A SURVEY OF AMERICAN DRAMA

by

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Department of English.
My interest in plays is like Topsy in its origin, it "jest grewed". No event of my freshman year in high school stands out more clearly than the production of the Senior play, Hiawatha. Its weird Indian melodies, the war dance, the mysterious forms of Famine and Fever and the last words of the dying Minnehaha, - how impressive they all were! Of course, our class was not to be outdone in dramatics, and so the following year we regaled the town with a masterful production of Rip Van Winkle, - Burke's fifty-year-old version, as I have recently discovered. In succeeding years we presented Among the Breakers, Under the Lilacs, and The Ugliest of the Seven. Needless to say, my interest in plays was fixed there for all time. Consequently, when I was asked to submit subjects for a master's thesis, I included among others, "Some Phase of Modern Drama." Professor Whitcomb immediately suggested that, since American drama was almost entirely neglected in our histories of literature, that was a field worthy of research and well adapted for historical treatment. Hence, after making a few preliminary investigations, I decided to make a survey of our native plays
and I have found it a very fascinating study indeed.

Owing to the paucity of printed dramas and the difficulty of gaining access to those written during the early periods of American history, I have been somewhat handicapped in the work. But through the kindness of Mr. Koonman, Librarian of Brown University and Mr. Wright of the Kansas City Public Library, I have been allowed to read many plays and books of reference without which this thesis would be much more incomplete than it is now. I am exceedingly grateful to them as well as to the Librarians of the University of Kansas for their patience and helpful cooperation. Furthermore, my thanks for suggestions and references are due to Professor Dickinson of the University of Wisconsin, Harold Beyer of Grinnell, Iowa, Mrs. E.S. Jackson of Atlanta, Georgia and the Drama League of Chicago.

I have thought it unnecessary to append to this thesis a chronological list of American plays or a bibliography dealing with them. Oscar Wegelin's Early American Plays and Robert F. Roden's Later American Plays contain a fairly complete list of all the American plays printed previous to 1900. The Dramatic Index, Reader's Guide, Poole's Index and The Publisher's Weekly contain an immense amount of references concerning our recent drama.
Besides the bibliographies mentioned above, Professor Burton's *New American Drama* and The *American Dramatist* by Montrose Moses have been the reference books most helpful to me. Mr. Moses' book contains a very comprehensive list of works relating to American plays, as does also his *Study Course in American Drama* recently published by the Drama League. These have been of untold value to me.

I have read about a hundred and twenty-five American plays printed between the years 1765 and 1916. Thirty-five of these appeared before 1870, and represent the beginnings of many of our modern types. Since it would be a work of years to make a complete survey of this big field, I have chosen to confine my efforts to those plays most distinctly American and representative of the best dramatic effort of each era. My method of dealing with individual plays and periods has been guided largely by Professor Whitcomb's plan of conducting his course in English drama. Except in my personal comments on individual plays, I make no claims to originality.

In conclusion, I wish to express my thanks to Professor Whitcomb for his suggestions and guidance which have made this thesis possible, and for discovering to me many rich fields of research whose existence I had never realized until this year.
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INTRODUCTION

"George H. Boker is almost the only American who has succeeded with that most difficult of literary productions, the drama"
is a statement found in Pattee's *History of American Literature*. Amid with a sentence or two concerning Payne and Robert Montgomery Bird, the author passes on to weightier matters. This attitude is characteristic of historians of American literature. Captain John Smith's narratives, *The Bay Psalm Book* and the novels of Charles Brockden Brown are worthy of consideration but *The Contrast* or *Andre* can be dismissed with a few words, or completely ignored. Newcomer devotes the enormous space of two paragraphs out of three hundred eight pages to the drama, and then adds one sentence at the close of his book, "As for literary drama it is neither written or read." Simonds is a little more liberal. He gives an entire page to *Early American Plays*, and later mentions five or six recent playwrights.

Since special students of American literature take this attitude, it is not strange to find critics making the statement that there is no American drama previous to Howard's *Saratoga* (1870). But, in the light of such statements it is strange to find two entire books containing bibliographies of plays printed in A-
merica before 1900. Furthermore, T. Alston Brown's History of the New York Stage shows that hundreds of these were acted and with success. Special students of the stage such as Richard Burton, William Winter and Walter Prichard Eaton devote hundreds of pages to a discussion of modern plays but if they touch earlier work at all they dismiss it with a few pages, or a bare comment on its worthlessness.

However, in the literary world, mushroom growths are rare, and our stage of today owes a big debt to the playwrights of the early nineteenth century. And it is the purpose of this thesis to trace the development of our present drama from more humble origins. It is interesting to know that in his recent Study Course in American Drama, Montrose Moses has recognized the debt we owe to men like Tyler, Barker, and Brackenridge. It will probably be but a short time until a truer historical perspective will be established.

It has seemed best to treat this subject chronologically and, for that reason, we have taken the years 1798, 1830 and 1870 as the most convenient signposts along this historic route. In 1798, Dunlap's first translation of Kotzebue appeared and with it began the period of German influence on American plays. In 1830, Hugo and Dumas won fame for their romantic,
And from that time, American playwrights bowed before the French shrine. Finally, there arose Bronson Howard, a man who wanted to be known as an American dramatist and from the date of his first success, *Saratoga* (1870) a new era was inaugurated in play-writing.

Because of the vast amount of dramatic work done by Americans since that time the matter of relative proportion of chapters offers some difficulties. But since it is our aim to trace the development of types, the modern period will be treated only at sufficient length to show the effect of former eras upon it, not in its relative importance to American dramatic history as a whole. Throughout this thesis, only good representative dramas will be treated in detail. Obviously, it is impossible to consider all the plays in existence.

There seems to be some difference in opinion as to what an American drama is. In a broad sense, as Moses points out, it is a play "written in the United States, chiefly in the English language." In a more patriotic sense, it is a drama written by an American upon an American subject and embodying the American spirit. Although we shall make some mention of closet dramas and numerous foreign imitations, we are more ...
concerned in detecting the characteristics which are common only to America.

"It is not enough," says Percy Mackaye, "if we shall half see the potentialities of American drama through eyes educated and enamoured of European ideals; we must see them wholly, distinctly, freshly, through eyes enamoured of what they behold, and so body their large spirit forth in works unadulterated, at once American and universal".

*The Playhouse and the Play.* p. 95.
CHAPTER I.


I. Pre-Revolutionary Efforts.

When the New Theatre of Philadelphia was finished over a century ago, above the stage was an emblematic representation of America encouraging the drama. With it was this motto, "The eagle suffers little birds to sing". Since that time, we have apparently been so deafened by the screams of foreign eagles that we have allowed our home birds to sing unheard. As a consequence, many people have inferred that, since they heard no songs, there were no singers. Such, however, is not the case, for there have always been those who chanted, as best they knew, their "native woodnotes wild", and it is time we gave them fitting recognition. But before we can appreciate their efforts we must know something of the conditions that surrounded them in their "native woods".

It is not necessary for us to be apologetic about America's lack of culture in the past, even though foreign critics and travelled Americans have delighted in pointing it out to us. By so doing they have merely demonstrated their ignorance of the bear-
ing of economic conditions upon a nation's civiliza-
tion. Several years ago, Woodrow Wilson wrote,

"The obvious fact is, that for the creation of the nation the conquest of her proper territory from nature was first necessary".

Many nations partook of this conquest. France chose for her portion the Mississippi Valley and the Great Lake region; Spain felt more at home in the South and West. Along the Atlantic coast English settlements predominated, but here, too, were small colonies of Dutch, Swedes, Germans, Italians and Scotch-Irish,—a beginning of our present heterogeneous population. But we are concerned chiefly with those who spoke English. At the beginning of the eighteenth century, 260,000 subjects of King William lived in the New World, mostly in New England and Virginia, and the western border of the Atlantic coast region marked their frontier. After 1700, the population doubled about every twenty-five years, thus reaching the 5,000,000 mark by the end of the century. In the meantime, France had given up her claim to the Eastern Mississippi Valley, and the English frontier was pushed into Tennessee, Kentucky and the upper branches of the Ohio. It is among these foreign colonists, struggling with the soil, the savages, poverty, home-
sickness and disease, that we are to look for so high a type of literature as the drama. The wonder is not that they did so little "singing" in those days, but that they found time and inclination to do any at all.

A considerable body of so-called colonial literature exists. Journals, diaries and histories were the first to arise and to the latter Captain John Smith himself contributed. In New England, the stronghold of Puritanism, Wigglesworth's *Day of Doom* and Cotton Mather's *Magnalia Christi Americana* best exhibit the literary attainments of seventeenth-century America. It is noteworthy that between the years in which these two books appeared, English literature was enriched by its two great Puritan classics *Paradise Lost* and *Pilgrim's Progress*. But at present we are most concerned about the literature of the eighteenth century. Here we find Benjamin Franklin, who gave to the world *Poor Richard* and the famous *Autobiography*. In this century too, our first novels and periodicals appeared, paralleling again the literary history of England. There were many other works of minor importance, but it was very seldom that anything dramatic appeared. When such an event did happen, the result was usually but a poor imitation of some play.
which the author had seen or read in the Old World. Not until after the Declaration of Independence was the national consciousness born which brought strong American notes into our literature. In the drama, Indian and Revolutionary plays made their appearance, and with *The Contrast* (1787) came our first American comedy of manners. The year of Washington's inauguration is also the year in which William Dunlap, our first professional dramatist, produced his first play. But before we deal with the work of individual playwrights let us take a glance at the first references to America in English drama.

According to Paul Leicester Ford no sooner had English settlements been made in the western hemisphere than English dramatists began to manifest in their plays this growing interest in the New World. Chapman, Marston, and Jonson, always ready to deal with contemporary events, introduced into *Eastward Ho* (1605) a scene in praise of Virginia. Even Shakespeare in the *Tempest* speaks of the "still-vexed Bermoothes". Indians and tobacco made their appearance on the English stage about 1612, and, near the close of the seventeenth century, the African slave appeared in Southerne's

Oroonoko (1696). Mrs. Afra Behn's play, The Widow Ranter; or, Bacon in Virginia (printed 1690) was the first drama to have an American setting and the first to deal with American colonial history.

Of course, none of these plays were written on American soil. In fact, it is difficult to determine when the first play was written in this country. Professor Burton in his New American Drama states that John J. Neidig has found a play written by Jesuit priests as early as 1640. Paul Leicester Ford, on the other hand, thinks that Sir William Berkeley's Cornelia, written while the author was governor of Virginia (1641-1651) was the first to appear. All authorities agree, however, that the oldest play extant, written and published in America, is Andróborus (1714) a biographical farce in three acts. The author, Richard Hunter, governor of New York, chose this dramatic method of satirizing his political and personal opponents, including the clergy and members of Trinity Church. The piece contains many humorous Malapropisms, but, owing to its coarseness, it was never presented on the stage. The only printed copy extant is now owned by the Duke of Devonshire but E. J. Wendell, a collector in New York City, has a manuscript copy of it.
No successor to this play came until 1751 when *The Suspected Daughter*, a farce by "T.T." was published in Boston.

Nearly forty years after *Androborus*, some amateurs of the French military post of New Orleans amused themselves by producing (1753) *Le Père Indian*, written by one of their officers, Le Blanc de Ville-neuve. Although the play was in a foreign language, the setting and theme were distinctly American. In fact, this lost piece was the forerunner of the many Indian plays in which our dramatic history abounds. In this case, the plot dealt with the sacrifice of a Choctaw father for his son.

It is very doubtful if the colonies knew anything about this French production. But other people besides French officers were detecting dramatic material in the Indian struggles of the time. Robert Rogers (1727–1798), an English commander of the "Rogers Rangers" in the French and Indian war, and a participator in the siege against Pontiac and the French at Detroit, saw in his experiences good dramatic material and the result was our first poetic play, *Ponteach. A Tragedy.* (Printed in London in 1766. Price 2s. 6d.). It is written in high-sounding blank verse and subdivided into
the conventional five acts. Solemn rhetorical soliloquies retard the action. Strangely enough, the Indians, with whom Rogers sympathized deeply, moralize like courtiers about kingdoms and crowns. Besides, they are high-minded and sentimental, Christian in morals and feeling! Thus Philip, the son of Pontiac, the chief, exclaims:

"Oh! what a wretched thing is a Man in Love! All Fear— all Hope— all Diffidence— all Faith— Distrusts the greatest Strength, depends on Straws—

Soften'd, unprovident, disarm'd, unman'd, Led blindfold; every Power denies its Aid, And every Passion's but a Slave to this; Honour, Revenge, Ambition, Interest, all Upon its Altar bleed— Kingdoms and Crowns Are slighted and contemn'd, and all the Ties Of Nature are dissolv'd by this poor Passion."

But, of course, this isn't unusual, for Philip's father talks of "genii and gods."

The characters are all Englishmen or Indians with the exception of the bad French priest whose actions are contrasted unfavorably with those of the Indian conjurer. The Englishmen are all cruel, selfish and unprincipled. All— hunters, traders, soldiers and even the governors— conspire to overthrow the natives, boasting "It's no crime to cheat and gull an Indian," for they are

"Cursed Heathen Infidels! mere savage Beasts."
They don't deserve to breathe in Christian Air, 
And should be hunted down like other Brutes".

From passages like this it would seem that civilization 
had not progressed far since the time of the Crusades.

The Indians, on the other hand, all except Philip 
the villain, are dignified Christian braves much more 
manly than their British enemies. Ponteach says,

"Indians a'n't Fools, if white Men think us so; 
We see, we hear, we think, as well as you; 
We know they're Lies and Mischief in the World; 
We don't know whom to trust, nor when to fear; 
Men are uncertain, changing as the Wind, 
Inconstant as the Waters of the Lakes,

............... 
Some like the Tyger, raging cruel fierce, 
Some like the Lamb, humble, submissive, mild, 
And scarcely one is every Day the same."

A very wise remark, but not especially realistic!

The French priest is zealous to spread Catholicism, ambitious to become pope and entirely unprincipled. He plays upon the credulity of the savages by 
telling them Jesus was an Indian, and by bringing down 
fire from Heaven by means of a burning glass. Then, 
too, he attempts to seduce Monelia, claiming that the 
pope has exempted him from certain priestly vows. Ap- 
parently, Rogers was not fond of French Catholics.

The play opens with the plots of the English 
to cheat the Indians and the consequent distrust of 
Ponteach who calls a council which decides on war.
Military and religious preparations follow. In a short time, news comes of an Indian victory. Previous to this, Philip the eldest son of Ponteach reveals his desire to wreak vengeance on his younger brother Chekitam, who had sold Donanta, an Indian maiden whom Philip coveted. Chekitam is in love with Monelia, daughter of a Mohawk chief. At the time of the battle with the Indians, Philip slays Monelia and her brother, wounds himself, and lays the blame on the English. Chekitam mourns for Monelia in a very "un-Indian" fashion, Monelia's brother revives— for he wasn't dead after all— and Philip's treachery is revealed. Of course, Chekitam in revenge stabs Philip and then himself. Then the bad priest, blocked in his designs on Monelia, betrays Ponteach to the English. The play closes with the determination of the bereaved chief to fight to the finish, for

"Britons may boast, the Gods may have their will
Ponteach I am, and shall be Ponteach still".

The faults of the play are obvious. Often the scenes fail to advance the plot, which is two-fold in its nature and rendered ridiculous by the introduction of this sentimental love affair. The working-out of the plot is absurdly artificial. The characters, too,
are one-sided and unreal. Indeed, it is not difficult to discern the English influence on Major Roberts for the play is merely a reminiscence of the old revenge tragedy steeped in eighteenth-century sentimentalism. Though the aborigines of America are the tragic figures of this drama, the tone throughout is not American but English.

In this connection it is interesting to know that at the time of the Revolution Major Rogers, who remained a Royalist, had some difficulties with General Washington who ordered his arrest. He returned to England and according to Wegelin, nothing is known of him further.

Like Rogers, George Cockings, too, is an Englishman. While holding a government position in Boston, he wrote the first New England play, The Conquest of Canada; or The Siege of Quebec. An Historical Tragedy in Five Acts. (1766). It was staged in Philadelphia a few years later, but it proved to be a poor acting drama.

Preceding The Conquest of Canada about a year, came the publication of Thomas Godfrey's Prince of Parthia, the first tragedy written, acted and printed in Early American Plays.
in America. The author (1736-1763) was a young Philadelphian, the son of Thomas Godfrey the inventor of the quadrant. He was a watch-maker's apprentice until he became Lieutenant in the Pennsylvania forces which marched against Fort Du Quesne. Later, he became a factor in North Carolina where he received a sun stroke which brought about his death. Although not quite twenty-seven years old, he had written several poems which were published with his tragedy in 1765. The editor of the American Magazine at that time, in commenting on Godfrey, hints that he aspired to flights beyond his years. Furthermore, he states

"This is the first essay which our Province or perhaps this Continent, has, as yet, publicly exhibited of Dramatic Composition".

N. Evans, the friend who edited the poems, admits that "Godfrey was unskilled in any precepts", but Evans thinks it "is doing some service to human society to amuse innocently".

But what kind of amusement does this play furnish? There is no action on the stage, but everything is reported, as in Gorboduc. Long monologs are frequent. All the themes of a revenge tragedy - love, ambition, jealousy and insanity - are here. In being pure tragedy it fails to imitate Shakspere. Otherwise,

Preface to The Prince of Parthia.
it follows in the footsteps of the Master. Godfrey appropriates entire speeches from Shakspere's tragedies, only altering a word or two. "Why dost thou shake thy horrid locks at me?" sounds very familiar, and how reminiscent of Lear is this apostrophe:

"Ingratitude,
Thou hell-born fiend, how horrid is thy form!
The Gods sure let thee loose to scourge mankind,
And save them from an endless waste of thunder."

The dead rise from their graves the night that evil deeds occur just as they did when Caesar was murdered. But Shakspere is not the only writer whom Godfrey knew. Among others he refers to Virgil and Milton. According to his editor, Godfrey read the poets while attending an English school in Philadelphia. The romantic Parthian story he obtained from Tacitus, Strabo and Josephus. He put it into the form of high-sounding blank verse, sometimes irregular with occasional rhymed couplets. The plot is loose and episodic, and often moves so slowly that it seems only to creep. The characters fall readily into two classes, good and bad. They are aristocratic and oriental and poorly developed. In fact, The Prince of Parthia is much better poetry than drama. But even the verse is so full of sentimental, tragic diction, plagiarisms and imitations that one might well hesitate to call it poetry.
This is the form the story took in the mind of Godfrey: Artabanus, the King of Parthia, had three sons. The oldest, Arsaces, being in his father's favor, is hated by his envious brother Vardanes, by Thermusa the Queen, and by Lysias a court officer, who conspire against him. Meanwhile, Evanthe, a beautiful captive of war beloved by Arsaces, Vardanes and the King, discovers that Bethas, a captive taken in Arsaces' latest victory, is her father. And she succeeds in getting Arsaces to beg the King for her father's life. Arsaces' requests both for the life of Bethas and permission to marry Evanthe are granted unwillingly by the King. Vardanes then persuades the jealous monarch that a plot is being hatched against him. Then when Lysias murders the King, Arsaces is imprisoned leaving the third brother - a mere boy - to go to the Lieutenant-General for help. The Queen plans to kill Arsaces, but, later she decides that it will punish him more to let him live. Just as she comes to that decision, the King's ghost appears and the distracted Queen brains herself. By this time the forces of the Lieutenant-General arrive to release Arsaces. Naturally, a battle ensues - but not on the stage. When the report comes that Vardanes has killed Arsaces, Evanthe poisons her-
self only to learn before she dies that Vardanes is the one who has been mortally wounded. After Evanthe's death, Arsaces stabs himself. Then comes the report of Betha's death. Finally, the suicide of the Lieutenant-General is prevented by the only surviving prince, who leads all the survivors to the temple to appease Jove.

It is a relief to turn from this Gorboducian tragedy to a discussion of our first comic opera. Col. Thomas Forrest, writing under the name of Andrew Barton, produced his Disappointment; or The Force of Credulity a few years after The Prince of Parthia, but owing to personal allusions it was never acted. He says that his reasons for writing it were (1) the infrequency of dramatic composition in America, (2) the solicitations from all quarters, (3) the necessity of entertaining the city (N.Y.) and (4) to ridicule the foolish practice of searching after supposed hidden treasure. It is interesting to learn that this little opera contained a song to the tune of Yankee Doodle.

Before passing to a survey of the drama of the Revolution, we must mention the first woman playwright born in America. Charlotte Lennox was a native of New York, but early in life she went to England to live. Her plays, The Sister (1769) and Old City Manners, an
adaptation of *Eastward Ho* were written there. Wegelin tells us that Dr. Johnson considered her work equal to that of Fanny Burney and other well-known female writers.

**II. Revolutionary Plays.**

In our examination of plays so far it is perfectly apparent that American notes are conspicuous by their absence. When the Revolutionary troubles began to ferment, the attention of the colonists was centered on their own political problems. However, both Whigs and Tories found time to lampoon their opponents and it was not unusual for these polemics to take dramatic form. Moses Coit Tyler in his *History of American Literature from 1768 to 1783* devotes forty pages to the dramatic writings of that time, which, he claims, show better than any other form of literature the ideas and passions of the period. Samuel Sewall was the first Tory dramatist to oppose the work of the Continental Congress and the movement against the ministry in *A Cure for the Spleen; or, Amusement for a Winter's Evening*. Seilhamer says its purpose was to instruct in politics and gain adherents to the cause of loyalty.*

* Early American Plays.

* History of the American Theatre. Vol. II. 
It is in the form of a conversation between a Tory parson and his neighbors, whom he finally converts to his Tory views. Sewall is not the leading dramatist of the opposition, however.

While the soldiers of Burgoyne were penned up in Boston during the winter of 1775-6, it was necessary to provide some sort of entertainment. Therefore, the British officers and ladies of the town, in order to "Promote Theatrical Amusements and encourage a useful charity" organized a dramatic club which gave a series of plays in Faneuil Hall. Major Andre was one of the most popular members of this little society. General Burgoyne, who had previously written the Maid of Oaks, a play which had made him famous in England, contributed a little farce to the repertoire of the club. In this farce, The Blockade, he chose to make fun of the bravery of the rebels and the seriousness of their situation.

Immediately, the rebels retaliated with The Blockheads in which ridicule was turned back upon the British in no uncertain fashion. This, in turn, called forth another retort from the Loyalists. Their anonymous farce The Battle of Brooklyn, held up the rebel leaders as "bar-tenders, horse-jockeys, black-legs, ploughmen and cobblers". "The whole production"
Tyler says, "is unutterably coarse, .... a triumphant exhibition of vigor in the flinging back of filth at the enemy".

And so the dramatic - or rather farcical war went on. One Daughter of the Revolution showed her loyalty to the cause by her satirical poems, dramas only in mechanical form. This was the daughter of James Otis, Mrs. Mercy Warren (1728-1814). She presented the events centering about the Boston Massacre in her first poem, The Adulateur, a Tragedy as it is now acted in Upper Servia (Boston). It is nothing more nor less than a loosely-strung succession of scenes denouncing the British tyrants, chief of whom are "Bagshot", really Captain Preston, and "Rapatio", who is Governor Hutchinson of Massachusetts Bay. The five patriotic conspirators, "Brutus," "Cassius", "Marcus", "Portius", and "Junius", are no other than Hancock, Otis, Warren and John and Samuel Adams.

In substance, the patriot's theme is always this:

"Oh! my poor country! when I see thee wounded, Bleeding to death, - it pains me to the soul. Long have I wept in secret - nay, could weep Till tears were changed to blood."

Rapatio, the governor, is all that's tyrannical and mean, voicing on every side sentiments like these:

*History of American Literature from 1763 to 1783*.
"I'll make the scoundrels know who sways the sceptre;
Before I'll suffer this, I'll throw the state,
In dire confusion, may I'll hurl it down,
And bury all things in one common ruin.
O'er fields of death with hast'ning step I'll speed,
and smile at length to see my country bleed:
From my tame heart the pang of virtue fling,
And 'mid the general flame, like Nero sing."

Rapatio arises to his greatest tyrannical height when he exults, "Nero, I tower above thee". It certainly required strong feelings to paint monsters like this.

Of course Brutus the patriot looks forward to the time when the British will be vanquished. He even, with prophetic insight, foresees America of today:

"From distant lands (I) see virtuous millions fly
To happier climates and a milder sky".

