regional novel has existed in France in some form since Honoré d'Urfé. M. d'Urfé dedicated his "Astrée" to the river Lignon, Genevoix offers his as a tribute to the Loire. The writing of regional novels does not constitute a departure from literary traditions. Already in our own twentieth century, René Bazin, Henri Bordeaux, Alphonse de Chateaubriant and others have woven the life of some part of France into their novels. It would perhaps be interesting to compare Genevoix's work in this field with that of such recognized artist as the last named, M. de Chateaubriant.

"La Brière" by Alphonse de Chateaubriant (publ.1923) is the story of some of the inhabitants living in the section of France bearing this name. This section is a series of communities situated on small islands near the

1 "Le Prix Goncourt" in "Annales Politiques et Littéraires", Dec.27, 1925.

mparison
with

La Brière" city of Mayun. The attachment of the people to their
by "pays" is typified by that of Chateaubriant's character,
ateaubriant Acoustin, who has cursed his son because he married a
maiden from a distant village. "La Brière" has for its
theme this inherited devotion to the native soil, which
is also the keynote of "Rémi des Rauches". The language
used in it is very frequently the simple, expressive
language of the "gens du pays" as is that employed in
"Rémi des Rauches". There is reflected in both books
the same distrust of machinery and a similar love of
gaining one's livelihood in the primitive pursuits of
hunting and fishing. The hero of each novel is a strong,
unsophisticated man of narrow vision but of generous soul.
Chateaubriant is a more skilful psychologist than Genevoix.
In his story, we find Acoustin broadening under the un-
conscious influence of his daughter. Genevoix's Rémi,
on the other hand, is a man so attached to the Loire that
he deserts his wife and child for it.

Monsieur de Chateaubriant shows his superior ability
in psychological analysis by satisfactorily solving a
more complex problem than that in "Rémi des Rauches" and
by ably interpreting the feelings of a large group of
people. Genevoix seems to me, nevertheless, to be
developing in the same direction as Chateaubriant.

If we compare "Raboliot" (1925) with "La Brière",
we find that here Genevoix shows more maturity. While
"Raboliot" does not make the same appeal to me, I feel
it is more nearly on a level with "La Brière". The

semi-legitimate manner by which Raboliot makes a living in this study becomes the means by which his enemies work their jealousy against him. The delineation of character in this book does not equal that in "La Brière", but it approaches it. In some future novel by Genevoix, we may expect him to reach Chateaubriant's level.

Like his war books, Genevoix's regional novels deserve a place among the best contemporary French novels. They possess artistic construction, grace, purity and beauty of style, and are marked by elevation and beauty of content.

In "Rémi des Rauches", for example, we find many passages of beautiful description. Note the charm in this subtle comparison of Rémi and the Loire river(1): "Alors Rémi posa sa gaule contre un arbre, sa boîte à poissons près de la gaule, et s'assit, les mains croisées sur ses genoux. Il inclina son menton vers ses mains, et demeura immobile, regardant la Loire à travers les branches.

"Il avait un visage très jeune, presque enfantin encore malgré sa grosse moustache blonde, un visage hâlé de coureur de grèves, avec, près des narines, quelques taches de son tavelant les joues. Ses yeux larges ouverts, d'un bleu pâle et mouillé, avaient la transparence et la douceur des eaux crépusculaires. Il regardait la Loire. La beauté du jour finissant remuait son être d'une grande émotion vague.

"C'était un soir d'octobre magnifique et tranquille. Quelques branches défeuillées à demi, les deux berges tout

1 "Rémi des Rauches", p.11.

de suite lointaines, et la Loire reflétant le ciel, il n'y avait rien que cela; rien que le ciel et les eaux d'ambre vert qui se mêlaient au couchant mauve et gris. Un calme infini s'épandait sur le monde. La brise ne soufflait plus. L'ample rivière coulait sans un frisson, sans une moire."

In the following passage, we have a vivid description of the water that is gradually turning into ice (1).

"Ils quittèrent la maison et descendirent au quai, 'pour voir ce que disait la Loire'. Elle roulait des eaux d'un vert livide, que le gel engourdisait à demi. De temps en temps un amas de glace poreuse, de la même teinte que les eaux, montait du fond comme une bouée légère, et s'étalait à la surface dans un grésillement de bulles d'air. Le long des rives passaient de lents glaçons, ceints d'un bourrelet neigeux, éblouissant. Ils raclaient les pierres de l'enrochement, avec un bruit de soie lourde qu'on froisse; et le même bruit s'entendait lorsqu'ils se joignaient deux à deux, tournaient l'un contre l'autre, un instant, comme des meules, pour bientôt se disjoindre et recommencer leur lente descente."

In "Raboliet" Genevoix describes as follows the home of the hero as he sees it on his return at night. (2)

"Il arrivait à sa maison, une petite maison oubliée là, une ancienne demeure de briques à pans de bois, couverte de tuiles, comme il n'en est plus guère en

1 "Hémi des Rauches", pp. 36-37.

2 "Raboliet", pp. 55-56.

Sologne. La lune brillait assez déjà pour qu'on pût distinguer, dans la blancheur des lits de mortier, les tranches des briques superposées, leurs hâchures en diagonale dont les nuances évoluaient souplement, d'un rose tendre et charnel à des rouges vifs de coquelicots, à des pourpres assourdis, bleutées d'encre. Raboliot poussa la porte; elle résista, fermée au verrou."

Later, he gives the impressions Raboliot felt as he walked through the woods at night: "Des coupes anciennes n'avaient laissé là que de beaux arbres espacés, entre lesquels jouait la lumière et flottait un air libre, baigné d'aromes. Raboliot aspirait les odeurs de la nuit, celles des pousses vertes, celles des essences légères que diffusait la sève, et celle des feuilles tombées qui fendraient l'humus gras; et il sentait passer aussi l'odeur des champignons soulevant du chapeau la jonchée des aiguilles." These passages show Genevoix's powers of observation of even the most minute details of nature, his distinctive vocabulary, his imaginative treatment, in short, the fine poetic qualities of his style.

Various passages might also be quoted from these novels to illustrate Genevoix's skill in character delineation. In "Raboliot" especially, there are sentences of vivid characterization. Writing of the overseer, Tancogna, who was watching the men bring in fish, Genevoix adds(2): "Il ne dit pas un mot, mais ses mains

1 "Raboliot" p.68.

2 "Raboliot", p.17.

se crispèrent; leurs bouts pointus aux ongles durs s'enfoncèrent dans un ventre orangé; un à un, avec la même froideur cruelle, il creva les poissons qu'avait apportés Tournefier; on entendait chaque fois un aigre et léger claquement, celui de la poche natatoire qui éclatait sous la pression."

I feel that a novelist who has expressed the spirit of the region he treats with such poetic truth and skill as is shown in the above passages may be called a regional novelist of power.

In his "Panorama de la littérature contemporaine" published in 1925, Bernard Fay, a literary critic who is interested in French literature especially as seen by foreigners, does not speak of Genevoix's novels as having any considerable influence on French thought. Of course, "Raboliot" which was published in the same year, had not yet had time to make much impression upon the French mind. It will be interesting to note future comments on it by other authors. "Rémi des hauches" has nevertheless been popular with the older generation as is shown by the fact that the "Revue de Paris" published it complete. Because of their common interest in the war and their common youthful point of view these novels of Genevoix will naturally appeal to the younger generation, who have broken away from the restraining influences of their elders. (1)

1 I have not been able to determine the influence of Genevoix's regional novels on the thought of other European countries. In America, the indication is that few of our people have read them. Neither of them, as so far I can

find, have been translated into English. There are occasional notices of them in the literary magazines, but they have not attracted any widespread interest.

PIERRE HAMP

In his "Histoire de la littérature contemporaine" René Lalou says that Charles Péguy's "Cahiers de la Quinzaine" 'had the honor of revealing to the public'(1) such men as Halévy, Rolland, Suarès, and Pierre Hamp. Lalou also states that these "Cahiers" were one of the centers of French thought from 1900-1915. Since that time the public for which Pierre Hamp writes has grown until the publication of his "Gens" in English by an American house brought forth in 1921 very favorable comments from six of the leading American periodicals.

In his life and in his attitude toward literature, Pierre Hamp is far from following the traditions of his forerunners in literature. He holds a place among them, but by his own wish he is not one of those who write for the sake of art alone. Some call him an "original". He must at all accounts be considered among those who try to do good in the world. He compels recognition both for his writings and for his ideas.

