LEADERS OF AMERICAN LITERARY CRITICISM
IN THE LAST QUARTER CENTURY

by

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A.B., Southwestern College, 1927

Submitted to the Department of
English and the Faculty of the
Graduate School of the University
of Kansas in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree
of Master of Arts.

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To my Mother and Father,

My Guides Since

Childhood
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To the professors who wore out red pencils on the manuscript of this paper, the librarians who secured armloads of books for its preparation, and the roommates and relatives who tolerated me while I wrote it, I wish to express sincere appreciation and weary but heartfelt thanks. Of the members of the University of Kansas faculty who have aided me, I desire to acknowledge my obligation particularly to Professors R.D. O'Leary, H.L. Whitcomb, and J.H. Nelson for their suggestions and inspiration both as teachers and as advisors, and to Professor E.M. Hopkins for his courses in criticism, in which it is now my regret that I was not an apter pupil. So many of the library staff assisted me that I cannot well single out any one or two for mention; consequently, it is to the staff as a whole that I tender my thanks.

I have made no attempt to arrange a complete or even a representative bibliography of American literary criticism. The list printed at the close of this paper includes only those books studied as a direct basis for this paper, and those magazine articles I considered of especial significance because of either their intrinsic merit or their value as types. The material is limited almost entirely to that which is accessible in the library of the University of Kansas, though it has been augmented slightly by books and magazines from the Wichita Public Library, and the loan library of the University of Chicago.

August 31, 1929

Irene Murphy
INTRODUCTION

Highways of human thought, like highways of human travel, appeal to me. There is something exhilarating in being able to trace the course by which the Santa Fe trail or the Oregon trail was built, and to note the suffering, privations, and adventures that attended the achievement; but there is something magnificent in being able to trace some of the pathways by which the mind sought out new territories and expanded its dominion. Bridges were built - but others were left unbuilt; roads were straightened - but others remained devious, uneven, leading to a mirage instead of an oasis. Between these extremes lie grandeur and futility. The students of civilization and of literature, that means by which civilization preserves, enriches, and propagates itself, have some of them caught something of the sweep of human thought through the ages and have embodied its course. With eyes keen with knowledge and enkindled with a reconstructive vision, they have in a sense charted the course of man's intellectual march. Among the English literary men of our day, Mr. Edmund Gosse and Mr. George Saintsbury have done signal work, the one as a student of creative expression through the centuries, the other as a close observer of that and of critical thought.

Mr. Saintsbury has done for English criticism what no man has yet done for American criticism, and that is to chart its course throughout its career. He has been in a sense a maker of road-maps. By making clear some of the stages of English
criticism and the continental criticisms from which it for a time received its impetus and sustenance, he has helped to define English critical thought and picture the highways and by-paths of its development. No American critic has, to my knowledge at least, made any attempt to undertake a similar work on any scale for American literary criticism. Mr. Norman Foerster comes the nearest to doing it in his *American Criticism*, but he concentrates on the nineteenth century, and within that century, on four names: Poe, Emerson, Lowell, Whitman. If he could build a second volume of twentieth century criticism on the firm structure of the first, he might be well on his way to a distinctive study in American letters. One of the desirable features of his book is that he has thoughtfully printed brief excerpts from the writings of these four critics in the appendix of his volume. Mr. James Bowman is another who has done a commendable work in editing *Contemporary American Criticism*, a chronological arrangement of critical essays extending from the time of Lowell to the present day, enhanced in value by short editorial comments. Perhaps an adequate study of American criticism would combine these, would include a collection of critical essays or excerpts to accompany and illustrate a critical text much simpler than Mr. Bowman's. But such an enterprise is out of the question for the present work.

As a student but two years out of college, and only within the last two or three years even a casual observer of literary criticism, I feel that it does not lie in my power to lay more than a single stone in the cause of bridging this gap in the study of contemporary criticism. Perhaps no one book can
suffice as a guide through the maze of American criticism, any more than one book would suffice as an index to the art of poetry or the study of philosophy. Even if a few general histories of American criticism were in existence, they would need to be supplemented by studies of individual men and movements. This has been an animating thought during the construction of the present paper. I have more than once been dismayed at the range of territory I had to traverse even within the limits I have allowed myself. It has been my intention to give a preliminary survey of the field of American literary criticism since 1900, with a cursory glance at its main tendencies, to supplement all this with such references to the history of earlier criticisms as seem necessary, and then to single out three figures of prominence in our critical realm, and on them concentrate the remaining attention. By way of laying a foundation for all this, it has seemed profitable to first call attention to the works of four nineteenth century writers who were in a sense precursors of the critics of the present century. This thesis may not be much of a contribution in the field it purports to concern; still there lingers in its author the faint hope that those amateur studies may furnish an incentive, and perhaps even become a stepping-stone for someone who will in a day not too distant give comprehensive and discriminating attention to the issues of modern American criticism.

The hundreds of small fry who encumber the critical field are bewildering. After examining scores of magazines and books, and reading many articles and reviews that did not even find their way into the bibliography, I understand why Pope described
the critic as,

"The bookful blockhead, ignorantly read,
With loads of learned lumber in his head;"

and why James Russell Lowell thought of him in the same vein:

"......... one of those omnivorous swallowers,
Who bolt every book that comes out of the press,
Without the least question of larger or less,
Whose stomachs are strong at the expense of their head...
A reading-machine, always wound up and goin,
He mastered whatever was not worth the knowing."

From my own experience, I have found the critic to need

a keen sense of enjoyment as regards both life and its literary
embodiment; a ready fund of humor that will enable him to toler-
ate other people's controversies without rancor and encounter
his own earlier dictums without humiliation; a discriminating
sense of values; a penetrating mind, quick to recognize the es-
sentials of any issue; a hunger to know the minds and hearts of
men; and, with all this, a detachment sufficient to allow for a
sincere examination of his own tastes, his own reactions, and
his own experiences, and for a careful analysis of those of
other men. His mind must be more than a span wide, his person-
ality something more than can be confined within the black
type of a book. It takes greatness in a man to recognize
greatness in his neighbor, and such a trait must the critic of
modern American criticism possess.

One other of the essentials of those who would be
makers of critical maps is a knowledge of perspective. One
should either be a giant with long-range eyes or a sizable
person equipped with strong field glasses and a mountain to
stand on. There are plenty of authors who offer themselves as
field glasses through which one may look at the scene, but one searches in vain for a man whose loftiness makes him a veritable mountain to stand on. Critics marked by detachment, the power of dispassionate analysis, and extended vision are rare in the modern world. Perhaps that is one reason why the map-making industry is slack, and the progress of American criticism remains uncharted.
CHAPTER I

A Survey of Modern American Leadership in Critical Thought

American literature had no Minerva-like beginning. English literature may have mothered it in its infancy, and tended it in its years of awkward childhood in more or less casual big-sister fashion, more by precept and example and by friendly criticism than by actual intervention. But American literature, like American industry, is in the main an independent growth, seeded, it is true, with ideas both native and acquired, fertilized of course by gleanings from all ages and all nations, but grown almost exclusively on home soil, and imbued with the characteristics of that soil.

In her introspective moments, especially of late, America has become greatly concerned about her cultural welfare, and it is the light that dawns on her in these apprehensive moments that, consciously or unconsciously, is a factor in directing her attention to criticisms and to book reviews, those tabloids of criticism. The span of America's articulateness as a nation does not exceed one hundred and fifty years, if it can be estimated so high. Only in the last half of that era has the country focused her attention on one of the most important branches of literature, criticism. In other words, America is only now reaching a stage of literary self-consciousness, the outgrowth of what appears to be an increasing artistic conscience. There is no definite school in support of this development, as there is in Ireland, nor even so express a movement as there was at
the turn of the century in Scandinavian countries. In both
these regions, particularly the former, literary interest for
the last several decades has been concentrated on the task of
developing a literary self-consciousness, inducing the artists
to utilize native resources in the way of subject-matter and
diction, and publishing this newly appreciated native literature.
The movement does not take this form in America. Indeed, here it
is less of a movement than the widespread infiltration of an idea.
Partly an instrument in producing that self-consciousness,
partly a product of it, is American criticism, a distinct and
growing body of literature sufficient in bulk, and when well
selected, in quality, to achieve distinction anywhere. We do
not in the whole of our history boast a critical genius such as
an Aristotle or a Longinus, nor perhaps an Arnold or a Sainte-
Houve; but we have men who are founding a worthy department of
American letters, men worthy to rank with such able critics as
Hazlitt, Coleridge, Ruskin, and Lemaitre.

A. Nineteenth Century Contributors

Looming large on the critical horizon of nineteenth cen-
tury America are four men whose work as critics and creative
artists helped place our national literature on its feet: Edgar
Allen Poe, Ralph Waldo Emerson, James Russell Lowell, and Walt
Whitman. Each derived his inspiration from a different phase
of our national thought, so that each stands out conspicuously
from the others in regard to his critical theories and emphases.
Poe conceived the sole function of literature to be to add
pleasure to the life of mankind. Emerson valued books as agencies
in gaining complete self-knowledge and self-control, and identifying the one mind with the universal mind; through books, he thought, the supreme beauty, truth, and goodness, triple aspects of a single force, speak to the human soul. James Russell Lowell was an apostle of international culture who saw in literature a link between the past and the present, and between ordinary life and ideal life, its mission being to depict the ideal. Walt Whitman, a confirmed exponent of democracy, was a nationalist and an individualist, convinced that the purpose of American literature was to further America's God-given uniqueness, with the critic serving as a prophet to herald in her era of supremacy. These, the aesthete, the philosopher, the romantic idealist, and the democrat, represent among themselves most of America's critical thought in the nineteenth. Yet none of them could really be recognized as the founder of a critical school, although each had his many followers.

It was Poe's weakness that he was incapable of forming a critical creed higher than his own practices. The man whose genius gave natural vent to itself in works noted for their beauty, their unity, and their brevity, incorporated his own artistic tendencies into his critical code, and unconsciously judged all other men by his own achievements or ability to achieve. His critical theories and his actual practices are in singular agreement - in fact, to a degree unparalleled in American letters - but which of these gave rise to the other, or whether both are the sincere expressions of an inward conviction, is a moot question. The fact remains that his writing has greater unity from the standpoint of coherence between
theory of expression and actual mode of expression than has either Emerson's or Lowell's. Poe as critic and artist is an example of the strength and weakness of the doctrine of "art for art's sake". The youthful American literature of a century ago needed all that Poe could give it of art and beauty, as it needed more than he could give it in the way of scholarly reading and schooling in the cultures of the past. His opposition to the two current types of provincialism — implicit belief in everything American, or on the contrary, the unreasoning distrust of everything produced in America — was timely and valuable, but his own knowledge of men and of books was too limited to enable him even to grasp at any balanced program. "Poe wrote more criticism than any other kind of composition, and became known to his own time chiefly as a literary critic." There are students who believe that in the future less attention will be given to his stories, more again to his criticism. If so, it must still be acknowledged that the appetite for aesthetic pleasure fed by beauty is his strength; but it is also his limitation, for in Poe this love of sensuous beauty has no moral imagination to offset it.

In antithesis to Poe's criterion of pleasure is Emerson's criterion of moral elevation and ethical usefulness. To him, truth, beauty, and goodness are one. When he said "Beauty is its own excuse for being", it was the beauty that is a revelation of true Nature, of the universal mind, that he referred to. He was concerned not with the mechanical unity of a work, but with its organic unity. Mr. Forster has summarized a part of Emerson's critical code in this fashion: "From the
organism, the intuition itself, proceeds the appropriate form that expresses it. And the intuition, or thing expressed, likewise proceeds from a reality beyond the artist's understanding. We say that the artist aims to express ideal beauty, but we mean that he lets it express itself through him. This ideal beauty is also ideal truth and goodness, which three are one. Latent in all men is this supreme unity, but completely realized in none. The arts, most of all literature, inspire men, help men to realize their complete humanity. If a man ever attained this end, he would have no further use for the means, for the works of art. In proportion as men really live, approximate that vital union of truth, goodness, and beauty, their need for art diminishes. 2 The true artist is true to his own genius, says Emerson. Like Poe, Emerson was an opponent of provincialism, but unlike him, was widely read in classical literature. However, Emerson's readings tended to be limited to the cool, lofty thinkers that would appeal to his own nobility. For fiction he cared little and had almost nothing to do with it. He defined the scholar or critic as Thinking Man, but felt that after all the critic had little to teach the poet, who must follow the dictates of his own nature. If all Emerson's criticisms were collected from his Journals and works their amount would be found to be surprisingly bulky, and many of their judgments weighty. Their emphasis on ethical content and organic unity is a part of their worth; but their lack of any distinct interest in the affairs and passions of individual men is a typical flaw, a fault which is organic and not mechanical. Its source is in the personality rather
than the theory of the author.

Lowell in his _Fable For Critics_ genially deprecates his own office by saying of critics that they

"...come into existence,
   To impede other folks with their awkward assistance."

But his own judgments, though influenced by the romanticism against which he strove unsuccessfully, were obviously the products of sanity and good sense. Mr. Foerster is of the opinion that "In no other American of the nineteenth century has the critical spirit manifested itself so comprehensively as in James Russell Lowell." His facility of expression, the absence of philosophical depth which distinguished Emerson, and of the intensity which characterized Poe and Whitman, his debt to impressionism, and the fluent humor which flowed through his writing give his work an appearance of superficiality and lightness, yet his judgments as a whole have greater fairness and balance than those of the other three critics, and are the products of a more extensive and versatile reading. When Gustav Pollak wrote his _International Perspective in Criticism_, he selected four critics who seemed to him most distinguished for their international outlook, and those four were Goethe, Grillparzer, Sainte-Beuve, and Lowell. It was his opinion that the American helped to link the cultures of Europe and the new American. Lowell was an extensive if not an exhaustive scholar, having a firm background in French, Spanish, English, German, and Italian literatures as well as in American literature. He was free from the special purposes, the dominating motives, that animated Poe, Emerson, and Whitman, so that both his
readings and judgments were less colored by personal bias. It was his theory that literature is an ideal representation of human life, and he agreed with Emerson that there must be organic harmony between the form and the idea in expression. Lowell felt that through literature men have their best opportunity to possess their rightful share of the fruits of the past and of noble lineaments of the ideal. Although his reviews were good and many of his essays excellent, his criticism fell short of the highest goal because there was not sufficient profundity in the man himself. "Lowell is a capital instance of the fact that it is possible to think both rightly and feebly, just as it is possible to think both wrongly and energetically." His versatility was an enemy to his highest attainment. His critical equipment was comprehensive — scholarship, sanity, emotional responsiveness, and the imagination which he stresses as a source of knowledge of life. He deserves his rank as the most distinguished literary critic of the nineteenth century in America, had the man been cast in a bigger mold, he might have made himself supreme in our criticism, an American Sainte-Beuve, but he fell short of the task.

Like the rest of the four, Whitman was both creative artist and critic, if the common distinction between the two terms is to be accepted. Democracy was always his text and sermon, and this fact holds true in his criticism as in his other writing. In Democratic Vistas and elsewhere he stresses the uniqueness of America in government and population. He conceived of American literature as an agent for expressing
this uniqueness. There is a best kind of literature, not yet realized, he said, and American literature must be that best. The function of the poet is the registration of himself, his time, and his land. He saw America as the antithesis of Europe, and everything that Europe lacked, America had. While he deplored the morbidity and futility of the poetry of his own day and the fundamental want of a class of native authors dedicated to the "religious and moral character beneath the political and productive and intellectual bases of these States," he nevertheless believed firmly in the possibility of a national literature deeply grounded in national life and breathing the fundamental principles of democracy, with its gospel of the self-realization of the individual. Whitman as a critic is undervalued, yet his name can never be on the roll of the greatest critics because he failed to deal with the enduring values of literature, and because he conceived the office of critic to be a prophet, a harbinger of the future, instead of an appreciator, interpreter, and judge of "the best that has been known and thought in the world." Wide reader though he was, he placed insufficient stress on the past, and too much on the future which he thought he foresaw, but which has failed to realize itself. Yet such is his significance that any map of critical America must take account of him as of Poe, Emerson, and Lowell.

B. Twentieth Century Leaders

These four men, Poe, Emerson, Lowell, Whitman, together with their companions who made up the so-called Golden Age of American literature, and with Henry James and William Dean
Howells and a few other men whose fame was full before the turn of the century, in a large measure constituted the American literati in its promising nineteenth century period. It is not to be expected that those first twenty-nine years of the twentieth century can boast so distinguished a roll of literary men as it took almost the entire preceding century to produce.

The twentieth century has abundance of writers where the nineteenth had comparatively few; quantity production is as much a characteristic of modern literature as it is of modern industry. But the excellence of its workmanship is difficult for one of the generation to judge. Once the French critic Remy de Gourmont, encountering a similar difficulty, wrote, "It is hard to characterize a literary development at that moment when its fruits are still uncertain, when even the blooming is not complete in the whole orchard. There are precocious trees, backward trees, and doubtful trees which one would not yet like to call barren; the orchard is very diverse, very rich, too rich; the density of the leaves beguiles shade and the shade discolors the flowers and makes the fruits grow pale."

It is noticeable that the critics of the last century neatly dodged the question, What is criticism? leaving their successors a clear field in which to tackle the problem. The result is not one answer but a myriad. The array of critical theories now represented in America is bewildering. Impressionists, expressionists, realists, imagists, aesthetes, moralists, idealists, and half a hundred others overlap each other in a
seemingly inextricable tangle, and each group shouts its own answer and stops its ears to the others. Another obvious fact which adds to the confusion is that the critics are divided according to occupational lines as well as doctrinal allegiances. George Jean Nathan and Brander Matthews are both students of the drama, but their critical roads lie far apart. Louis Untermeyer, Amy Lowell, Harriet Monroe, Ezra Pound, and Mark Van Doren have had little in common save that they are all of them students of modern American poetry. Neither is there any unity among that larger, more distinguished class of those who are specialists in literature as a whole rather than in a particular type. There is little kinship between William Crary Brownell and H.L. Mencken, and not a great deal more between Mr. Brownell and Stuart Pratt Sherman, or between George Woodberry and Joel Spingarn, or Irving Babbitt and Ludwig Lewisohn. Probably no two of all the men mentioned would concur on any definition of criticism, even though they coincided in the literary area in which they specialized. Some of them would agree with Anatole France, who denied the possibility of objective criticism, as Mr. Sherman, Mr. Mencken, and Mr. Spingarn, each in his own way, denied it; but Mr. Sherman at least would not agree with him that it has replaced theology, and that although it is the youngest literary form, it may come in time to absorb all other forms. Anatole France understood criticism to be "like philosophy and history, a kind of novel for the use of the discreet and curious minds. And every novel, rightly understood, is an autobiography. The good critic is he who relates the adventures of his soul among masterpieces."
Opposed to the impressionism of the Frenchman and his American sympathizers is the judicial intellectualism of Mr. Browne, who maintained that criticism is thinking, thinking, thinking. Mr. Browne thought the ultimate business of the critic was to reanimate the idea for which each writer stood, to recapture the personality behind it, and gauge the worth of both idea and personality to the reading public. James Huneker, American critic of art and music and literature, called the critic a middle-man, an interpreter. Mr. Paul Elmer More has hinted that the duty of the critic is similar to that of the educator — to further the cause of culture in the world by searching for and emphasizing the factors which contribute to it, wherever they appear. Mr. Sherman conceived of the critic as a humanist whose obligation it is to oppose naturalism and to reclaim man for society by continually mirroring ideal social relationships and by vigilantly searching for and praising all manifestations of such spirit, especially in contemporary writings. Mr. Mencken seems to think the critic a man who reveals himself to the public, with another author or a book as excuse. Every critic has his own excuse for being; no two will agree as to the purposes and obligations of their profession, but each seems to be justified to a degree at least in his own position. It is not the purpose of this paper to attempt to bring order out of the chaos of critical methods and criteria, nor to catalogue all the critics dealt with according to their theories and procedures, but rather to call attention to this variety, dwell at some length on several representatives of various schools and stages of critical thought, and endeavor
to point out briefly some of the most conspicuous and important characteristics of their critical systems.

