S O C I A L E N G L A N D

as portrayed by

H U G H W A L P O L E.

BY

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CHAPTER I.

CHIEFLY BIOGRAPHICAL.

Hugh Seymour Walpole, Bachelor of Arts, Commander of the British Empire, was born in Upland, New Zealand, in 1884. He is the son of the late Right Reverend G. S. Walpole, Anglican Bishop of Edinburgh. He was educated at King's School, Canterbury, and Emmanuel College, Cambridge. When he was six years of age he was brought from New Zealand to Truro, Cornwall. The Archdeacon of the Cathedral at Truro was his uncle. He lived in Truro for several years and he himself states: "I had nothing but love and kindness and charity; I go back now to Truro whenever I have opportunity."[1]

His parents moved to New York, and when he was nine and a half he was sent back to England to school. He states himself that he went to a school that was not all that it should be. Undoubtedly this is the school that is mentioned in "Fortitude." The food was inadequate, the morality twisted, and he states that "sheer, stark unblinking terror stared down out of every one of its passages."[2] Of this particular school experience he writes: "I was frightened in the war several times rather badly, but I have never, after those days, thank God, known continuous increasing terror night and day."[3] During the evenings, it was the custom for the older boys to bully the

1 The Crystal Box (The Bookman - New York - Vol. 56).
2 Ibid.
3 Ibid.

smaller boys, to force them to strip naked and to torture them in various ways, and expose them to ridicule. He states of this experience: "I went to S..... with a very fair intelligence. Mathematics I never could begin to understand (to this day I count on my fingers) but history and geography and literature I was nosing into like a pony with a bale of hay. Well, S..... flung the hay about my ears all right and there it has stuck ever since."[1]

Speaking of the various deficiencies in his novels, he blames entirely his life at this place and states that ever since, his mind has been muddled. The only good feature in his life at this time was the refining influence of the young wife of one of the head masters, who apparently had an interest in boys. The name of this particular school is not given, and Walpole himself states that it is now conducted in a very fine way.

He very soon discovered that he had neither an accurate nor a deeply penetrating mind. He found that his memory was shocking, and that in many ways he was awkward. He had no gift for doing anything with his hands and he had difficulty with a great many of the academic subjects. Quite early he developed a love for books and as a boy read a great deal. His attitude to his school work he aptly describes: "In vain at school masters tried to drive some order and method into my muddled novel-confused head. I could learn nothing accurately,

1 The Crystal Box (The Bookman - New York - Vol. 56).

nothing at any rate that they wanted me to learn. Had they asked me for the plot of "Hermsprong' or a list of the characters in 'The Waverley Novels' I would have astonished them with my talents. Instead they demanded from me Greek accents and algebraic roots. I know that they hated the very sight of my long, bony (I was thin in those days), complaining body."[1]

After his experience at the institution we have mentioned, he went to Canterbury and attended school there for several years. His godfather was a Canon of the Cathedral and his stay in Canterbury was a very happy one. It was at this time that he began to be dimly aware of an interest in cathedrals. The first cathedral that he knew was that in Truro, in the county of Cornwall. It is the one which he himself states he loves dearest of all English cathedrals. A second cathedral with which he became familiar was Canterbury, and it was at Canterbury that he developed that fear of such buildings which he aptly portrays in his own book "The Cathedral." He had a further opportunity for a study of English clerical life when he lived with his parents at Durham, where his father was head of the Teacher Training College.

During his school life at Canterbury he began to read and became obsessed with a passionate fondness for books. Books began to come into his life and to exert over it a great

1 The Crystal Box (The Bookman - New York - Vol. 56).

influence. He states: "The world of my novels became during this time so real to me that the world of school and cathedral and family faded into thin air..... I played an absurd game on a small bagatelle board, pitting authors against one another: Walter Scott would play Dickens; and Harrison Ainsworth, G. P. R. James; and I would solemnly put the scores down on a slip of paper and add them up at the end of the week..... All this time I was writing, writing, writing..... all of them historical romances. Mine was the true art impulse then, pure and undefiled! No one read my stories. I had no hope for gain. I wrote simply because I could not help myself. Two or three years ago, when it was the fashion to publish juvenile efforts, I opened a drawer and searched through my romances. They were of a desperate badness that makes my cheek pale now when I think of them. No merit or originality of form or narrative to be found in any of them anywhere, and yet I may say with truth that I was far prouder of them than I have been of any of my eternally disappointing later works!"[1] (This was written in 1922).

Very little information regarding Walpole's life at Cambridge is obtainable. His parents hoped that he would enter the church, and it was with this in mind that he pursued his studies in Cambridge. He states that his three years at

1 The Crystal Box (The Bookman - New York - Vol.56).

Cambridge had hardened his conceit and it was with the feeling of a general returning from a supremely successful combat that he undertook to work for a year with the Mission of Seamen, with headquarters at Liverpool. It seemed simple to him at this time to make these sailors feel sure of God. He felt very sure of Him himself. He states that "It all seemed simple enough. I started in splendidly optimistic."[1]

He soon found, however, that he was entirely unsuited for this work. He began to feel that his experience in life was limited; that he was not at all sure of God; that he was not at all sure that his mission in life was the Church; and he spent a very miserable time indeed. Owing to his lack of experience he neglected his work at the Mission and began to write a book, which he called "The Abbey." He plunged into the writing of this book with fervor and was amazed at the quantity of writing he had done. The story was woven around English cathedral life. The passion for writing which had taken possession of his very being from the time he was small, now gained the upper hand and he resigned his position at the Mission. "The Abbey" was to appear some twenty years later as one of his most outstanding books - "The Cathedral."

At the age of twenty, when an undergraduate of Cambridge, Walpole wrote two novels. One of these he destroyed,

1 The Crystal Box (The Bookman - New York - Vol. 56).

as it was too long, and the other was "The Wooden Horse," which was his first printed novel. He kept "The Wooden Horse" in manuscript for some time, until he had become a Master in a certain provincial school in England. At that time he showed the novel to a fellow Master who, after he had read it, stated: "I have tried to read your novel, Walpole, but I cannot. Whatever else you are fitted for, you are not fitted to be a novelist."[1] Walpole was very grieved, and was possibly unaware that the same thing had happened to other distinguished novelists.

Soon after this incident he met Charles Marryat, who was then a novelist of remarkable distinction. Mr. Marryat was not sure that "The Wooden Horse" had no merit, and as a result Walpole determined to devote his life to writing.

With the disapproval of his family and with thirty pounds in his pocket, he set out for London. He secured lodgings in Chelsea at four shillings a week. He was then at the age of twenty-three. Through the influence of Mr. Marryat he obtained a temporary position on the "London Standard," as a critic of fiction. This position he was unable to retain. This led, however, to a regular situation on the same paper, which he kept for several years.

Since the publication of "Fortitude" in 1913 Mr. Walpole has been almost constantly engaged in writing.

1 Hugh Walpole - Appreciations - Grant Overton (Doubleday Doran & Co., New York, 1929).

During the war he went to Russia and served with the Russian Red Cross from 1914 to 1916. He was awarded the Georgian Medal for his services and was also honored by the British government. His service in Russia gave him a background for "The Dark Forest" and "The Secret City." Hugh Walpole was always partial to Russia and it was to be expected that he would be even more impressed by his actual contact with the Russian people.

Since the war he has continued to write steadily, as our bibliography will show. Nothing has appeared from his pen since the publication of "Rogue Herries" early in 1930. We should soon hear from him again.

Speaking of Mr. Walpole, Mr. Arnold Bennett says: "He seems to give about one-third of the year to the tasting of all the heterogeneous sensations which London can provide for the connoisseur and two-thirds to the exercise of his vocation in some withdrawn spot in Cornwall that nobody save a postman or so, and Mr. Walpole, has ever beheld. During one month it is impossible to 'go out' in London without meeting Mr. Walpole - and then for a long period he is a mere legend of dinner tables. He returns to the dinner tables with a novel complete."[1]

Shortly after the war, Mr. Walpole took up his residence in the English lake country. His more recent books make mention of the lake country even more than they do of

1 Hugh Walpole - The Person, Arnold Bennett (Doubleday, Doran and Company, New York, 1929).

Glebeshire and Polchester. His present address is Brackenburn, Brandlehow, Borrowdale, England.

Mr. Walpole is still a young man and undoubtedly when the biography of his life comes to be written in a complete form there will be many outstanding contributions to English literature recorded in his name.

CHAPTER II.

THE WORKS OF HUGH WALPOLE.

Mr. Walpole has written twenty-three books. He has also written an essay on Reading, a lecture on The English Novel, an appreciation of Anthony Trollope which was published in The English Men of Letters Series, and several minor essays. In 1929 with Mr. J. B. Priestley he wrote "Farthing Hall." It will be generally agreed that for a man only forty-seven years of age this is a considerable body of work. Nor has the increase in volume during the past years impaired the quality of his work.

While the most of his works have been very popular novels there have been some other interesting pieces of work in almost entirely different fields. He has not hesitated to invade the realm of the short story, and has done so with marked success. Whoever has read "The Thirteen Travellers" has nothing but praise to offer for this interesting group of stories. Speaking of this particular work, the literary critic in "The New York Times" states: "Again Hugh Walpole has done a remarkable piece of interpretative fiction in this volume of short stories strung together on a connecting thread. The thirteen travellers are passengers, so to speak, in a coach that is beset on all sides by armed bands and destructive forces. His characters are of the London life he knows

so well, caught in the grip of the war, their landmarks obliterated, but striving still to make the old life go in a strange world.

"There is an extraordinary actuality, vividness, in each one. It lives, it is. While you read it you are a part of it....It is difficult to think of any one doing better work than Walpole. The restraint and lucidity of his style carry a peculiar distinction, his sympathy with human nature is based on understanding; he touches your emotions at the same time that he interests your mind."[1]

"The Silver Thorn," which was his first book of short stories, was published in 1928. He opens with a quotation from "The Duchess of Paradis" which was the outstanding work of "Hans Frost," another of his characters: "The Silver Thorn was the Consolation Prize. It was the best prize of all - but that was because he liked best the one who lost the race." This quotation is the key note of this poignant series of men and women who in some way have lost the way, who do not quite fit into the pattern of life and for whom Hugh Walpole has a sympathetic tenderness.

Mr. Walpole has always been a student and has studied in a very thorough manner the development of English prose literature. It is no wonder, then, that we find him writing

1 Review in "The New York Times", 1921.

"Some Notes On the Evolution of the English Novel." This was given in the "Rede Lectures, 1925." He also wrote "Joseph Conrad: A Critical Study," "The Crystal Box, Fragments of Autobiography," "Anthony Trollope: English Men of Letters Series, 1928."

"The Crystal Box" appeared in serial form in "The American Bookman, 1922-23." It is the only connected story we have of Mr. Walpole's life, and as he himself styles it "Fragments of an Autobiography," so it is indeed very fragmentary. He does not attempt to give us minute details of his life, but rather depicts the parts which he considers of most importance, and, as we shall point out in another chapter, his autobiography is woven very closely around his love for the English novel and his own contribution to English prose literature.

Mr. Walpole has studied a good deal of contemporary prose literature, and his appreciation of Mr. Conrad is very keen. He also appreciates to a very marked extent the works of Joseph Hergesheimer and to a lesser degree the works of Sinclair Lewis. He shows his regard for Conrad by his "Appreciations of Conrad" and by the dedication of "The Cathedral" to "Jessie and Joseph Conrad, with much love."

The childhood of Hugh Walpole was very much broken. He did not have the sheltered home life that some children have, and felt very vividly the difference which people are apt to make between other children and their own. When staying with relatives in England he knew that, while treated kindly, there was a difference made between him and the family. He was not happy at the first residential school which he attended. Unlike most men, Mr. Walpole remembers vividly his own childhood, with its painful experiences, happy days and memories of school and holiday life. To a very marked degree he has analyzed the psychology of that period and has retained in many respects the feelings which he had then, and has looked them over with the calm judgment of the mature man. The result has been the publication of four very interesting books of childhood: "The Golden Scarecrow," "Jeremy," "Jeremy and Hamlet," and "Jeremy at Crale."

Mr. Walpole states that Anthony Trollope influenced him more than any other English novelist, unless it be Scott. He repays the debt very nicely in his "Appreciation of Anthony Trollope." "Barchester Towers" was one of the first books which he read thoroughly, and it impressed him very much. Hugh Walpole's early life was interwoven with clergymen and cathedrals, and it is easy to see why "Barchester Towers"

would make a distinct impression upon him as a boy. As he read more and more of Trollope the influence grew. Trollope dealt with men and women in their relations to each other. Most of Trollope's characters belonged to well-to-do classes. Out of their position in life, their property and connections, their mutual friends and alliances, came the antagonism which formed the plot of his novels. Here was fit training for the young mind which was aptly to describe London society and the evolution of twenty-five years of its most crucial history.

The latest piece of work which has come from the pen of Walpole is "Rogue Herries." He has always admired the work of Scott. In "Rogue Herries" we see a definite attempt to do a piece of work on the lines of the historical novel and at once we come to the opinion that in this he has been influenced by his love for the works of Scott and his study of Scott's novels.

"Rogue Herries" is rather disappointing. The action is not as well sustained as in most of his novels. The plot structure is not as good and in the evolution of character which Mr. Walpole displays in Herries there are periods where interest is very apt to flag.

It was a very popular book, but after reading it one cannot help feeling that the sale was due to the merits of

former works rather than to the merits of the book itself. Mr. Walpole changes the scene in this novel and uses for his setting the English lake country, rather than Cornwall. It is a country with which he is very familiar, as he himself has made his home in the past few years at Borrowdale. He does not make it as charming as Glebeshire and Polchester, nor is there the tang of the sea which is very refreshing in his other novels.

What Mr. Walpole will bring forth in the future remains to be seen. He is a young man, and will possibly write for fifteen or twenty years more. If he continues to make a study of English society and produce books which will give us some insight into the life and social problems of the day, then his contribution to English literature will be very marked. If he follows up his latest bent and deals with the historical novel, with his skill he may bring forth something in the form of a historical novel which will be the outstanding contribution of the century to this form of literature.

CHAPTER III.

SOCIAL ENGLAND - THE ARISTOCRATS

It is very doubtful if Hugh Walpole commenced writing with the purpose of portraying in a definite way the changes which England has undergone socially during the past twenty-five years. England has always been a subject of deep interest and study to him and its people must have presented a different picture to him, as a result of his contact with colonial life, than it would to one who had spent all his life in England. The social problem, however, is attacked by him in his very first novel, "The Wooden Horse." It is quite evident that he has given the change in social life much study, and has endeavored to bring some of it before the public in his writing. "The Wooden Horse," however, did not impress the public to any great extent, and any thought or attention which the author wished to draw to the changing social order perished with this first piece of work.