The biography of Pierre Hamp resembles more that of a successful American than that of a French writer. Born in 1876, he spent his early years as assistant to a pastry-cook, first in Paris, then in England, in Spain,

1 "Histoire de la Littérature Contemporaine" René Lalou, p.362.

and finally in England again, This very material occupation did not, however, prevent him from 'reading avidly in cheap copies of Victor Hugo by the light of a basement-window'(1) When he was in England, an old French professor wished to teach him Latin. It does not appear that he did so, but the boy's desire for knowledge evidently increased, for he returned to Paris at the age of twenty-six 'to learn everything'. Having read of a 'université populaire' in Paris, he gave up his work and lived on his savings as long as they lasted.

When his money was gone, Hamp returned to industry. He entered the railroad system of Northern France, where in seven years he rose from a subordinate position to "sous-chef de gare". Then says André Beaunier, he began to write. The war broke out shortly after this time and Pierre Hamp served France throughout its four years. I have not been able to determine in what capacity he began his services, but I have found authority (New York Times, May 29, 1921) for the statement that he was a mediator in the settling of disputes between workmen and the Ministry of Munitions during the latter part of the war.

Hamp first gained notice, as Lalou says, from his articles in the "Cahiers des Quinzaines" before 1915.

From 1916 on he wrote sociological studies for "L'Humanité".

1 Gilbert Thomas in "Lives of the Underdogs", Freeman, June 29, 1921.

Hamp himself tells us that the sketches which were published after the war in two volumes, entitled "Gens", he wrote before the war "as a relaxation from longer and more strenuous labors". Whatever may be the merits or demerits of his work, we may be certain that his studies are the result of personal experience as a toiler.

Purpose
of
his
Writings

Hamp's youth spent among the laboring classes bred in him a desire to help them secure justice. His later experiences among them strengthened his conviction that they were the victims of capitalists. The twelve books and numerous articles which he wrote had, then, as their purpose justice for the working-man. Sometimes he recounts an interesting tale, but he never finishes it without, like Voltaire, attempting to win his readers over to an idea. He is a worker and to him the only real purpose for literature is to give his readers the experiences of the toiler.

Comments
on
Writings

From the time of the publication of his first studies Pierre Hamp has received much criticism, both favorable and unfavorable. His articles on labor published in "L'Humanité" in 1916 brought forth many comments. Although the tone of his writings is usually socialistic, such conservative magazines as the "Revue de Paris" in France and the "Century" in America have considered some of them worth a place in their columns. One finds criticism of them in various sources.

The Dial, a literary magazine, published this

one (1): "'People', (Hamp's 'Gens' translated) brings to American readers a proletarian de Maupassant. The author, rich in experience, identifies himself with short and extremely realistic sketches of women of the streets, scullions, carpenters, clerks, all those types of the submerged strugglers of Paris. For the most part objective, the reader will note at times a profound irony behind the writer's work. There are moments when the intense social consciousness of Maxim Gorki manifests itself so strongly as to suggest a deliberate discipleship on Hamp's part."

The New York "Nation", May 18, 1921, mentions Gorki with Hamp, but rather in contrast with him. "M. Pierre Hamp, a man of strong creative gifts who has risen from the actual ranks of labor, repudiates, with a touch of fierceness art as it is commonly understood. He has seen so much crude suffering that to create beauty for its own sake seems to him an affront to mankind. Very well. But he is eager to restrict the subject matter of literature and forgets that the complications and sufferings of the strictly personal life involve man's meaning and destiny quite as much, if indeed not far more, than the problems and processes of labor, and that the achievement of a freer and more human existence by the masses will only serve vastly to increase the numbers of those who will be concerned with the subtleties he now condemns. His own stories are far from artless, nor is their art conceivable

without the tradition of the modern French 'conte' from de Maupassant on. He takes a sharply-seen and tenaciously remembered character - a working girl, a pastry-cook, a skinflint shopkeeper. He defines that character through very concrete bits of action and passion and ends upon a note of bitter and laconic irony. Thus he quietly shapes each story into an accusation of the economic order which is the more devastating because he has given his proletarians no fancied virtues and no graces but those of their sheer humanness. His portraits are deep-etched and memorable... But he is no Gorki. He and his people have a Latin hardness and definiteness. There is no brooding, no inflowing of the universal, no hint of any pain deeper than the lack of bread and light."

A writer in the *Survey*, Oct. 15, 1921, in a criticism of "People" ("Gens"), compares Hamp's art with that of another Russian, Tchekov:

"This is a most moving, albeit dispassionate book. Without being photographic, the author divests his stories of all interpretation. There is no extravagance of words, of sentiment, or even of the sordid that mars much realism... Although his satiric pen is bitterly engaged in a proletarian struggle, his sympathies are obviously with the unfortunate, with whom they amount indeed to a genius of comprehension, and for the portrayal of whose griefs he has developed an art comparable in ruthlessness and beauty to that of de Maupassant or Tchekov."

In "The Freeman"(1) a socialist magazine, we find this praise of Hamp's work in an article by Gilbert Thomas: ".....his characters have that universality that is peculiar to truth and to genuine art..... Hamp always writes with perfect knowledge and faultless understanding and he is master of a prose style that responds sensitively to every demand made upon it." This novelist's "People", Mr. Thomas says, contains " a series of incisive and vivid portraits of men and women." Hamp's narrative he considers "often excellent" in general. "When", continues Mr. Thomas, "he comes to show the psychological effect (of a great disaster) upon the minds of various men and women, we almost lose consciousness of his lesser gifts in our delighted satisfaction with the greater and more individual quality of his art."

Under the title "Labor and Literary Art", (2) a writer in the New York Times whose name is not given says, "Hamp occupies himself as a writer exclusively with the submerged millions. He goes to the same source as did his fore-runner Zola. But his inspiration, his point of view, his methods and purposes are different. Zola wrote of the toiling, festering, submerged masses as an artist, in words bent upon making an artistic product. Hamp detests the use of words for such a purpose with a savage scorn and writes of the toiling masses because he is one of them

1 "The lives of the Underdogs" by Gilbert Thomas, Freeman, June 29, 1921.

2 "Labor and Literary Art", New York Times, May 29, 1921.

and wishes to make them vocal....for him there will henceforth be no literature worthy of the name save that which sings the song of Labor and celebrates those who toil.

"That conviction makes him a significant figure in the world of letters, a sign of the trend of the times, but when to it is added the fact that he possesses the gift of words and can use it like a flamingsword, he becomes arresting and deeply interesting.

"His stories deal with the world of poorest toil.... he is always objective. Never does he talk about his people or his scenes in his own person, never does he have any recourse to the tricks of the trade to draw upon the reader's sympathy..... he draws his characters with such force and color and vitality that they are as alive as if the reader had himself been in their homes, gone with them to their workshops. He makes no effort to create dramatic effects, but lets the drama inherent in the fact of semi-starvation manifest itself."

French critics do not praise M. Hamp so much as do the Americans. In "La Revue des deux Mondes"⁽¹⁾ André Beaunier, who until his death was literary critic of this magazine, gives Hamp a portion of both adverse and laudatory criticism. He says Hamp is not a good writer but nevertheless a writer. He considers him revolutionary but adds, "Il ne dédaigne pas tout le passé; il admire de vieilles choses qui sont

1 "Les idées de Pierre Hamp" by André Beaunier, Revue des deux Mondes, Apr.1, 1925 - republished in "Au Service de la Déesse" published by Flammarion, Paris, 1923.

French
Comment

d'ancien régime..... il n'a point résolu encore la question sociale qui est probablement insoluble; mais il traite avec bonne foi plusieurs questions sociales, et c'est, à mon avis, son mérite.....Les livres les plus intéressants de Pierre Hamp sont réalistes, sont la peinture exacte des métiers..... Hamp a besoin de la réalité toute proche; il devrait s'en apercevoir, se méfier du romanesque où il n'est point à son affaire, et se méfier aussi des vastes doctrines, où il y a plus d'imagination que de vérité."

Gaston Rageot, président of the Critique Littéraire, writes in the "Revue Politique et Littéraire" and also in the "Revue Bleue" on Hamp's merits and demerits. He says that Hamp (1) "a introduit dans la prose le même esprit que Verhaeren sait apporter à sa poésie - il a tenté de connaître et de peindre l'homme moderne économique, l'homme par excellence, tel que l'a modelé notre civilisation industrielle, l'homme économique qui peine.... Pourquoi le travail, le monde du travail, où l'on trouve des passions, des devoirs, un idéal, un honneur, etc., n'offrirait-il pas une matière romanesque et dramatique plus romanesque et dramatique que tous les thèmes usés des romans et des tragédies? C'est ce qu'a compris et montré l'auteur de "La Peine des Hommes" qui, avec

1 "Une Pièce de Pierre Hamp" by Gaston Rageot, "Revue Bleue" Febr.2, 1924. "La Maison avant tout" by Gaston Rageot, "Revue Politique et Littéraire", Febr.2,1924.

des nouvelles et des essais, dont l'ensemble forme une espèce d'épopée dédiée à l'effort et au labeur, mérite d'être considéré comme un véritable novateur.