Tyler says that Mrs. Warren's second satire, The Group was even more effective than the first. It was full of bitter thrusts and the same high-flown sentiment that characterizes The Adulateur. Some authorities also attribute to Mrs. Warren the above-mentioned farce The Blockheads but its authorship is uncertain. It is known positively however, that she wrote two elaborate tragedies in blank verse, The Sack of Rome and The Ladies of Castile. These were not published until 1790.

From both a historical and dramatic standpoint John Leacock's Chronicle Play, The Fall of British
Tyranny; or American Liberty Triumphant (1776) is important. In it are strong spectacular elements. According to Tyler, the scene shifts constantly from England to the various American colonies or Canada and back again; and covers a long stretch of years ending with the British evacuation of Boston. So large a number of historical figures appear, either under real or fictitious names, that the play is almost a pageant. Of course, all the British characters are satirized and the virtues of the Whigs extolled. The spirit of the late eighteenth century is reflected in the epilogue which pleads for the reign of common sense and the proclamation of independence. Besides introducing the chronicle play into American drama this is our first drama to present the negro as a comic character.

And now let us turn from these Bostonian Satires to college dramatics in the South. College students have always taken an interest in expressing themselves through the drama, and it is not at all strange to find the students of a Maryland academy, during the years the Revolutionary ardor was at its height, presenting two plays written by their teacher, Hugh Henry Brackenridge (1748–1816). Besides being a Princeton graduate, Brackenridge was editor of the United States Mag-
azine and at one time a chaplain in the American army. Consequently, he was well prepared in both literary and military knowledge for the production of his dramatic poems, *The Battle of Bunker Hill* (1776) and *The Death of General Montgomery at the Siege of Quebec* (1777). As is so often the case with poetic dramas, these are more literary than dramatic, merely poems in dialog form. The first exalted the military effectiveness of the Americans because of "the moral superiority of their cause". Tyler suggests that it meant to teach the lesson of military confidence. Whether it did that or not, it could not fail to make its impression upon young and ardent patriots at a time when feeling already ran high.

In the "Foreword to the Public" preceding *The Death of General Montgomery*, Brackenridge states that "Virtue, bravery and heroism, not love" are its themes, and that he published it merely "to fan the fires of liberty". Because the actors were all to be boys, Brackenridge omitted all female characters. Naturally, that simplified matters, making it easy for him to paint the conventional English devils and American angels. Like Rapatio in *The Adulateur*, Carleton, the Governor of Canada, is a perfect monster of cruelty. In one
scene the ghost of General Wolfe arises for no apparent reason except to accuse his nation of injustice. Another character is the chaplain, a sort of warrior priest, who causes one to surmise that he is a picture of Brackenridge himself. He does not hesitate to defend war and prays for victory with the fervor of a Hebrew prophet. It seems to be the view of all the characters that the heroic thing is to die for one’s country rather than to live for it as we modernists try to argue. In one respect though, the play has a modern touch, for it expresses the hope that we might some day annex Canada, a dream which a few people still cherish. As in all the Revolutionary plays, hatred of the British is a controlling motive. The last speech of the drama drives home this intense hatred of the "earth-disgracing name of Englishman" in a few lines strongly resembling (in form not substance) Antony's speech over the dead Brutus,

"And at the Last Day, when the pit receives Her gloomy brood, and sees among the rest, Some spirit distinguished by ampler swell Of malice, envy and foul-gripping hate, Pointing to him, the foul and ugly Ghosts Of Hell shall say, "That was an Englishman".

This poem can hardly be said to have a plot.

Montgomery's forces attack Quebec and are defeated — and that's all. As its title indicates, the General
is killed thus making the play a tragedy, though the event is not real enough to arouse the slightest sorrow in the mind of the reader. The soldiers make long flowery speeches over the death of their comrades, when they ought to be in the midst of battle. Another obvious fault is that no allowance is made for the passage of time. In one speech Montgomery talks and in the next the soldiers mourn his death. And so we might go on pointing out grave and serious faults, but notwithstanding all these, Brackenridge must have succeeded in accomplishing his purpose which was not to produce a great drama but, as I have said, "to fan the fires of liberty".

After the Revolutionary excitement began to wane it was only natural that a reaction should set in, especially against the belief that all Englishmen were devils incarnate. In Boston the reaction swung to the extreme and it became fashionable to sneer at the Revolutionary cause, denounce our French allies and long for the British military pomp formerly centered in Boston. Against this fashionable practise some anonymous writer directed a farce, The Motley Assembly. Some attribute its authorship to Mercy Warren but that is only a probability. It is important historically chiefly because it contains only American characters.
Perhaps one or two other plays deserve mention here. Peter Markoe's *Patriot Chief* (1783) and Henry John's *School for Soldiers* suggest American subject matter.

A few dialogues, school exercises and anonymous pieces were written during these years, but they are very scarce, some of them lost. The plays examined so far, — crude and provincial as they are — are more interesting for the light they throw on the literary, historical and social conditions of the times than for any dramatic value.

III. First National Awakening.

Just as the small boy after winning his first fight, awakes to a consciousness of his strength and imagined greatness, so the youthful United States after its victory over John Bull became self-conscious, proud and alive to greater possibilities. Literature revived as a result of this awakening and before the birth of the nineteenth century America could boast of one professional dramatist. But before we discuss William Dunlap, let us look at the two distinctly American dramas which preceded his earliest play.

In these days we hear a great deal about foreign marriages, and escapades of American girls and foreign counts. This is not, as one might think, a new theme, for as early as 1785, Barnabas Bidwell in his *Mercenary Match* described just such a situation. Today,
a divorce would be inevitable, but Mr. Bidwell's New England conscience would probably have been horrified at such an outcome. Anyhow, he saved his conscience by having the foreigner murdered instead. The play was acted at New Haven by the students of Yale, Mr. Bidwell's alma mater.

Following on its heels came our earliest comedy of manners, *The Contrast* (1787). The author, Royall Tyler, (1758-1826) was a Harvard man and a contributor to periodicals. He was, also, a law student, eventually becoming Judge of the Supreme Court of Vermont. Not in staid New England but during a diplomatic mission to New York, Judge Tyler first became intensely interested in the theatre and his own play *The Contrast* was the immediate result of this interest. The advertisement says that the play was "written by one who never critically studied the rules of the drama, and, indeed, has seen but few of the exhibitions of the stage; it was undertaken and finished within the course of three weeks; and the profits of one night's performance were appropriated to the benefit of the sufferers by the fire at Boston."

It was played by the American Company in New York, Philadelphia and Baltimore and possibly Boston. When it was printed (1790) Washington, Aaron Burr, Edmund Randolph and William Dunlap were among its numerous subscribers.
The Prolog in heroic couplets states that the author "has confined the subject of his work To the gay scenes - the circles of New York," for "Why should our thoughts to distant countries roam, When each refinement may be found at home?"
The author condemns especially the interest in dress shown by the fashionable beaux of New York:

"Modern youths with imitative sense Deem taste in dress the proof of excellence; Whilst all which aims at splendor and parade Must come from Europe and be ready made."

Thus early arose the cry against imitation and importation of foreign goods, and the demand for products "Made in America".

This prose play, in the usual five acts, has a cast even smaller than that of the society dramas of the late Clyde Fitch. The scene opens in Charlotte's New York home. Two society belles, Letitia and Charlotte, in gossiping over the love affairs of their friends, tell how Maria has discarded her lover Dimple because he does not conform to her ideas of a sentimental hero. Unconsciously, both girls betray their own interest in Dimple. The plot becomes more complicated with the arrival of Charlotte's sentimental brother, Manly, and his Yankee servant Jonathon. Meanwhile, Dimple, the avowed disciple of Lord Chesterfield, upon
receipt of bills from England, decides to marry the rich Letitia although he obviously prefers Charlotte. His duplicity is exposed by Manly, but as Dimple departs he calls attention to "the contrast between the deportment of a gentleman who has read Chesterfield and received the polish of Europe, and an unpolished untravelled American," the last a parting shot at Manly. Maria finds in Manly her sentimental ideal. And the play ends as Charlotte awakes to a realization of the basic qualities of a real gentleman as embodied in her own brother.

To allow for the passage of time, Tyler interpolates some comic scenes. Jonathon, the Yankee, entertains Jessamy and Jenny, the servants of Dimple and Maria, with accounts of his experiences in New York, especially his innocent visit to "the devil's drawing room" where he saw The School for Scandal.

In spite of Tyler's plea for home-made products he has imitated somewhat - especially in his diction - the sentimental comedy of England. Steele's Conscious Lovers and Kelly's False Delicacy had been played in America and he may have seen them himself. Manly and Maria are the chief moralizers here. Manly foresees America's great wealth and, in a long monolog, discourses on the theme, "Luxury is surely the bane of a nation." He is proud of "our illustrious Washington" and of
the sword presented to him "by that brave Gallic hero, the Marquis De la Fayette". He voices the modern complaint,

"In America, the cry is, What is the fashion? And we follow it indiscriminately because it is so."

For the first time in our dramatic annals, we see American society contrasted favorably and realistically with English. The sentimental hero is the ideal American patriot of the eighteenth century - exemplary in honor and bravery. The American atmosphere is further intensified by the introduction of the popular Cherokee Death Song sung by Maria and by Jonathon's nasal rendering of Yankee Doodle. Jonathon is the first of the many Yankees who have figured in our native drama. His dialect and diction betray his Vermont origin, just as his attitude toward the theatre shows his New England rearing.

"Why, ain't cards and dice the devil's device and the playhouse the shop where the devil hangs out the vanities of the world upon the tenter-hooks of temptation?"

asks Jonathon. However, he describes the "show" which he attended at what was really the old John Street Theatre. He went into "a long entry that had lanterns over the door". The building had "a garret just like a meeting house gallery." And there Jonathon saw

"a power of topping folks, all sitting round in little cabbins just like father's corncribs; and then there was such a squeaking
with the fiddles and such a ternal blaze with the lights, my head was near turned."

Then he describes in his homely way the applause after which

"they lifted up a great green cloth and let us look right into the next neighbor's house."

He discusses the "next neighbors" - really the actors. Then Jessamy assures him that he has certainly been in the playhouse. Dumfounded, Jonathan reflects, "Well, I vow, now I come to think on't, the candles seemed to burn blue, and I am sure where I sat it smelled ternal-ly of brimstone".

The fashionable Charlotte naturally, has a more modern attitude toward the play. She and other belles and beaux "often make a party in a side-box at the play". She continues,

"Everything is conducted with such decorum. First we bow round to the company in general, then to each one in particular, then we have so many inquiries after each other's health, and we are so happy to meet each other ....... Then the curtain rises, then our sensibility is all awake, and then by the mere force of apprehension we torture some harmless expression into a double meaning which the poor author never dreamt of, and then we have recourse to our fans, and then we blush, and then the gentlemen jog one another, peep under the fan, and make the prettiest remarks; and then we giggle and they simper, and they giggle and we simper, and there the curtain drops..... Oh! the sentimental charms of a side-box conversation."

Dimple, in his Chesterfieldian conceit and love for the foreign, does not regard the New World theatre in quite so favorable a light as Charlotte. He says
there is no recreation in New York for a traveler but "hops" and "sitting to see the miserable mummers, whom you call actors, murder comedy and make a farce of tragedy".

These comments, however, should be taken with a grain of salt, for Dimple liked nothing English or European.

Undoubtedly, The Contrast, abounds in technical faults. Many of the scenes are mere dialogs and the comedy parts are mainly fillers—in. But Judge Tyler is at least to be credited with giving us the most entertaining New York society drama previous to Mrs. Wcott's Fashion (1845). Paul Leicester Ford says that Samuel Low's Politician Outwitted (1788) is as interesting as The Contrast, but for some reason it has not received the attention or favorable comment of the latter. Perhaps because it is a political comedy, it does not make the appeal of a comedy of manners. But what of the comment on The Contrast? Thomas J. McKee says its success

"was one of the powerful influences which aided in bringing about in this country a complete revolution of sentiment with respect to the drama and theatrical amusements..... And when the first citizen of the United States, the immortal Washington, attended in state as President to witness a first-night performance of an American play, the Revolution was complete."

Preface to The Contrast as edited by the Dunlap Society.
Not only was *The Contrast* a means of bringing about a revolution in sentiment, but it was also the means of stimulating to dramatic authorship our first manager, stage historian and playwright. William Dunlap, though born in Perth Amboy, New Jersey (1766), was taken by his family to New York when a boy. Here he began his art studies which resulted in his being sent by his father to England where he studied under Benjamin West. After his return to America, his lifelong interest in the drama and the wonderful success of *The Contrast* caused him to turn from painting to play-writing. His first effort, *The Modern Soldier*, was read and praised by several of his friends but never acted. Dunlap tried again and in 1789 won recognition by the production of two plays, *The Father* and *Darby's Return*. Five years later, he produced his first tragedy, *Leicester* which was followed by *The Archers* (1796) an opera, and by a farce, *Tell the Truth and Shame the Devil*. Between 1787 and 1830 he produced sixty-three plays many of which are adaptations from the German of Kotzebue or direct imitations of him. The best known is *Andre*, a five-act tragedy. About the time of his dramatic success, Dunlap became Manager of the John Street Theatre in New York, but poor business methods led him to bankruptcy. During his later life, besides
his large amount of dramatic composition, he did a
great deal of painting, founded the National Academy
of Design and found time to write a Life of George
Frederick Cooke and several histories including The
History of the American Theatre. He died in New York
in 1839. It was his hope to lead the public to an ap-
preciation of good native dramas, a hope which is being
carried out by the Dunlap Society and Drama League of
the present day.

Only Dunlap's earliest plays fall within the
period under consideration. It is with The Father that
we first shall deal,— a play melodramatic and crude,
far inferior to The Contrast. Instead of real humor,
Dunlap has supplied mere horse play. Witness this passage:

Susan. Mrs. Bounce Flobby wants you to go
a-hopping with her.
Mrs. R. Shopping I suppose you mean.
Susan. I guess she did mean so; for the na-
tion knows she doesn't look much
like hopping, I guess.

Often, too, when Dunlap wishes to be serious he is
most ridiculous. It takes little imagination to pic-
ture the effect on the audience when the sentimental
Father, Colonel Duncan, in his tenderest mood exclaims,

"They shall feel my protection when these
gray hairs no longer rustle in the wind."

(These are only two examples of the crudities common in
the play.)
The play is a mixture of sentimental comedy and the comedy of intrigue. The villain Ranter plans to seduce Mrs. Rackett, the wife of a profligate New York merchant, and then marry her rich sister Miss Felton. He is balked in his plans by the appearance of Miss Felton's lover, Captain Haller, who discovers his villainy. Haller proves to be the long-lost son of Miss Felton's guardian, Col. Duncan (The Father), and, owing to the emotion aroused by this touching discovery, the villain Ranter is freely pardoned in the words of Col. Duncan:

"We will restore you to peace, but first must restore you to the paths of virtue, for out of them there is none."

Needless to say, the scenes are melodramatic. The characters speak in a stilted bombastic fashion neither realistic or entertaining. In the last act they are all dragged onto the stage, as in a Dickens' novel, and a general moral reformation occurs.

In spite of these faults, there are a few interesting bits here. Jacob in his use of Dutch dialect is a reminder of Hans in The Shoemaker's Holiday and a forerunner of Rip Van Winkle. However, his is not so much an idiomatic dialect as it is English pronounced by a Dutchman. The young Rhode Island doctor with his conversation filled with Latin phrases, medical terms
and learned words in general is distinct though a caricature. Rackett says of him,

"That, sir, is a travelled American, who has been gaining knowledge in England, Scotland, France and Italy....His head is New York on May-day - all the furniture Wandering."

As in The Contrast, the soldiers boast of their Revolutionary victories, although they are far enough removed from the heated feelings of the war to acknowledge, "I think not the worse of a soldier or a man for being English; we are no longer enemies" - a very different sentiment from that found in the plays of the Revolution. Instead of war, reconstruction now claimed the attention of statesmen. The Articles of Confederation were being amended. In the opening scene, Rackett at his breakfast table reads in his newspaper,

"A majority of thirty-one in favor of adopting it with amendments.... and we hope all the states will follow our (N.Y.) virtuous example".

To a twentieth-century student, melodrama and sentimentalism always have their ridiculous sides. When the heroic Captain Haller addresses Ranter thus,

"Villain, thou canst not escape. Here your career is finished, ungrateful man,"

smiles are in order. Col. Duncan, the central figure of the play, is all that is perfect. His sensitive soul could never have lived in our day when "Swat the Fly"
is a national slogan.) Cartridge his servant says,

"I have known him brush away the mosquito that bit him with his handkerchief thus: 'I can forgive thee', says he, 'thou actest up to thy nature; but when man stings, I punish for disgracing his god-like reason'."

Evidently Col. Duncan is something of a philosopher as well as a sentimentalist. It is too bad that Dunlap steeped his play in that "stale morality" which the Epilog so censures.

Washington, whose patronage had done much to change American sentiment concerning the drama, received frequent mention in Dunlap's next play, Darby's Return. Darby is a poor Irish soldier who, upon returning to his native land, describes Washington as

"A man who fought to free the land from wo,
Like me, had left his farm a-soldiering to go,
But having gained his point, he had, like me,
Return'd his own potato ground to see."

During Dunlap's stay in England, he had witnessed many of the popular dramas of the day. As Brander Matthews suggests, he was familiar with Douglas and Venice Preserved and early came under the influence of Schiller and Kotzebue. There are traces of this German influence in both Leicester and Andre but, since the former is American in no respect, it will be treated with the other foreign plays of Dunlap. The Andre (1798) is, however, of national interest to us, being the first

* Preface to The Father. Dunlap Society Publication.
of a dozen or more American plays which deal with the Andre-Arnold story. Brander Matthews in the Preface asserts that this will never make a good drama because it has two heros, a spy and a traitor, and poetic justice cannot be done without violating historical truth. Then, too, Dunlap in 1799 was hardly far enough removed from the period portrayed. Arnold was still alive, then, and Washington, who is one of the characters, survived the production of Andre more than a year.

The Prolog informs us,

"A native bard, a native scene displays
And claims your candor for his daring lays".

His Muse "Sings of wrongs long (?) past, men as they were,
To instruct without reproach, the men that are."

For the first time in American dramatic history, a full description is given of the make-up and costumes of the chief characters. Besides soldiers and children, there are two women and eight men in the cast. Unfortunately, Dunlap chose blank verse in which to write his tragedy. Although he was a better dramatist than poet he did not have the genius of a Shakspere who could make his plays succeed in spite of their poetry. As is usually the case in poetic drama, long speeches retard the action, conversation replaces feeling and sentimental rather than tragic speeches prevail. The play is so remote from the real that the reader hardly
feels that the outcome is tragic after all.

The spectator first catches a glimpse of the American camp in the moonlight and, as in the first scene of Hamlet, a sentinel paces the rounds reflecting on the night. His friend Bland approaches and, as they discuss the war, the sentinel tells of the capture of Andre who, Bland says, once saved the latter's life. Bland, after a prayer for Andre's safety, goes to seek him in prison. To allow him time to reach the prison a scene in Washington's camp is interpolated. Washington and his generals discuss the war. The plot is not advanced any, but the opportunity of lauding Washington is fully utilized.

The scene changes to Andre's prison where the spy is thankfully reflecting that his death will involve no one. He is very glad to see his friend Bland once more and begs only that the manner of his death be changed. Bland, with overdone frenzy, rushes to the General to beg for Andre's life. About the same time Bland's mother learns that the English have captured her husband and will shoot him if Andre is put to death. She, too, flies to the General and reaches him shortly after Bland's suit has been refused and he, in frenzied despair, has thrown away his cockade and renounced his country.
While Mrs. Bland is in camp, messages come from Sir Henry Clinton and from Bland himself. The former threatens Washington with the death of Bland in case Andre is put to death. And in a speech which settles forever the fate of Andre, Washington thus responds:

"'Tis well, sir, bear this message in return. Sir Henry Clinton knows the laws of arms: He is a soldier and, I think, a brave one. The prisoners he retains he must account for. Perhaps the reckoning's near. I, likewise, am A soldier; entrusted by my country. What I shall judge most for that country's good That shall I do. When doubtful, I consult My country's friends; never her enemies. In Andre's case there are no doubts; 'tis clear: Sir Henry Clinton knows it."

Bland's note begs Washington to do his duty ir- respective of his (Bland's) life or death. Young Bland reveals this state of affairs to Andre who asks to communicate with Sir Henry Clinton's messenger, in behalf of Bland Senior who is later released. Meanwhile, young Bland repents of his rash words and makes due apologies. About this time, Honora, the girl whom Andre believed married, comes to the prison and the sight of her suffering overcomes Andre's fortitude. The General is touched when Honora pleads for her lover, but his little moment of hesitation ends when a message comes which tells of the hanging of Hastings by the English. Honora, almost crazed, goes to Mrs. Bland's arms. In the last scene Andre is led to his execution and the sound
of shots comes from behind the scene.

And so ends the story known to every American schoolboy. Throughout the play, Washington appears dignified, serious and modest, wavering between his Christian feelings and his conception of patriotism. When most irresolute he voices the cry of the modern pacifist:

"Oh, I feel
That man should never shed the blood of man."

But, nevertheless, he decrees Andre's death because he is convinced that

"The destiny of millions, millions yet unborn, depends upon the rigor of this moment."

The interest of the play centers more in him than in Andre whose fate we are sure of from the beginning. With the devotion of a soldier to his general, McDonald thus characterizes The Father of Our Country:

"Both good and great thou art, first among men;
By nature, or by early habit, grac'd
With that blest quality, which gives due force
To every faculty, and keeps the mind
In healthful equipoise, ready for action;
Invaluable temperance—by all
To be acquired, yet scarcely known to any."

In contrast to the calm and dignity of Washington is the rash, impetuosity of the youthful Bland. In fact, his character is decidedly overdrawn. His worship of Andre even to the point of denouncing his country and selfishly ignoring the grief of his mother is not suf-
ficiently motivated. Just as the audience of 1798 was shocked when he traitorously threw away his cockade, so the reader feels that the Biblical maxim "Spare the rod and spoil the child" has been ignored once too often. Bland's character strengthens a little, later in the play, and interest in Honora calls attention away from him.

Honora is the conventional tragedy figure crazed by the loss of her lover. The lover, though, is the brave, Captain Andre throughout except when weakened by Honora's frenzied grief. The tragedy lies in the almost fated death of a good man. The problem of the dramatist consists in bringing about the death of Andre without injury to the portrayal of Washington. Dunlap handles that difficult situation creditably.

Although it is apparent that Dunlap was strongly influenced by Shakspere, Otway and others - Bland says he has played Pierre in Venice Preserved - the setting and themes are strictly American. Even at that early date was heard the cry,

"When peace comes then Europe's ports Shall pour a herd upon us far more fell Than those, her mercenary sons, who now Threaten our sore chastisement" -

the nation-old cry against immigration. Other themes might be enumerated, but it is probably plain to the reader that Andre has sufficient individuality to rank
its author among the "little birds" of American drama.

These are the words of Brander Matthews:

"Of all the plays on the subject of Arnold's treason and Andre's sad fate, the Andre of William Dunlap is easily the best, both as literature and as a successful acting drama".  

Dunlap was only one of several who imitated the foreign drama. David Humphrey's translated The Widow of Malabar (1790) from the French. Among other tragedies appearing before 1798 are these:

Peter Markoe: The Reconciliation (1790).
David Ritterhouse: Lucy Sampson (1789).
James Norval: Generous Chief (1792).
William Preston: Death of Louis the Sixteenth (1794).
Margaretta B. Faugeres: Belicarius (1795).
William C. White: Orlando; or, Parental Persecution (1797).

The lighter plays of the period contain American touches, however. Mrs. Carr's Fair American was acted in 1789. Ann Julia Halton's opera, The Songs Of Tammany is certainly of local interest. During this period Susanna Rowson, the author of the well-known Charlotte Temple, tried her hand at drama. The Slaves in Algiers; or, A Struggle for Freedom was followed by a couple of farces The Female Patriot and The Volunteers, both of which suggest the Revolution. Miss Rowson acted on the American stage for five years, her last appearance being in her own comedy, Americans in England (1798). Both John Leacock and Royall Tyler tried again to write

"Preface to Andre. Dunlap Society Publication."
dramatic pieces but without their former success. Just at the close of the century, the development of true American drama was retarded by the introduction of translations and imitations of the German playwrights, Schiller and Kotzebue. Tyler spoke truly when he said,

"All which aims at splendor and parade Must come from Europe and be ready made." 

