BOOTH TARKINGTON: A STUDY

by

Goldie M. Lemon

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Approved by:

[Signature]
Instructor in Charge

Jan. 20, 1928

[Signature]
Head of Chairman of Department
This study of Booth Tarkington was prompted by the extreme interest shown in this author by the children of Central High School, Muskogee, Oklahoma, and especially by those boys who so freely discussed Tarkington's characterization of youth and adolescence.

The more one studies Tarkington and his works the more one appreciates his understanding of human nature and his ability to entertain without the use of vulgarity. His books are wholesome, and with him one can laugh or cry.

For this study I have read all the material available in three libraries, and with the exception of a few plays have read all of Tarkington's works. I take this opportunity to thank Mr. E. N. Manchester, Director of Libraries of the University of Kansas, and others of the staff who have given their friendly service; Miss Lillian J. Constant, Librarian of the Lawrence Public Library, for her helpful assistance; and Mrs. Cora Case Porter, Librarian of the Muskogee Public Library, and her assistant, Violet Goddard, for their encouragement and assistance. I wish most of all to express my deepest gratitude to Dr. J. H. Nelson, who counseled me and so graciously guided me through the study. I am under great obligation also to Dr. W. S. Johnson, who so kindly assisted me during the absence of Dr. Nelson last summer. I wish to thank Booth Tarkington for the
autographed pamphlet which contained the announcement of his new and unpublished book.

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Goldie M. LeMon
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Although Booth Tarkington is an unusually well known contemporary author, no extensive biography of him has been written. True, there are a few biographical chapters in Robert C. Holliday's critical study, Booth Tarkington, and there is a pamphlet, entitled Booth Tarkington, by Asa Don Dickinson, but for the most part detailed information concerning this popular author is scattered here and there throughout newspapers and magazines. For the sake of convenience, then, in this study, the present writer has collected the various items, and has woven them into the following biographical sketch.

Newton Booth Tarkington was born in Indianapolis, Indiana, July 29, 1869, of distinguished ancestry. His father, John Stevenson Tarkington, from whom he inherited a strain of French blood, was a lawyer, who had served as a member of the Indiana House of Representatives, as a judge of the Seventh Judicial Circuit, and as captain of the One-hundred-thirty-second Indiana Infantry in the Civil War. His mother was a descendant of the Reverend Thomas Hooker, a noted scholar and orator of colonial fame, and his great-grandmother was the beautiful Mary Newton, who figures in the annals of Old Salem and who, through her marriage with Walter Booth, was ancestor to

2 Robert C. Holliday, however, says this is not true. "Another family altogether, that." Booth Tarkington, p. 5.
the Booths who became "the pride and glory of the stage" fifty years ago. Others of his kinsmen were noted, and the uncle, Newton Booth, for whom Tarkington was named, was a prominent orator, who in turn became United States Senator from California and Governor of California.

Tarkington spent his boyhood in Indianapolis in much the same manner as other boys, but he was somewhat hampered in that he had a nervous disorder, resembling St. Vitus dance, which repeatedly caused him to be taken from school for two or three months at a time. He was much interested in "make believe" or imaginative play, and was very fond of reading. He enjoyed assisting his father, and it was with much interest that he, an eleven-year-old boy, helped in setting the stakes for the brick house which was to be his home for so many years. His vivid imagination kept him from enjoying fishing and shooting.

He was a precocious child, of an inquisitive mind and a retentive memory, and even though handicapped, ranked high in his studies. Early he became interested in story writing, and before he was able to write with ease, dictated his bits of Indiana history to his sister. "Jessie James, the desperado," he said later, "appealed to my youthful fancy, and, in consequence, my early attempts at composition invariably commenced—'It was dusk, and four horsemen were seen riding over the top of the hill.'" These stories he and his companions dramatized, and in order to appear more professional,

1 Current Literature, 30:290 (March, 1901).
2 Outlook, 72:819 (Dec. 6, 1902).
3 Williams: Our Short Story Writers, p. 325.
they built a stage in the Tarkington barn and charged an admission of three cents. The author of the play was the director and the chief actor.

When he was jovial, buoyant, and happy, he was a dramatist, but when unhappy or grieved, he could best express himself in poetry. At thirteen, while trying to recover from discipline, he reflected vividly his melancholy in his little poem then entitled The Trees, but published later under title of My Maiden Effort.

Tarkington denies the accusation that his stories of youth are autobiographical, but in his teens, he was, in many ways, a walking image of Willie Baxter. He himself relates experiences in connection with his first call that might easily have been incorporated as a chapter in Seventeen.

His preparatory education was acquired at Phillips Exeter Academy, in Exeter, Massachusetts, but little concerning his experiences there is recorded. He was graduated in 1889, and soon entered Purdue University, at Lafayette, Indiana. In 1891 he entered Princeton, and there he was to receive encouragement toward becoming a writer. As he could sing, compose music, draw, or write stories, poetry, or plays, he was in great demand and was assured a happy college life.

He entered the College Glee Club and soon became soloist, and in addition became helpful in writing songs and in setting to music such notable poems as Poe's The Raven. He was appreciated

1 Outlook, 72:817 (Dec. 6, 1902).
3 Colliers, 72:7 (July 28, 1923).
for his musical ability outside of this club also, for he wrote
the class song for the commencement exercises in 1893, and he
was always ready to add spirit to any group meeting where there
was a lull. The call "Tark! Tark! Tark!" meant that Tarkington
was to respond with "They're Hanging Denny Deever" or "On the Road
to Mandalay."

It was quite unprecedented in Princeton to belong to two
editorial boards at once, but Tarkington did, and in turn became
editor of The Tiger and of The Nassau Literary Magazine. He was
popular, but no doubt his cartoons won for him his place on The
Tiger, and his prize story, The Better Man, his place on "The
Lit". His cartoons were not necessarily high art, but they were
so much better than any the other boys could draw that they attract-
ed attention. His story though was quite good, and its acceptance
by the magazine encouraged Tarkington to begin a literary career.

1 The tune was brought to Princeton by Max Farrand, a member of
Tarkington's class, and later head of the History Department
of Yale. Farrand had received the song from his brother in
'88, and his brother had received it from Richard Harding
Davis. The words are by Kipling. Bookman, 42:508 (Jan., 1916).


3 Ibid., 42:506 (Jan., 1916).
As an amateur dramatist, Tarkington was very popular, both while in college and later in connection with the Dramatic Club of Indianapolis. While at Princeton he wrote plays, and one, *The Honorable Julius Caesar*, written by him and Post Wheeler, was presented by the Princeton Dramatic Association in the "Golden Nineties." Suffice it to say, Tarkington was Cassius. Later they wrote an opera which proved so popular that it was given for three successive years.

Besides the organizations mentioned, Tarkington belonged to the Ivy and the Triangle Clubs, and it is said that during his senior year he, with a half-dozen others, formed the Coffee House Club for the purpose of studying literature. It is interesting to note, too, that with all these activities he kept up his studies and stood well in his class. In the classroom he seldom took notes, but always seemed ready for examinations. Princeton has rightly been proud of Tarkington and has recognized him with honorary degrees. In 1899, six years after his graduation, he received the degree of A. M., and in 1918, twenty-five years after, the degree of Litt. D.

For some time after he left school he seems to have drifted, and using his own terms as applied to John Harkless, he

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1 *Current Literature*, 30:281 (March, 1921).
3 *Current Literature*, 30:280 (March, 1921).
4 Holliday: *Booth Tarkington*, p. 28.
5 *Outlook*, 72:819 (Dec. 6, 1902).
"was sitting on a fence rail in Indiana." Would he succeed as an artist, or as an author? He really wanted to be an illustrator, and was delighted when Life in 1895 accepted a pen drawing, but when the same magazine rejected thirty-one subsequent sketches, Tarkington gave up his artistic career.

He continued "fussin' with literachoores," but quite unsuccessfully, for his returns from 1893 to 1898 were only twenty-two dollars and fifty cents. He had suffered disappointment with three plays during this period. They had been so well received by the Dramatic Club of Indianapolis that he took them to New York, but there received no encouragement whatsoever.

Before going to New York he was writing for the Indianapolis papers under the pen-name of John Corburton, and while in New York in 1895, he wrote for the little magazine, John-a-Dreams, signing himself S. Cecil Woodford. "The death of that little magazine," said Mr. Tarkington, "on the staff of which I was supposed to be, was the greatest blow I ever sustained."

But Tarkington was soon to rise above his discouragement and to receive recognition. Harper's purchased the whimsical romance, Cherry, and before they published it in 1901, McClure's

3. Outlook, 72:817 (Dec. 6, 1902).
4. Ibid.
had purchased *The Gentleman from Indiana* and *Monsieur Beaucaire*, and had issued them serially in 1899 and 1900 respectively. Tarkington then became known as a Hoosier, a novelist, a short story writer, and a dramatist. In 1901, with the assistance of E. G. Sutherland, he dramatized *Monsieur Beaucaire*.

After Tarkington had assured himself a means of support, he became interested in a home of his own, and in June, 1902, married Miss Laura Louisa Fletcher, a gifted woman much interested in poetry. Incidentally, too, it is interesting to note that it was her nephews who furnished Tarkington many suggestions for his characters Penrod and Sam.

In 1902 he was elected to the Indiana Legislature, where he joined the insurgent Republicans. There, too, he found material for stories which he published serially, and later collected under the title of *In The Arena* (1905).

Also while he was in the legislature two other novels, *The Two Vanrevels* (1902) and *Cherry* (1903), both of which had appeared previously in McClure’s and Harper’s respectively, were published in book form. His accomplishments for 1902 were quite surprising considering the fact that for several weeks he suffered the serious illness of typhoid fever.

The years from 1902 to 1906 Tarkington spent quite largely abroad in company with his wife and two very close friends,

1 See Reader’s Guide, 1904-1911, for poems written by Mrs. Booth Tarkington.

2 *Collier’s*, 72:6 (July 28, 1923).
Mr. and Mrs. Harry Leon Wilson. They spent much time in Paris, in Rome, and on the Island of Capri, of which Tarkington was very fond. These travels greatly influenced his works, and these places, as well as towns in Indiana, afford settings for his novels, short stories, and dramas.

During the period from 1905 on he has written continually, whether in America, in Europe, or on the seas between. He has produced novels and short stories, but much of his time he has spent on plays. In *The Conquest of Cansan* (1905) he has given a photograph of another little city in Indiana, and in his short stories, *The Beautiful Lady* (1905) and *His Own People* (1907), he has given glimpses of cities in Europe. *The Quest of Chusnay* (1908) also has foreign flavor, but *Beasley's Christmas Party* (1909), dedicated to James Whitcomb Riley, is truly American and is a reminiscence of Tarkington's childhood. The plays which appeared are: *The Man from Home* (1906), with Harry Leon Wilson, *Cameo Kirby* (1907), *Springtime* (1908), *Your Humble Servant* (1908), *Getting a Polish* (1909), *Beauty and the Jacobin* (1911), and *The Man on Horseback* (1912).

It is not for the present writer to conjecture which of the experiences related in Tarkington's recent article, *Marriage*,

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2 In 1910, Tarkington's father wrote *The Hermit of Capri*.
3 *American Magazine*, 103:11 (April, 1927).
were his, but suffice it to say that sometime about 1911, Mr. and Mrs. Tarkington were divorced. Mrs. Tarkington and their only child, Lionel Laurel, went to New York to live, but Mr. Tarkington remained in Indianapolis. In the fall of 1912 he married Susannah Robinson, the daughter of F. P. Keifer of Dayton, Ohio.

The next year was important in Tarkington's career, for in *The Flirt* (1913) he was showing realistic tendencies, and Riley had accepted him as a brother Hoosier in the realm of literature. Although Riley and Tarkington had been neighbors for years, and although Riley had been a sort of family uncle, making regular Sunday evening calls, Riley's poems, not the young author's works, were discussed. Riley could not forgive the Indianan for exploiting a foreign prince in *Monsieur Beaucaire.* But as soon as Riley had read *The Flirt,* he forgot his prejudices, and, invalid though he was, drove in his carriage to the home of Tarkington and said, "I hurried over to tell you that I read *The Flirt* last night, and I liked it. ..... It's a great piece of work. I've read other things of yours that I didn't like and never said anything about them to you. But I like this and want you to know it."

In 1914 Tarkington published *Penrod,* the first of his famous boy stories. Previous to this, however, the stories which


2 *Collier's,* 71:22 (Mar. 10, 1925).
form the basis for the chapters appeared serially in the Cosmopolitan under such titles as The Boy in the Air, Brothers of Angels, and Overwhelming Saturday. Then followed The Turmoil (1915) with its contrasting Bibbs, a boy whose environment would not allow him any of the freedom of the vivacious Pensod. Pensod and Sam (1916) and Seventeen (1916), however, are in a way sequels to Pensod.

From 1916 until 1921 Tarkington came again under the influence of the theatre and began to turn out plays at the rate of one or two a year. During this time he wrote Mister Antonio (1916), The Country Cousin (1917) with Julian Street, Up from Nowhere (1919), Clarence (1919), The Gibson Upright (1919) with Harry Leon Wilson, Coldskin (1920), The Wren (1921), and Intimate Strangers (1921), practically all of which were played in New York Theatres. At the same time, however, he was working on short stories and prize-winning novels. His short stories during the period were Hand and Bill (1917) and the patriotic serial entitled Ramsey Hillbolland (1919).

His prize-winning novels were The Magnificent Ambersons (1918) and Alice Adams (1921).

But other honors were his, for in 1920 he was elected to the American Academy of Arts and Letters, and was in 1923 and

1 These novels won the Pulitzer Prize of one-thousand dollars, which is given each year by Columbia University for the American novel best presenting the "wholesome atmosphere of American life and the highest standards of American manners and manhood." World's Work, 44:232 (Jan., 1922).

1924 respectively given the degrees of Litt. D. by De Pauw and 1 Columbia Universities.

In 1922 Gentle Julia, containing Florence, the female Penrod, and the first two of Tarkington's one-act plays, The Ghost Story and The Trysting Place, appeared. The same year Rose Briar was being played in New York.

The year 1923 was a grave one for Tarkington, for in 2 January he buried his aged father, and in April his seventeen-year-old daughter, Laurel, died of pneumonia while visiting her father in Indianapolis. Despite the sorrow, however, he continued his work, and The Fascinating Stranger and other stories, The Midlander, and two plays, Tweedles and Magnolia appeared.

Two late books, Women (1926) and The Plutocrat (1926), are being much discussed; the first on account of its realism and the latter on account of its satirical quality. His latest book is different from any of his others, for it is a collection of his essays, published under title of Looking Forward (1926). Tarkington continues to write, and now, whether he be in Indianapolis or in Kennebunkport, his fertile mind is weighing and creating something for our enjoyment next year.

3 Ibid., April 14, 1923, 13:5.
II. PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS AND INTERESTS

Perhaps no author can be more easily known than Tarkington, for his personality permeates all his stories and radiates from them. However, for the sake of brevity, it is better in this study to discuss his traits and interests direct from life rather than indirectly from his works.

Today Tarkington is a tall, robust man, quiet yet active, with keen dark eyes which assist in lighting up his healthily tanned face with a kindly and quizzical smile. Tarkington's friend, Jesse Lynch Williams, says that Tarkington has not always been so well and hearty and describes him on entering Princeton as "woefully gaunt and almost cadaverous." For many years physicians, as well as friends, were alarmed about his health.