"M. Hamp - est-ce parce qu'il y est arrivé par une voie détournée et qu'elle l'a malgré tout un peu émerveillé? - met beaucoup plus de littérature dans ses œuvres qu'un littérateur ordinaire - j'entends bien qu'il y met autre chose aussi - mais pourquoi tant d'affectation, de solennité, un ton qui, partout ailleurs, fatiguerait, mais qui, ici, devient particulièrement éloquent?"

Benjamin Crémieux in his "Vingtième Siècle" (1) compares Hamp's earnestness in his mission as the Voice of the masses to that of Dante, in his supposed mission as speaker of the Ghibelin party. The useful side of a work of art ends with the generation of its author, M. Crémieux says, its beauty alone makes it live. And it is because of the beauty of Hamp's writing that this critic believes it will live.

As a writer, Pierre Hamp is a romanticist and his work is filled with autobiography and impressionism, contends M. Crémieux, contrary to the opinion of some other critics.

"Ouvrier par nécessité ou par curiosité, inspecteur du travail, ce n'est pas la vie des ouvriers qu'il chante, c'est sa propre vie, ou si l'on préfère, en chantant sa

1 Pierre Hamp in "XXème siècle" (première partie) by Benjamin Crémieux, Paris, Nouvelle Revue Française, 1924, p.129.

propre vie, c'est celle des ouvriers qu'il chante. Son cas est, tout compte fait, un cas de narcissisme littéraire."

To Pierre Hamp, all life functions around work and the labor of men. In writing about trades and tradesmen, Crémieux says, Hamp is merely following his personal inspiration. Of secondary importance in a consideration of this author's work are the theme and the setting, according to Crémieux. The people in his writings, their suffering, their revolt or resignation, their hope or their despair, these are of primary importance. The great problems of life, Hamp expresses according to his conscience as a laborer. He does not concern himself about the end of man or the hereafter. "Les grands mystères chrétiens de l'au-delà, de la grâce, du sacrifice, de la communion des saints, il ne s'en préoccupe pas." His problems are the difficulties of the workman in the present. "La grandeur de Hamp se mesure là: il nous penche de force sur notre destinée d'hommes vivants, et le vertige s'empare de nous, et nous sentons peser sur notre tête l'irréversible malédiction de la Génèse: 'Tu gagneras ton pain à la sueur de ton front!'"

Comparison
with
Zola

It is interesting to note points of comparison between Pierre Hamp and his forerunner Zola. Examination of his work shows some influence of this great writer. Emile Zola's youth, like that of Pierre Hamp, was marked by privations and the rancor of poverty. Both men were almost entirely self-taught, and ventured into such studies

as socialism without a guide. Zola, we learn, was naturally inclined toward materialistic rationalism. Hamp's published works show a similar tendency. Hamp does not follow the plan Zola initiated in his series of novels on the Rougon-Macquart family. That purpose, we remember, was to show one family as having branches throughout all the ramifications of society. But a review of Hamp's writings shows a similarity in them to some of Zola's. "La Bête Humaine" by Zola, for instance, recounts the adventures of some railway employees near the end of the second Empire. "The Rail" of Hamp treats the same subject in the twentieth century. "L'Assomoir" of Zola aims to show the results of drink on the moral and social conditions of the working-classes. "L'Enquête", of Hamp, has the same purpose. "Le Ventre de Paris" has the central markets of Paris for its scene and the struggle between the poor and the rich as its theme. Similarly, "Marée Fraîche" by Hamp, shows the struggles of the fishing population of France that the rich may have fresh fish, and "Vin de Champagne" recounts the story of the grape from the vine to the millionaire's table with the sufferings of the poor as its background.

Although Pierre Hamp does not stress the lower instincts in human nature as Zola often did, he follows his master in choosing as subjects some aspects of society which call for radical change. One of Zola's novels, "Germinal", is strongly socialistic. Hamp makes all his writings a plea for the proletariat.

Zola's cycle of the family Rougen-Macquart consists of powerful novels well-defined in their construction. His style is vigorous and carefree, his exactness on historical subject is doubtful, his knowledge of the various "milieus" he describes is often incomplete, and his use of technical details is inaccurate. Hamp's work differs from Zola's on each of these points. In the first place, most of Hamp's works defy classification as novels. Some of them are 'contes', others essays, and of late, he has made use of the drama in bringing his ideas to the public. In his 'social novels', Hamp follows the example of the novelist by introducing to the reader a group of people whom he then uses as the characters of his study. Hamp's style is carefully chiseled, and he is well prepared to describe the "milieus" he chooses. He has worked in many of the industries he writes about and knows the psychology of its workers. He glories in making his descriptions and explanations of technical matters accurate. Thus, while Hamp has perhaps borrowed some of his ideas and subjects from Zola, he has treated them in a sincere and original manner.

Writings
considered
as
literature

The dictum of André Beaunier (1) that Pierre Hamp is a writer but not a great writer sums up my estimate of the value of Hamp's work as literature. René Lalou (2) considers him to be the creator of a new form of social

1 "Les idées de Pierre Hamp" by André Beaunier, "Revue des Deux Mondes", April 1923.

2 René Lalou, op.cit. p.670.

novel. In the composition of the various types of writing which he has successfully undertaken, he appears to me to have received two influences besides that of Emile Zola - the first of his own youthful experiences, the second of the brothers Goncourt.

We recall that the first years of Hamp's training as a man of the people were spent in a pastry kitchen, where he was apprentice to the cook. Benjamin Crémieux remarks the effect which this association with the materials of cookery had upon his writing. "Hamp (1) travaille sa matière comme une pâte", he says. "Les mots, la syntaxe ont pour lui une valeur matérielle. Il écrit opaque et lourd. Ses réussites de forme, ce sont des phrases à tenir dans la main pour les soupeser ou les caresser. Il y a des écrivains visuels, d'autres auditifs; lui est un écrivain du toucher. Il recherche les qualités tactiles; l'épaisseur, le poids, la consistance, le liasse, le rugueux."

Elizabeth Shepley Sergeant (2) says he is "perhaps the only writer in any language, who, rising from the masses, has kept not only the unsentimental realism and the instinctive sympathies, but the muscles, the tough hide and so to say, the craft technique of the manual worker". From time to time, Hamp illustrates in his writing qualities of the various manual workers among whom he grew up and with whom his life is indissolubly connected. He takes pride in using the exact technical words of each trade,

1 Benjamin Crémieux, op.cit. p.134.

2 Introduction to American edition of "People",
Brace, Harcourt & Co., 1921, New York.

showing his great love for his own métier as a writer although he values it not as an art, but for its social message.

The Goncourts, those literary workmen who have made such a strong impression on contemporary prose, probably inclined Hamp to the choice of a scientific method in his writing. The following pronouncement of the Goncourts may be applied to Hamp's social novel. "Le roman actuel se fait avec des documents racontés ou relevés d'après nature, comme l'histoire se fait avec des documents écrits. Les historiens sont des raconteurs du passé, les romanciers les raconteurs du présent." (1) Like the Goncourts, Hamp paints "milieus" with photographic accuracy. As the Goncourts sought to "tuer l'aventure dans le roman" (2), so Hamp's novels are mainly recitals of actual conditions among laborers with little or no attempt at romance. He gives as the frontispiece of one of his books the oath taken by witnesses in a court of justice, "Je jure de dire la vérité, rien que la vérité" (3). The substance of this book consists of statistical investigation into the living conditions of Lille's working classes. Hamp's statistics are sometimes difficult reading, partly because they are colored by the writer's personal ideas, and partly because of the obscure terms he uses.

1 Goncourt Journal, Oct. 24, 1864.

2 " " " Sept. 6, 1895.

3 Frontispiece to "L'Enquête", by Pierre Hamp.

When we come to speak of the qualities of Pierre Hamp's writing, we must mention his verisimilitude first. This follows no doubt from the fact that he writes about the people and the things he knows best. Elizabeth Shepley Sergeant expresses her admiration of this quality of Hamp's writing thus, - "Neither Zola with his naturalism, nor France with his delicate irony, could have given to the speech and thought of their working-class personages the tang, the poignant verity achieved by Hamp. He knows from having been inside their skins how the fishmonger, the carpenter, the section-hand, the textile-worker feels, thinks, eats, loves, most significantly how he works - works and suffers and rebels from the increasingly machine-made civilization whose weight he carries on his back." (1) His picture, for instance, of the baker in "Gens" and his exposition of the engineer's feelings after an unavoidable wreck in "Le Rail" show that Hamp knows these characters; he has worked side by side with them.