Time, environment, literary fads, the intellect, temperament and disposition of the critic, the nature of the book or author he is criticizing, and the rise of associated professions and trades, chief among them journalism and bookmaking, all those and more obscure influences play their part in fashioning modern criticism. The ascendancy of American journalism in the present century has provided not only a spur to American criticism, but an actual gateway to enlarged critical opportunity. There are few newspapers which do not have a daily or weekly column devoted to book reviews and criticisms; and in recent years, most of the larger metropolitan dailies have instituted literary supplements as a part of their Sunday edition. The business of book reviewing, which in its fullest form deserves to be called a department of criticism, has boomed accordingly. Most magazines include literary sections of some kind, sometimes merely biographical, sometimes critical. Prominent among the critical magazines and supplements are the New York Times Book Review, the Saturday Review of Literature, the New York Herald Tribune Books, and the Bookman. Many but not all of the critics of the present century came up through the ranks of practical journalism. Stuart P. Sherman, Henry Seidel Canby, George Woodberry, William Lyon Phelps are among those who first wielded the critical pen from the professor's rather than the reporter's chair; but William Dean Howells, Hamilton W. Mabie, Christopher Morley and H. L. Mencken are among the professional journalists. The journalistic exigencies of
time, space, and interest have had their influence for woe or
woe on a sizable portion of modern criticism. The facile, clever
style that is ordinarily a joy in Mr. Sherman, Mr. Kœnken,
and Mr. Morley becomes an abomination in the lesser writers who
make a cult of mere cleverness, and of smart's divinity. The
quickness appropriate to repartee needs to be held in check by
good taste and balanced by genuine thoughtfulness, else it
degenerates into tawdriness and becomes odious.

Two illustrious men whose critical characters were
already well formed at the turn of the century were prime
factors in the new criticism—Henry James and William Dean
Howells. They are exceptions among the critics in that they
were both leading novelists. Henry James, the product of several
generations of intellectual culture, published few books of
criticism, but he deserves to be ranked among the distinguished
but less productive critics because of the merit of his judg-
ments and the excellence of his craftsmanship. For smooth
wording, he had no rival among his generation; nor has he an
equal among the writers now living. Stuart Pratt Sherman in
a flash of critical acumen, recognized him as an apostle of
beauty. His kind is rare among American critics. Because he was
a man of travel and for years a resident of foreign countries
and in later life a citizen of England, he had opportunity
for friendships among foreign writers that modified his native
heritage. Being subject to international influence, he was less
susceptible than the average American to the influence of
pure nationalism. He was one of the first Americans to display
enthusiasm for his admired friend Turgeneff, and for another friend, Flaubert. Interested in modern authors who had attained a certain standard of superiority, his largest sympathies were nevertheless with the classics, because beauty was his creed, and there he seemed to find its fullest expression.

The prose of his own essays, like that of his fiction, is distinguished for its clarity and dignity. In fact his entire works are remarkably consistent in tone. Like Poe, he practiced as a writer those qualities which he stressed as a critic. His chapter on "The Art of Fiction" in Partial Portraits might be interpreted as a commentary on his own novel writing as well as a summary of his critical attitude toward fiction in general. Although not a thorough-going impressionist, he was convinced that the ultimate test of a novel, not to be removed by the most improved criticism, is whether the book is liked or disliked. According to James, the only obligation which every novelist must be prepared in advance to meet is that his work be interesting. He called the capacity for receiving straight impressions the first aid in fiction, with taste holding a secondary position. He considered art and morality two different forces, not to be confused; he felt that all that need be said concerning morality was that no good novel will proceed from a superficial mind — that is all the needful moral ground for a novel. The man whose novels were so often praised for their form thus succinctly expressed his viewpoint in the matter of form: "The story and the novel, the idea and the form, are the needle and thread, and I never heard of a guild of tailors who recommended the use of the
thread without the needle, or the needle without the thread." The novelist trying to picture exactly a psychological reason, attempting to catch the exact ting of its complexion, is a Titian translated to a different plane. His first duty, James believed, is to present as complete and perfect a work as possible. In such a way does the output of James the novelist illustrate the creed of James the critic.

As a critic, James was less known than was William Dean Howells, who was made president of the American Academy of Arts and Letters in 1909, and who was called by common consent the dean of American letters during the latter part of his lifetime. James had come from an Eastern home of wealth and generation of culture; Howells came from the home of a Midwestern editor, and followed in his father's professional footsteps from boyhood on. It was as editor of the Atlantic Monthly, usually admitted to be the best literary magazine in the United States, that he received most recognition as a journalist. It was a part of his editorial policy to be on the watch for new writers of talent and to foster their success, although sometimes his enthusiasms were not shared by the public. Although he had more than once been flayed by rival critics because of occasional unpopular proteges, he once said that he had never lost faith in a single author once that man had satisfactorily demonstrated his talent. He seemed to feel that what was laid at his door as a failure in critical judgment was either a want of appreciation on the part of the public, or a lack of adjustment or application on the part of the writer. In spite of the censure brought down on Howells as a
critic of premature decisions, one must recall that on the other side of the score he had to his credit the discovery and faithful sponsoring of many reputations then, now but now fully established. His interest in new talent persisted undiminished, even though his magazine during his editorship had almost a monopoly on the work of Longfellow, Emerson, Holmes, Lowell, Whittier, Mrs. Stowe, Parkman, Higginson, Alcott, and Stedman. Besides making his American discoveries, he helped to establish the American reputations of Thomas Hardy, Gustave Flaubert, and other foreign writers. His enthusiasm for the Russians was a precursor of the fervent regard in which the élite have for many years held the writers of that nationality.

Howells took a serious interest in the book trade—editing, publishing, selling—as an accompaniment of the art of writing. He discussed its aspects with some frequency in his books and magazine articles, especially in his later life. But it is as much for his own writing as for his enterprise in fostering American literature that his name is still something of a standard. His ease, his intellectual composure, the attitude of reserved sociability which is one of the attractive features of his style, his air of playful respectability, and his genial responsiveness to new interests and new manifestations of old ones contributed to his fame, and helped to establish him as a type. He was keenly awake to the relationship between literature and life, and concerned with what he called "good work, true work, beautiful work" rather than with success. No large degree of literary attention came to him until after he was thirty-five, but after that time he experienced not a single genuine reverse, and this gave his writing
an easy self-confidence which in him is more of a virtue than a blemish, for beneath it one senses a solid intellectual and moral structure.

The reputations of these two men, James and Howells, began in the nineteenth century, but continued in the twentieth without much fluctuation, only establishing themselves more firmly in the public favor. Together, the two men exercised a beneficent influence on American letters. Their calmness, their craftsmanship, their integrity, their discrimination, their moral rectitude, their extensive reading and scholarship, and their interest in contemporary literature, especially marked in Howells, made them the bulwarks of American criticism in the early part of the century.

No new reputations have been made to rival these long established ones, although new men of considerable importance have swung into the limelight. The range includes among the noticeable figures Mr. Joel Spingarn, an American modification of Croce; Mr. George Woodberry, professor, and humanitarian in letters; Mr. Irving Babbitt, classicist and defender of old traditions; Mr. Carl Van Doren, editor, teacher, and student of American literature, especially in its present manifestations; Mr. H.L. Mencken, the individualistic iconoclast, the perennial denouncer; Mr. William Cray Brownell, student of national cultures and connoisseur in the province of criticism itself; Mr. Paul Elmer More, classicist and student of comparative literature; and Mr. Stuart P. Sherman, upholder of the Puritan ideal in American letters. Because the last three men
seem to the writer of this thesis in many ways the weightiest, each man has been taken as the subject of a special chapter in this paper. A briefer consideration must suffice for the others. Of these, Mr. Hencken is dealt with at greatest length because he is most concerned with contemporary life and literature, and because his contentions have made him the subject of frequent and heated controversy.

Mr. Spingarn sits apart in the splendid isolation of his expressionism. He has his kindred spirits, but his distinction is to an extent not only one of kind, but one of degree. No other person has been willing to make himself the target for critical jokes to the extent that Mr. Spingarn in his pristine ardor has done. In his anxiety to swallow every vestige of the "art for art's sake" doctrine, he has gone to greater lengths than were seemingly required. Mr. Spingarn contradicts Mr. Sherman, Mr. Woodberry, and all their followers who say that art has a moral purpose or at least an ethical result. Art is an end, not a means, Mr. Spingarn seems to think; apparently he very nearly considers it distinct from human life at all; it seems to be food for neither mind, body, nor soul unless one considers the emotions to be the soul. He advocates pure impressionism as the critical test, and taste as the sole criterion. He proposes the elimination of rules, genres, theories of style, moral judgments, discrimination between technique and art, and between genres and taste, and the abandonment of the idea of race, time, and environment as factors in a poet's work. The critic must identify himself with the work of art; "the creative and the critical instincts are one and the same."

No
critic of any authority now judges literature by ethical standards, is Mr. Spingarn's firm belief. "To say that poetry is moral or immoral is as meaningless as to say that an equilateral triangle is moral or an isosceles triangle is immoral, or to speak of the immorality of a musical chord or a Gothic arch," is one of his oft-quoted statements. The questions that the modern critic would ask, if he followed Mr. Spingarn's estimates, are these: "What has the poet tried to do, and has he fulfilled his intention? What is he striving to express and has he expressed it? What impression does his work make on me, and how can I best express this impression?"

Mr. Spingarn is an near a Benedetto Croce as anyone this country presents. As such, he is in contrast to Mr. Woodberry, who conceives of literature not so much as an art within itself as a storehouse of race power. Consistent with this attitude is his theory that education is a process of absorbing the race-mind, including its cumulative wisdom, and that consequently it is the means through which the individual realizes himself. The work of the race-mind is the freedom of the individual soul and the realization of the unity of mankind, tasks in which literature must characteristically share. This gospel is related with considerable thought, ingenuity, and persuasiveness in The Torch and Other Lectures and Addresses. He exalts the ideal of self-sacrifice as the possible ideal for races as for individuals, seeing in the rise and wane of nations a destiny by which each people contribute to the slowly perfecting race of mankind, though dying out themselves. Literature, which is itself the expression of life, shares the race-mind and is the means of passing it on. Mr. Woodberry sees in the
Titan myth in its various forms, from the time of the early poets down to Shelley and Byron, a manifestation of the slowly developing desire of the race for perfection. In regard to these lectures and essays, Mr. Woodberry stands confessed as a blend between a historical and an aesthetic critic, but mingled with these there is extensive evidence of the ethical idealist.

Through Irving Babbitt, a critic of the old school, American thought reaches back through the centuries and clasps hands with Greek aestheticism, for the eyes by which he gauges literature have gained their perspective through their training in classic standards. In his essays on "Genius and Taste," he takes the characteristic position that it is high treason to civilization to repudiate Christian and classical checks, and substitute no others. He scoffs at Mr. Spingarn's theory of creative expressionistic criticism as "the craving for an indeterminate vagabondage of imagination and emotion," an outgrown eighteenth century attitude, and sees in the term "creative critic" what Arnold calls the great name without the great thing. Mr. Babbitt staunchly asserts that the critic cannot afford any more than the creator to let himself go; he is creative only in the sense that he creates standards. It is in this insistence on standards that Mr. Babbitt differs from the expressionists, impressionists, and their ilk, and it is in this sense that he has become the bull's-eye for their taunts and gibes. But there is nothing of the deserter in his make-up. He goes calmly on his way, still emphasizing mankind's need for what he calls the illusion of a higher reality, without which imagination the whole modern experiment is threatened.
with collapse.

Critics agree that there has been a new impetus to the study of criticism in the United States since 1912, of the men of importance whose reputations have largely been made since that time; one well-known example is Carl Van Doren, at one time literary editor of the Nation, and one of the editors of the Cambridge History of American Literature. It was his good fortune that he made himself a specialist in American literature before the study became so popular, so that he was in a position to fulfill the need for commentators and interpreters when it arose. Mr. Van Doren seldom talks about himself, but in his many minds he breaks away from the habit of reserve in the "Postscript", and discusses his critical position under the heading "The Friendly Enemy - Carl Van Doren." The criteria he proposes for any masterpiece are not only, "Is it good? Is it true? Is it beautiful?" but "Is it alive?" He assures his readers that vitality is not a fool-proof criterion; nevertheless it is one in which he places a great deal of faith. His desire as a critic is to help unprofessional readers to "make up their own minds about the authors whom he interprets." Thus he makes himself an arbitrator rather than a ruler. Mr. Van Doren's primary interest is in human character rather than in literature alone, so that after publishing four books of literary criticism, it has become his plan to curtail his strictly literary endeavors and expand his attention to include other aspects of the human problem. However, he still continues with his reviewing and writing of critical articles.

Since 1900, no man on this continent whose pen in his
livelihood has caused greater disturbance than another editor, Henry Louis Mencken, a veteran of the press and the hardened survivor of many bloody battles. He has been pelted with compliments and with insults of all degree. Those who rejoice in the title of young radicals and consider themselves the freed and enlightened hail him as a god, while their opposites go to the other extreme. Whoever he finds combusible elements, it is his delight to touch the match or fan the spark, and then stand back and watch the blaze. His glee may be less fiendish than is popularly supposed. There are plenty of sensible people who regard him as a literary firebrand, as dangerous to their welfare and peace of mind as high explosives. Yet one author who describes him says, "Picture a butcher's boy with apple cheeks, who parts his hair in the middle and laughs out of the side of his mouth, and you have a fair idea of the facial aspect of Heinie Mencken," whom he calls one of the best-dressed men he has ever seen. "He is thoroughly honest; he discharges his obligations promptly; he keeps his appointments; he is a man of his word; and he is a dutiful and affectionate son. All women, without exception, like him. And all men do too; who have ever met him. The secret of this is that he is frank and unaffected, courteous, gentle, amiable, wise, jovial, and a gentleman."

Certain it is that neither praise nor censure deters him from the course he has mapped out for himself.

Ernest Boyd has written a brief study of Mr. Mencken as one volume of the Modern American Writers series of which he is editor. The book is a capable digest of the salient facts concerning the critic's life and professional ventures. But
the really comprehensive and enlivening account of him is the somewhat voluminous critical biography written by Isaac Goldberg and entitled The Man Honcken. One of its interesting features is "A Honcken Miscellany" attached to the main book, and containing excerpts from Ventures into Verse, an early book no longer in print, a copy of which would probably be worth sixty dollars or more on the public market; other stray bits of verse, including a song from "Ruth", an unpublished cantata; a few short stories published between the years 1900 and 1905; and letters about Honcken from Mr. Schaff and Mr. Dreiser. It is worth noting that Mr. Goldberg dedicates his book to E. Waldemar-Julius as the only publisher who has ever allowed him complete liberty to print what he wished.

Mr. Goldberg has unearthed data about the Honcken family which goes back to the sixteenth century. Judging from his account, Mr. Honcken's hatred of pedantry is inherent in the family line, for the characteristic was marked even among those who were distinguished for their academic accomplishments, as was the case with several who acquired fame because of their intellect. Incidentally, one member of his line, Louise Wilhelmine Honcken, was a playmate of the three sons of Friedrich Wilhelm II, was noted for her great beauty, and later became the wife of Captain Karl von Dismarck and the mother of the Iron Chancellor. One cannot blame the well-known American representative of the house for the interest he takes in the Honcken genealogy. The surprising thing is that his pride is not more personal and prejudiced than it is. Perhaps that is partly because the American branch of the family in its three
generations here has been less conspicuous in its accomplishments than certain of the European representatives, although its members have been prosperous and successful. Mr. Mencken's own father, a tobacco-grocer, was a pronounced practical joker, and much of his son's unbridled humor seems traceable to him. "Mencken the man, the writer, the force in contemporary life and letters," says Mr. Goldberg, "is thus partially defined by his forbears on the one hand, and on the other, by the writings that are his alter ego. Between stands the man who completes the circuit."[17]

Carl Van Doren is of the opinion that the name of H.L. Mencken is better known in the American colleges than that of any other contemporary writer. This would be sufficient justification in itself for studying the man, even though no other offered itself.

Mr. Mencken's first published article was on the subject of platinum-tining baths for silver prints, not an auspicious start on a career as a literary and social critic, but an evidence that his interest in chemistry continued after his graduation from Baltimore Polytechnic. As a boy, he had done frequent writing: poems from the time he was twelve, a short story or two, and words for a Polytechnic show. His first position as a reporter was with the Baltimore Herald in 1899 at eight dollars a week, about this time he was selling jokes to syndicators, doing odd advertising jobs, varying from the composition of advertisements for the London Park Cemetery, to the editing of pamphlets for a piano-manufacturer, a milk-dealer, and the United Fruit Company. In his leisure time he planned a
novel with Shakespeare as the leading character, but fortunately abandoned the attempt because of his ignorance of the era. By way of recreation he played the piano for a quartet of his friends who frequently assembled to indulge their musical tastes. His career as a columnist began in 1901 with "Rhyme and Reason," then "Knocks and Jollities," and "Ieroe and Terrible Texts," the first two verse and prose mingled, the last strictly prose. The first of his famous "Untold Tales," using ancient Roman politics as a mask for local affairs, were published in the prose column. Although he met with a certain amount of success as a story-writer, he soon deserted fiction. His first published book was "Ventures into Verse," which two friends who were interested in typesetting intrigued him into letting them print as an experiment. Its first and last edition numbered 100 copies, twenty-five of which the author gave to his friends. Mr. Goldberg says there is a record of only two sales. Because the author has withdrawn it from circulation and has been doing his best to live it down for the last two decades and a half, the existing copies are valuable. Even the book displayed at the New York Public Library is a photostat, not a genuine copy. Never again has "N.I. N.," strayed from the path of prose.

At twenty-five Mr. Londekin was made editor-in-chief of the Herald, perhaps as a reward for his swift and capable emergency service when the paper had to be printed for a time on the presses of the Washington Post, and then for five weeks on those of the Philadelphia Evening Telegraph when its own offices were damaged by the fire that swept Baltimore. His famous Free-Lance column was instigated in the Baltimore
Evening News several years later, and proved an instantaneous success. In 1909 he turned his hand to book-reviewing, and became literary critic of the Smart Set, of which George Jean Nathan was then dramatic critic as successor of Channing Pollock. In 1914 the two became joint editors of the publication and made it a financial success, but in literary matters they were hampered by the old reputation of the paper, so after nine years of arduous work they sold it to William Randolph Hearst, who revived it according to its old lines.  

By this time he had published a study of George Bernard Shaw and another of Nietzsche, both of them instrumental in the formation of his own philosophy and literary style. Like the series of Prejudices, his most famous books, the subjects were suggested to him by other editors. His selection of the title Prejudices for his six-volume collection of miscellaneous papers on topics of literary and social interest was a shrewd stroke on his part, for by making the admission which the word implies, he warded off criticism which would have been even more severe than that he received. The first three volumes contain much of his literary criticism. In the other three he has aimed his blows more at social institutions and political leaders than at literary events or characters. In fact, as a literary critic, H.L. Mencken is a waning influence. This is partly a matter of his own choice. Moreover, no thunderer can expect to capture the complete attention of two consecutive generations of radical youngsters.

The frequently reprinted paper, "Criticism of Criticism of Criticism", opens Prejudices, First Series, and launches his attack on Puritanism in American literature in no uncertain
terms. He derides Mr. Brownell, Mr. Sherman, and Mr. Phelps as learned, diligent, but essentially ignorant and unimaginative men—phrases well calculated to get under the skin of any critic. He accuses them of making criticism a branch of homiletics. This idea continues throughout the series, and reveals which side he took in the lively Sherman-Menciken controversy over Puritanism and morality in general, which raged almost until the time of his opponent's death. Mr. Sherman's attitude is plainly indicated in The Main Stream, when after fretting that the Jemand, fille and her followers are demanding a new criticism for their irritating new literature, he complains that: "At this point enters at a hard gallop, spattered with mud, H.L. Mencken, high in oath. He leaps from the saddle with saber flashing, seizes his horse in the church, shoots the priest, hanges the professors, drills those ladder, burns the library and the University, and, amid the crackling ashes, erects a new school of criticism, on modern German principles. Mr. Sherman calls his enemy a rhetorical drill-sergeant, who can make his sentences march or halt at command, but he points at him as one who can give the younger generation lessons in derision, cynicism, contempt—lessons which they do not need, being already proficient in the art. Mr. Sherman accuses him of having blunted such artistic taste as he had by literary strong drink.