IV. American Theatricals Before 1798.

Since the reign of Elizabeth, the theatre has been one of England's great institutions — except, of course, during the Interregnum (1642-1660). It is perfectly natural, then, that the Loyalists of Virginia, with all due regard for the recreations of their mother country, should look more favorably upon theatricals than their Puritan neighbors. Although Seilhamer and Dunlap insist that no plays were given in the colonies before the middle of the eighteenth century, Mary C. Crawford in her Romance of the American Theatre cites letters and newspaper reports in which Williamsburg, Virginia, is mentioned as having a "Play House" as early as 1722. Addison's Cato was given by the college students of Williamsburg in 1736. After Hallam's Company arrived from England (1752), a gradual demand for theatrical entertainments arose. Consequently,

• Prolog to The Contrast.
the Hallam Company, afterwards called the Douglas and still later the American Company, with shifting membership, remained here until 1796 when it disbanded and its various members joined other troupes. These early players had to face many difficulties, however. Just as today in many small towns of the Middle West, all amateur productions are given in the I.O.O.F. or other lodge hall built over the largest store in town, so in Philadelphia, theatrical beginnings were made in the room over Plumstead's Warehouse. In New York the players used a room in Nassau Street. Several play-houses were built after 1758 but until the close of the century the John Street Theatre in New York, (built 1767) and the Old Southwark in Philadelphia (built 1766) were the most prominent. Norfolk, Williamsburg, Annapolis, Baltimore and Charleston were dramatic centers in the South. In New England progress was slow. In Boston, men like Gov. Hancock opposed "Stage Plays, Interludes and Heathen Shows" vigorously. As a result, prohibitive laws were not repealed until just prior to the erection of the Boston Theatre (1794). After the Revolution, in addition to the Old American Company appeared vaudeville companies, strolling comedians and amateurs in abundance. William Winter says there were 150 professional actors in America by 1800. 

*The Wallet of Time.*
Richard III and Cato were among the most popular plays given as were, also, the dramas of Otway, Farquhar and Garrick and other eighteenth century playwrights. Literally, "each actor in his life played many parts". During the first two years that the Hallams were in America each member played from twenty-two to thirty parts. According to the English custom, there was an afterpiece - a farce - following every performance and this increased the work of each actor considerably. Large repertories prevailed until far into the nineteenth century.

Not only did players have to face the problems involved in poor buildings, big repertories and popular opposition but they had to face adverse legislation as well. In 1760, Philadelphia enacted this law against plays:

"And Whereas, several companies of idle persons and strollers have come into this Province from foreign parts in the character of players, erected stages and theatres and thereon acted divers plays by which the weak, poor and necessitous have been prevailed on to neglect their labor and industry and give extravagant prices for their tickets and great numbers of disorderly persons have been drawn together in the night to the great distress of many poor families, manifest injury of this young colony and grievous scandal of religion and the laws of this government.

Be it Therefore Enacted, That every person and persons whatsoever that from and after the First day of January which will be A.D.1760 shall erect, built or cause to be erected o
built any play-house, theatre, stage, or scaffold for acting, shewing or exhibiting any tragedy, comedy, tragi-comedy, farce, interlude, or other play or part of a play whatsoever, or shall act, shew or exhibit them, or any of them, or be in any way concerned therein or in selling any of the tickets aforesaid in any city, town or place within this Province and be thereof convicted in manner aforesaid shall forfeit and pay the sum of five hundred pounds lawful money aforesaid."

Notwithstanding all this, plays were given in disguise. Hamlet appeared as Filial Piety, and The Pernicious Vice of Scandal was the new name for Sheridan’s popular drama.

In Rhode Island plays were prohibited because "they increase immorality, impiety and contempt of religion." When the Douglas Company slipped into Newport for a season they, again, resorted to subterfuges. Othello was described as "Moral Dialogues in Five Parts Depicting the Evil Effects of Jealousy and other Bad Passions, and Proving that Happiness can only Spring from the Pursuit of Virtue".

The bill printed a moral below the name of each character. After Cassio’s name was the warning: "All young men, whatsoever, take example from Cassio".

It is not difficult to understand how our Puritan ancestors were shocked by the lax morals so prevalent in eighteenth-century dramas. Newspapers were full of controversies about the theatre which, some writers implied, was a resort of thieves. Mobs were

"Seilkamer's History of the American Theatre."
not infrequent we know, and eggs were often aimed at the beaux who crowded the stage. Mr. Douglas, the actor, issued this card in New York May 3, 1762:

"A Pistole Reward will be given to whoever can discover the person who was so very rude as to throw Eggs from the Gallery upon the stage last Monday, by which the Cloaths of some Ladies and Gentlemen were spoiled and the performance in some measure interrupted."

At the outbreak of the Revolution the Continental Congress suspended public amusements. In 1778 it further enacted

"That any person holding an office under the United States who shall act, promote, encourage or attend such plays shall be deemed unworthy to hold such office and shall be accordingly dismissed."

This rule, however, was not fully enforced, and owing to change in public sentiment, prohibitive legislation gradually disappeared. The revolution of sentiment is apparent in this article from the Pennsylvania Herald after The Contrast came out:

"The new comedy not only rivals the most celebrated productions of the British muse in elegance of invention, correctness and splendor of diction, but particularly commands applause for the chastity of its morals, the happy application of political reflections, and above all for that exuberance of attic salt prevailing in this comedy, and totally divested of the obscene suggestions which have so long disgraced the stage in the parent country."

Seilhamer suggests the coming of the Hallam-Douglas-American Company was the chief incentive to

"Seilhamer: History of the American Theatre"
dramatic writing. We have shown there were other incentives as well. Although *The Prince of Parthia* and *The Conquest of Canada* were both acted on the Philadelphia stage, neither was a success. During the Revolution only amateur companies of soldiers or civilians indulged in acting plays. The American Company felt safer in Jamaica. After *The Contrast* proved successful, a Dramatic Association was formed in Philadelphia which aided the drama materially. It is to the credit of the actors, Hallam, Douglas, Henry and others that American dramas were always given a fair trial. After the rise of William Dunlap, our stage annals are fairly rich in accounts of plays written by Americans.
CHAPTER II.

THE GERMAN PERIOD (1798 - 1830)

I. The Romantic Movement.

"Do not, O greedy critic, apply the birch because its (the drama's) unpractised tongue cannot lisp the language of Shakspere, nor be very much enraged, if you find it has to creep before it can possibly walk."

Thus J. N. Barker prefaces his Indian Princess (1808). This warning is still very applicable to all critics of our drama and particularly to critics of the earlier periods. Not only did our drama go through this creeping stage, but when it first attempted to walk clung tightly to the fingers of its big sisters, England, Germany and France. Until 1870 at least, it was in the clinging stage, letting go only now and then to attempt a step or two by itself, but eventually running back into the arms of the favorite big sister, which, during the period under consideration, was sentimental Germany.

National expansion during the first three decades of the nineteenth century had little positive effect on American drama. The purchase of the Louisiana territory and the accession of Florida opened new worlds to colonizers, who pushed our frontier into the Mississippi Valley as far west as Missouri. Immigra-
tion increased and our population more than doubled between 1800 and 1830. But colonists in the new territory naturally had no time for literary pursuits. These they allowed their Atlantic-Coast relatives to monopolize. American literature during this period boasts of Cooper and Hawthorne, novelists, Poe and Bryant, poets, and of Washington Irving, essayist and story-teller. These men were a part of the romantic movement, originating in Germany, which Scott and Lamb and the early nineteenth-century poets brought to its culmination between 1816 and 1821.

In Germany, Schiller's Sturm-and Drang plays had already done their part in disseminating the author's revolutionary ideas concerning ruler and subject, tyranny and liberty, and by 1804 he had completed his five great dramas, Wallenstein, Maria Stuart, Die Jungfrau von Orleans, Die Braut von Messina and Wilhelm Tell. His comtemporary, Augustus von Kotzebue (1761-1819), though a comparatively obscure figure today, was as influential as Schiller in romanticizing the drama. Kotzebue was a native of Weimar in Saxony, and during the greater part of his life he held governmental positions in Russia and Germany. For some time he was director of the German Theatre in St. Petersburg and later of the Imperial Theatre in Vienna.
He was finally stabbed by a theological student at Mannheim, because his political doctrines were not in accord with those of the youthful revolutionists of the day. Besides directing the production of numerous dramas, Kotzebue himself wrote more than two hundred plays. The most popular of these were The Stranger, Pizarro, and The Virgin of the Sun.

Since Germany was the cradle of romanticism for this period, the distinguishing characteristics of German writers during this period are practically synonymous with the term romantic, which signifies a subjective treatment of picturesque material in a spirit of reaction against classical models. Sentimental, moralizing and high-sounding phraseology are characteristics of Kotzebue's subjective treatment just as his exotic, Gothic, historical settings suggest the picturesque material of which he made use. His plays are not in blank verse like Schiller's and Goethe's, but in prose. His hero is usually a morbid, melancholy, solitary figure, and his heroine a seduced but repentant woman, weak and emotional. These characters, usually of high rank, are involved in a love affair which proceeds in a melodramatic fashion to the tearful end. Kotzebue excelled in dramatic technique and especially in the ability to bring about effective situations,
influencing French and German dramatists to Sardou and Sudermann. Although not all of his plays were produced on the English stage, many of them were, and through these the acting drama of the time was greatly influenced.

America has always been prone to reflect the literary conditions of her mother country. Consequently, when England allowed the German dramatic argosies to overpeer her own petty traffickers which curtsied to them, did them reverence, America too, or rather William Dunlap, with a follow-your-leader spirit, immediately turned to the laborious work of translating Kotzebue's plays. His first adaptation, The Stranger, was played in 1798 in the John Street Theatre, New York, but it is possible that this play was merely a reprint of Sheridan's translation. It must have proved successful, in either case, because two years later he produced five more plays from Kotzebue which were acted in New York. These included the well-known Pizarro and The Virgin of the Sun. Later he added to this collections of German translations many plays which are preserved now only in manuscript. Besides the three named above, printed copies exist of False Shame, The Blind Boy, Fraternal Discord.

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Abaelino, The Great Bandit, and Lover's Vows. Dunlap was not the only translator, however. In the two years of 1800 and 1801, Charles Smith, a New York book-seller and editor of the Monthly Military Repository produced what Dunlap termed "several (17) bad translations" from Kotzebue. But there is no record of their being acted.

Let us now turn from this direct German influence through translations to the indirect influences which is much vaster. During his stay in England in the eighties, Dunlap had become familiar with Schiller and Goethe as well as Kotzebue, and before he had even translated Kotzebue he had produced The Archers; Or, The Mountaineers of Switzerland (1790). This preceded Schiller's Wilhelm Tell almost fifteen years, but it shows the general interest in the romantic Tell story of which Schiller later took advantage. Even earlier Dunlap had produced his tragedy, Leicester, which, though it falls chronologically into the preceding period, will be considered here on account of its romanticism. Dunlap realized, as so many of our modern critics have pointed out that

"This (tragic) Muse has not been courted to our clime;
Her rays have feebly reached our land from far,
The light, long-ling'ring of a distant star".
No doubt it was partly because of this American preference for the comic Muse that this tragedy met with little success. The story of Leicester immediately suggests the setting of the play, Kenilworth Castle and its environs, a setting extremely remote, historical and Gothic. Like Schiller, Dunlap chose to write this time in blank verse of the same quality as in the Andre. One of the best passages contains Leicester's tribute to woman:

"Judge not her sex by her (Matilda). They are by nature
Tender, gentle, loving; form'd to delight;
Best blest in giving bliss; goodness in all:
But when that heaven-implanted guest, sweet
Innocence,
Is by base Passion driven from her throne,
That instant all is marr'd."

As usual, Dunlap insists on pointing the moral in the closing speech. Leicester exclaims,

"O that mankind
Would ponder well this scene, which, rightly ta'en,
Shows us how near the ever-open gate,
Of Guilty Pleasure lies Perdition's gulph."

Such a moral arouses our curiosity as to the plot. It runs as follows: Leicester, on his way to Kenilworth to see his wife Matilda hears the clash of swords. Upon investigation he discovers only Dudley Cecil and his wife Elwina. Dudley has just fought a duel with his brother Henry who has disappeared after being wounded. Leicester invites Dudley and Elwina to spend
the night at Kenilworth. Meanwhile Henry Cecil, Matilda's lover, who has been posing at Kenilworth as her brother, tells Matilda of Leicester's approach. They plan to escape from the castle, but are prevented by Leicester's speedy arrival. When a letter announces the coming of Matilda's real brother, she decides that their only way to escape from having their guilt exposed is to kill Leicester. With the courage of Lady Macbeth, Matilda urges Henry to the deed. He creeps into the darkened room and stabs the sleeper who, he learns too late, is his brother Dudley. Leicester soon discovers Matilda's treachery. But without any of the remorse of a Lady Macbeth, she invites Leicester to a banquet where she hopes to poison him. When he accuses her of the attempt and she sees that all is lost, she stabs herself. Henry rushes in and falls on Leicester's sword and the hero remains unharmed.

Now, this is not really a tragedy, except for poor Dudley; for the others deserved to die. Henry was young and weak and easily led by Matilda. Dunlap claims Matilda is different from both Lady Macbeth and Clytemnestra though more like the latter. She is certainly a Greek when it comes to resourcefulness and deceit. But she lacks the nobility of an Iphigenia as well as the more human qualities of a Lady Macbeth. Pride,
vanity and guilty love lead her unresistingly to murder. Leicester is aristocratic, dignified and noble, always brave and generous and ready to forgive.

This play like the *André* shows strongly the Shakesperean and classical influences on Dunlap. It lacks the extreme sentimentalism, though it possesses much of the Gothicism prominent in German drama.

The rest of Dunlap's numerous plays, with the exception of *Yankee Chronology; or Huzza for the Constitution* and *A Trip to Niagara; or, Travellers in America*, (in which Leatherstocking is a character), show the influence of the romantic movement. Note the suggestion of Gothicism in this title, *Ribbemont; or, The Feudal Baron*. Dunlap terms *Bluebeard; or, Female Curiosity*, a dramatic romance. Russians and Italians come in for dramatic treatment in *The Italian Father, Rinaldo Rinaldinì; or, The Great Banditti* and *Peter the Great; or, The Russian Mother*. *Fountainville Abbey*, an adaptation of Mrs. Radcliffe's *Romance of the Forest* is, of course, Gothic. Of Dunlap's sixty-three plays and adaptations, only twenty-nine exist in print, the others remaining in manuscripts which are practically inaccessible. It is to be deplored that his audience did not act upon the advice contained in the Epilog of *The Father*: 
"If he write more, and down your throats will cram 'em
Give him a hint, and very fairly damm 'em."

At first Dunlap asked,

"Is there none to strike the lyre at home?  
Have we of native heroes had our share?  
Look to our annals; read the answer there."

But like many preachers he failed to practise and with the exception of Andre failed to make use of our vaunted "native heroes".

Other would-be dramatists followed in the wake of our so-called "Father of American Drama". Excluding the plays of Dunlap and Smith, there are in existence over one hundred seventy printed dramas which were written in this period. Of these, about one-fourth of the titles suggest a crude romanticized use of American subject matter. The Young Carolinians; or, Americans in Algiers (1818) presents American characters in a romantic setting which probably leads to dramatic situations akin to those of Kotzebue. At least, the German playwright wrote a piece with a similar title, False Shame; or, The American Orphan in Germany. Even the plays which are American in subject matter show the German influence in their themes and technique. The rest of the dramas of the period have foreign titles whose scope extends over much of the known world.
Daranzel; or, The Persian Patriot (1800).
Foscard; or, The Venetian Exile (1806).
The Russian Banquet (1813).
Altar (1819).
Mary of Scotland (1821).
Xerxes the Great (1815).
The Sultana; or, A Trip to Turkey (1822)
And finally, The Emancipation of Europe (1815).

This last was the work of Edward Hitchcock, President of Amherst College. From the romantic and melodramatic titles of these works one naturally infers that the treatment of the subject matter is sentimental and melodramatic, too, and therefore imitative of the dramas of Schiller and Kotzebue. It is impossible to determine when this influence actually ceased. It was, however, gradually replaced by the French after the entry of Hugo and Dumas into American literature.

II. John Howard Payne. (1791-1852).

To the average American John Howard Payne is known merely as the author of Home Sweet Home. But Home Sweet Home is simply one little song in Payne's opera, Clari, the Maid of Milan (1823). And it is this last work that identifies him as a dramatist. This, and others of Payne's sixty and more plays and adaptations, were presented on the London stage before being played in his own home, New York City. He is, then, our first dramatist to win recognition abroad and, as the greatest figure of this period, deserves a detailed study.
While yet a boy, Payne took part in amateur theatricals, thus perfecting his acting sufficiently to appear at the Park Theatre as Young Norval in Home's Douglas. Although he was only eighteen years old at the time, his acting immediately attracted attention. Dunlap tells us,

"The applause was very great. Boy actors were then a novelty and we have seen none since that equalled Master Payne."

Encouraged by his success, (the American Roscius, as he was dubbed,) continued playing in various American cities until 1813 when he went to London. Here he made his appearance as Young Norval at Drury Lane. He continued his career in London, with occasional trips to the continent, for nearly twenty years during which time he wrote nearly all of his plays. Side by side with his dramatic work, he carried on literary work, contributing to and publishing periodicals both in New York and in London. These facts help to explain why Payne's dramas stand out as the most actable and most literary of the American plays yet considered. Payne's life was a romance in itself. While in Paris he fell in love with Mary Godwin Shelley who preferred Washington Irving to Payne and, consequently, did not encourage his advances. After Payne's return to America, he was appointed as United States Consul to Tunis and the last
decade of his life was spent there. Some time after his death his body was brought back to America where it received fitting interment in Oak Hill Cemetery in Washington.

Payne wrote his first play, *Julia; or, The Wanderer* at the immature age of fourteen. It must have been encouraging to the boy to have this comedy performed at the Park Theatre in the following year, but with the exception of his *Lover's Vows* (1809), its presentation did not incite him to further authorship. Not until he had been in London for several years did he again turn to play-writing. The results of his renewed efforts were several farces, comedies and melodramas, one or two adaptations from the French, the opera mentioned above, and his two best-known plays, the tragedies *Brutus; or, The Fall of Tarquin* (1818) and *Richelieu; or The Broken Heart* (1826).

(Let us first consider the Roman tragedy.) It has the old tragic motif of revenge mingled with the romantic struggles between liberty and oppression, love and duty. It pictures Roman life at the beginning of the Republic, exalting the good woman and the pure home.

As the title indicates, Brutus is the central figure. For years he has feigned idiocy at Tarquin's court, hoping thereby to find means of deposing the
tyrant. Finally, Tarquin's son, Sextus, criminally attacks Brutus' kinswoman, Lucretia, who, stinging under disgrace, stabs herself. Until this occurs, Brutus has remained passive, but this event furnishes him a sufficient motive for revealing his true nature and calling all Rome to rise against the Tarquin family. In a Mark-Antony-like speech, he addresses the Roman mob in the Forum and incites them to the expulsion of the Tarquins. Meanwhile Titus, the son of Brutus, influenced by his love for Tarquinia, deserts his country and runs to her rescue. But both are captured and brought to Brutus, one of the new consuls, for trial. Brutus, torn between his duty toward his country and love for his son, finally condemns Titus to the axe. The play closes when Brutus gives the signal for the death of Titus and then falls overcome. Thus was verified the declaration of the oracle that the struggle would end when a fool drove the Tarquins hence and set Rome free.

The change in Brutus' character from that of an apparent idiot to a truly noble Roman afforded men like Kean, Booth and Forrest opportunity for really great acting. No doubt, Payne's own knowledge of stagecraft enabled him to supply this drama with splendid settings as well as plenty of action and tragic situations.
Beside Brutus, the other characters are weak and one-sided. Titus is an impossible son of his father as weak as Henry Cecil in Dunlap's Leicester. He is not Roman at all. Lucretia is the exemplary wife whose chiefest glory
"Is in retirement — that her highest comfort results from home-born and domestic joys, — Her noblest treasure, a deserving husband."

Tullia, the wife of Tarquin, is the aristocratic Roman, proud and haughty. She is not afraid to die but too proud

"To perish
By the vile scum of Rome — hunted by dogs — Baited to death by brawling, base mechanics — Shame insupportable!"

Tarquin himself does not appear in the struggle but the unprincipled Sextus makes up for his omission.

In America, this play has had a long stage history and a deserving one. It was especially popular during the third quarter of the century, appearing with Shakspere's tragedies in the repertories of our great tragedians. Its last appearance on the New York stage was in 1884. Although it abounds in imitations of other Roman tragedies, it would be interesting to see it revived by a good company with the aid of all the modern stage settings and appliances. Not only would this lead to a renewed interest in the classical story of Brutus and of Lucretia, but it would enable the
present generation of playgoers to view the best drama of our first prominent playwright.

Payne's Richelieu is about as inferior to Bulwer-Lytton's great play of the same name as a novel of Mary J. Holmes is to Les Miserables. His hero is not a dignified old statesman but a conscious villain of the "Faustus" type, versatile, handsome and brilliant. He is much younger than Lytton's Richelieu and seemingly delights not so much in power as in questionable love affairs. He could never be capable of the deep feeling which the older Richelieu shows toward Julie de Mortimer.

The fact is, Payne spoiled his play by an excess of Kotzebuean characteristics. After the death of his victim Madame Doriwal, Richelieu rushes from the room crying frantically, "Horror! Horror!" in a way that recalls Cora's frenzy in the last act of Pizarro. Its melodramatic situations, sentimental prose diction and sentimental motifs, and the seduced but repentant heroine are all reminiscences of Kotzebue. The heroine is, also morbid and tearful and dies heart broken. In her weakness she cannot be compared with the gentle, lovable Julie, a tragic but never a silly character. As in Kotzebue, there is here a great deal of unnecessary moralizing and an excess of love-making which re-
veal, not the strength and weakness of the minister, but just the one side of Richelieu's nature, - his unprincipled attitude toward women. His remorse at the end is entirely inconsistent with his villainy and only makes a bad character worse by stamping him a hypocrite as well as a libertine. In addition to these other faults, Payne has made use of all the artificial dramatic methods, such as unnatural asides and confidences, which today we condemn.

M. Duval's La Jeunesse de Richelieu (1796) gave Payne the idea for this play which he claims is "a faithful picture of high life in France at the time in which the scene is placed". The aristocratic Richelieu speaks of the war in which were "gentlemen of the very first note stretched on the bare earth, and confounded with the commonest soldiery".

To this, Dubois, his cynical secretary, responds sarcastically,

"All the great folks should have been killed apart by themselves."

It seems that the English Lord Chamberlain objected to sentiments like these. at least, he opposed the production of the drama. In spite of this opposition, it was played by Charles Kemble with certain adaptations. However it is far surpassed by the Brutus in dramatic possibilities, diction, plot, characters, motifs and real tragic struggle.
III. Dramas with American Themes.

Often it is as important to know the exception as it is to know the rule. If the bulk, more than three-fourths, of the plays produced in this period were under the German influence, foreign and romantic, there is the more reason why we should want to know something about the plays that were least imitative and most American in themes as well as in setting and characters. But in a short survey, it is necessary that we confine our examination to a few of the best and most typical of these dramas. Although anonymous pieces continue during these years, they are of very minor importance.

The three chief types which predominate are (1) plays dealing with Indians; (2) those bearing on our wars with England and (3) comedies dealing with Americans at home or abroad.

First, we shall examine the Indian plays. It is very difficult to determine how many there are, owing to the number left in manuscript. There are seven, possibly more, in print:

F. Deffenbach's Onliata; or, The Indian Heroine (1821).
Joseph Doddridge's Logan, The Last of the Race of Skikellemus, Chief of the Cayuga Nation (1823).
W.H.C. Hosmer's Fall of Tecumseh (1830).
Nathaniel Deering's Carabasset; or, The Last of the Norridgewocks (1830).
G.W.P. Custis' Indian Prophecy (1828).
and Pocahontas; or, The Settlers of Virginia (1830).
James N. Barker's *Indian Princess* (1808).

The last two are of especial interest because they deal with the romantic story of Pocahontas. Barker's "Operatic Melodrama", as he calls it, is founded on an incident in Captain John Smith's *General History of Virginia*, — the story of his rescue by Pocahontas.

Mr. Barker (1784-1858) in his Preface condoles the fact that critics

"most liberally bestow their stripes on all poor wanderers who are unhappily of American parentage."

He is an optimist, notwithstanding, and declares,

"Dramatic genius, with genius of every other kind, is assuredly native of our soil, and there wants but the wholesome and kindly breath of favour to invigorate its delicate frame, and bid it rapidly arise from its cradle to blooming maturity."