Closely akin to its verisimilitude is the sincerity of Hamp's writing. He is earnestly an apostle of the working-man. From time to time, he gives examples of his personal experience. But more often he speaks through the voice of his characters or by means of the statistics he has laboriously compiled. In "Contagious Poverty" (2)

1 Introduction to American edition of "People".
2 Trans. as "Contagious Poverty" and published in the New Republic, March 29, 1922.

and "Partnership in Poverty"(1), his appeal to his countrymen and to the world to try to wipe out the disgrace of war penetrates the mind and heart of the reader. Why is the reader moved by it? Some of his arguments do not stand the test of logic. But those who peruse the pages of these articles or of any part of Hamp's work feel that their author is sincerely trying to improve his neighbor's lot.

Some critics consider Hamp's writings objective. I disagree with these and hold to the point that they are subjective on account of the strong emotional feeling of the author. They thus possess a valuable literary quality - an appeal to the emotions. René Lalou gives his opinion on this matter in the following words: "L'art de Hamp est très concerté, rectifiant le naturalisme par l'impressionisme, fort peu objectif nonobstant la sécheresse de ses statistiques." (2)

In "La Victoire Mécanicienne", for example, when Hamp deprecates the inefficiency of the French railroads during the war, he forces the reader to sense his personal disappointment in the matter. Again, in recounting the quasi-martyrdom of Bernard de Palissy to his experiments with ceramics, he does so with a deep poignancy.(3) His book, "L'Enquête", is practically a series of statistics

1 Trans. as "Partnership in Poverty" & publ. in the New Republic, Dec. 6, 1922.

2 René Lalou, op.cit. p. 660.

3 "Saints of the Workshop", by Hamp, published in "Century", May 1923.

on necessities of life, but it possesses something more than statistics generally do - it has an appeal to the reader's emotions. Crémieux remarks of Hamp: "Il est le premier et le seul à avoir extrait d'une statistique une parcelle d'émotion littéraire."(1)

It is in his subjectivity as an "ouvrier-homme de lettres" or workman expressing himself in literature, that one finds the originality of Pierre Hamp. Many others have expressed pity for the workman and for the submerged classes, and social reform has been the subject of treatises for centuries. But it has remained for Hamp to blaze as a workman the trail of the laborer in literature. Crémieux again expresses the idea most aptly: "Son grand mérite ne sera pas d'avoir introduit dans l'art 'ce qu'il y a de plus beau au monde, le travail'....., son vrai mérite sera d'avoir été le premier ouvrier à parler de soi avec son âme d'ouvrier. C'est son âme seule qui apporte une nouveauté dans notre littérature, et non pas comme il semble le croire, le sujet qu'il traite. La littérature ne se renouvelle jamais par les sujets ou par la forme, elle ne se renouvelle que par des états d'âme inédits qui déterminent sujets de forme."(2)

This gift of Hamp's to his country's literature has been variously recognized by the writers to whom I have had access. Miss Sergeant, who has gained some of her ideas on Hamp from personal communication with him says

1 Benjamin Crémieux, op.cit. p.135.
2 Benjamin Crémieux, op.cit. p.131.

in her introduction to "People"(1): "His great originality is that in his evolution to intellectual power and expressiveness he has never renounced his workman's heritage."

A writer in the New York Times (2) considers Hamp's mind "strikingly and flashingly original". Hamp expresses his philosophy of work in a letter to the American publishers of "People", beginning thus: "To me as a workman it seems that civilization today, founded as it is on work, should consider trades and crafts not merely as the power and fortune of man, but as his art." We may conclude that Pierre Hamp has contributed much to labor and to art because he approaches his task as a workman turned artist.

As the chronology of his work shows, the writings of Pierre Hamp have influenced modern thought. He was "révélé au grand public" by his contributions to Charles Péguy's "Cahiers de la Quinzaine", which appeared from 1900-1914. The program of the "Cahiers" was to seek the truth and, when found, to express it. Here, then, Hamp first gained a literary public for his socialistic views.(3) As the "Cahiers" numbered among its collaborators and contributors the most cultivated men of France, Hamp was rewarded by his association with them with a reputation which counted much in influencing the reading public.

From 1908 on Hamp's pamphlets, short stories and novels

1 Introduction to American ed. of "People".

2 "Labor and Literary Art", New York Times, May 29, 1921.

3 Hamp's "Dix Contes écrits dans le Nord" appeared in the "Cahiers", Nov. 1, 1908. "La Marée Fraîche" appeared Nov. 15, 1908, and "Le Vin de Champagne" appeared Nov. 28, 1908.

have been appearing at frequent intervals. In the prefaces to "Le Lin" and "Gens", he says that these two books were written before the war. Neither was, however, published until the war was over. But during the course of the war, and perhaps also before it, Hamp was a regular contributor to "L'Humanité", the socialist organ of France. His articles in this paper were widely read, for many of them were answered by labor syndicates or individuals.(1) The "Revue de Paris", a conservative magazine, published Hamp's "Pêcheurs au Danger" in 1918.

In 1920 the reputation of this author as a writer was sufficiently well established to elicit comment from the important French magazines. The "Grande Revue" published a criticism of his work by G. Vidalenc in that year. In 1922 the "Nouvelle Revue Française", magazine, contained a review by J.R. Bloch of his "Le Cantique des Cantiques". The "Nouvelle Revue Française" publishing department undertook the publication of his writings, thus demonstrating that this group of authors (including André Gide, Marcel Proust, and others) considered him an influential figure in contemporary French letters.

The "Revue des Deux Mondes" published André Beaunier's article: "Les idées de Pierre Hamp" in 1923. This article was included in the same year in Beaunier's volume "Au Service de la Déesse." (2)

1 vide "Les Métiers Blessés" by Hamp.

2 "Au Service de la Déesse" by Beaunier, Flammarion, Paris, 1923.

1924 brought an article on Hamp by Gaston Rageot, published in the "Revue Politique et Littéraire" and one in the "Revue Bleue". In the same year appeared Crémieux's "Vingtième Siècle" (première série) containing an article on Hamp. In 1924, G. Truc published "Quelques Peintres de l'homme contemporain" (IV Mm.P.Hamp et Richard Bloch) in the "Grande Revue".

In 1925 and 1926, also, several articles by and about Hamp appeared in the current French reviews. The diversity of the magazines and of the critics in France who consider him as having a strong influence on contemporary life and literature forces one to believe that Hamp's influence is continually growing.

When "Gens" appeared in America in the translation by Charles Whittall (1921), it received a shower of criticism, chiefly favorable. In 1922 the "New Republic" printed two of Hamp's articles, "Contagious Poverty" on March 29th, and "Partnership in Poverty" on December 6th. The following year, the "Century" published Hamp's "Saints of the Workshop". In his comment on "People" one of the American critics said he wished many of his compatriots could read this book. His wish has apparently been fulfilled, for "People" is now in the municipal public libraries of the country and is apparently being widely read. The message of Hamp is a broad one. Our country has influenced him; In a few years he will perhaps have had an effect on both the working people and the writers

of America.

In reviewing the writings of Pierre Hamp, one is forced to note the seriousness with which he advances his ideas. The fervour of his self-imposed apostolate wins the reader's respect, although the logic of his tenets does not, as I have said above, always win converts to his "religion". A French professor⁽¹⁾ who has recently heard M. Hamp lecture in Paris and Strasbourg says that Hamp possesses a forceful personality and has gained many adherents to his ideas by his brilliant 'conferences'. Hamp is, he says, very much à la mode in Paris at the present time. Would it not then be useful for us to review some of the salient points of Hamp's philosophy and attempt to judge them impartially?

A close study of Hamp's works impressed the present writer with the following eight clearly-defined ideas: They are, (1) his contempt for literature as an end in itself, (2) his conviction that we live through the sufferings of others, (3) his advocacy of a period of apprenticeship for the workman, (4) his interest in the problems involved in the introduction of machinery, (5) his religion of work, (6) his analysis of the abnormal conditions of labor which he calls the "pathologie du

1 M. Michenot, official lecturer of the "Alliance Française, 1926, and professor of diction at the Conservatory of Strasbourg.

travail", (7) his hatred of war, and (8) his opposition to love and women.

In the preface of "Gens", M. Hamp clearly expresses his contempt for the literary profession except in so far as it finds its inspiration in Labour, or effects some benefit for the toiler. He expresses his opinion of writing in this manner: "S'amuser au jeu d'écrire est une occupation sénile." (1) In "Les Métiers Blessés" he again expresses this idea, saying that we attribute too great importance to the man who does no useful labour, who is nothing but a writer (2). He can see no value in "art for art's sake". He can find no excuse for a beautiful poem save as it is created to gain justice for the workingmen. A thing of beauty is not a joy forever to him simply because it is beautiful. The pouring of the alabaster jar of precious ointment over the feet of Jesus would appear to him the most wicked wastefulness. Hamp's outlook on this matter is very narrow. He is like a dray-horse on whom blinkers have been placed so that he will do his apportioned work more surely because he cannot see and be distracted by the objects about him. Hamp agitates against even his own nature in this idea, for he confesses that he has sometimes been guilty of working on his writing merely for the pleasure of finding the fitting, the beautiful word for a certain context. He says to his disciples:

1 "Gens", preface.