It is not difficult to find a portrait of Tarkington; in fact there are so many that one would almost think him vain. According to the Bookman of November, 1921, and to recent observations, it is probably true that "of no other living writer have so many different portraits appeared in the course of the past twenty-five years." His expressions in the different photographs are similar, but the surroundings often vary. Sometimes he is in a boat or a car; sometimes he is near one of his beautiful

1 Bookman, 56:364 (Nov., 1922).
3 Bookman, 54:221 (Nov., 1921).
homes, accompanied by his wife; sometimes he is in an easy wicker chair on or near a well-polished table; but wherever he is, he quite often has one of his extremely long cigarettes or his Florentine Poodle, Wop. Only once has he been pictured in a more or less frivolous manner. Soon after he left college he drew a portrait of himself which is said to look more like him than do his photographs.

"Tarkington's wardrobe inclines to emphasis in color, striking effects—pearl-grey soft hats, suits dashing light in tone with high-power checks, or ties with no faint stripes. He could not appear on the street without a stick, generally a stocky, canary-hued staff with a heavy silver top."

Tarkington's friends say that to know him is to know a broad-minded, big-hearted fellow whose "dominant trait is an apparent interest in everything and everybody." In his presence one feels at ease. His entire attitude is "make yourself at home." He seems to make a business of handshaking, and McMahon says that he has a sort of Arabian hospitality which impels him to offer as a present anything at which a guest looks. No doubt some of these

1 Literary Digest, 50:1468 (June 19, 1915).
2 Critic, 37:396 (Nov., 1900).
3 Bookman, 54:218 (Nov., 1921).
5 Collier's, 72:6 (July 28, 1916).
gifts are quite valuable, for his Indianapolis home is full of 
Italian antiques.

Tarkington is a home-loving man and cares little for 
living in any place except in Indianapolis or in Kennebunkport, 
Maine. Since he keeps two houses completely furnished, moving is 
no hardship. The winters he spends in Indiana, and the summers 
and early fall, in fact from May to Thanksgiving, in Maine.

Quite recently he has moved farther out in Indianapolis, 
and has left the ancestral home on Pennsylvania Street. His home 
suffered, as did those of the "Ambersons," the "Oliphants," and 
the "Sheridans." Residences and service stations crowded in until 
the noise and dirt, perhaps "smoke," caused him to move to "a new 
addition." Regretfully he made the change, and for several nights 
he could not sleep, feeling that the old house was saying, "So 
I'm not good enough for you and your friends, eh? Well, your 
father built me, and I was good enough for him." "I felt," Tark-
ington said to a friend, "just as if I had selfishly abandoned a 
poor old uncle and left him to die, just because he was crippled." 

His Kennebunkport home, "Seawood," is both beautiful and 
unusual. It is surrounded by flowers, and looks down over the sea. 
The exterior is modelled after a Maine farmhouse, but the interior


"No wonder," thought the friend, "that a man so full of senti-
ment can put human interest into books."
is divided and arranged according to Tarkington's original ideas. He likes to see from one end of the house to the other, he wants the floors at uneven levels, and he demands a balcony for retreat. "Some of the rooms welcome you with quaint friendliness, with early American simplicity; some of the rooms are subtle in what they say, and speak of foreign places, as of experiences that enrich; all are colorful and free." About the house, on walls, tables, and window sills are many beautiful ships, for which Tarkington has very great admiration.

Tarkington leans toward extravagance with money. He smokes mammoth cigarettes, especially prepared, one hundred to a tin box and labelled "E. T."; and to add to the undue expenditure he throws them away half-smoked. He has given ten dollars when only a dime has been asked for, and he has given away money promiscuously just for the pleasure of seeing the result. Today, however, he is becoming a better financier; he is putting his surplus money in bonds, and strongly recommends the bond habit. No longer does he put money into liquor. He calls it "nasty stuff," and he makes his words impressive.

Tarkington is of a speculative turn of mind and is ever-ready to give his comment on any subject, be it ever so frivolous.

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1 Ladies' Home Journal, 42:16-17 (April, 1925).
2 This characteristic is attributed to Pinker in The Plutocrat, pp. 187, 433.
1. Even as late as 1924 and 1926 he was discussing women, bobs and wigs, and short skirts. It is in his essays, to be discussed later, that he discloses many of his opinions. All through his short stories, novels, and dramas, too, he adds such observations as, taken from the context, would be almost epigrammatic. For instance, in 

2. Penrod and Sam, he writes, "There is no boredom (not even an invalid's) comparable to that of a boy who has nothing to do"; in

3. The Flirt, "People who expect nothing are never disappointed. I must keep that in mind"; and in Jeannette, "Since all revolts are more apt to take place against feeble governments than against strong ones, if the children are in revolt, it must be because the parents are showing greater laxity than they used to." In this same story Tarkington sets forth his own idea of why children lose respect for parents. This idea is more fully discussed by Fred C. Kelley after his interview with Tarkington on Why Our Young Folks Are So Wild.

Concerning religion Tarkington is most serious. He be-

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1. Kansas City Times, Nov. 28, 1924.
2. Ibid., date unknown.
3. Penrod and Sam, p. 257.
4. The Flirt, p. 287.
5. In The Fascinating Stranger, p. 121.
6. Collier's, 72:6-7 (July 28, 1922).
lieves in immortality himself, but holds very liberal views toward others and their beliefs. As to spiritism, he says, "We don't know enough about it to know anything about it." "Tarkington's conclusion," says Holliday, "is simply that there is in this world some force, or power, or what not, which we do not now understand, and which 'we are as yet a long way off from knowing anything about.'"

In telling stories Tarkington is a delight. He relates personal experiences and passes on good stories which he gathers from various sources. There are scores of stories connected with his campaign for the legislature, but perhaps the two most popular concern the doughnut factory and the securing of negro votes.

Tarkington enjoys jokes, and on account of the imitative qualities of his voice he is sometimes a sore trial to his friends. "He calls up by telephone and pretends to be anybody from a society editor to a motor cop. One evening Tarkington called up a friend in the little Maine village, and pretended to be a country justice of the peace.

'Be-n't you the feller that was driving up the road so gosh durned fast this afternoon?' he asked. 'I have a warrant here for your arrest. If you'll come in at once I'll try to keep your

1 American, 99:88 (June, 1925).
2 Holliday: In Men and Books and Cities, p. 83.
3 Outlook, 72:819 (Dec. 6, 1902).
Whereupon the friend innocently called up Tarkington to inquire what he'd better do.

"Pay no attention to it," advised Tarkington. "I know that old fellow, and I think I can fix it with him to let you off. But you'd better buy a box of cigars and leave it with me to give to him."

The joke, though, was really on Tarkington, for the friend was so delighted over having avoided the supposed fine that he told everybody he met for miles around. After that, even at midnight, Tarkington was called when influence in police court was needed.

Tarkington is systematic in his work and considers writing a trade, which, like any other trade, must be learned. He says, "We must serve our apprenticeship; but we must work it out alone. We must learn by failure and by repeated effort how the thing should be done." He speaks from experience. He remembers his painstaking effort on The Gentleman from Indiana and his steady practice before venturing a final draft for Monsieur Beaucaire. He says that he doesn't like to write, but that he doesn't feel right when he isn't working.

1 Shrine, vol. II, no. 4, p. 19 (April, 1927).
2 Williams: Our Short Story Writers, p. 327.
3 Shrine, vol. II, no. 4, p. 65 (April, 1927).
In regard to his writing he is over-diligent and is quite intemperate. During his busy winter season he works seven days a week and sometimes sits up all night. He has been known to wear his bathrobe for two or three weeks at a time, rather than distract his mind from his novel by taking time to dress. On account of his eyes, however, in recent years he has been more temperate, and now he follows a more or less regular routine in each of his homes.

In Indianapolis he breakfasts between nine and ten o'clock on coffee, cornflakes, and sometimes prunes, but never eggs or bacon. He writes until one-thirty, and then allows himself ten minutes to eat his luncheon which is served in his room. At three-thirty he leaves his work for the day. Perhaps that seems a short day, but it is two hours longer than the average author writes. If there is no evening engagement or writing to be done, Tarkington reads or plays solitaire, until about one.

In Kennebunkport, when he is on his vacation, he has more leisure time. There he does not plan to write anything except short stories and plays. He feels that his novels require the atmosphere of Indiana.

He breakfasts at nine, works until noon, and then, driven in his car in a roundabout way to the beach, he takes a plunge in the sea. He braves the ocean until October twenty-sixth, later than the average colonist. This is worth noting, for "this is the

1 Shrine, vol. II, no. 4, p. 65 (April, 1927).
only item in his life and works in which he seems to show any pride or vain glory." He returns to the house, and after dressing, goes to his motor boat in which he spends his afternoon. In the evening he goes to the show, because it affords him a mile walk with a place to rest. His bed-time in Maine is twelve-thirty.

Tarkington's workshops are characteristic of his systematic way of working. Everything is placed or arranged for his convenience. In Indianapolis, before he moved into his new home, his study was on the second floor. Near an east window was a tilted drawing board, his desk, and on this were many sheets of legal-size yellow paper and about twenty-five well-sharpened yellow pencils. There was no waste paper to be seen, and Tarkington often wonders "if there is any other author to be found, who keeps his desk in that condition." Beside this desk was a flexible electric desk light, and near was a table which contained many articles, among them food, perhaps a sandwich or a few apples. This is to gratify a queer psychological food craving which resulted from his having had typhoid. While he was ill he wanted the kitchen door open so that he could smell the forbidden food cooking.

His library in Seawood is a beautiful room, large, handsomely decorated, and well lighted. There are rows and rows of

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well-used books, comfortable chairs, and many interesting accessories. His windows are placed high so that he may not be distracted by outside views, but he prefers his retreat in the balcony. "I can't work in that great place down there," he says. "I must work in constricted quarters, and in quiet, too."

Mr. Tarkington is extremely fortunate in having a wife who guards against every interruption. During work hours she will not permit telephone calls, household problems, nor ill-tidings of any nature to reach him. She says that she watches over him almost as one might care for an old Stradivarius.

"All of Tarkington's writing is done by his own hand in pencil. He begins at the top of the page with letters of generous size" and with fairly good spaces between the lines, but near the bottom of the pages, his writing is so cramped and crowded that only patience and experience can decipher what is written.

Tarkington's notes are nothing more than hieroglyphics, intentionally made vague to avoid a premature crystallization of his story. Sometimes, however, in spite of his care, crystallization will set in, and he will be obliged to write a chapter or a scene which he does not use until he nears the close of his novel or play. For his novels he has two or three dozen pages of penciled notes, while for his plays he usually has about a dozen.

1 Ladies' Home Journal, 42:17 (April, 1925).
He writes daily about eight sheets, or perhaps fourteen hundred words. Before he begins a new page, he reads over the work of the previous day and corrects it, and in so doing reestablishes his trend of thought. After he has revised his story as a whole, it is ready for his sister-in-law, Miss Louise Keifer, his official secretary, to type. Very little editing is then necessary. Of himself he says: "I can write very fast. I work as well with my tools as I ever shall. I could write a story fifty times and it would be no better the fiftieth time than the first. I wrote The Turmoil in sixty days, The Magnificent Amherstons in three months, and Alice Adams in five. It takes longer as I get older, you see. But in spite of speed and facility, it is always hard work."

Sometimes he gets discouraged, and in a quiet confessional tone he once said to Fred O. Kelley: "Frequently I feel so discouraged that I'm tempted to quit writing altogether. The scope of the writing art is so tremendously large, and all that I seem to be able to do is just to take one little bit of narrow track through it."

As to amusements and recreation, Kelley says that Parkington's tastes are "as simple as those of a farm boy back in the 80's." His favorite indoor games are dominoes and solitaire, and during the fad he enjoyed mah jong. He makes few attempts at playing golf. He likes boating, evening walks to the post office,

1 Bookman, 56:535 (Dec., 1922).
and car-riding with a chauffeur. He is "absolutely uninterested in the inwards of a car." He enjoys going to the University Club, but unlike many literary people he does not enjoy formal dinners and parties. However, in whatever social group he finds himself, he is always agreeable and entertaining.

III. NOVELS

Booth Tarkington is a writer of novels and short stories, and just where the dividing line comes between them is rather difficult to determine. In fact Tarkington himself is indifferent to classification, indifferent as to whether he has produced a short story or a novel. Judging by length and length alone, the present writer is assigning Cherry to the list of novels and Monsieur Beaucaire to the list of short stories. According to this grouping, then, Tarkington has a dozen novels, all interesting and delightful.

The novels which stand highest among the twelve are The Flirt, The Turmoil, The Magnificent Ambersons, and Alice Adams, the four which have earned for Tarkington the title, "The Historian of Hoosier Manners." With the exception of three, Cherry, The Guest of Gasney, and The Plutocrat, all of Tarkington's novels have Indiana settings. He has become an interpreter of that region in America where he grew up, telling of the progress made from the time of the Mexican War to the time immediately succeeding the World War. The background of his boyhood in the middle-western town is reflected in his stories, and it is his very honest feeling for the charm of such a place that gives strength to his sentiment....and, later, driving force to his

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satire. Even before he completed The Gentleman from Indiana, he returned to Plattville to refresh his memory. Meredith Nicholson, a brother Hoosier, says that Tarkington depicts the semi-urban type that Mr. Riley so often celebrated in verse.

Tarkington's story which dates back to the days preceding the Mexican War in 1846 is The Two Vanrevels, an historical romance not very well known and sometimes questioned as to its accuracy. Simmons says, "It is difficult to realize as one is reading The Two Vanrevels that it is a story of a Western town, a town, too, of the early times when Polk was President and the Mexican War was not yet fought. One does not think of society's being so polished, but one must remember that the part of Indiana where lay the town of Mr. Tarkington's story, though geographically of the West, was practically of another sphere altogether. Even then it was long past the pioneer stage; it was enriched by the trade that had flowed from other lands up the tributaries of the Mississippi; and its people, descendants of the original French settlers with a mingling of later comers from the old state of Virginia, clinging to many of their ancestral traditions and ways." The men were of old-fashioned courtliness, the

1 Holliday: Booth Tarkington, p. 9-10.
2 Bookman, 24:606 (Feb., 1907).
4 Bookman, 16:373-4 (December 1902).
women, of gracious manners, and the daughters, convent bred. It was in the days when political feeling was bitter, and when the male citizens of the town formed a line and pulled the little fire-wagon and hand pumps to the burning buildings.

When the story of The Two Vanrevels opens, Elizabeth, the only daughter of Robert Carewe, a southern gentleman of Rouen [Terre Haute], Indiana, is just returning from a convent in the South. Tired of a secluded life, she is anxious to know young men, and becomes interested in the appearance of a young man who is standing just outside her gate when she arrives home. But this is Vanrevel, whom Carewe despises, and despises to contemptuously that people in Rouen understand that Betty is not to be introduced to him. Carewe has already made serious complaint of the young lawyer's coming on his premises. Since Betty has no means of meeting Vanrevel or his partner, Crailey Gray, she becomes confused and thinks Tom Crailey, and Crailey Tom. Crailey soon learns about the confusion and, by staying away from the social gatherings, is able to continue the deception. Tom knows of Crailey's deceit, but is too honorable to expose the young man, whom he has so many times befriended. Carewe makes anew his threat, and spends his time watching that Vanrevel does not talk with Betty.