O, that critics today might catch the vision!

Barker divides his characters into two groups, Europeans and Virginians. Of the former, Captain Smith, Lieutenant Rolfe and Larry, an Irishman, are the chief soldiers and adventurers, though there are several others. Powhatan's family, including his son Nantaquas and Pocahontas, Miami a prince in love with Pocahontas, and Grimosco the conventional bad priest are the leading Virginians. These characters are all stationary but a little better drawn than in *Ponitach*. Larry, the Irishman, was probably suggested by Dunlap's Darby.
He tells Irish jokes in the Irish brogue, sings, and is the general comedian for the company. He says when he came to America he left "a prolific potato-patch all in tears". The other characters are historical figures personified but little more than puppets in the hands of Barker.

The language used by the Indians is little more realistic than that used in Ponteach. Pocahontas waxes Europeanly poetical in this speech to Rolfe:

"Thence, soaring high
From the deep vale of legendary fiction,
Hast thou not heaven-ward turn'd my dazzled sight,
Where sing the spirits of the blessed good
Around the bright throne of the Holy One?"

The background of this little piece, with modern scenic effects, could be made very beautiful. One scene is the Powhatan River, wild and picturesque, with ships approaching the shore. Another is Werocomoco, the village of Powhatan. The inside of Powhatan's palace, a forest, and a grove, - all of these are romantic even Gothic settings. In the last of the three acts, the scene shifts to Jamestown, the village. With proper scenery and costumes, this would make an entertaining little spectacle.

The first act pictures the landing of the English at Jamestown and the capture of Smith. In one of
the comedy passages, Rolfe declares he would be willing to marry a squaw. In the second act, Pocahontas saves the life of Smith. Miami, the Indian prince, becomes jealous of Rolfe and, when his demands are refused by Pocahontas, he declares war. In the last act, the priest persuades Powhatan that the English are false. Pocahontas overhears this and secures help from the ships which arrive from England at the opportune moment, just before the Indians attack. All the characters appear in the last scene including three white girls who, disguised as pages, have come over on the last ship in order to marry Larry and two of the other soldiers. Rolfe, too, has won his squaw.

The arrival of the English girls is as improbable, though not quite so impossible as the rapid building of Jamestown. Apparently, only a day or two have elapsed between the first and third acts and yet, in the first act, Smith's party arrives and in the third, Jamestown, houses and all, is the scene of the action. Barker follows historical traditions too closely to produce a good play. He employs little suspense, brings about the climax too early in Act II, and then by means of artificially contrived situations holds the interest till the end.
The play is mostly in prose, though Smith usually speaks in blank verse as does also Pocohontas. About a dozen lyrics appear to justify Barker's statement that this is an "operatic melodrama." In the use of musical effects, this drama is quite modern. Its themes are those of love and adventure, the life of the colonists and of the Indians in Powhatan's camp. It is too crude to be of much importance dramatically. Notwithstanding, it was acted both in Philadelphia and New York but not with the success which Custis' Pocahontas met in Philadelphia a few years later.

George Washington Parke Custis (1786-1857) was the grandson of Mrs. Martha Custis, afterwards Mrs. George Washington. His daughter became the wife of Robert E. Lee thereby uniting the famous Virginia families. Mr. Custis was always interested in the early history of Virginia and his Recollections of General Washington was one outgrowth of this interest. Another was the production of his two Indian plays. The Indian Prophecy, he calls a "National Drama in Two Acts, founded on a most interesting and romantic occurrence in the life of General Washington."

It appeared two years before the Pocahontas.

Barker's Indian Princess was probably the model Custis used in Pocahontas. He uses the same three-act
division and the same or similar settings. His characters are either English or Indians and, in the main, the same as in the other play. The suitor of Pocahontas, though, is not called Miami now but Metacoran. Instead of the conventional John Smith, we have here a brusque, conceited braggart. Rolfe is of a more meditative turn. As in the other play, the bad priest incites Powhatan against the English. The three Indian girls — no white girls appear in the garb of pages this time — are called, after the manner of Cooper, "innocent females". One of these is the wife of Mowbray, the first "squaw man" in American drama. He had been left on the Virginia shore by an expedition previous to Smith's.

Namoutac, the Indian who has just returned from Europe gives a very European account of his visit. Even until 1830 stage Indians persisted in using good English. Metacoran thus advises Powhatan, "If we cannot succeed by open force, we must resort to stratagem."

And Powhatan, at the close of the play, prophetically remarks:

"Now it only remains for us to say that looking thro' a long vista of futurity, to the time when these wild regions shall become the ancient and honored part of a great and glorious American Empire, may we hope that when the tales of early days are told from the nursery, the library, or the stage, that kindly will
be received the national story of Pocahontas; or, The Settlers of Virginia."

Custis does not fall into the error of bringing his play to a climax before it is half done. On the other hand, while he uses much the same story as Barker, but with more suspense and better motivation, he leads up to the climax just at the close when Pocahontas saves the life of Smith and is betrothed to Rolfe. Various episodes are interpolated to prolong the suspense and allow for the passage of time. As in The Merchant of Venice, the hero does not marry the heroine but here again dramatic justice suffers because of historical facts. Except that Kotzebue was a much better master of technique than either Barker or Custis, these plays might almost have come from his pen. As far as their romantic qualities are concerned, they strongly resemble his Peruvian dramas.

Many authorities claim that the best Indian drama of the period is John Augustus Stone's Metamora; or, The Last of the Wampanoags (1830). It is in manuscript form and, therefore, very difficult to obtain for examination. Mr. Phelps in his Players of a Century gives the following entertaining account of it:

"Metamora was not a work of much literary merit, but it was original and its success was remarkable. It was the first time that the creation known as the Cooper Indian ('an extinct tribe
that never existed' - Mark Twain) was seen upon the stage. To this purely idyllic creature the actor (Stone) added the fruits of his studies among the Choctaws, and the result was a grand theatrical success. Many times delegations of Indian tribes who chanced to be visiting Boston, New York, Washington, Baltimore, Cincinnati and New Orleans, where he was acting the character; attended the performance, and even expressed pleasure and approval. It is said that a large delegation of western Indians, seated in the boxes of the old Tremont Theatre in Boston, on such an occasion, were so excited by the performance, that in the closing scene they rose and chanted a dirge in honor of the death of the great chief."

The plays dealing with early American wars are about as numerous as the Indian dramas. Both the Revolution and the War of 1812 offered dramatic material. About the time of Dunlap's André, John Daly Burk, editor and publisher, produced his Bunker Hill; or, The Death of General Warren (acted 1798). A little later, Samuel B.H. Judah, a well-known writer in New York City, produced four plays among which was A Tale of Lexington, a National Comedy founded on the opening of the Revolution (1823). The title of W. Icór's drama leaves no necessary information untold: The Battle of Eutaw Springs, and Evacuation of Charleston; or, The Glorious 14th of December 1782. A National Drama in Five Acts (1807). The popular actor, Henry James Finn wrote Montgomery; or, The Falls of Montmorency (1825), which was acted at the Boston Theatre, (as Wegelin says), "with
much success”. Mordecai Manuel Noah, journalist and lawyer, (of whom it was said, "He told the best story, rounded the best sentence, and wrote the best play of all his contemporaries,”) produced two historical dramas, Marion; or, The Hero of Lake George - acted in New York in 1821 - and She Would Be a Soldier; or, The Plains of Chippewa (1819) - played in Philadelphia four years before it was printed. C.E. Grice and John Blake White turned to the struggle of 1812 for their plays, The Battle of New Orleans; or, Glory, Love and Loyalty (1816) and Triumph of Liberty; or, Louisiana Preserved (1819). The author of the latter, Wegelin says, was "an artist, lawyer and dramatist residing in Charleston," S.C. Other efforts were made to record America’s military prowess, but these are sufficient to show the bearing of political upon dramatic history.

When Burk’s Bunker Hill came out, it was performed for fourteen nights "with unbounded applause." Be that as it may, it is about as full of faults as a drama in poor blank verse can be. The speeches are long, stilted and sentimental, offering opportunity for elocution rather than acting. One of the two plots consists of scenes showing the battle and the death

* Early American Plays.
and funeral of General Warren, - not so much a plot as scenes in a historical pageant. The other centers in the lover of Abercrombie, a red-coat, for Elvira, the daughter of a Carolina planter. Abercrombie's struggle between his love and duty to his country comes to a climax in Act III when he allows his honor to overcome his love. The tragedy consists in the death of Abercrombie and the despair of Elvira.

The minor characters are the conventional red-coats and patriots. Elvira is so weak in her pleadings with Abercrombie as to be despicable. According to his friends, Warren's character was not true to life. John Adams said the stage Warren was "a bully and a blackguard". And so he is. He is fighting to wreak vengeance on the British for indignities offered the patriots,—not an extremely high motif! Besides, he is fighting for glory and renown as much as for his country. He reaches the lowest depths of brutality when he says,

"Now savage strife and fury fills my soul -
And when my nature yields to soft compassion
Let Boston's injuries rise before my view,
And steel my heart to pity".

Furthermore, he is conceited enough to think he will be one of the immortals after death. And he dies boasting,

"I had but one poor life to give my country: Had I ten thousand it should have them all."
Burk surely put some of his own admiration for Warren into the mouth of the hero without realizing what the result would be.

Abercrombie is forced into voicing the sentiments of a pacifist. When he sees he must give up Elvira, he exclaims:

"Curse on the authors of all war and strife; They are, who fill the world with wretchedness, Who tread on honor and humanity; Who rend all ties which knit the soul together."

But Abercrombie would never have advocated, "Peace at any price!"

Since Mr. Burk had been a student of the classics at Trinity College, Dublin, he tinges his play with references to Roman history especially the dramatic stories of Brutus and Cato, and he exposes his pedantry by expressing his scanty stage directions in Latin. We are grateful to Mr. Burk for his zeal in behalf of "Columbia's glories", but it would have been better had he expressed his zeal in other than dramatic form. He had a weakness for history, and all of his dramatic attempts were of a historical nature. Probably, he felt as did Samuel Judah

"Writings for the stage of a national character founded on a period so eventful and brilliant in our history ....... should be the first and most desirable subject for an American dramatist, for he has an excuse even when he
fails — his feelings and his wish belied the feeble efforts of his limited powers."

This statement should be kept in mind for Mr. Judah's efforts were, indeed, feeble. Like the witches in Macbeth, he brewed a concoction of all the dramatic and romantic types he knew, including works of Scott, Shakespeare, Kotzebue, and Ben Jonson, and his Tale of Lexington was the result.

As in Kotzebue's dramas, Ethlinde the central figure is the betrayer and seducer who has deserted his wife, Alianor. At the opening of the play she is crazed — a weak combination of Ophelia and Blanche of Devon — and the mother of a very precocious boy of no certain age. Ethlinde, after deserting Alianor, attempts to seduce her sister, Mey Bothel, a weak silly, gullible creature, who is ignorant of his real character. Their elopement is prevented by the Battle of Lexington, at the conclusion of which he is confronted by his crazy wife. In the hesitation attendant upon his remorse, he is killed by the patriots, just as Mey learns that he is her sister's seducer.

Adam Bothel, the father of the girls, is as overdrawn as the other characters. At first he condemns Mey in an unnatural, unjust manner because of her affection for Ethlinde. In the battle he fights brave-
ly and rejoices to discover his daughters are safe, but immediately after finding them, forgets all about them in delivering a panegyric on the Lexington martyrs whose memory

"shall ever be embalmed in the hearts of a grateful nation."

The comedy characters, - for there is about as much comedy as tragedy here - are Grimalkiah Sheepshanks and his follower Sampson, and Ambuscade, a literal "miles gloriosus". Grimalkiah, the Quaker, is a comedy-of-humours figure resembling the Puritan in Bartholomew Fair and David in The Last of the Mohicans. He is always brave when there is no fighting to be done, but a ridiculous coward in time of action. He and his monosyllabic follower, Sampson Silent, watch the battle from the woods and when the tide turns, Grimalkiah exclaims,

"Rejoice! Rejoice! Satan is defeated - Moloch flyeth; let us make ovations, egregias oves - my ribs cleave unto my breast even as a buckler of Joshua the son of Nun; Sampson, thou art brave - peradventure thou dost not fear?"

After the battle is won, he again turns to Sampson,

"Rejoice! Rejoice! we defeateth Satan - exultavimus! jubilavimus! - vincimus! Verily we will flee; we flee swiftly as young lambs; do we not, Sampson Silent?"

"Yea."

According to the eighteenth-century method, the soldiers are here called Haversack, Ambuscade and Fusee.
Ambuscade almost out-Herod's Herod in rant, boasting and conceit. In speech after speech he proceeds to sound his own praises. He describes himself as one

"born in a camp; who was bred in the mouth of a cannon; who has been cradled in the butt-end of a musket; who has lived all his days on powder and ball; ... and who, sir, has received eight mortal wounds and but seven in the back, sir."

He has great confidence in his military ability:

"I've read Turrene, sir — I can command an army, sir; if Frederic of Prussia had me in his service, he'd never lose a battle; if General Braddock had taken my advice he would have beat the French; if General Wolfe had followed my hints he'd been alive this day of our Lord."

But enough of such historical plays! There remains quite a body of lighter plays and, as has usually been the case, they best reflect the American life and spirit.

After the advent of Jonathan in The Contrast, Yankees were favorites characters. Sometimes the Yankee appears at home, sometimes abroad, but always in comic situations. Sometimes, he is the hero of a musical farce, as in L. Beach's Jonathan Postfree; or, The Honest Yankee (1807); sometimes of a comic opera such as Micah Hawkins' The Saw Mill; or, A Yankee Trick and Samuel Woodworth's The Forest Rose (1825). Most often he is the central figure of a comedy of manners. One
of the best known representations of this Stage American is in the anonymous comedy, *Jonathan in England* (1828), a version of Coleman's *Who Wants a Guinea?* The American here has developed originality of name, at least, and is known as Solomon Swap. David Humphreys, the Revolutionary soldier and American Ambassador, wrote *The Yankee in England* (1815) and, after the close of the War of 1812, James K. Paulding, the friend of Washington Irving, treated the same theme in *The Bucktails; or, Americans in England*. Wegelin's *Early American Plays* lists many more comedies of a similar nature, but *The Forest Rose* and *The Bucktails* are typical dramas of this type.

In point of time *The Bucktails* stands first. It, too, contains a mixture of dramatic types. Several of the characters, Obsolete, Gunwhale, Longbow, Threadneedle, are marked imitations of those in Sheridan and Goldsmith's comedies of manners. The abduction of one of the heroines is after the fashion of the comedy of intrigue. Again, there comes a Gothic touch when the girl finds herself in the churchyard at midnight and, later, in the ruins of an old castle. Sentimentalism pervades the whole production in a truly Kotzebuen manner.

The first scene is like that between Nerissa
and Portia. Jane, an American heiress who is visiting her sister, Mrs. Carlton, in London, discusses her various English beaux. She concludes, "I shall never marry out of my own dear country. Women, and especially American women should never marry to go abroad; or go abroad to be married."

We are now prepared for the arrival of the Tudor boys from America. Mr. Obsolete, whom they are visiting, gives a dinner for these "aboriginals" whose manners are a pleasant surprise to his English guests as well as to himself. The plot thickens. The Tudor boys immediately fall in love with Mary Obsolete and Jane, but Lord Noland decides he must marry Jane because he is sorely in need of her money. He succeeds in having her kidnapped. Jonathan Peabody, the Yankee servant of the Tudors, hears of this through Paddy Whack, Noland's servant. He and Miss Obsolete give the alarm and a search is immediately instigated. Meanwhile, Jane escapes from her abductors and takes refuge first in a church surrounded by a grave-yard and later in the ruins of an old castle, mentioned above. These ruins are filled with a band of gipsy beggars, who add a romantic, Il Trovatorean touch to the play. Jane's pursuers and rescuers meet at this ruined castle. Noland confesses his guilt and he and Henry Tudor prepare for a duel which is prevented by Jane's interference.
Obsolete, the antiquary, decides to return to America with Frank Tudor and his daughter, Mary.

Comic scenes between Paddy Whack, Jonathan and Rust, Obsolete's servant, are frequently interpolated. Jonathan is the typical Yankee comedian, but Paddy's part is poor and Rust's is very commonplace. Mr. Obsolete is another Mr. Hardcastle who prefers "old wine, old fiddles, old friends, and, in short, everything old."

As has been said, Paulding wrote this comedy after the War of 1812. Consequently, he used the opportunity of putting into Jane's mouth references to our naval struggle with England. She taunts Admiral Gun-whale by saying,

"I hope, at least, there are still English women that can conquer under their own flag."

References are made to the Guerrièr, Macedonian, Java, Wasp and Frolic, ships which figured in the battles of the war.

Naturally, American life is here compared with English. Jane wearies of social distinction, saying as she does so,

"I mean not to detract from the advantages of birth and title, but in America we lay little claim to such distinctions."

Jonathan, too, reflects this democratic spirit when he says,

"I don't see how one white man can be the master of another."
Later he concludes, "I guess he's a slave, like one of our niggers". At the conclusion, Obsolete pays tribute to the New World as "the land of unexplored antiquities"! Jane responds, "'Tis the land of free maids and happy wives." Paddy appropriately remarks, "'Tis the land of the exile, the foster-home of the poor Irishman!" and all agree, "'Tis the land of the free and the home of the brave.'"

It has long been the custom for amateur debaters to discuss the various merits of town and country life, and this old, old subject is the theme of Woodworth's little two-act opera, The Forest Rose; or, American Farmers. At first, it gives one rather a familiar shock to hear William, one of the characters, orating about

"the mill-pond, the waterfall, the meadow, the orchard, the well, and even the old bucket out of which I so often drank."

But this is not so surprising when we remember that Samuel Woodworth (1785-1842) is likewise the author of The Old Oaken Bucket. He was a printer and noted editor in New York City and the author of several plays, including a comic opera, The Deed of Gift and the little pastoral opera under discussion.

He, too, was afflicted with German sentimentalism, as the love-making and lyrics in this opera attest. Blandford wanders in these "rural scenes". To his
"dearest Lydia", he says

"One smile from thee would cause this desponding heart to throb again with rapture."

And to her he sings,

"A smile from thee would banish pain, And bid each doubt and sorrow flee, I ask but this, once more to gain A smile from thee."

His Lydia is one of the languishing type who says,

"I would not, if I could, forget the past, although I must look to the future without hope."

Then she sings,

"Though mourning like a mateless dove, The languid heart be doomed to beat, It cannot, will not, cease to love, It finds the pain so sweet."

So much for the sentimentalism of the lovers.

Let us now look at the plot, which is loose and episodic dealing with the love affairs of three couples: Harriet and William, Lydia and Blandford, and Jonathan and Sally. The first scene is in a New Jersey village in the early morning. Instructions are given concerning the overture which is descriptive of the awakening of village life. Lydia, in the yard of a farmhouse, longs for Blandford from whom she has fled. Harriet, a rural coquette, who longs for a taste of city life, teases William by flirting with Bellamy, an English adventurer late from London. In the next scene, Jonathon Ploughboy, the Yankee store-keeper, proposes to Harriet in
order to get even with the frolicsome Sally, but Harriet refuses him. On his way home, he meets Blandford who inquires for Lydia. But Jonathon doesn't know her, and so directs him to the Tavern. In the second act, Bellamy meets Blandford at the Tavern, and shows him Lydia's locket which he has found. Their inquiries concerning the owner are unavailing, because Harriet has never seen Lydia wear the locket. Meanwhile, the villain Bellamy, knowing Harriet's desire to visit the city, has hired Jonathon to help abduct Harriet. The locket passes from Jonathon to Sally under the condition that Sally help decoy Harriet. She, always enjoying a joke, disguises Deacon Forest's darkey girl, Rose, as Harriet. The abductors are pursued and brought back and Rose's disguise removed. By means of the locket, all three couples are brought together and reconciled, and Bellamy's villainy is exposed. The last scene closes with songs glorifying country life.

As the title indicates, the American farmer is glorified here. Harriet's father says,

"The girl who would reject the honest heart and hand of an American farmer, for a fopling of any country, is not worthy of affection or confidence."

William, too, reflects the sentiment:

"Blest with plenty, here the farmer Toils for those he loves alone; While some pretty smiling charmer, Like the land, is all his own."
These country people delight in praising their environment. Five out of the twelve lyrics are along lines similar to this:

"Here in scenes of sweet seclusion,
Far from bustling towns we dwell,
While around, in rich profusion,
Autumn's yellow bounties swell.

There, the loaded fruit-trees, bending,
Strew with mellow gold the land;
Here on high, from vines impending,
Purple clusters court the hand.

All the day, to recreate us,
Strains of music freight the breeze,
Healthful sports at eve await us -
What are city joys to these?"

Harriet, Sally and Jonathon are the best-drawn of the characters. According to Jonathon, Harriet can

"milk a cow, make a cheese, and boil a pudding with any girl in the world."

Besides these practical qualifications, she is a first-class coquette, vivacious and clever at repartee. Sally is all her name implies, plump, frolicsome and kind-hearted. Of course, Jonathon is the chief comedy figure, repeating on every occasion that offers, "I wouldn't serve a negro so." He is always calculating. Bellow says, "You calculate, do you sir?" And Jonathon honestly admits, "I guess I do, a littel, in the way of trade." He also calculates in the way of matrimony, for he sings to Harriet, "I love the ground you walk on, for 'tis your father's farm". He lists the merchant's
wares as "whiskey, molasses, calicoes, spelling-books and patent grid-irons." His diction smacks of the usual, "What may I call your name?" and "I said, says I". Unlike the Jonathon in *The Bucktails*, he does not say, "I snore" for "I'll declare".

Rose is the first negro girl to appear in American drama and, therefore, marks this play as unique. Her dialect is fairly well handled. She uses "ax" for ask, "berry" for very, "Massa" for master, and "lubber" for love. But she speaks so little, that there is no opportunity for her to use much dialect. Paradoxical as it may seem, this opera is the most American of all the plays considered and, at the same time, dominated greatly by foreign influences.

A few other dramas of the period are worth noting. In 1830, James H. Hackett appeared at the Park Theatre in the title role of *Rip Van Winkle; or, The Demons of the Catskill Mountains*. This was the work of a very obscure playwright named John Kerr. Another adaptation from American fiction was Samuel H. Chapman's *Red Rover* (1828) founded on Cooper's novel of the same name. Since Mr. Chapman's day, dramatized novels have threatened to flood the American stage. Titles like Mead's *Wall Street* (1819) and Talbot's *Paddy's Trip to America* (1822) suggest promising material.
Prominent among closet dramas were those of James Abraham Hillhouse, John Neal's *Otho* (1819) and James G. Percival's *Zamor* (1815). But with the exception of Payne's *Brutus*, nothing especially noteworthy was produced during this period. As Barker reminded us, the drama

"has to creep before it can possibly walk."

IV. The Stage between 1798 and 1830.

Volumes have been written on the theatres and actors in America in the nineteenth century, but we can only touch upon the most important phases of theatricals. Although in some sections opposition to dramatic entertainments persisted during these years, theatres and actors met with little objection as compared with that of the previous century. Little or no legislation was exerted against the stage, although the old controversy as to its morality was revived after the burning of the Richmond Theatre in 1811. Seventy-one people lost their lives here, and some considered that God was inflicting punishment on those who attended such "unholy amusements". The investigation of theatrical conditions which followed, put the stage in a more favorable light. To provide for the increased popularity of the drama, theatres sprang up in all the
larger cities of the East and South and as far west as Cincinnati. Dramatics centered in New York City, just as they do today.

This is the era of stars. Mrs. Henry, in the preceding period, has the distinction of being the first star on our stage. But in the first part of the nineteenth century, numerous others appeared. From England came George Frederick Cooke (1810), Edmund Kean (1820), and Junius Brutus Booth (1821), each famous in the role of Richard III. It was owing to some of Kean's questionable actions that the New York and Boston riots occurred in 1825. Charles Matthews, the English comedian, arrived in 1822 and William Augustus Conway, the tragedian, two years later. Near the close of the period, Macready made his first visit to America (1826), followed by George Holland (1827) and Charles Kean (1830).

More important to us is the advent of American stars. Thomas Apthorpe Cooper, although English-born, starred first at the Park Theatre in New York in 1802. So successful was he that he never returned to his old capacity as actor in a stock company. Mrs. Duff made her debut in Boston as Juliet (1810). Later she played with Cooke in Richard III and as Ophelia to John Howard Payne's Hamlet. She played both on the foreign and American stage reaching the height of her popular-
ity as Lady Macbeth.