2 "Les Métiers Blessés", p.22.

contempt
for
terature

'Do not do as I do in this case, do as I say' - and, as usual, such a recommendation is not often followed.

The title page of "La Marée Fraîche" and "Le Vin de Champagne" bears this inscription: "Nous vivons de la souffrance des autres." These two stories and also "Le Lin" contain descriptions of industries practically all of whose workers actually suffer "in their effort to secure products for the consumer. In "La Marée Fraîche", fishermen are shown continually risking their lives and often enduring cold and hunger for days. Their families, too, live in almost unbroken anxiety during the fishing season. The workers in the grape sections as well as those who make wine and prepare it for the buyer are shown in "Le Vin de Champagne" as the victims of avoidable suffering. The story of the linen industry, Hamp demonstrates in "Le Lin" as a calvary to the underpaid workers. "Filer, c'est le plus vilain métier qu'une femme pût faire", he asserts. The workers, when they spin in their homes, where at least they can get some air, receive a pittance for a long day's work. When they are in factories, they work in dark, poorly-ventilated rooms. Many of the spinners are mothers who leave their babies in a room adjoining the workroom. Thus the health of both the present and the future generation is undermined. The making of garments in France, though more frequently done by women and girls in their own homes than it is in this country, is attended by all the evils of the American sweatshop. If the workman and the workingwoman were justly treated,

Life
through
suffering

mothers of family would not be forced to eke out the family income and many measures would be taken to improve the conditions of work. No thinking man or woman will deny Hamp's thesis on these points.

Period
of
Apprenti-
ceship

Acute suffering is brought about also according to our author by the neglect at the present time of an adequate apprenticeship in trades. This is a great evil for both the individual and the nation. Part of the responsibility for this state of affairs rests upon the parents, who are too anxious for their children to begin earning something as early as possible. In the choice of a trade or career for a child, the primary consideration should be, not his immediate earning power, but his natural aptitudes and the best future good of the individual and of the state. Only the careful selection of a person's *métier* to conform with his own desires will assure any happiness to him. And an unhappy worker is not nearly so great an asset to his country as a happy one. This belief of Hamp's is certainly a laudable one in so far as it goes. But it would be even more appealing if he went a step further. He considers the child only as a creature of the state, and does not believe he has a future life. What Hamp does not appear to recognize is that unfavorable employment sometimes blights the spiritual growth of a child and injures his ability to obtain this future life.

"Le
Machinisme"

Let us next consider this writer's ideas on "Le Machinisme" or the increasing substitution of machinery

and factories for handwork done in the home. At times, Hamp deplures "le machinisme." He fears that it will destroy the soul of work. It is this quality, the love of one's chosen trade, which, he holds, has been the mainspring of much that is super-fine in workmanship up to the present time. Skill, too, is discredited when machinery does all the work. In a short time an untaught workman may produce as much as the artisan of many years' experience. "La jeune fille agile est choisie plutôt que le vieux professionnel ralenti. Le recrutement examine non la capacité déjà acquise dans le métier, mais l'aptitude physique."(1) "Le machinisme" also crowds men and women into factories and into "tandis", or unhealthy tenements. Poor working people did not run the risk of contagion in their homes in the country that they now do in dark city streets.

But, on the other hand, Hamp claims that machinery is abolishing the slavery of humanity and this is what the people of France have not yet learned. They have also to learn that the new world of machinery and what we call in America "big business" requires a mode of living adapted to these innovations. As a matter of fact, the country people of France have for centuries lived huddled together in villages and those who work in the fields have gone out at break of day to their labour. Even in America the country people, according to Henry Ford (2)

1 "Les Métiers Blessés".

2 "Today and Tomorrow" by Henry Ford & Samuel Crowther, 1926, Doubleday, Page & Co., Garden City, N.Y.

are the most backward in changing their methods of work and of life to adapt themselves to the inventions of the times. Pierre Hamp would probably consider Ford's new five-day plan of work a boon to the workingman, but the laborers of France might think he was more influenced in its favor because of his interest in taylorized (1) methods of work.

Religion
of
Work

"Rappelle-toi, il faut aimer deux choses: la justice et ton métier", Hamp pronounces in "Gens". This sentence summarizes his belief in the religion of work. The decrease of the 'spiritual' quality brought to labour, he considers as one of the causes for the great unrest of our time. Labour is a religion, he states, and one in which everyone should be obliged to take part. In a letter to his American publishers, Hamp expressly voices this attitude thus, "Our industrial civilization must find in work not only beauty but a new religion. Humanity will be saved when work will be divine." He also states that work can take the place of religion(2) and that devotedness to one's profession springs from a sort of consecration.

As Hamp considers work a religion, therefore, he proceeds to give it a hagiography. As the most

1 Taylorism is the name given to the method in factories, introduced by Taylor, an American, whereby each employee does one part only of the making of any product. The French claim this method to be subversive of all originality in a workman and a mental strain to him. This method is in use in the Ford factories.

2 "Saints of the Workshop", May 1923, "Century".

meritorious of his 'saints of the workshop', Hamp counts those who do the lowliest tasks. These, he says, the "world" looks down upon, but to them he would give the highest place in his paradise. It is true, indeed, that all men should work and that labour is a dignified and ennobling act. We can agree with Hamp when he quotes Genesis to the effect that we shall 'earn our bread by the sweat of our brows', and even when he says that if any man will not work he must not eat. But when Hamp promulgates the doctrine of work as a religion, we must disagree with him. He can see no deeper yearnings in the human heart than the necessity of food and of present justice. Such a philosophy is unsatisfactory, for history shows that men of all times have sought in their religions a satisfaction superior to any to be gained in this life. Never has a nation been found which did not have a definite belief in a Supreme Being above anything perceptible by them, and a religion based on worship of this Being. Hamp's doctrine of work as a Deity, cannot, because of the constitution of man's mind, be widely accepted.

La Pathologie du Travail". The "pathology of work", that is, the perverted standards under which labour works, results in Hamp's estimation, from injustice to the workman. In "Le Rail", he illustrates this point by giving a particular instance. An accident has occurred as the effect of an engineer's passing a danger signal. Hamp shows that the railway company and not the engineer was at fault, for on that

line the train is obliged to keep up a very high rate of speed in order to reach its destination in the scheduled time. The men in charge of the train are docked if the schedule is not kept. When going at the necessary high rate of speed it is sometimes impossible for the engineer to see a signal before reaching a danger zone. Which should he do, slow up and cause his own pay and that of his associates to be lowered, or take a chance that the signal is favorable?

In "Les Métiers Blessés", the author further explains this subject of a wrong committed by employees as the result of an injustice on the part of their employers. A certain price is set as the amount to be paid for a piece of work. If a man or woman, as many women are in industry, by working harder and thus increasing his or her fatigue, turns out an amount of work larger than a set norm, is he or she rewarded correspondingly? No, the directors of the company lower the price to be paid for that piece of work, and if the workman still increases his output, the price is again lowered. Such pettiness has its effect on the workingman. He voluntarily limits the amount of work he does, slowing up his machine when his superior is not near, and even braking valuable machinery in order to gain time.⁽¹⁾ While we cannot condone this waste of time and materials, and the endangering of human life as shown above, we must, like Hamp,

1 "Les Métiers Blessés". pp.93-94.

feel that the first evil to be corrected here is one of capital rather than of labour.

Hatred
of
War.

In spite of man's difficulties in his work, his greatest suffering does not lie here, Hamp declares. Compared with the chastisement of war, work is a reward.⁽¹⁾ Homicide is the most thoroughly organized thing in our civilization. Hamp is sure from the four years of war which he endured that nothing in the pains attendant on labour at all equals those of war. In "Partnership in Poverty" he begs his compatriots to overcome their feelings of enmity for Germany, for the sake of the advantage of both countries. The withdrawal of thousands of workers in both countries from their trades, some for four years, and some forever - did not result in the industrial boom economists expected. On the contrary, idleness and hard times followed in both Germany and France. their spasm of hatred. Certainly all thinking men and women unite with Hamp in his desire to see this waste of material and of energy, which is war, exterminated.

position
to
Women.