When the call comes for volunteers for the Mexican War, Tom, even though much disturbed over the deceit of his friend, and

1 Holliday: Booth Tarkington, p. 81.
not exactly in sympathy with the war, sets about gathering re-
cruits. People rally quickly, but before Vanrevel can get off with
his regiment, a tragedy occurs. The deceitful Crailly, being only
a corporal, puts on Tom's uniform, that of a major, and goes to
meet Betty in the garden, according to the arrangements made by a
note, which through force and bribery Mr. Carewe reads. In the
evening Carewe slips to the Cupola, and when Crailly arrives,
shouts, "Stand away from my daughter, Vanrevel, and take this
like a dog!" He shoots, comes down, sees he has wounded his
gambling friend, Crailly Gray, and goes to the steamboat. In
the meantime through a servant from the Carewe home Tom has
learned of Crailly's danger and has attempted to warn him, but is
too late. When he reaches Crailly, he is sympathetic and does not
disclose Crailly's deceit. "So the story went over the town: how
Crailly called to say good-by to Mrs. Tanberry; how Mr. Carewe
happened to be examining the musket his father had carried in 1812,
when the weapon was accidentally discharged, the ball entering
Crailly's breast; how Mr. Carewe, stricken with remorse and horror
over this frightful misfortune, and suffering too severe anguish
of mind to remain upon the scene of the tragedy which his careless-

1 The Two Vanrevels, p. 286.
Betty however, tells of his deceit, and considers that he has done her a favor in getting himself shot, for her father will never come back. Carewe remains in France, Crailey dies, and Betty waits for Tom to return from the Mexican War.

The next city which Tarkington uses as a setting is the little town of Plottsville, in Carlow County, seventy miles from Terre Haute. In fact the town is so small that descriptive location is "usually accomplished by designating, as, 'Up at Barklocks,' 'Down by Schofields,' or 'Right where Hibbards live.'" It has two brick stores, a railway station, and, being a county seat, a courthouse. There are factions in the city, and everything is relapsing into a state of decay. In The Gentleman from Indiana Tarkington shows how an Indiana, a young man educated in the East, "becomes a pilgrim of light among his people." On account of his study in an eastern college, John Harkless is a new type of Hoosier, who has little kinship with the earlier people of Eggleston. Through The Herald, the weekly paper, which he bought, he uses his journalistic influence to educate the people and to break down factions. He soon incurs the hatred of the White-Caps, a faction of the Six-Cross-Roads, but in spite of repeated threats and occasional shots, he goes around unarmed "splendidly and ridiculously" indifferent to danger. One night

1 The Gentleman from Indiana, p. 6.


3 Bookman, 24:608 (Feb., 1907).
on his return from Briscoe's, where he has been calling on Helen Sherwood, he is captured by the White-Caps, who perhaps intend only whipping, but blows and shots ensue. Before they have entirely subdued him, he finds out by snatching off masks, just who some of the men are. He is thrown in a box car, cast aside as dead. He is, however, taken to the hospital in Rouen, and in his absence his paper prospers under the editorship of Helen Sherwood, signed H. Fitzbee, who is also responsible for his nomination to Congress. Ever since Helen's arrival in Plattville she had tried to make John Harless happy; she had tried to do something for him. He did not understand her interest in him and in Plattville, but he knew he loved Helen and would miss her when she returned to her home. She did not want to go home; instead she wanted a place on the "Herald" that she might support herself. Sad and disappointed that Helen would not say that she loved him on her last night to be in Plattville, Harless left Briscoe's hurriedly, without his companion, Lige Willets, and was thus caught in the ambush. Helen really loved Harless, but she wanted to do something for him out of gratitude for what he had done for her father. While Helen, in another town with her uncle, was "dancing and going about wearing Jewels," her father had lost his money, and John Harless had taken his hand. When Harless returned to "the dear good people" Helen told him that she was the daughter and not the niece of James
Fisbee. Helen felt that she had been too forward, and in her explanation, she said, "I wanted to do something to show you that I could be ashamed of my vile neglect of my father—something to show you his daughter could be grateful."

The general interest in the political situation, in the election of a congressman, shows how thoroughly the small county seat is imbued with politics, and early in The Gentleman from Indiana Tarkington writes: "Politics is the one subject that goes to the vitals of every rural American; and a Hoosier will talk politics after he is dead."

Meredith Nicholson says that Tarkington has followed accurately the social history of the good stock and the bad, illustrating the antipathy existing between the prosperous and intelligent, and the idle and ignorant. He says, too, that Tarkington has properly emphasized the homogeneity of the Middle Western fold; the people live together like a great, kind family. In 1910, Nicholson considered The Gentleman from Indiana one of the most creditable novels yet written of life in the Ohio Valley.

1 The Gentleman from Indiana, p. 500.
2 The Gentleman from Indiana, p. 13.
The Conquest of Canaan, like The Gentleman from Indiana, is a realistic study of manners but in another Indiana town. Canaan is larger than Plattville, much larger, for there are at least four thousand negroes and four or five times that many white people. The board sidewalks have given way to cement, and on account of the daily postman, the post-office has become only an excuse for loafers to get down town. In the winter the sages of the city meet each morning in the National House near the post-office on the Main Street side of the Courthouse square, in sight of the railway station, while in the summer they place themselves in the cane-seated chairs just outside the National House. On the snowy morning just before Christmas 'Gene Bantry returns from college, and through these old men, one of them a colonel from the Mexican War, one learns that "Gene certainly acts the fool, but that Joe Louden, Gene's stepbrother, is the orneriest boy Mr. Arp ever saw in an ornerly worldfull." Mrs. Louden, formerly Mrs. Bantry, favored her own son in sending him to college, but Joe Louden remains in Canaan, "delivering the Daily Tocsin on a secondhand Star bicycle and gambling with niggers and riff-raff!"

On account of his low standing in the community Joe is not invited to the party at Judge Pike's; but on account of his admiration for Mamie, the judge's daughter, he conceals himself behind some palms on the porch that he may watch her dance.

1 The Conquest of Canaan, p. 22-23.
He is detected, but after receiving a blow from a poker which Judge Pike has concealed, he makes his escape to Beaver Beach, a place of inferior entertainment. To avoid further humiliation he decided to leave Canaan—to take his seven dollars and go away. He passes Mamie's house, stops at Tabor's to tell Ariel Tabor, his best friend, good-bye, and passes out of Canaan for seven years. During that time he works through a law school and finally returns to Canaan to practise law. He sets out immediately to "Rescue the Perishing," to clear up animosities, to save people's money for them, and to clear out Beaver Beach. He wins the Fear law suit, foils Judge Pike in his attempt to defraud Ariel Tabor of her money, and through his ability to relieve Canaan of Judge Pike's oppression, wins the favor of the citizens, and becomes Mayor of Canaan, the choice of Canaan's best citizens. And, too, according to the usual ending, he is rewarded with one of Canaan's best girls, Ariel Tabor. The Conquest of Canaan is not so well known as some of Tarkington's other novels and in some ways is inferior, but it contains Tarkington's only description of slums, of low and wicked life. The saloons are open, and Beaver Beach is the inferior section of the city.

In The Conquest of Canaan Tarkington mentions factories, but in The Flirt the factories are throwing off the smoke which pervades Tarkington's next five stories. Capitol City is painted accurately, and through the observations of Valentine
Corliss as he enters the city of his childhood, Tarkington gives full explanation of the many statues which are found throughout his stories. "A few of the oldest houses remained as he remembered them, and there were two or three relics of mansard and cupola days; but the herd of the cast iron deer that once guarded these lawns, standing sentry to all true gentry: Whither were they fled? In his boyhood one specimen betokened a family of position and affluence; two, one on each side of the front walk, spoke of a noble opulence; two and a fountain were overwhelming. He wondered in what obscure thickets that once proud herd now grazed; and then he smiled, as through a leafy opening of shrubbery he caught a glimpse of a last survivor, still loyally alert, the haughty head thrown back in everlasting challenge and one foreleg lifted, standing in a vast and shadowy backyard with a clothesline fastened to its antlers."

Queen Anne architecture too has given way to that incited by a new outbreak of the colonies—the Gothic, the Tudor, and the Tuscan, but the electric light has not yet been installed.

The Flirt is the picture of a domestic circle in which the character of one daughter dominates and destroys the happiness of everyone about her. Cora Madison, the flirt, who has several suitors, becomes interested in Valentine Corliss, a sharper from Italy selling oil stock. Mr. Madison, Cora's father,

1 The Flirt, pp. 5-6.
has no money for such an investment, but in order to have his influence, on account of his experience and his integrity, Corliss insists that Mr. Madison become the secretary of the company in Capitol City. Corliss flatters Cora into thinking that she is a woman of influence—a woman who can be successful in securing money for his adventure. She seeks out her suitors immediately, and Richard Lindley invests his fortune, fifty thousand dollars. Ray Vilas suspects Corliss, but is willing to spend a thousand dollars in order to detect the nature and extent of Corliss' villainy. Through Mr. Pryor, a detective for twenty-eight years, Cora learns that Corliss is a swindler and a married man, without divorce. To evade gossip she marries Wade Trumble, the most stupid and unpromising of her suitors, and runs away, leaving a sick father. Ray Vilas takes the life of the swindler, and then kills himself. Richard Lindley, who lost his fortune, takes a position in a bank and after a short time marries Laura Madison, the older sister, whom he should have appreciated from the first. It was she who kept the Madison home, it was she who was the musician, and it was she who had cared for him, as he had learned from the diary which Hedrick Madison had brought him. Hedrick adds a second interest to the story, and it was he who captured Riley. He is the foil of Tarkington's views, and it is through him that we learn so much concerning the Madison family. He is very, very much like Penrod, the boy which Tarkington was portraying the same year.
As the factories develop in Indiana the cities become dirty and crowded, and demand expansion. The growth of cities then is quite accurately pictured by Tarkington in *The Magnificent Ambersons* and *The Midlander*. *The Magnificent Ambersons*, it will be noticed, covers more time than the ordinary story, from 1873 to 1920, but H. W. Boynton says that at the time Tarkington was producing this story there was a custom of writing stories using generations of families. For this reason then there is in an historical account of Indiana progress some duplication because other stories have covered a part of the same period. Boynton says that *The Magnificent Ambersons* is true except for the central figure, and Robert C. Holliday cites an interesting parallel to Amberson Addition. "There is in the Midland city of Indianapolis (as has been within my memory) an 'addition' identical with this Major Amberson's. It is called Woodruff place. Indeed, it seems to me that there is a critical point in the fact that so much of *The Magnificent Ambersons* is a quite literal transcript of the setting that, to a mind familiar with the locality, the book, for considerable stretches, does not seem a fiction, a creative work at all; but reads rather like an engagingly written history of the city, from 1873 to 1916. In numerous instances, as in the case of Bucktown, the negro quarter, the author has not even cared to

follow the usual practice of rechristening the place, by even some slight variation in syllables of its name."

Through contrasting the three generations of Ambersons it is easy to see the change in customs that has taken place during the latter part of the nineteenth century. Robert C. Holliday calls attention to the following: "What was the fashion in trousers in the early eighties? In beads? In hats? In shoes, cravats, hair-cuts, coat-tails, household furniture, dances, sports, theatrical entertainments, dogs, literature, weddings, in interior decoration, in architecture, servants, songs, and slang?"

He adds: "If the world should lose all interest in novels it would not willingly let die this remarkable sort of American 2 Henley and Farmer's Dictionary of Slang, 1873-1916." Too, during this period should be noticed the passing of the hired man, the team of driving horses, the surrey, the cutter, the street car drawn by a mule, and the rise of the horseless carriage, the automobile.

Major Amberson has "made a fortune" in his day and has purchased "two hundred acres at the end of National Avenue; and through this tract he has built broad streets and cross-streets; paving them with cedar block, and curbing them with stone." At the intersection of National Avenue and Ambersons Boulevard he builds his mansion. Here Isabel Amberson lives until she marries

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1 Bookman, 48:86-87 (Sept., 1918); also Holliday: Broome Street Straws, p. 167.
2 Ibid., 48:88-89.
Wilbur Minafer, when her father gives her a beautiful new house next door. George Minafer, her son, knows nothing but wealth, and at the age of ten is calling playmates riff-raff, and at the funeral of his grandmother he applies the same title to the undertaker. He is a child of circumstance who, instead of being put in a public school, is protected through tutors and private academies, only to become more despicable, trying to manage and control all of his associates. Grown people of the town express desires to live to see the day when that boy will get his "come-upance". Major Amberson's fortune diminishes, and as it decreases the fortunes of other citizens increase. Eugene Morgan, the father of Lucy, George's friend, is making a success with his automobile factory, and others are making money to use in the rebuilding of Amberson "addition". George finally gets his "come-upance" in seeing that the names of his aristocratic ancestors are taken from the street corners, and in finding that the Amberson name does not appear in the book of Biographies of the Five-Hundred Most Prominent Citizens and Families in the History of the City. Then, too, he finds that he must go to work. Here was a good place for the story to end, but Tarkington gives George another "come-upance" by breaking both his legs in an automobile accident. But Lucy and George Morgan both attend him. He finds that life, not money, is the bigger.

While *The Turmoil* precedes *The Magnificent Ambersons*
in publication, it does not precede it so far as tracing the development of Indiana is concerned. In *The Magnificent Ambersons* the industrial problem is introduced, and its effect on the town is seen, but Big Business really comes with *The Turmoil*.

"The Sheridan Building was the biggest skyscraper; the Sheridan Trust Company was the biggest of its kind, and Sheridan himself had been the biggest builder and breaker and truster and buster under the smoke." There seemed to be unrest and the American hearts called for "Bigness," "We must be Bigger! Bigger! Bigger! Get people here! Drive them! Swindle them into coming! Bigness is patriotism and honor! Bigness is love and life and happiness. Bigness is money!" And people came, black, white, and yellow, and the city grew.

Sheridan cares little who is trampled down in Big Business, not even in his own family. Because Bibbs is nervous and unable to work in the Sheridan Automatic Pump Works, he is the "odd one" of the family and is sent to a sanitarium. Jim and Roscoe, older boys, fall in with their father's ways and hold prominent places in the company. But Jim is killed when the roof of a building collapses, and Roscoe, who has domestic troubles, takes to drink. Edith, Sheridan's only daughter, runs away and marries Robert Lamborn, a worthless fellow. The cares, within

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1 *The Turmoil*, p. 3.
his family, do not turn Sheridan from his idea of Big Business. Alone, he makes appeal to Bibbs, and with consideration Bibbs is able to work with his father. Mary Vertrees, whose family standing had been unfortunately affected by Sheridan's rise of Big Business, had courted Jim Sheridan for his money, but she really loves Bibbs, and Bibbs loves her.

At the close of the story Bibbs is seemingly happy, and yet the story is tragic; to serve the god of big business and money, Bibbs is laboring in the Pump Works when he really wants to be working at something else—he at least wants to be poetic.

The Turmoil, both in England and America, is considered Tarkington's best work. William Lyon Phelps says, "The Turmoil is the most ambitious and on the whole the best of Mr. Tarkington's novels; without too much didacticism, it is an unsparing and honest diagnosis of the great American disease," which is "The American love of bigness, with its concomitant evils of smoke, dirt, noise, especially noise."