Payne's career was eclipsed by that of Edwin Forrest (1806-1872), a Boston product. He was only fourteen when he made his debut in the popular role of Young Norval, and his success was so marked that he soon secured an engagement with a stock company playing in Pittsburgh, Cincinnati and Lexington. In 1825 at the Albany Theatre came the great opportunity of his life when he acted Iago to Kean's Othello. After that, he played both at home and abroad, winning great renown in Shaksperean tragedy, especially in the difficult role of King Lear.

When he was only twenty-two years of age, struck with the scarcity of American drama, he offered

"To the author of the best tragedy, in five acts, of which the hero or principal character shall be an aboriginal of this country, the sum of $500 and half the proceeds of the third representation, with my own gratuitous services on that occasion; the award to be made by a committee of literary and theatrical gentlemen."

Two of this committee were Bryant and Halleck. J. A. Stone was awarded the first prize for Metamora. It is said that, subsequently, Forrest paid out of his own funds, for the encouragement of native drama $200,000 as premiums and benefits to authors. This caused the writing of about two hundred plays, nine of which re
In connection with Kerr's *Rip Van Winkle*, mention has been made of James H. Hackett of New York City. He, as well as George ("Yankee") Hill, was a comedian well-known for his impersonations of Yankee characters. Hackett was also distinguished as the American Falstaff. (It was for him that James K. Paulding and C. W. Tayleure later designed the characters of Colonel Nimrod Wildfire and Horseshoe Robinson.)

From all these noted names it is apparent that by 1830 America is fixed definitely on the theatrical map, if not so definitely on the dramatic.

"Phelps' *Players of a Century*."

received prizes.  


CHAPTER III.

THE FRENCH PERIOD (1830 - 1870)

I. The Vogue of Melodrama.

If one were plotting curves showing the parallel development of American literature in general and of drama in particular, the greatest divergence would appear in the middle of the nineteenth century. In that era the line of general literature shoots to heights which we have never surpassed, and the line of dramatic effort sinks down to the level of poor melodrama. Franklin P. Adams describes in verse the essentials of this melodramatic species:

"Take an old father, unyielding, emphatical, Driving his daughter out into the snow; The love of a hero, courageous and Hacketty; Hate of a villain in evening clothes; Comic relief that is Irish and racketty; Schemes of a villainess muttering oaths; The bank and the safe and the mill and the forgery - All of them built on traditional norms - Villainess dark and Lucrezia Borgery Helping the villain until she reforms; The old mill at midnight, a rapid delivery; Violin music all scary and shivery; Plot that is devilish, awful, nefarious; Heroine frightened, her plight is precarious; Bingo! - the rescue! - the movement goes snappily - Exit the villain and all endeth happily!"

But what were the general conditions of the country which was satisfied with this sort of recreation? The years between 1830 and 1870 comprised an
era of very rapid western expansion. The frontier formerly located in the Mississippi Valley moved westward to meet a second frontier traveling eastward from the Pacific coast. By 1870, the permanent boundaries of the present United States were laid and the population was fast approaching the forty million mark. This might have been a period of very great progress in all lines had it not been for the Mexican and Civil wars which retarded for years our economic advancement although they tended to arouse our national consciousness. The high feeling prevalent in those days materially effected our literature both as regards subject-matter and the methods of discussing it. Whittier, the abolitionist poet, and Lowell, our greatest man of letters, found abundant material for poetry. Longfellow, Holmes, Emerson, Cooper, Poe and Hawthorne produced their greatest work at this time, - largely poetry and fiction.

Mr. Price in his *Technique of the Drama* observes that France was the only nation during the middle fifty years of the nineteenth century in which drama held its own. Since that was the case, it is only natural that the French dramatic influence should predominate in all countries where French literature was known. It would be absurd to say that other influences were
not at work, for literary modes do not disappear in a night. German romanticism persisted long after 1830 and translations of German dramas became a frequent task of students and men of letters. Romantic tragedies were the most abundant of all forms of drama just as they were in the preceding period. Comedies, mediocre and imitative, vied with them in popularity. Dramatic romances, plays on Biblical subjects, farces, dramatic sketches, and adaptations from English novels and romantic plays, - all these added to the mass of dramatic work which Americans did during these four decades.

But it is with the popular melodrama that we are most concerned. Rousseau's Pygmalion, the first of its kind, appeared in 1775, but it remained for the nineteenth century to perfect this dramatic type. About the close of the Revolution, the French people, accustomed to horrors and exhibitions of strong feeling, clamored for these in their plays. The relapse which followed called, also, for a tinge of moralizing. The old-style melodrama was, as Wright explains in his History of French Literature, "a play free or not from the unities, depending for its effect on elaborate scenery and musical accompaniments; free, also, to deal with any sort of adventure in any station of life. It was a lyrical prose drama with music
executed by the orchestra in the place of song."

But, owing to local conditions, the type was changed. By 1830, musical accompaniments had disappeared, action had become violent, and the melodrama preached humanitarianism and democracy vigorously. The melodramas of Pixerecourt, as Wright points out, abounded in unexpected climaxes, moral platitudes, elaborate local coloring and a union of comic and tragic.

Hugo and Dumas continued the type established by Pixerecourt, but made it literary. In Hugo's best-known dramas, Hernani, Ruy Blas and Roi s'Amuse, secret doorways, poisons, murders, improbable meetings and coincidences are numerous. Hugo likes to present gorgeous pictures. Long Shaksperean soliloquies in high-sounding verse are favored by him. Usually, he blends opposite traits in the same character. (Hernani is a hero-bandit; Ruy Blas, though lowly-born, is a truly great man; Triboulet redeems his wickedness by his great love for his daughter.) Hugo is inferior to Dumas both in character-analysis and in his sense of what is really dramatic, though Dumas, too, makes use of grotesque exaggerations. The latter encouraged the dramatic treatment of historical matter. He, also, glorified passions and the revolt against social conventions.
Scribe is inferior to both Hugo and Dumas in literary work, though he excels them in technique. He produced light comedies, comic operas and vaudeville performances mostly. His chief interest was in action, his characters being of the brainless-butterfly variety. After 1850, other French dramatists came to the front, chief of whom were Dumas fils, the outspoken realist and dealer in morel problems; Augier, attacker of social vices; Sardou, light and satirical and a technician second to Scribe; Labiche, the vaudeville man and Meilhac and Halevy, composers of operettas and opera-bouffes. But the influence of these men effected American drama long after 1870.

It is with Hugo and Dumas that we are chiefly concerned. Their great dramas, Hernani and Henri III appeared just at the opening of this period. After that time, the French melodramatic vogue made its way into America through various channels, literary rather than dramatic. Great French plays were not directly adapted to the American stage until 1850, though there were occasional translations before that time. Matilda Heron adapted Camille and introduced Racine's Phaedre to our playgoers. In the sixties, Ruy Blas appeared, and since that time French plays have held a permanent place on our stage. It is to A. M. Palmer,
Augustus Daly (1838-1899) and Lester Wallack (1820-1888) that we owe the largest debt, both on account of their numerous adaptations and for their own plays which were direct imitations of the French. Other actors and would-be playwrights joined their ranks in producing numerous melodramas of whose titles The Branded Hand, The Evil Eye, The Red Mask and The Six Degrees of Crime are fair samples. Operettas, opera-bouffes and musical extravaganzas were not lacking. In fact, nearly every form of drama written in Europe was attempted by some ambitious resident of the United States.

Daly's Under the Gas Light (1867), a work which came late in the period, is one of the most melodramatic plays produced at this time. This, in brief, is the plot: After Laura, the cousin of Pearl Courtland and the betrothed of Ray Trafford, is unexpectedly visited by Byke, the villain, Pearl reveals to Ray that Laura, when six years of age, was taken by Mrs. Courtland from two criminals, Byke and Old Judas, who were teaching the child to steal. On account of her questionable origin, Ray turns against Laura, who secures a refuge in a poor section of New York. She is discovered and seized by Byke who proves to the court that she is his daughter. Byke takes her to his refuge near Pier 30, North River, and when he is discovered.
by the repentant Ray and the newsboys, he literally pitches Laura into the river whence she is rescued by Ray. Although Ray takes her home to his new betrothed, Pearl, Laura cannot bear to stay there, but slips away to the depot to wait for a train bound for New York. Meanwhile, Byke and Old Judas plan to murder Laura and get Pearl into their power. Snorkey, an ex-soldier who has overheard their plot, blocks their way. Byke ties Snorkey to the railroad track, but Laura sees him from the depot window. She releases Snorkey just before a fast train rushes past. Then she and Snorkey hasten to Pearl's home in time to save her from Byke, who reveals the news that Old Judas is the mother of Pearl and that she changed Pearl and Laura in their cradles. The accidental death of Old Judas prevents this fact from reaching the ears of Pearl's society friends. However, Pearl gives up Ray, who looks for a "happier tomorrow."

Here are the four characters indispensable in melodrama: Ray, the repentant hero; Laura, the persecuted heroine; Byke and Old Judas, villains; and Snorkey and the newsboys, comic characters. The climaxes occur when Byke throws Laura off the bridge, when Laura saves Snorkey from the on-coming train, and when she and Snorkey save Pearl from being robbed and
murdered. Fortunately, the characters only indulge in moral platitudes occasionally. The local coloring is elaborate enough for a Pixerecourt. The picture of the criminals and poor outside the Tombs and along the Pier is much like that of the Parisian waifs in *Les Misérables* and the London toughs in *Oliver Twist*. The scenes at Delmonico's, at the Tombs Police Court, and at the Railroad Station at Shrewsbury Bend, all afford good local color. The changing of the babies is a standard incident, as improbable as the story as a whole. Because of the light it throws on the social classes of New York in the sixties, *Under the Gas Light* is often classed among the society plays of the era. But it is so exaggerated that one questions its value as a true picture of the times.

II. Irish Actor - Playwrights.

At first thought it may seem strange that in a survey of American drama we should give a section to the consideration of Irish playwrights, but that is really not so strange as the fact that, of the plays printed in this country during the period under consideration, those of Irish playwrights outnumber and often excel in quality those of our native dramatists. Owing to the long residence of their authors in this
country, Broughham's and Boucicault's plays reflect, somewhat, the American spirit and are, therefore, legitimate subjects for our study.

In 1833, Tyrone Power (1797-1841) came to America where he published three plays: St. Patrick's Eve (1848), Born to Good Luck and Paddy Carey. These were essentially Irish, always containing one character suited to the acting of the popular comedian.

Usually Dion Boucicault (1823-1890) is considered as belonging to the field of English rather than American drama. Nevertheless, fifteen of his printed plays were written during his residence in this country. Among these were his famous Colleen Bawn (1860) and The Shaughran (1874). These were not as American in subject-matter as The Octoroon; or, Life in Louisiana and The Poor of New York (1857). The former contains the famous Salem Scudder, one of the many stage Americans of the era; the latter was based on the same French play as Daly's Under the Gas Light. With his wife, Agnes Robertson, Boucicault played in this country many years.

It was in 1842 that John Brougham (1810-1880) came to America. Previous to his coming, he had produced a few plays in London but it was in the United States that most of his acting and writing was done.
It would be impossible to obtain a complete list of his dramas, for more than a score of them were never printed. But there are twenty-five, at least, which are obtainable. Brougham left very few types untried, but he excelled in farces, burlesques, extravaganzas and comedies.

*Vanity Fair,* *David Copperfield,* *Jane Eyre* (1856), *Dombey and Son* and *Dred; or, the Dismal Swamp* (1856) were among his dramatizations of novels. Many of his plays are Irish in subject-matter and in characters, but a few are distinctly American. *His Pocahontas; or, the Gentle Savage* and *Metamora; or, the Last of the Pollywogs* are both burlesques on popular Indian plays. In *Franklin,* he essays historical drama. *His Columbus et Filibustero,* he calls,

"A new and audaciously original historico-plagiaristic, ante-national, pre-patriotic, and omni-local confusion of circumstances, running through Two Acts and Four Centuries."

Brougham was quick to catch that indefinable something known as the American spirit. With it he united his Irish wit in the production of his dramas. This union is especially noticeable in *The Irish Yankee; or, the Birthday of Freedom.* Ebenezer O'Donahoon is the Irish soldier whose bravery in carrying news to General Warren concerning the plans of the enemy helps
the American cause. The plot consists of two love-stories interwoven with a succession of scenes presenting the Boston Tea Party, the Battle of Bunker Hill and the declaration of Washington and his men in behalf of independence. The play closes with a masque-like procession of the original thirteen states.

Washington sounds the keynote of the whole piece in his oratorical speech at the conclusion:

"Fellow Freemen! this auspicious day has given birth to the American Republic, liberated from foreign thralldom with our own hands; we register our country amongst the nations of the earth - Free and Independent. Let her arise; not to conquer and to devastate, but to re-establish the reign of peace, a living example to the world, an asylum where the unhappy may find solace, the persecuted meet repose, owning no masters, subject to no power. Within ourselves we contain the elements of success. May we, using them to our honorable advantage, make distinguished through the universe the name of an American Citizen."

Plainly, Brougham does not excel in serious writing. Even here the comic characters are the best. The Yankee peddler Jasper Slack, Ebenezer O'Donahon the Irish Yankee, and Lyddy Jenks the coquette are the most life-like. In one instance, Ebenezer feigns drunkenness in order to gain admission to the room where his friend is imprisoned by the British. He blinds the jailers by throwing snuff in their eyes, and by the time they are able to see, both Ebenezer
and their prisoner have disappeared. The dialog which takes place between Ebenezer and the Sergeant is a good example of the kind of wit in which Brougham's characters often indulged:

Sergeant. Peace, drunken fool, don't you see we're regulars?

Ebenezer. Regulars, is it regulars? Well, -bedad, ye's are the most unregular regulars I ever came across.

Serg. What brought you here?

Eb en. Do you wish particularly to know?

Serg. I do.

Eb en. Then listen, for it's mighty surprisin' - you'd hardly believe it - but it's just exactly what brought yourself.

Serg. And that is?

Eb en. My legs, for the want of a better pony.

Serg. Pshaw! no prevarication. Have you any information?

Eb en. Eh?

Serg. Have you any information to communicate?

Eb en. Well, between you and me, I just have.

Serg. What is it?

Eb en. Come away from these fellows and I'll tell you; but bedad it's a great secret, entirely, and out of respect for me and consideration for my character, I hope you'll keep it to yourself.

Serg. Well, what is it?

Eb en. I'm getting mighty drunk.

One of Brougham's best burlesques is his Met-
amora, a piece which remained on the boards for ten years at least. It is extremely clever, though the humor is often crude and even vulgar. It would not appeal to a cultured audience of today, though it suited even Boston audiences at the time of its appearance. Its burlesque is certainly comprehensive, touching on
all the dramatic conventions found in Indian and Yankee plays.

The characters are either Anglo-Saxons, or Pollywogs. Of the former, the chief characters are: Pappy Vaughn, a Yankee as well as the conventional father; Oceana, Vaughn's daughter, whom Brougham designates as "a chip of the old block"; Oceana's two lovers, Master Walter and Lord Fitzfaddle, the latter a typical Miss Nancy. The last three characters form the "eternal triangle". Metamora is "the aboriginal hero"; Tapiokee, his "squalling squaw, killed with kindness", and Pappoose, the last of the Pollywogs, — this is the family whose fortunes are entwined by Brougham with those of the Vaughn family.

King Philip's wars furnish material for the plot: Pappy Vaughn is hostile to the match between Walter and Oceana. Oceana tells him how Metamora saved her from a bear, but Metamora angers Vaughn by blaming the white men for the death of the wild animals. A fight threatens, but Oceana interferes and Metamora gives her a rooster feather as a pledge of his peaceful intentions. The whites, however, use this quarrel as a pretext for arresting Metamora who stabs Anaconda, the Indian who turns state's evidence, and defies the white men in this heroic strain:
"Ye chalk-faced humbugs, tremble from this hour, 
I smite your nation and defy your power."

In the second act, Vaughn attempts to make a match between Oceana and Fitzfaddle. But to Oceana's cry, Walter responds, "Walter's beside thee, love, no need to bawl." Vaughn wants Walter and Oceana separated, "as is done in plays", but just then Metamora and his Indians rush in and Oceana saves the lives of the whites by producing the rooster feather. Metamora stabs Fitzfaddle for insulting Tapiokee. Then he kills her so that she will not have to learn how to make pies and hominy and other dishes which white folks eat. The Anglo-Saxons shoot Metamora several times, at which he jumps very high and falls. Then they all fall, and die singing, "We're all dying, die, die, dying". But Metamora, Tapiokee and Vaughn decide not to stay dead, and they arise to listen to Metamora's last appeal to the audience.

Brougham burlesques the poetic drama by casting this piece in irregular verse. All of the characters, even the Pollywogs, use Yankee dialect, poor English and all the slang of the day. Vaughn calls,

"Hello, young feller! What is this you're arter? 
You hai'n't seed nuthin', hev you, of my darter?"

He talks of the "Ingînes" and "na-tîves" and occasion-
ally has an "idee". Humorous effects, Brougham produces by means of anti-climaxes, incongruous language and ridiculous situations. Metamora exclaims,

"A woman's words have kindled up my soul! 
A burning heat, more terrible by far 
Than blazing mountain or a lit cigar."

In the lullaby which Tapiokee sings to the Pappoose, Brougham burlesques the favorite theme of the Indian's being deprived of land and fed with whiskey by the wicked whites:

"O slumber my pappoose! thy sire is not white; 
And that injures your prospects a very great sight; 
For the hills, and the dales, and the valleys you see 
They all were purloined, my dear pappoose, from thee.

"O slumber, my papoose! the time will soon come 
When thy rest shall be broken by very bad rum; 
For though in fair fighting the whites we beat down, 
By a sling made of whiskey the red man is thrown."

Of course, dramatic Indians are always brave. Oceana says that when she was frightened by the bear, Metamora

"gave a yell, 
So sharp, so loud, the bear dropped down and fell."

Pappoose inherits his father's love of slaughter. Says the child,

"He's using up those pale-faces a few, 
And when I have seen a few more snows, 
I can go slaying, also, I suppose."
But, unfortunately, the Pappoose died, exclaiming with his last breath, "I want to scratch my nose". Since he was the last of the Pollywogs, of course he had to be killed. In fact, it was necessary that all should die if the play was to be a real tragedy. But it was also essential that the high-flown patriotic speech should not be omitted at the close. Hence, Metamora is resurrected to exclaim:

"Into the foe a feet or two I'll walk! Death or my nation's glory! That's the talk".

Brougham made use of several local "hits" in this burlesque, thereby exemplifying his ability as a comedian rather than a dramatist.

A few more Irish dramas appeared at intervals. Chief of these were pieces written for Barney Williams, another Irish actor. But except from a historical standpoint they are of little importance.

III. Plays Dealing with Racial Types.

We all agree that America is the Melting Pot of the nations and it is our hope that the immigrant "can be fused into the body politic". But the process of fusion is a slow one. The Indians and negroes, though they have been in America as long or longer than the Anglo-Saxons, are still racially distinct. Nowhere

- Frederic J. Haskins: I am the Immigrant.
are these distinctions more clearly drawn than in our literature, especially in our drama. Here the Indian or the negro is a very different character from the white man, whether he be Yankee, Dutchman or Irishman. Irish plays we have already discussed.

The most famous play dealing with a Dutch character is, of course, Rip Van Winkle. Many dramatizations of the famous story have appeared. We have already mentioned Kerr's version (1830). It was Bouicault's adaptation (1865) which Joseph Jefferson starred in for nearly forty years. Another popular rendering was that of Charles Burke. He, however, does not overcome the difficulties which the story offers in itself. Rip's long sleep, his adventures with the dwarfs and his return in time to save his daughter from a hated marriage, - these are among the improbabilities which, when emphasized more than the characters themselves, make the story appear absurd. Rip speaks broken English, but the other Dutch villagers, strange to say, use perfectly good English. The shiftless, carousing Dutchman and his scolding Frau are realistically drawn. But the scoldings and beatings in the first act are not far removed from the crude physical strife in the early English comedy, Gammer Gurton's Needle.
The popularity of *Rip Van Winkle* was surpassed by its contemporary, *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, the stage history of which extends over a period of more than fifty years. The first and standard dramatization of Mrs. Stowe's famous novel was that of G. L. Aitken (1852), but there were several other adaptations. Aitken's *Uncle Tom* is in six acts. Apparently, he was unable to crowd all of the necessary scenes into five acts. The exciting moment occurs when we learn that Tom must be sold. The death of little Eva and the slave auction which follows mark the turning point in Tom's career. His death is, of course, the catastrophe.

All the characters were typical of various classes of people found in America in the fifties. Among them were the planter and the planter's wife; the slaves, men, women, and Topsy; the unprincipled trader; the Quaker; Miss Ophelia, the Northern abolitionist, and the Yankee, Gumption Cute. As in the novel the characters are over-drawn, especially the negroes who, with the exception of Topsy, are almost as virtuous as the Indians in *Poneteach*. The character of Gumption, the unprincipled Yankee, is entirely uncalled for; and certainly resembles Dickens' earlier caricatures of Americans in *Martin Chuzzlewit*.

Although Aitken calls his play a "Domestic
Drama", it is much nearer a pure melodrama. Eliza crossing the ice, the rescue of George by Phineas, the death of St. Clare, Gumption's rapid walk from New Orleans to Vermont, - all these are sensational enough, but the crowning situation takes place when Eva mounted on a white dove extends her hands in blessing above St. Clare and Uncle Tom. In those heated days just preceding the Civil War, it is not strange that Mrs. Stowe and the dramatists of Uncle Tom should exaggerate the abolitionist sentiment, humanitarianism and the meanness of slave owners. When the issues disappeared on which the play was based, Uncle Tom's Cabin no longer appeared upon the regular stage, although until the present time it continues to be played by tent troupes touring the country.

Uncle Tom was not the only negro drama on the stage. Mrs. Stowe's Dred; or, the Great Dismal Swamp was dramatized by Brougham and also by the actor Conway. In 1827, George Washington Dixon presented the first minstrel show in Albany, New York, and since that time the negro minstrel has become a fixture in American dramatics. A vast body of Ethiopian plays, farces, and minstrel entertainments exist. Robert Roden estimates that more than five hundred of these were printed. Among these were The Quadroon, Oh! Hush!
or, The Virginny Cupids, Vilkens and Dinah and Jumbo-Jim. They serve only to show the popularity of the Ethiopian on the stage. It is quite the thing now for a negro or an Irishman to furnish the comic dialog in amateur plays.

The Indian dramas, which arose so early in our history, persist during this era with little dramatic improvement. Most of them are unknown today. Among their titles are a Pocahontas or two, The Pequot Maid, Osceola, Sassacus; or, the Indian Chief (1836), Tecumseh and the Prophet of the West (1844) and Helemas; or, the Fall of Montezuma (1864).

It is human nature for people to be interested in themselves and their own little world. Hence, it is only natural that the Yankees, so prominent in this period of American history, should prefer plays about themselves. We have already noted the popularity of the various Jonathans who appeared previous to 1830. It is a relief, now, to find the typical American named something besides Jonathon. Solomon Swap is the hero of Jonathon in England; Mose, the fireman of Benjamin Baker's A Glance at New York. Deuteronomy Dutiful is the central figure in the one-act anonymous farce, The Vermont Wool Dealer (1844). He comes to New York to sell wool, and on the way he makes Amanda's
acquaintance. Immediately his mind is made up:

"I will court the gal, by grasshopper! 'Cause she's got $55,500 I hear, and 'cause she likes me, I do opine."

Consequently, at the earliest opportunity he proposes to Amanda telling her,

"I'm every way a match for you — my family is good, none better in Vermont. My grandfather was one of the first settlers in our part of the country — bought up pret-ty nightly one third of the hull country. He was sent to our State Legislature — old Mike Dutiful — you must a' heern on him — he was my grandfather. Well, Mike, he married old Squire Halliday Harrindon's daughter, Harrietta, as like a gal as ever drove a pair of oxen .... Harriet brought suthin' considerable to the old man when he married her."

In spite of his ancestry, however, Amanda uses Deuteronomy badly and jilts him for Captain Oakley, but the Wool-Dealer takes his disappointment philosophically and treats them all to champagne which he bought "everlastin' cheap."