"He turns in anguish from the pure and simple flavors that please children as the first gifts of nature, and that delight great critics as the last achievements of art. His appetite craves a fierce stimulation of sauces, a flamboyance and glitter of choosics, the sophisticated and appalling ripeness of wild
duck nine days old. And Mr. Mencken in return called Mr. Sherman "The Professor Dr. Sherman," twitted him for his purity and derided him for his spinelessness in words as fewerish as Mr. Sherman's and even blunter. These two men who parried with such dexterity and fought with such gusto attracted nation-wide attention by their encounters; yet writers who knew them both found them amiable men personally, and were persuaded that could they have met in person they would have become firm and mutually appreciative friends.

"The essential Mencken...may be summed up in a half-dozen words: passion for freedom, hatred of fraud. Whatever he has written may be traced to these twin aspects of a single function, liberty," says Mr. Goldberg. Doubtless his biographer would attribute the critic's distrust of democracy, his opposition to Christianity and especially Puritanism, and his belligerent scorn of the average American to this same dominating enthusiasm. Mr. Mencken is fond of referring to mankind as home boorians, and the chief reason for his American Credo, on which he collaborated with George Jean Nathan, was his conviction that the primary attitudes of man reveal his essential characteristics; and that the average American stands revealed through his own everyday beliefs and sayings as a windy idealist, a pusher, no longer a genuine lover of liberty, but an aggressive faddist, a boisterous braggart forever talking of his rights but forever yielding them whenever they are seriously disputed.

Never particularly reticent about himself and his criticism, Mr. Mencken has at least twice given definite expression to his critical policy - once in the article "H.L.Mencken"
printed in the Nation, and the other time in his summary of his work as editor of the Free Lance column in the Baltimore Evening News, written when he resigned from the position in 1915. In the first, he proclaims that criticism is only self-revelation. A professional critic writes about himself every day in the practice of his art. Denouncement of a book simply means that the writer is disgusting to him. Praise of it means that he feels some kinship with him as to prejudices, habits of mind, and traditions. "In the first case," says Mr. Mencken, "I hold myself to be a great deal better than he is, and am eager to say so. . . . That is all there is in criticism, once it gets beyond cataloguing. The plain truth is - and how could it be plainer? - that I practice criticism for precisely the same reason that every other critic practices it: because I am a vain fellow, and have a great many ideas on all sorts of subjects, and like to put them into words and harass the human race with them. If I could confine this flow of ideas to one subject I'd be a professor and get some respect. If I could reduce it, say, to one idea a year, I'd be a novelist, a dramatist, or a newspaper editorial writer. But being unable to staunch the flux, and having, as I say, a vast and exigent vanity, I am a critic of books, and through books of Homo sapiens, and through Homo sapiens of God." He professes a belief in liberty to its extreme limits. "I am against forbidding anybody to do anything, or say anything, or think anything so long as it is at all possible to imagine a habitable world in which he would be free to do, say, and think it. The burden
of the proof, as I see it, is always upon the policeman, which is to say, the lawmaker, the theologian, the right-thinker... The eye through which I view him is watery and jaundiced... He is the enemy of everything I admire and respect in this world — of everything that makes it various and amusing and charming."

It is to this idea that he attributes the fact that in Europe he is regarded as a highly typical American, and that in this country he is denounced as "the worst American unhung," an alien and an enemy. "I am this, to Americans, a bad American, but to Europeans, still unaware of the practical effects of the Wilson idealism and the Roosevelt saloon-bouncer ethic, I seem to be the eloquent spokesmen of the true American tradition. It is a joke, but the joke is not on me." 22

His work on the Free Lance column of the Jews, carried on in direct controversy with the editors and with the conservative policy of the paper, was summarized in a similar vein: "General aim: to combat, chiefly by ridicule, American piety, stupidity, tin-pot morality, cheap chauvinism in all forms. Attacked moralists, progressives, boomers, patriots, reformers, Catholics, etc., by name." He claimed that he invented new terms, some of which got into circulation, among them "baltimoralist", "sunthound", and "boozehound"; supported women's suffrage as a means of reducing democracy; and in so doing wrote perhaps 2,000,000 words; was attacked in probably 10,000 letters to the editor; and was the subject of denunciatory resolutions passed by all the religious and uplifting organizations save the Catholic and Jewish churches. Incidentally, his frankness has been so great as to leave him more or less
isolated. Every alliance has been more or less temporary.
Yet, as Mr. Boyd asserts, his facts are seldom challenged, but
only his views. Mr. Boyd rightly calls him a pragmatist, for
he believes only in those things which happen before his eyes
or are clearly demonstrable to him.

As a critic, Mr. honeken has to his credit the early
championship of ring lardner, theodore dreiser, george ado,
James Branch Cabell, Joseph Hergesheimer, Willa Cather, Eugene
O'Neill, and Sherwood Anderson. Decides these, he introduced
to American readers or widened the American reputations of
Havelock Ellis, lord dunbarry, James Joyce, Georghardt Humpenn,
August Strindberg, Hermann Sudermann, Friedrich Nietzsche, and
George Bernard Shaw. He has made himself read because he has
made himself interesting, and he has used controversy partly
as a means to that end.

Some of his best, most forceful, and least obstreperous
writing occurs in his Book of Prefaces, published in 1917. The
paper on joseph Conrad is one of his clearest and most discern-
ing pieces of critical prose, here he avoids the appearance of
having no reserve force but additional words, a misleading im-
pression that frequently results from his more vituperative
writing: All his composition is remarkable for its burly style;
its fearless slashing words; its irony, sarcasm, and furcical
humor; its direct, consciously tactless frontal attacks; its
phlegm; and above all, its aliveness. He has never pretended
to be constructive in his criticisms. How could he be when his
philosophy as he has worded it is, "I. The cosmos is a gigantic
fly wheel making 10,000 revolutions a minute. 2. Man is a
sick fly taking a dizzy ride on it. 3. Religion is the theory that the wheel was designed and set spinning to give him the ride.\textsuperscript{23} Allowing for the typical Ionian exaggeration of expression, the groundwork of his skepticism still remains in evidence. His whole critical endeavor has been to attack those things which seem to him fraudulent, to praise those individual writers whose works seem to contain the least humbuggery, but to leave to other critics the formulation of any program for literary betterment. His friends claim for him that he is at heart an unconfessed but ardent humanitarian, and there is some evidence in support of their contention; but if this be the truth, he will be the last to acknowledge it. No is an extremist, but he has been a vital factor in awakening America to the vices that may result from her virtues. An omnivorous reader and an abundant writer, he has done too much to do it all well. "And yet his wounds are clean wounds and they do not fester," is the tribute Walter Lippmann pays him.\textsuperscript{24} I know, because I have fragments of his shellfire in my own skin. The man is admirable. He writes terribly unjust tirades, and yet I do not know of anybody who writes for his living who will stay up so late or get up so early to untangle an injustice... This Holy Terror from Baltimore is splendidly and exultantly and contagiously alive. He calls you a swine, and an imbecile, and he increases your will to live.\textsuperscript{24}

In spite of the valuable contributions that many of these critics have made, complaints against American criticism continue to pour in through the columns of the magazines and newspapers. One group of writers scoffs at it for its timidity, its
Pellid, over-professionalized or undernourished impartiality and over-balance; others denounce it for its camouflage, its false vigor, its lack of restraint; others complain because of its aggressiveness, ill-nature, whimsicalities, and polytheistic or altogether non-existent standards. These are actual objections, culled from twenty or more articles on modern criticism. And so varied are American critical practices and so divergent their motives that every accusation is found to have its justice when laid at the proper door. Despite all this confusion, there is helpfulness in the very number and vociferousness of the critics. Their clamor indicates that sleep has been chased from their eyes; they are wide-awake, and already plunging into the thick of things, their chief difficulty being that they do not pause long enough to gain perspective, but restrict their sharp eyesight to the things immediately surrounding them. Fortunately this deficiency is remediable. Judging by their aliveness to the defects of American literature and American criticism, and their fervent desire to capture and express what is most typical in American life, it seems that one is justified in saying that the era of American self-consciousness is here.

It is the complaint of Joseph Warren Beach that there is no indigenous prose to compare with the poetry of Robert Frost, Edgar Lee Masters, or Carl Sandburg. Surely no century has a right to feel ashamed of itself which has witnessed in less than three decades the writings of Henry James, apostle of beauty; W.D. Howells, dean of American literature and enthusiastic agent in the development of contemporary literary
art: Joel Spingarn, aesthetic impressionist; George Wodehouse, exponent of literature as a torch by means of which the finest ideas of the race are perpetuated; Irving Babbitt, upholder of classic standards; Carl Van Doren, alert interpreter of modern writers and movements; and H.L. Mencken, an iconoclast and controversialalist whose abuse is seemingly cathartic in its influence. None is without his faults. James gradually withdrew from the disturbance of contemporary problems; Novello, like Lovell, was so occupied with so many issues as to seem somewhat superficial; Mr. Spingarn has become intolerant of everything but extreme measures, and firm on every sort of rule and standard; Mr. Wodehouse's head is too long in the clouds; Mr. Van Doren is well-read and pious, but lacking in the personal breadth and profundity of the great critic; and Mr. Mencken, usually so energetic, has been guilty of the sin of mental laziness, and is often brutal and occasionally vulgar, though always with a purpose; and with all his talk of freedom, he keeps swinging down the same unchanging groove himself, his course unaltered from the first. Yet these are stirring writers, and their pens, with those of Mr. Brownell, Mr. More, and Mr. Sherma, have helped to promote the critical movement given such competent foundation by Poe, Emerson, Lowell, and Whitman.

To one who remembers those four Vikings of the nineteenth century, this statement of Mr. Louisohn's becomes a trifle ridiculous: "A group of critics; young men or men who do not grow old, are at work upon the creation of a civilized cultural atmosphere in America. . . . . Like a troupe of shivering young Davids—thin and frail but with a glint of morning.
sunshine on their foreheads - they face an army of Goliaths!
In the first place, surely the country which produced those
carrier leaders must have already possessed a recognizable
degree of culture. Furthermore, a new culture is not made by
sheer determination and a few strokes of the pen. Nor is it
easy to visualize Messieurs Huneke, Spingarn, Mencken, Lewisohn,
Hackett, and Bourne, the gentlemen to whom he refers, as "shir-
oring young Davids," competent as they may be. With their sling-shots,
Exactly who are these formidable "Goliaths," he fails to speci-
fy, but one infers them to include all those not already grouped
as "Davids." Despite Mr. Lewisohn's ambitious wording, his main
point is well taken, and that is that these modern critics
are in a responsible position, and that most of them are doing
their eager best to further the cause of a well-rounded, artist-
ic, and lofty literature. In the last twenty years there has
been no single man with the popular following that belonged to
James Russell Lowell in the middle half of the nineteenth cen-
tury, or to his successor, William Dean Howells. But the three
men who seem most entitled to the place by right of their
scholarship, taste, craftsmanship, and perspective, are William
Crazy Brownell, for twenty-five years literary advisor for
Scribner's and Sons, and one of the first Americans to make an
extensive study of the province of criticism; Paul Elmer More,
for years editor of The Nation, and today one of the most dis-
tinguished classical scholars in this country; and Stuart Pratt
Sherman, professor, editor, and zealous defender of what he called
the Puritan tradition in American letters. The work of each
deserves careful and discriminating consideration.
CHAPTER II

William Garry Brownell

The analytic spirit is not yet pronounced in American letters, but wherever it has appeared it has been a potent factor, by virtue of its own weight, and of the important uses to which it has been put. Not until the present century has there existed in this country a critic of criticism. In this sparsely-peopled field William Garry Brownell is one of the pathfinders, and today stands as perhaps the most significant figure in the whole range. No movement could have had a saner, sager, or more scholarly leader. In these last forty years he has served the purpose of a civil engineer in the field of American letters, and particularly of American criticism. With all the skill of a keen native intellect firmly grounded in the humanities and in European and American arts and cultures, he surveyed the field, studied its topography and inner structure, staked out separate enclosures, planted fence-posts, and insisted on fences and sometimes on boundary lines. In other words, he recognized criticism as a distinct type, discussed its precincts, characteristics, and requisites, and observed the standards necessary for it. In addition to this he wrote some of the best pieces of general criticism to be found in American literature.

Mr. Brownell's contributions were largely made in the last decade of the last century, and the first two decades of the new. He belongs primarily to the period 1890 to 1920, or as a critic of criticism, to the period 1900 to 1920. Although
his books on criticism proper were not published until well along in the second decade. His views were well outlined in his *Victorian Prose Masters* and *American Prose Masters*, and were forecasted in his earlier works. In point of time he can be classified as a late nineteenth century, and as a twentieth century writer. He was still doing creditable work at the time of his death in the spring of 1928, but the period of his most distinctive and specific contribution in defining and analyzing the field of criticism and in guiding its criteria and standards was between 1910 and 1920.

His work as a critic of criticism was officially begun in 1914 with his publication of a slim portentous volume called *Criticism*. Three years later he continued it in *Standards*. In these, and, to a certain extent, his *Genius of Style* (1924), he has outlined his critical creed, a body of principles predicted in his earlier volumes, *French Traits*, *French Art*, *Victorian Prose Masters*, and *American Prose Masters*. One work is built on another with surprising accuracy and consistency. Probably no straighter, more unvarying sequence of ideas could be found in American criticism, especially considering the comparative variance of the topics with which they deal, than these seven books of Mr. Brownell's published between the years 1889 and 1924. *Genius of Style* is not the culmination of his earlier writings, but it is the logical outcome of them.

In his late seventies there was an obvious decline in the clarity of his prose, but this does not discount the essential vitality of his ideas, or minimize their value in the realm of criticism, or in any way depreciate the uniqueness of his
earlier contribution to American criticism.

Whether the American public as a whole knows it or not, William Cray Brownell was until his death one of our foremost contributors to criticism. This is no idle statement. It is backed by the word of many men who are themselves noteworthy critics, among them Mr. Stuart Pratt Sherman, Mr. Hamilton Mabie, and Mr. H.W. Boynton, all of whom have accorded him a leading place both as a literary critic in general, and as a student of criticism itself. His is not a household name. He has not the popular recognition given to James Russell Lowell, Edgar Allan Poe, William Dean Howells, or even of late years to the voluble Mr. Mencken - all of them distinguished in their way as both critics and creative writers. Unlike them, Mr. Brownell was a critic only. If he wrote short stories, novels, and verse, he refrained from publishing them. The fact that he is not only primarily but exclusively a critic partly accounts for the comparative ignorance concerning him. Good criticism means severe thinking - patient, plodding thinking, many times - both on the part of the author and the reader. Its appreciation is a task for which the American people as a whole have not yet prepared themselves. As a nation we are bright enough, but we have never been especially noted for the rigorous quality of our intellects. And if we had such a reputation, it would be unwarranted. Mr. Brownell's dignified, retiring personality, and the painstaking, unsensational character of his scholarship have won him recognition among the critics, but have left him more or less unknown to the general public, particularly in his
capacity as a student of criticism.

Mr. Brownell is distinct among American critics first of all for directing his attention to defining the field of criticism itself, and for establishing standards and criteria for its use, as already mentioned. Then he is more or less in a class by himself, as far as American critics go, in regard to his criterion, employing neither impressionism nor rationalism alone, but a combination, a rationalized impressionism, a taste regulated by reason, in other words. He does not employ the aesthetic, the moral, the didactic or the utilitarian criteria singly, but a sort of sum-total, and re-combination of them all. Intellectual honesty, rigid self-discipline, scrupulous scholarship, a fine sense of discrimination, and a healthy appreciation of human life -- these distinguish William Cray Brownell as critic and as man. And distinctly he is the ambassador of culture. Here again he is in a measure different from most of his contemporaries, even from Henry James and William Dean Howells, the men who above all typified culture in the last generation. Both of these, in spite of a distinctly American flavor in native talent, verged gradually from the cosmopolitan to the continental in tastes, and became almost alien to their own land in their prolonged admiration of continental culture, James in fact being included in some texts of English literature by virtue of his long residence in England. Mr. Brownell had less of the distinctly American in his native make-up, perhaps, but he had done more directly to foster an American culture in American letters and in the department of criticism, enriched by, but always independent of, foreign cultures. In his final
Chapter of French Traits he gave definite expression to this: after deploiring some of the disadvantages of New York in comparison with Paris, he commends the richness of American resources in the development of the individual soul and the production of a significant literature, and emphasized the value of focusing our attention on the establishment of our culture and the cultivation of our tendencies, aided by, but not dependent on, a study of the organic society that is France.

Mr. Brownell, then, differed from other critics in his choice of his field, in his gospel of rationalized taste, in the refinement of his talents, the fastidiousness of his tastes, the exactness of his artistic conscience, the extent of his technical expertness, and his emphasis on the development of a native culture, fertilised from international sources.

He had an unbiased judicial sense quite lacking in Poe, an independence of thought foreign to Lovell, Henry James, or William Dean Howells, an intellectual calm unknown to H.L. Mencken. At the same time he lacked Poe's warmth of emotional response, Lovell's charm and his shrewd rollicking humor, and Mencken's pungency of phrase. But as Mr. Lewis Mumford expressed it, "In intellectual quality no American critic has quite reached his achievement." In comparing Mr. Brownell with European critics, Mr. Mario said that Mr. Brownell had less suavity, sympathy, and divination than Mr. Dowden, more exactness and logic in his mental processes than Mr. Brandes, and that he shared with Brunetière the force and energy of mind of the French critic, without his rigidity of theory. Mr. Boynton, in his review of Victorian Prose Masters, contrasted him with Walter Bagehot, distinguished nineteenth century English critic, from whom he
differed in his inability to express things concretely, but to whom he was superior in breadth and discrimination of argument. "Walter Bagehot was a notable critic by the grace of Heaven, while Mr. Brownell's power is the result of broad study and conscious attachment."\(^5\)

That leads one naturally to the question, What are this man's training and qualifications for his task? That is a legitimate question to ask concerning any man who purports to serve the public, whatever his occupation, and particularly of any man who has established himself in the critic's chair. An isolated faculty for composition will never suffice to make an able critic of any aspirant. But there can be little doubt of Mr. Brownell's adequacy on the score of either talent or preparation, although his work falls short of the ideal in his almost exclusive dependence on the intellect as a means of comprehension, judgment, and interpretation. Mr. Brownell received his education at Amherst and Columbia Colleges, and held the degrees of A.B., L.H.D., LL.D., and Litt. D. This does not, in itself, insure his fitness. But it does imply that, if he applied himself readily, he was a well-educated man — and no one who has ever read a single one of his books or articles would question his degree of application. He was trained in the classics, had a unique comprehension of French morés, cultural conceptions, artistic standards and practices, was conversant with the literatures of Germany, Spain, and Italy, and was thoroughly grounded in the major critical authors. His college years, his period of residence in France, and the long span of his reading years were obviously spent to good advantage. In addition,
Mr. Brownell had the somewhat negative advantage of not being a college professor, as some of our most dogmatic and provincial-minded, as well as many of weight and dignity, have and have been. Instead he was a journalist for a time, but he escaped the sins of hustiness, partisanship, and mere cleverness that sometimes beset American newspaper men.

He was endowed with a penetrating mind, unflagging intellectual zeal, and a conscientious candor that forbade his stating half truths as whole truths or making attractive statements merely because they sounded well. He was like that rare man who would rather be honest than good-looking. From the standpoint of beauty, his prose has sometimes gained by his honesty, but almost as often it has suffered. But his forceful character and what Mr. Hable called his "resolute pursuit of the truth" have stumped his criticism with a rare degree of dependability. Within his realm he was as scrupulous and as comprehensive as he was sincere. Somewhere Mr. Brownell himself described the critic's task as thinking, thinking, thinking, and smiling— and then when he is tired out, thinking some more. In this instance as in others, his practice followed his theory. Mr. Stuart Pratt Sherman once wrote concerning Mr. Brownell's qualifications and achievements, "We have other literary critics who have written as learnedly, more voluminously, and perhaps on a wider range of topics; and we have other critics who have brought their personalities to play upon their public with more of what is often accepted without scrutiny as 'inspirational power.' But I doubt whether any other is more abundantly supplied with those general ideas in which the permanent value of critical writing
largely resides, and I am not acquainted with any other who has quite so pertinently, intelligently, and intelligibly applied his general ideas to the real cultural problems of our time - I mean the definition of culture's own standard, the creation of a cultural ideal, the description of culture's business in a modern democracy. In those six books, American criticism is ripe."