R. Ellis Roberts, a British critic, says The Turmoil is Tarkington's best novel, and that it nearly achieves greatness. He, however, attacks the realism in the treatment of Bibbs by maintaining that in England or in France it would not be possible for a man to behave with the idiocy and the brutality which

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Sheridan exhibits toward his son.

The Midlander is a sequel to The Magnificent Ambersons and The Turmoil, another story of industrial change. Eugene Morgan, who was just beginning to make automobiles in The Magnificent Ambersons, when automobiles were a joke, is making a great success with his "Morgan Car." The great Sheridan of The Trust Company and the Pump Works is still making money. The Vertrees family has been crowded out of its mansion, and on the site where once stood the house appears a "tremendous square box of concrete fronted with glass—the 'sales building' of the 'Ornaby Four, the Car of Excellent Service.'"

Dan Oliphant, a young man, in face of much opposition from grandmother, parents, and brother invests heavily in a new addition, Ornaby addition. He builds new houses, new factories, new tenements for his workmen, and paves the streets, and is instrumental in having the trolley extended. In hope of joining the East and the West Dan marries an Eastern girl, Lena McMillan, but Grandma Savage, proud of her stock, is afraid of Eastern blood. Lena is just as much afraid of the Western stock, but because she has been a little indiscreet in her actions and is apt to be talked about, she decides, on advice of her brother, to marry Dan. She goes West under protest. Dan is good to her, but

1 Living Age, 300:545 (March 1, 1919).
2 The Midlander, pp. 404-406.
he became so engrossed in making his city bigger that he is negligent of his time at home. Lena, with Henry, their son, leaves for New York just at the time Dan has to sign over Ornaby Four to the men from whom he has borrowed money, and also Ornaby Addition. Harlan Oliphant, a brother who has begun to understand Dan, comes to his assistance, but Dan dies. He has given his life in making a better and bigger town.

The satire on "Big Business" comes to a climax when workmen come to tear down the Oliphant home, and Harlan has to put forth such a great effort to persuade the men to let Dan have a quiet place to die. At that they leave a great hole in the roof when they go. "My Heavens!" exclaimed Harlan, "when such things happen how's anybody ever to see any meaning in life?"

The present writer has just learned from Tarkington himself that he has rewritten three novels in which the Ambersons, the Sheridans and the Oliphants first appeared: The Turmoil, The Magnificent Ambersons, and The Midlanders, to form a consecutive whole. He is calling the complete novel Growth. It is "the story of a city's growth traced in the lives of the three generations of one family from the time of mere ruts on the prairie to beautifully paved streets running up to number 150, and multicolored filling stations on every third corner."

1 The Midlander, p. 475-7.
2 Dickinson: Booth Tarkington, p. 37.
Preceding *The Midlander* in publication and in setting is *Alice Adams*, "the most deep-thoughted of Mr. Tarkington's books," a penetrating vision of social adjustment during the rise of "Big Business" and industrialism. *Alice Adams*, as *Gentle Julia* to be next discussed, is not so typically Indianan as some of the other stories, no Indiana town being mentioned, but its background is so closely related to that of Tarkington's other stories that it is more or less localized, and one thinks of it as being Indianan rather than American.

The interest in *Alice Adams* does not lie in industrial development, but in a family which is struggling to maintain social standing—to maintain it at any rate until Alice, the daughter, may marry well. Other families in the community have prospered; boys and girls with whom Alice and her brother used to play have gone to college, belong to country clubs, give entertainments, and meet cultivated and attractive friends, but the Adamses on their income of previous years have not been able to keep pace with the increasing demands. No one realizes the social decline more than Mrs. Adams, who continually nags at her sick husband to give up his position with J. A. Lamb and go into business for himself. All the while Mrs. Adams is doing what she can to keep up appearances. She makes over Alice's dress that

she may go to the dance, she sees that Walter, Alice's brother, escorts her, and later she entertains Mr. Russell sumptuously on one hot summer evening, hoping that he may become more interested in Alice.

When Mr. Adams is able to be at work again he does not go back to J. A. Lamb's, but takes the recipe for liquid glue which he and Mr. Campbell formulated for Mr. Lamb and establishes a liquid glue factory. Mr. Lamb feels the formula belongs to him but instead of reprimanding Mr. Adams, sets up a glue factory, much larger than Mr. Adams', and then offers to buy Mr. Adams out. Much to the displeasure of Mrs. Adams, Adams sells the factory and goes to work again for Mr. Lamb. Mr. Adams too pays Mr. Lamb a sum of money which Walter had taken before he ran away, and the Adamses take their position in middle class life, still fighting—so characteristic of man in the face of adversity. Mrs. Adams rearranges her household and begins taking roomers and boarders, and Alice ascends the dark stairs to Frincke's Business College, a place she has formerly thought fit only for "turning pretty girls into old maids."

Although Alice has not called the business college people working people riffraff as had George Minafer, she has thought of them as belonging to a different caste. But she, like George, finds

2 Alice Adams, pp. 191, 434.
that family pride must give place to wholesome labor. Like in
The Magnificent Ambersons, too, there is much of passing interest.
Tarkington discusses the style in dress and tells how Mr. Lamb
carries over the styles of the seventies into the next century.
The noise and smoke of the city are still on the increase. Mr.
Adams, the sick man, "is conscious of the city as of some single
great creature resting fitfully in the dark outside his windows.
It lies all round about, in the damp cover of its night cloud of
smoke, and tries to keep quiet for a few hours after midnight,
but is too powerful a growing thing ever to lie altogether still."
The trolley-lines, the factories, the milk-wagons, and passing
workmen all add to the confusion. And the automobile which is a
new invention in The Magnificent Ambersons has reached the stage
of "a second-hand tin Lizzie" in Alice Adams. There is much
mingling of mirth and sadness in Alice Adams, and the final out-
come is a tragedy without moods.

Gentle Julia is so different from the pulsating indus-
trial stories that it seems doubly light and humorous, but it
typifies another phase of American life—pleasure, humor, and
freedom from care. Gentle Julia is a return to the analysis of
youth, a Penrod and Willie Baxter story.

Florence Atwater is/mischievous Penrod or a Jane Baxter
grown older, and acting with her is her cousin, Herbert Atwater,

1 Alice Adams, p. 5.
much like Medrick in The Flirt, but not so intellectual. Gentle
Julia is the maiden aunt showered with gifts from her many suitors.
Herbert and Florence lend entertainment, especially after Herbert
receives the printing press from his Uncle Joseph. Herbert and
Henry Rooter decide to edit a paper, and the first edition, save
for a little trouble with Florence, is quite successful, but the
second edition, under the editorship of Florence, obtained through
blackmail, gets the editors into difficulty. In her local news,
Florence announces her Aunt Julia's engagement to Mr. Crum, "a
widower though he has been divorced with a great many children." ¹
When Noble Dill, Julia's chief suitor in the home city, reads
this announcement, he loses his reason, but regains it when Julia
returns on the evening train and says she is not engaged.
Florence and Herbert are punished but Florence's greatest regret
is that she will not get to be "Flower Girl," for Aunt Julia
said that she was not engaged and would promise never to "be en-
gaged to anybody at all." ² At the close of the story there is
a little Tarkington satire in that Julia's only motive for coming
home so unexpectedly was that she could not depend on the
Atwater family keeping the deadliest kind of secret for more than
ten or twelve days, and too in Julia's saying that she broke
her engagement immediately after meeting Mr. Crum's mother.

¹ Gentle Julia, p. 323.
Tarkington's novels, then, though not necessarily historical, have backgrounds which describe Indiana from 1846 to 1923, from the Mexican War to the years succeeding the World War. Tom in The Two Van revels was a major in the Mexican War, and Arthur Russel in Alice Adams was a major in the World War. In The Midlander "The war halted the wrecking of National Avenue, but not for long. Until the soldiers came home and the country could begin to get back into its great stride again, groups of the old, thick-walled, big-roomed houses were permitted to survive-----But when the great heydays came, following the collapse of the war 'expansion,' and the country took up its dropped trades again-----it set forth in a new stride gigantic beyond all its striding aforesome, and National Avenue perished. From first to last there is the story of the colonization of Indiana, the stabilization of city governments, the growth and expansion of cities, industrial and social development, and above all a breaking down of class distinction with a settling to the home-life depicted in Gentle Julia.

In the early days of his authorship Mr. Tarkington made a start something like Clyde Fitch—with characters and backgrounds remote from the region in which he lived. But in his novels Tarkington has not, considering his travel and his admiration for Paris and Capri, included much of the cosmopolitan, as just

three of them have anything other than Indiana settings.

Cherry. Tarkington’s earliest story, though not published first, belongs to New Jersey and conveys the spirit of colonial life before the Revolutionary War when there was much danger of highway robbery. William Fentress, a rival to Judgeberry, both Princeton students, plans an attack on the carriage in which Sylvia Gray and her father are riding in order that he may rescue her and prove himself a hero. At the time of Cherry’s appearance in the magazine it was much more appreciatively reviewed by English papers than American. Seemingly the Americans took it too seriously to get the irony.

The Guests of Quesnay. Tarkington’s first attempt at a psychological novel, has a Parisian background, fully described as to landscape and people, which adds to the weak mystery of the story. Briefly Larrabee Harman, or Oliver Saffren as he was called after his loss of mind resultant from an automobile accident, was brought to Paris by Keredec, a professor, who was making every effort to assist Harman in recalling helpful experiences from his past life. Harman has been married, but on account of his neglect and his attentions to a Spanish dancer, Mrs. Harman gets a divorce and goes away. After the accident Keredec feels that Harman again needs the love of Mrs. Harman, pronounced Madame d’Armand by the French Amélie, who was visiting at the Château de Quesnay. Finally Mr. and Mrs. Harman meet.

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1 Holliday: Booth Tarkington, pp. 97-98.
the old love returns, and they escape from Paris. "Professor Keredec is an idealist believing in the immutable goodness of man's spirit; and his metaphysics is of the order which does not bother about what has gone by and what is to come."\(^1\) Harman has an opportunity to start over again. Although the story is psychologically weak it is quite entertaining.

The Plutocrat, Tarkington's latest novel, has a changing background, extending from America to Africa and through Algiers. The sophisticated Mr. Ogle, the playwright, has elevated himself to such a degree that his superiority causes him to look with so much disapproval on Mr. Tinker that there is nothing in common between them, other than that they are both from America. Ogle is ashamed to have his foreign friends feel that the Tinkers are typical Americans, and yet he who feels that he is a typical American passes almost unnoticed. But then it is that the satirical echo of "Big Business" is heard abroad. Tinker is a good example of "The Glorification of the American Business Man."\(^2\) He has money with which to play poker and money to pass out promiscuously. "Ogle receives a little of George Minafer's "Come upance." Anywhere poor Ogle goes, he runs into the Tinkers, only to be humiliated again. Even Madame Aurélie Komoro cares more for Tinker than she does for Ogle, for he is cosmopolitan.

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1 Holliday: Booth Tarkington, p. 143.

2 Kansas City Star, January 29, 1927.
and has great power, money. Mr. Ogle becomes stranded in Tunis, and is saved only by the sale of The Pastoral Scene, his latest play, to the movies which he has despised. He finally becomes engaged to Olivia Tinker, much to the displeasure of her father, but a reconciliation follows.

Besides the theme and the vivid characterizations there are other interests in The Plutocrat. The descriptions for sight-seeing are clear and distinct, and the use of music, both vocal and instrumental, and musical terms is entertaining. In fact, The Plutocrat contains a greater number of references to music than does any other of Tarkington's books. Also there are many lines in this story which might be entered in a book of proverbs. Of course many of them are satirical, but away from their context they lose some of their bitterness. In many of the epigrams are heard echoes from The Tam-o'-Shanter in Indiana: "Money has always been power; and people who don't know that understand neither power nor money." ¹

¹ The Plutocrat, p. 433.
While Tarkington is known chiefly as a novelist, he has written notable short stories. Through his understanding of human nature he has endeared himself to the reading public. His stories may be roughly divided into four general classes—first, those located in foreign countries; second, those dealing with American politics; third, stories of American youth; and fourth, stories in which the chief interest is the modern American woman. True, there are some satirical stories, but these are rather insignificant when compared with the other groups. Many of Tarkington's stories are to be found only in magazines, but for the most part they have been collected and published in book form. At present he has ten volumes of stories.

There is no special reason for discussing the classes in the given order except that a chronological development, even without comment, shows that Tarkington gradually changes from romanticism to realism and that he covers one theme well before he passes on to another.

Through his four stories of foreign setting Tarkington, according to Robert O. Holliday, has developed a new and distinct literary form—that of the trifle—"a short piece, light as air, and irradiant with color." Monseur Bezucapre, then, is the first trifle, having blitheness of mood, symmetry of form, iridescent
color of words, swiftness of action, and tingling vitality from start to finish. 1 Monsieur Beaumira, too, came in with the romantic revival of Stevenson's day, and much of its charm is suggestive of Stevenson himself.

The Beautiful Lady, another trifle, is a summer comedy in Paris with notes of merriment and pathos. The crowd views with joy the man with the painted head, advertising the Theatre Folio-Rouge, but the Beautiful Lady views him with sympathy. Tarkington has here made a happy portrait of a gentleman, a man of gentle birth and feeling reduced to poverty—Ansolini. 2 Lambert R. Poor, Junior, is an excellent entertainer but becomes too acquiescent to the suggestions of Ansolini, his tutor, between their leaving France and their arrival in Italy.

His Own People and Americans Abroad carry with them the same satirical tone that is found in The Flutocrat. The American is without his environment. These tales, too, are romantic, excelling in figurative language and descriptive quality, the likening of the "glass-domed palm-room of the Grand Continental Hotel Magnifique in Rome" 3 to an aquarium is unique, and the description of the Bay of Naples 4 is both picturesque and

1 Holliday: Booth Tarkington, pp. 75, 119.
2 Holliday: Booth Tarkington, p. 121.
3 His Own People, p. 165.
4 "Americans Abroad," Everybody's, 17:168 (August, 1907).
Of his political stories Tarkington has but one collection, *In the Arena*. It is made up of six stories, each based more or less on fact. He says he found the idea of the smallpox epidemic used in *The Alien* "revolving in the mind of a perfectly live politician." In tone the stories are more or less didactic, for they show graft in order that more good men may see that they are needed in politics. Tarkington depicts the men who go into politics for a living, and idealizes the honest man, not strikingly intelligent, but capable of doing right. As far as characterization and plot are concerned, *Factor* is the best, but *The Need of Money* is perhaps more realistic.

The next group of stories which Tarkington wrote concerns youth, and it is with skill that he has pictured children of various ages. He not only describes their locks, dress, and general appearance, but he describes their inner feelings and thoughts as well. Although *Ferrad and Sam* appeared later than *Ferrad*, there is so much similarity in the books that they may easily be discussed together. The same characters to a certain extent are seen throughout. The episodes are all realistic; who

1 Holliday: *Booth Tarkington*, pp. 103-4.
2 Bookman, 65:15 (March, 1927).
3 Williams: *Our Short Story Writers*, p. 330.
can forget the fight with Rue. Collins, the rescue of the cat, and above all the tar fight? The dog—the boy's faithful companion—, childish prattle, the circus, the characteristic boyish choice of girls, are all there to add interest to the story.

