

THE REVIVAL OF THE GOTHIC ROMANCE IN ENGLAND.

Horace Walpole to Sir Walter Scott.

by

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A Thesis presented to the Department
of English of The University of
Manitoba in partial fulfilment of the
requirements for the Degree of
Master of Arts.

University of Manitoba

April 1928.

This paper is not an attempt to review the novels of this period, but rather, to try and see just what the more prominent ones of the time contributed to the growth and development of novel writing. During the years of the infancy of the movement, there was a grave doubt as to whether this kind of writing could live. It seemed, that unless there could be something more lasting than mere thrills introduced into works of romance, that the movement was doomed. Man is soon sated with unusual occurrences which draw sustenance from other worlds, but man is never sated with man. We speak of things pleasing us because they are 'so human'. Things human involve the struggles common to man, be they mental, moral or physical. This need was met when the novelists came to draw upon human characteristics for novel themes, and to write novels wherein the reader sees the soul of the man opening before his eyes; to see man a victim of his own shortcomings rather than pursued by an infernal spirit. The novel lived and flourished, because with Scott and Jane Austen ^{came} the human touch, character development, Man the Maker of his own Destiny.

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CHAPTER I.

WHAT THE GOTHIC ROMANCE WAS.

The Early Gothic.

The Chief Characteristics of the Revival.

Chapter I.

WHAT THE GOTHIC ROMANCE WAS.

'Gothic' and 'romance' are two words which must occur many times in this paper, and over which there seems to be some vagueness of meaning in the minds of many readers.

Gothic is truly of the North. One of the greatest races of Europe was known as the Goths, a tribe which originally occupied the valley of the Vistula, and from this small beginning pretty well spread themselves over the whole of the North countries of Europe. Gothic, is then, not a fancy name appended to a certain style of architecture, but, applied even in this limited field, has a real significance. It is a description in itself. Gothic appertains to the activities of the tribes of the Goths. The activities of a race of people are not limited to prowess in war, nor to the means by which they sustain life, but also to the manner whereby the soul of the race finds expression. So, as we read in the history books of the Gothic wars and conquests, in the mythologies of the Gothic gods, if we but look with a little more care we shall find the song of the Goths, the expression of that intangible inner man.

In looking into the dictionary we find the word 'Gothic' described thus: 'Of the Goths or their language; (original sense not classical) barbarous, rude, uncouth'. (1) How came these last three words to become synonymous with the word 'Gothic'?

With the development of the fine arts in the countries of Greece and Rome, all the rest of the world seemed to be outside the pale of culture. 'Culture', in this sense, is given by the dictionary as meaning, 'training, intellectual development'. (2) Now the question arises, were the people of these Southern European countries of higher mental calibre than the races of the North, or is there something else to be considered?

There is certainly something else to be considered. There is environment. According to the environment into which living things are born, so their lives must be modified or they will perish. So, two races, growing up under exactly opposite conditions, will perforce, develop the faculties most propitious to preservation of life and species in each peculiar clime. The less struggle to live, the less need for ingenuity along these lines, and the more time to devote to things of fancy, and vice versa. Then, the standards of culture

- (1) The Concise Oxford Dictionary.
- (2) Ibid.

in two very different countries must needs be equally different; and this is just what we find in comparing things Gothic, with things Classical.

Unlike the Greeks and Romans, the Goths had to battle with a stern problem in the mere maintenance of life. The countries of the North offered the hardships of cold and long months, when there could be no growth, entailing the fear of starvation. Men and animals in these parts grew fierce, but with growing fierce, they also grew very strong. The mental development of these races turned along the most practical lines, while that of the Southerners inclined towards luxury, and more luxury.

Song is natural to man. He sings of the things he knows, but he does not always sing of them in the light of cold reality, and this brings us to the second word over which there is some difficulty, 'romance'.

The word 'romance', the dictionary expounds as: 'exaggeration, picturesque falsehood', 'romantic', 'preferring grandeur, or picturesqueness, or passion, or irregular beauty to finish and proportion, subordinating whole to parts, or form to matter'. (1) Thus, we see that the two words, which enter so much into this subject, have definite meanings of their own, and it will be well to bear these meanings in mind as we consider the movement known as 'The Revival of the Gothic Romance'.

(1) The Concise Oxford Dictionary.