We note, finally, an unusual tenet in the dogma in which Hamp believes. This, his opposition to love and to women, seems unreasonable and radical. As he does not give any reason for his opinion on the subject, and as he is apparently happy in his own domestic life (he is married and has children), we can only suppose that he has seen in his investigations many cases in which women have lowered

1 "Les Métiers Blessés" pp.93-94. "Le Travail Invin- cible, page 3.

rather than raised standards. Although, of course, we cannot subscribe to this opposition of Mr. Hamp's, and we consider that this idea, if promulgated, would have a subversive effect on society, we must allow him the right to his personal opinion.

The above are some of the main points in Hamp's dogma as seen by the present writer. They appear to me as humanitarian and laudable when they relate to the gaining of justice for the workman, but as unsound when they treat questions of metaphysics.

ANDRE MAUROIS

The chief result of the writings of Pierre Hamp is the increase of understanding between capital and labor which they have caused. The principal effects of André Maurois' books are twofold - the deepening of sympathy between England and France and the humanizing of some famous characters.

His understanding of the English character

André Maurois, or Emile Herzog, was born in 1885. He was a liaison officer between the French and English armies throughout the war. English writers consider him as the Frenchman who best understands the English people(1). These English were highly pleased by his witty expositions of the British character in his "Les Silences du Colonel Bramble" translated into English in 1919. "Les Discours du Docteur O'Grady" which followed, has not yet been published in translation.

After the war, Maurois published two novels, "Ni ange ni bête" and "Les Bourgeois de Witzheim". His signal literary achievement was, however, the writing of "Ariel, ou la Vie de Shelley" in 1923. This book was soon translated into English and published in both America and England. "Ariel" was imitated by numerous other writers. Finally, in 1926, Maurois himself returned to the biographical type of fiction, and wrote this time three short stories of the way of "escape". This book, "Meipe", translated as "Mape",

1 Vide "The French" by Claude C. Washburn in 19th Century & After, Nov. 1925.

a story of illusion", is a study in the psychology of the three nations Maurois had sought to understand, France, England and Germany. With his German ancestry, his English training and sympathy and his unswerving French loyalty, M. Maurois may be expected to contribute an element of broadmindedness and forbearance exceedingly valuable to present-day Europe.

As I have said above, Maurois' writings have attracted considerable attention in England, and, I may add, in America. French critics have not been nearly so general in their comment upon them. His "Ariel" was, however, awarded the Prix Paul Flat in 1925. Soon afterwards appeared M. Firmin Roz's favorable review of this book in "La Revue Politique et Littéraire"(1): "M. Maurois unit les dons du conteur, du psychologue et du moraliste dans ce récit d'une brève existence qui signifie la lutte de l'Idéal contre le Réel, de l'Esprit contre la Matière. Mieux encore: il a su envelopper d'une atmosphère de poésie diaphane, irisée, la figure du plus aérien, du plus lyrique de tous les poètes anglais....M. Maurois procède par indications éparses, très justes, mais très rapides, très discrètes, d'une sobriété peut-être excessive. On ne voit qu'une seule exquise un peu poussée dans son livre, celle de l'aristocratique école de Eton. (M. Roz says here that Shelley is represented by M. Maurois as

1 "Le Roman Biographique" by Firmin Roz in "La Revue Politique et Littéraire", Nov. 3, 1925.

Comments
on
his
Writings

entering as a student at Ston in 1809, whereas facts show that he entered in 1802 or 1803.)

"Son récit est d'une forme charmante, mêlée de portraits nets et vifs, de jolis dialogues, de pittoresque et de poésie. Le style, de bon aloi, n'est pas extrêmement châtié; mais il a une gracieuse aisance, plus de mouvement que de couleur, et parfois des ailes de la fantaisie. Le talent de l'auteur a été touché çà et là de la manière la plus heureuse par le génie de son modèle dont il reflète les couleurs et l'accent."

The "New Statesman" an English publication, published a criticism of "Ariel" in the following month which appears to me exceedingly well balanced(1) and in which the critic says that "Ariel" was one of the most successful books of 1923 in France. The writer continues, "M. Maurois has discovered a new kind of biography and one which is sure to be imitated. The narrative is very well done. The only general criticism I have to make is that, although M. Maurois' portrait of Shelley is not inconsistent with his being a great poet, those who had not already read Shelley's poems would hardly think it probable. This is due to the tone of the narrative; M. Maurois tells the story with sympathetic and ironical amusement. We must infer the poet, while we are given the antics of a sincere and gentle crank. Maurois has a rich vein, and as a Frenchman, a new vein to work."

1 "New Statesman", Dec. 15, 1923, "Ariel" by Maurois, signed, Affable Hawk.

In the same month (Dec.1923) the New York Times commented on this book.(1)

The English "Spectator" followed with an article on March 1, 1924.(2) Martin Armstrong says in this magazine, "This study by the author of 'Les Silences du Colonel Bramble' is an excellent example of a type of book which the American or English writer can hardly achieve but which the French can do to perfection. It is simplicity produced out of a complexity of matter. "It is, in fact, biography raised to a fine art. Its effect is the effect of a novel, and, what is more, a novel admirably simple, sharply defined, and of strikingly visual quality.

"The book has, besides, other excellent qualities, for a French writer is able to view English character and English institutions with a detachment impossible to an Englishman; nor is it only, in M. Maurois' case, detachment; it is also ever so slight distortion of view which makes most things English seem to the logical and Latin Frenchmen slightly barbarous and slightly ridiculous; and which gives to all his remarks a delicious sharpness and piquancy.....

"The ending of the book has true imaginative skill. It is perhaps the best, certainly the most vivid picture of the life of Shelley which has yet been written."

Then came the pronouncement of the English "Nation"

1 "Shelley as a Leading Man in a Romantic Comedy", New York Times, Dec.23, 1923.

2 "A true Fiction", by Martin Armstrong in the "Spectator", Mar.1, 1924.

in an article entitled, "The Freeing of Ariel"(1): "Maurois has written a biography of Shelley that can be read as easily and amusedly as a novel, with the additional satisfaction to his readers that they are studying history at the same time.....M. Maurois has given us a Shelley, slightly gallicized perhaps, but otherwise not to be distinguished from the Shelley that we have synthesized for ourselves, long ago, from the accounts given by Peacock, Hogg, Trelawney and others."

Many more notices on this book were published during 1924. Noteworthy among them may be mentioned that in the "Bookman" and the one in the "Atlantic". John Donelson writes in the "Bookman"(2): "'Ariel' will be ranked as one of the novels of the year, no doubt, in spite of the fact that it is a biography. It is deft and sympathetic. Maurois paints his hero with subtly ironic strokes and yet somehow makes his baffling whimsicalities, often so tragic in their consequences, lovable."

Gamaliel Bradford gives his opinion in the "Atlantic"(3) in the following manner, "M. Maurois' interpretation of Shelley is based upon thorough familiarity with all the existing authorities, and follows closely the accredited biographical sequence, simply giving the story and the characters a grace and vividness of movement which professional biography often lacks. It fails perhaps

1 "The Freeing of Ariel", by Robert Graves, Nation & Athenaeum, Mar.22, 1924.

2 "Bookman", Aug.1924, art. on "Ariel", written by John Donelson.

3 "Atlantic" (bookshelf) Jly.1924, art. by Gamaliel Bradford.

slightly in two points: there is everywhere a suggestion of French turn and tone, while Shelley, for all his sympathy with French idealism, was as intensely English as Lamb; and further, there seems to me not quite enough intimation or sense of the unearthly, supreme, transfiguring quality of Shelley's poetry, which should always temper and etherealize the strange tragi-comedy of his life.

"But after making these slight reverses, it should be recognized that the narrative thrills and throbs with all the magic that attaches to one of the most fascinating spirits that ever appeared in this mixed and troubled world."

Qualities
of
Maurois'
Books

The preceding quotations give the opinions which various professional reviewers have published concerning the value of M. Maurois' biographical novel, "Ariel". A study of this and his other books has brought me to the conclusion that they have value as literature because of four or five qualities. As the first of these I would consider his imagination.

Imagination

There is a great difference in the effect produced on the reader between the most illuminating of the Shelley biographies and "Ariel". Maurois paints vividly whatever he touches. Even Francis Thompson's beautiful essay "Shelley" leaves a large gap between the writer of poetry and the man, Shelley. Maurois shows himself to be a poet in his capturing of the wayward spirit and bringing it to ordinary men's comprehension without divesting it of its ethereal qualities.

Francis Thompson tells us in exquisite language of the petty tortures to which the boy Shelley was subjected by his schoolmates. M. Maurois goes a step farther and puts before us the boy fleeing with streaming hair before the crowd of tormentors. He follows the dishevelled lad to the corner where the cruel young Quilps malignantly goad him to rage. Then he bids us wander after the lonely boy as he turns his steps to the river and the cool grass bordering it for surcease of his sorrow.