When Penrod grows older, his name is changed to Willie Baxter, but he becomes no less interesting. Penrod would probably have carried the washboiler on his head and would probably have been just as cynical toward a little sister. Some may object to calling Seventeen and Ramsey Milholland short stories, but they are so closely allied to the Penrod series that the present writer prefers to discuss them as short stories. Originally Seventeen and Ramsey Milholland, as well as Penrod and Penrod and Sam, appeared serially, and Blanche Colton Williams laments the fact that the stories, disguised as they are now, are losing their individuality. Regardless of its classification, Tarkington has given in Seventeen a skilful analysis of adolescent love. Some seventeen-year-old people admit that it is true to life, but for the most part Seventeen is appreciated more by grown-ups. An older person receives some pleasure from reflecting upon his own thoughts and actions at seventeen. Van Doren alone is cynical concerning Tarkington's stories of youth. He says, "The author of Penrod, Penrod and Sam, and Seventeen passes for an expert in youth; rarely has so persistent a reputation been so insecurely founded. What all these books primarily recall is the winks that adults

1 Williams: Our Short Story Writers, p. 334-5.
exchange over the heads of children who are minding their own business as the adults are not; the winks moreover of adults who have forgotten the inner concerns of adolescence and now observe only its surface awkwardness. Real adolescence, like any other age of man, has its own passions, its own poetry, its own tragedies and felicities; the adolescence of Mr. Tarkington's tales is almost nothing but farce - staged for outsiders. Not one of the characters is an individual; they are all little monsters."

Miss Pratt is too childish, and Willie Baxter idealizes her too much, but Jane, Willie's little sister, is well characterized. To Willie, six years her senior, Jane is a nuisance — always in the wrong place, always hearing the wrong thing, and always eating bread and butter with apple sauce and powdered sugar.

Another group of stories about American youth centers around Lucius Brutus Allen — The Spring Concert, Night in Marlowe, and Hand and Bill. The first two are in the collection, The Fascinating Stranger, but Hand and Bill as yet has not been reprinted. Lucius Brutus Allen is an old bachelor who wishes to be kind and generous toward Mrs. Ricketts, a sweetheart of his youth, but now a widow with two children. In order to woo her

1 Nation, 112:233 (Feb., 1921).
2 Williams: Our Short Story Writers, p. 334.
again he must endure Maud and Bill, who with their many and unusual pranks must be closely akin to Penrod.

Bassley's Christmas Party, an earlier story, and Ramsey Milholland, a later story, both dealing with children, differ in themselves and from the other stories just discussed. Bassley's Christmas Party, a Tiny Tim sort of tale, is a make believe gathering for the entertainment of a little invalid. It was first printed under the title of Bassley and the Krouchboys, but was later expanded into the present story. Ramsey Milholland is a sketch telling of Ramsey's school days and interest, as he grows older, in his country. In a small way it becomes a war story which tells of Ramsey's and Dora's patriotism during the World War.

Most of Tarkington's stories from 1924 to 1926 have to do with women, their ideas and manners. Several of these after running serially were collected and published under the title of Woman. They are, in the estimation of the present writer, Tarkington's most realistic work. His women act and talk as women do in real life; they manage their homes, they belong to clubs, they gossip, and they advise their children. In their advice to their children they uphold the right ideals, but often make mistakes in the example which they present. For instance, Mrs. Dodge wants Lily, her daughter, to be the steady, philosophical, obedient comfortable daughter Ada Corey is, but the timid and retiring Ada

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1 Woman, p. 244.
offers a surprise by eloping. Tarkington, in his stories, is
fond of showing the relation of child to parent, and here, as
elsewhere, moralizes concerning "forbidden lovers." "A toy
withheld becomes the universe to a child, and a lover withheld
is life and death; but toys and lovers freely given are another
matter." Some of the other stories which were not included
are By Heart, almost entirely absorbed by other stories which
were included, Stella Cressier, Frances, and Sida Uvola.

As has been said before, Tarkington has a few satir-
ical stories, two concerning women and one rather long one
concerning the theatre. The Raffle Rouser and The Veiled Fem-
inists of Atlantis are both social satires. The first concerns
woman's voting and the latter, woman's rising power and education.
The Veiled Feminists of Atlantis portrays characteristics of both
men and women—women are fickle,—men are jealous and want power
for themselves. Figuratively, woman wants to remove the veil—
wants to be independent, but after her triumph, she is willing to
put the veil back on — to neglect her civic duties. The long
satire, Harlequin and Columbine, published some ten years ago,
has to do with the theatre and especially the actors who, by their
actions, alter, almost beyond the distracted author's recognition,
the plays in which they take part.

1 Women, p. 222.
Tarkington's latest stories, Constance and Constancy\(^1\) and \(^2\) Claire Ambler, have appeared in The Ladies' Home Journal within the last six months. Both are concerned with women, but the stories are quite different. Constance is a war widow, making her life miserable by a too strenuous devotion to the memories of her dead husband. Claire Ambler is a flapper, somewhat fickle, a friend of several men, but in love with none, who feels that the greatest difficulty with people today is that they do not think. Although these stories are not in a new field, they show that Tarkington is still alert, watching for the commonplace things which happen around him.

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2. Ibid, 45:3 (September, 1927).
Booth Tarkington has been interested in the drama and the theatre from his childhood, and it will be remembered that he began producing plays early, in his father's barn, in Princeton, and in a club in Indianapolis. After 1900 he became much interested in playwriting, and has since written twenty or twenty-five successful dramas, usually at the request of some manager. Because writing for managers, he is often required to change and revise his plays, much to his displeasure. He rewrote Foldskin and changed the ending entirely. At the request of G. C. Tyler he rewrote The Country Cousin, changing its title from The Ohio Lady. In the presentations of his plays Booth Tarkington has no patience with the actor or actress who over-plays his part. He wants the actor to be enthusiastic about the part, but prefers the less experienced rather than the "stars." Many times, he feels the sympathy is with the "star" rather than with the character the actor is presenting. Most of his dramas are comedies, inlaid with social satire and moral teachings, and enlivened with clever lines.

On account of their brevity not many of Tarkington's dramas have been published in book form, and many of them are not even to be found in magazines. Enough have been found, however, to make a three-fold classification. There are dramatizations of Tarkington's novels, plays proper, and scenarios. But only three of Tarkington's works have been dramatized. He was quite successful in an almost immediate dramatization of Monsieur Beaucaire,

1 "When the King and Queen of Portugal were the guests of King Edward the Seventh and Queen Alexandra in England last year [1904], the play presented at Windsor Castle for the entertainment of their Majesties of the Peninsula happened to be the dramatization of Mr. Tarkington's Monspier Beaucaire. One feature of this presentation will sound amusing to Americans. Innocent as the play seems, it gave those officials who were responsible for the pleasure of the royal guests considerable anxiety. In choosing a hero for his story, Mr. Tarkington not only selected a member of the Royal Family, but a personage who happened to be an ancestor of the Queen of Portugal. This might be interpreted as lèse majesté of the worst sort. So it was thought best to soften the offence by printing in French for the royal visitors an elaborate apology, laying the blame on American audacity and intimating that the author, being an American, could not possibly realize the enormity of his presumption. This apology is said to have effectually soothed the wounded sensibilities of the King and Queen." Bookman, 21:6 (March, 1905.)
and he was no less successful in a dramatization of Penrod. The hard work of producing Seventeen in play form, however, was taken over by Stuart Walker, and after its successful performance on the stage Tarkington sent Mr. Walker a telegram, giving him full credit for the success: "I am in no discernible measure responsible for either the production or its friendly reception." 1

Tarkington's longer plays are for the most part sociological studies. Some are on family life, some are on the foreign element in our land, some on capital and labor, and some are on personal adjustments.

Intimate Strangers has in it the new and the old type of girl, and needless to say the old type misunderstands the new. Tarkington, however, understands both types, and is able to have the girls live together, entertaining one another with their peculiarities. Here is another Florence similar to the one in Gentle Julia, but this one has more worries, since she has to live with old maids, called "left-overs" by Tarkington. Tarkington, too, here gives several vivid pictures of the spoiled man. Johnnie is a weak character—merely a puppet.

Tweedles, also called a comedy of Family Pride and Prejudice, unsuccessfully played in Chicago under title of Bristol Class, is another story of snobbishness or a story of station in

1 Booker, 46: 258-259 (Oct., 1917).
life, such as was presented in Monsieur Beaucaire. The setting is in New England. The Tweedles hold themselves higher than the Castlebury's until, the drunken Philomen Tweedle discloses some family history about swindlers and traitors. A level is reached then quite suddenly, and the Tweedles at once are glad to suggest that they are "human bein's, like the rest o' mankind."

When the play was given in New York, the following comments appeared in the Papers: "A bright, new comedy which was not popular in Chicago," sufficiently diverting to keep the audience in a fairly satisfactory state of merriment," and "a filmy love story, as attenuated as it is iridescent, and admirably acted." 1

Mister Antonio and Foldekin are both concerned with the foreigner. Mister Antonio, the little hurdy-gurdy man, with all his wit, is contrasted with Mr. Jorny, the Mayor of Avalonia. Everything that is done and said points to the unfolding of the hypocritical Mayor's life in New York. The minister's sermon is so appropriate: "A certain man went down to Jericho." No one could get ahead of Tony. His instrument was a noisy thing, but he knew how to use it, for just as he was about to be arrested for Sunday disturbance, he began playing Onward Chrislain Scho-

ho-holvers. The unlettered Italian straightens up the town.

Foldekin, perhaps, is the rarest bit of satirical comedy, for it is full of surprise in portraying the Russians and their

attempt to find the soul of America. As in all of Tarkington's plays, there are many clever and humorous turns which add surprise. The plays on "capital" and on the constitution are unusual. The satire is directed against Bolshevism.

Although capital plays some part in Boldskin, it does not play the part that it does in The Gibson Upright. The latter contains a more serious strain, and although a comedy, lacks the characteristic Tarkington humor. In the satire on modern industrial conditions, Tarkington tries out a Utopian plan which cannot but fail. The people in the factory were not ready for group control.

The Man from Home is closely akin to some of the short stories of foreign settings, carrying the theme of Americans Abroad and one of the chief characters of His Own People. The Man from Home is also akin to Monsieur Beaucaire in that the heroine decides on a "man from home." From a dramatic point of view, this play was almost a failure, for the critics of New York tried to take it in a literal way as a harsh criticism on European culture.

On account of the failure of New York critics to receive The Man from Home, Tarkington considered, for a while, publishing his plays under a pen-name. He felt, since they had also been unduly critical of The Country Cousin and Mister.

Antonie, that they might be somewhat biased. 1 He published
Clarence, however, under his own name, and it became quite pop-
ular. Clarence, an ex-soldier, back from the war, has to adjust
himself. As he does so, it is necessary for him to adjust the
Wheeler home. Outside of the drollery of Clarence himself, the
son, Bobby, adds humor to the play.

Tarkington has not written many short plays, but has
some half-dozen which are light and cheery. The first one, The
Beauty and the Jacobin, called An Interlude of The French Rev-
aslen, appeared in 1911, but he wrote no more one-act plays until 1922.
He mentions The Beauty and the Jacobin as the "turning point" in
his writing — the place where he leaves "the surface and works
from the inside of his characters out." 2 The plot springs
directly from the characters themselves. To cause Eloise
d'Anville to care more for Louis Valny-Cherault, Valsin, the agent
of the National Committee of Public Safety pretends to have called
to arrest Louis as an emigrant. Eloise recognizes Valsin, and
Valsin through allowing for a passport for an extra woman allows
Louis to escape from France disguised as a lady. For good
comedy, even though new entanglements develop, it takes Valsin
too long to make his plans. While it is a farce and altogether
humorous, the street descriptions remind one of those vivid
pictures he gathered when reading The Tale of Two Cities. In spite

2 Cohen: One-Act Plays, p. 4.
of the humor one cannot forget the guillotine ever in readiness.

In the later one-act plays, there is much similarity.

In the first place there is the typical Tarkington youth, a clear definite person, who cajoles his father into allowing him to go to camp, or has a girl to whom he wishes to talk. In all these plays fathers and mothers, and sometimes sisters, are a nuisance. These little plays are worth reading, and some of them can easily be staged.

Tarkington is interested, too, in scenario writing.

"Mr. Tarkington’s first work directly for the screen was in writing a series of Edgar Comedies for the Goldwyn Company which deal with boy life in two-reel episodes." He began this work through the influence of his cousin, Tarkington Baker, but Goldwyn bought Baker’s interest in the contract. Tarkington’s interest in moving pictures is not outstanding, but he recognizes the fact that pictures are the possible means of a new art. He says, however, that those who are working with the pictures today are the pre-primitives — that the art will develop mechanically, and that there will be a great improvement in the quality of the thought expressed. The Educational Film Magazine says that there are twelve screen comedies built around the new Tarkington boy, named Edgar Pomeroy; and that they show that parents accept child-

2 Ibid, July 18, 1920, VI, 2:2.
hood's pranks at face value. Through books and films Tarkington is doing much to awaken greater friendship between parents and children.

While Tarkington's dramas are interesting and entertaining, they are not being staged now in the theatres in New York. They were, however, used a great deal when they were first written. On account of the simplicity of the stage settings, Tarkington's plays can be produced easily by amateurs and are used often in the Middle-west. Clarence and Seventeen are the most frequently enjoyed.

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1 Educational Film, Sept., 1920, pp. 13-15.
VI. ESSAYS

Tarkington is primarily a novelist, but he has written short stories, even dramas, and some few essays. For the most part in his essays he is an idealist, and without being didactic, influences the reader to consider his philosophies. His one and only book of essays, Looking Forward and Others, treats of such subjects as immortality, happiness, abstinence, and age. Other essays of similar nature, found now only in magazines, are The Miracle, The Christmas That Means Most, and Marriage. In several of the preceding essays he quotes Mark Twain or Howells. In fact he uses Twain's definition for happiness after having heard Howells use it at a party. "Happiness is merely a person's unconsciousness of troubles that he really has."

It is only in the last ten years that Tarkington has really become interested in essay writing. Before the World War, besides some critical views, he had written but two essays, both descriptive, entitled The Middle West and The Vatican. The former is a discussion of regional differences in America, and the latter an account of a Chicagoan's visit abroad.

1 Ladies' Home Journal, 39:12 (December, 1922).
During the war and after he discussed world problems, some satirically, but others in a calm, matter-of-fact, and sensible manner. Using the Kaiser and Economic Adjustments are humorous comments on economy. Using the Kaiser contains didactical comparisons, somewhat unusual, and the characterization of the Kaiser is perhaps unexcelled. Middle Western Anarchy and American, German American, and German are pleas for loyalty and patriotism. In Middle Western Anarchy, Tarkington contrasts the indifference of some of the states to Cuba's answer when the President called for volunteers. American, German American, and German is full of sympathy for all nations. Tarkington's greatest sympathy is shown, however, in the letter he writes during the war to a thirteen-year-old French girl. With simple childlike language, he tells of American history, of American progress in education and democracy, of America's friendship with France, and of America's attitude toward Germany.