With that indomitable courage of which he speaks in "Fortitude" he continued to write, and as he says himself, "Fortitude" was the turning of the scale. He now had the public ear and was determined to bring before the reading public a picture of the changes which were going on before their very eyes. With this purpose in mind he wrote "The Duchess of Wrexe." He states: "Once upon a time I planned a

trilogy and published the first volume of it - 'The Duchess of Wrexe.' The trilogy has grown..... After 'The Duchess of Wrexe' came 'The Green Mirror,' 'The Young Enchanted,' and now this 'Wintersmoon,' and after 'Wintersmoon' - Who knows?"[1]

The period covered by these novels is from just before the Boer War to the social reaction which took place in England after the Treaty of Versailles in 1919. Twenty years of the most momentous history of the Empire is treated in a very careful way by Mr. Walpole, and set out in a most interesting fashion. A careful analysis of the situation in England would lead one to see that this change had been going on before the very eyes of the public. It becomes, however, a matter of momentous interest in the lives of the better classes, who are profoundly interested in the changes brought about.

The Duchess of Wrexe is the very foundation of this picture of social change which Walpole so ably presents before us. There is one real figure in English life which closely resembles the Duchess of Wrexe, and that is Queen Victoria herself. Queen Victoria came into possession of great power when quite young, and lived to a great old age, wrapped about with a mantle of authority which was irksome to government and people alike. When her death came, although genuinely sorry the British people were profoundly relieved. The Duchess of

1 From the Foreword to "Wintersmoon," Hugh Walpole.

Wrexe is the leader of her social circle when a young woman. She dominates cabinet ministers, peers of the realm and all aristocratic London. Nothing is done without her knowledge, and nothing is accomplished without her consent. Social England is changing; the masses of the people are obtaining more and more authority. The younger generation chafes against the restraint placed upon it. They desire the right to think and grow and live and form social circles as they will, and they struggle against the tradition which commends them to do as tradition wills.

"The Duchess of Wrexe is the autocrat of the autocrats. From her darkened rooms, where she sits in a great chair with grim china dragons on either side, she plots against the spread of democracy shrewdly, ruthlessly, ceaselessly."[1]

The Beaminster family is typically English. The old Duchess, as we have shown, is indeed the head of the house. The picture Walpole gives of her shows the determination and pride of English aristocracy at its best at the close of the Victorian Age.

"The Duchess received the colour and the sunlight, but made no response. She sat, leaning forward a little, bending with one of her dry wrinkled hands over a black ebony cane, a high carved chair supporting and surrounding her. She seemed,

1 The Duchess of Wrexe, Hugh Walpole - Appreciations - Grant Overton (Doubleday, Doran & Co., New York, 1929).

herself, to be carved there, stone, marble, anything lifeless save for her eyes, the tense clutch of her fingers about the cane, and the dull but brooding gleam that a large jade pendant, the only colour against the black of her dress, flung at the observer. Her mouth was a thin hard line, her nose small but sharp, her colour so white that it seemed to cut into the paper, and the skin drawn so tightly over her bones that a breath, a sigh, might snap it.

"Her little body was, one might suppose, shrivelled with age, with the business and pleasure of the world, with the pursuit of some great ambition or prize, with the battle, unceasing and unyielding, over some weakness or softness.

"Indomitable, remorseless, unhumorous, proud, the pose of the body was absolutely, one felt, the justest possible.

"On either side of the chair were two white and green Chinese dragons, grotesque with open mouths and large flat feet; a hanging tapestry of dull gold filled in the background.

"Out upon these dull colours the little body, with the white face, the shining eyes, the clenched hand, was flung, poised, sustained by its very force and will."[1]

Her son, Vincent, has inherited the title and is the Duke. Richard, the other son, has been twice Prime Minister. John, the youngest, now quite an old man, is the typical English

1 The Duchess of Wrexe

gentleman, rotund, fashionably dressed, quite pink and shining, he is content to let things muddle along. He knows nothing of the people who make up his country and knows very little of anything outside of his own circle. Twenty years afterwards, in "Wintersmoon," the author shows the same Lord John Beaminster questioning to himself very much whether the unemployment after the Great War really meant anything. He tells himself that a great deal is said by the daily press which means nothing, and surveys his own small circle for assurance that there is nothing but contentment in the world.

But the signs of the times had already shown themselves in the Beaminster household. Iris Beaminster had refused to be governed by her mother and had married Kit Breton, in defiance of tradition. Disaster, socially and morally, had inevitably followed. Francis Breton, her son, was a constant reminder to the old Duchess of changing times. Rachel Beaminster's father, the wayward son of the Beaminster house, had married a Russian. After the death of her parents, Rachel wassbrought to England by the Beaminsters, and she, too, was a constant reminder that all was not well. Rachel has an inherent love for truth. She hates the sham that is drawn as a mantle around the Beaminster household and every other aristocratic household in England. She states: "It's all so sham. It's like someone in one of those absurd fantastic

novels that people write nowadays when half the characters are out of Dickens, only put into a real background. I'm frightened of grandmother - you know I always have been - but sometimes I wonder whether..... Whether there's anything really to be frightened of. And yet the relief when I can get off this half-hour every evening - the relief even now when I'm grown up - oh! it's absurd!"[1]

In her conversation with Roddy Seddon before her marriage she says: "There are some men and women - I've met one or two - who're just made up of Truth. You know it the minute you're with them. And they'll have pluck, too, of course - Courage goes with it. Our family," she ended, "are of course the most terrible liars that have ever been - <u>ever</u> - "[2]

This was downright heresy and was against all family tradition. The Duchess knew it. She knew that there was something in Rachel which she could not conquer. She knew there was something in Francis Breton which she could not conquer, and she hated them both. She knew also that times were changing. Lord John saw it. The Duke saw it, and it seemed to draw the whole family together. Under the strain, the old Duchess, after years of confinement to her room, gradually lost her strength.

1 The Duchess of Wrexe
2 Ibid.

"Lady Adela was unhappy; the very foundations of her existence threatened to dismay her, at any moment, by their insecurity. Within her the Beaminster tradition urged, before Lizzie Rand, at any rate, the maintenance of dignity and indifference, but the novelty to her of all this disturbance brought with it a hapless inability to deal with it, and again and again little exclamations, little surprised wonders at what the world could be coming to, little confused clutchings at anything that offered stability, showed Lizzie that trouble was on every side of her. Then through the house rumour began to twist its way - Her Grace was not so well -"'The Old Lady was breaking up' (this in the close security of a shuttered room below stairs).....'You mark my words,' Mrs. Newton said to Norris, ''er Grace will go, Old Victorier will go, and where'll the Beaminster crowd be then, I ask you? Times are movin' too quick. I wouldn't give a toss for your Birth and Debrett and all in another twenty years.'"[1]

Of the South African trouble the Duchess and the Beaminsters were sure that England would muddle through. Things were not going as well as they should, but then it would come out all right. There did not seem to be any definite plans among those in authority; just muddling through by sheer weight and strength.

1 The Duchess of Wrexe

At last the strain caused by age and by the manipulation of affairs brings about the death of the Duchess.

"The Duchess of Wrexe died on the morning of May 2nd at a quarter-past three o'clock. The evening papers of that day and the morning papers of the next had long columns concerning her, and these were picturesque and almost romantic. She appealed as a figure veiled but significant, hidden but the landmark of a period - 'Nothing was more remarkable than the influence that she exercised over English Society during the thirty years that she was completely hidden from it' - or again, 'Although disease compelled her, for thirty years, to retire from the world, her influence during that period increased rather than diminished.'"[1]

The death of the Duchess of Wrexe as portrayed by Walpole, reminds one very vividly of the death of Queen Victoria. People were genuinely sorry and felt that she had made a great contribution to England. There was, however, no prolongued period of national mourning. The small boy was glad because he got a holiday from school and would get another holiday at the time of the Coronation. The prime minister was glad because Queen Victoria had been rather hard to deal with. The younger generation of the well-to-do were glad because a repressive influence was removed. The workman was glad because "Eddie" would come to the throne, and he was a "damned good sort."[2]

1 The Duchess of Wrexe
2 Ibid.

The Duchess thought that England could not get along without her and her class. Possibly a better England was being founded than she had ever conceived.

"The force of the rising generation, represented here by two rebels in her own clan, Francis Breton, her outcast grandson, and Rachel, her hated grand-daughter; and the force of the awakening people that began to come into its own when the guns of the South African war battered down class barriers and disclosed England's aristocracy at its true worth. The close of the war marked the passing of the Victorian age with its great traditions - among them the Duchess of Wrexe."[1]

1 Publishers' note - The Duchess of Wrexe.

CHAPTER IV.

SOCIAL ENGLAND - THE UPPER CLASSES

It was particularly significant that Walpole should choose 1914 for the beginning of his London novels, which portray in such a vivid manner the changes in the social structure of England. It is very probable that 1914 will go down to posterity as the most outstanding year in world history. The economic force which was unleashed by the industrial revolution and which placed a new value on industry, was to result in a titanic struggle which affected the whole world.

The Hanoverian influence was still strong in England and the marriage of Victoria with Prince Albert years ago had strengthened the bond between aristocratic Germany and the ruling house of Great Britain. This was not popular in England, and the Kaiser's famous telegram to President Krueger during the Boer War did not help matters. There was a feeling abroad among the younger people that there was too little freedom given to younger men in political life, and too much authority vested in the older people, who, as younger England saw clearly, were only muddling through. Mr. Walpole shows us this very clearly in "The Duchess of Wrexe" and makes it even more clear in "The Green Mirror."

"The Green Mirror" more than any other of the London novels resembles in a very curious manner Mr. Galsworthy's "Forsyte Saga." Indeed, one might be inclined to say that the

famous London novels of Hugh Walpole had influenced Mr. Galsworthy to write "The Forsyte Saga." Apart from any discussion, however, "The Green Mirror" shows how very seriously English family life takes itself. The story is woven around the Trenchards, a fine type of family found in England prior to 1914, but a type which since that time has been moving in a more or less disturbed element, owing to changed conditions. The author pursues the same theme as in "The Duchess of Wrexe" but shows how the social disturbances profoundly affected this fine family of the upper classes.

In a very apt way he opens his story with the celebration of old Grandfather Trenchard's birthday. The whole family is gathered around the old gentleman, as has been their custom for years. No stranger dare intrude upon such a celebration as this, but to the dismay of the whole family, some one who has missed his way inquires at the house and is permitted to enter the room. With this stranger, Philip Mark, the whole of the Trenchards' life is changed.

Mark is a young man who was of English and Russian parentage. The disturbing and emotional element of the Russian moves mysteriously in the blood of Mark. He is sincere and upright in his ideals, as far as he himself can interpret them,

but he has lived a life apart entirely from the secluded life of the Trenchards. The fine old London home in which the Trenchards have gathered had sheltered them for centuries. There had been no struggle with life. An income sufficient to maintain them in their accustomed plane of life had always been assured, and there was little need for them to look about on the changing social order and the new economic life of England with concern.

A young man of not more than thirty, Philip Mark has indulged in the customary life of the Continent. He had lived for some time with a dancer in Petrograd, named Anna, who, while living with him, did not love him. They had established a home, but after the death of their son, Mark, staggered by the blow, returned to England. It is true that he had offered to marry Anna, but she had refused.

An affair such as this was, of course, simply beyond the comprehension of the Trenchards. In England, Philip falls violently in love with Katherine Trenchard and determines to marry her. He makes no mention of his past life. The amazing ignorance of world conditions which Mark sees among the Trenchards causes him often to make remarks which seem to be rude and out of place. Young Henry Trenchard obtains some knowledge of Mark's life in Russia and endeavors to use this

to break up the affair between Mark and Katherine. When he makes this disclosure he expects Mark's reaction to be similar to that of the Trenchard family. Mark very calmly tells him that it is none of his business, and Katherine also tells him that she had known of it for some considerable time. It appears that Mrs. Trenchard has also known it and has allowed things to take their course. Mrs. Trenchard hopes that Katherine will give Mark up, and is determined never to speak to Katherine again after she elopes with Mark. Katherine comes to see her mother once, and desires to see her grandfather. She is refused. Just a year has elapsed. The whole family is "right-about-face." The modern social life has changed the life of the family, on that evening when Grandfather Trenchard dies. "The Green Mirror" indicates particularly how the social changes in England were affecting the least prominent well-to-do classes.

In 1921 Mr. Walpole wrote "Wintersmoon," which is by far the most intense and realistic of all the London novels. In reading it one feels the action of the novel, and it is made even more realistic by the continuity which Mr. Walpole so happily preserves in his characters. Twenty years have elapsed since the death of the Duchess of Wrexe. The Great War has shown the true worth of the masses and has sounded the death blow

to anything which has a semblance of the old Victorian aristocracy. Some older men, like Lord John Beaminster, still lived and looked back upon the age of Victoria as the greatest of all ages in history. For the most part these people were placed in such circumstances that they did not have to think of social conditions. When Lord John Beaminster did think of social conditions - and it was hard enough to avoid them - he "felt sure that the miseries of other people as recounted by other people were greatly exaggerated."[1]

Very few families were left as undisturbed as the Poole family at Wintersmoon. The present Duke had "lived always for those he loved, his wife, his child, his tenantry, his servants, some friends. Above all for his religion, about which he rarely spoke and never argued. Unlike his wife, he did not care of what sect anyone might be so that God was a reality; atheists, materialists he did not understand, but was sure that one day they would find the way. In God's good time everyone would find the way. 'Not a sparrow....'"[2]

Felix Brun sensed the change at Lady Madden's party on his first night in social England after the war.

1 Wintersmoon
2 Ibid.

"He had realized at once on entering the room that for the first time since his return to London he was in the world that he had known before the war. Once in the old days of the South African War he had divided the English ruling classes into three parties - the Autocrats, the Aristocrats, and the Democrats. The Autocrats - the Beaminsters, the Gutterils, the Minsters - had been the people with whom, at that time, he had mostly lived. The old Duchess of Wrexe had been their queen, and for a time she had ruled England. She was long dead, and the Autocrats, as a party of power in England, were gone and gone for ever. The Democrats - Ruddards, Denisons, Funells, Muffats - there were plenty of them about, he supposed. The war and its consequences must have helped them to power. It was they, and the members of the old Autocratic party whom disaster and poverty had driven into their ranks, who danced and kicked their way through the illustrated papers. He didn't know and he didn't care. He felt in his bones that, at the present time at least, they were unimportant whatever they might become. He dismissed them with a shrug. They were food for the novelist who wanted dazzling pictures with post-impressionist colours and Freudian titles.

"Remained then the Aristocrats - the Maddens, the Darrants, the Chichester, the Medleys, the Weddons. He had

once said of them, 'I take my hat off to them. All those quiet decorous people, poor as mice many of them, standing aside altogether from any movements or war-cries of the day, living in their quiet little houses or their empty big ones, clever some of them, charitable all of them, but never asserting their position or estimating it. They never look about them and see where they are. They've no need to. They're just there.'

"He didn't remember, of course, that he had ever said that, but it was what he still at this day, twenty-two years later, felt. And they were of infinitely more importance now than they had been then. They were all - positively all - that was left of the old Aristocracy in England, that Class and that Creed that, whether for good or ill, had meant a great deal in the world's history. They were (he couldn't as yet be sure but he fancied that he felt it in the air about him) engaged now in a really desperate conflict. This might be the last phase of their Power, or it might lead them through victory to a new phase of Power, greater than any they had yet known. If they were as poor as mice then, twenty-two years ago, they were, they must be, a great deal poorer than any reasonably fortunate mouse now. He fancied that he could see something of that too as he looked about him. But they would say nothing at all about it. They would have, above everything else, their dignity and self-respect, qualities that the Democrats had lost long ago."[1]

1 Wintersmoon.

"Wintersmoon" is the vivid story of the marriage of Janet Grandison to Lord Poole, and the blending of her life with his to make a part of the background of tradition of English aristocracy. Many events and characters pass against this background. Janet, who loves her sister Rosalind; the devotion of Wildherne, her husband, for his son. Rosalind as a type of the younger woman in English society, shows a brilliant, fascinating, but hard and callous character.