His style at his best is lucid and precise, an intelligible medium for an intelligent message. Like his doctrine, it is explicitly intellectual. It depends for effectiveness on the weight and refinement of its ideas rather than on rhetoric or euphony. Humor or satire gives it an occasional, but very occasional, brightness, whatever Mr. Sherman may have said of Mr. Brownell as a wit. As could be expected of him, his style is painstaking and thorough. He could never be detected in a slipshod sentence, though in the last few years he could be discovered in some rather tiring ones. Frequently he resorted to definition, a habit popular and effective with scholarly critics since Aristotle, one that is calculated to be an aid to the thorough comprehension of the subject-matter, but certainly not an aid to easy or melodious reading. Because of his impartiality, his detachment, and his devotion to absolute accuracy, his style is usually lacking in warmth and verve, though this is largely counterbalanced by the significance of his writing. Nevertheless the reader would like to feel a more vivid play of temperament, a heartfelt emotional responsiveness, than is customarily displayed. Remembering Mr. Brownell's own
statements in Criticism of the relationship between personality and composition, one is justified in concluding that the fault is inherent in the personality, rather than being a flaw in technique. Commenting on his intellectual integrity, his searching methods, and freedom from theories, Mr. Mabie called Mr. Brownell "a capital example of the professional as contrasted with the amateur in method and style." His rare side dashes, Mr. Mabie maintained, only emphasize his steady control. "Neither theory, which many men love more than truth; nor personal liking, which in the minds of many critics runs parallel with the principles of critics; nor the passion for saying the brilliant thing, for a dexterity either in thought or phrase, which assails the expert everywhere, deflects this writer from his determination to do, not only with all his heart, but with all his mind, the work to which he has set his hand."5 But even Mr. Mabie admitted that Mr. Brownell's style is sometimes carried away by its exactness from the realm of art into that of intellect. On occasion his sentences are so packed with meaning that it takes the reader a while to conquer them. At its best his style is adequate and even admirable for his purpose, but at a lower level, as in one of the chapters in Genius of Style, it is labored and a trifle circuitous, or at least exacting, and is burdened with too much detail, with material that would have gained greatly in point if condensed. Fortunately this is a rare fault with Mr. Brownell.

His procedure is almost scientifically methodical. This is most apparent in his Victorian Prose Masters, American Prose Mastermen, Criticism, and Standards. In general organization
and style of composition the four books go somewhat in pairs, the first two resembling each other, and the last two resembling each other. Each of the two books on prose writers is made up of six chapters, every chapter a study of a single master. Neither book has any sort of preface, introductory chapter, or conclusion — Mr. Brownell always seems to avoid explanatory matter wherever possible. Each chapter is divided into from six to nine sections on the popularity, art, style, personality, philosophy, characters and religious or ethical significance of the writer involved. Consequently the mechanics of the books are distinctly in evidence, but this is an advantage rather than a disadvantage. Usually Mr. Brownell opens each chapter with a survey of the critical opinions and popular estimates regarding the writer, then contrasts these with the actual qualities of the artist himself, then examines the man's chief works to test them as an expression of his personality and an incarnation of his ideals. Usually he goes from general to specific criticism, then back again: from criticism of the man to evaluation of the works, and then back to evaluation of the man. In every case the critic gives his own judgment, and carefully traces his reasons for rendering such decisions. His criterion seems to be always the rationalized taste he advocates in Criticism. His organization in Criticism and Standards is necessarily a little different from that of the other books, but each chapter is logically built on its predecessor and carefully dovetailed to its successor, and is orderly within itself in sequence of ideas. Mr. Brownell has a faculty for direct, coherent thinking. Ordinarily his trail is clearly marked from beginning to end, with the imprint of his own footsteps so unmistakably outlined that
the reader can follow him directly, whether he agrees with him or not.

A digest of this man's work constitutes a diagram of his critical evolution, founded, at the one end, on the remarkably sagacious and penetrating French Traits, and marked at the other by Genius of Style, or possibly the papers on "Democratic Distinction". Each stage in his development seems to be the direct sequence with the one preceding it, rising from it as regularly as each story of a pueblo rises from the one beneath it.

Mr. Brownell's critical creed appears at its fullest and richest in Criticism and Standards, obviously, and is most economically dealt with by deferring a major part of its discussion until the consideration of those two volumes. Nevertheless a summary of its main tenets is essential in interpreting his other works, or at least in tracing the evolution of his critical gospel. For that reason a summary of his primary critical principles might be of value here as a basis for understanding his books. Mr. Brownell himself did not formulate any Decalogue or code of critical beliefs, but the gist of his creed seems to be something like this: (1) Criticism is a separate province of letters, and is entitled to be called a creative art because it necessitates a recognition of the artist's ideal as well as his result, and the creation by the critic of a combined image of the two in his hearer's mind. (2) The function of the critic is to discern and characterize the qualities of the artist rather than the properties of his production. (3) The critic's equipment must be in excess of his field; that
is, he must be in possession of a general culture, best gained through history, aesthetics, and philosophy, in addition to his specialized knowledge of the matter at hand. 8. The only true criterion is to be found in the rationalization of taste, bringing the reasoning faculty to bear on feeling or intuition. 9. The only method consistent with this criterion is the constructive method as contrasted with the merely analytic—the synthetic presentation of the organic whole that underlies the minute considered. This really means the discriminating interpretation of the personality of which the work is but an expression. The solution of the mystery of personality is the "end of critical research. To state it is the crown of critical achievement." 10. The maintenance of letters as a fine art depends upon the spread among both artists and public of those standards of taste which "arise insensibly in the cultivated mind." 11.

French Art and French Traits are outside the scope of this paper, being published prior to 1900, and concerned with criticism of art and society rather than literature, but they are so obviously and consistently the platforms on which his later critical doctrines are raised that one cannot wisely refuse at least a glance at them.

French Traits, published in 1868, is subtitled An Essay in Comparative Criticism, and involves criticism of French society rather than belles-lettres. Literary criticism has a subordinate place, but the judgments given, though incidental, are consistent with the literary principles outlined twenty years later; for example, he refers to Ed Howe's Story of a
Country Town - "one of the most important contributions to sociology in a decade" - as an illustration of the baleful influence of egoism, a literary factor in which he was later greatly concerned. He is already using the figures he is to refer to for the next forty years - Balzac, Sainte-Beuve, George Eliot, Corot, George Sand, and other artists of pen and brush. Published when the author was thirty-seven years old, French Traits is the work of a mind already mature, an insight that is penetrating, a temperament that is balanced. Mr. Brownell gives voice here to conceptions of the French that he uses as illustrations and comparisons in all succeeding volumes: their embodiment of the social instinct, their fundamental national belief in the power of the intellect, their avoidance of excess, their emphasis on sense and corresponding deficiency in sentiment, their uniform manners, their organic social unity, their democratic cult, their regard for the true rather than the beautiful in art, and always their technique, their elegance, their culture. From a social standpoint the volume is one of the most penetrating studies of a foreign people ever written by an American. "French Traits is distinctly the most illuminating interpretation of the French genius and character that has appeared, and belongs with the best racial or international studies," is the glowing tribute that was paid it by Mr. Habe.

French Art, published in 1893, deals with classic, romantic, and realistic painting and sculpture, the criterion being that of a rationalized taste as usual. Mr. Brownell strives to be fair even when his sympathies are foreign to the subject, as in
classic painting. His critical principles are virtually the same as in his later literary work: he stresses personality wherever he finds it; urges on the critic the business of being in touch with everything cultural; emphasizes the necessity of self-respect, culture, and cosmopolitanism; and asserts that vitality depends on the belief, "This is my own, my native era and environment" — an admirable if unmelodious statement. The unillustrated volume is difficult reading for those unfamiliar with some of the lesser names; but the enlarged and illustrated volume, published in 1901, is criticized for over-emphasizing modern art, and particularly Rodin, in its illustrations, and in not being more competently brought to date. Mr. Sherman, who found Mr. Brownell to be a careful student of French art, if not at all times a close sympathizer with it, thought that he set a new standard for American critics in the volume. An anonymous reviewer said of him: "No one has written better of French Art than Mr. Brownell, or has seen more clearly the fundamental difference in that art of the sense of form and measure, the desire of style, the classic spirit."

Victorian Prose Masters (1901) is one of the recognized masterpieces of American criticism. It was one of the early critical works published in the new century, and its appearance signalized the beginning of Mr. Brownell's concentration on literary criticism. Mr. Brownell takes Thackeray, Carlyle, George Eliot, Matthew Arnold, Ruskin, and George Meredith in turn, and weighs each according to his aesthetic capacity, moral outlook, truthfulness, and breadth and depth of intelligence. He never fails to keep score accurately, even against one of his favorites,
and Thackeray is certainly one of these. The critic is concerned with the world these masters present, and with the way in which they present it, but his ultimate concern is with the richness and scope of the personalities of the artists. In the essay on Thackeray, customarily pointed out as one of the best in the book, and indeed in the field of American criticism, Mr. Brownell's interest is focused on Thackeray's personality throughout the discussion. Because of the analysis that accompanies the obvious approbation, and the sympathy and discrimination with which the theme is treated, this is one of the most satisfactory essays on the subject. The predominant appeal is to the intellect, as is habitual with the author. Mr. Brownell's intelligent justification of the Thackeray style is one of the substantial verdicts in American criticism. Thackeray's personality makes his work almost gauze, says the critic, a type different from those it seems to resemble. His discursiveness is but a matter of technique, and the test of technique is its appropriateness. Such sentences as those in which Mr. Brownell discusses the plasticity of form proper to the novel show the expert technical skill, and the independent, penetrative mind peculiar to this critic: "Its art is the handmaid of its purpose — which is to illustrate the true and aggravate the good, as well as to express the beautiful. Like literature taken in the mass, it includes, rather than is identical with, so much of 'art' — in the sense in which we use the word with reference to inarticulate art — as suits this purpose. Its sole artistic standard is fitness; its measure, the adaptability of means to end." Precision of phrase, clarity of idea, and sharpness of critical comments are sufficient
to rank work like that as literature.

The other five essays are similar in plan to this first. Mr. Brownell emphasizes Carlyle's massive personality, his egotism, his unscientific outlook, his unsurpassed mastery of energetic prose; George Eliot's intellect, and her lack of creative imagination, her deficiency in style and in aesthetic sense, and the undue subordination of her ardent temperament; Arnold's rare influence over criticism and literature, the harmonious development of his personality, the synthetic quality of his criticism, and the limpidity of his prose; Ruskin's lack of substance and lack of form, his quixotism, his lack of poise, his discovery of neglected beauty; George Meredith's imagination, his intellectual eminence, his analytic treatment of human nature, and his serious perversity and lack of temperament. One reviewer observed that the essays on Carlyle, Ruskin, and Arnold show the limitations of the more or less psychological method used by Mr. Brownell. He missed depths that a greater emotional responsiveness might recognize. Yet he has a habit of hitting uncomfortably near the core of the matter. Mr. Mabie told of one devoted lover of Meredith who "has confessed that he never passes Mr. Brownell's window without a desire to assault a critic whose spirit seems to him so merciless, but that he is always halted by the paralyzing suspicion that Mr. Brownell may have hit the truth after all." According to Mr. Sherman, Mr. Brownell's is probably the dictum posterity will know concerning Meredith.

One reviewer said that, "In a series of six papers, Mr. Brownell displays more critical acumen, more sanity of judgment, more cunning fence of the intellect, than we have seen for years
in any book of criticism, English or American, with a single possible exception." That exception, he announces later, is George Santayana's *Poetry and Religion*. Still another critic, reviewing the same work, said that Mr. Brownell's grade of invites comparison with the best critical masters, and that he is in fact affiliated in a way with Arnold and Sainte-Beuve, though he has adopted neither Sainte-Beuve's intensive approach, nor Arnold's tone and manner. Like them, he is neither impersonalistic nor academic. Mr. Boynton has called the same work, "the most significant criticism since English Essays in Criticism, with the exception of the work of Mr. Dowden and Mr. Gosse, and Richard Garnett's *Essays of an Ex-Librarian*. Mr. Sherman saw in him a successor of Emerson as a leader of American culture. "In general," he said, "American seekers for light were obliged to find their account in Arnold, Sainte-Beuve, Taine, Ruskin, and Fator, but for the discrimination of taste and general sense of initiation found in Ruskin, Arnold, and Fator, the intelligent readers can now turn to Brownell. The word of these critics may be taken as valid, particularly so when supported by such evidence as already given, or later to be observed. *American Prose Master* (1909), is a significant as a critical document and as a study of American literature by an American. Cooper, Lowell, Hawthorne, Poe, Emerson, and Henry James are the six prose artists analyzed. In organization and critical attitude the book is similar to its forerunner, the Victorian studios, and for that reason need not be considered at such great length. *Victorian Prose Masters* is perhaps the more famous of the two, but the American volume is of more
value to Americans for the clear-cut insight into and discrimina-
ting evaluation of those dominating spirits of American letters.
The very fact that Mr. Brownell saw fit to name the book American
Prose Masters indicates the dignity and eminence to which our
literature has attained. Poe and Hawthorne are both of a genius
so different from Mr. Brownell's mould, that in some ways he
does not do them full justice, but he deals with them with great
intelligence, nevertheless. His most prominent contentions are
those: (1) that Cooper is a born story-teller, belonging to the
same class as Scott, Dumas fils, and George Sand, possessed of
a genius as individual as Scott's, but with less background to
work with, and a greater facility to capture him; that he is
dominated always by an intense patriotic zeal, and that "his
world is a microcosm quite worthy to be set by the side of those
of the great masters of fiction;" (2) that the Scarlet Letter
is America's one prose masterpiece, but that Hawthorne's other
work suffers from his seriose fatalism, and the undevelopment of
his own gifts - the cultivation of his fancy to the neglect of
his imagination, his really unique attribute; (3) that Poe,
though of vast historical significance and great technical
ability, concentrated himself exclusively on effect, and that
his work suffered from a lack of culture and of substance; (4)
that Emerson, a peculiarly American genius, is predominantly an
intellectual, and is deficient in sentiment, in imagination, and
in organic quality of art; (5) that Lowell, a man of great eru-
dition and influence, is of a representative rather than indivi-
dual turn of mind; (6) and that Henry James is an artistic
theorist, a realist, and a scholar, who because of his large-scale
powers must be judged by the same standards as great prose masters.

In *Criticism* (1914) Mr. Brownell deals with the field and function of criticism, the equipment of the critics, the criteria and methods of criticism. Arnold and Sainte-Beuve are apparently the two critics he most admired. The book is the work of a scholar who has dwelt with his subject for so long that he is able to couch it in the terms of its elements, simply and concisely. For that reason the book is understandable to laymen as well as specialists. After commenting on the painful confusion presented by modern criticism, and the disgust in which it is held by some writers, he asserts that it is perfection and not abandonment of it that literature needs. The function of the critic is not the promotion of education, he says, so it is unfair to demand that the critic "invade the province of the studio and teach the artist." On the contrary, "Criticism may not inexactl be described as the statement of the concrete in terms of the abstract. It is its function to discern and characterize the abstract qualities informing the concrete expression of the artist. Every important piece of literature, as every important work of art, is the expression of a personality, and it is not the material of it, but the mind behind it, that invited critical interpretation... The concern of criticism is to measure his success by the correspondence of his expression to the idea it suggests and by the value of the idea itself. The critic's language, therefore, into which he is to translate the concrete work he is considering, is the language of the abstract." For this purpose he suggests the cultivation of
the grammar of the abstract through the study of philosophy, where it largely occurs, and because aesthetics and literature are so closely allied, the critic may sometimes "transpose his theme into a plastic key, as it were, and thus get nearer to its essential artistic quality by looking beyond the limitations of its proper technique."

Mr. Brownell holds that pure Impressionism will never serve as a satisfactory criterion, for as Sainte-Beuve says, our liking anything is not enough; we must know why we like it; as there can be universal taste and no accepted standards, Impressionism lacks certainty, and is therefore insufficient. "No other than a rational criterion so well serves criticism in the most important of all its functions, that of establishing and determining the relation of art and letters to the life that is their substance and their subject as well."

"Theories of every kind are preconceptions, and are therefore dangerous in criticism," says Mr. Brownell. The only appropriate method with a criterion of rationalized taste is the constructive, but it has its danger when subordinated to a theory, as with Carlyle, Thine, and Brunetiére. In such a case criticism is apt to be degraded into furnishing data for historical synthesis, or some such thesis. "The criticism as distinct from reviewing, it is personalitie rather than works that count. Byron rather than II nfoed; the Choral Symphony rather than Beethoven. In brief, his doctrines are: the acceptance of criticism as a search for truth, particularly the truth of personality; the preparation of the critic through specific study and general
culture; his duty to give a synthetic presentation of the whole whose parts he analyzes; the application of rationalized taste as dominant criterion; the monism of art and letters; the duty of the critic in the extension and appreciation of the true and the beautiful.

Mr. Haber, speaking both of the finished book and of its first appearance when read as a paper before the joint medical Academy of Art and the National Institute of Arts and Letters in 1908, said it sounded a sorely needed note of authority in a period of confusion of standards, laxity of methods, and adventurous experimentation.

Standards (1917), a little book almost twice as long as Criticism, is its logical successor. It is written with care, exactness, and comparative simplicity, and is a valuable piece of reading for any student of literature. Mr. Brownell comments frequently in the course of its hundred and fifty pages on the modern revolt against standards, and on the ferocity of the egotism which underlies said rebellion—"a conflict which, by the way, represents a break with rather than an evolution from the past, and is to be looked at as dangerous because of its disregard of all past culture and experience. In this it is a contrast to the Renaissance, the Reformation, and other intellectual movements. After glancing at the status of modern taste, the cult of individualism, and the exaggerated, illusory character of modern art, Mr. Brownell stresses again the danger of pure impressionism because of the rapidity with which its uncultured tastes become conventions in their turn. For the sake of arts and letters he demands recognition and extension of
those standards which "arise insensibly in the mind of the cultivated public and spread insensibly widening circles." The book displays a knowledge of psychology as well as of literature, and is obviously the more valuable for that reason.

Gonius of Style (1924), like several other of Mr. Brownell's books, appeared first in magazine form. It somewhat resembles Standards in tone and purpose, but is far less precise in thought and expression, though it contains many interesting and fruitful ideas. Its lucidity is considerably hampered by its digressions, or rather its occasional prolonged discussions of factors contributory to or influenced by style, particularly in several lengthy dissertations on the sins of modern life. In the title chapter Mr. Brownell makes plain that he means by style, good style, as he means by standards, good standards. He sees in the present distaste for style a natural outcome of the abandonment of standards and of the egotistic, undisciplined urge for self-expression that underlies it. He defines style as being "That factor of a work of art which preserves in every part some sense of the form of the whole; so that one may say a work of art possesses style when detail both counts as detail and also contributes to the general effect." Order and movement are its essentials. Mr. Brownell advocates style as a remedy for naturalism, of which he is always an opponent, and looks forward to a future ideal of prose that is aesthetic instead of purely communicative.

In his forty years of active writing Mr. Brownell has built for himself a firm reputation as America's leading connoisseur of criticism, if such a term may be employed. Mr. Mabie
in writing a review of Criticism when it first appeared in book form declared that it was a serious loss to this generation that Mr. Brownell was insufficiently recognized, as he was the most important American as "practition of the art of criticism for its own sake." He was not the best writer among American critics, but he was the foremost critic among American writers. Commenting on the amazing integrity of Mr. Brownell's work, he said, "In intellectual force Mr. Brownell may be said to hold the first place in American criticism; and the dominance of the intellectual quality gives his work a distinction which gains by contrast with the loose thinking of many of his contemporaries." As such, he is entitled to be placed among the first, if not the first, in power of intellectual analysis among the American critics, because of the way in which he would go to the root of the matter without wasting time on delicate shading of details.