Why is a story told or sung? Men of all ages have eagerly sought the story-teller, but he must have something which will hold the listeners; even the earliest bards of all races knew this. They sung of the things they knew in life, that was the framework, but they rendered these things into romances, that was the imagination. The song of the Goths was of hardship enlarged upon by the fancy of the singer, and of the conquest of hardship by great heroes, who partly taken from life, were made over more marvellously in the same imagination. Many of these old stories were carried from generation to generation by repetition, for writing and preservation of lore was little done, and what little was done, happened to be in possession of the only scribes of the time, the monks.

Then came the Renaissance period, and with it, the literature of the Greeks and Romans. The early native stories were forgotten in the glamour of the new, and they passed from the songs of men. During the latter part of the Eighteenth century there was a movement to bring back to life the spirit of the old Gothic Romance, and many of these efforts are to be deplored from one point of view, but from another they are worthy of much notice. Too often the writers who delved into this sort of literature, did so only from a sense of novelty, and did their work without sufficient knowledge of what

they were trying to revive. So, it was not the grandeur of the past they gave to the world, but rather the spectacular, and that without root, for which reason it soon withered. From these efforts grew a taste for this style of romance, and, when the reading public became sated with the shallow efforts of the pioneers in the field, there came to the rescue, writers, who had made a study of the past, and could blend something human with the spectacular. Among the writers of the early period we find Horace Walpole, Clara Reeve, Mrs. Ann Radcliffe, Mrs. Charlotte Smith, Matthew Gregory Lewis, William Godwin, Percy Bysshe Shelley, and later, Mary Shelley, Charles Robert Maturin and Sir Walter Scott.

But to go back a little. The setting into which these romances, old and revived, was cast, was of a definite character. The background consisted largely of natural effects, nature in her severest moods and in her most serene. There were great gloomy forests, wherein all known and unknown dangers could be imagined to be lurking; forbidding mountains, whose heads stretched to the clouds, and over whose sides were seen bottomless gorges; there were the maddened mountain streams, with boiling cataracts and plunging falls. A gentler and propitious nature was usually depicted by a flood of silver moonlight. Hand in hand with these features were the man-made structures which adorned the face of the earth and such scenery; buildings constructed with all the ingenuity

and cunning of a people who must needs find defence from man, beast and nature. These were the old Gothic castles, yielding grace of lineament to solid massiveness, and beauty to necessity. Thick walls, high battlements and great watch towers gave these strongholds an air of mystery and impregnability. Within the castles were all sorts of cunning devices, some for escape of the inmates in time of danger, some for purposes of concealment. There were dungeons, secret compartments, winding stairs, leaded windows, tapestried walls, long dreary picture galleries, and all in all a perfect maze of bewildering apartments.

"The tale of terror is as old as the history of man,"(1) and the revivalists of the Gothic romance do not seem to have missed this in any part. One of the leading characteristics of this revival was this 'terror or horror' element, which embraced the supernatural in every form of fancy, the awesome aspects of nature, and the barbarities and cruelties of man. Entering into this field, we find ghosts of wronged men and women, come back to earth to right the wrong done them, or visited on their progeny. The ghosts announced their unquiet and inability to rest in their graves, as well as want of a suitable audience, in various ways. There were rattlings of chains, doors, casements; waving of tapestries, shaking of foundations,

(1) "The Tale Of Terror" by Edith Birkhead Chapter 1.

groans, shrieks, wails, and in extreme circumstances, these spirits took upon themselves, the death of guilty parties. Nature played her part by means of terrific storms, blinding lightnings, resounding thunders, earthquakes and moaning winds; she even lent the ornaments of her bosom to become an expression of the terror idea, forests, with their gloom and terrifying labyrinths of thickets, tortuous mountain ways and turbulent rivers. And, the skill of man gave castles with mysterious passages, hopeless dungeons, closed apartments, forgotten recesses, cat-combs for the dead, deserted buildings half fallen to decay, and all such like. Not a little of the terror of these tales was derived from the introduction of black villains, savage monks and fiendish nuns. Such was the machinery employed to portray the element of terror.

The writers of the latter eighteenth century seemed to be unable to pick and choose which of these instruments of terror to employ in a single book, and so they tried to crowd as many as possible into a single work. The greater number of the early books had little plot, but seemed to be just instances of horror, danger, peril and hair-breadth escapes, end on end. Allene Gregory, speaking of Goethe's 'St. Leon' voices a sentiment which might be applied to many of these novels. "Here the book ends for no particular reason". (1) The books were in

(1) "The French Revolution and the English Novel"
by Allene Gregory Chapter 3.