"Wintersmoon" is possibly the most satisfying novel that Walpole has written. It is a rich, ironic and extremely interesting story, and Walpole displays social life and post-war England as no other novelist has done. "Wintersmoon" is caustic and ruthless in its revelation of modern society. Rosalind as a type of the young woman of England, is hard and cruel, yet it is not too much to say that she is real and that one can find in actual life many younger women with the same attitude to life.

Walpole does not attempt to reach any conclusion in this novel. He does come to some conclusion with regard to the older Victorians, as shown in "The Duchess of Wrexe." His disgust at their desire to manage and manipulate things is quite strong. He is full of righteous indignation at their ignorance of what is going on among the lower classes in every day life. He feels and shows that as a class, the aristocracy which centred itself about personages such as the Duchess of Wrexe,

must go. In dealing with the complexities of modern life, however, as in "Wintersmoon," Mr. Walpole, like a good many others who are thinking about modern life, has very little to offer in the way of constructive criticism. Modern society is not as it should be; it is hard, cold and selfish, but how to inculcate a better spirit is something Mr. Walpole has not dared to show us.

CHAPTER V.

SOCIAL ENGLAND - THE MIDDLE CLASSES

Hugh Walpole states: "After Wintersmoon - who knows?" The "Trilogy" dealt with life in aristocratic England - the England in "The Duchess of Wrexe;" the Beaminster family and families associated with them. It had also dealt with the more well-to-do classes which did not belong to the exalted circle of the Duchess of Wrexe. "The Cathedral" deals with professional life in the Victorian Age, and gives us a study of the people in the upper strata of the middle classes.

From what the author has told us himself it is altogether likely that he never intended that this book should be analysed for the light which it would throw upon changes in Social England which occurred about 1900. Nor is it likely that it was planned to present such an impressive study of human psychology. In his autobiography, Mr. Walpole tells us that the first novel he wrote was called "The Abbey." It was written while he was a young curate, working among the sailors at Liverpool. He tells us that he wrote fervently and passionately, but after he had surveyed the book as a whole he was disgusted with the jumble and decided to destroy it. The impression, however, made upon him by Cathedral life and by the stately buildings themselves, grew, and the idea of re-writing "The Abbey" remained with him. Finally it was published as "The Cathedral."

"The Cathedral" is primarily a study of human character, but it also gives us a vivid picture of clerical life during the latter days of the Victorian era. To feel the grip that the clergy had upon England, one must study carefully the history of England and the European countries, and must be aware of the very important part which religion played in the life of the people from the establishment of the Church by Augustine, down to the very present.

The son of a well-to-do family who did not choose the army or political life for a career was educated for the Church. Owners of huge tracts of land had, as a result of the old laws and customs of England, the right to bestow very fine livings upon those members of the clergy who met their favor. Tithes were collected, and the clergy were practically independent of the people to whom they ministered.

The Church at that time was absolutely a State Church. Bishops had certain political rights. The Chapter of a Cathedral, with its Dean and Canon, was a very impressive, dignified and powerful body. A good many men who loved ease were able to obtain in a very quiet and dignified manner a very fine living, with a minimum of effort.

There was not an inkling at the time the story opens in 1896 that a vast change would take place within the next ten years. Those who had been watching the industrial movement knew

very well that labor was being organized and that the efforts which had been put forth by Gladstone and other leaders to secure electoral reform was but a prelude to the complete dominance in political and social life of the working classes.

Labor and socialism are firmly entrenched in English University life to-day, but in the time of Queen Victoria these ideas had not reached Oxford or Cambridge, and for the most part, the clergy were untouched. It is true that Methodism and organizations such as the Salvation Army were bringing to the notice of thinking people the fact that the clergy of the day were not serving the industrial worker, but the Anglican Church, which was The Church throughout the country, ignored these movements and for the most part took that complacent view that it would muddle along and finally succeed in overcoming any difficulties.

Mr. Walpole has shown in a very clear and vivid manner that the Chapter of Polchester Cathedral was dominated by its Dean, Adam Brandon; and the Chapter, which in the main reflected Brandon's opinions, influenced all social and political life in Polchester. The schools were conducted by the clergy. The public library was conducted by a committee which was dominated by the Cathedral officials. The social life of the town was made by the clergy and their wives, and

was conducted in the manner which they saw fit. The Cathedral was the key of all life in Polchester.

Mr. Walpole states: "I find it difficult now to realise how apart from the life of the world Polchester was in those days. Even now, when the War has shaken up and jostled together every small village in Great Britain, Polchester still has some shreds of its isolation left to it; but then - why, it might have been a walled-in fortress of mediaeval times, for all its connection with the outside world!

"This isolation was quite deliberately maintained. I don't mean, of course, that Mrs. Combermere and Brandon and old Bentinck-Major and Mrs. Sampson said to themselves in so many words, 'We will keep this to ourselves and defend its walls against every new invader, every new idea, new custom, new impulse. We will all be butchered rather than allow one old form, tradition, superstition to go!' It was not as conscious as that, but in effect it was that that it came to. And they were wonderfully assisted by circumstances. It is true that the main line ran through Polchester from Drymouth, but its travellers were hurrying south, and only a few trippers, a few Americans, a few sentimentalists stayed to see the Cathedral; and those who stayed found "The Bull" an impossibly inconvenient and uncomfortable hostelry and did not come again. It is true that even then, in 1897, there were

many agitations by sharp business men like Crosbie and John Allen, Croppet and Fred Barnstaple, to make the place more widely known, more commercially attractive. It was not until later that the golf course was laid out and the St. Leath Hotel rose on Pol Hill. But other things were tried - steamers on the Pol, char-à-bancs to various places of local interest, and so on - but, at this time, all these efforts failed. The Cathedral was too strong for them, above all Brandon and Mrs. Combermere were too strong for them. Nothing was done to encourage strangers."[1]

What was true of Polchester was true of all rural England at that time. The Anglican Church in England still wielded as strong conservative influence as it had in the days of Jane Austen and George Eliot. But a change was coming and in the case of Polchester it came in the person of Canon Ronder. It was inevitable that in the new movement, Archdeacon Brandon and the older men in the Chapter would have to give way. There was no place for the clergyman who "looking up to the high vaulted roofs above him greeted God, greeted Him as an equal, and thanked Him as a fellow-companion who had helped him through a difficult and dusty journey; thanked Him for his health, for his bodily vigour and strength,

1 The Cathedral.

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for his beauty, for his good brain, for his successful married life, for his wife (poor Amy), for his house and furniture, for his garden and tennis-lawn, for his carriage and horses, for his son, for his position in the town, his dominance in the Chapter, his authority on the School Council, his importance in the district..... For all these things thanked God, and greeted Him with an outstretched hand.

"'As one power to another,' his soul cried, 'greetings! You have been a true and loyal friend to me. Anything that I can do for You I will do.....'"[1]

Ronder with his clever, keen, diplomatic manner upset entirely the conclusions of the older clergy, and brought with him new force which was to give vigour to Polchester. It was the dawn of a new day. Ronder was not a rural clergyman. He had been trained in London and had an urban view of life. Undoubtedly he had felt the press of the vast multitude which was soon to rule England, and he set about putting the Cathedral in Polchester in order, fatally for him, but nevertheless he was instrumental in bringing the change.

Mr. Walpole very aptly brings his novel to a crisis at the time of the Jubilee Celebration of Queen Victoria. A celebration was conducted in Polchester, and the new day as

1 The Cathedral.

personified by Canon Ronder dawned in that celebration. Not Brandon, not the Bishop, not the Chapter, but Ronder, organized it from beginning to end. It was the last of Old Polchester.

"It must certainly be difficult for chroniclers of contemporary history to determine significant dates to define the beginning and end of succeeding periods. But I fancy that any fellow-citizen of mine, if he thinks for a moment, will agree with me that that Jubilee Summer of 1897 was the last manifestation in our town of the separate individual Polchester spirit, of the old spirit that had dwelt in its streets and informed its walls and roofs for hundreds of years past, something as separate and distinct as the smells of Seatown, the chime of the Cathedral bells, the cawing of the Cathedral rooks in the Precinct Elms.

"An interesting and, to one reader at least, a pathetic history might be written of the decline and death of that same spirit, - not in Polchester alone, but in many another small English town. From the Boer War of 1899 to the Great War of 1914 stretches that destructive period; the agents of that destruction, the new moneyed classes, the telephone, the telegram, the motor, and last of all, the cinema.

"Destruction? That is, perhaps, too strong a word. We know that that is simply the stepping from one stage to another of the eternal, the immortal cycle. The little hamlet embowered in its protecting trees, defended by its beloved hills, the Rock rising gaunt and naked in its midst; then the Cathedral, the Monks, the Baron's Castle, the feudal rule; then the mighty Bishops and the vast all-encircling power of the Church; then the new merchant age, the Elizabethan salt of adventure; then the cosy seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, with their domesticities, their little cultures, their comfortable religion, their stay-at-home unimaginative festivities.

"Throughout the nineteenth century that spirit lingers, gently repulsing the outside world, reproving new doctrine, repressing new movement.... and the Rock and the Cathedral wait their hours, watching the great sea that, far on the horizon, is bathing its dykes and flooding the distant fields, knowing that the waves are rising higher and higher, and will at last, with full volume, leap upon these little pastures, these green-clad valleys, these tiny hills. And in that day only the Cathedral and the Rock will stand out above the flood."[1]

1 The Cathedral.

In this book, Walpole introduces into the later Victorian Age some of the social problems which are facing modern life. It is his first attempt to show how the disorganization of society would bring, to a certain extent, moral crises in the lives of the people and the nation. With this we shall deal in a later chapter.

CHAPTER VI.

SOCIAL PROBLEMS

As Mr. Walpole has fearlessly attacked English tradition and social life as it existed just before 1900, so also has he quite as fearlessly exposed the social evils which beset modern society. He has dealt quite frankly with the matter of marriage and divorce, and to some extent with the liquor question. In "Harmer John" he has also dealt with living conditions among the poor.

Just what he does believe with regard to marriage and divorce it is very hard to ascertain. He attempts no remedial suggestions in any of his novels. One is impressed, however, with the fact that in most of his novels there is a triangle. In "The Duchess of Wrexe" there is Roddy Seddon, his wife Rachel, and Nita Raseley. The other triangular affair which he presents in "The Duchess of Wrexe" is that of Rachel, Francis Breton and Roddy Seddon. In "Wintersmoon" we have Wildherne Poole, Diana Guard and Janet in a triangular affair, and in the same novel we have Rosalind, her husband, Tom Seddon, and Ravage. In "The Cathedral," Amy Brandon leaves her husband for Morris, with no thought of home or position, her whole idea being to obtain love, personal freedom and happiness. In "Hans Frost" Mr. Walpole attacks the power of the marriage contract to bind one to any particular form of life, and in "Fortitude" he presents a triangle which consists of Peter Westcott, his wife Clare, and Cardillac, the wealthy bachelor.

We cannot suppose that Mr. Walpole has presented these problems without some purpose. He cannot be a true realist and not present life as he finds it, and modern society at any rate is permeated more or less with the triangular love affairs of unhappy men and women. The frankness with which Mr. Walpole deals with this phase of society and the part which he allows it to play in his novels indicates what part of life it is and the problem it presents to those who are thinking seriously about the social structure of modern life.

One must understand England, however, and the Continental spirit, to really appreciate the free manner in which both men and women in the novels of Walpole decide to break up home and family in an effort to find freedom and happiness.

When laxity of marriage laws, divorce and other kindred problems are spoken of, one's thoughts naturally turn to The United States. But is not this after all due to the fact that divorce has been given a very prominent place in the press of The United States, and in the eyes of the world, through moving pictures made in The United States? Years ago, it was made extremely easy for the working classes in England to obtain separations. There has never been any form of liquor control in England, and it was quite a common thing among certain classes for a man to spend his earnings at the

public house and then go home and proceed to beat his wife for demanding a share in his earnings. One could walk through the poorer parts of London, or any of the larger cities of England, and see goods and chattels placed on the road as a result of a distress warrant for rent, due largely to the effect of liquor.

As labor grew in power, so did women become endowed with more political authority, and much social legislation was undertaken to alleviate conditions such as we have mentioned. It was an easy thing for husband and wife to obtain a separation order. It involved practically no expense. No learned counsel need be engaged, as almost any police magistrate could grant such an order. Divorce was practised by the better classes, and even among the titled classes women were beginning to assert their privilege in this connection.

The result of industrial and economic conditions in England led to a great many socialistic movements and the working man in England read more about socialism than possibly any other skilled worker in the world. As men and women labored together in the factories, so men and women organized to obtain better living conditions.

The established Church in England always did take a conservative view of the situation and never did put itself definitely on the side of labor. There were too many good livings to be given by the landed classes for the bulk of Anglican clergymen to take up definitely the cudgels on behalf of labor. As a result, the working classes as time went on began to look with disfavor on all clergy. The authority which we see wielded by the Chapter of the Cathedral at Polchester as shown in "The Cathedral" was never to be an authority again after the Boer War. Even the Non-Conformist churches, which after all did confine themselves largely to the laboring classes, were questioned. Religion itself was questioned. Men who are studying socialism and who work every day with their hands are rather apt to criticize in this way, and sometimes not unjustly.

This all led to a distinct questioning of the power and authority of the Church and to a great deal of very wide spread atheism - or if not atheism, agnosticism. With the questioning of the Church came a very definite questioning of marriage. The state alone had power to dissolve it; why should the Church have power to consummate marriage? Should not everything be state controlled? Should one pledge one's entire future to something which looked after all very much of a gamble?

A questioning such as this of marriage led to a great many common-law marriages. It is quite a common thing on the Continent and in London to find people living together for years without ever having been legally married and without any intention of being legally married. There is a mutual understanding on the part of the man and woman as to their respective responsibilities and they do not intend to let Church or State dictate as to their personal happiness. This has been so much so that the State does not now designate a child born out of wedlock "illegitimate," and at last we have the Anglican Church at its Conference dealing very generously but rather too late, with the problem of birth control. This is possibly a last effort to win some favor from the working classes which now dominate and will dominate English life and politics. Dean Inge has stated that there must be two kinds of marriage: a marriage with vows which would be just as binding as at present, and a marriage of a strictly companionate type. The discussion of such matters in the Church indicates how far the Established Church has gone and how long this state of affairs must have endured among the people for the State Church to take cognizance of it.