Deuteronomy lacks the dry humour and shrewdness of Solon Shingle, the country teamster who furnishes the comedy for J. S. Jones' The People's Lawyer (1856). Solon looses a barrel of "apple sass" out of his wagon. He knows that it has been stolen and he wanders into the court-room, hoping to find the thief. Tripper, a lawyer, mistakes him for a witness in the case then before the court, and the following dialog takes place:

Tripper. Ah, Mr. Shingle, what do you know of this affair?
Solon. Well, sir, I can't say, you know there's no telling who's Governor till after 'lection. So I guess.

Tripper. Mr. Shingle, I think I had the pleasure of examining you once before in a case.

Solon. Yes, and you didn't get much a head on me, did you?

Tripper. On this occasion, you may tell what you know in your own way.

Solon. Jest so. But I don't tell all I know, for nothing — as I said in the last war, for my father fit in the revolution.

Tripper. Just confine yourself to the facts in the premises, if you please, Mr. Shingle.

Solon. Well, sir, — I don't exactly understand what you mean by premises.

Tripper. Why, sir, I thought every fool knew as much as that.

Solon. Jest so; well, as I come out of the store, I knew that my cattle would natrally look to me, and I took off the chain.

Judge. The watch chain, Mr. Shingle?

Solon. No, Squire, the back chain.

Tripper. The back chain, what's that?

Solon. Why, I thought every fool knew what a back chain was. I had him there, Squire, by Cain.

Judge. Mr. Shingle, this has nothing to do with the case.

Solon. Well, I didn't say it had, Squire.

A study of the stage American re-affirms the old geometrical axiom, "The whole is greater than any one of its parts." We should be very thankful that the real American is greater than any one of these caricatures; especially, greater than Lot Sap Sago, the trapper and nature lover, a character in C. A. Logan's Yankee Land (1834). He is a fantastical creature, half-foolish, yet witty, with occasional flashes of sense, a Yankee Lancelot Gobbo. Viewed in the light of mod-
ern science, he is an abnormal son upon whom the sins of his fathers have been visited, a foundling about whose origin a mystery hangs. His conversation is full of stories about bears, bulls and lizards, whose habits he knows much more perfectly than Otto Manakin, the English dude, who spends his time searching for zoological and ornithological specimens.

No play which we have examined thus far can compete with Yankee Land in improbable situations, family intrigues and sentimental speeches. These lines are a fair sample of the sensational nature of the dialog:

"'Twas night; the gloomy purlieus of Westmin- ster echoed to the crash of swords; two men were furiously engaged; one fell by the sword of his adversary; his accusing shriek of 'murderer' came wildly on the air. But the other — a solitary lamp gleamed faintly on his countenance, pale, horror-stricken, and bloody! That man is now before me. Now, shall I marry your daughter?"

The Vermont Wool Dealer, The People's Lawyer and Yankee Land are among the best-known Yankee plays of the period. The Yankee Peddler (1841) and The Stage Struck Yankee are two of the many titles which suggest a further treatment of this popular stage figure.

IV. Some Social Themes Treated by Dramatists.

In the broadest sense, the word "social embraces everything relating to men living among other men, their
history, religion, customs, arts, laws and institutions. But since our dramatists have ignored many of these phases of society, our study is confined largely to an examination of political, industrial and domestic themes.

Most of our political plays deal with the various wars of the United States, but in a few instances they discuss specific problems. In 1868, Mrs. D. S. Custis wrote a play satirizing the woman's rights movement. She called it *The Spirit of Seventy-six; or, the Coming Woman*. The titles, *Whigs and Democrats* (1839), *The Politicians* (1840), and *The School for Politicians* (1840) are self-revelatory. With some exceptions, among which are *Ossawatomie Brown* (1859), *Anthony Wayne* (1845), *Bull Run*, *The Battle of Lake Erie* and *The Battle of Mexico*, the war plays persist in dealing with the Revolution. Joseph Breck, Horatio Hubbell, James Orton, Elihu Holland, William Lord, and George H. Calvert were some of those who essayed to use the Arnold and Andre story. But none of the later plays on that subject excels Dunlap's *Andre*, in the estimation of Brander Matthews. Nathan Hale, Putnam and Moll Pitcher were popular subjects for dramatic treatment.

Many critics say that the best of the plays dealing with the Revolution is *Love in '76* (1857) by Oliver
Bunce. It is a two-act love comedy in which a clever girl outwits some ingenious men, marries her lover and saves him from the British soldiers. Here the redcoats are as human as the patriots and their feelings toward each other are not extremely exaggerated. Even though sentimentalism and touches of melodrama mar the play somewhat, yet with the proper Colonial costumes and settings it would be an entertaining piece for a modern audience.

A war drama which is based on the fighting along the Virginia and Carolina frontier is Clifton Taylure's dramatization of Horseshoe Robinson; or, The Battle of King's Mountain (1856). The love plot is not so cleverly worked out as that of Love in '76. The elder Hackett impersonated the fighting hero, Horseshoe Robinson. He is a brusque, brave, kindhearted American who despises "all sorts of contwistifications and spyin' tricks." Although he says nothing about fighting Indians, he impresses one as being a Leatherstocking-Daniel Boone sort of man. The play in which he appears has the faults of most of these war dramas, one of which is bitter hatred of Englishmen, but it also possesses the virtue of containing a strong hero.

The lawyer's profession is so closely related to politics that shall re-consider The People's Lawyer
in its political connection. It deals primarily with merchants and lawyers, the counting house and the court-
room. Solon Shingle distrusts all lawyers for their trickery, but Howard the honest barrister declares,

"Though the law may sometimes shield a villain with its broad hand of power, in honest hands 'tis an engine the evil-doer dreads."

He insists,

"Our laws are just; our judges honest men, our jurors are our equals."

Howard sounds the American note of equality, too, especially in education:

"Our country is a free one and education flows from the public fountain for all who thirst for its refreshing streams."

There is some comment here on class distinctions. The heroine, poor though talented, says she will hate the rich because they ridiculed her "threadbare dress". Winston, the merchant and forger, looks down upon Howard in his mechanic's garb. He says of him,

"He's a common mechanic bullying a gentleman in college style."

Norman Maurice; or, the Man of the People (1857) is another play having an attorney for its hero. This is the work of the Carolinian romancer and verse-writer, William Gilmore Simms. Maurice did what many other young Easterners were doing in the fifties, — he married and, with his young wife, emigrated westward set-
tling near St. Louis. Here he became a very popular lawyer and was about to be elected Senator from Missouri when Warren, the villain, arrived from the East. Warren threatened Maurice with some forged papers in his possession. Clarice, the wife of Maurice, obtained these papers, stabbed Warren and died from the excitement just before news came that Maurice had been elected Senator.

Maurice is a true democrat. He pleads for honesty and mercy in law, and justice for the poor and the oppressed. He is heartily in accord with the slogan, "Let the people rule". The recall and referendum would have found in him an ardent champion. Furthermore, he holds that it is the high trust of every statesman to teach the people how to rule wisely. Unfortunately, Simms chose to cast this play into poor blank verse more elocutionary than dramatic. Another fault is the poetically unjust death of Clarice. This drama, then, is not less important as a domestic tragedy of intrigue than as a frontier play based on attorneys, politicians and fire-eaters of St. Louis. It shows the influence of French as well as of English drama.

Another play of frontier life is Paulding's Lion of the West (1831) in which James H. Hackett star-
red as the famous Colonel Nimrod Wildfire.

Whether temperance be considered a political, religious or economic theme is immaterial. It might be either. Suffice it, that as early as 1858 Pratt's dramatization of Arthur's Ten Nights in a Bar Room appeared on the New York stage where it was played at intervals until 1883. Like Uncle Tom's Cabin, this play was long a favorite with traveling troupes. Its coming marks a change of public sentiment on the liquor question from that entertained by Burke's Rip Van Winkle who exclaimed,

"I have conquered temptation at last. I must have a glass for that."

Except for the slavery question, industrial themes are woven in pretty closely with domestic motifs, and it is rather a difficult matter to separate them. The business man and money-getter has been somewhat neglected by playwrights until recent years, although he received some attention in society dramas like Fashion and Self. Slavery was the great political and industrial question of this era. Dramatizations of Uncle Tom's Cabin were the most influential plays bearing on the subject, though other efforts were made in that direction. Among them was Trowbridge's Neighbor Jackwood (1857) which did much to arouse anti-slavery sentiment.
Let us now turn to a survey of the purely domestic dramas which were quite numerous at this time. Fashionable life, especially in New York, furnished material for many of these, but even so remote a place as Salt Lake City is the scene of at least, two plays: Deseret Deserted; or, The Last Days of Brigham Young (1858) and The Mormons; or, Life at Salt Lake City (1858). Surely, polygamy is a domestic theme.

It is with the three comedies of the youthful W. I. Paulding that we have first to do. In technique, they are poor and imitative in the extreme. We can have little doubt of Paulding's literary rank when we read his criticism of Sir Walter Scott's want of force and energy and deficiency of invention. He says,

"Ainsworth and Eugene Sue are the inheritors of immortality — the real genuises of all time!"

Paulding's plays are domestic, however, and full of local references.

The Noble Exile is a sham count who is found out just before he elopes with the rich Boston girl, Martha Matthews. This is practically the same plot which Mrs. Bateman later developed in Fashion. It bears on the old, old question of marrying titled foreigners. The country cousin, the much-travelled American and the Yankee boarding-house keeper appear somewhat in caricature.
Madmen All; or, The Cure of Love has Philadelphia for its setting. It ridicules the mercenary marriage and, incidentally, makes thrusts at the over-credulous tourist and the vogue of cheap romances.

Markham, the Philadelphia lawyer, and his friend Peters from New York are the best-drawn characters. Philadelphia, Paulding characterizes as "a literary emporium of cheap publications." References to wild-cat banks, Arkansas floods, and "the lone star of Texas that was" help us locate the play in order of time.

Two rather modern characters are found in Antipathies. One is Changeless, the enemy of modern improvements; the other is Go-Ahead, the promoter of railroads, new inventions, and, if he were living today, of inter-urban electric lines. Changeless is especially modern in his attitude toward education. He is a practical man and opposed to the study of Latin and Greek. He objects to cooping babies into a schoolroom and teaching them things they don't understand. Then he sounds the complaint which was, is now and ever shall be:

"Educated boys", says Changeless, "are ignorant of all that a man ought to know - ignorant of the classics of their own language - ignorant of their native tongue - ignorant of the laws and institutions of their country."

Go-Ahead is another type. This is his ambition:

"If I could only establish a joint-stock
company - lay out a railroad - fill my pockets and then persuade the state to buy it; or lend money on it, it would be a grand operation."

Many people have tried to define the American spirit and to characterize the typical American gentleman. Paulding puts his conception of his countryman into the mouth of one of his heroines who declares that if you are an American gentleman you must be,

"A lover of your country and her institutions, yet not a party-zealot, nor a man of sectional prejudices; estimating public men by their own acts, not by their opponents' calumnies; borrowing your opinions from no man, but forming them on your own judgement - yet not proud, nor presuming, nor arrogant in expressing them; yielding to everyone the honor due to his station and his character; disdaining not to clasp hands with the hard palm of honest labor; despising no man for his poverty; cringing to no man for his wealth; incapable of deceit or dishonor; and ready, as our fathers proved themselves, to lend your arm and shed your blood, if need be, for your country in her extremity."

The best society dramas of the era are, as has been hinted above, Fashion; or, Life in New York (1850) by the actress Anna C. Mowatt and Self (1856) by Mrs. Sidney F. Bateman. The foibles of the fashionable world are ridiculed in both. As has been suggested, the plot of Fashion centers in the efforts of the fashionable Mrs. Tiffany to win the sham count Jolimatre for a son-in-law. The real character of the count is discovered, however, in time to prevent his
marriage with the silly Seraphina. The French maid has discovered
"de money is all dat is necessaire in dis country to make one lady of fashion".

Mrs. Tiffany is one of these moneyed-fashionables who apes everything foreign, - language, customs, dress, manners and homes. Her husband is the business man employed at "making money on the true, American, high-pressure system", so that his family may have sufficient funds by which to move in select circles. It is Trueman, the moralizer, who points out to Tiffany that his wealth has brought him neither happiness nor ease, and to Mrs. Tiffany the hollowness of living for fashion only. But the only reward he receives for his advice is to be told that he is "quite rustic and deplorably American!" It is too bad that Mrs. Mowatt made her play so painfully didactic. From a technical standpoint it is a fair melodrama.

Self excels Mrs. Mowatt's drama in many respects. Mrs. Bateman was very fortunate in her choice of settings. The first scene in a fashionable New York store is decidedly new. The parlor, boudoir, breakfast-room and drawing-room of the Apex home, and Unit's boarding-house are all good settings for a domestic drama.

The plot is well unified: Mr. Apex is nearing bankruptcy on account of the extravagance of his wife.
She tries to borrow money from her step-daughter, Mary, but is refused. Later, Mary loans the money to her father but before he draws it, Mrs. Apex and her son Charles forge Mary's name and secure the money. Mr. Apex, after accusing Mary of using it for herself, sends her away. She appeals to her old friend, Mr. Unit, who promises to loan her money with which to help her father. On the night of the fashionable party given by Mrs. Apex, Unit and Mary go to the house. Charles becomes conscience-stricken and a general reconciliation takes place. They are all happy though Unit contends as did Pearson in *The Hoosier Schoolmaster*, "We're all selfish accordin' to my tell".

The extravagant wife and over-worked husband, Unit, the "rough diamond", the prodigal son and ideally good girl, - these are the central figures. Charles and Mrs. Apex are the only characters who change materially. Charles is the pampered son who would behave if his mother would let him. He has a sensitive conscience, and a great deal of manliness which is not brought out until the last scene. Mrs. Apex, too, promises to reform.

Unit is the lonesome and eccentric old man loved by only a few people; a money-getter and a money-keeper, of the "David Harum" type. He never has
time to give a sentence a subject, but grunts out his words jerkily. In his eyes everything is judged according to whether it pays or doesn't pay. On the night when Mary appeals to him for help, he sits in his room soliloquizing,

"Made my will to night - settled all my affairs - might die suddenly - object to long sickness - doctors' bills and nurses very expensive and often help to kill you. In that case, don't pay! .... Have no heirs - left half my money to Mary - good girl, economical - left the rest to orphans, no children of my own, help to support other peoples. Don't like colleges - education no use except figures - arithmetic is the only study that pays!"

The comedy parts are supplied by Cynosure, "a travelled nonentity", and by Mrs. Corderoy Codliver "a wealthy Vulgarian". But these are only poor imitations of Sheridan's characters and lack reality. It is a distinct relief to find the conventional love-story omitted. In its references to New York fashions, stores and families, the play is of local rather than national import. It is more conventional and imitative, but not so superficial or realistic as Clyde Fitch's society dramas.

V. Closet Dramas.

This survey would not be complete without some treatment of those literary dramas which have never
attained great popularity on the stage. True, a few of them were acted in spite of their poetic form and high-sounding diction, but it was owing to the ability of their actors that they found a hearing in the theatres of America rather than to the great dramatic merit in the plays themselves. Edwin Forrest encouraged the production of this style of drama, for he rather liked lines which gave him an opportunity to display his elocutionary powers. Consequently, he made a success of plays like Bird's *Gladiator* (1837) and Conrad's *Jack Cade; or, The Bondman of Kent* (1832). It was J. W. Wallack who encouraged Nathaniel P. Willis to write for the stage, but it is said that Willis never approached its requirements except in *Tortesa, the Maurer*, a play practically unknown today.

By means of the romantic examples of Hugo and Dumas, playwrights were carried back to Shakesperean models, especially to historical subject matter. Usually, they chose Italy, Spain or Germany for the setting. Many of their dramas suggest Spanish history in their very titles. Longfellow's *Spanish Student* (1843) has both Spanish and gypsy characters, and a plot suitable for a romantic opera. The Mobile lawyer, A. J. Requier, produced *The Spanish Exile* (1844), *Mohammed* (1850), *De Soto* (1853), and *Senor Valiente* (1858)
were the plays of a Maryland lawyer and editor. A
novelist of the South, Mrs. Caroline Lee Hentz, re-
ceived a prize of $500 from Pelby of the Boston Thea-
tre for her tragedy, De Lara; or, The Moorish Bride
(1843). George P. Morris, a journalist and song writer
of New York, chose German rather than Spanish history
for treatment in his opera The Maid of Saxony (1842).
The Sons of Usna (1858) was a closet drama written by
Thomas Chivers, a Georgia poet.

It would be necessary to make an extended study
of all of the closet plays of the era in order to judge
as to their relative merits. Critics claim that Francesca da Rimini (1855) by George Henry Boker is the
best. At least, it was played successfully by both E.
L. Davenport and Lawrence Barrett, and it was recently
revived by Otis Skinner. Boker (1823–1900) was a
cultured Philadelphian, a scholar and a poet. In 1871,
he was sent by President Grant to Constantinople where
he served as our ambassador. Later, he represented
our government at St. Petersburg. His dramatic works,
other than Francesca, include Galaynos (1848), Leon-
or de Guzman, The Betrothal, The Widow's Marriage and
Anne Boleyn (1850).

Unfortunately, Boker can not get away from his
master, Shakspere, but frequently echoes his thoughts
and often his very phraseology. He reproduces the character of Henry VIII in *Anne Boleyn*. Anne herself is a figure about whom it is difficult a tragedy. Although Boker tries to make us sympathize with the abused queen, the memory of Henry's first wife rises to kill our sympathy, just as it plagues Anne's conscience. At the conclusion one feels that she only reaped what she sowed, and even her bravery in meeting death does not efface that fact. It would take a Racine to make a great tragedy figure out of Anne.

In Francesca one feels that a certain hard, grim fatality is leading the main characters to inevitable destruction. Neither Paola nor Francesca can help loving the other. Neither can Lanciotto, who is passionately in love with his wife and bound to defend her honor as well as his own, — neither can he do otherwise, according to Italian conventions, than end the lives of both Paola and Francesca.

The most original character in the play is the dwarf Pepe, the malicious mischief-maker, who takes a Mephistophelean delight in taunting Lanciotto and arousing his worst passions. Pepe, though a jester by profession, is an expounder of doctrines opposed to many of the conventions of his world. In many respects, he is very similar to Hugo's jester Triboulet.
Francesco was once a fair acting drama as its stage history proves. But its lines, though technically good blank verse, are largely Shaksperean in sentiment. It is Lanciotto who sounds this familiar note:

"There's not a man - the fairest of ye all - Who is not fouler than he seems. This life Is one unending struggle to conceal Our baseness from our fellows."

Playwrights today realize that Shaksperean verse or mere verbosity must never be substituted for dramatic action.

VI. A Glance at the Stage.

Until the middle of the nineteenth century, theatrical centers were found chiefly in the East and South, but with the rapid westward expansion following the discovery of gold in California theatres sprang up rapidly in the West. At Salt Lake City dramatics were under the patronage of the Mormons. In San Francisco, many prominent actor-managers won experience. Among these were Lawrence Barrett, Booth's manager a few years later, and John McCullough. New Orleans, too, boasted of her local playhouses, which the best travelling companies often visited. Everywhere play-going was a favorite American recreation.

Though the drama boasted of no very prominent writers at this time, theatrical history is rich in
records of both visiting and native stars. In the forties Macready made his second and third trips to America, but his career was clouded by the jealous rivalry of Forrest which, with the newspaper comment it evoked, led to the riots of 1849 in which more than a hundred people lost their lives. Charles and Fanny Kemble, the elder Sothern, and the comedian Matthews were other English actors who visited us. France sent us Rachel with her famous roles of Phedre and Adrienne Lecouvreur, and from Italy came Ristori, then noted Maria Stuart.

American actors, too, were winning fame at this time. Edwin Forrest was in his prime and Charlotte Cushman was perfecting her greatest role, Queen Katherine. James H. Hackett, for whom several Yankee plays had been written, proved himself greatest as Falstaff. We have already mentioned Joe Jefferson's impersonation of Rip Van Winkle. But the greatest figure of the century, the greatest tragedian America has yet produced was Edwin Booth (1833–1893). He was only sixteen when he acted a minor part in Richard III at the Boston Museum. A few years later he did some pioneer acting in California. Not until 1857 was he advertised in the famous role of Richard III and it was nearly a decade later that he attained the height
of his popularity as Hamlet. In his later years Booth played abroad, especially in England and Germany. He was esteemed both as a man and as an actor, and after his death Thomas Bailey Aldrich wrote William Winter that when Booth's coffin was lowered into the grave the sun went down.

Although the repertories of these actors varied widely, Shakspere remained the test of a great actor's ability. Owing to Forrest's interest in local drama, American plays won a permanent place in the repertory of many prominent players. In some instances dramas were written to suit the range of a specific actor.

This was a period in which were produced many critical and historical works bearing on drama or on the stage. Wm. Dunlap's History of the American Stage (1832) was a pioneer in that field. It was followed by Joseph Ireland's Records of the New York Stage from 1750 to 1860 and by Clapp's Record of the Boston Stage (1853). Ree's Dramatic Authors of America appeared in 1845. Since 1854, William Winter has been contributing to the field of dramatic criticism both in his numerous newspaper magazine articles and in his books. Only recently several prominent men interested in literature and the drama wrote a letter of
appreciation to Winter for the services he had rendered America as the Dean of Dramatic Criticism.

All of the great literary men who flourished between 1830 and 1870 were interested in the drama but none have left any extended criticism of it except Poe. He discussed at length Mr. Longfellow, Mr. Willis and the Drama and the works of other playwrights including Robert Montgomery Bird and Anna Cora Mowatt.

In conclusion: we see a great improvement in theatrical conditions and in acting during this period, as well as an awakening in the production of theatrical histories and of dramatic criticism. By 1870, conditions are favorable for the production of genuine American drama.
CHAPTER IV.

THE EMERGENCE OF AMERICAN DRAMA (1870 - 1916).

I. Increased Popularity of Play-Writing.

In *The Drama Today*, Charlton Andrews voices the theory that the more energetic a nation the greater will be its drama. Furthermore, he infers that the drama flourishes most in any country at the time of greatest national vitality. In a measure, this theory accounts for the rapid development of playwrighting in the United States during the last forty years. Between 1880 and 1890, our western frontier disappeared. Alaska, Hawaii and the Philippine Islands have since claimed some of our attention but, in the main, we are concerned now with the development of settled land rather than the taking of new territory. Professor Dickinson in the first edition of *The Playbook*, remarks,

"The last fronties have been crossed. Both poles have been discovered. The North West Passage has been traversed. Men can fly. Whence will come the new wonders? We will see."

Since our country reached the limit of expansion, it has, unconsciously or not, begun a process of nationalization which according to President Wilson, has meant strength and elevation of view. As one little outgrowth of this elevation of view, we have a
body of American plays many of which show a marked improvement over the plays of preceding eras. At the same time, they depend a great deal on their predecessors both in subject matter and method. It is not our purpose to reproduce the discussion of modern drama found in books as comprehensive and entertaining as Moses' *American Dramatist* and Burton's *New American Drama*. Our aim is rather to follow down to date the dramatic paths marked out in previous periods as well as to note the appearance of new trails of any significance.

Heretofore, we have noted the preponderance of foreign imitations, first English, then German and lastly French. Do not suppose that we have at last thrown off the foreign yoke, for such is not the case. Our debt to Europe is greater than ever, especially since the opening of the twentieth century. Our playwrights are still influenced by Scribe, Dumas, Sardou and their contemporaries, especially as regards situations and technique. In recent years, the American public has become acquainted with both the printed and acted problem dramas of Hervieu and Brieux. Except in the way of translations and adaptations and in the retention of a modified sentimentalism, we have been less under the German influence than under the
French. But since the advent of Hauptmann and Sudermann, interest in the German stage has been renewed. Although America has recognized the genius of Ibsen and been influenced somewhat by his technique, as a nation it seems to have agreed with William Winter that Ibsanism is "rank, deadly pessimism." It is to the English stage that America owes the greatest debt at present. Our playwrights no longer look to Robertson and Taylor. It is the technique of Pinero for which they are striving now, and many critics rank one of our playwrights, Augustus Thomas, second among the technicians of modern times. Realism, naturalism, romanticism and symbolism all have disciples among our playwrights. Some like Wallack, Daly, Palmer and Belasco have both adapted and imitated foreign plays. Others have chosen foreign material for dramatic treatment. Fitch's Beau Brummel (1890) and Mary Johnston's Goddess of Reason are two modern instances of this. Our poetic dramas, too, abound in foreign subject matter.