(1) "Currents and eddies in the English Romantic Genes" by E. K. Pierce.

the form of each of them has the airy lightness of a
difference. They have all fine eyes and abundant hair --
each other, or rather they possess hardly any shade of
and original genius. Her heroines too nearly resemble
to perhaps the case with all the productions of a strong
a considerable degree of uniformity and mannerism, which
them thus: "In the writings of Mrs. Radcliffe there is
of these maidens, Dunlop, a history of fiction, declares
may be taken as a fair example of the prevailing mode.
heroines of these novels; maybe those of Mrs. Radcliffe
stood in it; a wonderful out-throat, etc." (1) Of the
pictures; a ghost, so believed; or a written record,
since from the rocky deserted rooms; underground passages;
situation; a castle, on a rock; a sepulchre, at some dist-
or barrenness; ignorant of their birth and in some depend-
romances a priority, only varying the proportions. A baron,
boy, with making out a scheme which was to serve for all
reading a romance in Mrs. Radcliffe's style, amused him-
less rigorously. Pierce tells us that, "Coleridge, on
to have been one prototype, and all follow along more or
Of the characters appearing in these books, there seems
married and lived happily ever after.
subset of a number of harrowing experiences, they were
taking part in each one, and when these two had run the
the link being the same characters, as hero and heroine,
many cases, just so many short stories, the only connect-

"nymph -- they are all fond of watching the setting sun, and catching the purple tints of evening, and the vivid glow or fading splendour of the western horizon. Unfortunately they are all likewise early risers. I say unfortunately, for in every exigency Mrs. Radcliffe's heroines are provided with a pencil and a paper, and the sun is never allowed to set or rise in peace. and in the most distressing circumstances find time to compose sonnets to sunrise, the bat, the sea-nymph, a lily, or a butterfly." (1) It may be deduced from the foregoing quotation, that such heroines are in a great degree, colorless as character studies.

The heroes were "handsome, melancholy, passionate, respectful but desperate, ... with large black eyes, smooth white forehead, and jetty curls". (2) The villains, who sometimes were barons, monks or cruel guardians, all possessed beetling brows, piercing eyes, and were, as Beers says, "crime-stained". (3)

We find also in these works, fine ladies, who have erred in some manner, and are doomed to spend their last days in some convent, in expiation of their sins, as did Laurentini, in 'The Mysteries of Udolpho'. (4) Among the favorite and perhaps the best portrayals in

(1) "Dunlop's History of Fiction", Vol. 3, p. 387.

(2) "A History of English Romanticism in the 18th Century" by H. A. Beers Chapter 7.

(3) Ibid.

(4) "The Mysteries of Udolpho" by Ann Radcliffe Vol. 3.

these novels, were the servants, who ever play a more or less important part in the unravelling, and who, with their chatty ways add a touch of the human to the rest of the characters. The novels abound in examples of these: Bianca, in 'The Castle of Otranto', Joseph, in 'The Old English Baron', Serothee in 'The Mysteries of Udolpho' and so on.

This style of characterization gave a niche in which to pose the idea of chivalry. The lovers professed more than they were physically able to carry out for the sweet helpless maidens, but, the hero being virtuous, the supernatural came to his aid. Thus, though weak in characterization, the fibre of these romances was woven from the elements of chivalry, reguery, and the supernatural in varying quantities of extravagance.

Another characteristic of these romances was the constant employment of music throughout. Sometimes this music seems to be supernatural, and sometimes it is only the heroine with her lute. In 'The Mysteries of Udolpho' that which seemed to be supernatural music, Mrs. Radcliffe discovers to us, as that of a nun, who wanders about the woods in sorrowful contemplation.

In this chapter, the elements that we may expect to find in the writers of the period of 'The Revival of the Gothic Romance', have been briefly outlined. The revival was started by such writers as Bishop Hurd, Horace Walpole,

and Clara Reeve feeling the way, and were followed by Mrs. Radcliffe and Lewis in the hey-day of the movement. After these thrillers, the interest in this sort of fiction noticeably flagged. Professor Beers says: "It was reserved for Walter Scott, 'the Arioste of the North', the historiographer royal of feudalism, to accomplish the task which his eighteenth-century forerunners had essayed in vain." (1) But, as we go through the following chapters we shall see that each of these writers contributed something definite to the growth of the novel, and when the grain has been winnowed from the chaff of gross and ignorant exaggeration, we must see that to say they " essayed in vain" is a little unfair.

(1) "A History of Romanticism in the 19th Century"
by H. A. Beers. Chapter I.

CHAPTER 2.