Mr. Walpole presents in a very fearless manner in his novels, pictures of happiness and unhappiness; of certainty and uncertainty; of freedom and of bondage, through marriage. He deals with marriage in a more detailed way in "Wintersmoon" than in any of his other novels. Wildherne Poole, when he desires to marry Janet Grandison, states: "I am not in love with you. I have been in love for eight years with somebody, somebody whom it is impossible for me to marry and someone who would not marry me even though it were possible. With the exception of this one person I would rather marry you than anyone in the world. I like you. I admire you. I think we could be good companions."[1] Janet's reply is: "Giving you frankness for frankness, the other day I told you that I did not love you in the least. But I like you. I would do all I could to make you happy if I married you."[2] Janet's purpose is to obtain a home for her sister, whom she passionately loves. Speaking further, Wildherne states: "But how many marriages ever remain romantic? It is a platitude that they do not. The best thing that comes of a happy marriage is companionship. That I believe we shall have."[3]

After Janet has accepted Lord Poole she thinks over the situation and these are her thoughts: "Marriage? And

1 Wintersmoon
2 Ibid.
3 Ibid.

with a man whom she did not love? It was a reassurance to her that he did not love her; she would not have to submit to his passion, but he wanted children, and what would that intercourse be for them both deprived of passion? Would he not close his eyes and imagine that in his arms he held another dearly-loved woman? And she? Could she shelter herself enough behind her liking for him? Did she like him enough for that?"[1]

Her engagement continues, although she gives it much thought. She comes to the place where she cannot turn back. She has some faith in the future - how much she does not know. "And now she would play a part where love could not help her. She had dreamt of love in her girlhood, and perhaps if Rosalind had not possessed her so entirely she would have known by now what love, - sexual love, married love - might be, but she had never known, and now, by this action, she had shut it out of her life for ever. Sexual love, yes. But there were other loves - love of friends, of beauty, of high deeds - all these were open to her. She could love the old Duke very easily - already she loved him perhaps. And for Wildherne - it might be that constant companionship with him would lead to comradeship, and comradeship to a kind of sisterly love. They would both be tranquilly happy, wise, sensible comrades. Wasn't that the way that marriages were made in France, and were they not

1 Wintersmoon

more successful than our impetuous, hurried, romantic arrairs that had no basis of real understanding?"[1]

Love does not enter into the situation as far as the Duke and Duchess are concerned. The Duchess had "Always been haunted by the fear that he, their only child, the true hope of the world, would marry someone unworthy. In these dreadful godless democratic days anybody might marry anybody. And now, after all her fears, he had chosen of all the young womenshe knew the one whom perhaps she herself preferred. A marvellous, marvellous piece of luck and fortune, and now, as she looked at the girl, so tall, so graceful, so perfectly at ease and in her right place, she was more than ever reassured. Moreover, the girl would be easy to dominate. She had been poor, struggling, with scarcely enough to eat; she would be so grateful for everything, so ready to fall into any plans, to do what she was told, to follow her mother-in-law's lead."[2]

Janet is not yet a woman of the world. Diana Guard, however, has had many affairs with men and she has no hesitation in telling Wildherne what she thinks of him, although she plays with him. In her conversation with Lord Poole, the author brings out some of the ideas of relationships between men and women, that have grown up through the war: "No, Wildherne, I don't love you. That's true enough. But I love no one, and most certainly not myself. Love eludes me.

1 Wintersmoon
2 Ibid.

At most I see it a room away, always out of touch. But friendship, that's another thing. Of all the nonsense this stupid post-war time has brought us that at least is our merit, that we've learnt the value of friendship between men and women, how to manage it and hold it so that it lasts. I want you as a friend. I can't trust anybody around me. They are false, and so am I. But you are not false. I can trust you altogether, and so I want you for a friend. Your Janet can't grudge me that. Besides, if all I hear is true, she's not a grudging woman."[1]

Janet is convinced of the wrong she is doing in marrying Wildherne and at the very last tries to reassure herself. She sees the future. She knows of Wildherne's love for Diana Guard. She tries to reassure herself and fails. "She would be punished all her life because she was selling herself, body and soul, for comfort. That it was not her comfort made no difference; and surely she saw clearly enough to-night that it would not be Rosalind's comfort. Why had she done this thing? What crazy impulse had driven her? The consciousness of her friendship with Wildherne had left her. Friendship when he was madly in love with another woman?"[2]

After some months of married life both Janet and Wildherne are extremely unhappy. Wildherne returns to

1 Wintersmoon
2 Ibid.

Diana Guard but is saved from himself by his father. The mad passion, however, continues to live and he fails to see that Janet is becoming passionately in love with him. After the birth of their baby, Humphrey, there is at least some happiness in the family. The old passion for Diana Guard still pulls at Wildherne's heart and he is still unappreciative of Janet. Janet strives in vain to win him and not until the death of the baby and the recovery of Wildherne from his fit of insanity do they really understand each other.

In the same novel young Tom Seddon falls madly in love with Rosalind. He worships the ground upon which she walks. He does everything for her; loves her with a deep emotion, which is due to the Russian strain in his blood. He is assured of success at the Foreign Office and is in every way a brilliant young man. Rosalind spurns him cruelly. She has absolutely no mercy. With a brazenness that is hardly understandable she frequents Ravage's rooms and finally runs away with Ravage, who has no compunction whatever about taking her nor has he any thought for her outside of companionship for a time, be it short or long. She goes away with Ravage to a cottage in Keswick, and that evening, when old Lord John Beaminster is dozing his last in his big arm chair, Tom Seddon shoots himself.

In "The Duchess of Wrexe" Francis Breton and Rachel love each other passionately. Rachel is married to Seddon, through the influence of the Duchess, and although finally she

and Roddy Seddon live happily together, her heart is Francis Breton's. In a very light manner Seddon has an affair with Nita Raseley, and one is apt to question whether he ever did care for Rachel as he should.

In "The Cathedral Mr. Walpole does not hesitate to show the unhappiness which may result from a strict code of behaviour in regard to marriage. Amy Brandon is crushed; her personality and her whole life is sunk in that of her husband, Archdeacon Brandon. Something in her very heart rebels against this and she finds comfort in the company of Morris. Morris is socially, intellectually and in every way inferior to Brandon, as far as the world would measure him, but he has sympathy and love, which are qualities unknown to Brandon, and although Brandon himself would not admit it. Morris learned to love Amy Brandon and in that love there is a reassertion of her personality. Without any hesitation she leaves Brandon to his shame and humiliation. She leaves her home, not caring what might happen to her daughter, Joan, in order to seek her own happiness. It would seem that Walpole has endeavored to show in the tragedy of Amy Brandon the scenes that sometimes lie behind supposedly respectable married life.

In "Harmer John" Mr. Walpole displays another phase of our social life which he does not hesitate to attack in a very

scathing manner. Mary Longstaff, daughter of the Reverend Thomas Longstaff, is a very bright and intellectual girl. A certain Major Waring, a retired Indian officer, had an only son who was at Oxford. During the holidays Lance Waring fell violently in love with Mary Longstaff and throughout one summer they were always together, riding, playing tennis, walking, and dancing. Early in the September of that year he was thrown from his horse and killed. In October it was known that Mary Longstaffe was going to have a baby, and that Lance Waring was its father.

"What horrified every one so terribly was that she stayed calmly on in our town for several months after this was known. She seemed to have no shame at all, and walked up and down the High Street and took her usual seat in the Cathedral just as though she were like every one else. Of course every one cut her, every one except old Mrs. Combermere, who was eccentric and just did things to show her eccentricity, and young Lady St. Leath, whose brother had married the daughter of Samuel Hogg the publican, once owner of a low public-house down in Seatown, who was 'queer,' therefore, in any case, and the perpetual sorrow and cross of the old Dowager's life.

"Mary Longstaffe had stayed in Polchester until Christmas of that year, and after that she vanished. It was rumoured vaguely from time to time that she lived in London, that she had a son, that she lived by writing for the newspapers; in any case she was not seen again in Polchester.

"..... It all came of the girl having no mother and picking up all these advanced ideas."[1]

The author does not hesitate to sympathize with Mary Longstaff, and in his book shows very clearly that the finger of scorn which the public is very often wont to point at those who have been unfortunate in some phases of their life, is very often the mark of the most flagrant hypocrisy.

In several of his novels, particularly in "Rogue Herries," "Fortitude," "Farthing Hall" and in one story in "The Golden Scarecrow," Mr. Walpole points out very definitely the evils of liquor. Our novelist knows the English public too well to endeavor to draw any morals or to make any definite comment on the evils of liquor, but paints his pictures with vivid reality and leaves one to consider the impressions which he has given. He does not make any suggestion regarding control nor does he show any remorse on the part of those who have erred in this way. Nevertheless, we can take it for whatever it may be worth. In "Fortitude" we have the picture of a man with a comfortable home, a sick wife and a son who would be a credit to his father, going gradually down hill and marking every step of his degeneracy by a greater use of intoxicating liquor. The last picture we have of the elder Westcott is

1 Harmer John

that of an old man who is at the brink of the grave, with a mind befuddled and besotted through continued drunkenness.

We feel that the passion for strong drink influences Rogue Herries so that his passion for a pretty face becomes his downfall, largely through misjudgment when under the influence of liquor. In "Farthing Hall," old Mr. Rossett threatens to wreck the happiness not only of his son but of his daughter, through his reckless drinking. The land has been mortgaged and the mismanagement of the whole state by Rossett threatens to plunge the whole family into ruin. In "The Golden Scarecrow," 'Enery's mother betrays her trust, loses her position, and little 'Enery faces starvation, as a result of his mother's indulgence. These are just some of the pictures Mr. Walpole has given us to indicate the evils of excessive drinking. It would be interesting to know what he would suggest by way of dealing with this situation in a country like England.

Nor have the living conditions of the poorer classes passed unnoticed by Mr. Walpole. Although in "Harmer John" he is speaking of conditions in Seatown about the year 1900, we must not forget that the book was written in 1929, and while most thinking people in England had a decidedly socialistic view toward life, we cannot help but feel that present day conditions among the poor have also given our novelist some food for thought.

Seatown is the slum area of Polchester. Johanson felt that he must make the people of Polchester realize what a filthy place Seatown was. He thought "how many people must really see that the brewery beyond the Town Hall is hideous, that Seatown is a disgrace, that cruelty at tea-parties is a crime as bad as child-beating, that the detracting view of any one at most is only half the view, that beauty grows and grows with what it feeds on."[1]

Johanson was determined to make Polchester realize its duty towards Seatown, and in this he realized that Seatown held his destiny.

".....The one Seatown street showed its straight line of scattered lights, and behind that line the others lay coiled like the eyes of watching animals nested lazily in the warm night. The place had a stranger fascination for him than anything else, save the Cathedral, in Polchester. He knew that in some fashion it was here that his destiny would reach its crisis. In some fashion, too, that little bunch of dirty houses would be his test, and he fancied that as he looked down those eyes looked up, lazily, contemptuously, but with some shadow of apprehension."[2]

He consulted Ronder and Wistons about it. Ronder is the typical clever, calculating, English Church clergyman,

1 Harmer John
2 Ibid.

who preaches for his own self-gratification and because of the social prestige which it gives him. Johanson is a capable fellow in all his work, but when he began to touch Seatown with the rents and profits from the brewery, then the pocket-books of Ronder and some of the other clergymen; Hogg, the public-house keeper; and others, would be touched, and this could not be allowed to continue. Wistons tells him very clearly that he is making a mistake. Johanson unburdens his heart to Wistons. He tells him what he thinks about Seatown.

"And then there were Seatown. I went down one afternoon. Oh, sir, it is terrible, the dirt, the walls tumbling, the windows broken, the smell, the rags. In such a town as this, so beautiful, so old, so happy, to have such!

"It's only a little place, one street, fifty houses. One day would pull it down. I was made unhappy by that. You told me once I couldn't build before I pulled down. Perhaps that is true. But what right had I to say anything? It were not my business. I am a stranger. And deep in my heart I don't wish to change people. I am not confident enough of my own goodness to teach others. But if we were all at it together, not because we were better than others, but because we all saw the same thing to do and set about to do it."[1]

1 Harmer John

He tells him how Ronder advised him to be quiet about Seatown. Wistons' advice is much to the point: "Stay here quietly, do what you're told for a year or two, give up ridiculous dreaming, get power and position and then, when you're really strong in the place, pull down Seatown if you like."[1]

When finally during the close of his interview with Wistons, and Wistons has put the responsibilities before him clearly, he then urges him to go back to the fight. In the crusade for reform, Harmer John is killed. Not, however, until he has aroused Polchester and all that part of England regarding conditions in Seatown. An extract from the "Polchester News" read as follows:

> "Do you know
>
> That Seatown streets after eight o'clock at night are a scandal to which decent Polcastrians are able to be blind no longer?
>
> That it is time some of our Church dignitaries ceased to frequent tea-parties and employed their valuable time among the poor of our city?
>
> That the recent discovery of a valuable work of art in our city is causing some of us to wonder what the Town Council are thinking about it, and whether they've got some more of the same covered up with street rubbish which they are too lazy to clear away?"[2]

1 Harmer John
2 Ibid.

The death of Harmer John in 1907 is commemorated in a celebration which is described in "The Western Morning News" as follows:

A POLCHESTER CELEBRATION

"On October 7 will be formally opened by the Mayor of Polchester the new street of houses facing the Pol.

"This street is to be known as Riverside Street, and it promises to be one of the finest streets in Glebeshire, bordered, as it is, by the waters of the Pol and faced by a beautiful bank of rising fields and woods.

"For many Polcastrians October 7 will be a significant day. Formerly the site now occupied by the new street was covered with one of the worst slums in Great Britain, long felt by the citizens of Polchester to be a scandal utterly unworthy of this Cathedral city's great traditions.

"Many efforts were made to rid the town of this eyesore, but no effective steps were taken until a shameful riot on October 7th, 1907, opened the eyes of every one to the urgency of the matter. It is felt, therefore, that the civic ceremony could not take place more fittingly than on October 7, just six years after the original disturbance.

"The civic ceremony, which will take place at ten-thirty in the morning, will be followed by a service at the Cathedral, at which it is hoped that all the Cathedral dignitaries will be present. This will be succeeded by a luncheon in the Town Hall.

"After the formal opening of the new street by the Mayor, a tablet to the memory of a foreign resident of the town who lost his life in the riot of 1907 will be unveiled."[1]

Of the new Seatown we read:

"..... Well, it was hideously ugly, so ugly that, at my first sight of it, had I been younger and more open to illusions I should have turned my head aside and cried. Heavens! This was what my Harmer John had made, he with his dream of avenues and statues and noble buildings with fountains playing! Yes, hideous - but I am sure, after all, a vast improvement on that terrible old Seatown slum. No slum here any more. The neat, sober houses each dressed in that dull, grey stone that is my especial detestation, each with his two windows decorated with nice overhanging slate eyebrows, each with his grey ears pricking up to heaven so neatly in their appropriate places. Oh! the ugliness of that street! But there was a fine, smooth road in front of the little houses, a mild, grey stone wall and the river Pol beyond - that last, at least, as it had ever been.

"All so neat and clean and comfortable. Every little house with its bath (h. and c.) and its excellent sanitary arrangements, a little garden back and front to every house. No slums any more and no old inhabitants of the slums either.

1 Harmer John

Whither had they all fled, those ghosts of the sinister past? Hiding in the caves of the sea and the hollows of the Glebeshire valleys? Or all reformed with clean faces and clean collars, forming part of this handsome crowd that pressed in on every side?"[1]

After the celebration, a brass tablet is unveiled, which reads:

Hjalmar Johanson

Friend of this Town

Died October VII. MCMVII.