In his essays, as in his stories and novels, Tarkington has his boys and dogs. His two essays, My Boy Friends and What I have Learned from Boys, are especially helpful in making an analytical study of the boys in Tarkington's works. He defends the theory that a child repeats the history of his race during his development, and sympathizes with the youth in his

1 St. Nicholas, 48:209-16 (January, 1919).
seeming waywardness. He does not deal with generalizations but with examples. Some of his observations are from his own experience, while others are from the experiences of relatives and friends; but all are characteristic of the actions of Penrod and Sam. In these essays he attempts to do what he is doing in his scenario writing - to create a better understanding between parents and children, especially parents and boys.

Teach Me, My Dog is an obituary of Tarkington's dogs, complete except that it was written a little too early to lament the death of Wop. This article, without doubt, shows Tarkington's understanding of his canine friends. Fox Terrier or Something, written earlier, is unusually humorous and tells how Tarkington's nephew substituted first a tom-cat and then a mangy dog for Gamin, Tarkington's dog which had been killed by an automobile.

In the field of criticism Tarkington has written but few articles. Early he wrote concerning the Temptations of a Young Author, and a quite pointed article on Views of the Stage and Players; quite recently, in Old Sex and New Footlights, he attacks the sex play, and prophesies the return of Puritan control of the theatre. He has written a pleasing little criticism on William Dean Howells, saying that he does not want Howells, his personal

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1 Cosmopolitan, 39: 665-6 (Oct., 1905).
friend, classified by the whims of the critics. In appreciation he writes: "We know what he has been to us, what he did for us, what his strong and gentle teaching saved us from doing; and in time we may be able to make it generally understood how he led the way out of a wilderness of raw and fantastic shapes where many of us dallied, making childish figures in imitation of the foolish things we found there. He was a critic, himself, indeed; not a pompous one, but one who knew how to make things and showed how to make them."¹

Although Tarkington has not produced many essays, those which he has written have been inspirational and entertaining. It is to be hoped that he at some time will publish another volume as helpful as Looking Forward and Others.

¹ Harper's, 141:346 (August, 1920).
VII. ARTISTIC METHODS AND STYLE, CHIEFLY IN THE NOVELS

A study of Tarkington and his works would not be complete without a closer observation of his artistic methods and style--his craftsmanship. For a long time Tarkington refused to be classed as a romanticist or a realist, and maintained that the only thing worth considering is how a book is written, or how life is seen. But later he analyzed his literary self and admitted that he began his writing as a romanticist, producing for example Monsieur Beaucaire, The Gentleman from Indiana, and The Two Vanrevels. After he returned from abroad and was settled again in Indianapolis in 1911, he began a period of more realistic writing. This began with a romantic satirical play called Beauty and the Jacobin, in which, for the first time, Tarkington analyzed his characters from inside out. His first realistic novel was The Flirt, which he speaks of as "realistic with a romantic error in it." He still thought he had to work out a lot of story. Here, however, he refrained from recording merely men's actions; but became "a defender and champion of the West." Since the writing of The Flirt, Tarkington thinks his work has tended to become

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3 Bookman, 65:16 (March, 1927).
more and more realistic, but to have it more realistic he has not had to mention "spittoons". In his article on Old Sex and New Footlights he writes: "Realism in any art means only lifelikeness, and since lifeliness to life cannot be complete in art—for even the best waxworks have no digestions—realism in a play or novel can mean no more than that an apparently natural effect is presented...."2

Critics feel, too, that Tarkington is tending more toward realism. "In his later novels," says Joseph Collins, "there is abundant evidence that Tarkington is determined to cast off every vestige of romanticism. Yet he never quite succeeds. He still allows his dreams to come true, though never with such violence or success as in his early books."3

The English critic, R. Ellis Roberts, calls Tarkington a sentimentalist, and says that like all sentimentals, he has a strong vein of cynicism.4 The Turmoil and The Plutocrat are good examples of his sentimentality, cynicism, and also satire. He is sorry for Bibbs, and with feeling he sees that the city which years ago has been a pleasant place to live is in the turmoil only a place of dirt, smoke, and rotten politics. Our fathers, he felt, suffered and toiled, and built and bled to make this city which is deteriorating as far as appearance is concerned. He exposes Sheridan's lack of understanding

2 Saturday Evening Post, 198:3-4 (Feb. 13, 1926)
3 Bookman, 65:12 (March, 1927)
4 Living Age, vol. 13, p. 545 (March 1, 1919).
of human nature. In fact, Tarkington feels such a contempt for the characters of The Turmoil that he doesn't see how "anybody can stand them." In The Plutocrat he satirizes the American business man. His satire reaches the literary, as well as the business and social world, and tags him with the name of satirical critic.

Tarkington is not an inventor of plots, nor does he pretend to be. As has been said before, he works against premature crystallization and strives to let the story be an outgrowth of character. "I can only work from the inside out," he says, "and in that kind of writing about the only thing you can choose is your setting, the place where you are going to lay your story. You follow the lead of your characters. They drag you on." He thinks of his characters in relation to one another, and they make his stories. Of The Turmoil, Holliday says, "There is no 'shaping' at all in the effect of the story. It has grown, in effect as naturally as a tree; and it has the swing and rugged balance, and careless symmetry which Nature has."

However, after the characters have made their stories, there is always a plot, a framework discernable, and it appears that the basis of practically every story is a misunderstanding of one kind or another, of identity, of purpose, of character. To cite one example

1 Holliday: Booth Tarkington, p. 206
2 Holliday: Men and Books and Cities, pp. 72-73.
3 Holliday: Booth Tarkington, p. 201.
of each of these misunderstandings, the plot of *The Two Vanrevels* may be described as one of mistaken identity. Betty Carew does not know which is Crailey Gray and which Tom Vanrevel, the man she really wishes to admire. A good example of misunderstanding of purpose, no doubt, would be found in *The Midlander*. Dan Oliphant, who has been East to school, wishes to draw East and West to a better understanding. In face of objection from parents and grandmother he marries Lena and brings her West, but she will not stay. He is thwarted, too, in his outlook for the advancement of his city. Joe Louden, in *The Conquest of Canaan*, is perhaps one of the most misunderstood as far as character is concerned. Although early in his life he is considered bad, he has had high ideals. Then too there is a combination of misunderstanding of purpose and character and a faulty evaluation of life and money. The best examples here are two of Parkington's stories-*The Turmoil* and *Alice Adams*. In *The Turmoil* Sheridan must have big business and money at the expense of his entire family. He secures big business but fails in his home. His only daughter runs away, Roscoe becomes a drunkard, Jim dies, and the sickly Bibbs is forced to go to the machine shop against his desire. What doth it profit a man to gain his money and lose his entire family? And in *Alice Adams* the family must even do wrong, steal money or formulas, in order to maintain its former position in society.

Parkington is resourceful in his plot devices, and is quite successful in having original ideas for each situation. Some,
which he uses several times; however, are the dance, accidents, automobile and trolley car; and coincidence. The dance is especially useful to Tarkington in his showing social position and worth in communities.

In *The Conquest of Canaan*, Ariel Tabor is a wallflower at Mamie Pike's party, and Joe Louden is not even invited. In *The Flirt*, Cora and Laura Madison, sisters, are treated as differently as they are dressed. In *Alice Adams* it is through the dance that one learns the Adamses are declining both financially and socially, and have dropped so far that Alice is a wallflower and her brother has begun shooting craps with niggers. Suffice it to add further that Tarkington uses the dance or receptions in no less than seven of his twelve novels.

He resorted to automobile accident in two of his novels, using it for the introduction of one, and the conclusion of another. It is through an automobile wreck that Larrabee Barmen in *The Guest of Quezney* loses his mind, and it is in an automobile accident that George Minser in *The Magnificent Ambersons* gets his additional "comeupance." In *The Turmoil* he allows Bibbs to be knocked down by the trolley in order that Mary Vertrees, seeing the accident, may call over the telephone to ask Bibbs if he is hurt.

Coincidence—an old and time-worn device, used by Tarkington but not to excess in his novels, as in his dramas—is used especially in his more romantic novels. In *The Two Vanrevels* Mr. Carewe comes by just in time to see the little boy deliver and receive a note; Joe Louden in *The Conquest of Canaan* appears at the Straw-cellar, a dance
hall, at the precise moment to assist Eugene Bentry to escape from a murder scene, and in Gentle Julia, Gentle Julia arrives home just in time to keep Noble Dill from going insane.

In his plots Tarkington has not been able to dispense with the villain entirely. If he does not appear in person he appears in the form of autocracy or gossip. Crailey Gray and Valentine Corliss are typical villains, while Judge Pike, Robert Carewe, and Mr. Sheridan are typical autocrats who rule everything and everybody. Gossip and deceit invade respectively. The Conquest of Canaan and Alice Adams.

Tarkington's stories are full of dramatic situations. One must wait to know the result of John Harkless' capture, must wait to see whether or not Carewe shoots the disguised Crailey Gray, must wait to see Valentine Corliss defeated; but the most trying situation is the dinner to be served in the Adams' home with new servants, with Mr. Adams somewhat uninterested, and with Mrs. Adams and Alice doing everything they can to keep Mr. Russel from sensing the disturbance and confusion.

In his stories, especially in earlier ones, there is much melodrama, but Tarkington recognizes it as such and often passingly points it out. For example, when Valentine Corliss briskly enters the library, Cora is haughty. At his words, "Cora, one would think us really married," she walks across the floor to a window, turns there, with her back to the light, and stands facing him, her arms folded.

"Good heavens!" he exclaims, noting this attitude. "Is it the trial scene from a faded melodrama?" 1

1 The Flirt, p. 332.
The severest criticism of Tarkington concerns the denouements of his stories. William Allen White says some of his stories are lazy-backed—that the backs of some of his novels begin to break after the first ten chapters; 1 Blanch Colton Williams says that he fumbles the denouements of his stories, 2 and F. H. Boyton says that the endings of his novels are anything but pleasant. 3 Carl Van Doren says that he tries too hard to bring his characters in in the last chapter that they may be "tucked safely away in the good old Hoosier fold." He continues, "According to all the codes of the more serious kinds of fiction, the unwillingness—or the inability—to conduct a plot to its legitimate ending implies some weakness in the artistic character; and this weakness has been Tarkington's principal defect . . . . Tarkington apparently believes in his own conclusions. Now this causes the more regret for the reason that he has what is next best to character in a novelist—that is, knack."

According to the principles set forth then by Boyton and Van Doren, it seems to the present writer that Alice Adams comes more

1 Saturday Review of Literature, vol.3:335-6 (Dec. 4, 1926).
2 Williams: Our Short Story Crit. re, p. 322.
3 English Journal 12:120. (Feb., 1923).
4 Van Doren: Contemporary American Novelist, p. 91.
nearly having a satisfactory denouement. The ending is neither
happy nor forced, and there is no evidence that Mr. Tarkington
directs their [the Adams'] fortunes out of a mistaken tenderness
of heart."

Tarkington explains his method of characterization in
an interview with Fred C. Kelley. He says, "I seldom can use a
class character direct from life. When he's placed in the strange en-
vironment of a plot in which he never really figured, he doesn't
seem true. I have to conceive a character and let him do what
such a person would do under the circumstances." He says that he
analyzes the thoughts of youth by recalling his own boyhood or
by figuring out what young people naturally must think. As to
the thoughts of Alice Adams at the dance he says, "Everybody has
seen such girls. You have nobody in particular in mind, but when
your thoughts begin to run in that channel you recall bit by bit
just how some poor wallflower of a girl was obliged to behave—
and what she must have been thinking. I received a letter from
a girl I used to know who accused me of using her for the de-
scription of Alice Adams at the dance, but I hadn't even thought
of her. If she ever was a wallflower, I had forgotten all about
it. Nevertheless, I may have described her -- part of her, anyhow -- with-

out realizing who she was."

Through a letter in *The Magnificent Ambersons*, Tarkington in an unusual manner gives his attitude toward his characters, and shows definitely that he is a follower of Thackeray. George Minser writes thus to Lucy Morgan: "What are you reading now? I have finished both *Henry Esmond* and *The Virginians*. I like Thackeray because he is not trashy, and because he writes principally of nice people. My theory of literature is an author who does not indulge in trashiness --- writes about people you could introduce into your own home... or meet at your own table."²

Tarkington, however, does introduce a few dissipated characters, all, though, worthy of reform. Beaver Beach, in *The Conquest of Camsen*, presents the most outstanding licentious scene with its dancing, drinking, fighting, shooting, and carousing generally. Mr. Wilkerson in this story is intoxicated merely for artistic effect, but most of Tarkington's drunkards are "well understood alcoholics," each representative of one of the many varieties of nervous cases. --- "James Fisbee, Joe Lane, Joe Louis, Crailey Gray, Larrabee Harman, Uncle Billy Rollinson, Ray Vilas, Roscoe Sheridan" --- all are victims of circumstances connected with their lives. "Roscoe Sheridan, Tarkington's most thoroughly

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1 *Collier's*, 72:6-7 (July 28, 1923).

2 *The Magnificent Ambersons*, p. 147.
diagnosed case of alcoholism, is not inherently a drunkard at all, has not the temperament, and would seem to be one only to the superficial judgment. He turns to drink as the result of over-work and emotional strain, and, later, in his physical revulsion to 'business', he presents a very fair case of another great American disease, neurasthenia.\(^1\) There too, are elements of low life in connection with Larrabee Harman and the Spanish dancer, la belle Mariana, but throughout Tarkington's stories there is little allusion to illicit love.

For the most part, then, Tarkington's characters are sane, well-meaning men, women, and children of different nationalities and races, who are capable of understanding the predicaments in which they find themselves. True, Lolita Martin in The Flirt is an idiot, and Noble Dill in Gentle Julia is mentally unbalanced for an afternoon after he hears of Julia's engagement, but Tarkington's characters are usually normal folk. Most of them are Indianan, and though Tarkington knows them well, he treats them without identifying himself with them.\(^2\)

Tarkington is interested in characters of all ages, — old, middle-aged and young. The Conquest of Canaan\(^3\) has many old men. While they are more or less characterized as a group of the

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1 Holliday: Booth Tarkington, pp. 203-4.
2 English Journal, 12: 123 (Feb., 1923).
3 The Conquest of Canaan, pp. 6-22.
retired element, ironically speaking, loafers, each has some
distinguishing trait or characteristic: Roger Tabor, the grand-
father, "a very thin, old man with a clean-shaven face," is an
artist; Eskew Arp, a cynic and seventy-five, usually opens the
arguments at the street conclave with such attacks as this,
directed either at the city in general or individual citizens—
"Here's a town that's jest one squirmin' mass of lies and envy
and vice and wickedness and corruption"... Squire Buckalew,
Justice of the Peace in '59, is the chief defender of his city
and Joe Louden; and Colonel Flitcroft, colonel in the Mexican
War and once on the Council in Camzan, also accosts Arp for his
"slander upon our hearths and our government."

Other old people unusually well characterized are Major
Amberson, 1 J. A. Lamb, 2 Grandma Savage, Mrs. Oliphant, 3 and Grand-
pa Atwater, 4 but Grandma Savage is the most unusual. She belongs
to the old school and can understand neither youth nor progress.
She is not in sympathy with Dan's marrying a New York girl and goes

1 Magnificent Ambersons.
2 Alice Adams.
3 The Midlander.
4 Gentle Julia.
so far as to say: "They aren't fit to do anything but flirt and talk French and go to Soirees. They're the most ignorant people I ever met in my life. They're so ignorant if you asked their opinion of Lalla Rookh they wouldn't know what you were talking about."1 Dan pleads for the change in time, but his grandmother insists that the Eastern girls are the same they were forty years ago. At the reception for Lena, Dan's New York wife, Grandma Savage looks at Lena, bids her welcome, and, extending her right arm, touches the bride's cheek with her gloved hand. Lena protests, but grandma after gazing at the fingertips of her white glove calls out, "She's painted."2 Her theory is that any woman who uses paint at all is a bad woman and wants men to know it.3 She can see no future for Dan with his Ormsby Addition, and even cuts his share in the will in order that he may not have so much money to squander.