Again Thompson tells us how childlike Shelley ever was. "It is seen in his fondness for apparently futile amusements, such as the sailing of paper boats.....Very possibly in the boat he saw the magic bark of Laon and Cythne." But Maurois' imaginative account is more vivid than this. It pictures the "prince héréditaire" that Shelley became among his sisters when he returned from Eton or Oxford for the vacations. It hints to us of the mysterious royal guests and of the romantic intrigues with which Shelley peopled his home for the awed admiration of his sisters. It paints for us the youth at Oxford who, when he went out for a walk with his friend Hagg, "se conduisait en route comme un enfant, courant sur les talus, sautant les fossés." On these walks, Shelley often "lançait des bateaux de papier." And on their return to their rooms, he curled himself up before the fire and slept like a child. After several hours the boy awoke refreshed and discoursed with a mixture of brilliance and child-like mysticism on the philosophies of

the world. Thus graphically and realistically does Maurois' imagination picture his "Ariel".

Of Shelley's loves Francis Thompson gives an interpretation similar to that of Maurois. "For we are clear", he remarks, "that this was no mere straying of sensual appetite, but a straying, strange and deplorable, of the spirit; that he left a woman, not because he was tired of her arms, but because he was tired of her soul; We must in conscience disapprove of the prominence M. Maurois gives to these affections. But we must also admit that he gives the breath of life to each of the women who offered Shelley affection that was in almost all cases unasked.

Maurois pictures eighteen-year old Shelley trying to develop the soul of Harriet Westbrook, two years younger than himself. The girl is fascinated by the young philosopher, and, believing herself to be in love with him, begs him to elope with her. The young and generous philosopher came, like Galahad, to rescue the beautiful maiden. His second elopement, that with Mary Godwin, was in the company of Mary's half sister, Jane Clairmont, and here too abstract admiration of this impassioned soul was his chief reason for the elopement. His feeling for the beautiful Emilia Viviani was also "mystical" and of the knight-errant type.

In part one of "Meipe", Maurois' imagination gives us a picture of the young Goethe very similar to one he had already painted of the youth Shelley. (1) "Il partait chaque

1 "Meipe", p.12.

matin, un livre sous le bras, vers les belles campagnes qui entourent Wetalar. Les arbres, dans les champs et les prés, semblaient de grands bouquets blancs ou roses. Couché dans les hautes herbes, près d'un ruisseau, Goethe se perdait en ces mille petites plantes, en ces insectes, en ce ciel bleu."

In the part of "Melpe" in which Maurois relates the efforts of the English actress Mrs. Siddons, to find a place of "escape" in her profession, the author gives a beautiful picture of Mrs. Siddons on the night of her first London triumph. He divides that occasion into three episodes, the first of which recounts Mrs. Siddons' anxious preparation for her appearance. "Le jour venu, avant d'aller au théâtre, elle pria longuement.....elle s'habilla dans un silence si profond, dans un calme si tragique, qu'elle effraya les habilleuses."(1)

The second of these episodes tells the effect of her acting on the audience. They at once, recognized her performance as perfect, and enthusiastically showed their appreciation. "Ce fut une de ces soirées presque divines, où le délicieux bonheur d'admirer éloigne des âmes pour quelques heures tous les sentiments bas et vulgaires."(2)

The third episode tells the effect of Mrs. Siddons' triumph on herself and her family. Mrs. Siddons was overwhelmed and her father and husband, with whom she passed the hours following the performance, were almost as deeply

1 *ibid* p.155.

2 *ibid* p.156.

moved. "Elle rentra chez elle épuisée de fatigue..... Elle remercia Dieu, puis, avec son vieux père et son mari, partagés un souper frugal. Le silence était presque complet.... Bientôt ils se séparèrent pour la nuit."(1)

Use
of
Imagery

Maurice's imagination often clothes his language with beautiful and fitting images. Thus his style frequently verges on the poetic. His narrations are always marked by clarity, and occasionally his portraits are adorned appropriately. For example, Maurice prefaces his account of the ennui Goethe felt on his return home with these images: "Le retour à la maison paternelle après un échec, apporte toujours un double sentiment de refuge et de découragement. L'oiseau a essayé de s'envoler; il a dû replier ses ailes; accroché au nid, il garde la nostalgie de l'air libre où il n'a pu se soutenir. L'enfant échappe aux difficultés d'un monde exigeant et hostile; il se replonge dans le milieu familial qui heurte naturellement moins que tout autre des habitudes que lui-même a formées; il y retrouve la monotonie des sensations trop connues, l'affectueux esclavage de la famille."(2)

In the part of "Meiße" concerning Mrs. Siddons, he also gives a memorable picture of the first time Mrs. Siddons saw the great actor Garrick play Lear. The author thus expresses her impression, "Mrs. Siddons était à la lettre enéantie par l'émotion. Au moment où le vieillard, échevelé, terrible, avait prononcé la malédiction, elle avait pu voir

1 *ibid*, p.156.

2 *ibid*, p.38.

le public se pencher en arrière d'un seul mouvement
comme les moissons sous le vent."(1) The great actor's
thoroughness of method frightened her, however, for, as
Maurois says, "Le Maître retouchait ses notes à chaque
représentation comme un grand peintre ne peut voir ses toiles
sans leur donner un coup de pinceau."(2)

In these excerpts from his biographical novels, one may
see that Maurois evidences his vivid imagination and his
happy faculty for delicate imagery throughout his work.

Maurois' work is tinged also throughout with a gentle
cynicism. He mildly ridicules characters and institutions
in a manner peculiar to himself. Perhaps the portrayal
of English people has made this quality particularly
apparent in his writing. It has always been very difficult
for those possessing the Gallic temperament to understand
their more stable English cousins. England and the English,
Shelley himself, and the people he associated with, all
share in M. Maurois' ironical comments.

In "Ariel", for instance, you come across sentences
like these: "Elle (England) exigeait de ses grandes écoles
publiques une génération sagement hypocrite.....Le but
profond et caché du système était de former des caractères
durs coulés dans un moule unique."(3)

In recounting Shelley's entrance as a student at
Oxford, M. Maurois cannot restrain a smile at Shelley

1 *ibid*, p.154.

2 *ibid*, p.156.

3 "Ariel", p.4-5.

senior's complaisance on the, to him, august occasion. The author remarks that such ceremonies are always agreeable to an Englishman.

The professors at Oxford are the next target for Maurois' arrows. When Shelley had published "The Necessity of Atheism", he was summoned to appear before the dean and authorities of his college. Maurois describes these men thus: "C'était un petit groupe de maîtres à la fois érudits et puritains, exemplaires sans fantaisie du christianisme athlétique et classique, qui presque tous détestaient depuis longtemps le jeune Shelley à cause de ses cheveux longs, de son étrange façon de s'habiller, et de son goût vraiment vulgaire pour les expériences scientifiques." (1)

In recounting Shelley's trip to Ireland to help the people of that country, Maurois enjoys ridiculing both the mysterious island and her gallant champion. He says, "S'il existe aux yeux d'un Irlandais un être plus ridicule qu'un Anglais, c'est un Anglais qui aime l'Irlande, et s'il est au monde un spectacle qu'un ancien élève d'Eton et d'Oxford, même réfractaire, ne peut supporter, c'est celui du désordre irlandais." (2)

Thus Maurois, mildly cynical, finds many occasions for sharpening his wit on his characters.

A consideration of Maurois' biographical novels without mention of his humour would seem very incomplete

1 *ibid* p.42.

2 *ibid* p.115.

Humour

to anyone who has enjoyed the gaiety of Maurois' dialogues in "Les Silences du Colonel Bramble" or "Les Discours du Docteur O'Grady". Humour, is, indeed, intrinsic in the novels also, but generally in a more restrained form.

There are, nevertheless, some passages in which Maurois joins with the reader in a hearty laugh at the ridiculousness of the incident. Such is the episode of Shelley, Mary Godwin, and Jane Clairmont on their way through France to Switzerland. They are accompanied by a small donkey Shelley had bought to carry the luggage. Maurois says that at this period, 1814, the roads of France were made unsafe for travellers by the roaming bands of marauders. It was then small wonder that "les travailleurs des champs regardaient avec surprise cette caravane de deux jolies filles en robes de soie noire, d'un adolescent aux cheveux bouclés, et d'un âne petit jusqu'au ridicule.

"Au bout de quelques kilomètres, l'âne se montra si fatigué que pour terminer l'étape, Shelley et Jane durent le porter." (1)

The picture of Shelley sitting on the steps of his father's house reading Milton after he had been refused admittance is also an amusing one. He must have looked forlorn and penitent for the sins that had called his father's wrath upon him. Soon his father's doctor came out to speak to him, and not long afterward his cousin Sidney Shelley joined him cautiously. If he had remained sitting there

1 *ibid*, p.174.

much longer, we would doubtless have had the picture of all the haughty Shelleys slinking out, one by one, to bid good-bye to the pariah.