Walpole does not believe that the slums of England can be made beautiful, but he does believe they can be made clean and sanitary. He does not believe that reformers can suddenly change the type of people whom we find in the slums of English cities, but he does believe that education over a period of time can do much to teach these people to help themselves and to take their places in society as honest citizens.

1 Harmer John

CHAPTER VII.

WALPOLE THE NOVELIST.

In any consideration of Mr. Walpole's art and skill as a novelist we must consider the various influences which have been brought to bear upon his work and the various factors which led him into the field of writing. He states in his autobiography: "Long before I could actually read I carried books about with me, fingering the smooth gentle leaves and scrawling marks with a pencil all over their pages."[1]

He also states the joy which he experienced when his godfather made him a present of"David Copperfield." It was this copy of "David Copperfield" that first caused him to make a library. He collected his books together and arranged them on his window-sill in a row. There was no place in his room for a book-shelf, and the window-sill seemed to be an excellent spot for his collection. The younger son of the clergyman with whom he was staying came into the room and threw all the books into the pond. There was a fight, but from then on Walpole was never without a collection of books. He states:

"It was 'David Copperfield' who first decided me to have a library. When I went back after that wonderful Christmas week to the clergyman's house where I was a paying guest (it was that same one in which lived Miss Julie) I collected my books together. I had about a dozen and they

1 The Bookman (New York) Vol. 57 -(The Crystal Box)

were, I think, 'Stumps,' 'Rags and Tatters,' 'Alice in Wonderland,' 'Ivanhoe,' 'The Talisman,' 'The Golden Treasure,' the Bible, 'The Pilgrim's Progress,' 'Robinson Crusoe,' 'St. Winifred's - Or The World of School,' 'David Copperfield,' and a volume of Mrs. Ewing's stories. I arranged these in a row I remember on my window-sill, there being no book-case in my little room, and next day the red faced son of the clergyman came in and threw them all out of the window into the garden pond."[1]

Very early he learned to love Scott, and he states: "I didn't care then, and I don't care now, how careless Sir Walter's style might be (there are things in 'Guy Mannering' and 'Old Mortality' and many another that can beat Meredith, Hardy, and James together for fine English), and how slow his openings (his prefaces are glorious), how impotent his conclusions (and his conclusions are impotent often enough). Character was the thing in a novel then and is the thing for me now - the one thing that the novel can do supremely better than any other branch of the arts."[2]

As he grew older he still was a patient student of the novel and collected those novels and books which interested him. He tells of a never to be forgotten day when "I was lured by a friend into the enchantments of Sotheby's. I had never been present at a book auction before. I stood nervously at his side and watched the proceedings. A first edition of

1 The Crystal Box - The Bookman, (New York) Vol. 57
2 Ibid.

Lewis's 'Monk' appeared. It was passed around. I handled the three slim volumes and my heart leaped up as did Wordsworth's when he beheld the daffodils.

"'Would you like that?' my friend asked me. I said, 'Yes,' never dreaming of my possession. He nodded his head once or twice.

"'The book's yours,' he said. I gasped and with that gasp entered a new kingdom."[1]

There is no doubt that Scott influenced Walpole to a very great extent. His influence becomes more apparent as time goes on, and Mr. Walpole's last novel, "Rogue Herries," is a type of historical novel patterned strictly after Scott. The admiration which Mr. Walpole has for Scott is shown very clearly in a statement from his autobiography: "I can only answer that it gives me a deep emotional pleasure to see, to handle, to live with those copies of the books that I love, the copies that first came into the world before anyone alive had time to realize how tremendous an effect upon the world they were going to have!"[2] One has only to read this statement of his own to realize what a great student of the novel Walpole has been, and how reverently and carefully he has endeavored to know that vast heritage of English Prose which has made possible the work of the modern novelist.

1 The Crystal Box - The Bookman (New York) Vol. 57
2 Ibid.

He realized the vicissitudes and struggles which the young novelist will have, and these are portrayed in a very vivid manner in "Fortitude." In fact, in the struggles of Peter Westcott to establish himself as a writer we seem to see the struggles which Mr. Walpole himself experienced before his work was appreciated by the public. In speaking of the difficulties of the novelist he states:

"A novelist especially is in these days driven to self-consciousness because the novel has become the public market-place of the arts. Everyone walks there and brings bells there and drives his donkey cart.... It is perfectly easy for a novelist to say, 'I know that I am no good as a writer. I have a knack. The public at the moment likes me. I am feathering my nest.' But there are also all the novelists whose very first written word proclaims them self-conscious artists. They are trying to do well something that a number of men and women have already done superbly well before them. 'Madam Bovary,' 'Rouge et Noir,' 'War and Peace,' 'The Brothers Karamazov,' 'Wuthering Heights,' 'The Return of the Native,' - these compel them to self-consciousness. The trouble to-day is that the very popular novels are too stupid and the very superior novels are too priggish. What we need is a Miss D---- or a Mr. A---- with better brains and more culture, and a Miss D---- or a Mr. K---- with a stronger narrative gift and less self-conscious satisfaction."[1]

1 The Crystal Box - The Bookman (New York) Vol. 57

Speaking of the advancement that the novel has made and the development which we hear talked about so much at present, he states the following:

"I cannot, personally, see that the novel has advanced one little step since 'Clarissa Harlowe.' Of course any talk about the progress of the arts is nonsense. The arts do not advance. Once in a while a star dances, genius blazes the sky, a fountain leaps, a crowd of critics are left staring skyward and volubly explaining. The arts do not advance. James Joyce can teach Laurence Sterne exactly nothing at all. As to the things that Laurence Sterne, bending down quizzically from the loftier shades, can teach James Joyce.....

"Meanwhile I have my Credo. I believe that:

1. I am a born novelist.
2. I have a narrative gift, a sense of character, a feeling for atmosphere.
3. My godfathers, Hawthorne and Trollope, are not bad godfathers for a man.
4. I consider about myself continually, but no more than any human being in constant reminder of the past, the present, the future, his digestion and his friends, must consider himself.
5. I consider the relation of the Other Life to this one so infinitely more interesting than any other question that I am surprised it is considered unimportant or even non-existent by so many of my friends.

6. I am in love with life - not really with myself, as some of my friends and all of my enemies consider.

7. I think it of absorbing interest that I should exist - and of nearly equally absorbing interest that everyone else should exist, so different, so persistent, so picturesque.

8. I am too inquisitive and too deeply interested to be shocked by anything.

9. My life is a constant struggle between selfishness and love for my friends. Those whom I do not love think me completely selfish.

10. I like to be liked except by those whom I hate. I hate nobody.

11. I consider myself or any other individual so deeply unimportant and at the same time so important that conceit and humility seem to me impossible qualities."[1]

Many modern critics would not at all agree with Mr. Walpole that the novel has not advanced, but it would appear that only the keen student of the novel, such as Mr. Walpole is, really appreciates the great strides in the development of the novel which culminated in the efforts of Thackeray. We have had no novelists as great as Thackeray, nor is it likely that in

1 The Crystal Box - The Bookman (New York) Vol. 57

this age when people do not want to delve into the depths of good, solid reading matter, are we likely to produce novelists such as Thackeray. The novel that is heavy and intense is put aside as being too tiring for the modern reader of light fiction. As Walpole so aptly says, the modern novelist must consider his public if he desires to obtain a living, and for this reason we are not likely to develop novelists of the type of Thackeray.

The present has its compensations, and the various complexities of modern life give us studies in psychology and in modern problems, such as are presented in Walpole's "Wintersmoon" and "Hans Frost," and, after all, these may have more bearing on modern life than the novels which we so fondly call the masterpieces of English Literature.

Realism is everywhere present in most of the novels of Mr. Walpole. He has patiently endeavored to portray English life - its traditions, advantages and disadvantages. It has been said that four Walpole novels, "The Duchess of Wrexe," "The Green Mirror," "The Young Enchanted," and "Wintersmoon" occupy the same high plane as Galsworthy's "Forsyte Saga," and, indeed, as we have already stated, it might be argued that these are even greater than "The Forsyte Saga" and were undoubtedly a source of inspiration and strength to Galsworthy himself.

Hugh Walpole knows life and is not afraid to depict it. He can be sympathetic without being sentimental; he is afraid neither of pleasure nor pain - nor of seeming to fear the conventionalities. Of life he himself says: "Human nature is mean, bestial, furtive, preoccupied eternally with sex, discontented and deeply ironical."[1] On the other hand, he admits that there is a great deal in human nature which is worth while. He has no sympathy for the so-called realist who goes too far in one direction, to stress the disorders of present day conditions. He is quite caustic when speaking of some of the heroes of Miss Dell, Zane Grey and Hall Caine, and states: "I am ready to admit that much that is interesting in human psychology has been discovered by the modern psychological scientists, although the Book of Genesis I fancy covers most of it - but the novel as a form of art is another thing than the novel as a photographic recorder of surface realism."[2]

The fragment of his autobiography as recorded in "The Crystal Box" shows how intensely he has always been interested in the novel. He commences "The Crystal Box" with a statement of his life, and very early brings into the narration the love which he felt as a boy for books, and the influence which books have had on him throughout his life.

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He closes his biography with many comments as to the nature and future of the English novel. In fact, the whole biography is permeated with the spirit of the novel, which, to Walpole, is very life.

He has patiently and studiously followed the works of Sterne, Richardson and Addison in the development of prose writing. He knows Dickens, he knows Thackeray. He is appreciative of Jane Austen and Charlotte Bronte. Through his novels various little touches indicate his knowledge of the development of the English novel. In "Hans Frost" he makes a statement which Coleridge had said about Sterne: "There always is in a genuine humour an acknowledgment of the hollowness and farce of the world and its disproportion to the godlike in us." In "The Wooden Horse" the surname of one of his characters is "Feverel." He makes several allusions to the work of Miss Austen and in his biography shows that he has made a very clear survey of the development of prose literature.

In 1922, in an article in the "Literary Digest" he makes a very interesting pronouncement regarding the American novel. Sinclair Lewis had stated that "England could no longer be the mother country of American literature any more than she could be the mother country of American politics or American life." Mr. Walpole wrote an article on "The Truth About American Literature" in "The London Daily Mail," and "The Mail" printed it in an effort to convince its readers that Sinclair Lewis was not incorrect.

He states: "Were I asked to mention the six most prominent younger American novelists definitely of this movement, I should name Joseph Hergesheimer, Willa Cather, Sinclair Lewis, Sherwood Anderson, Floyd Dell, and F. Scott Fitzgerald, and if some one wanted the names of six younger poets I would give him Vachell Lindsay, Carl Sandburg, Robert Frost, 'H. D.,' Edgar Lee Masters, and Amy Lowell. And if to these names we add the names of six modernist essayists and critics - Heywood Broun, Waldo Frank, Don Marquis, Burton Rascoe, W. Hackett and H. L. Mencken - there are in these eighteen men and women sufficient force and strength to prove admirably the truth of Mr. Sinclair Lewis's contention....

"Take the six novelists I have mentioned, and in their work what do you find? What is there that is difficult for the British public? Obviously something, because only one of them, Joseph Hergesheimer, has secured any sort of success here.

"Hergesheimer is probably the best living American novelist, altho these judgments are always personal and never, of course, decisive in any way. He is an American of Dutch extraction, a man between forty and fifty, who had to wait many years for recognition, was discovered by the indefatigable Mr. George Lorimer, of the Saturday Evening Post, and made his first big success somewhere in the early years of the war with 'The Three Black Pennys.' .....

"But not from her and not from Hergesheimer will you savor the real sharp tang of this new American vision and language. You will get the first taste of that from Sinclair Lewis's 'Main Street' (Hodder and Stoughton). That book has sold half a million copies in The United States. It has sold very few, I believe, in Great Britain.

"You must persevere with it. It is very long. People talk through its pages in the most incredible language-- the new American tongue. It describes the life of a small American town that is in no sort of way like a small English town-- the new American town. But persevere. And when you have read it, read Sherwood Anderson's 'Winesburg, Ohio,' and when you have finished that read Scott Fitzgerald's 'This Side of Paradise,' and when you have finished that read Floyd Dell's 'Moon Calf.' Then if you are still alive, turn back and consider Hergesheimer and Miss Cather again, and you will know something about the new American fiction.....

"Sinclair Lewis was right in his chief contention. We British can patronize no longer. It is time that we began to read American contemporary literature from an American standpoint as we read French from a French standpoint.

"Let us realize that this is a foreign language that faces us, and a difficult foreign language at that; that we are having offered to us a new presentation of a new life - a new life that is certain to play an immense part in the development of the new world.

"It is urgently necessary for us to understand this."[1]

1 Literary Digest, August 19th, 1922.

The intense study given by Mr. Walpole to the novel enables him to perfect the plot structure of his novels to a very high degree. From the very opening page until the story is completed, his novels move forward in an orderly fashion and intense interest is sustained throughout. He further heightens this interest by the pleasing continuity which he gives in the creation of his characters. Rachel Seddon appears in "The Duchess of Wrexe" and is a prominent character in "Wintersmoon." Felix Brun and Lord John Beaminster appear in both novels. Zanti appears in "Fortitude" and again in "Wintersmoon." Westcott and Stephen Brant appear in "Fortitude" and "The Green Mirror" and Westcott is mentioned in several other novels. One feels that it is a continued story about old friends; that one has a survey of a section of society rather than a narrow view of one family.

But Mr. Walpole is not entirely a realist. "The Golden Scarecrow," "The Man With Red Hair," "Jeremy and Hamlet" and some of his short stories, are fantasies. "The Golden Scarecrow" is a very fantastic portrayal of the religious beliefs of several children. It reminds us very distinctly of the same passion that Wordsworth felt in his "Intimations of Immortality," in which he states ".....Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting!....."Heaven lies about us in our infancy."

Possibly to be a stern realist one must also be a dreamer. At any rate, "The Golden Scarecrow" and "Wintersmoon"

are as far apart as the two poles. One cannot say that a book like "The Golden Scarecrow" is appreciated by the public, but Walpole feels that he has something to write about and intends to give the message to the world for whatever it may be worth.

Speaking of the future of the novel, Mr. Walpole states in his autobiography:

"Not long ago a number of English writers were asked to say what they thought of the future of the English novel. One of them, J. D. Beresford, who ought to have known better, actually stated it as his belief that the novel as an art form was worn out and finished.

"Does that not show to what ends the novel is being to-day turned? So long as there are human beings alive on this planet who wish to tell other human beings some anecdote, some adventure, some humorous history, so long will the novel exist. That may not be for a greatly extended period. But while humans remain the tale remains. From Chaucer to Joyce the distance of time is slight. And as in art there is no progress but only a procession of interpreters, let us not disturb our souls with the sense that printing was discovered yesterday nor that, having been so recently found, it should be so swiftly silenced."[1]

Nor should we like to close this chapter without mentioning the appreciations of Mr. Walpole's works, which have been written by some of the outstanding men in the realm of English

1 The Crystal Box - The Bookman (New York) Vol. 57

prose. Since we commenced this chapter we have heard with regret of the death of Mr. Arnold Bennett. Speaking of the works of Hugh Walpole, he stated that after "The Wooden Horse" Mr. Walpole "was quite incurable, and he kept on writing novels. 'Maradick at Forty' was the next one. It sold eleven hundred copies, but with no greater net monetary profit to the author than the first one. He made, however, a more shining profit of glory. 'Maradick at Forty' - as the phrase runs - 'attracted attention.' I myself, though in a foreign country, heard of it, and registered the name of Hugh Walpole as one whose progress must be watched.