The criticism has been made that Tarkington's books are all alike, and in a measure this is true, for, as has been stated before, his backgrounds are Indian and his characters, as states Mr. Collins, are more or less alike. "The same men," he says.

1 The Midlander, p. 69.
2 Ibid., p. 173.
3 Ibid., p. 219.
"live through everyone of his novels, under different masks, in diverse walks of life, and with personal characteristics which change their patterns enough to make them outstanding as individuals, not members of one family." For example Collins compares and contrasts John Halfless in The Gentleman from Indiana, and Monsieur Beauchare, but a simpler example may be had through a glance at the older men, the fathers, in Tarkington’s stories. Each is seen in relation to his family, and each has his financial problem, ill health, or interest which characterizes him as different from any of the other fathers. Wilbur Minafer, James Fisbee, and Mr. Vertrees lose money, Wilbur Minafer, Virgil Adams, and Madison lose their health, while Eugene Morgan, Robert Carswe, Judge Pike, and Mr. Sheridan are interested in self and in feeding their selfish desires. Each has his little characteristics that differentiate him from another.

"As a swain the Tarkington hero is very Tarkingtonian. He is bold and dashing in attack, when he thinks of the beauty to be won, and faint of heart, when he thinks of his own unworthiness. If one attempts to gather from Mr. Tarkington’s various heroes a sort of collective statement of the Tarkington

hem, one gets into difficulties. On one hand is a composite portrait of, altogether, a somewhat Fielding-like type of hero. Though they are mighty fine fellows, like Tom Jones, they are sad dogs ............ Crailey Gray, William Fentris, Joe Londen, Robert Russ Melling, Larrabee Harman, and -- yes, Penrod Schofield. On the other hand, there are Saint John Marques, Tom Wanrevel, Bibbs Sheridan, estimable gentlemen, all."

Tarkington is fond of using the odd one, the social or economic misfit. James Fisbee has an unknown past, Crailey Gray is worthless as a lawyer, Joe Londen is an outcast, and Bibbs Sheridan a sensitive invalid. In union with his returned wanderers, Tarkington uses these characters effectively.

Although he has idealized his men, they do not lack reality. They have feeling; they bleed. "He has held his banner high proclaiming his belief that man is fundamentally decent despite man's meannesses and weaknesses and that God is essentially good....... He has glorified man as the child of God, a wayward child, perhaps, weak of course, petty, peevish, dirty, often abominable, but always carrying in his heart that nobility which marks him from the beast." 1

1 Holliday: Booth Tarkington, pp. 36-37.

Tarkington's books are filled with amateurs: amateur lawyers, amateur journalists, amateur poets, amateur business men, and even amateur lovers. His men are profuse smokers, though, and seldom one is found which is not an experienced smoker. Only Mr. Atwater in Gentle Julia found cigarette smoke offensive.

Tarkington's women, like his men, are all of one psychological pattern, but according to Joseph Collins they may be divided into several groups. First, there is "the Helen Fisbee type, a miniature of the perfection of the cosmos, endowed with every quality of nobility. To her group belong the strong, faithful, loyal, somewhat masochist girls of later novels. There is Anne Elliott in The Quest of Rassnay, Laura Madison in The Flirt, Helen Vertrees in The Turmoil, Lucy Morgan in The Magnificent Ambersons, and Martha Shelby in The Midlander."

"Besides that group is the 'eternal woman', vivacious and beautiful, such as, Betty Carewe in The Tyg Venrevals, Sylvia in Cherry, and Cora Madison in The Flirt, who is in someways the twin sister of Alice Adams, and a first but unsophisticated cousin of Lucy Morgan."

Tarkington's women are either too reckless, too bold, or too highly idealized to be real. Tarkington's girls seem a little forward, for at the dances they are continually using

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devices to attract attention, and in assisting the heroes, the heroines go more than half way. Helen Fisbee, Betty Carewe, and Ariel Tabor do not actually propose, but all of them come rather close to it. Edith Sheridan and Cora Madison run away to get married, and both have reasons to be unhappy.

"The women of Tarkington's ideal are of the sort that give both hands, rather than receive. Ariel Tabor returns from Europe in time to give Joe Louden the one needful incentive to keep him from weakening at the crucial moment in his fight to conquer Canaan. Mary Vertrees gives to Bibbs the spirit to find music in the hitherto loathed zinc-clipping machine, and the more 'down' the heroes are the more Tarkington's heroines consider it a point of their womanhood to stand by them." Tarkington continues to have his heroines companions to his heroes.

Alice Adams is not idealized, but "is true to life and true to herself. The ultimate victory that she gains over herself and circumstances makes the fight worthy." Up until her appearance, Tarkington's heroines, all products of sheltered rearing, feel with Mary Vertrees that being a stenographer would

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1 Bookman, 24:605 (Feb., 1907).
2 Holliday: Booth Tarkington, p. 146.
3 Bookman, 65:18 (March, 1927).
be unthinkable.¹ Many of Tarkington’s heroines are motherless, but their fathers, through the aid of relatives and convents, train them to be ladies. All of the heroines to whom this author gives his own heart are pronouncedly of the maternal type,"² and in their characterization he uses such phrases as "was a born mother," "yearning to mother him," or "born to be a mother."³

As to boys, Tarkington says he never consciously set out to notice what boys were doing or thinking about, but just observed. His boys are original creations—a compilation of the average boy. His boy stories are not necessarily autobiographical, as some have thought, but his own experiences and those of his nephews form a basis for his observations. When Tarkington was asked how he came to write about children, he said, "It was an accident due to Mrs. Tarkington. I did not think I knew anything particularly about children, and she thought I did...........Finally, to please her, one day I decided to write a story about an eleven-year-old boy, and I did the first of the Penrod series."³ It seemed easy for Tarkington to portray children of different ages, and in one book, The Magnificent Ambersons, he allows his readers to see George Minasfer as he

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¹ Holliday: Booth Tarkington, pp. 48-49.
² Ibid.
passes from nine to twenty. In *The Midlander*, Henry Oliphant is exhibited in perambulator stage, in "summerset" days when he tears Martha Shelby's dress, and again in the automobile stage when he takes his red "speedster" and, after drinking, goes into the gutter hub-deep.

*Penrod* and *William Sylvanus Baxter*, or *Seventeen*, mean as much in any company as any popular figure -- everyone knows them. Tarkington, as did Mark Twain, "tried to pleasantly remind adults of what they once were themselves, and of how they felt and thought and talked, and what queer enterprises they sometimes engaged in."¹ Tarkington has a long category of children, both black and white, Herman and Verman, Penrod Schofield, Sam Williams, Mitchy-Mitch, "Baby" Remndal, Jane Baxter, Herbert Atwater, Florence, and many others, but the forerunner of them all is Hedrick Madison in "The Flirt." Tarkington becomes the "vivisectionist."² Hedrick enters the story as an over-inquisitive youth and better able to understand Coralee and her forwariness than any other member of the family. Hedrick is the mouthpiece of the family, and it is only through him that the inner life of the family circle is revealed. He tells that the tablecloth is worn out and that Coralee has been spooning and that Laura loves Richard Lindley. Many of Tarkington's children

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¹ *English Journal*, 12:122 (Feb., 1923).
² Holliday: *Booth Tarkington*, p. 168.
grow up during the story, but Hedrick is but a few days older when Coralee runs away and Richard calls to see Laura. Hedrick is much like Penrod but more serious-minded. Penrod was chagrinned at his having to dance with "Baby" Remsdale, but he doesn't feel that he will be punished his whole life through for a single moment's weakness, as does Hedrick in reference to Lolita's kiss. Hedrick too is interested in photographing African Wilds, and in order to have a gun he is successful in getting Egerton Villard covered with molasses and then rolled in hay and chicken feathers.

All of his boys seem to have a spirit of deviltry in them much as do the boys of Aldrich, William Allen White, Mark Twain, and Mr. Howells. "Some boys are 'little gentlemen,'" like Georgie Bassett, says Holliday, "but there are certain animal juices in boys which make them distinct among their species."

Holliday feels that Tarkington's boys wear somewhat better clothes and have a somewhat better social environment in Hoosierdom than do Clemens' boys on the Mississippi.¹

Closely associated with the boy is the dog. While Tarkington does not use the dog as a hero in any of his stories, he characterizes him and becomes "a realist in the dog line."² He has poodles, St. Bernards, terriers, and hounds, belonging to white and black.

¹ Holliday: Booth Tarkington, p. 168.
² Ibid., p. 175.
Tarkington does not confine his characterizations solely to
Americans or to the white race, for in his novels, he has written
of Frenchmen, Jews, and negroes. His depiction of Amédée as the
"most henlike waiter in France," babbler, scandal-mongering, with
the soul-of-honor pose and the eloquent gestures, whose talents
were indeed lost in the country, and his friend the gossiping
gardner Jean Perrot, are conceptions of delirious comedy.
"Truly, Truly," as Amédée would say. In The Midlander he
characterizes the Jew and introduces him into the "Big Business"
of America. At first Sam Kohn, Junior, is a playmate of Dan's,
but later, Sam and Sol and their father tear down the Amberson
Block, and the Rosenberg brothers, apartment builders, buy and
obliterate half a dozen old houses at a time.

"Kohn and Sons is an establishment formerly mentioned
by National Avenue as a 'cheap Jew dry-goods store;' and
prosperous housewives usually laughed apologetically about any-
thing they happened to have bought there. But as the years go
by, the façade of Kohn and Sons widens; small shops on each side
are annexed, and the 'cheap dry-goods stores' are spoken of as a
'cheap department store,' until in time it became customary to
omit the word 'cheap.' Old Joe Kohn is one of the directors of
the First National Bank; he enjoys the friendship of the president

1 Holiday: Booth Tarkington, pp. 140-41.
2 The Midlander, p. 405.
of that institution; and he is mentioned in a tone of respect by even the acid Shelby.\(^1\)

Tarkington's systematic portraits of negroes are unusually good.\(^2\) For the typical Southern negro one must know Old Nelson of The Two Vanrevels, having the extraordinary tact, which the old of his race nearly all come to possess;\(^3\) a servant in Robert Carewe's home who with his typical dialect with a low and gentle voice served to explain to and appease Betty Carewe after her scene with her father. Later he rushes Mr. Carewe to the boat and brings Betty back the word that her father has gone to France. Of younger negroes Herman and Varman of Penrod are outstanding, and Phelps says "those two negro boys are worthy of Mark Twain at his best."\(^4\)

Of the negro women, the servants, Malea Burns and Gertrude Collamus, in Alice Adams, and Kitty Silver in Gentle Julia are typical. Malena, the cook, does not enter upon the scene, but Gertrude has all the untidiness and the cold resentment that can be associated with her race. When summoned Gertrude "sets herself in slow motion," but when not busy stands "leaning against the wall, her chin moving like a slow pendulum;"

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1 The Midlander, pp. 132-135.
2 Encylopedia Britannica, Vol. 30, p. 117.
3 The Two Vanrevels, p. 122.
however, her gum had been removed by request. She chews of habit.

Kitty Silver is the most entertaining with her stories to Herbert and Florence and her attitude toward Julia and her pets. She perhaps is Tarkington’s best colored woman, introduced into the story setting on the "sagging steps of the elderly "back porch!"

As to the names of his characters, there is little to be said other than that there are few repetitions, even of Christian names, and that the ones used do not definitely signify anything as to the characters to which they belong. "His names never carry the slightest suggestion of the crude device of the tag: he never calls a fat man Mr. Paunch, or a miser Mr. Skinflint; yet in some subtle, happy way his names invariably do "go with" the characters of the persons that bear them." 1 Sometimes it will be noted Tarkington employs in his names a graceful literary suggestion, as in Joe Louden’s "Airy Spirit," Ariel; and the ominous connotation of the name 'Claudine' startled Miss Tabor in Joe’s office, and ’the sense of a mysterious catastrophe oppresses her’ in regard to Mrs. Fear.” 2

In one of Tarkington’s recent essays, The Hopeful Pessimist, he uses two names in such a way as to make the essay almost

1 Holliday: Booth Tarkington, p. 29.
allegorical. -- Doctor Parsloe calls on Mr. Thomas J. Gallup -- but this is a new and unusual turn in the naming of Tarkington characters.

More of his names, no doubt, are wholly or partially Indianian than are easily recognized, for can it be doubted that Daniel Voorhees Pike of Kokoma, Indiana, in The Man from Home derived his name from Senator Daniel W. Voorhees of Terre Haute, Indiana?

Booth Tarkington "learned his trade of writing quite in the manner practised by painters and craftsmen of old, patiently equipping himself in the classic way, by a painstaking interrogation of the secrets of the masters of the past." He says there are no teachers; that each one must work out his method of writing alone. He must learn by failure and by repeated efforts how the thing should be done. Tarkington acquired his style by reacting to striking books or passages that he read, either in imitation of them, or in satire upon them. Holliday says, "it was this gymnastic exercise which gave him facility of expression." Holliday also says that not everyone consciously feels the charm of a thing by which Tarkington sets much store, the way in which a book is written. But everyone does like his reading to be clear, easy to understand. Tarkin-

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1 Holliday: Booth Tarkington, pp. 43.
Tarkington's style is curiously fluid, changing its color with every turn. The qualities which, in general, form the basis for his changing style, the way in which his various books are written, occur to one as the classical French qualities. No doubt French literature has had a great influence on Tarkington, for of thirteen favorite authors which he names, four are Frenchmen: Cherbuliez, Pauet, Balzac, and Dumas. In fact, Tarkington seems to have adopted the creed of a celebrated French master who believes it the author's business to make truth beautiful through ease in its effect; to surprise attention as well as exact it; and to avoid obscurity and difficulty as opposed to facility and rapidity, the very essence of good literary breeding. In sum, Tarkington's style, modern as it is, has come only through living with and appreciating all that is best in first-rate writers of all time. "Neatness, precision, ease, moderation, lightness of touch, lucidity, these in general are its qualities. He is clever without being smart, and pointed without emphasis."

Holliday says that "a thing which strongly attracts the interest in a survey of Mr. Tarkington's work from first to last is this author's facility for investing himself with a style happily suited to each particular occasion. He has never become

1 Holliday: Booth Tarkington, p. 42-44.
set in any one manner; nor does he continue to exploit a field already won." His is the restless, creative spirit that must go on ever to new fields. In manner and style The Guest of

Quesney stands alone among Tarkington's books, as he tells the story in the first person, a style particularly objectionable to him on the grounds that it is "too easy." But there is no doubt that the charm of its style -- descriptive, discursive, leisurely in method -- is the charm that comes from writing in the first person.

In his boy stories Tarkington has mastered a very striking style which some prefer calling "no style at all" in the proper sense of the word; for it "imposes no film of consciousness of itself between the mind of the reader and that of the writer, but it is like a wire conductor carrying an electric current between the two........every work is the right shot to hit the bull's eye. Altogether, it is in effect like a series of pistol like concussions of thought......."