In these novels, besides telling a good story and telling it well, M. Maurois proves himself to be a psychologist of ability. Truly, one finds psychological insight to be a gift of nearly all French novelists, but in Maurois' imaginative biographies, it has a special significance. He is able, on account of this quality, to throw some new light on characters important in literary history. Maurois' talent in interpreting the words and actions of women is unusually worthy of note. He shows in a word or two how Mary Godwin knew that she attracted Shelley, a married man, but did nothing to check the attraction. And again he remarks how Lotte Buff perceived Goethe's interest in her, but though knowing herself promised to another, "*elle fut coquette comme seules les femmes honnêtes savent l'être, c'est-à-dire dangereusement.*"⁽¹⁾ When Shelley brought his friend Hogg to see Mary, she found him dull and uninteresting. But such is the frailty of womankind that after Shelley repeated to Mary Hogg's admiration of her beauty, she was delighted to receive him. These instances are only small ones of the skill with which Maurois dissects and revivifies his characters.

In summing up the qualities of this author's writing I would therefore consider his imagination, his skilful use

1 "Meiipe", page 18.

of images, his gentle cynicism, his humour, and his psychological insight as the most outstanding.

In 1925, a book which is similar to "Ariel" in many respects was published by a Canadian writer. This book with of "novelized facts" is "Glorious Apollo"(1) by E. Barrington. It appears to have imitated or at least "Glorious Apollo" to have been strongly influenced by "Ariel", which was published two years previously. "Glorious Apollo", although it resembles Maurois' book, is to my mind different also from it in many respects. Let us consider first in what ways Barrington's book is like Maurois'.

E. Barrington, to begin with, has chosen the companion poet of Shelley, Lord Byron, for her novel. Like Maurois, she depicts an aspect of English society at the end of the 18th and beginning of the 19th century. Her "Apollo" is worth reading as the complement of "Ariel" because it portrays a poet who, in his views on life and in the use of his poetic gifts, was almost the opposite of Shelley. The author's preface at the beginning of "Glorious Apollo" promises the same truthful treatment of the characters as that of "Ariel". She says, as does Maurois, that she wishes simply "to touch biography with imagination and to present the essential truth as I see it." And, like Maurois, E. Barrington refers to the chief sources she has used. Because these writers pledge themselves to develop their characters only after the pattern of the original, they are obliged to show us in Shelley and Byron, men of immoral

1 "Glorious Apollo", E. Barrington, Dodd, Mead & Co., New York, 1925.

lives. They feel themselves justified, nevertheless, in exonerating these men from some of the blame due their conduct by showing what strong influences were working against their moral development. Each of these writers has evidently a strong sympathy for the poet chosen. As sympathy is said to give a better understanding of character, I believe that E. Barrington and Maurois have given us truer romantic studies because of this feeling.

"Glorious Apollo" differs from "Ariel" as E. Barrington's attitude toward life evidently differs from Maurois'. Maurois is, I think, a cynic, though a gentle one, and therefore he portrays Shelley and his environment in a slightly ironic manner. Barrington's method is the more straightforward English manner of praising where she feels praise is due and blaming what falls below her standards. In "Ariel", the author concerns himself almost entirely with Shelley the man, bidding us, in a note at the end, read Francis Thompson's essay and André Chevillon's study for distinguished treatment of his poetry. Shelley's life, as Maurois reveals it to us, was itself a poem, tragic, yet undoubtedly poetic. The author of "Glorious Apollo" does not attempt to give a lyric quality to Byron, but she develops her here both as a man and as a poet. She knows how little he esteemed his great gift, yet how pleased he was to use it as a means of gaining adulation. Because she pictures the creative side of Byron, a side of Shelley which Maurois fails to bring out, the book will be rated more highly than "Ariel" by some readers. The moral

tone of each of these books may be questioned, but to me, "Glorious Apollo", although it traces the life-story of the more unworthy man, is preferable to "Ariel" in this respect because its author gives the counter-development of a noble soul, Lady Byron. Maurois tells Shelley's story and laughs, but E. Barrington recounts Byron's history and weeps. Thus, while Barrington is possibly less original in having derived her idea from Maurois, I feel that her performance surpasses that of Maurois in some respects.

Books which show some influence of Maurois

The number of books which show a similarity to Maurois' "Ariel" shows that it has influenced contemporary literature. In French, one finds a life of Liszt by the novelist and critic Guy de Pourtales, published by the Nouvelle Revue Française (1926). A collection of books known as "Vies des Hommes Illustres", by leading writers is to appear soon. It is significant that André Maurois has been chosen to prepare one on the English statesman, Disraeli.

In German, too, we find an example of a similar novel. Ludwig Diehl has written a novelized life of Heinrich Heine which has been translated into English as "The Sardonic Smile" (1926). A reviewer in the New York Times says it is in the mode of "Ariel".

England contributes a novel on Bennie Prince Charlie called "Heir to Kings" by Winifred Duke (1926). A publisher's notice says, "What André Maurois' 'Ariel' did for Shelley, Miss Duke has done for this popular prince."

E. Barrington, the Canadian, has given us in addition to her "Glorious Apollo", "The Divine Lady", and "Exquisite Perdita", two additional novels in the same strain.

An intriguing addition to the Shelleyana and to the biographical novel has come with the publication of "The Orphan Angel" by Elinor Wylie. Mrs. Wylie's imaginary account of Shelley in America is very original, but it too, undoubtedly received its inspiration from "Ariel".

Then comes another study in which Byron appears with his daughter. This book, "Allegro", by Annisteed C. Gordon, is called by the New York Times, "an excellent popular biography - an illuminating study."

In concluding this study of Maurice's biographical novels, I feel that this author may be said to have created a new interest in biographical interpretation. This awakened interest has spread from French literature to German, English, and American literatures. May this study of former great figures of their own and of other nations be a bond of understanding and of union to the nations today.

CONCLUSION

To criticize the work of a great writer is far easier than to add anything new to literature one's self. Nevertheless, to choose a few men among the large number who are producing works at the present day and to say, these writers will live, those others will die, is a presumptuous undertaking. What I have attempted to show in the foregoing pages, as ^{the} result of my own observation and the testimony of recognized authorities, is simply that Edouard Estaunié, Maurice Genevoix, Pierre Hamp and André Maurois are noteworthy exponents of the art of the novel as it has been developed in France and that they represent the best that is being written, each in a particular genre, at the present time.

Estaunié's field is that of the psychological and idealistic novel, which has played an important part in French literature since "La Princesse de Clèves". To what we already possess in this field, he adds his ideas on the suffering of the individual, which he shows to be augmented by the solitude of the interior life.

Genevoix follows two traditions - that of the war writer and that of the regional novelist. In the one he contributes to the war literature of France, which began with the "Chanson de Roland", five novels of the battlefields, all of distinct literary value. In the other he follows

the example of George Sand in giving sympathetic studies of peasant life. In both he describes the people he knows best from close contact with them, according to the traditions of the naturalist school.

The novels of Pierre Hamp, like those of Victor Hugo, are realistic with a social purpose. Into this type of literature Hamp pours his own soul, an unusual and original one. Hamp's contribution to the literary development of our day is one which reaches deep in the lives of the toilers.

Maurois' biographical novels are a present-day example of that French fondness for writing memoirs which gave their literature such noteworthy character studies as the "Mémoires du Comte de Grammont" of Hamilton. Maurois' interpretations of English and German character would be favorably regarded by another former writer, Madame de Staël, as a continuation of her efforts to establish a more cosmopolitan literature in France. They are a phase of the post-war extension of the French language as a literary medium at the time when English is becoming correspondingly important as a political and commercial language.

The present European cosmopolitanism has been largely the result of the political tendency since 1918 to connect the nations by bonds which will make a renewal of hostilities unlikely. The nations which sought such bonds with good will have not needed to look far from them. They exist in ties of commerce and finance and also in more human

interests which find their outlet in literature. Among them are the psychology of the individual, the study of peasant-life and the social problems, and the desire to regain the inspiration of great figures of the past.

The writings of Messieurs Estaunié, Genevoix, Hamp and Maurois, reflecting as they do interests of their own country and of other countries, can rightfully be considered as important in contemporary French literature.

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L'Empreinte	1895	
Le Ferment	1899	et
L'Epave	1902	
La Vie Secrète	1908	Cie
Les Choses Voient	1915	
L'Ascension de M. Baslèvre	1919	editeurs,
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Maurice Genevoix

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Au Seuil des Guitounes	1918	editeur,
La Boue	1921	
Les Eparges	1923	Paris.

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La Joie	1924
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Ariel, ou la Vie de Shelley	1923	éditeur,
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