"About the time of the publication of "The Gods and Mr. Perrin,' I made the acquaintance of Mr. Walpole and found a man of youthful appearance, rather dark, with a spacious forehead, a very highly sensitised nervous organisation, and that reassuring matter-of-factness of demeanour which one usually does find in an expert. He was then busy at his task of seeing life in London. He seems to give about one-third of the year to the tasting of all the heterogeneous sensations which London can provide for the connoisseur and two-thirds to the exercise of his vocation in some withdrawn spot in Cornwall that nobody save a postman or so, and Mr. Walpole, has ever beheld. During one month it is impossible to 'go out' in London without meeting Mr. Walpole - and then for a long period he is a mere legend of dinner tables. He returns to the dinner tables with a novel complete."[1]

1 Hugh Walpole-Appreciations-Notes and Comments by Grant Overton.

Mr. Joseph Conrad in a comment on the works of Hugh Walpole states: "Of the general soundness of Mr. Walpole's work I am perfectly convinced. Let no modern and malicious mind take this declaration for a left-handed compliment. Mr. Walpole's soundness is not of conventions but of convictions; and even as to these, let no one suppose that Mr. Walpole's convictions are old-fashioned. He is distinctly a man of his time; and it is just because of that modernity, informed by a sane judgment of urgent problems and wide and deep sympathy with all mankind, that we look forward hopefully to the growth and increased importance of his work. In his style, so level, so consistent, Mr. Hugh Walpole does not seek so much for novel as for individual expression; and this search, this ambition so natural to an artist, is often rewarded by success. Old and young interest him alike and he treats both with a sure touch and in the kindest manner. We see Mr. Walpole grappling with the truth of things spiritual and material with his characteristic earnestness, and we can discern the characteristics of this acute and sympathetic explorer of human nature. His love of adventure and the serious audacity he brings to the task of recording the changes of human fate and the movements of human emotion, in the quiet backwaters or in the tumultuous open streams of existence."[1]

1 Hugh Walpole - Appreciations - Notes and Comments by Grant Overton.

Joseph Hergesheimer, whom Walpole considers to be one of the outstanding American novelists, states: "It is possible to say that Mr. Walpole possesses almost entirely the qualities which seem to me the base, the absolute foundation, of a beauty without which creative writing is empty. In him, to become as specific as possible, there is splendidly joined the consciousness of both the inner and outer worlds.

"Yet, to deny at once all pedantic pretense, it must be made clear that my real concern is with the pleasure, the glow and sense of recognition, to be had from his pages. The evoked emotions, which belong to the heart rather than the head, are the great, the final, mark of the true novelist. And they may be, perhaps, expressed in the single word, magic. Anyone who is susceptible to this quality needs no explanation of its power and importance, while it is almost impossible of description to those upon whom it has no effect. It is quite enough to repeat it.... magic. At once a train of images, of memories of fine books, will be set in motion. Among them the father of Peter Westcott will appear -a grim evil in a decaying house heavy with the odor of rotten apples; and, accompanying them, the mind will be flooded with the charmed moments of Mr. Walpole's descriptions: Russian nights with frozen stars, rooms swimming placid and strange in old mirrors, golden ballrooms and London dusks, the pale quiver of spring, of vernal fragrance, under the high sooty glass dome of a railroad station.....

"His books, from the first to the last, have not become antiquated; they are as fresh to-day as they were at any time through the past ten or twelve years; the people in them, true in costume and speech to their various moments, are equally true to that to which in man is changeless. They, the novels, are at once provincial, as the best novels invariably are, and universal as any deep penetration of humanity, any considerable artistry, must be. Never merely cosmopolitan, never merely smart - even in his knowledge of smart people,- they are sincere without being stupid, serious without a touch of hypocrisy; and on the other hand, light without vapidity, entertaining with never a compromise nor the least descent from the most dignified of engagements.

"Usually great creative writers - gifted, together with pity, with clarity of vision - have dealt in a mood of severity with life; they are largely barred, by their covenant with truth, from the multitude; but Mr. Walpole, not lacking in the final gesture of greatness, has yet the optimism that sees integrity as the master of the terrors. Literature, different from painting and music, serves beauty rather by the detestation of ugliness than in the recording of lyrical felicities. But, again, Mr. Walpole has countless passages of approval, of verbal loveliness, that must make him acceptable not only to a few but to many."[1]

1 Hugh Walpole-Appreciations-Notes and Comments by Grant Overton.

Grant Overton, who so frequently writes for the American "Bookman," says of "The Cathedral": "The aim in 'The Cathedral,' a study of human power and destiny in widening circles, is so completely compassed that this presentation of our world in little is likely to stand as Mr. Walpole's most perfect novel from all standpoints up to the hour in which this is written. And one does not speculate about the future unless he is deficient in a just attitude toward the present. The future translates itself; it is in the Now that we prove our mastery of the arts of life - of which not the least is the art of careful savoring and sincere appreciation. In three successive novels Hugh Walpole has shown the height and the depth and the breadth of his very ample talent; and for those who can evaluate them properly, 'The Captives,' 'The Young Enchanted' and 'The Cathedral' may supply the best measure of what he may be expected of what he may be relied upon - to do."[1]

In an appreciation of "The Cathedral" published in "The Bookman," Joseph Hergesheimer writes as follows: "Archbishop Brandon is a penetrating, a merciless study of a man blinded by his own conceit, a man ruled by precedent, obstinate, self-satisfied, incapable of true thought, incapable of understanding anything or anyone opposed to him.

1 Hugh Walpole - Appreciations - Notes and Comments by Grant Overton.

Yet this man is also a good man, an honest man, a lovable man. He is worth so much that he is worth saving, and since he can be saved only by undergoing the uttermost agony, he treads a bitter road. The handful of characters associated with him, and who in one way or another help forward his fate, are drawn with the greatest charm and insight, and made to live for you in a telling phrase, as where one maiden lady is described as 'looking like a tightly rolled umbrella with a parrot head handle.' Humor, sympathy, and graciousness are in the book, and much beauty, and there is also the wild, sweet breath of young and happy love."[1]

1 The Bookman (New York) No. 56.

CHAPTER VIII.

WALPOLE AND ART.

It would be impossible to deal with the novels of Mr. Walpole without taking into consideration the large part which art plays in all his works. One feels very distinctly that he has a keen appreciation of everything that is beautiful and lovely, and that he is a true artist in that he appreciates the art in other things around him, as well as in his own work. This is more often true of writers than it is of painters, and in Mr. Walpole's works we are made very conscious of a deep, aesthetic feeling which dominates his characters.

It is quite true that Mr. Walpole does not feel that the average Britisher has a very deep or proper regard for art. He says: "English people are not clever in their flattery of artists, because, thank God, they do not care very greatly for art. The only countries where art really flourishes are those in which the artists are left alone and work, in little isolated numbers, not against hostile surroundings but indifferent ones."[1] At the same time, art influences the actions of his chief characters.

The room in which Hans Frost wrote his novels which commanded the attention of all England is described as follows: "There was no room for pictures. One etching - Rembrandt's 'Three Crosses' - hung over the fireplace. Beneath it was an

1 Hans Frost

Epstein head of a woman. There was one long writing table and two small ones, two armchairs of deep blue, a deep-backed chair that had once belonged to Dickens at the writing table. On the table itself perfect neatness, a writing pad, an old shabby ink bottle shaped like an owl (this had belonged to Henry Galleon), a round crystal bowl edged with gold that held now dark amber chrysanthemums, on his right hand a photograph of his wife, on his left a photograph of Galleon, a small bronze (a copy of the Donatello David), a silver paper knife, a stick of red sealing wax, a heavy blue paper weight."[1]

His friends, knowing of his deep appreciation of art, presented him with a beautiful Manet on the occasion of his seventieth birthday. "And it was a lovely thing! It was a very small oil painting and the artist was Manet. The picture had for its subject two ladies and a gentleman outside a print shop in Paris. One lady wore a blue crinoline and the other a white; there was a little fuzzy white dog; the glass windows shone in the afternoon light, and beyond the pearl-grey wall of the old house there was a sky of broken blue and swollen white cloud. It was a very lovely little Manet..... Hans Frost was unconscious of Sir Giles and of everyone present. He saw only the picture. He had always adored Manet, a painter closer to his soul than any other. He entered into the heart of a Manet at once, as though it had been painted

1 Hans Frost

for himself alone. He could be critical about everything else in the world (and was so), but not about Manet. When he was depressed or troubled by his liver he went and looked at Manet .... And now he would have a Manet all of his own, his very own - that deep and tender beauty, that blue crinoline, that fuzzy little dog, that white cloud against the gentle blue; these were his for ever."[1]

When Hans determined to forsake the sheltered existence with his wife, Ruth, he took with him his favorite novels in English literature, and the Manet. When he had rented the little bedroom in which he was to pass the rest of his time he looked at it and thought how beautiful it would be with its white-washed walls, the deal table and the Manet. All through the novel it is this painting which prompts Hans to make worth while decisions in the crises of his life.

Harmer John relates how he made his decision to go to England: "One day I was walking by the shops and I saw a blue plate - one of those deep blues like the sea. I thought it was the most beautiful colour I'd ever seen. It wasn't glass, it were some sort of clay. I bought it and took it home. I put it on the mantelpiece of my sitting-room, and before it had been there half an hour the mantelpiece looked shabby, so I went out and bought two pictures - prints of Copenhagen. In the evening I was looking up at that plate, and the rug in front of the fire were so faded I was properly ashamed of it. So in the morning I went out and bought a new

1 Hans Frost

rug, a good one, purple colour to go with the plate. Then I had a terrible time. Everything in the room looked wrong by the rug - old shabby things, no sort of use. I cleared them all out. The room was bare. I white-washed the walls. I put my money together and bought a Zorn etching. It was like a fever, then. It spread to my other rooms, then my clothes, then the view out of my windows. My flat looked on to a blank wall. I changed the flat and got another that looked over the water and the trees. Then one day in a bookshop window I saw a book open, and one page had Donatello's 'David,' and the other one of his prophets for the Florence Cathedral. I couldn't forget that prophet all day. I went back the next morning and bought the book. That morning my life changed. I said, Why shouldn't it be now once again in the world as it was then - Why shouldn't we build towns in which everything was beautiful, lovely streets, wonderful statues? And I thought of England and that town my mother had talked about with the Cathedral, and I swore that one day I would go there and would live there and work there, and - and - here I am!"[1]

England is beautiful and Harmer John found it so. "He found here, as he had found nowhere in his own Scandinavia, the work of the craftsman, striving with his hands to make Beauty for the World that he loved. He found it in the floor,

1 Harmer John

in the roof, in the pillars, in the windows, in the Cloisters, in the Bishop's tomb, in the Brytte Monument - in the Brytte Monument above all. That must have been, at his first vision of it, as though it had stepped straight out of his beloved 'Donatello' book ('Donatello', by Lord Balcarres, Duckworth, 1903)."[1]

"Three people, four people, five people.....find them and start your little crusade..... One blue plate means one Persian rug, one Persian rug means one good water-colour, one good water-colour means a new wall-paper, one new wall-paper means a new view from the window.... And why are we all standing still doing nothing, letting a tiny minority do all the work?"[2]

It was the beautiful in the Persian rug and the blue plate that inspired Harmer John to risk his all in bringing about better conditions in the slum areas of Polchester. We cannot help but feel that the aesthetic atmosphere which these simple things gave to his private apartments strengthened and aided Harmer John in his struggle.

In "Fortitude" it is Zanti who leads young Peter Westcott into a deeper appreciation of those things which are beautiful and worth while. Art as he sees it in Zanti's shop,

1 Harmer John
2 Ibid.

in literature and pottery, gives Peter a new conception of life and an outlook on life which he never would have received from his drunken father. It is his knowledge of good literature which he obtains through working in Zanti's shop in London that enables Peter to withstand the vicissitudes which usually mark the early life of a young author.

In "The Duchess of Wrexe" the chief character, Rachel Beaminster, has a deep passion for beautiful music, a passion which her husband, Roddy Seddon, can never feel. In her love for the beautiful, she and Seddon stand poles apart, and in the beginning of their friendship a side of Rachel's character is shown which he can never know.

At the opera with him "As the music reached her, the old red and gold seemed a cage, swinging, swinging higher and ever higher with old Lady Carloes and Roddy Seddon and all the brilliant people in the stalls, and all the enthusiastic people in the gallery, swinging, swinging inside it. She could feel the lift of it, the rise and fall, and almost the clearer air about her as it rose into the stars. Then there came to her the voice for which she had surely all her days been waiting. It enwrapped her round and comforted her, consoled her for all her sorrows, reassured her for all her fears. It filled the cage and the air beyond the cage, it was of earth and of heaven, and of all things good and beautiful

in this world and the next. For the second time to-day her early years came back to her; the voice had in it all those hours when someone's tenderness had made Life worth living. 'Life is immortal,' it cried. 'And I am immortal, for I am Love and Charity, and, whatever the wise ones may tell you, I cannot die.' She felt again the space and the silence and the snow, but now with no alarm, only utter reassurance. And the cage swung up and up and there were now only the stars and the wind around and about them."[1]

The music was interrupted time and again by the conversation about her. "Rachel felt in that moment that murder was assuredly no crime."[2] The interruptions continued until finally she said: "Keep quiet, keep quiet!" and as she sat down again her anger choked her and she hated Seddon. She took him to task for this very severely between acts. When he apologized she said:

"'How dared you - how could you? What do you come for if you care nothing for music at all? If you can hear a voice like that and then talk about your own silly little affairs.... And the selfishness of it! Of course you think of nobody but yourself!'

'Upon my word, Miss Beaminster!'

'No, I've no patience with you. Go to your musical comedy if you like, but leave music like this for people who can appreciate it!'

1 The Duchess of Wrexe
2 Ibid.

"She returned to the box quite angry.

"Then as the loveliest music in all opera flooded the building her anger began to melt.

"He had looked so charmingly repentant and, after all, the 'Meistersinger' was long for anyone who did not really care for music - and then they all did talk. It was only in the gallery that one found the proper reverence.

"Her anger cooled and then descended upon her the quintet, and she was once again swept, in her cage, to the stars.

"Now she and all live things seemed to be opening their hearts together to God - no shame now to speak of one's deepest and most sacred thoughts. No fear now of God nor the Archangels nor all the long spaces of Immortality. The cage had ascended to the highest of all the Heavens, and there, for a moment, one might stand, worshipping, with bowed head."[1]

In "The Cathedral," Ronder, cultured, clever, assured of himself, is influenced by art. We cannot admire the character of Ronder, but his culture, poise and self-assurance are undoubtedly due to the beautiful things with which he was accustomed to surround himself. A description of the room in which he and Miss Ronder found themselves at the beginning of their stay in Polchester is worthy of our consideration.