Mr. Lewis Mumford struck a more moderate note of praise when he said that, although Mr. Brownell, Mr. Irving Babbitt, and Mr. Paul Elmer More were symbols of mildew in American letters to his generation when he was growing up, he recognized now in his maturity the stimulus he and his fellows had missed through lack of contact with these scholarly and thoughtful minds. Mr. Mumford considered Mr. Brownell less of a positive influence than the other two, but esteems his work highly, and finds him well deserving of his early popularity among the critics. The moderation of his praise is owing partly to his contention that every critic from Mr. Brownell to Mr. Monckton has failed in a
measure, largely because of the need of a framework of experience and philosophy in our national life into which to fit our criticism, a background and testing laboratory that is missing, in his estimation.

Stuart Pratt Sherman, speaking of Mr. Brownell as a cultivated intellectual radical, paid him this distinctive tribute, which may stand as a summary of his work: "Neither an iconoclast nor a reactionary, he has been steadfastly and consistently a man of intensely contemporary sympathy and interest; he has stood unflinchingly for reason as our supreme instrument eminent in culture, he has valued the past as it could be used in the present; a convinced democrat, he has criticized the brutality of our individualism and has commanded the study of French equality and French social instinct as a means to refine our own society and make it more delectable; no lover of negation, the main tendency of his work is positive and affirmative; in every field of art he has turned from academic vacuity and romantic insubstantiality to welcome the modern passion for reality; as a critic of letters he has formulated and applied standards which are exacting but both intelligible and obtainable; in his own writing he has striven with high seriousness to exemplify the virtues of an idealistic realism; he has declared that the highest service of criticism is 'to secure that the true and the beautiful, not the ugly and false, may in wider and wider circles of appreciation be esteemed to be the good. If these are not the ideal of the younger generation, so much the worse for the younger generation. But I think they are
or that they will be as soon as the younger generation knows itself."
CHAPTER III

Paul Elmer More

Mr. Brownell is distinctive as a diagnostician in the field of criticism - a connoisseur in the province and function of the art of criticism itself; Paul Elmer More, on the contrary, is almost exclusively a critic of cultures and literature. Nowhere, either in his eleven-volume Shelburne Essays, his principal literary work, or in any of his other books, does he give extensive expression to his critical creed, although he does drop hints of it from time to time. Even his essay entitled "Criticism," which occurs in the seventh volume of the Shelburne Essays, spends itself in consideration of other critics rather than in any attempt to outline Mr. More's own critical doctrine. Mr. More, like Mr. Brownell, is a scholar, a true gentleman of learning. His dignity, his coolness, his stability and equip also, and the profundity of his learning distinguish him from the mushroom growth of brash young critics who are infesting our newspapers and popular magazines, and are themselves breeders of a frivolous and sharp-tongued literature. Mr. More's roots are sunk in Greek literature and learning, and are nurtured by Oriental culture and philosophy. He is rich with the wisdom of the thousands of years of learning and thought on which he has fed. Such is that man of whom Stuart Pratt Sherman once wrote, "If W. D. Howells is the dean of our fiction, More is the bishop of our criticism."

Critics are not given to living exciting lives. If Mr.
Moro has had adventures, he has never let any indication of the fact creep into print. No biographer has felt stirred to lay bare the "true life of Paul Elmer Moro", in the modern fashion—a fact which seemingly indicates that he has engaged in no secret love intrigues, carried on no dubious correspondences, and aspired to no political offices. He is not one of that voluble circle who open the door of their private lives to the readers; he does not within the course of a volume confide the age of his wife, the pranks of his children, the price of his latest suit, or the score of his latest triumph on the links. His essay style retains the dignity of the eighteenth century, never breaking into the breezy nonchalance that is one aspect of our twentieth century familiar essay. With him, prose is a medium for the expression of intellectual ideas, not a chance for airing one's private affairs. Here is a journalist whose experiences in the newspaper and magazine world have left no trace of the columnist in either the style or the content of his work. A reader accustomed to the whimsical confidences of a Christopher Morley is surprised to find Mr. Moro refraining even from intimations as to his personal conduct.

Perhaps because of Mr. Moro's reticence, little reference to his private life is made by those who write of him. One has a feeling of confidence that a man of such ideals could not live a life other than one of dignity and merit, but beyond that one somehow has little curiosity, for the man's main interest lies in his intellectual conceptions, in his cultural standards, rather than in any exposure of his own inner life.

Who's Who, the New International Encyclopedia, and a
few other sources furnish us with the bare facts of his biogra-
phy. By nativity, Paul Elmer More belongs to the Middle
West, and here received a part of his education. His birth oc-
curred in St. Louis in 1864, and it was from Washington Univer-
sity that he was graduated in 1887 with the degree of bachelor
of arts; he received his master's degree in 1892 from the same
school. In addition to those degrees, he held an A.M. from
Harvard, an LL.D. from Washington University, and a Litt. D.
from Columbia, Dartmouth, and Princeton. It was on the occasion
of the granting of his Princeton degree that Dean West declared
him to be "an independent disciple of the old masters of Greek
thought, notably of Plato; a writer of force and grace, a
scholar of vast reading in books ancient and modern, an intent
student of the intellectual and moral realities which underlie
human life, a profound critic of our present development in
philosophy, science, politics and education in the light of
standards which have stood the test of time. Gifted with what
Edmund Burke called 'the moral imagination', his studies place
in clearest view the inestimable value for today of our ances-
tral heritage of truth and justice."

After completing his studies in Harvard, Dr. More was
for two years an assistant professor in Sanskrit there, and
for the following two years was an associate professor in
Sanskrit and classical literature in Bryn Mawr. Then in 1901 he
turned his attention to literary production and became the
literary editor of The Independent, a position which he ex-
changed for a similar one on the New York Post in 1905. His
most notable achievement in the magazine world was his editorship of The Nation from 1909 until 1914; when he relinquished that position he nevertheless remained one of the literary advisors of the publication. In a day when the influence of modern journalism is felt on almost every pen, it is worthy of notice that Mr. More's writing has consistently retained the tone of scholarship rather than of journalism. At times his professorship is a little too obvious, but his weight on the side of classical literature and classical standards is noteworthy.

It takes scholarship to understand a scholar. For that reason Mr. More is somewhat difficult to comprehend. He is one of the few in the twentieth century United States who are both painstaking literary critics and profound philosophers. Furthermore, he deserves to be ranked as the outstanding classicist among present-day critics of philosophy and literature in this country. His has become a notable name in American letters. The dignified figure of this professor, editor and essayist helps to counterbalance the influence of both the frivolous and the blase among our younger writers. This exponent of Platonism, of cultural aristocracy, and of Christian principles has made himself a leavening and a steadying force in a restless world by means of his forceful intellect and his serene wisdom.

Mind and personality must have outlet, and in the case of a writer the most lasting form of expression finds itself of course in literary activity. Mr. More has a fairly long list of books to his credit, each done with the scrupulous
care that seems to characterize his work wherever it is encoun-
tered. He writes with that almost unconscious precision of thought that seems to be the outgrowth of a lifelong con-
centration on intellectual truth. This same stalwart thorough-
ness is bone and tissue of every one of his twenty-four or twen-
ty-five books, whether the subject is religion, philosophy,
literature, or social conduct. The eleven volumes of the
Shelburne Essays, the four volumes of The Greek Tradition, and
the several single works all exhibit the integrity, the breadth,
and the greatness of this man's mind. This is not to assert
that all these books are equivalent in the display of those
forces, although they are remarkably even in workmanship con-
sidering their span; they may fluctuate in degree, but the
essentials stand out boldly in every volume.

The work into which Mr. More has built his life is his
bookshelf of Shelburne Essays, published at irregular intervals
between the years 1904 and 1921, and this is the collection
which is more largely representative of him, likewise is it
the center of interest for the student of literary criticism.
The Religion of Plato, Hellenistic Philosophies, The Christ
of the New Testament, Benjamin Franklin, Nietzsche, a Century
of Indian Epigrams - these and his other books throw only an
indirect light on More as a literary critic. It is the Shelburne Essays that one must resort to see the man in his
full stature in that capacity.

What is a Shelburne Essay? When Stuart Pratt Sherman
proposed that question, he answered himself by saying in his
picturesque way, "I conceive the Shelburne essays, to which he adds
a wing year after year, as a many-chambered mansion, conspicuously withdrawn from the public highway, built and maintained for the reception of Indian sages, Greek philosophers, great poets, moralists, scholars, statesmen, and other guests from the Elysian Fields, who, but for his lordly pleasure-house, would be hard cut to it for a resting place for a week-end, would they revisit the glimpses of the moon. Let us be thankful - we academic cottagers, we journalistic occupants of three-rooms-and-a-bath - let us be thankful for an intellectual capitalist or so with means and inclination to entertain these shadow ambassadors from other ages, and so to establish for our undistinguished democratic society fruitful and inspiring relations with the deathless grand minds of antiquity.

Mr. Sherman called such an essay "generally the imperfect, fragmentary cross-section, sometimes only the outer bark of a cross-section, of the character and personality which I have been sketching. It is criticism, it is history, it is philosophy, it is morality, it is religion, it in, above all, a singularly moving poetry, gushing up from deep intellectual and moral substrata, pure, cold, and refreshing, as water of a spring from the rocks in some high mountain hollow... By its compression of serious thought and deep feeling it produces an effect as of one speaking between life and death. There is a pulse in the still flow of it, as if it had been stirred once and forever in the bottom of the human heart. It is for this poetry that we love Mr. Morse. But", complained Mr. Sherman, "one has to go so far for it! In the long series it is so intermittent! There is so much territory through which it does not flow!" Possibly
so, but to accept these statements without inquiry into their justice would be to approve the judgment before hearing the case. The rule of criticism is to investigate first, and to judge afterward, so all decisions are to be reserved until there is a fuller understanding of exactly what this "many-chambered mansion" contains."

The eleven volumes of Shelburne Essays contain some 126 chapters, with a range of perhaps 100 different subjects, centering mostly about literary and cultural interest. To summarize or even to enumerate every one of these separate chapters would be a monotonous and thankless task. Dualistic philosophies, Greek literature and learning, and English and American literatures and cultures are the chief points of emphasis, the great aim being apparently the support of a sane, balanced, cultural aristocracy - a world leadership governing through the power of trained intellect. Many of these essays were first printed in the form of articles for the Atlantic Monthly, the Independent, the International Quarterly, the Sewanee Review, the New York Evening Post, and other newspapers and magazines. They include book reviews, criticism, and independent studies. The reviews have more in common with the leisurely, lengthy type in vogue in the nineteenth century than with the rather brief articles that are an established feature of most of our modern journals. Little attention is given to continental literature of any save the Greek period; this may be an oversight, or it may be due to lack of interest; it is more probably the result of concentration in other fields, and the unintentional slighting of this. The essays on Pascal,
Sainte-Beuve, and Tolstoi are among the exceptions. Sainte-Beuve is in fact one of Mr. More's few critical admirations definitely expressed as such.

The essays take their name from Shalburne, New Hampshire, to which Mr. More retired for two years of partial seclusion and inner enrichment. Although this occurred more than three decades ago, its stamp on his life is strong enough to warrant the appearance of the name in the title of his collection. Those two fallow years when the young thinker, companioned by only his dog, withdrew from social obligations and irritations and exposed himself to the quiet strength of natural surroundings and the incoming flow of his own thoughts are still bearing the fruits of his meditation.

Volume I of any series is of interest if for no other reason than that it is the first volume; but fortunately, the book which opens Mr. More's collection has other qualities to recommend it. It confines itself to no one country and to no one type in its array of topics. The subjects of this particular volume are neither held together by any common bond, nor arranged in any especial sequence, for the papers occur in this order: "A Hermit's Notes on Thoreau," "The Solitude of Nathaniel Hawthorne," "The Origins of Poe and Hawthorne," "The Influence of Emerson," "The Spirit of Carlyle," "The Science of English Verse," "Arthur Symons: Two Illusions," "The Epic in Ireland," "Two Poets of the Irish Movement," "Tolstoi: or the Ancient Feud Between Philosophy and Art," and "The Religious Ground of Humanitarianism." As this volume can be considered representative of the series, save for its
comparative inattention to the Greek, a rather careful examination of it will introduce the reader to Mr. More's ideas and mode of thought, to his manner of presentation, and somewhat to his philosophy of life.

It was during his retirement in the valley of the Androscoggin that Paul Elmer More came to underThereau in surroundings congenial to the nature writer; and it was there he gained the inspiration for this study that opens the series, as well as for others which constitute it. Mr. More's contemplative spirit is manifest through the volume, as it is throughout the series, but it is seen to especial advantage in this initial consideration of Thoreau. In this respect his spirit meets Thoreau's and between them there exists a strong bond of fellowship. Thoreau is never the schooled philosopher that Mr. More is, nor has Mr. More that warmth of inner resource, or thatuteness of visual observation that marked Thoreau's talent, yet both have a meditative outlook; both know how to get along without the world at times; both have experienced the quickened fertility that resulted from a thoughtful withdrawal from the world of affairs. Mr. More seems to write of Thoreau more affectionately than of his other topics.

When attention is turned away from the subject of the essay and directed to the writer of it, one observes in Mr. More the power of careful analysis that gives his writing distinction, and as a feature of that, an ability to detect faults as well as strong points in individual authors as in types and movements. Mr. More's sympathy with his subject flows in a steady stream through the study even when he is occupied in pointing out Thoreau's weaker tendencies. Furthermore, he unconsciously
displays a wide background of reading when he calls Thoreau, "the greatest of America's nature writers by far" and "the creator of a new manner of writing about Nature", and says of him that his work is imitable in essence because of his personality, although his manner is imitated by a host of living writers. No man of Mr. Nore's sincerity would dare make such large positive statements without knowledge to back them. This same expansiveness of reading knowledge is the basis for intelligent contrasts, as when he comments on Thoreau's lack of pantheistic reverence, on Wordsworth's social interpretation, Shelley's mysticism, Keat's self-abandonment, and Byron's passion as aspects of the typical reactions of these poets to the world of nature. Mr. Nore finds in Thoreau an awe of unsubdued natural forces not to be discovered in the other men. He estimates him as a lesser creative genius than any of the others named, but the possessor of a more wholesome attitude toward nature.

In the other essays of the volume one detects again the author's power to cope with the essence of a man, as in the discussion of Hawthorne, Carlyle, Emerson, Byron, and Johnson. Accompanying this is his sense of the worth of human personality, which is particularly noticeable in the essay on Carlyle, when he considers him next to Samuel Johnson or even possibly ranking with him as the supreme personality of English literature. Another quality apparent throughout the series is his ability to trace historic origins of ideas and movements, and related authors to their predecessors, as the study of Emerson and the chapter on "The Origins of Hawthorne and Poe", in the last named of which he asserts the forerunners of those two
men to be Wigglesworth and Edwards and Frenoy in the "age-long contemplation of things un-earthly," taking care to point out that Frenoy is a transition figure between the two groups. With these traits already mentioned, the author exhibits a knowledge of poetic theories, particularly of rhythm; an appreciation of the value of form in literature; a balanced sense of the necessary choice between realism and illusion in art and literature, presented rather carefully in the chapter on Symons; a rigorous adherence to classic art principles in his attack on Tolstoi; and his conception of a need for balance between the laws of Caesar and the laws of God in the life of the individual, a matter he discusses in "The Religious Ground of Humanitarianism."

The book gives an idea of the scope of Mr. More's knowledge in that he criticizes both Irish and American authors not only as individuals but as links in their national literatures, deals with English, Russian, and French authors, gives consideration to literature, art, national culture, and social concepts, and lays some of the foundations for his own social creed.

In his attack on the Elizabethan Sonnet in Volume II as inferior and imitative, Mr. More displays the courage of his own intellectual decisions and convictions. He is familiar with his sources, and coolly trusts his own opinion, having thoroughly covered the ground himself. At least that is the impression that the reader receives, though there is nothing of conceit in the writer - little mention of his reading, never a hint of the boastful. In the discussion of Shakespeare's sonnets as distinct from others of the time, the author again puts into
action his ability to draw contrasts successfully. Again one admires him for his knack of pulling down a writer's distinctive characteristics; for example, he praises Lafcadio Hearn's "power of suggestion through perfect restraint", his success in interpreting the artistic delicacy of Japanese verse in the scorch English prose and poetry, and his temperamental equipment for expressing Eastern refinement of emotionalism. He says truly of Hearn that beauty is the essence of his art. The chapter on Hazlitt is an interesting study of the man's character, its author justifying himself on the ground that the man's temperament so overmastered his work that no other approach is possible. Passion, says Mr. More, is the mainspring of Hazlitt's every word and action. There is a rare flash of honor when the author comments in an aside to the effect that Hazlitt's two marriages are the only two acts of his life not dominated by that passion. The essay on Lamb is smooth, appreciative, distinctly sympathetic and readable; the essay on Kipling loses keen and loses interesting. The study of Meredith is a good analysis, although it is hardly as clear in its central idea as is Brownell's study of the novelist. Both see him as a psychologist, both criticizing his conversation as his own rather than that of his characters, and both take a middle ground between praise and blame in judging him, though admiring him for flashes of insight. In the chapters on Hazlitt and Lamb, and to a lesser extent on Meredith, Mr. More gives abundant recognition to character and personality as factors in the production of literature. Although one does not perceive a great deal of the writer's private life through the medium of his
writings, one can detect his moral views and see his literary outlook shaping itself - or, more accurately, can see the bulwarks of his creed disclosed, for his standards seem to have altered little from first to last in the entire series. In the chapter on Greek literature, the critic definitely sets his ideal of literature as criticism of life.

The next two volumes include a variety of topics, among them "Fanny Burney," "Keats," "Blake," "Walpole," "Franklin," "Hawker," "The Scotch Novel," and "Sainte-Beuve." There is no definite sequence or confinement as to topic. The paper on Fanny Burney is informative, carefully judicial, and yet as a whole entertaining and at times even lively; it is crisp as to phrasing and apt as to comment. For instance, Mr. More says, "Her satire skates over the surface of life with unfaltering dexterity." This essay is another example of Mr. More's power of condensed impression. The criticism of Keats is representative of his carefulness in presenting an author's weaknesses as well as his admirable qualities. He finds Keats alone of all the great writers a trace of the cockney influence. In "Franklin," Mr. More concedes himself with a man who is more of a social than a literary figure. Once in referring to one of his practical jokes, the supposed revision of Job, the critic is guilty of what might almost be called a sideswipe of his own at the Revised Version - but Mr. More is no Mencken. This one remark is a rare exception, and moreover while written with malice aforesaid, is lacking in triviality or meanness of thrust. The study of Whittier is an unexpected defense, and owes its virtue again to Mr. More's ability to detect the distinctive
characteristics of a man and his writings. The Sainte-Beuve paper shows ardent admiration for the one critic of whom he speaks at any length in the Shelburne Essays. Many of the papers, such as that on Cowper, were inspired by the appearance of some recent edition of a man's work or a new biography of him. The two volumes attest the author's knowledge of minor authors, Hawker among them; his distaste for seeing certain authors, Walpole, for example, unjustly minimized; and his power of definition, which is seen to advantage in the paper on Scotch novels, and in the consideration of pims, though pims are dealt with more fully in the essay on "Thomas Hood" in the seventh volume.