One foreign type prominent in the preceding period is still popular, — the melodrama. Montrose Moses says there have been countless writers of it. Steele Mackaye's Hazel Kirke (1880) he places in this category. The plays of Owen Davis, Theodore Kremer
and Al Woods are likewise melodramatic. Such titles as Convict 999, Fast Life in New York, and Gambler of the West suggest the Diamond-Dick and Nick Carter audiences to which plays like this cater. Fitch's City (1910) and The Woman in the Case (1904) are modified melodramas. So, also, are many of the plays of David Belasco. Montrose Moses prophecies,

"The melodrama of tomorrow will show an increased consistency on the part of the dramatist, and will indicate a corresponding improvement in the tastes of those audiences which are now stigmatized as a class, but which differ essentially from the legitimate audiences only in the fact that one pays twenty-five cents for a seat while the other pays two dollars."

Surrounded on every hand by foreign models, many of our playwrights have been able, notwithstanding, to produce some dramas truly American in spirit and a few of our recent plays have almost a universal appeal. This seems to be an era of play-writing. Dickinson wrote in 1913,

"Yesterday every man had a prayer book in his wallet. Today he has the manuscript of a play in his trunk."

One thing that attests the popularity of the play is the interest which has been taken in it by our men of letters. The first of Howell's farces

* The American Dramatist.

appeared in 1876 and since that time he has written a
great number of parlor plays and comedies. Two Men of
Sandy Bar (1876) was Bret Harte's contribution. In
the eighties Henry James followed in their footsteps
with his comedy, Daisy Miller. This was, also, the
decade in which Paul L. Ford printed The Best Laid
Plans, and Anne Katherine Green and Dr. S. Weir Mit-
chell attempted dramatic work. A decade later found
Brander Matthews in the field with his realistic com-
edies of American life, This Picture and That, and The
Decision of the Court, and H. C. Bunner with his oper-
ettas Seven Old Ladies of Lavender Town, Three Little
Kittens and Bobby Shafto. Thomas Bailey Aldrich,
Henry W. Longfellow, Bayard Taylor, Henry Van Dyke
and many others have produced plays of high literary
quality but we shall consider when we deal with the
poetic drama.

II. Prevalence of Past Types.

Our first concern is with modern plays which
follow lines laid down by dramatists of earlier eras.
First in point of development is the Indian play. Mod-
eren playwrights seem to have recognized the fact that
it presents many difficulties. Apparently, Brougham's
Metamora was not without effect, for, except in melo-
drama, the Indian hero or heroine is seldom found on the modern stage. William Ellery Leonard points out,

"The stage Indian, whether as noble red man in eagle feathers on a cliff or as drunken savage in stove-pipe hat before a frontier saloon, has long since become a weary joke in stageland", but "His is the great race tragedy of America. His story, though so often told falsely, has not yet been outworn."

Keeping in mind the opportunities for presenting heroic figures with elemental feelings in natural idyllic settings, and knowing how well the life, costumes and ceremonies of the real Indian are adaptable to the stage, Mr. Leonard produced his one-act play, The Glory of the Morning (1914).

Royle chose the relation of an Indian woman wedded to a white man as the theme of his Squaw Man. According to some critics this is the liveliest phase of the Indian question today. But the theme is as old as Custis' Pocahontas (1830).

Since the establishment of big government schools like Carlisle and Haskell Institute, there has arisen the problem of the educated Indian and his relation to his white associates. This is the material chosen by William C. De Mille for his college play, Strongheart (1909). Strongheart, a Carlisle graduate, is one of the best players on the Columbia football team and the bosom friend of Frank Nelson Playbook. April 1913.
and Dick Livingston. Owing to the dishonesty of Thorne, one of the team, Columbia's signals are revealed to the opposing players and because Strongheart, thinking that Dick is the traitor, refuses to reveal his knowledge of the case, the Indian is put out of the game. Though suspicion fastens upon him, his friends Frank and Dick stand by him stanchly until Thorne's guilt is proven and Strongheart cleared. Then Thorne declares that Strongheart is in love with Frank's sister Dorothy. Dick too wishes to marry Dorothy and, hence, he and Strongheart are estranged. Frank stands by Dick and, as Strongheart says, "The knife of prejudice cut the ties of friendship." Although Frank is bitterly opposed to the match, Dorothy declares she will go with Strongheart. Just then news comes that the chief of Strongheart's tribe is dead and he is now chief. He feels that he owes his life to the people whom he was educated to serve, but he refuses to allow Dorothy to share his hardships. His is truly a tragic figure as, deserted and alone, he prays,

"Oh, great spirit of my fathers, I call to you for help, for I am in the midst of a great desert alone."

Obviously, this is a marked improvement on the Indian plays of former days, but even here the old tendency to idealize the Indian is noticeable.
Frank and Dick seem a bit un-American in their sudden prejudice. It is Billy who sounds the American motto of giving every man fair play. When Strongheart reveals to Billy the prejudice which has come between him and his former chums, Billy exclaims, "Is that straight?". And when Strongheart says it is, Billy replies,

"Then I'm ashamed of my whole damm race, and I'll go and tell 'em so."

Because this little play is so typically American in spirit and atmosphere, and because the Indian is the tragic figure, it marks a distinct advance in the direction of real American drama.

Mary Austin, instead of presenting the Indian from the standpoint of the white man, attempts to portray him as he appeared to his own race in primitive times. In order to write a play Indian in spirit, it has been necessary for her to study the red-man, his various linguistic groups, his customs, ceremonials and tribal life. Although her best-known drama is called The Arrow Maker (1911), the central figure is really the medicine woman, Chisera. Although set apart by the tribe as mediator between the Indians and the Great Spirit, she is merely a woman who, wearying of the friendship of the gods, longs for human love and a home and children such as other women of her
tribe have. She falls in love with Simwa, the Arrow Maker, for whom she makes medicine. She proclaims him war leader in this chant:

"The bows of Castac shall be broken.
The bow-strings shall break asunder.
The bows of thy foes shall be broken
And the vultures come to battle.
The Maker of Arrows shall lead you.
He that makes arrows of eagles' feathers,
Arrow Maker of Sagharawite, he shall lead you.
Simwa shall break the bows of Castac.
The bows of Castac shall be broken!
The bow-strings shall break asunder!
He shall break the bows of Castac!"

Chisera's love avails her nothing, however, for in a short time, Simwa marries Bright Water, daughter of the chief. From that time, the fortunes of war are against Chisera's tribe, but in her jealousy and anger she refuses to make medicine. Finally, the starving women and children arouse her sympathy, she invokes the gods in their behalf and after the tribe has expelled Simwa, the inefficient leader, she saves them from the attack of the Tecuyas.

Although Mary Austin has a play here that is Indian in setting, costumes and ceremonials and universal in its themes of love, jealousy and ambition, yet one feels a modern note in this problem of the gifted woman and her longings, as well as in the portrayal of suffering resulting from war. The language of the Indians is realistically figurative at times. Chisera
"Every lover looks to every maid - tall and strong and straight in the back."

But in spite of such expressions as "wickiup" and "moth-hour", one feels that the author has not entirely succeeded in presenting the spirit of another race.

Fire (1914), Miss Austin's last play, will hardly win even the stage success which The Arrow Maker had. It presents the Indian from his own viewpoint better than its predecessor, perhaps, but because of that reason and because of its poetical form it will hardly be popular with American audiences. It looks as if the successful Indian play will be the one which best presents the Indian in his modern relations to the white man.

In the preceding period we noticed the advent of plays based on the Civil War. Moderns with the aid of better stage technique have produced a few such historical dramas which are really creditable. Belasco's The Heart of Maryland (1895), Bronson Howard's Shenandoah (1889), Herne's The Reverend Griffith Davenport (1899) and Gillette's Held by the Enemy (1886) and Secret Service (1896) are among the number. The last named, Secret Service, is printed and played today. There have been a number of weaker plays. The Young Republic (1871) by William Busch has Lincoln, Davis
and Booth among its dramatis personae. The assassination of Lincoln is the theme of J. W. Roger's play, *Madame Surratt* (1879). Neither were Washington, Columbus, Burr and Hamilton neglected by American playwrights.

The best Revolutionary play that we have is Clyde Fitch's *Nathan Hale* (1898). According to *The Bookman* for December 1899, this play came "excitingly near" being the first real American tragedy. The first act in Nathan Hale's school-room is delightfully realistic. Complications arise in Act II when Hale promises to act as a spy in spite of his promise to Alice not to jeopardize his life. Act III is marred by some rather improbable occurrences at the Inn in which Hale is caught by the British soldiers. Act IV had to end true to history and, for no just reason whatever except for the insufficient one of a broken promise, Hale is dragged to the orchard and shot. The last act is conventional, melodramatic, sentimental and, at times, revolting and justifies *The Bookman's* qualification, "excitingly near".

In *Barbara Frietchie* (1899), Fitch did not attempt a historical play. It is merely a picture of the spirit and atmosphere of the Civil War days, centering about Barbara, the heroine. Here, too, the
the play is spoiled by the last act. The scene in which Barbara guards the stairs leading to her lover's room is intensely dramatic, but the entire effect of it is destroyed when the crazed Jack Negly, after hastening the death of Barbara's lover, shoots her and is given over to the officers. The scene of a man shooting a woman of Barbara's type in cold, or rather hot, blood before our very eyes is too horrible for description and absolutely overturns the effect produced by the first three acts of the play.

Among recent efforts, two of Percy Mackaye's one-act fantasies present very effectively the American war spirit. In Gettysburg, we have a sympathetic picture of Link Tadbourne, the Grand Army veteran living over, on Decoration Day, the events of that battle. It is the war, idealized by memory, about which the old gentleman dreams. "Sam Average" pictures the discontent of the soldier in the War of 1812. Sam is the average American who has always been and will ever be. He has all the dry humor of our idealized Uncle Sam, as well as a Lincoln-like sympathy for the hardships of his soldiers. Here is his description of himself:

"My talk ain't rhyme stuff, nor the Muse o' Grammar wa'n't my school ma'am. Th' ain't painter nor clay-sculptor would pictur' me just like I stand. For the axe has hewed
me, and the plow has furred; and the arm-in' of gold by my own elbow-grease has give' me the shrewd eye at a bargain. I manure my crops this side o' Jordan, and as for t'other shore, I'd rather swap jokes with the Lord than listen to his sermons. And yet for the likes o' me, jest for to arm my wages — ha, the many, many boys and gals that's gone to their grave-beds, and when I a-closed their eyes, the love-light was shinin' thar".

Shamed by the words of Uncle Sam Average, and aroused by the voice of the

"One in whom the millions are saved,
the Million in whom the one is lost,"

the soldiers of 1814 decide not to desert but to stand by their Uncle Sam. To reproduce the feelings of a by-gone epoch of storm and stress is such a difficult problem for the playwright that it seems highly improbable that our great American dramas will be historical.

Another inheritance of modern times is the immigrant play. The Irish, Dutch and Germans were the chief strangers within our gates prior to our Civil War, and the Irish, especially, left their imprint upon the drama of the time. Recently, the tide of immigration has been marked by an increasing number of Slavs and Italians to whom America stands as The Promised Land. Although the various nations represented in the United States have probably produced some dramatic work in their own language, it is the Italian
and the Jew who figure most in recent immigrant plays written in English.

Horace B. Fry's *Little Italy* (1898) is one of the most dramatic of these, for the author succeeds in condensing into one act material sufficient for, at least, a three-act tragedy. The cast is small consisting of a baker in the Italian quarter of New York, his wife homesick for Napoli, his child, and the wife's Neapolitan lover who has come to America to continue his trade of street-singing. The wife induces her unsuspecting husband to hire the singer so that he may teach her an Italian song which she longs to learn. When the lovers hear the baker approaching, the wife steps into the dumb waiter which will carry her to the singer who has just descended the stairs. But owing to an accident the wife is killed in the descent. Meanwhile the husband has had time to read her farewell note, and the contents of the letter and her tragic death leave him in sorrow and despair to care for his child alone. Originally, Mrs. Fiske played the part of the wife. This little piece is so full of deep emotion and rapid action that it is worthy of reproduction, in spite of the fact that the tragedy is brought about by so commonplace an agent as a dumb waiter.
Another Italian appears in George Beban’s interesting experiment, *The Alien* (1915). This play is unique in that it combines moving pictures with the spoken drama. The pictures explain the setting of the piece, then the curtain rises and the real play proceeds, interspersed at times by scenes on the screen.

Mackaye has just recently published his drama, *The Immigrants*. (*The Phoenix* (1875), *Potash and Perlmutter*, *Children of the Ghetto* and *The Melting Pot* present the life of the New York Jew). *The Melting Pot* has probably been the most successful of them all, for it glorifies America in a way pleasing both to Jew and Gentile, native-born citizen and foreigner. Unfortunately, Mr. Zangwill sometimes allows these laudatory speeches to replace the action of the play. But no less a technician than Augustus Thomas is quoted by Mr. Zangwill as saying,

"Mr. Zangwill’s ‘rhapsodising’ over music and crucibles and statues of Liberty is a very effective use of a most potent symbolism, and I have never seen men and women more sincerely stirred than the audience at *The Melting Pot*."

It is only a step from the naturalized to the native-born American. Billy in *Strongheart* is typical of the American college boy. Col. Mulberry Sellers in Mark Twain’s *Gilded Age* and Judge Bardwell
Slate in Benjamin Woolf's The Mighty Dollar (1875) were famous two decades or more ago. So, also was Joshua Whitcomb in Denman Thompson's The Old Homestead. In later years, The Grand Army Man and David Harum have stood for certain phases of American life. Booth Tarkington is one of the ablest playwrights who has attempted to dramatize his country-men. Bunker Bean, the joint production of Tarkington and Harry Leon Wilson, is one of the most successful of our new plays, but it is The Man From Home to which people allude when they discuss the most noteworthy stage American of modern times.

The old-fashioned Yankee has apparently made his exit from the stage, but David Harum and Daniel Ebenezer Pike, the Man from Home, continue what W. P. Eaton has pleased to call the "American comedy of bad manners". In order that Pike might gain by contrast with foreign nobility, the authors chose Sorrento, Italy, for the setting. Here it would not be wholly improbable to find English tourists, an American, and a Russian Grand Duke at the same hotel. But the Hoosier, although placed in very artificial situations, always thinks of the right way in which to rise above them. Pike is thoroughly democratic and judges men solely on their own merits rather than
by their titles, history or money. In this respect he is wholly unlike his ward, whose sole ambition is to marry a title and, thereby, secure worldly advancement. This theme is as old as Mrs. Mowatt's *Fashion*, (1847) and the comedies of W. I. Paulding. Pike is typically American in his fondness for a square deal and honest business methods. He views Europe from a commercial standpoint, and is proud that American buildings are hygienic if not historic. He does not pretend to be a cultured American, but merely a business man of the middle-class, so busy heretofore that he had never found time even to visit Niagara.

The other characters are not always consistent, and even Pike is considerably idealized.

William H. Crane has always excelled in his acting of the typical American. Not long ago, he appeared as the senator in Martha Morton's new comedy *The Senator Keeps House* (1912). After all Matthew Arnold was right when he accused us of loving self-glorification, and one form of this love is revealed in our fondness as play-goers for the dramas built around our typical local and national characters.

The American spirit is more or less genial and fun-loving, and, for that reason, the Comic Muse has always been a favorite. No less a critic than Walter
P. Eaton claims our humorists Cohan and Ade would never have had their present popularity had it not been for Brougham and Harrigan and Hart. We have already considered Brougham. It was in the early seventies when Harrigan and Hart drew attention in *The Mulcaney Twins*. Following this, came numerous other farces and burlesques some of which dealt with the fortunes of the Mulligan Guards. *A Slippery Day* and *A Porter's Troubles* are hardly subjects for serious dramas. Norman Hapgood in his *Stage in America* discusses at length the peculiar humor of Charles Hoyt who, he says,

"was witty, good-humored, fatalistic, frank, agile, formless, vulgar, -- as we are, the great American people."

The jokes rather than the plot made successful *A Hole in the Ground*, *A Trip to Chinatown*, *A Rag Baby* and others of his pieces but even these jokes were often "horsy" rather than witty.

Though not altogether complimentary to American taste, it is at least indicative of our love of humor that the music hall of Weber and Fields in 1900 was, and perhaps is still, the most popular high-priced play-house in America. Here jokes are dispensed in a familiar and personal form common among those actors whose business it is to amuse the audience be-
tween acts. Puns, daffodils, exaggerations and slang are quite prominent. Fields, the boy Smallus, says to Fay, Templeton his sister Lythia, in a mock-Latin style,

"Thou art a punkin ball player. Thou wilt never get to the minus."

Miss Templeton advises her stage-father to take a walk:

"You may possibly be run over by a cable car and catch the grip."

And so the show proceeds for an evening, a veritable "Slow Train Through Arkansas."

No one would accuse Weber and Fields of producing literary pieces. But we do have a body of clever farces written by literary men. Mackaye's Anti-Matrimony is a farcical comedy. It contrasts those Americans who, carried away by a wrong interpretation of Ibsen and other continental playwrights, attempt literally to live out their theories of free love, with those New Englanders who are horrified at such unconventional goings-on. Naturally, the situations are ridiculous and over-drawn. But it is too full of literary allusions to become popular on the stage. Only students of foreign drama could appreciate it.

Of a more popular nature are The Dictator and The Galloper, written by Richard Davis. Both are in three acts. The first is a take-off on the political
boss who seeks a province of Central America in which to become dictator. Numerous revolutions occur. In these a typical American named Steve, two missionaries, a detective and a wireless telegraph man help save the day. In this farce as well as in The Galloper, Davis' experiences as a newspaper man furnish him with dramatic material. Greece is the scene of The Galloper. Here assemble a number of British and American reporters and three American Red Cross nurses. All are here because of the war between Greece and Turkey. Cope Schuyler of the New York Republic is the "Steve" of this play, willing to face any situation bravely and make the best of it. As in The Dictator, a tragedy is averted by the timely arrival of friends, — a rather worn artificial device.

The farces of John Kendrick Bangs are shorter and not so journalistic as those of Davis. The making of the Worsted Man with whom eight summer maidens fall in love is an amusing little fairy-story. And when each girl discovers that her hero has flirted with the other girls, the inevitable happens and in a fit of rage they unravel the work of their hands.

No such romantic episodes occur in the parlor plays of William Dean Howells. His are so realistic that, in some instances, they are almost commonplace.
He takes some funny incident common to the middle-class American and around this builds a short farce entertaining and lively and free from the vulgarity of a Weber and Field's production. The woman who is afraid of a mouse, the husband who cannot find his dress suit, the women who keeps people awake on the sleeping-car, the man who kindly holds a stranger's baby while she looks after her baggage, — all these are familiar to everybody. With the eye of a Molière, Howells has seen in his contemporaries subjects for dramatic portrayal, but so far he has not cared to give them more than surface treatment.

When one takes the American temperament into consideration, it is not strange that the farce and light comedy are popular forms of amusement. Plays like Officer666, It Pays to Advertise, Her Husband's Wife, Seven Days and Bunker Bean are apparently crowding classical dramas from the stage. One new and entertaining phase of light comedy is found in the college play. We have already discussed Strongheart. Rida Johnson Young's Brown of Harvard is no less popular. But it is George Ade who since 1902 has become our most prominent humorist and producer of college plays. The College Widow, Just Out of College and Father and the Boys approach true comedy but his best
work is marred by the introduction of elements found in the musical comedy and in farce. George Cohan with his famous Get-Rich-Quick Wallingford is a humorist of a different, even an inferior, type. But all of these men serve to prove the increased popularity of the farce, burlesque and light comedy over such productions of previous eras.

Let us turn now to the development of the society drama. In the mass of society plays which followed Fashion and Self, those of Bronson Howard and Clyde Fitch hold first place. (Langdon Mitchell's New York Idea (1908), also, ranks high as a social satire.) Saratoga (1870) was the first of Howard's plays in point of time. With the Academy of Design and Congress Springs, Saratoga, as settings, Howard introduced scenes familiar to his contemporaries. In a plot tinged with improbabilities and exaggerations, he pictured fashionable society at Saratoga with its resultant love affairs, nothing more. The technique and dialog of the drama are admirable, but there are too many characters. The situations border on farce, too. For instance, Bob Sackett is engaged to three different girls and in love with a fourth. Because of the complications which arise, he is challenged by six or seven men all of whom meet in his room to fight.
The women, strange to say, have preceded them thither and a general straightening-out occurs. For the first time in our dramatic history, American girls are realistically represented.

Following Saratoga, Howard produced a new play every year or two until his death. The Young Mrs. Winthrop (1882) is much better than Saratoga. The cast is small, consisting of only four women and five men. The characters are better developed than the situations, and are deep, serious and of universal interest. As in Fashion and Self, the society demands of the wife and the business habits of the husband are conducive to estrangement. But Howard goes farther than this and, in addition to discussing family love and the child as a tie between husband and wife, brings about a situation in which divorce seems inevitable. Yet Howard is wholesomely old-fashioned, especially in his attitude toward divorce, and with excellent motivation he reconciles the couple in the last act.

All of the characters are very distinct, but the oft-divorced Mrs. Dick Chetwyn, the blind girl Edith, and Mrs. Ruth Winthrop the sweet kindly grandmother are the new types which Howard introduces. All of the characters are idealized, but in the same
wholesome way in which Miss Alcott idealized Jo and Meg. Be that as it may The Young Mrs. Winthrop is a landmark in the development both of the society drama and the problem play.

Kate (1906) the last of Howard's dramas has for three acts an English setting with English characters, — all except Kate and her father. As of old, the American heiress is seeking a foreign husband, but on the wedding day she learns of his relations to another woman. Of course, she stops the wedding proceedings and is reconciled to the man she really loves, the third son of another English family. This play is somewhat more modern in tone than The Young Mrs. Winthrop, but it is likewise more English than American.

Very few of our recent dramas equal Howard's earlier play in the power with which it presents some of the social forces which are undermining American family life. In that respect it is far in advance of the comedies of Clyde Fitch.

Like Howard, Fitch excels in his portrayal of women rather than men and in nearly every instance it is a young society girl or one newly married whom he chooses for a heroine. Now it is Georgiana Carley, the girl who has her own way; now the stubborn Geraldine, the jealous Jinny or the prevaricating Becky, — but
interest always centers in "the woman in the case". Fitch's men are often weaklings. Trotter in The Climbers is almost a Pickwickian figure. Steven Carley, Georgiana's brother, is so weak that he is despicable and Becky Warden's husband is unusually credulous, and easily deceived. Sam Coast is of a stronger type, but his strength takes the form of stubborn persistence and absolute selfishness.

Fitch, then, does not excel in character-drawing but rather in technique and great scenic effects. Interest never lags and if it does the audience can find enough charm in the background to hold their attention. A snow scene in mid-winter, a scene on ship-board in the evening, a conservatory at three o'clock in the morning, a steamship dock or the Vatican at Rome, - Fitch did not hesitate in reproducing any of these in his dramas.

For the most part, sentimental love is the theme which pervades all of these plays. In Her Own Way Lieutenant Coleman, Georgiana's lover is ordered to the Philippines, where his regiment is annihilated; but in the last act, Coleman returns with both arms in slings. The Stubbornness of Geraldine depicts the culmination of a romance begun on ship-board between the American girl and Count Kinsey. The love of a
wife for a dishonest husband is one strong theme in The Climbers. Jinny's affection for her husband causes her to be jealous of Ruth, and Captain Jinks' devotion to the young singer Trenton leads him to shock his conventional Southern mother by marrying an opera star. And so it is through the rest of his play, sentimental love and little besides. In one or two instances, Fitch works out real psychological studies, but he is usually satisfied with a presentation of the lightest, most trivial phases of society life. The Climbers exaggerates certain of these phases, with the purpose of satirizing them, and, in his way, Fitch accomplishes his purpose. Undoubtedly, both Howard and Fitch produced society plays far superior to their forerunners of the early fifties.

Before we begin our survey of modern poetical dramas, let us look for a moment at the relation between the novel and the play. In the preceding era, we noted the stage popularity of Mrs. Stowe's novels, of Ten Nights in a Bar Room, and a few others. Today, our bill-boards are plastered with notices of dramatized novels. The Scarlet Letter has been made into a play two or three times. Ben Hur first appeared on the boards in 1876. But any novel with good spectacular settings like Quo Vadis, Les Miserables and The
Garden of Allah will be welcomed by the visual-minded play-goer. Kipling's novels have been played on our stage and only a few years ago Dickens' and Thackeray's stories were revived as dramas. Little Women, The Pit, The Christian, The Shepherd of the Hills, Brewster's Millions are only a few of the hundreds of plays which first appeared as fiction. Managers saw chances for commercial success in giving the people stories which they knew and liked and since that time novel-butchery has been the rage.