"As for that dreadful something which goes by the name of rhetoric, one may search Tarkington's volumes through without finding a trace of it." There is nothing he would hate more

1 Holliday: Booth Tarkington, p. 138.
2 Ibid., p. 138.
3 Ibid., p. 172-3.
4 Ibid., p. 44.
than being termed "literary." He does not want to be "caught" he declares, writing prose. When some literary editor in New York told Tarkington that certain pages in The Turmoil were noble English prose, Tarkington made a wry face, as though he would like to cut such passages out. "His energy of expression has its spring in his saying things straight ahead as they come through an honest mind, clear and simple in its workings and close in feeling with everyday stuff."²

He displays humor, narrative interest, and a healthy grasp of human nature. Stuart P. Sherman called him America's "nonchalant and best dressed author," the allusion being to his manner of writing. He has the gift of gratifying popular taste without writing down to it. Tarkington says that he has never used devices here and there throughout his books simply to please an editor or a book buyer. "Really," he said, "I'd as soon have forged a check. I've written things only as I thought they ought to be written."³ Tarkington has a brilliant gift for the art of fiction, and tells what he has to tell most uncommonly well. "We must make our words into colors and sounds — and the cheap old tricks and phrases won't do that. You've got to get

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1 Holliday, Booth Tarkington, pp. 91-92.
3 Holliday: Booth Tarkington, p. 205.
living words out of yourself: the used word is stale. Startle
your reader, amuse him, make him see what you see — make him
feel your words — flush him with colors, and always by suggestion."
is Tarkington's idea of what diction demands of an author. 1 Wm.
Allen White exclaims, "Oh! the joy of the verbs which always
adorn his staunch sentences." 2

Sometimes there are slight affectations in speech, as
in The Two Vanrevels the word "instanter" and a frequent re-
petition of "never," as in "danced she never so hard and late," and
"though never so slightly." Tarkington finds it difficult
to write dialogue. He says, "I aim to avoid tiresome repetitions
of the 'he saids' and 'she saids,' and yet not to let it appear
obvious to the reader that I have sought variety. In other
words, I try to keep out of the ink — to make the reader think
only of what the characters are saying, and never notice the
technical work of the author. But this sort of work just wears
me out." 3

Collins says that Tarkington "does profound injury to
the English language" and cites the opening of The Flirt. 4 Tark-
ington uses some unfinished sentences and some non-parallel ex-

1 Dickinson: Booth Tarkington, p. 15.


3 Collier's, 72:6-7 (July 28, 1923).

4 Bookman, 65:12-21 (March, 1927).
pressions, and has a tendency to use long sentences, sometimes a little vague. He dislikes novels made up too largely of short staccato sentences. He says, "You simply can't do good writing with nothing but short sentences, for you can't get the cadences."¹

Tarkington's descriptions are always vivid; one can recall many outstanding verbal pictures. If but one novel were cited, that one should be *Alice Adams*, for it is without doubt the richest in descriptions. Not only is the Adams' home opened for view, but one visits the homes of friends, and sees the interior of at least three business houses. *The Guest of Madeley* has many clever descriptions so characteristic of Tarkington—such as, "So we rolled along peacefully, not madly and smoked (like the car) in hasteless content."² Tarkington has been successful in handling scenery and weather, too, in such a way as to make a definite impression. His descriptive passages stand out from the average, "some as possessing an exceptional charm, and some by reason of their sheer exuberant topsy-turvy exaggeration."³ In *The Plutocrat*, Collins says there are many descriptions which seem to have been dragged in by the neck, lest they escape. Some which he mentions are the bellowing of the

¹ *Shrine*, Vol. II, No. 4, p. 65 (April, 1927).
² *The Guest of Madeley*, p. 16.
³ *Bookman*, 24:605-16 (Feb., 1907).
camels, the ascent of the mountains, pictures of sunsets and sunrises, and the glorious feeling of walking on a promenade-deck on a steamer.\footnote{Bookman 65:19-20 (March, 1927).} His descriptions of houses and towns do not become tiresome, though there is much similarity in them. The smoke, which is very very light in the beginning, becomes heavier and heavier until it is almost unbearable. One sees and feels the unpleasant change.

As Tarkington's idea of story telling is through suggestion he uses many figures of speech and many allusions. "He [the painter] was interrupted by an outrageous uproar, the gusty scream of a siren and the cannonade of a powerful exhaust, as a great white touring-car swung around us from behind at a speed that sickened me to see and, snorting thunder, passed us 'as if we had been standing still.' It hurtled like a comet down the curve and we were instantly choking in its swirling tail of dust."\footnote{The Guest of Guesnay, p. 20.}

While Tarkington makes no pretense at being literary he makes many allusions to history, literature, and music. In The Tumult alone Tarkington has no less than fifteen allusions to history, forty-eight to literature, eight to art and architecture, and to music twenty-two. Throughout his stories his
allusions to history are chiefly to French, Roman, and Greek history. In literature few authors escape mention, either personally or through their works: there is reference to Browning, Tennyson, The Bible, Dickens, Maeterlinck, Shakespeare, Irving, Poe, Cooper, Scott, Byron, and Turgenev. In art and architecture he refers chiefly to Raphael and Landseer, and to Gothic architecture. Although Tarkington is not so interested in music as he was during his Princeton days, he has not lost his appreciation for it. He finds an excellent use for it in his stories. His characters more easily—humming, whistling, yodeling, or singing almost any kind of music. It may be ragtime, sacred, popular, patriotic, or classical music, depending on circumstances and conditions. He defines music, uses musical terms in descriptions, and can write easily concerning Wagner, Beethoven, Gounod, and Schubert. Sometimes one hears a church organ playing Lohengrin's Wedding March or a recessional, a piano playing Chopin's Funeral March, or perhaps only an old calliope tooting Wait Till the Clouds Roll By, Jennie. No instrument seemingly has been omitted, for there is everything from the old harmonium and accordion down to the newest phonograph, the saxophone, and the radio. Vocal music is no less interesting—serenade or solo, quartette or negro assemblage. The Plutocrat, The Flirt, The Two Vauvevals, and The Turmoil are richest in the use of music.
Robert C. Holliday says, "If he [Booth Tarkington] had no other distinction, he should, I think it is safe to say, bear that of the wittiest of our novelists. With the passing of the years the character of Mr. Tarkington's wit has greatly changed. The searing flashes of The Tumult are far from the playful twinkle of The Gentleman from Indiana." 1 Roberts says that The Conquest of Canaan is the first novel in which Mr. Tarkington's humor gets anything like enough scope. The chorus of old men who do nothing but discuss and gossip and quarrel is humorous. But there too is a mingling of pathos, for the main spokesman, old Eskew Arp, who tells of the wickedness in the city, gives his life to save Joe Louden's dog. There is just such mingling of humor and pathos in Alice Adams. There is humor in Mrs. Adams' attempts at keeping her children in society, but their gradual decline and final fall is pathetic.

Many of the witticisms in Tarkington's stories are epigrammatic and are placed in the mouths of some of the less important characters, a reason perhaps for some of Tarkington's less important characters appearing too prominent. Hedrick in The Flirt, Grandma Savage in The Midlander, and Old Nelson and Mrs. Tanner in The Two Vanrevels add the sharp humor, and

1 Holliday, Booth Tarkington, pp. 48-49.
generally the humorous touches, and the "strike home" truths are left to the younger members of the family.\(^1\) His dramas have more surprises and witty sayings than his novels. Mr. Antonio, a satire on hypocrisy, is full of surprises. In one instance, the hurdy-gurdy man protects himself against the law by changing his selection. He is about to be arrested for disturbing the peace on Sunday, and when he sees the officers coming, he plays "Onward Christian Soldiers."

Tarkington is one of the few men writing to-day who is genuinely happy in the use of dialect. For the most part his characters speak accurately the vernacular of the community in which they find themselves a part, but Tarkington has established a dialect peculiar to the children of his stories, a kind of impish mimicry. It begins in The Flirt when Hedrick "was pursued, harried, hounded from early morning till nightfall, and even in his bed would hear shrill shouts go down the sidewalk from the throats of juvenile fly-by-nights: 'Oh dar-ling lit-oh darling lit-oh little boy, little boy, kiss me some more,'" and all in reference to his kissing Lolita, a little idiot. He used this same echoing mimicry in Gentle Julia and The Fascinating Stranger, but especially in Penrod and Sam, after the reading

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\(^1\) Bookman, 65:12-21 (March, 1927).
of the sister's letter at school, or in Penrod before and after
the tar fight.

Tarkington is an admirer of the homespun virtue, and
throughout his stories, while he does not have a tendency to
preach, he brings in moral lessons, pleasantly and satirically,
and sometimes the moral permeates the entire book. Throughout
his stories he carries the moral teaching that "right makes
might" and that dishonesty or treachery brings defeat sooner or
later.

Tarkington has no theory for the making of titles for
his stories, other than that he leaves the titles to the last,
for he feels they are difficult to decide upon. Observation,
however, shows that for the most part the titles are derived
from names of characters, as in Alice Adams, or from words which
suggest in some small measure the character or main thesis of the
story, as for instance The Turmoil.

Through painstaking effort, then, Tarkington is develop-
ing his art of writing. He began as a romanticist, but when the
public became interested in realism, he, through the influence
and aid of Howells, began to write more realistically. Tarkington
studied his characters and from their relationship to one another
his plots grow. Through practice he has developed a pleasing

style, not rigid, but changeable, dependent upon the type of characters he wishes to portray. With his characters he is sincere and makes every attempt at giving each a characteristic portrait.
VIII. AN ESTIMATE OF TARKINGTON.

A general estimate of Tarkington may well include his own modest opinion of his ability. He feels that he has not yet finished with the job of learning how to write. He agrees with the experienced painter who said, "I need to work hard in order to learn a little about how to paint, because so far, I know next to nothing about it." To this statement Tarkington adds: "Painter or sculptor or architect or musician or actor or writer, he who knows best how little he knows, knows most." ¹

But there is much Tarkington has learned about writing, much that is commendable, much that will give and retain for him his place in American Literature. Some of those qualities which make Tarkington Tarkington are only too apparent to anyone who has read a considerable number of his works with any degree of thoroughness. For instance, as Holliday says, "Tarkington admires all those things which every decent, ordinary, simple-hearted person admires: dash, courage, honesty, honor, feminine virtue, and graciousness and beauty, and so on. He hates precisely those things hated by all honest, healthy 'American' people: sham, egotism, conceit, cruelty, affectation, and so forth. In short, he believes in all those things which make up the creed of the average sane, wholesome person in this country. He has in-

¹ Ladies' Home Journal, 42:30 (February, 1925).
fectious humor, and (though savage in attack upon what he feels to be vicious) abounding 'good humor.' In school his works will live because they are free from dirty detail; and whatever is endorsed today by the public schools is sure of life for at least several generations. He is not ashamed of being wholesome, nor is he afraid of "clean mirth."

The reading world is indebted to him for much pleasure and some enlightenment, but on the whole "none of his heroes remain in our hearts to help us over the rough places of life as do those of Howells or Maupassant."

That Tarkington is well known and popular is evidenced by the fact that he was named one of the twelve greatest living American men reported in the survey made by the New York Times in 1922. His name, that of one lone author, stands with the names of ex-presidents, statesmen, scientists, and inventors—Thomas A. Edison, Woodrow Wilson, Charles Evan Hughes, Charles W. Eliot, Herbert Hoover, John D. Rockefeller, John Singer Sargent, Henry Ford, General John J. Pershing, William Howard Taft, and Elihu Root. In general the names listed were those of men who had made permanent contributions, in some form or other, to the good of society. From men in different walks of life it might be inter-

1 Holliday: Booth Tarkington, pp. 208-209.
2 Bookman, 65:21 (March, 1927).
esting to know Tarkington's ranking. Daniel Frohman, the theatrical manager, placed him sixth; Dr. Edward L. Thorndike, noted psychologist and professor of educational psychology in The Teacher's College at Columbia University, ninth; and the Rev. Dr. Charles Lewis Slattery, Rector of Grace Church in New York, seventh. Tarkington, too, is one of only fifty living men enrolled in the American Academy of Arts and Letters.

Critics in general have been kind to Tarkington, the harshest criticism coming from Carl Van Doren and Joseph Collins. Van Doren attacks the characterization of Tarkington's children, while Collins criticizes his objective method, and his aloofness in characterization. He says, "We remain strangers to the fate of the men and women of his creation because we are not allowed to peep into their fundamental makeup. We are attentive listeners to their tales, but never participants of their dreams. His stories create pictures and situations, all in the impersonal, Tarkington manner; there is no effort at analysis, at critical understanding, at profound search into individual reactions, at semblance of logic in action."

In 1922 "Mr. Tarkington said that he had finished with his stories of youth, and was becoming more interested in the

2 Shrine, vol. II, no. 4, p. 63 (April, 1927).
3 Bookman, 68:20, 2170-71 (March, 1927).
grown-up types that represent the changing of standards in this country, and the development of cities and towns and the general upbuilding of America."¹ However, as late as June, 1926, he wrote Clytie’s Look, a story similar to the Penrod stories and those in The Fascinating Stranger (1923). Clytie studies and studies and dreams and day-dreams until she becomes interested in boys, Tommie Foreigh, and later George Breamer in her school. She builds herself up by “Dignity, Courage, and Nobility.” Though this story was written twelve years after the Penrod stories, it is as entertaining as they, though the novelty of the once new style has worn away.

As to Tarkington’s dramatic activities, he is not so popular just now. His plays are seldom given in New York, but are used for amateur acting, the most notable use of his plays of recent years being in St. Louis. His latest efforts in drama, 1926, are successful and pleasing one-act plays, in which he seems especially interested at the present time.

As has been said before, Tarkington is ever growing, changing subject and style as his interests change. Early in his career he wrote of politics and children, but now he has turned his interests toward industrial and social changes. His method of combining his miscellaneous stories concerning women into one

¹ Ladies’ Home Journal, 39:130 (Nov., 1922).
continuous story through a three page preamble is peculiar and speaks well for originality.

In 1907, Arthur Bartlett Maurice wrote of Tarkington: "It would be sheer futility to attempt to forecast in any way his work in the future. There has been much in his experience of which no use has as yet been made in his writings.

Essentially a club man in the broadest and truest sense of the term, he has never yet drawn a real club type. With a wide knowledge of the men and women of the theatre, of the people who write books or draw, or paint, he has never introduced into one of his books, in the full sense as a major character, a player, a painter or a man or woman of letters." Nor has he yet in 1927. The nearest approaches to such characters might be, however, the narrator, the painter, in The Guest of Cusanay; or Mr. Ogle in The Plutocrat; or, perhaps, Mrs. Cromwell in Woman, but for the most part Tarkington has yet these characters to produce.

"Tarkington has been chastened by life, and success." He has style and he knows without question men, women, children, books, and cities. Just now he is busy writing a novel, entitled Growth, in which he describes the growth of a city traced in the lives of three generations of one family. On ac-

1 Bookman, 24:605-16 (Feb., 1907).
2 Holliday: Booth Tarkington, p. 218.
count of his varied interests and experiences, it is difficult to hazard any speculation on what his next inspiration will be, but whether it appears in essay, novel, story, or drama form, one can rest assured that, whatever the form, the work will be worthy of Tarkington -- clean and wholesome.
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