The fifth volume is varied in content, English and American subjects predominating; but the sixth, a discussion of Manichaenism, under the name of Studies in Religious Dualism, is more philosophy than criticism, and consideration of it is hardly within the province of this work - in that respect, it is like many of his other works outside the Shelburne series. The knowledge of early Indian literature that Mr. More displays here, the knowledge of religious standards, and of early Christian leadership, the close analysis of various aspects of dualism, and the careful tracing of the dualistic idea from the early forest philosophies of the Hindus to nineteenth century Europe - these constitute the chief interest of volume six for us. Paul Elmer More possesses marked ability in dealing with long developing lines of thought, as this volume more than any other in the series shows. The book is hard to wade through because he has taken it for granted that his is a
philosophical audience; there is little explaining, no pausing for breath. The studies were originally articles published in the Atlantic Monthly, the Hibbert Journal, and similar publications, and were lectures given in the University of Cincinnati inaugurating in that institution a new chair of comparative literature. They are specialized in their learning and approach, and are not adapted to popular reading. Mr. More traces religious dualism in human thought, from the Vedanta's "frank acceptance of the dualism of human experience and of man's inability to reconcile that dualism through the reason," through the doctrine of inattachment advocated in the Bhagavad Gita of the Indian epic, the Mahabharata; Augustine's conception of a God who is supreme, and to whom man in his depravity must surrender himself completely; Pascal's acceptance of a dualistic conception in the mystery of Jesus; Sir Thomas Browne's confirmed disillusionment over the dualistic problem; and Rousseau's social contract theory, the acknowledgment of his belief in the warring forces of man and nature, man's only chance at happiness coming through peace with nature by means of nature worship, a deistic religion. In other volumes Mr. More discusses Emerson's philosophy in the light of the same problem. He believes that in the course of time every religion is brought face to face with a problem which it must solve or cease to grow, which - and this is the tragic recurrence of history - it can solve only by surrendering its purest portion of truth. The religious instinct, as we have seen, is based on two contrary tendencies in the soul of man, by one of which he is
dragged down to the desires and painful satisfactions of this world, while by the other he is lifted out of changing impressions into the serene contemplative possession of himself. "Faith is the faculty whereby the world becomes unreal beneath the light of the greater inner reality." He holds out the Platonic path as the nearest approach to truth, convinced that man must hold fast to traditional religion as a necessary illusion to keep him from falling into the pitfalls of the senses. He can afford to be neither a humanitarian nor an optimist. "He will feel compassion for the world; but he will be convinced that the fatal struggle for him, as for each man, lies within his own nature and is for the possession of himself." Such seems to be the trend of his exalted and rather incomprehensible philosophy.

In the seventh volume our feet touch familiar soil again - Shelley, Wordsworth, Hood, Tennyson, Morris, Aldrich, and others of lesser note, are all of them inspected with diligence and weighed with perspicacity, and all are found worthy in some respects but wanting in others. In other words, most of the papers are true to form. They are learned, intelligent, decisive - stimulating, but hardly to be thought entertaining. And then in the tenth paper we are swept back into the whirlpool of philosophy from whose solemn undercurrents Mr. More can never shake himself free; would, indeed, consider it sacrilegious to do so, in all probability. He sees in William James's "pluralistic panpsychic view of the universe" another result of the quality of consciousness which, he says, has been recognised since the time of the rival schools of Parmenides and Heracleitus.
ever eftor to be a dividing stone and a stumbling block among the philosophers.

It would have made it easier for students of Mr. More's critical standards if he had conserved some of the time spent plowing abroad in the realm of philosophy and had devoted more time to the cultivation of his own critical fields. The paper entitled "Criticism", the eleventh in this volume, is the only entire paper he devotes to the subject, and it could be appreciably fuller in its discussion. Its reason for being is apparently the publication of Arnold's Notebooks, issued posthumously by Arnold's daughter. Here and here alone does he indulge to any extent in lining up the individual critics with each other and with critical movements in general. He sees a close relationship between the Earl of Shaftesbury's doctrine of good-breeding as the purpose of criticism and Arnold's creed of culture, and sees Arnold's method of criticism not as a lonely nineteenth century product, but as a representative of "a long family of human intelligence, beginning with Cicero, the father of them all, and extending through Erasmus, Voltaire, Shaftesbury, and Sainte-Beuve. His own faith in the power of criticism, implied by his very use of the function, but seldom put into words, is here expressed: "The critical spirit, as it has been exercised, may have its limitations and may justly be open to censure, but I doubt if its true reproach will turn out in the end to be a lack of efficiency in comparison with the more assertive force of the reformers."

The spirit of Erasmus is probably more at work today than the dogmatic one of Luther. When Mr. More criticizes Arnold for
seeing the past too much as "a dead storehouse of precepts for schoolmastering the present," he stresses the necessity for understanding the guiding principle behind the evolution of ideas, for "interpreting time as a minister rather than as a master." In this sense, he says, literary criticism is only the "specific exercise of a faculty which works in many directions... Might not one even say that at a certain point criticism becomes almost identical with education, and that by this standard we may judge the value of any study as an instrument of education, and may estimate the merit of any opposition or presentation of that study? It is at least," he concludes, "in the existing chaos of pedagogical theories, a question worthy of consideration."

The essay on "Victorian Literature and the philosophy of change which follows this is a splendid example of the author's own attempts to fulfill the critic's obligation of understanding the guiding principle behind the evolution of ideas. It is one of the most valuable discussions in the series, gaining part of its clarity no doubt from the careful organization of the book which it ostensibly reviews: The Literature of the Victorian Esa, by Hugh Walker; for Mr. Walker uses a parallel arrangement of writer and intellectual figures, such as Darwin and Tennyson, Huxley and Arnold, to show the interworking of various intellectual currents in the nineteenth century. Mr. Nord dates the beginning of the Victorian period with Wordsworth, "emotionally the father of us all," and traces the expression of the philosophy of change in the poetry of Whitman,
Morris, Swinburne, Browning, and Tennyson. The critic's own concise thought and careful phrasing is manifest in his judgments here when he speaks of Tennyson and Arnold, the most persistent voices singing to sing the transition of the old to the new, "In Tennyson the two fields lay curiously side by side, and it is the sign of a certain lack of hardness in his mental fibre that he never seemed to perceive their mutual antagonism. At one moment he is the conscious laureate of science and evolution and of a self-evolving change moving to some far-off divine event; at another he is the prophet of insight, singing the mystery of the timeless, changeless, spirit." Mr. More's judgment is that the literature of the Victorian era is impoverished as a result of a loss of consciousness of the "pillars of eternity." The philosopher who worries himself over the inescapable duality of consciousness recognizes as a critic the need of stability.

Volume VIII, The Drift of Romanticism, is unusual among Mr. More's books in that it has a preface, and that that preface advocates the kind of criticism which is a balance between sympathy with the individual work, and attention to the relationship of the individual piece with other things, and to its place in literature as cause or effect. This is the exception among his books in that he lays down his critical principles at the beginning and adheres to them through most of the essays. "The romantic movement," he says, "conveys all its show of expansion, seems to me to be... a drift towards disintegration and discourse." Although he is sensitive to the beauty of certain
romantic works and the greatness of certain of the men, he nevertheless deals with them as typical of their age rather than in regard to their particular excellence. In that light he writes of William Beechford, Cardinal Newman, Walter Pater, Thomas Huxley, Fiona McLeod, and Friedrich Nietzsche. But in the last paper he swings back to a discussion of his favorite dualism by giving ninety paragraph definitions of such terms as reason, happiness, and tradition. The book displays ability to give pleasing characterizations; an ability seen at its best in the paper on Newman; the power of analysis of character and of literary forms; distrust of romanticism as a movement; and a keen historical sense in regard to the evolution of ideas.

Aristocracy and Justice, the next volume, contains some of the best known essays in the series. In it the author gives recognition to the need for cultural leadership, expresses his taste for creative scholarship, advocates intensive instead of extensive study in the college, defines justice as distribution, criticizes social work such as that of Jane Addams on that score, and finally explains the role of reason in all things. Such action as is displayed is intellectual; there is a tone of aloofness in the maintenance of a certain interest in social welfare. Mr. Love is not the type to conduct social experiments himself, and seems to criticize as from a distance. Herbert Ellsworth Cory in criticizing the book called it "a noble dramatization of hedonism" and its author "a reactionary aristocrat," but declares that he errs in advocating the imposition of good traditions on an ignorant populace (the long-distance exhortation of the high-born hermit to a congregation.)
which he is inclined to keep remote and therefore cannot know."

Having regarded Mr. More as a master, he finds himself watching with growing concern "what seems to be a steady crescendo of bitterness in his later volumes, that bitterness which isolates and warps the noble mind."

Volume X, Decadent Wit, essays on seventeenth and eighteenth century writers, is less interesting, as a whole, than most of the other volumes, perhaps because of its subjects. It shows Mr. More's attentiveness to the influence of character on writing, his appreciation of the technique of writing, and his ability to evaluate a period - all qualities that have previously been noted.

A New England Group and Others, the final volume of the Sholbury Essays, might seem from its title to be concerned mostly with American literature, but that is a subject to which Mr. More could never confine himself through the entirety of a book. The book is characterized by its knowledge of streams of American thought and literature, its continued attention to the problems of dualis, its brief study of economic ideas in connection with the review of Edward Poole's harbor, and its analysis of the deterioration of Oxford as a center of culture. Mr. More's admiration is never unqualified, and his temperament is seldom anything but cautious. The first three papers in the volume - "The Spirit and Poetry of Early New England", "Jonathon Edwards," and "Emerson," are a valuable history of the evolution of the Puritan idea, but the remaining essays, though written with more heat than customary, are somewhat lacking in clarity.
They attest Mr. More's interest in economic and social affairs without displaying any profound capacity for meeting their needs.

Surveying all these Shelburne Essays, looking at them as a composite, through them there are seen to glean certain salient characteristics of spirit and technique. Brooding through all, leavening all, is the spirit of contemplation, which is remarkable not only within itself, but in contrast to the frequent restlessness of current American writing as of our mode of living. Intellectual peace is a rarity. Mr. More has not entirely achieved it, for his calm is broken somewhat when he contemplates modern social and economic affairs; but as long as he confines himself to intellectual realm, randoms are foreign to him, controversy, bickering, and everything of that sort removed from him. The balance, the overtness, that is characteristic of Greek thought may have transformed itself to him as a reward for his persistent effort in that field. Conservatism in action, excellence in craftsmanship, breadth and accuracy of scholarship, justice in criticism, as in standards of social conduct - these are his abiding principles.

Among Mr. More's leading characteristics, then, are his power to cope with the essence of a man, as seen, for example, in his essays on Hawthorne, Hoarn, and Whittier; his superior ability in tracing historic origins and dealing with long developing lines of thought, as in his handling of the problem of dualism, the Puritan line of moral concepts, and the progress of ideas in the Victorian period; his quiet recognition of certain literary standards - his theory of rhythm, his conception of
literature as criticism of life, his appreciation of other critics, chiefly Sainte-Beuve and Arnold, and his appreciation of good writing, manifested in his attitude toward Pope; his emphasis on balance, whether as a matter of intellect, conduct, or technical procedure; his conception of the need for intellectual leadership in the world; and his concern with the problems of philosophy, particularly an inescapable dualism. These are among the characteristic traits and principles which one perceives in almost every encounter with one of his essays.

His equipment is his own breadth of culture and his extensive education, an openmindedness that one breathes through his work despite a certain conservatism that seems a part of its fibre, and an innate taste for what is wholesome, true, and life-giving in literature and social relations. An estimate of him published under the title "A Critic of High Rank", praises him for the breadth and genuineness of his scholarship, for his ethical sincerity, his sound writing, his deep-going intellectual integrity, his generous endowment of common-sense along with his academic taste, his insight, his fine poise in spite of a certain tone of "discouraged and somewhat cynical pessimism". "Mr. More's essays are the best American parallel to those incomparable letters which for a quarter of a century every Tuesday morning sent Sainte-Beuve down to the bottom of the pit not to reascend until Friday evening at some unknown hour; and which have done more than any similar body of writing to define French literature in racial and artistic terms."

It cannot be said, however, that Mr. More's work has
succeeded in revealing American literature as a product of American life to either his countrymen or the peoples of the continent in any such measure as has Sainte-Beuve's in dealing with his native literature. The endeavors of both Mr. More and Mr. Browne have been directed in a measure toward the building up of an American culture, and, as an expression of that and an aid in its expansion, the development of a broader and richer American literature. Neither writer has written for a popular audience, so neither has received widespread acclamation, though both have had the enthusiastic support of many of our scholars. Mr. Browne's contribution to the cause of an American culture is the more precise of the two by virtue of a more definite discussion of the writer in the concluding chapter of French Traits, than any presented by Mr. More. Mr. Browne has given himself the additional advantage of presenting us with that is in some degree a unified study of American authors in his American Prose Masters, whereas Mr. More's American essays are scattered capriciously through the Shelburne series. Neither has Mr. More the knowledge of allied arts at his command that so distinguishes Mr. Browne. Yet through the unity and consistency of his ideas, his unflagging emphasis on intellectual culture, and his clear presentation of the evolution of American letters, he has probably done as much as the other toward defining American thought and literature. Both men have held posts enabling them to exercise a subtle influence in the formation of public opinion, whether the general public was aware of their names or not: Mr. More as editor of the Nation and contributor to other magazines of note, and Mr.
Browne as magazine writer and literary adviser of Scribner's and Sons.

The literary style of Paul Elmer More is significant because indicative of the man and his attitude. His prose is euphonious, dignified, and unhurried, unbroken by popular wording or pedantic phrasing. His essays on philosophy are an exception in a way, however, for they are technical in diction and procedure, and difficult of digestion for the average mind. One is reminded again of Stuart Sherman's complaint that, admirable as is the moving poetry of Mr. More's ideas, it is "so intermittent, and there is so much territory through which it does not flow!" However that may be, his prose is as a rule calm and dispassionate, and is smooth and unflurried to the ear, though not often achieving actual beauty. It is of that quiet excellence which never points to itself with pride, but keeps itself in the background with well-bred reticence.

His attacks - that is, his opening sentences - are clean-cut and forceful, without preamble, plunging immediately into matters of biographical significance or literary importance. A few examples from the fourth volume will suffice to illustrate this point. The Franklin essay begins, "There is a certain embarrassment in dealing with Franklin as a man of letters, for the simple reason that he was never, in the strict sense, concerned with letters at all" - and it is with the social aspect of the man and his writing that the critic concerns himself. The Whitman study starts with the more eloquent statement that, "It is ill dealing with the prophets. They themselves may be approachable, serene, and simple, but about
them their disciples seem cast such a mirage of words that the
seeker is blinded and baffled, if not utterly repelled. And
denying what the disciples say, one fears the rebuke of deny-
ing the great principles whose names they usurp. You may read
in Mr. Burroughs or Mr. O'Connor or Mr. Bucko and feel so
strong a repulsion for their idol that only a copious draught
direct from the Leaves of Grass and Spectator Days will restore
your mind to its equilibrium;" The essays draw liberally on
biographical material, but are almost without exception at-
ttempts to place the men as literary personalities and as links
in a literary chain rather than to present them as interesting
biographical subjects. Mr. More is too philosophic, too much
concerned with the relation of the individual to the universal
scheme to write otherwise.

A gross perempt from the London Speaker leads him in
these measured but admiring terms: "He is familiar with classical,
Oriental, and English literature; he uses a temperate, lucid,
weighty, and not ungracious style; he is aware of his best
predecessors, and is apparently on the way to a set of philo-
sophic principles which should lead him to a high and perhaps
influential place in criticism. We believe that we are in
the presence of a critic who must be counted among the first
who take literature and life for their theme."

It can truthfully be said that Paul Elmer More is a
citizen of the world, and not of America alone, in that he has
at heart the cultural progress of all countries rather than
of a single nation. In a way, he is a citizen of all time, not
of today alone. This is not to be interpreted as declaring.
that he has shown his right to a place among the Immortals, for that does not necessarily follow; his work is lofty but not exalted, learned, but lacking in touch with the universal human heart, and consequently, not to be ranked among the classics, in spite of its breadth of culture, range of interest, and quiet, unobtrusive excellence of style. Mr. More is not of the Immortals, certainly, but he has partaken of their character in that he has an ability to profit by the past, live in the present, and build for the future, where learning is separated from sanity and wisdom, either tragedy or futility results; but in Mr. More the three are united, although the blend is not perfect, for his learning seems to have withdrawn his finger somewhat from the pulse of the great human heart. His is an eye intent on watching the spectacle of the human race in progress. As a result, his prose has eminence - and yet in spite of that fact, it falls short of grandeur.
CHAPTER IV
Stuart Pratt Sherman

Out of the welter of younger critics springs the name of Stuart Pratt Sherman, a son of the Midlands, with the stamp of his native region on his speech, enhanced by the spice and vigor of Eastern journalism; with an intellect whetted on the classics, and a heart rich in the love of men. Middle age found him a capable professor, a lively journalist, a formidable critic, and, in whatever capacity he served, one of the outstanding spokesmen for the American tradition in literature and life. With his strong physique and robust spirit, he was a man who found living a joy. Then on August 23, 1926, came the news of his death while on his vacation. Carl Van Doren wrote a few days later, "The sudden, still incredible death of Stuart P. Sherman at the age of forty-five stops a voice which, though listened to from the time it first began to speak out, had only well begun to say what was in the man to be said." Another critic, equally appreciative, believed that, "Stuart Pratt Sherman, the ablest and most penetrating scholar critic of our generation in America, has died at the moment when his powers were greatest."

Somewhat shy though he seemed to those who knew him personally, he was never in any sense an ascetic, although there was a time when he was condemned for remaining in his secure Illinois post, remote from New York, the hub of things literary - seeming so to its inhabitants, at least - and denying himself the experience of knowing personally the men
and women whose works he criticized in print. But wherever he was, he was a man who lived on the highway, near the thoughts and emotions of men. From the time this son of Iowa started to Williams College, he made and kept a reputation for scholarship, but he retained the elasticity of spirit and the interest in people that are pledges of warm humanity. Neither as student, as professor, nor as critic, did he live an isolated existence.

The careful classical scholarship in which he was trained made him agreeably tart toward contemporary writers; however, a habit which at least one critic sees as encouraged by his career. "He was a prize boy at Williams College; academic hands applauded him through the Harvard graduate school; there were many academic gates wide for him when he came out. At the University of Illinois he climbed the hard steps of promotion so that at thirty he was a full professor and had already begun to reap the crop of invitations by which envious universities have sought to tempt him to other learned groves. From the first, responsibility has sat upon his shoulders." At twenty-one, already a Phi Beta Kappa, he received his A.B. from Williams College; the next year he won his A.M. from Harvard, and two years later, in 1906, his Ph.D from the same school. Being somewhat of a rebel by nature if not by training, he revolted against the regimen of rigorous technical scholarship and for some time was embittered by its demands. But it may be said for him that he mastered his Harvard professors' methods before attempting to combat them. This rebellion may be partially responsible for later flashes of cynicism to be found in his works, regarding the contribution of our graduate schools and
our system of advanced education. He may not be the only graduate who has questioned the efficacy of the régime, or has felt the grind out of proportion to the attendant increase in intellectual stature.

However that may be, this attitude does not seem to have permanently colored his outlook, whatever temporary influence it might have had in sharpening his sarcasm. It is not likely that a confirmed skeptic regarding the cause of higher education would have occupied himself with a teaching career for eighteen years following the attainment of his own degree.

Immediately after leaving Harvard, Mr. Sherman became an instructor in Northwestern University. Promotions failed to hold him there, and after several years he transferred his allegiance to the University of Illinois, where he was made full professor in 1911, and later became head of the department of English. He must have found his work congenial and been somewhat conscious of the service he was rendering or he would not have refused the opportunity of becoming editor of the Nation in 1914, a refusal deplored by many of his critical friends at the time. Those who viewed this decision with disfavor felt that with such a step he closed the door on enlarged opportunities that would have meant a greater vision, and would have freed him from his adherence to the dogma of tradition as distinguished from its spirit, a drawback that prevented his supremacy among the younger critics. It is not surprising that such an offer should have come to him, for to Paul Elmer More, for several years the editor of the magazine, is given the credit for discovering young Sherman as a critic, and Mr. Sherman has more
than once voiced his admiration for Mr. More's ideals and workmanship, albeit the two could not agree on all points. What the editorship would have done for him, coming as such a comparatively early period in his life, it is idle to speculate; possibly it would not have changed his views as much as his friends at the time had hoped, considering the conservative nature of the publication. It is true that it would have brought him into more direct contact with contemporary literature than he was to experience for ten years; but the editorship had not notably altered Mr. More's sympathies or made his style of writing noticeably more congenial to public taste, even though it did force him to attend more closely to contemporary thought than he had done before. It is possible that had Mr. Sherman been forced into contact with current books as he was the last two years of his life as literary editor of the New York Herald Tribune, his work might have been nearer its maximum in power at the time of his death: it might have hastened the amalgamation of his interest in past and present, and quickened the forming of a more mature, more representative critical creed.