Along with it, has arisen the practice of novelizing plays. Since many dramas are preserved by their authors in manuscript, this practice is of some value to students of drama since it tends to familiarize them with the story of the play at least. Many plays of David Belasco, of Charles Klein and other prominent dramatists are accessible to readers only in the novel form. These do not rank, however, as a very high type of literature.

How different is the case of the poetic drama! High literary quality it often has, but little to recommend it for stage presentation. Longfellow's later dramas were even more unsuited to the stage than The Spanish Student. Bayard Taylor followed in his steps by producing The Prophet, The Masque of the Gods and
Prince Deukalion. Today there are so many poetic dramatists that we can only consider the most important. Biblical material seems to be the most attractive to literary playwrights. An apochryphal story is the basis of Thomas Bailey Aldrich's *Judith of Bethulia*, just as the healing of Naaman is the source of Van Dyke's *House of Rimmon*. Richard Burton's *Rahab*, Max Ehrmann's *Jesus*, and Harry Kemp's *Judas* betray further interest in Biblical narratives. William Vaughn Moody has left us three poetic dramas, *The Fire Bringer*, *The Masque of Judgment* and *The Death of Eve*. The translator of Maeterlinck, Richard Hovey, has been very prominent, especially for his trilogy of dramas bearing on the Arthur-Guinevere story.

Two of our most successful playwrights who believe that verse is the proper form in which to write plays are Percy Mackaye and Josephine Peabody Marks. While still in college, Mackaye planned his first play, *A Garland to Sylvia*. Its prose prolog is one of its strong points, but as in *Sappho* and *Phaon*, the play within a play is very confusing. It seemed to be hard for Mackaye to get away from that dramatic artifice, for in *Fenris the Wolf* the gods of the Prolog enter the souls of men and we are not certain whether it is the god or the man who acts out the play.
Mackaye has a remarkable sense for beautiful pictorial and musical effects. The Greek background is the proper setting for the story of Sappho and Phaethon and the French for Jeanne D'Arc. In the latter very elaborate scenery is necessary to present the "Ladies Tree" at Domremy, the Castle of King Charles VII, the meadow outside the walls of Orleans, the coronation pageant of King Charles in the streets of Rheims, and Jeanne's prison at Rouen. But none of Mackaye's dramas has a more romantic background than Fenris the Wolf. The prolog takes place in the crater of a volcano at dawn, with the gods of Icelandic mythology for inhabitants. The play proper opens and closes at the Rune-stone of Odin outside a tribal temple; but between Act I and Act IV, the scene changes first to Egil's lodge in the forest, then to his prison chamber and, finally, to the pool of Freyja in a forest glade. But the difficulties involved in providing adequate scenery for such a production, and, also, in acting the part of supernatural figures only served to make impossible the stage production of this powerful poem. The Canterbury Pilgrims and Jeanne D'Arc, because of their pageant-like succession of scenes, have been produced with some success by such companies as the Coburn Players.
In all of these plays, Mackaye has viewed ancient stories in the light of modern psychology. The love of a poet for a slave is only another form of the struggle for social liberty and equality. The reclamation of a wolfish nature through the love of a good woman is the theme of Fenris. In these the religion of Greece and of Iceland, respectively, determine the whole course of action for the characters. Likewise, Jeanne D' Arc's Catholic belief in the saints fires her to superhuman achievements. But after she loses faith in the heavenly voices, she is powerless. Mackaye, though he does not explain Jeanne, presents her with an imagination unusually susceptible to suggestion and her successes and failures are a natural result of her mental attitude.

Although Mrs. Marks in her earlier plays of Marlowe and Fortune and Men's Eyes dealt with literary as well as historic personages, she has won her greatest success in her plays for children. Her last one-act poem, The Wings, is more mature, a psychological study with dramatic qualities as intense as those of The Terrible Meek. It reverts in subject-matter to a Saxon monk of the days of King Aelfric.

The Piper is the best known of Mrs. Marks' dramas because it won the Stratford prize in 1910 and
has since been played at the Memorial and New Theatres. It presents the old story of the Pied Piper in an ethical, almost religious light. The people of Hamelin, because of their selfishness and greed, are punished by the departure of their children to the Hollow Hill. The Piper in praying to the wayside shrine says,

"'Tis hearts of men You want. Not muffled prayers; Not greed and carven tombs, not miser's candles; No offerings, more, from men that feed on men; Eternal psalms and endless cruelties."

But the Piper, loving the children passionately, cannot bear the homesickness of little Jan and, after a struggle, he leads the children home just as the Lonely Man would have done.

The same theme, the power of genuine unselfish love over both men and beasts, occurs again in The Wolf of Gubbio. Here the lonely, old wolf is so influenced by the kindness of St. Francis of Assizi that he returns a peasant's baby which he has stolen. The struggle between wolfishness and unselfish kindness in the heart of the humanized brute is both pathetic and dramatic. King Louis, Saint Francis and the Wolf are characters suitable for the world of any imaginative child and there is no reason why this drama should not be as popular as The Piper, unless the difficulty in
acting the part of the wolf should keep it from the stage.

As poetry it is excellent, having at times epic and lyric passages of great beauty. How far do lines like these surpass the Shaksperean echoes of George Henry Baker!

"The World is cold; the World is cold,
The snows are round us, fold on fold. only the flocks are stabled within; The kine are gathered, kith and kin. I must be growing old".

The Little Poor Man walked the World, (Laugh, laugh, my scars!) Hunger and thirst, and lack, and loss, Beckoned to him as stars. The Little Poor Man smiled at me; His eyes were like the sun. And down the years like sunlit tears, The pouring light did run! The Little Poor Man touched my heart; With love, with love, it broke. And from my bonden death-in-life, — I woke".

III. New Forms of Drama.

Hitherto, we have considered only those modern plays whose general type originated in some preceding period. But modern times have given us a few new forms which are favorites with our latest playwrights. The development of America has given rise to the play dealing with specific sections of the United States, and modern science has helped originate both the problem play and the psychological drama, — the two most
popular types on our present stage.

Although local New York dramas are as old as Tyler's Contrast (1787), the play dealing, not with one town, but with a state or group of states is quite recent. Augustus Thomas originated the plan of writing a play bearing on each state of the union but he abandoned that idea after producing three pieces, Alabama (1891), In "Mizzoura" (1813) and Arizona (1900). In Old Kentucky, The Heart of Maryland, The Lady from Oklahoma and Under Southern Skies are only a few of the numerous plays depicting life in the South. Alabama is notable for its technique as well as for its picture of the South in the days after the war. The marriage of the Southern girl and the Northern man is symbolic of the perfect union of the two sections previously estranged.

Melodramatic cow-boy plays with western settings still hold a prominent place in our theatres. In this connection, Murdoch's Davy Crockett and Oppenheim's recent poetic play, The Pioneers (1910) are notable since they deal with the moveable western frontier. But there are several dramas which bear on the West as we know it now. Belasca's Girl of the Golden West (1905), Tully's Rose of the Rancho and Henry Blossom's Checkers are characteristic of these. But William Vaughn
Moody's *The Great Divide* (1907) has the distinction of being the best Western drama, if not the best American drama ever written. It embodies the same theme as *Fenris the Wolf*, — the reclamation of man through the love of a good woman. When Ghent reaches the point where he is willing to renounce his own interests for the sake of Ruth, she confesses a willingness to return with him to their home in the West. This drama is especially fine in its delineation of the two national types, the free-and-easy Westerner with his natural religion and the New England girl weighed down by the conscience inherited from Puritan ancestors. The union of Stephen and Ruth is symbolic of the closer relationship between the East and the West. Since this play is national in its scope though universal in its theme, and since it possesses good technique and distinct literary qualities, it is credited by many of our prominent critics as our greatest American drama.

If by Eastern, one means a product of the East, all of our plays before 1870 fall in that category. But if by Eastern one means plays typical of the East as a section of the United States, such dramas are decidedly modern. *Giles Corey* by Mary E. Wilkins, *Shore Acres* by James A. Herne, *Lottie Blair Parker's Way*
Down East and Alice Brown's *Children of Earth* are the most famous of them all.

*Children of Earth* won the $10,000 prize offered by Winthrop Ames in 1914. Because it is a psychological study in which action is neglected for the portrayal of character, it has not won popularity with the average theatre-goer. It is more suited to an audience of thinkers, especially to those interested in drama from a literary standpoint. Acts I and IV have a setting suitable for a Wallace Nutting print,—the sitting room in the old New England home of the Barstow's. The funeral of old man Barstow is just over and Aaron, his son, insists that his sister, Mary Ellen return with him to his rich home in the city. But she prefers to remain in the old home with Peter Hale and his "Portuguese" wife. While they are debating the matter, news comes of the return of Mary Ellen's girlhood suitor, Nathan Buell. At first he and Mary Ellen plan to marry, but they discover that they have grown apart. Nathan is a grasping, money-loving Yankee, entirely unlike Mary Ellen's ideal of him. On the day of the "tree plantin'" at the Mill Road Farm, Peter Hale reveals his love for Mary Ellen and she, in a fit of desperation, plans to elope with him the following morning. They meet at the Pine Tree Spring at day—
break, and there Mary Ellen's conscience fully awakens and she decides to return home. By so doing, she averts the suicide of the "Portugee" wife, who has overheard their conversation. Then the drama ends for Mary Ellen and she settles down once more to the humdrum New England life to which she has always been accustomed.

The Yankee Fantasies of Percy Mackaye are brief commentaries on just such New England characters. Chuck is the prodigal son of a New England deacon who, with a heart full of rebellion against hide-bound conventions, succeeds in eloping with Letty, a young girl whom his brother Elijah is about to marry. The Antick shows the prejudice of the New Englander toward the Canuck, just as The Children of Earth reveals the prejudice of Peter Hale's neighbors toward his "Portugee" wife. The relationship of American to Canadian is a motif found in Knud Iverson (1871) and later in the melodrama of Eugene Walter called The Wolf.

Other sections of the country are developing dramas. The Bird of Paradise takes the American to Hawaii. In Wisconsin an important movement is under way to develop the dramatic possibilities of the Middle West. Little by little the entire country is awakening to a consciousness of itself.
Let us turn now from sectional plays to that great body of dramas dealing with social problems. Such plays are the logical outcome of the modern scientific movement, and indirectly they are, also, our heritage from recent European drama. In motifs they are as varied as life itself, though the relations of the sexes, of labor and capital and of peace and war are most prominent. The racial problem has appeared only once in a while. *Strongheart* and *The Squaw Man* discuss the mingling of the white and red races. Howard's *Moorcroft*, Dixon's *Clansman* and Sheldon's *The Nigger* are notable instances of the treatment of the negro in American society. *Alias Jimmy Valentine* bears on convict life. The author points out that the convict who tries to reform will be given a chance and plenty of encouragement. An ex-convict, this time a woman, is the heroine of *The House of Glass*, a very recent play by a new dramatist, Max Marcin. His contemporary, Cleves Kinkead, chose the dangers surrounding the working girl as material for *Common Clay*. Woman's rights is touched upon by Marion Fairfax in her drama, *The Talker*. And so, one by one, the problems of our complex civilization appear in our theatres.

Since the outbreak of the present war, war dramas have multiplied. *In the Vanguard* (1912) ap-
peared as a result of the peace movement, and though it is far from being a good acting drama it makes a readable plea for universal peace. *Across the Border*, *Inside the Lines*, and *The War God* are only a few titles of late war plays. Beulah Marie Dix in *Moloch* takes for her text Jeremiah 32:35, and on it preaches a sermon on the terrors, futility and demoralizing influence of war. Nazimova in Marion Craig-Wentworth's little piece, *War Brides*, presents with great depth of feeling, the fate of women in the war zone.

Charles Klein is the dramatist of business life. *His Lion and the Mouse*, *Third Degree* and *The Money Makers* are familiar in their novelized form and need no comment. Joseph Patterson presents the socialistic side of our labor problems in *The Little Brother of the Rich* and *Rebellion*. Child labor in the mills of Georgia is treated in *The Product of the Mill* (1912) by Elizabeth McFadden. *The Scab* is, of course, an outgrowth of our numerous labor strikes and is probably influenced by Galsworthy's *Strife*.

None of these popular plays have had quite the prominence on our stage that sex dramas have,—another outgrowth of movements on the continent and in England. *Polygamy* is the title of a play by O'Higgins and Ford. The moral codes of men and women are discussed by Ra-
Che1 Crathers in _A Man's World_ and by Augustus Thomas in _As a Man Thinks_. This last play modernizes _The Young Mrs. Winthrop_. It is not devotion to business or to society which estranges Frank and Elinor Clayton. For some time Elinor has forgiven Frank for his dealings with other women, but when she accompanies an old suitor, De Lota, to his hotel, Frank turns against her and demands a divorce. Only by the most humiliating confessions does De Lota prove both his and Elinor's innocence, but even then Frank refuses to be reconciled to her until their little boy brings about their reunion. As is his custom, Thomas fills the play with splendid dialog and rapid action and though one may find some rather improbable situations here, the drama is worthy of serious consideration, nevertheless.

Much more realistic than Thomas is Eugene Walter in his _Paid in Full_ and _The Easiest Way_, plays dealing with the degeneration of men and women. If Walter had written _As a Man Thinks_, he would probably have ended the play with a divorce and a complete estrangement of the Claytons, if not by the suicide of the heart-broken wife. In this fondness for tragic conclusions, he follows both Ibsen and Pinero. _The Easiest Way_ is merely an Americanized version of _Iris_. 
Laura Murdock, because of her love for John Madison, decides to live a clean life, but, while she is waiting for John to make their fortune, she loses her position, becomes penniless, and returns to her former life with the rich broker, Willard Brochton. From then on, she begins to lie to both Brochton and Madison and when the unsuspecting Madison comes to claim her, Brochton reveals her deception and both men cast her off. The play is a powerful arraignment of the weakness of woman, the brutality of man and the life of the immoral rich. It suggests the regenerative power of real love as well as the inevitable loss of moral strength in the lives of dissipated men and women. A play like this compels even the most careless playgoer to think.

The Necessary Evil is Kennedy's one-act play dealing with white slavery. Though more literary it is not so dramatic as Walter's play and the action is hindered by the sermon which Kennedy wishes to preach. The tragedy lies in the revelation to an innocent, sheltered girl of the evils of the underworld. Symbolically, it represents the attitude of the average woman toward her fallen sister, and the difference in moral fibre of the father who has lived a clean pure life and the son who has lived as other men. Kennedy
pleads for scientific knowledge of social evils, sympathy for the women who is down, a good woman's power over a weak man and lastly for eugenic marriages.

This last theme has been presented by Percy Mackaye in his California, Tomorrow. He makes much of Mendel's law, and with the conviction of a scientist, places reason above love in choosing a husband or wife. With the aid of the character of a congenitally blind child Mackaye succeeds in driving home his eugenic ideas. At the same time, he does not lose sight of the action, but his moral purpose is so very obvious and his subject matter so unsuited to mixed audiences that it is exceedingly doubtful if Tomorrow will live except as literature.

Indirectly, these plays are all psychological, but nowhere more than in Kindling is the psychological aspect more ably combined with the problem play. Here in a New York City tenement we see the suffering caused by strikes, the fostering of crime because of poverty, the life of the washerwoman, of the settlement worker, of the young medical student and, lastly, the unhealthy conditions among which the tenement baby is born. It is these unjust social conditions against which Maggie and Heinie Schultz struggle, — and after what threatens to be a losing fight to secure a
healthy environment for their child, genuine melodramatic luck comes to Maggie Schultz and her husband and it becomes possible for them to leave the tenements for life in the West. Charles Kenyon produced here a drama truly American in characters, plot and setting yet universal in theme and intensely human in its feeling.

The most psychological of Clyde Fitch's comedies are The Girl with the Green Eyes and The Truth. The first shows the evils attendant upon fits of jealousy. The latter is reminiscent of Vanity Fair. Becky, the heroine of both novel and play, is a white liar of exceeding cleverness. In The Truth, this lying tendency is a heritage from a prevaricating father. These plays have all the ordinary Fitchian characteristics including the poor fourth act. Even when the play is done, one feels certain that Jinny will again indulge in jealous rages and Becky in lies.

The influence of mental suggestion and the possibilities wrapped up in mental telepathy are the motifs found in Thomas' Witching Hour. Mental healing is the subject of Moody's Faith Healer, and the return of one's spirit after death of Belasco's Return of Peter Grimm. All such plays are open to the criticism of being vague, but that is because our present psy-
psychological knowledge is vague.) Robinson's *Van Zorn* is vague even to mystification. It may be a study of mental controls, or of the conflict between destiny and free-will, but even so the Oriental mysticism and mystery which surround *Van Zorn* are the very elements which make the drama unsuitable for the stage.

Dickinson's *In Hospital* and George Middleton's *On Bail* are important one-act psychological plays. George Bronson-Howard's *Red Light of Mars* has a similar psychological theme. To what extent such dramas can be made popular is a problem for the future to solve.

IV. Recent Movements.

It is impossible in the space at our disposal to do more than note the appearance of dramatic fashions which bid fair to color the coming literary and stage history of the twentieth century. The musical comedy is a nineteenth century invention that threatened for a time to become a dangerous rival of legitimate drama. It retains remarkable popularity and will probably become a fixed form of dramatic production. Just now it is overshadowed by the moving-picture scenario.

Since the rise of such companies as the Co-
burns and Ben Greet Players, out-of-door productions have become quite the vogue. Community plays have likewise been encouraged, and they have usually taken the form of the pageant or the masque. The pageant is generally historical in its purport; the masque, symbolical. Saint Louis is one of the best examples of what may be done by means of a masque dealing with civic life. It was written by Percy Mackaye to celebrate the founding of St. Louis, Missouri. All over the country there is an awakened interest in the masque and the pageant. The Sock and Buskin Society of the University of North Dakota gave A Pageant of the North-West, a local production, at the dedication of the Bankside Theatre at Grand Forks, N. D. That is only one example of many college pageants. The bulletin of the American Pageant Association for 1913 lists forty-six pageants, festivals and masques which were given that year in fifteen different states. The new pageant, according to Professor Koch of North Dakota, has a theme interesting to the community in which it is given, community actors and a community audience. It includes the arts of poetry, music, dancing, coloring, modelling and building. Its aim is to socialize and educate both actors and audience.

Since the rise of the Irish School of playwrights,
there has been a decided growth in the popularity of the one-act play. We no longer have time to read novels in two or three volumes and the ordinary play-goer is tired of a three-hour performance of Shakspere. But if the action usually expanded into three or more acts can be condensed into one, the average American is satisfied. The success of Mrs. Fiske's production of Little Italy and Nazimova's appearance in War Brides is prophetic. Charles Rann Kennedy, George Middleton, Witter Bynner, Beulah Marie Dix, and the Wisconsin school of playwrights have all produced notable pieces of this type. Mackaye in the Preface to Yankee Fantasies expresses the wish that lovers of the theatre may soon see the need of the one-act play and supply it.

Another recent movement is the rise of the symbolic or allegorical play. Its most obvious form is that of the morality. Everywoman, Experience, Lady Catechism and the Child are more allegorical than symbolic. Among those dramas which contain a large amount of symbolism are The Servant in the House, The Winter Feast and The Idol Breaker. Kennedy, their author, apparently owes something to Masterlinck. The Idol Breaker is the most symbolic though the least dramatic of his plays. So many interpretations of it are possible that one is at a loss to know which of the half
dozen was the author's own.

Along with symbolism has come a revived romanticism. Professor Burton in his *New American Drama* points out three forms which this romanticism has taken. In some instances authors have ransacked their geographies for exotic or mysterious settings. Some have invaded the scientific realm and a few the spiritual world. *Tomorrow* and *The Return of Peter Grimm* are good examples of the second and third types. The first has the most representatives. The Orient and the islands of the sea are backgrounds suitable for romantic figures in elaborate costume. (Knoblauch's) *Kismet* and Tully's *Omar the Tentmaker* take us back to Arabia and Persia. *The Garden of Allah* is, of course, the Sahara Desert, and with its reproduction of a sandstorm and live camels upon the stage it is extremely spectacular. *In A Thousand Years Ago*, Mackaye revives the commedia dell'arte in a Chinese setting. Even more interesting than this is *The Yellow Jacket, A Chinese Play Done in a Chinese Manner*. And as one element in this "Chinese Manner", the property man stays on the stage during the entire production. This play is striking enough to attract the attention of the Coburns who have made
it part of this winter's repertory.

Romanticism has taken one other form, that of
the fantasy. Knoblauch's Faun and Mackaye's Scare-
crow are two of the best. The latter is based on
Hawthorne's Scarlet Letter. The plot is, indeed, a
fantasy. Goody Rickby, the blacksmith witch, Dickon
a Yankee Mephistopheles, Lord Ravensbane a scare-crow
come to life, and Justice Gilead Merton the man with
a wild-oats past, - these are fantastical figures and
yet, with the exception of Dickon and the Scare-crow,
they are typical of New England in the witch-craft
days. The governor, the minister and the two preach-
ers from Harvard are all well-drawn. The tragedy con-
sists of the self-contempt of the Scare-crow after
Rachel has held up to him the Glass of Truth. It is
the horror of knowing one's self in all one's ludi-
crousness. A musical fantasy in verse has recently
been produced by Percy Shostac of the University of
Kansas, in conjunction with Arthur Nevin. This fan-
tasy, The Stuff of Laughter, was presented by the stu-
dents of the University at their annual May Fete (1916).
This work is only another outgrowth of the recent in-
terest shown everywhere in dramatic writing. Young
newspaper men, university students and professors,
lawyers, ministers and men of other professions are
seeking recreation in play-writing and occasionally one of these efforts meets with great success when staged. Part of this growing interest is the result of the printing of plays. Now one may read and study dramas, though he may live in a town which boasts of no theatre. A dramatic library has been a long felt need which is now being supplied and, in a few years, a resident of the Middle West will no longer be ignorant of the dramas which are meeting with success in the East.

V. The Stage.

In 1913, according to the figures of Charlton Andrews, there were fifty thousand people in seven hundred companies playing on an average of thirty weeks a year in thirty-two hundred theatres in America. The theatre costs the country $100,000,000 yearly. No wonder that it is one of the three or four great influences of modern life. Because of this very immensity, one can only touch the heights in a survey of this sort. Since 1870, our stage has fairly scintillated with stars. Actors like James A. Herne appeared in their own plays. Mantell, E. H. Sothern, and William Faversham are famous for their Shaksperean roles. Richard Mansfield, Otis Skinner, Julia Marlowe and Mrs. Fiske are among our great players. Visiting players
have been numerous. They include such names as Henry Irving, Sir Johnson Forbes-Robertson, Helena Modjeska, Sarah Bernhardt and Nazimova. Besides, we have been visited by a great number of operatic singers who have given grand opera a very prominent place on the stage of our largest cities.

Since 1870, theatres have multiplied rapidly. In New York and other large cities may be found the Irish, the Greek or the German Theatre. Even the Ghetto has its play-house. In the rural districts all over the country opera-houses are being built. Many Kansas towns of six or seven hundred inhabitants possess a theatre, which with the school and the church, is a social center of the community. The Little Theatre movement is spreading rapidly; the out-door theatre is gaining popularity; and New York now has its Portmanteau Theatre which can be boxed and shipped anywhere.

Unfortunately, the stage since 1896-7 has been controlled largely by a Theatrical Syndicate much to the destruction of originality and independence both in acting and play-writing. Only Mrs. Fiske and David Belasco have succeeded in opposing this Syndicate. It seems to be the most earnest desire of all friends of the drama that commercialism be done away with as soon as possible. The effect of the "movies" on the theatre
proper has yet to be determined.

Much has been done by the Drama League of America to place the true state of theatrical affairs before the American public. Through its various dramatic centers it is doing much to encourage the reading and writing of plays. From time to time the Drama League edits representative American plays prefaced usually by a dramatic critic of note. The Modern Series of plays and the Contemporary Dramatists Series and the American Dramatists Series (the last two published by Richard G. Badger of Boston) are other collections of plays valuable to the student of drama.

William Winter is no longer the only dramatic critic of America. By his side are Norman Hapgood, Walter Pritchard Eaton, Clayton Hamilton and others. The question now before the critic is that of honesty. Will he dare to express his honest opinion or will such a proceeding lead to a libel suit or the loss of his position? Apparently, America sometimes fails in being the land of the free. At present friends of American drama are looking forward to that Utopian state wherein our theatres shall be rid of commercialism, our critics shall be free to condemn mediocrity and our playwrights with originality and insight shall be producing the long-desired great American dramas.