THE ORIENTAL TALE IN ENGLAND.

**Samuel Johnson.
John Hawkesworth.
William Beckford.**

Chapter 2.

THE ORIENTAL TALE IN ENGLAND.

Romance tends towards extravagance, and this tendency is nowhere more evident than in the Oriental tale and the Neo-Oriental tale, which spread over Europe in the eighteenth century. There were three distinct sources of this style of literature, Turkish, Persian and Arabian. (1)

"Of all the wide lands open to the wandering imagination none has a more perennial charm than the mysterious East."

(2) 'The Arabian Nights' was first translated into English during the reign of Queen Anne, (3) and has become a part of our literature. Many of the oft-repeated phrases of this collection of tales "have entered into familiar household speech". (4)

Writers of the later eighteenth century seemed to feel this charm as we have many works to witness. Miss Birkhead gives us a short list of such publications: Addison's 'Vision of Mirza' (1711), Johnson's 'Rasselas' (1759), Dr. Hawkesworth's 'Almorav and Hamet' (1761), Langhorne's 'Solyman and Almeha' (1762), Ridley's 'Tales of the Genii' (1764), Mrs. Sheridan's 'History of Hourjshad' (1767), Beckford's 'Vathek' (1784). Such were the most popular of the Anglo-Oriental tales.

- (1) "The Tale of Terror" by Edith Birkhead, Chapter 5.
- (2) "The Oriental Tale in England" by M. P. Cosant ch. 1.
- (3) "The Tale of Terror" by Edith Birkhead, Chapter 5.
- (4) "The Oriental Tale in England" by M. P. Cosant Ch. 1.

'Rasselas', an orientalised tale by Johnson leans greatly towards moralizing, and thereby loses much of the charm, so possible in tales of the romantic East. "Only unusual genius can make an art of moralizing", (1) and to insert 'lessons' into the scenery of the Orient, pictured as it was in such luxury, seems incongruous. The opening chapter of 'Rasselas' immediately sets the reader down in remote lands, midst the fabulous wealth of the Orient, and the grandeur of Eastern monarchs. The story is of two young people, prince and princess, brother and sister, who were shut up in a palace, but tiring of the surfeit of luxury provided, set out to see what the rest of the world might be like. In their wanderings they met with much misery; everything had its drawbacks, and they returned to the 'Happy Valley' whence they came, disillusioned, but not cast down. "To me", said the princess, "The choice of life is become less important: I hope hereafter to think only of the choice of Eternity." (2)

From Johnson we step to Hawkesworth and his Oriental tale of 'Almorán and Hamet'. This story is filled with magic, charms, spells, evil designs, but withal virtue conquers. There were two brothers, Almorán and Hamet, and a beautiful maiden, Almeida. Both brothers wished to wed Almeida. Almorán was very wicked, and from the

(1) "The Oriental Tale in England" by M. F. Conant, Ch.2.

(2) "Rasselas" by Samuel Johnson. Ch. 48.

powers of evil had gained a charm, with which he hoped to ruin Hamet, and also Almida. This story continues to tell of the working of the charm, and deals more with magic than it does with the splendours of the Orient. Of the ending, it is such as Dr. Johnson's, a firm moral appended, the virtuous rewarded, and the wicked Almorav is converted into stone, to remain a warning for all ages to come. "And thou, Almorav, who, while I speak, art incorporating with the earth, shalt remain through all generations, a memorial of the truths which thy life has taught." (1)

For the Anglo-Oriental tale of splendour we must turn to the tale by William Beckford, 'The History of the Caliph Vathek'. This tale was first written by Beckford in French, and was translated into English without his leave in 1784. It was not until 1797 that he made a translation himself. Beckford, like Horace Walpole, steeped himself in the atmosphere wherein his imagination found play. Beckford craved the limitless luxuries of the East, and Miss Birkhead tells us: "It is impossible to understand or appreciate 'Vathek' apart from Beckford's life and character, which contain elements almost as grotesque and fantastic as those of his romance". (2) He was very wealthy, and surrounded himself with all the luxuries in books, furniture, jewels, and extravagant buildings

(1) "Almorav and Hamet" by Dr. John Hawkesworth ch. 19.
(2) "The Tale of Terror" by Miss Birkhead, Ch. 5

which great wealth, prompted by wild imagination could buy.