But speculation is vain. What he actually did was to remain with the university, and to make himself one of the chief factors in the development of that institution. He was a genuine scholar, but never a pedant; his interest in his students was primarily that of friend and counsellor, rather than academician.

It was in 1924 that Mr. Sherman at last heeded the call of New York. He resigned his professorship, moved with his wife and son to the metropolis, and for the first time in his fourteen or fifteen years of critical writing, devoted himself
entirely to writing reviews and critical articles in his capacity of editor of Books, the newly established literary supplement of the New York Tribune. Irina Van Doren, his assistant, has been placed in the editorial chair since his death, and the work goes on much as before, except that there has been no permanent reviewer to combine the breadth of knowledge, the wit, and the zest for life that was Mr. Sherman's; nor has there been so consistent and unsparing an editorial policy of fostering an American literature that is in the highest degree preservative of the best in American ideals and mores. Books is not the best literary review in the country, but it is one of the three or four best, and given a longer run under Mr. Sherman's control, might conceivably have raised its standards. Henry Seidel Canby, editor of the Saturday Review of Literature, another critical organ of high standing, remains the professor even in the editorial chair—inclined, dignified, worthy of respect as teacher and critic, but more the austere judge than the formulator of public opinion. Mr. Sherman addressed himself more closely to the popular audience and might easily have played the more impressive role as a molder of American taste.

Mr. Sherman as a man is never to be known again. He lingers on only in the memory of his students, his comparatively few but fervent personal friends, and the many persons whose lives he chanced to brush against in the course of his day's occupations. To the hundreds who followed his career with interest without ever having seen the man himself, he was nevertheless a personality, ardent and vital; for those who seek him now, the print is still warm with his presence. A few of his
journalistic papers have lost their current value because they dealt necessarily with things which were of the moment only; but even these if written in his usual vein retain some of their appeal through their colorful idiom. Because of the vigor and resourcefulness of their language, the moral integrity and intellectual firmness of their content, Mr. Sherman's writings are peculiarly a pathway to the man. His ready pen yielded itself to both his strength and his weakness, and has left behind it a record of his message to his generation and with lesser potency, to posterity.

Until the year America entered the war Mr. Sherman had published no independent studies, although he had edited Treasure Island, Coriolanus, A Book of Short Stories, and Ford's 'Tis Pity and The Broken Heart, a list to which he was later to add editions of The Scarlet Letter, the Sand-Flaubert Letters, Essays and Poems of Emerson, Leaves of Grass, The Poetical Works of Joaquin Miller, American Prose Masters, and Letters to a Lady in the Country, all issued between the years 1911 and 1925.

All but one of Mr. Sherman's own books are collections of articles and essays, most of which had been previously published in rudimentary form at least in any of the dozen or so magazines to which he was a frequent contributor: Books, The Nation, the Atlantic Monthly, and others. The last to be issued under his name, Shaping Men and Women, appeared in 1928 and was necessarily edited by another hand, but with this exception, all the selection and arrangement were done by Mr. Sherman himself; and all therefore bear the sanction of his taste.
The critic made his initial appearance in book form as an independent author in 1917, when at the age of thirty-six he published Matthew Arnold, How to Know Him as one of the volumes in the series edited by Will D. Howe. The same year saw the publication of his On Contemporary Literature, a collection of essays reprinted from the Nation after being revised and enlarged.

As to type, Matthew Arnold stands alone among Mr. Sherman's works. Whatever his reasons might have been, never again did he turn himself to an extended study of a single man. It would have been kindly of him had he written a similar book toward the close of his career to give his critics meat for comparison and contrast, and enable them to point to this and that as a landmark and say, here he advanced, here retrogressed, here remained unchanged. But it was never his policy to make too easy the paths of those who criticized him. The book itself is of interest because of its intrinsic value, its position as the author's initial work of any length, and its introduction to his critical method, for the plan used here, condensed and altered, became the groundwork or at least the point of departure for most of his later reviews and critical articles. Especially considering the full title of the book, Matthew Arnold, How to Know Him, Mr. Sherman showed foresight in beginning with the character of the man, continuing with a study of his personal poems, then of his external poems, and proceeding then to discuss his criticism and his attitude toward education, politics and society, and religion, a separate chapter being devoted to each. To paraphrase Arnold himself, his attempt was to see him
steadily, and see him whole. His method is both logical and chronological. Having given in his first chapter a framework of biographical facts and personal traits, in the ensuing chapters he shows the development of the man's stature stage by stage. The concluding chapter on religion contributes less in the way of definiteness than the others, but perhaps it is Arnold's failure at that point rather than Mr. Sherman's, for in a critical study a clear-cut subject is half the battle won. We have more to learn from Arnold in other fields; but because his attitude in this is less understood, less noticed, perhaps there is a greater need for clear presentation than would otherwise be true. Clarity of portraiture would have been enhanced by a strengthened synthesis at the close of the book. This would have made the unity of the book more obvious and would have given both finality and decisiveness to the characterization. Of the numerous reviewers who commented on the book at the time of its appearance, but few opposed its method, and those few neglected to give constructive hints, so the pleasure of knowing their reaction to such a suggestion as this is forever denied us.

The book is a sane one, the matter carefully presented, carefully phrased. If it is lacking in positive brilliance, it is characterized by diligence in research, comprehensiveness in approach and understanding, and conscientious thoroughness in judgment. If may be, as one critic suggests, that the verse quotations are not of the best and that Mr. Sherman was inherently unsympathetic with Arnold as poet and essayist, though this latter idea is best accepted with reservations. Audibly and tacitly, Mr. Sherman acknowledges his critical indebtedness to
this most estimable of English critics, whose strong points were
many of them adopted by his American follower, and his weak-
nesses likewise. Arnold believed that the critical temperament,
kindly but firm; Mr. Shorman, whether or not influenced direct-
ly by the suggestion, took the same stand and acted on it,
usually but not always to his advantage. The Arnold study is
carefully analytical and makes profitable reading except for
the most advanced of Arnold specialists. It lacks the exactitude
and penetration of Mr. Brownell’s essay; it digs somehow less
deeply and directly into the man’s fundamental qualities, and
is less precise in its expression of them. The whole Sherman
study probably does not contain so clearcut a dictum of
Arnold’s literary style as Mr. Brownell’s forcible if uncophon-
ious statement that Arnold “makes his lucidity count aesthetical-
ly.” The book is somewhat deficient in its references to other
writers and other movements, allusions of a sort in which Mr.
Nero’s works abound. But the careful workmanship that was to
become typical of Mr. Shorman’s book reviews is displayed more
to advantage. The critic is noticeably more conservative than
usual in his phrasing—more the teacher, perhaps, less the
convincing debater. It may be that his diction is under the
influence of academic halls, though his work cannot be critic-
cized as pedantic. In fact, a writer for the Yale Review paid
him this tribute: “Mr. Shorman has the gift of style. He says
exactly what he wishes to say, without hurry, without circumlo-
cution, without bungling.... He does admirable justice to
Arnold’s life as a record of noble and unselfish endeavor; the
life of a man who preached everywhere the duty of perfecting
our natural forces, moral, intellectual, aesthetic, social and religious. The book may be heartily recommended to those who wish to understand why Arnold is still an important influence in the world." Incidentally, Arnold's critical tenets here noted are the same for which Mr. Sherman took so decided a stand.

In On Contemporary Literature, Mr. Sherman establishes his habit of conversing directly with his readers by means of prefatory comments, a custom rare with Mr. Browne and Mr. More, but frequent among informal writers. Unregretful that he is classed as a "besotted Victorian," he avouches his belief in the notion of human progress in spite of his pessimism in regard to contemporary life, and makes war on the naturalism that, in his mind, is its enemy. "The great revolutionary task of the nineteenth-century thinkers, to speak it briefly, was to put men into nature. The great task of the twentieth-century thinkers is to get him out again... We have followed nature to the last ditch and ditch water." Looking to criticism, once an ally and abetter in the naturalistic movement, now to be an ally against it, he gives Mr. More and Mr. Irving Babbitt the chief credit for building up and rendering self-conscious the movement against naturalism. "In America the critical movement which opposes naturalism is not, if I understand it, distinctively religious, but distinctively humanistic. It seeks not primarily to reclaim men for God but to reclaim him for civil society; not so much to fit him with wings as to persuade him to shed the horns and hoofs which he has been wearing in his long après-midi d'une faune." It is that movement with
which he permanently allied himself. To him, human progress lies in the line of diverting rather than in indulging human nature, just as the sculptor's success lies in overcoming rather than following the natural tendencies of his clay. Literature "should mirror a society more regardful of its ascertained value, more reverent of its fine traditions, more reluctant to take up with the notions of windy innovators. It should, in short, suggest in its own subtle way the desirability of continuing to work out in the world that ideal pattern which lies in the instructed and disciplined heart." This is perhaps the strongest cut-and-cut declaration as a humanist to be found in his published works.

Mr. Sherman gives it as his conviction that the critic who deals with his contemporaries must have some sympathy with them and with the spirit of his age. But the creative artist must grant that if there is no absolute truth for the critic, neither is there for the novelist or the poet, who also is a critic of life, altering his reader's conception of truth through his selection of facts, ideas, and emotions for presentation. So the critic is immediately curious as to the manner of man and the mode of life of this writer through whose eyes a view of the world is to be taken. Every paper in the collection has, somewhere near its beginning, a character study of the man who is its subject, with sometimes brief, sometimes lengthy consideration of his biography as a source of his conception of life. The titles of the chapters are indicative of the author's attitude toward his subjects: "The Democracy of Mark Twain," "The Utopian Naturalism of H.G. Wells," "The
Barbaric Naturalism of Theodore Dreiser," "The Aesthetic Naturalism of George Moore", "The Exoticism of John Synge", "The Complacent Toryism of Alfred Austin", "The Aesthetic Idealism of Henry James", "The Humanism of George Meredith", "Shakespeare, Our Great Contemporary". Even in his most condemning papers, Mr. Sherman tries to give due praise to the subject—sometimes for keen powers of observation, for aptiction, for vivid imagination—but his final judgments are always colored by his filled idea of the moral function of literature. The essays on Mark Twain, Henry James, and George Meredith are among the best in the volume, the first because of its robust humor, its colorful, dexterous style, and its appreciation of Mark Twain's place as a representative American; the second because of its sensitive perception of Henry James as an exponent of beauty—a "flawless appreciation", one critic calls it; and the third for the accuracy and intelligence of its insight.

The little pamphlet entitled "The Significance of Sinclair Lewis", which made its appearance in 1922, was later included as a part of *Points of View*. Mr. Sherman sees Sinclair Lewis as a leader in the revolt of the Younger Generation. He admires him for turning the searchlight on what the critic considers representative types of our modern civilization, but says that sooner or later Mr. Lewis will be obliged to portray his idea of a hero. Although *Elmer Gantry* is in no sense an attempt to depict such a character, it would have been interesting to have had Mr. Sherman's reaction to the book.
Of Americans, issued in 1922, Mr. Sherman says, "If this book fulfills in any degree the intention of its author, its tendency will be to encourage readers to keep open the channels of their national traditions and to scrutinize the contemporary literature in the light of their national past." Mr. Sherman is not a nationalist in the strict sense of the word, but sees in the nation the greatest agent for redeeming as it is for corrupting humanity. Friends of humanity will make the best progress through "criticizing and purifying the national spirit and fostering those elements in it which are truly humane." It is this conviction which is the motive behind almost all of his writing both in this book and in the ones to follow. In the opening chapter of Americans, "Mr. Mencken, the Junior Fille, and the New Spirit in Letters", Mr. Sherman sees a new public demanding a new literature, with a new literature necessitating a new criticism—all signs of rebellion against the American tradition. Mr. Mencken is the chief recipient of his blows. Mr. Sherman's wit is poised to full play by anything which involves his feeling, and as his reaction to Mr. Mencken's writing is strong, his diction is laden with feeling. He maliciously chooses his every word with a sting in its tail. Reluctant to give vent to pure bile, he tones down his criticisms with an appreciation of Mr. Mencken's good qualities, particularly his aliveness; but in one or two statements he becomes as nearly vituperative as in him lies.

After this glance at current American thought, the author goes back to a study of tradition as developed and revealed in Franklin, Hawthorne, Whitman, Miller, and others, then swings
to various modern types as represented by Carl Sandburg, Andrew Carnegie, Theodore Roosevelt, the Adams family, and Paul Elmer More, in each of whom he finds something to praise and to blame according as he has followed or discarded the best in the American tradition. His criterion for judgment is always, directly or indirectly, the advancement of the human race. He has little hope for the helpful influence of our now foreign element in our literature, but adheres to the Puritan line of thought, a course which is in itself frequently revolutionary, as he takes care to point out. In the book as a whole, he displays a distrust of the present rebellion against tradition, because to his way of thinking, the experience of the race points to the wisdom of supporting rather than violating tradition; he emphasizes biography, as in the essay on Franklin, in which he shows the close relationship between character and action, and manifests even more than his usual attention to morality; he stresses personality, particularly in the Whitman study; and he places a high value on the living influence of authors of the past, especially Emerson. After reading the book, Burton Rascoe wrote, "The obvious points in the case for and against Mr. Shoran are: he is clever, witty, resourceful, passionate, personal, envious, deficient in a historical sense... a revolte by instinct and a reactionary by professional training, a poet... an ironist... When he is surveying a figure of the past, such as Benjamin Franklin or Emerson, or more recently Henry Adams or Theodore Roosevelt, he is able to bring to his subject the shrewdest analysis visible in modern letters. When he is talking about contemporary literature all he sees is - E.L. Mencken."
The *Genius of America*, published in the following year, 1923, is a sort of sequel to *American*, but might logically have been published first. Having been accused of being a hero-worshipper, Mr. Sherman in surprise hastens to declare that the hero he worships is not an individual, but the national life which gives expression, year after year, generation after generation, to the heroes who are typical of it. He champions the Puritan cause with a crusading fervor, declaring clearly that Puritanism is not to be associated with any one age or group. "Puritanism is not a fixed form of life," he says as one time, "it is a formative spirit, an ur gente exploring and creative spirit." The Puritans, according to his conception, are the non-conformers of any age who, animated by visions of a better life, refuse to be dominated by the demands of convention and have the courage to break away from a life of least resistance and discipline themselves to attain their ideal. As a great literary artist unavoidably expresses not only himself but also the dominant thought and feeling of the men with whom he lives, maintains Mr. Sherman, the great American artist must necessarily express the great moral idealism of America. "To rail against it would be to repeat the folly of the Restoration wits!" Literature in any society is a formidable agency for forming and reflecting life, and for calling on the great minds of the past to redeem the present. It is one avenue of education, for no man can be successfully educated until he feels himself linked with historic tradition. "Literature, then, is formidable because it emancipates a man from bondage to the present and makes him a citizen of this state which is as wide
as humanity and as old as the world. He may conform outwardly to the government of the man in the street, but his true inward allegiance is to a state which transcends national society, which transcends the international society of the present; and which has no sovereign but God. I have called it a republic; it is more strictly speaking a natural and entirely free aristocracy where no man has any power whatever but the power of his own spirit upon other spirits."

Points of View, which was published in 1924, is another presentation of Mr. Sherman's usual ideas and ideals in pretty much his customary manner. Incidentally, the title is the same as that used by Agnes Repplier for a book issued in the 1890's, although Mr. Sherman probably overlooked the fact. The style of his book is characterized by ease and assurance, and by the author's gift of sarcasm and flashing irony, as well as his more genial humor. In dealing with individual authors his method is much as before: a study of the personality, character, and biography of each man, a discussion of his mental, moral and artistic traits as exhibited in his books, which are almost always examined chronologically, frequently closing with a sort of composite portrait of the man as person and artist. As a critic, Mr. Sherman expresses his recognition of the need for purity in artistic expression, and the impossibility of legislating for it; the need in the formation of mature judgment for the cultural training so frequently rejected in youth; and the urgency for a straightforward, conscientious literary criticism free from the blindness he attributes to the Bacht-Dreiser school of novelists, who, he says, transfer their own myopic views to their readers.
More than once Mr. Sherman asserted that part of the duty of a critic in a democracy was to be understood. Perhaps it was with this idea in mind that he used a new method of approach in his next book, *My Dear Cornelia*, a little volume of personal essays in the form of conversations, reveries, and asides, with a story running through it all to give it intimacy and an appearance of authenticity. He even adds a mild middle-age love interest, with himself supposedly in the role of a Midwestern professor who is still faithful to Cornelia, the love of his youth, and is confident as well as that of her children, and the friend of her husband. His ideas of chastity, fidelity to marriage, comradeship in marriage, friendship, prohibition, hopefulness for the younger generation through their sportsmanship and straight-thinking "a comparatively new note of optimism for Mr. Sherman, by the way, and of the place of religion in everyday life, all are called forth by the pleasures and problems that play their part in the life of Cornelia's family. The author makes current problems concrete by making them personal. His tone is light and easy and humorous. Some readers find the book a searchlight on the issues of the day; others find it trivial, unconvincing, and somewhat forced. Probably the opinion expressed by F.A. Hutchinson, a reviewer for the New York Times, strikes a happy medium. He criticized the book for 'being somewhat sentimental and unaccustomedly thin, containing much that the author had already said. "Notwithstanding this, there is no inconsiderable display of sagacity and what in the best and broadest sense may be called weightiness."
Critical Woodcuts is a far more robust and weighty book. Inspired by the brisk, incisive art of the illustrator, Mr. Zadig, Mr. Sherman gave the book its name. His First Gallery contains the portraits of eight modern English and American novelists: Sherwood Anderson, D.H. Lawrence, Willa Cather; Floyd Dell, Ben Hecht, Ellen Glasgow, Rose Macaulay, and H.G. Wells. He went abroad into other fields and other countries for the inspirations for his Second Gallery: William qaler, Canadian Surgeon; Llewelyn Powys, English novelist; Anatole France, the French "immortal"; Pierre Loti, exotic French traveler and romanticist; Anton Chekhov, of Russia; Oscar Wilde, "a Dandy of Letters and Acquainted with Critic"; H.L. Mencken the Liberator, and several others. The men of the Third Gallery were of many ages: Mandeville, Boswell, Lawrence Stern, George Washington, Brigham Young, Jesus of Nazareth, and the American soldier dead in the war against Germany. The book gains in interest what it loses in unity by this variety. The author's flexible, vivacious vocabulary has full play within this array of personable subjects, so that his writing, always brisk and assured, is more colorful and resourceful than usual. The dignity of Matthew Arnold and the Benjamin Franklin study is gone. The professor is seldom in evidence, nor is the editor of the Cambridge History of American Literature. Instead, there is the reviewer and editor of Books - shrewd, forceful, energetic, intelligent, with his newly-acquired modern sympathies still balanced by his sensible natural tastes and careful training. His enthusiasms are quicker, broader, less conservative, more accessible to things modern, yet behind their ready wit and
modernity still lurks a hint of the old and perhaps well-
merited suspicion of anything published after 1890. His subjects
are timely, his phrasing unusually pertinent and palatable,
his analytic powers unimpaired. His method of organization
remains sensibly unchanged, for it is admirably thorough as a
book review outline: a few swinging characterizations concern-
ing the man and his contributions, then a brief personal
study, including usually a quick physical portrait, a few
biographical facts, set forth with humor and penetration and
disposed of with dispatch, then a chronological survey of his
work, frequently closing with a few words of summary or re-
iteration of distinctive traits.