1 The Duchess of Wrexe.

"The drawing room was charming. The stencilled walls, the cushions of the chairs, the cover of a gate-legged table, the curtains of the mullioned windows were of a warm dark blue. And whatever in the room was not blue seemed to be white, or wood in its natural colour, or polished brass. Books ran round the room in low white book-cases. In one corner a pure white Hermes stood on a pedestal with tiny wings outspread. There was only one picture, an excellent copy of 'Rembrandt's Mother.' The windows looked out to the garden, now veiled by the dusk of the evening. Tea was on a little table close to the white tiled fireplace. A little square brass clock chimed the half-hour as Ronder came in.

"'I suppose Ellen will be over,' Ronder said. He drank in the details of the room with a quite sensual pleasure. He went over to the Hermes and lifted it, holding it for a moment in his podgy hands.

"'You beauty!' he whispered aloud. He put it back, turned round to his aunt."[1]

It is in "Wintersmoon," however, that Mr. Walpole really gives us some of his own philosophy in the matter of art. Janet, harassed by her trouble with Wildherne Poole, and disturbed by thoughts of Rosalind's strange behaviour, while walking through the streets of London reviews in her own mind her difficulties.

1 The Cathedral.

"In her trouble she found herself staring, without seeing anything, into an old curiosity shop. She did not know where she was. Although it was not yet three o'clock the March afternoon had wreathed the London streets in a brown sunny mist that was not a fog, that obscured nothing, but transmuted the old grey stone, the windows and doors with an amber light.

"On such an afternoon London becomes of more importance than its inhabitants. The geniality is that of an old gentleman taking his ease in his club window and watching the world go by. No other city has that masculine geniality - New York moves too fast, it cannot afford the time; Paris is too feminine; Old Rome too conscious of Modern Rome to be light-hearted; Stockholm too physically material; Petersburg - alas, poor Petersburg, Petrograd, Leningrad, sinking back into its marsh whence so recently it climbed! - but your old, brown, smiling gentleman, rotund-stomached, clear-eyed, too unimaginative to be disturbed by the strange mutterings beyond his window, he is still there, the guardian of the world's tradition.

"Janet, looking into her window, was conscious dimly of beautiful things - of porcelain and precious stuffs, of gold and silver boxes, of a crystal bowl, a silver crucifix studded with jewels, and ivory cabinet.

"Absent-mindedly, thinking bitterly of Rosalind, she stepped back and saw over the shop only the word in large gold letters - 'Zanti.'

"These letters were stamped upon the front of the neat little shop with its dark blue door, having in their simple inevitability a kind of cheeky independence. No more words were necessary. You could take 'Zanti' or leave him.

"For the second time that day Janet had an odd sense of her last chance being offered to her. She must escape from her situation within an hour's time or submit to it for ever, and as though a step or two forward would assist her decision, scarcely knowing what she did, she walked into the shop.

"Within the shop there was dusk, a dusk flung into radiance at different points by splendid fragments of colour, gold and purple and amethyst. Out of the dusk there emerged an enormously fat man.

"'Madame, how can I zerrve you?' he asked.

"He was of course a Southerner, jet black hair fitting tightly his round, pale, many chinned face like a skull-cap. He was not short, but rather tall and extremely broad. On his stomach you could have laid a tea-tray. His eyes were small and sparkling like black diamonds. The effect of him was, in spite of his stoutness, not unpleasant. His fingers were slender for so fat a man. His black suit was clean and well brushed. His smile friendly but not sycophantic. Janet thought that he was perhaps an Italian.

"When he asked his question Janet was confused.

"'There was - I thought I saw in the window a rose-coloured bowl.'

"'If you think you zee it, Madame,' he answered her, 'then it is there, but as a matter of fact there is no such bowl in the window.'

"Had she seen it? She now almost believed that she had, a lovely porcelain bowl of the most delicate rose. 'I am sure I saw it,' she said, 'a porcelain rose-coloured bowl!'

"'If youzee it,' he repeated, 'it is there. Madame is lucky. It is Madame's possession for ever. She will always have her rose-coloured bowl. I am glad my shop has been so fortunate as to provide her with it.'

"'But if it is true,' Janet continued, 'may I look at it, please? Would you mind getting it from the window?'

"'It is not there in the window,' he answered her, smiling, 'but certainly in Madame's imagination. How much better for Madame! No one can take it from her, no careless servant break it - her lovely rose-coloured bowl!'

"'Then,' said Janet, 'why do you have your shop? Why should anyone buy anything?'

"'Why indeed!' He nodded his head gravely. 'But alas, zo many people have not Madame's imagination! They cannot own anything unless they have it physically in their hands, unless they can touch and feel. Fortunate for me, otherwise

I starve - unfortunate for them. They must pay.....' Then he added after a pause, 'I can show Madame zome beautiful unreal things, things she may touch and feel and must pay for.'

"She sat down and allowed him to show her some things, very lovely things, a vase of crystal, some cups of jade, a chain of old gold and pearls, a diamond snuff-box. She looked at them gravely one after another. Once or twice she asked the price; it was always enormous.

"'You are very expensive,' she said.

"'For these things, yes,' he answered. 'I don't care whether I zell or no. I have enough money for my own wants.'

"'Don't you love these beautiful things? Don't you hate to part with them?' she asked him.

"'No,' he answered. Nothing I can zee has so much value for me. Here am I, an ugly fat man - ugly, isn't it so? But this is not myself. I have learnt through a long life hunting for treasure where are the valuable things.'

"'Hunting for treasure?' Janet asked. 'Do you mean real treasure?'

"'Certainly. I have been everywhere. I am a citizen of the world. For a long time I was in Cornwall, then in London. I had a bookshop. That was in the days of the good Queen Victoria. Then I went to Spain, hunting for my castle, you know. In the war I fought for my country, Italy. That was a treasure hunt, I can tell you. Then I came to

London. It was not difficult for me to find things for my shop. I know where they are. And I settle here, resting. I am at peace.'

"'You have found what you were searching for?' Janet asked him.

"'Not found, no. But I go now in the right direction. I waste no time over what I can see with my physical eyes. I have also a rose-coloured bowl.' Then, smiling at her in the friendliest fashion, he said: 'But excuse me, Madame, I bore you. It was when you asked for the rose-coloured bowl that I was tempted to talk. I hope if you ever wish to rest for a moment you will come into my shop. There is no need to buy anything.'

"She got up, looking about her at all the beautiful things. 'Thank you,' she said, 'I will remeber. Do you apply your philosophy also to people?' she went on. 'Are none of the qualities and defects that we see in our friends real, but only the things that we cannot see?'

"He shrugged his heavy shoulders. 'Certainly they are real, our qualities and defects. Most tiresom their reality. Their reality obscures the thing behind just as, Madame, that vase and chain and cup obscure your rose-coloured bowl if you consider them too closely. We waste our time too much with these realities when the true purpose of life is beyond them. Do not look too often at that crystal vase, Madame. It is not worth your trouble.'

"'It is very beautiful,' Janet said.

"'Only for a moment, Madame. When you have bought it and taken it home and zee it on your mantelpiece, then you know all about it and your pleasure is satisfied. So it is with people. We must make it our business to search for the things that we shall never find. After the full summing-up something always remains. It is only that that is of value.'

"'Do you always,' Janet asked, 'entertain your customers with your philosophy? You must sell very little if you do.'

"'Ah no, Madame,' he answered her. 'But you came into my shop in trouble. You did not intend to come in. You did not come as a purchaser but as a fellow-traveller.'

"At that moment a lady and a gentleman entered the shop. The cup of jade pleased them. They asked its price. Bargaining began. Mr. Zanti was, Janet saw, sharp and extremely commercial. A fine dust of haggling filled the air.

"Janet said 'good-day' and sped away to the Museum.'[1]

Mr. Walpole makes a very clear case for the influence of art on our lives and our actions. Nor is he content to speak of art in his novels only. Some of his short stories indicate how deep is his feeling in the matter. One particularly fine story which illustrates this is called "A Picture."

1 Wintersmoon.

In this story a young couple about to be married have a difference regarding a picture hanging in the Durham Galleries. The hero of the story makes this statement regarding art:

".... As to discussions about art, there are few things in my opinion more amusing and more futile too. As to the futility of it, consider consider the little collection that I've been showing you this evening - John, Orpen, Pryde, Nicholson, Newton, Crundall, and the more advanced ones, the Nashes, Duncan Grant, Vanessa Bell, Gertler - jumble all these names up in a hat and spot your winner. Contemporary work, how can you tell? I've collected these things simply because I like them and they are a constant unending joy to me, little scraps of beauty scattered up and down my little house. And maybe that's the best reason, the only reason, for owning a picture, because you like it.'[1]

At the same time, he does get into a discussion, and that with the young lady to whom he is going to be married within a few months. They differ very distinctly in regard to a picture, and she is very much disgusted when, after having visited the gallery several times, he finally buys the picture for sixty pounds. Their difference is so sharp and so marked that they review, very carefully, the whole situation. The young lady in question afterwards takes the matter into her own

1 The Silver Thorn.

hands by going to Spain to be married to another young man of their acquaintance.

In the same collection of short stories Mr. Walpole shows how completely a man's whole outlook on life may be changed by the influence of art. In this particular story, a young banker who had never been concerned with the finer things of life but who was looked upon as a particularly good type of business man, when returning home from work one day saw a little shop with prints and drawings in the window. In the window was a notice that no print in the shop was more than five shillings. While looking over some prints idly, without any thought, "his hand stopped. His heart thumped in his breast. He was looking at a little landscape, a simple thing enough, a hill, a clump of trees, a cow, and a horseman. But how beautiful! How quiet and simple and true! And the real thing. Not a copy, although it was not a drawing. In the left-hand corner there was scribbled a name, 'Everdingin.' ..... Billy Gabriel paid his five shillings, his purchase was wrapped in paper, he left the shop. His heart was still beating. Why was he so strangely stirred? An etching, was it? Now what exactly was an etching? Was it a print? He thought etchings were coloured.... Driven still by a mysterious sense of drama he stopped in a bookshop and bought a little book entitled: 'Prints and Etchings: All About Them.' Then he went home."[1]

The Etching - The Silver Thorn.

His art caused him to differ sharply with his wife regarding his prints and the money he spent for them. He found that his love for art was feeding a passion in his life which had been starved.

"But it was more than that. Here was something for which all his life he had been waiting as the one man waits for the one woman. He had not known it, but it was so. The love of these things, their personality, the intimacy that he had with them, put him in touch with so much other beauty. He paid secret visits to the National Gallery, to the Tate, to the Wallace Collection. All these years had he been in London, and how seldom had he been into these places!

"He longed for the country - his cottage, his garden view, his rising hill and shining stream - so passionately that once at night when he was lying in bed and the room was dark he stared in front of him, and it all suddenly arose there in its quiet and beauty as though he had it in his hand.

"The six or seven books that he had bought had in them many pictures, and soon he felt that some of these lovely things were really his - The Spinning Woman of Ostade with the bird cage and the sleeping pig; the Meryon Morgue with its tier upon tier of watching windows, Corot's lovely Souvenir d'Italie with its shimmer of light and colour; Whistler's Rotherhithe, so strong and so delicate; best of all, perhaps, Van Dyck's Van Noort, the living, questing, animal, spiritual comrade; these and many, many another.

"Then, as stage followed upon stage of experience, he spent an hour or two every Saturday afternoon in the British Museum Print Room. The luxury, the heavenly luxury of these hours when the stillness settled all about you and you had, actually in your possession, the Three Trees and the Notre Dame l'Abside and the Whistler Little Mast. When he must go he stood up and for a moment had to pull himself together before he moved, shifting from the one world into the other. What drunken happiness!....."[1]

As a people, we may not be enthusiastic about art. We are moved by art and influenced by art, however, as any human beings. Mr. Walpole shows that even in the heart of a stolid Britisher like Hans Frost, or in the life of a young business man such as Billy Gabriel, there may be aesthetic feelings which when roused dominate and influence the life and circle in which they move.

1 The Etching - The Silver Thorn.

CHAPTER IX.

WALPOLE'S PHILOSOPHY OF LIFE

Although Mr. Walpole was educated for the Church he is by no means a preacher. He never attempts to preach or dictate to his readers in any way concerning his own philosophy of life. That he has very strong views on certain matters is quite apparent to those who have read his works. Scattered here and there through his novels are many arresting sentences which indicate the views of the author concerning such things.

If we had to make a very definite pronouncement, we should say that the key-note of the philosophy which Mr. Walpole has evolved is courage. The theme in "Fortitude" lies in a saying of a Cornish fisherman, "Old Frosted Moses": "'Tisn't life that matters, but the courage you bring to it." John Beaminster's advice to Tom Seddon, when Tom is somewhat downcast over his own affairs, is: "Life can hurt like the devil, and the more it sees it hurts the more it uses its power."[1]

Courage is the key note in Harmer John. Harmer John is madly in love with Maude Penethen. Pitted against the place which Maude holds in his life is the desire to accomplish something for the benefit of his fellow-creatures in Seatown, the slum area of Polchester. He fights it out with himself.

1 Wintersmoon

A partial description of this mental battle is given for us.

"As he climbed into the stuffy, tight little compartment he knew that the crisis of all his life had climbed in with him. He had, in fact, never known any crisis before. Life had been direct. First, there had been his mother to protect, and he had protected her; then there had been his father to fight, and he had fought him; then there had been his living to earn, and he had earned it; then there had been his work to love, and he had loved it. It was when the other loves had come to him that the struggle had begun, love of beauty, love for his friend and love for a woman."[1]

Wistons, of Pybus St. Anthony, a minister who alone had fought his own battles, is the only man Harmer John knows who can help him. Wistons tries to show Harmer John the folly of trying to pursue his ideal. When, however, Wistons is convinced that the man is sincere and has put everything at stake, he gives him this advice:

"'There is no way to show you. This is something you must fight out with your own soul as I have had to fight it out and many another man. Your real life is at stake now.'

"'You believe, then, in a real life?' Johanson said urgently. 'My dreams aren't all mist, my desires not all untrue, there is something -?'

1 Harmer John.

"'I believe,' said Wistons, 'that if God Himself came flaming before us here in this poor garden and commanded us to put away our superstitions, to bury our beliefs, to abandon our little shreds of ideals, to think only of the material life because there was none other, to know that Christ Jesus was a sham and a fake, to practise selfishness and gain and worldly success, to put heaven away from our eyes and to pray no more, I believe that behind this thunder there would be a still small voice comforting us and bidding us still believe -

"'If the spirit of man is a delusion and a joke, then it is a joke of so much greater power, glory, hope and comfort than any serious word that I will go to my grave feeding it, caring for it, giving it all I have.'

"'I know how loose words are,' Wistons went on quietly after a little while. 'What have I said that means anything or that can't mean anything you like to make it? But what I know is that there is more in life than anything that men can do or say, that there is an immortal spirit whose history, whose struggles, whose victories and defeats give the whole meaning to this life which is only one short paragraph in the book of that greater life. These are our fleshly conditions and we must obey them, but through them, always, we must be waiting, listening, for ever at attention to catch the movement of that other life. Your honour, your courage, your self-sacrifice, your gentleness, kindliness, if you lose these

things you had as well be a sheep's carcass hanging in any butcher's. That I know to be true.'"[1]

Truth is another virtue which Mr. Walpole does not hesitate to put forward as one of the first principles of life. In "Hans Frost' there is always something which urges Hans to be true to those things which he knows are fine and worth while. This spirit which is urging him on from time to time he calls "The One-Eyed Commander" and it is he who prompts Hans from time to time in the chief decisions of his life.