At the time the book appeared, almost all who reviewed
it praised it for being interesting, accurate, and lively,
although Mark Van Doren still preferred on Contemporary Litera-
ture to all his other books, and some of the other critics,
though enjoying the book, looked forward to a time of closer
union between Mr. Sherman's new impressionistic modern tastes
and his old classical standards. Mr. Van Wyck Brooks, writing
in Mr. Sherman's own paper, expressed something of this feel-
ing when he wrote, "Mr. Sherman was always a man of strong
feeling, a feeling for life and a feeling for literature in
general. It was this that carried him over his sorrows; it is
this that makes him today the most interesting figure in
American criticism. In his newly awakened sympathy with the
modern world he has become a sort of impressionist of character.
But he seems to be destined for a third incarnation. He is the
only critic in America today who writes of the past and of the
present with equal relish. Of the past he writes with relish and authority. "He believed that Mr. Sherman had only one more step to take, and that was to deal with modern literature with this same general assurance, to "make his position unique in American letters."

The Main Stream, printed in 1927, is the last of the critic's books to be selected and arranged under his own supervision. Like most of his other publications, it is a collection of weekly reviews, and is more imposing as a mass than as "diurnal entries." Considering that the subjects vary from Thomas Jefferson to Nicholas Murray Butler, from Thoreau to Dreiser and Ring Lardner, and from Montaigne to Carl Sandburg, Poultney Bigelow, and Paul Bunyan and his Blue Ox, there is some difficulty in determining Mr. Sherman's idea of the main stream. The book lacks unity of subject matter, though it is consistent in method, style, and general attitude. But it is unlikely that many other modern American reviews would make so desirable an array when published in book form as is true of both Critical Woodcuts and The Main Stream. Both show a thoughtfulness, a careful workmanship, and a thoroughness of investigation to be admired, especially by way of contrast with the lighter reviewers of the moment. The Christian Century saw in The Main Stream: "fine illustrations of seldom utilized possibility of converting the review into the critical essay," and a writer in the Saturday Review called it "real literature" while other critics, though criticizing it for its diversity of subject matter and its lack of unity, praised it as excellent
reading, and as an illuminating example of what American criticism can be. Taken as a whole, it is slightly inferior to Critical Woodcuts, but has much the same vitality and pertinence.

The latest book to be published under the name of Mr. Sherman is Shaping Men and Women, edited by Jacob Zeitlin, and intended as a memorial to Mr. Sherman's career as a teacher. It includes lectures and essays not previously appearing in any of his collections. Many of them were not written to be published, but because they show the author in the double role of professor and critic, and present many of the ideas he held as an educator, they furnish a closer insight into his personality than do the books which were more carefully written and more exactly edited. It is natural that the book should receive less popular attention than those published during the author's lifetime; nevertheless it is not to be overlooked by any person striving for a full understanding of the author as a personality and of his positions as critic and teacher. When C.P. Whitcher reviewed the volume for Books, the paper once edited by Mr. Sherman, he wrote, "To those who regard criticism as something to be aloof to soil its hands with the growth, struggle and dot of the moment, Sherman will doubtless seem a kind of playboy in letters. But it is hard to see how one can care intensely about the fortunes of the moment in which we live and not recognize him as the most valiant critic of our generation. He alone was willing to keep his great forces of mind and information plastic for immediate use and to say the word of encouragement or teasing scorn that the occasion demanded." It is somewhat extravagant
to credit Mr. Sherman out of all the horde of critical writers
with being the sole possessor of these traits. Notwithstanding
that fact, his distinction owes itself partly to those very
qualities Mr. Whicher discerned in him. It is reassuring to
know that such characteristics are observable in his minor as
well as in his major writings.

Those are the works by which Stuart Pratt Sherman,
professor, reviewer, editor and critic, must be judged by his
generation and others to come. He brought to his work a genial
disposition, irritated occasionally by the display of recklessness,
mental crudity, and animalism in current writing, and
perhaps sharpened a little toward the last of his career, but
never obliterated. He was endowed with an alert and fertile
intellect, quick to fasten itself effectively on anything
exciting either his enthusiasm or his animosity; a ready humor,
and a sharp wit which he sometimes exercised with relish; a
diligence in study which inspired him to read all or nearly
all of a man's books if he were reviewing a single one, as in
the reviews of Sherwood Anderson's Dark Laughter, Willa Cather's
The Professor's House, Ellen Glasgow's Barren Ground, and any
number of others; and to unearth valuable material in biograph-
ics, journals, and lesser sources; with these went a moral
sensitiveness unusual in modern authors, or at least rarely
tolerated in themselves as a part of their critical equipment.
A natural enjoyment in good reading was fostered by a solid
training in classical literature, and developed through a life-
time of extended, and in time varied, reading. Lacking the
philosophical profundity of Mr. More and the aesthetic culture
of Mr. Brownell, Mr. Sherman possessed a warm interest in individual life and a fervor for human progress unknown to either in such degree. It was at once his excellence and his shortcoming that he could rarely see literature except as a medium for the moral advancement of the race. This idealism led him to a keen, enkindling appreciation of Arnold, Franklin, Whitman, Hawthorne, George Meredith, Arnold Bennett, Willa Cather, Carl Sandburg, and to depreciation of Anatole France, Laurence Sterne, H.L. Mencken, Theodore Dreiser, and especially at the beginning of his career, of a host of lesser modern writers. But it is to be said to his credit that he was not blind to the aestheticism of Henry James, the exoticism of Pomer Loti, the creative imagination that fostered the Paul Bunyan stories, the masochism of Walter de la Mare, the scholastic excellence of Paul Elmer More, the unquenchable desire for perfection of William Cary Brownell.

Mr. Sherman was comparatively articulate in regard to his critical creed. It is a reasonably simple task to weave into a consistent whole the statements explaining and implying it that are scattered throughout his works, and are usually emphasized in the introductions of his books. Literature, to his mind, is at once a reflector, formulator, and modifier of human progress; a great work of literature occurs when a great artist, living in a great society, succeeds in giving noble embodiment to its highest ideals and preserving its worthiest practices. The experience of the race is best conserved through tradition, and in America the loftiest tradition is that of Puritanism, a courageous revolt against bigotry, injustice,
insincerity, ignorance and dishonesty in whatever form they occur, and an unchanging passion for a better life. It is the highest function of the man of letters to make this ideal prevail throughout society. To use Mr. Sherman’s phrase, it is the obligation of the critic of current literature to act as scout on the ever-changing river of literature, to sound it and to characterize it; it is folly to think disinterestedness a part of the critical equipment to his way of thinking; in reality, critics are valued not for their disinterestedness, which is monotonous and sleep-inducing, but “in proportion to the soundness and abundance of their preconceptions and in proportion to the adequacy of their ulterior purposes.”

As a critic, Mr. Sherman is characterized by his persistent search for moral truth in literature, his interest in the preservation of the highest social and ethical standards through literary mediums, and in the protection of American literature from the inroads of ignorant, malicious, or mis-shapen practitioners of the art. Because of his assurance, his youthfulness at the time he began writing, his fearlessness, his open opposition to many popular modern movements and their leaders, and his unrelenting defense of the moral ideal in literature, earning for himself the name of Puritan, which carried with it all the opprobrium that “Victorian” did a few years ago - because of these traits and a knack the man had for hitting authors’ sore spots and for making debatable statements with irritating convincingness, he was frequently engaged in controversies, especially after assuming his editorial position. Of these, the Mencken-Sherman argument attained
the largest proportions, and was carried on with the most heat by both the principal participants and their followers, the issues being the the criterion proper for a critic, and the definition of literature itself. Delicacy had no part in the warfare. Yet at least one writer who had several times encountered Stuart Sherman called him the gentlest of men, and so he seemed to be, when not roused in defense of his ethical creed.

His customary method of presentation in a book review has already been noted: a portrayal of the author's character is followed by an examination of the particular book to be reviewed, a comparison of it with other books by the same author in the order of their publication, a careful tracing of the development or disappearance of certain ideas through various stages and aspects, an occasional comparison with other writers, and at the end frequently a few pitying sentences of characterization that linger in the mind, as in the papers of Oscar Wilde, Matthew Gully Browne, Pierre Loti, and Anton Chekhov in Critical Woodcuts, and in the same and penetrating essay on Thoreau and those on Theodore Dreiser, Anatole France and George Moore in The Main Stream. The thoroughness of investigation and analysis which this plan necessitates is one of the evidences of Mr. Sherman's superiority over a host of contemporary writers.

One of Mr. Sherman's charms is his vivacious, muscular style, with his humorous quips and his words that tingle with life. Every essay and review yields ready samples of these characteristics, but the paper on Mark Twain abounds in them; it sounds as though Mr. Sherman had had joy in the writing of
it. His deft, picturesque turns in biography can be taken for
illustration. Mark Twain, after pleading his mother not to
"throw a card or drink a drop of liquor," had set out to see
the world as a printer. "But then he heard the call of the
Father of Waters, and for four years was pilot, and studied
the intricate mysteries of the Mississippi, and laughed and
jested with the rivermen from St. Louis to New Orleans, till
a shell from the Union batteries exploded in front of his
pilot house and ended that chapter. Then for a few days as
second lieutenant of an extemporized militia company, he rode
a small yellow mare to the aid of the Confederacy. Next the
golden flare in the far West caught his eye, and crouched among
the mail-bags behind six galloping horses, he swapped yarns
across seventeen hundred miles of plains till he reached
Carson City, and became a minor... From the unrecompensative pick
and shovel he turned to the boisterous, bowie-knife journalism
of the Enterprise, and thence to the vitriolic humor of the
Morning Call in San Francisco." After having made and lost
one fortune, and repaid his creditors with another, he made a
third for himself, "and built himself splendid mansions and
rested from his labors on an Italian mahogany bed, clad in a
dressing-gown of Persian silk" Oxford called him across the
sea to make him a Doctor of Letters, and he retired until in
1910 "the call came to set his course toward the sinking sun".
Quizzical humor, rapid motion, forceful idiom, and a bleeding
of his mood with the predominating one of the author criticised
are among Mr. Sherman's most noticeable stylistic traits. After
laboring over the precise phrases of some of the weightier
critics, one is inclined to respond gladly to Mr. Sherman's advances and say, Thank goodness for a critic who can be read with a chuckle. No quicker stab for this Puritan! The fact cannot be dodged that he is at times dogmatic, and that at the beginning of his career particularly he writes as a man with a thesis. But it can never be laid at his door that he sinned the sin of dullness. He has been accused of being provincial, but he was seemingly outgrowing that; he was accused of being prejudiced in favor of Puritanism, but taking his definition for the term, it was a title to accept with pride; but he was seldom if ever accused of being tedious and uninteresting.

In the fifteen or more years of his critical activity, he had to his credit the discovery of not a single new reputation, and the support of few public favorites ahead of popular approval, except for Sinclair Lewis. Early in his career he was criticized for being blind to all but one criterion, and that the humanitarian; later, he was accused of being an impressionist, too much influenced by New York intolerance. But he was admired for his ever-increasing knowledge, his exacting scrutiny of his own tastes and experiences as a source and guide for his critical conduct, his stubborn tenacity in adhering to his literary standards despite their unpopularity, and his unflagging diligence in scholarly preparation. One reviewer observed in him in his last year a new tolerance by which even Mr. Mencken profited: "As a mediator between conservative and radical, Stuart Sherman was thus in a way to become more important an influence on American criticism than before, and his untimely death is more than ever to be regretted as a loss
to his contemporaries and the future." Mr. Carl Van Doren, who had deplored Mr. Sherman's stubborn conservatism, wrote in 1926, "He constantly surprised his closest friends with discoveries he had made, with positions he had taken. So lately as two years ago he surprised them most when, having left a university to go to a newspaper, he showed himself without a break to be as much at home in the one post as he had been in the other. From being, of all university professors who wrote of current literature, the least academic, he became, of all the newspaper men engaged with the same topic, the least merely journalistic. It marks a brief, brilliant episode in American criticism that during those two final years of his life he produced, week by week, copious, considered, and sympathetic literary discussions which belong, not in the history of news, but in the history of literature itself... Somewhere in him was a greatness not to be measured."
CHAPTER V

In Summary: Brownell, More, Sherman

Mr. Brownell, Mr. More, and Mr. Sherman have no monopoly on the leadership of American literary criticism in the present day, but the three of them have contributed some of the finest specimens of critical thought that have been produced in this country.

Mr. Brownell's two major achievements have been unsurpassed in their respective fields: the one his clear and precise defining of the field of criticism, and the other his intensive but fairly abridged studies of the six men whom he classed as American prose masters. There is nothing in American criticism or more carefully considered than his Criticism, Standards, and American Prose Masters. Himself a man of culture, he demanded that the critic be possessed of equipment in excess of his field, convinced that a man cannot know literature until he knows art, history, philosophy, and ethics as well. Criticism to him was a creative art; consistent with this doctrine is his theory that it is the function of the critic - at once his duty and his greatest opportunity - to discern the qualities of the writer rather than the properties of his production. Personality and character outweigh words. In this belief he is somewhat similar to Mr. Spingarn, except that he is an advocate of rationalized taste, whereas the other is an advocate of impressionism. The standards recommended by Mr. Brownell are those which rise insensibly in the cultivated
mind" - principles for which the other seemingly made no provision. Deep within Mr. Brownell lay the conviction that literature as a fine art cannot exist apart from these subtle but definitely appreciable standards. As for his other most important contribution, it is best illustrated in his American Prose Masters, in which by the intensity of his scholarship, the intelligence of his style, and the exactness of his artistic conscience, he has a standard of excellence in critical writing beyond which no contemporary has gone. His painstaking accuracy, lucid diction, fastidious taste and refinement of ideas place on his work the stamp of high achievement.

Mr. More joins Mr. Brownell in the support of a cultured aristocracy which shall provide the leadership of the world. Neither is in any sense a partisan of things American. Two less nationalistic writers could scarcely have been found in this country in the last quarter century. Opposed, like Poe, to provincialism, both surpass him infinitely in knowledge of other countries and other literatures, and have more adequate materials at hand for combating the disease of nationalism. Mr. Brownell's speciality was French literature and society; Mr. More's is Oriental literatures and philosophies. Mr. More's knowledge of philosophy exceeds Mr. Brownell's, and makes him in some ways the more difficult of the two to read, for once he encounters the idea of dualism there is no stopping him. Two intellectual faculties more pronounced in Mr. More than in Mr. Brownell are his power to probe straight to the essential characteristics of a man or movement, and his ability to get a grip on the guiding principles behind the evolution of
ideas or social institutions. His contemplative spirit, his
familiarity with English, American, classical and Oriental
literatures; his persistent emphasis on balance in both thought
and conduct, his profound absorption in philosophy, and his
seeming indifference to popular attention make him a critic to
be admired and highly respected, one any nation can point to
with pride — but one not likely to be the subject of a nation-
wide love.

Mr. Sherman, the least weighty of the trio, was nevertheless
the most popular and in some ways apparently the most
influential. Had his workmanship reached its height, he might
have been able to combine friendliness, sincerity, taste, and
scholarship into a valuable and plastic medium for critical
expression. The ideal American critic, a hypothetical creature,
so to speak, stands in need of a union of those elements of
temperament, skill, and taste which Stuart Sherman possessed
at least in potentiality. But at the time of his death there
still clung about his work the appearance of lightness, lending
it charm, it is true, but denying it the depth of profounder
works. His greatest deficiency, like that of Lowell, seems to
be one of character, delightful though he was as man and writer.
At times it seemed that he had latent powers he scarcely sus-
ppected; possibly if a longer lifetime had been granted him, he
might have broadened and strengthened into the full stature
that belongs to the critic of true greatness. But he was a man
of forty-five at the time of his death, and the probability is
that he would not have grown enough to fill the need. He was
a tall man in character and intellect — but he was not a giant.
Mr. Shorman was the most characteristically American of the group. His genial humor, quickened sometimes into flashing wit, enlivens his writing and makes it a pleasure to read. William Dean Howells, H.L. Mencken, and Stuart Pratt Shorman at their best have produced some of the most spirited critical papers seen in this country, though there have been times when each of the three traded on his humor.

Mr. Shorman was much more devoted to America as a country than was either Mr. More or Mr. Brownell. This does not mean that he was a nationalist, but it does signify that he saw in the nation a medium for culture and a unit for progress. Believing that criticism can be made an instrument for human betterment, he sought to make it a weapon against naturalism, and an aid in the maintenance of intellectual self-control and self-direction. He conceived of literature as both a reflector and a determinant of human action. He was like Mr. Woodberry in his belief that it is a means of preserving the finest and most characteristic ideas of the race. Tradition, which embodies these ideals, thus becomes essential to the formation of any rich and fruitful literature. To him, the Puritan tradition — by which he meant the spirit which struggles against bigotry, intolerance, tyranny and self-indulgence, and presents a vision of possible perfection — seemed the most typical and beneficial of American traditions and consequently the one to find expression in our literature. Fortunately, his devotion to his cause kept him from being unduly thin-skinned, or he might have been flayed alive by the lash of ridicule.
as applied by those sophisticates who interpreted the term to mean a narrow, ingrown fanaticism which in its modern form persecutes liberals instead of burning witches. In his ardor, he purified the actual Puritan tradition, freed it from the rancors that accompanied its early development in this country, attributed to it a spiritual liberty and a tolerance that rarely accompanied it, and elevated it to a height only its leaders could have experienced, and even they were seldom capable of expressing. Although he glorified the real tradition, the ideals which he identified with it have existed in our nation, recognized only at intervals, perhaps, but flowing in a steady underground current through our history. Possibly some term other than Puritanism could better be used to designate the lofty standards which he associated with the movement; but there has been in this country no other movement whose ethical principles have been so broadly disseminated or so widely influential as those of Puritanism, in spite of its flagrant shortcomings. To Mr. Sherman, Puritanism is the incarnation of freedom and eternal progress, and for its cause he labored with unflagging zeal, at the cost of personal comfort and popularity, and with all the zest of his robust intellect and dexterous pen. He was not a man to spare himself in a faith to which he had given his allegiance.

William Girry Brownell, Paul Elmer More, and Stuart Pratt Sherman all have had their shortcomings - not because the men were petty, but because they were human. The worst that can be said of them is that no one of them was either an Arnold
or a Sainte-Beuve. They have failed, like their contemporaries, to supply America with a master critic. But American literature is the better for their having lived and written.
NOTES

I. Chapter I - A Survey of Modern American Leadership in Critical Thought

1. Foerster, *American Criticism*, p. 2
2. Ibid., p. 59
3. Ibid., p. 111
4. Ibid., p. 149
5. Excerpt from Whitman, *Democratic Vistas*, reprinted in Bowman, *Contemporary American Criticism*, p. 29
8. James, *Partial Portraits*, p. 398
9. Springarn, *Creative Criticism*, p. 43
10. Ibid., p. 32
11. Ibid., p. 44
12. Babbitt, "Genius and Taste", reprinted in Bowman, *Contemporary American Criticism*, and in the critical collection entitled *Criticism in America, Its Function and Status*
14. Ibid., p. 216
16. Ibid., p. 111, 118
17. Goldberg, *The Man Mencken*, p. 31
18. For full information as to Mencken's early life and his journalistic career, see Goldberg, *The Man Mencken*, Ch. IV, V
II. Chapter II- William Cray Brownell


6. Brownell, Criticism, p. 16

7. Ibid., p. 17

8. Ibid., p. 21

9. Ibid., p. 31

10. Ibid., p. 31

11. Brownell, Standards, p. 149


22. Brownell, Criticism, p. 17

23. Ibid., p. 67


25. Brownell, Standards, p. 149

26. Brownell, Genius of Style, p. 10


III. Chapter III-Paul Elmer More


7. Ibid., p. 329

8. See index of *Shelburne Essays, Eleventh Series*, for complete list of topics for series.


10. Ibid., p. 45


13. Ibid., p. 244

14. Ibid., p. 260


18. London Loud Speaker, as quoted in press comments at close of first four series of *Shelburne Essays*, (G. P. Putnam's Sons)

IV. Chapter IV - Stuart Pratt Sherman

1. Van Doran, "Stuart Sherman, 1881-1926", *Books, Aug. 29, 1926*, pp. 1, 2


4. For condensed reviews and criticisms of Matthew Arnold, see *Book Review Digest*, Vol. for 1917, p. 473


7. Ibid., p. 11

8. Ibid., p. 17


12. Ibid., p.

13. Ibid., p. 1261


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