In "The Duchess of Wrexe" Rachel Seddon is also perplexed with the insincerities which life presents when she would be true to that which she knows is best within her. Mr. Walpole shows us quite a similar spirit to "The One-Eyed Commander," but in "The Duchess of Wrexe" he calls it "The Tiger." It is this spirit which causes Rachel to view with some apprehension her marriage to Roddy Seddon.

" The doctrine of Truth - Truth to Oneself, the one thing that mattered. She knew that the pursuit of Truth was to her, and to every rebel against the Beaminsters, the restive Tiger."[2]

Love and charity to others also have a place in the philosophy of life which our novelist has evolved. By love

1 Harmer John
2 The Duchess of Wrexe

we mean that deep, lasting affection which our author shows in such a fine way in the love which Janet Poole had for Wildherne and the love which Wistons of Pybus St. Anthony had for his fellow creatures. There is a fine touch of charity in the manner in which Mr. Walpole shows us the poor, broken down wretch which the elder Westcott had become through drink. There is nothing carping or critical; it shows the result of a man's weakness and shows the unhappiness which it brought. Mr. Walpole shows the same charity in his treatment of Rossett in "Farthing Hall." When the old man finally does change his ways the life of the whole family is changed, but there is nothing critical, nothing harsh, in the treatment of these characters. We learn to pity them rather than to scorn them.

In "Harmer John" when speaking of Mary Longstaff, her father says: ".... She had committed by my own lights of everything in which I had been taught to believe, a great sin. I tried to speak to her of that, I broke down. She seemed suddenly to know so much more of life than I. And if you love some one truly, how can you change, especially if they are in trouble and disgrace?"[1]

The love which Tom Longstaff shows to Mary, the love which Janet Poole shows to Wildherne, is not the mind that changes. It is the kind that anchors one fast. Contrast that with the love - if one can call it love - which there is

1 Harmer John.

between Charles Ravage and Rosalind Grandison. When speaking of life, Ravage says of the older people:

"'It is easier for them because they are old-fashioned. They believe in things that seem to us childish.'

"'For instance?' she asked.

"'A benign deity, eternal love, the essential decency of humanity, England's destiny.....'

"She looked up at him as he crouched in the corner of the sofa, huddled, his thin knees perked up towards his chin.

"'Do you believe in nothing, then?'

"He stared across the room.

"'I don't know. I keep an open mind. But when you come to it, what have our generation left to them to believe in? A God? A first cause? At any rate not benign. Eternal love? We have reduced love to chemical equations. Essential decency of humanity? After the War? No, thank you. England's destiny? The words are so old-fashioned that they make one think of wax flowers under glass. There remains oneself. Also a chemical equation.... And yet.....'

"'And yet?' she asked him.

"'Yes. That's the devil of it!' he broke out, jumping off the sofa and beginning to pace the room. 'That remains. One can't get rid of it. Or I can't. And you can't. Our resolve is to strip ourselves of all nonsense. But the nonsense remains.'

"He stood close to her, staring at her. 'If I were to begin to make love to you, here and now, we should begin to believe in certain things - for a moment or two - certain beautiful things. And then - so quickly the disappointment! That's the matter with our modern kind. We can't stand the disillusion. We aren't brave enough to face it, and so we avoid, or laugh at, the things that produce it.'"[1] Mr. Walpole does not hesitate to show the hollowness of life when it is not fortified by a sound philosophy which tends to keep the mind steadfast.

Mr. Walpole has a fine regard for women. With one or two exceptions, his women are by far his finest characters. Some of his men are magnificent and splendid, but all are weak. For the most part, however, his women are strong and resolute in purpose, with a gentleness of character that is pleasing even to the most masculine reader. He makes a great deal of motherhood. Janet Poole is never so commanding and so fine a character until after little Humphrey is born. Amy Brandon bears all her difficulties and trials in order to shield her family. Maternity strengthens the bond between Roddy Seddon and Rachel. In "Wintersmoon" the Duchess tells Wildherne that "maternity is the grandest, finest thing a woman can know. However deeply she loves her husband, it isn't

1 Wintersmoon

the same as her love for her child. Her husband is her child, but just because she hasn't suffered so terribly in bringing him into the world, so he isn't quite hers as her child is. There is no joy like that joy when you put your arm around your child and hold it close to your breast and feel its trust in you."[1]

In matters of religion Mr. Walpole leaves us pretty well to form our own opinions. The conversation between Canon Ronder and Falk Brandon shows something of Mr. Walpole's ideas of religion. Falk wants to know whether Ronder believes in a God and just what line of conduct he should pursue in the crisis which has come to him.

"'Of course I believe in a God,' said Ronder, 'I wouldn't be a clergyman otherwise.'

"'Then if there's a God,' said Falk quickly, 'why does he let us down, make us feel that we must be free, and then make us feel that it's wrong to be free because, if we are, we hurt the people we're fond of? Do we live for ourselves or for others? Why isn't it easier to see what the right thing is?

"'If you want to know what I think about life,' said Ronder, 'it's just this - that we mustn't take ourselves too seriously, that we must work our utmost at the thing we're in, and give as little trouble to others as possible.'

1 Wintersmoon

"Falk nodded his head. 'Yes, that's very simple. If you'll forgive my saying say, that's the sort of thing any one says to cover up what he really feels. That's not what you really feel. Anyway it accounts for simply nothing at all. If that's all there is in life - '

"'I don't say that's all there is in life,' interrupted Ronder softly, 'I only say that that does for a start - for one's daily conduct I mean. But you've got to rid your head of illusions. Don't expect poetry and magic for ever round the corner. Don't dream of Utopias - they'll never come. Mind your own daily business.'

"'Play for safety, in fact,' said Falk.

"Ronder colored a little. 'Not at all. Take every kind of risk if you think your happiness depends upon it. You're going to serve the world best by getting what you want and resting contented in it. It's the discontented and disappointed who hang things up.'"[1]

As far as immortality is concerned, Canon Ronder says:

"We have our immortality - a tiny flame, but I believe that it never dies. Beauty comes from it and dwells in it. We increase it or diminish it as we live."[2]

This is undoubtedly Mr. Walpole's own belief with regard to immortality. In his stories regarding children he

1 The Cathedral.
2 Ibid.

shows how very close we still are to that which is immortal. He makes us feel that if we are immortal then we are immortal always, which is the truth. If the spirit of man is immortal at any one time, it is always immortal, and life is but a transition. Mr. Walpole always did present this view of immortality. In "The Golden Scarecrow" he tries to indicate how immortal is our spirit and how associated with that world of immortality from which we came. He also endeavors to show how to those of us whose senses have not been dulled, the spirit of others is still apparent. When he went into the old rectory and into the nursery he saw the children playing. The Vicar's wife told him about the two children dying of diphtheria some two years before. To Mr. Walpole they were not dead. He tells plainly of seeing them playing in the nursery. The Vicar's wife comes to the door and states that she thought she had heard children playing. She looks in the door and sees the building blocks made into a wall. She asks who did that, for that was the way the little boy used to build his blocks. She says that she thought she had heard the voices of children. The author says of course she heard the voices of children. They were always there. They built the blocks. They were there had her senses not been too dull to see them. This may be far fetched, and it may be a religion of childhood which appears absurd to many. Mr. Walpole

has no hesitation, however, in presenting his views of immortality to the world.

From his novels, then, one can conclude that he has a very sound philosophy of life, in which the dominating things are courage, love, truth, beauty, immortality, and the refining influences of good women.

CHAPTER X.

WALPOLE'S ENGLAND

One is always puzzled by Walpole's England. It is so truly England, and yet one cannot settle on any particular part of England which satisfies Mr. Walpole's descriptions. Several critics have hazarded guesses as to this or that part of England which is described in the works of Mr. Walpole, but none of these guesses is correct, if we are to believe what he himself has told us. He states:

"I cannot remember when I was not fascinated by maps. And my favorite game for a long period was to shut my eyes and plant my thumbs blindly onto some spot in the universe, and discover then how to get there. My journeys were many and fantastic.

"..... It came to me in a flash one day that I would much more nearly reach my country did I have one all my own, kept from me neither by slenderness of purse nor an exasperating ill sequence of Continental trains. Invent a country I did, and with the country a train service, and with the train service a system of counties and states, and with the counties and states town laws and county councillors, a social system, and with the social system a Royal Family and an Ancient Lineage -

"Slipping off as I have always been so deeply tempted to do, from the general to the particular, it was very soon the Ancient Lineage that I found especially tempting. I made out a genealogy that put Genesis and Exodus to shame and filled pages of small notebooks.....

"I did not, so far as I remember, draw another map that I might dwell in until my year in Liverpool, when, as I have already narrated in tense fragments, I began, in addition to my labors as a missionary, my first novel, "The Abbey" - that novel that was to appear twenty years later as "The Cathedral."

"The town of whose life, spiritual and material, the Abbey was the chief glory existed from the first so vividly in my mind that I must draw a picture of it; and it was from that picture, I suppose, that Polchester ultimately derived. I could not then and I cannot now draw, but my little wobbly lines and scratches represented something very definite in my mind. I gave the streets names, rebuilt the Town Hall, and put up a statue to a Crimean general in the market place.

"Polchester soon began to have an astonishing vitality in my mind. I have been asked on many occasions as to its real origin and I can only say that it had no origins. Something of Truro is in it, something of Durham, but in truth it is nakedly Polchester and nowhere else at all.

"For some years it was only the Cathedral and its environs that I had at all minutely investigated. The cathedrals of fiction in my memory are not very many .....

".... When my cathedral was there before me and Canon's Yard and Bodger's Street and the Precincts, I began to look at the rest of the town. The High Street did borrow something from Durham, I must confess, just as Orange Street

owes something to the Lemon Street of Truro - but Polchester first had its concrete evidence in the pages of "Jeremy," and his quarters at the top of Orange Street had very little to do with "The Cathedral." Gradually I penetrated down the hill and with the discovery of Seatown my vision of the city was complete. Sea Town suddenly became to me of the greatest importance. It was connected not only with the love affairs of young Brandon but also with the life and death of Harmer John - and Harmer John I love more than any other character of my heart and brain.

"Old rotting timbers, tumbling walls, grass grown streets have alwyas had as great an attraction for me as they had for Quilp. I have drawn the pictures of more old ghost haunted houses than I care to remember and I shall draw more yet.....

"Whether that be true or no it is certain that Glebeshire County soon began to grow in detail, shape, and form widely beyond the walls of Polchester. I am not a careful writer, but if only people knew how desperately muddled a mind I have they would wonder that I ever get anything clear at all. Glebeshire is still clear to me only in spots. It is placed geographically in my mind between Devon and Cornwall, enclosing the southern part of the one and the northern part of the other.

I remember that my friend J. D. Beresford abused me once for calling it Glebeshire, a name as it seemed to him quite unsuited to that southern toe of England. But when I think of the Devonshire and Cornish valleys, so rich and luxuriant, and the lovely lines of the ruddy brown plowed land rising against the deep blue of the Cornish sky, I cannot feel that Glebeshire is an ill name. In any case Glebeshire it is and Glebeshire it will always be.

"The other country in all Britain that seems to me to be southern England's only true rival for beauty and romance is to myself (and our choice of country is the most partial and prejudiced emotion in our blood) the Lake District, and of that I hope to write one day if I only take long enough; but Glebeshire more than any other part of the world that I know has the glory of an astounding contrast. The coast is sharp and rugged, masculine in places and ferocious. The inland valleys are loaded with flowers deep in streams, colored with southern brilliance; and you get, in Rafiel for instance, four or five of those valleys running to the very margin of the sea; so that standing on rugged promontories you look out to a furious tossing grey streaked sea, and looking back you see green blankets of wood threaded with purple water starred with yellow and crimson flowers.....

"There are places in the interior of Glebeshire that are still dim to me like those blank places in ancient maps. But there are enough stories already here to last me a lifetime.

And can't you tell any cheerful ones? I think "Jeremy" and "The Green Mirror" and "The Young Enchanted" are cheerful. But Glebeshire is I think a grim country - beautiful, astoundingly, but strange, foreign, remote in its spirit.

" The valleys are warm and colored but they seem to be there on protest. Polchester has many a gay and happy time - it is a sleepy place to-day and sleepy places are I suppose happy. But Polchester is not Glebeshire. No, not by a long way. I have a fancy that one day the sea will come sweeping over that thin peninsula and will flood the streets and creep up the hill and waves will beat against the windows of the Cathedral and only the rock will remain, jagged and gaunt, and the sea gulls will flock to it and build their nests there."[1]

At any rate Glebeshire for many of us will always be linked in our minds with Mr. Walpole's books and with the rugged Cornish scenes which he so very skilfully portrays. Mr. Walpole is a master of description. There is a very fine description of the old Cornish inn jutting out on the sea, in which we first find Peter Westcott in "Fortitude". Nor has Mr. Walpole confined himself to Cornwall for his very fine descriptions. There are some splendid descriptions of the English Lake Country in "Rogue Herries," and some very fine

1 The Crystal Box - The Bookman (New York) No. 57

description of architecture in "The Cathedral."

Mr. Walpole has not confined his descriptions of England to rural England and architecture, but gives us the following very fine description of London:

"..... London was London indeed that morning, like no other city in the world. The tang of the frost was still in the air; there was a thin slime of mud over roadway and pavement, ancient prehistoric mud as though in the night palaeolithic monsters, dinosaurs and icthyosauri - had invaded in vast clumsy cohorts the silent streets bringing their forest slime with them. Everything was thick, grey, and muffled. There was as yet no fog, but soon there would be; the snow was grey and dark, only shining from roof to roof dimly as though under thin moonlight. Some light glimmered in shop windows, and all sounds of traffic were hushed as though the world were straw-covered because of the mortal sickness of some God. So to-day; and yet to-morrow the sun would return and all the town glitter in a network of silver filagree. Eternal beauty and wonder of the London moods - a city where ghosts and living men are both sheltered by that friendly spirit so that time says nothing here. Buildings are for ever rising and falling, streets for ever disappearing, but the kindly London God stretches his colossal legs, murmurs sleepily his blessing, and all his children are included in his giant embrace."[1]

1 Wintersmoon.

One cannot read any of Mr. Walpole's novels without recognizing that bracing sea air which is peculiar to many parts of England, and that fine, buoyant freedom which comes over one on an English spring morning, when the larks are singing and one feels that it is good to be alive.

Hugh Walpole also has the very fine art of making nature suit his purposes and moods. In "Fortitude" Peter Westcott is returning home to his father and knows that he will be beaten. The night is dark; the sea is angry, and there is a foreboding spirit even in nature itself. In "Wintersmoon" when Lord Poole proposes to Janet, it is in the garden in an English spring time; everything is beautiful and happiness fills the air. When "Rogue Herries" is searching for the wife who has left him and in his heart there is desolation and despair, the setting is placed among the moors and rocky country of northern England during the winter time, when the desolation of this part of England is most apparent.

It is true that Mr. Walpole has created a country of his own - Glebeshire, with Polchester its capital city, but those who know Polchester and Hugh Walpole's Glebeshire, know England as it really is.