'Vathek', a history of a Caliph, is a riot of great splendour and vast riches, and a never-ending procession of crime. The horrible enters at every turn, from the monster Gisar to the caverns of the damned. The description of the five palaces of the senses exudes voluptuous luxury in every line: "He surpassed in magnificence all his predecessors." (1) The Caliph built a great tower, which had eleven thousand steps, from which height, he thought to satisfy his curiosity of things celestial. It was with the building of this tower that his troubles commenced, for Mahomet was angered and accordingly laid plans for his downfall. In his blind folly, and aided by his mother, Houronihar he went from evil to evil, until the two of them reached the entrance of the infernal regions. Miss Conant thinks that the tale is worthy of a place in the history of literature from this splendid catastrophe. The suspense of horror is kept at a white heat "from the moment when Vathek and Houronihar approach the dark mountains until they meet their doom".⁽²⁾ Whiteford says: "Vathek is an oriental tale, 'Before which', as Lord Byron has said, 'even Rasselas must bow'." (2) Miss Conant quotes Dr. Garnett as saying: "It is indeed almost the only modern oriental

- (1) "Vathek" by William Beckford, Cassell's edition 1892.
- (2) "The Oriental Tale in England" by M. P. Conant, ch. 1.
- (3) "Motives in English Fiction" by R. N. Whiteford ch.6.

"story 'which might appear without disadvantage in 'The Arabian Nights', with Aladdin on its right hand, and Ali Babo on its left'." (1)

But even though Beckford drew so well and so abundantly from the Orient, the tale of this description did not prevail in England. Saintsbury says: "Still Vatheks are not to be had to order; and as Romance was wanted, to order and in bulk, during the late years of the eighteenth century, some other kind had to be supplied." (2) As a steady diet, readers want something of human possibility, and these wild fantastic tales did not endure, though they did not pass without leaving their mark on English literature. Miss Conant thinks: "the oriental tale directly contributed romantic elements to the imaginative inheritance of later writers. ... Scott's mature imagination also retained an interest in the Orient; witness 'The Talisman', 'The Surgeon's Daughter', 'Count Robert of Paris', and possibly the arrow contest in the 'Monastery'. (3) "The History of the Caliph Vathek" did not set a fashion⁽⁴⁾, but we find it growing along with its lesser kind, in the same age as the novels of Gothic Romance. Of the two movements it was the Gothic that prevailed, and came to set a type for future literature.

- (1) "The Oriental Tale in England" by M. P. Conant ch.1
- (2) "The English Novel" by George Saintsbury ch. 4
- (3) "The Oriental Tale in England" by M. P. Conant ch.5
- (4) "The Tale of Terror" by Edith Birghhead ch. 5.

CHAPTER 3.

FIRST SIGNS OF GOTHIC REVIVAL IN ENGLAND.

**Sir William Temple.
Thomas Gray.
Richard Hurd.**

Chapter 3.

FIRST SIGNS OF GOTHIC REVIVAL IN ENGLAND.

Englishmen are said to be one of the most conventional of races; once they adopt a thing they cling to it until they can be fully convinced that there is something to adequately take its place. Even so in the latter part of the eighteenth century. There were prejudices and ideas of 'Good Form' which were not to be easily upset. The period of literature preceding 1760, or there about, was known as one of Classicism, or sometimes called the Augustan Age. During this time, to be refined and to be imbued with 'good form' seemed to be the sole end of life. The spontaneous literature of the Elizabethan Age gave way to a Neo-Classic style, wherein the poets sought to copy the masters of nations long dead and gone. Verse came to be a thing of rule; fine finish to works took the place of fine feeling, for with the advent of artificiality, exit emotion. The language of literature became stilted and formal, an effect that was not soon shaken off. Addison and Steele ventured to approach the natural, and in 'The Tatler and Spectator' there are some delightful bits of essay, gentle and refined ridicule, directed at the empty vanities of the time, (1) but withal the artificialities persisted even into the early part of the nineteenth century.

'Gothic' meant one of two things to men of the Augustan age. It meant to them a style of architecture, which had for the time given way to the Greek, and it also was synonymous with barbarity. To have a taste for the architecture of mass and strength was a vulgarity any man might seek to hide, and to find pleasure in anything that did not sever of the classic age of old, was indeed a serious drawback. Hence to speak of a thing as 'Gothic' simply implied that it was 'too low' to be considered by people of taste. Remaining Gothic structures in England at this time, were suffering decay and ruin. The Renaissance had given the literature of the Greeks and Romans to the scholars, but the lore of the early Anglo-Saxons and the Germanic peoples was mostly in manuscript, and in possession of the Monasteries, or in valuable private collections, and so was not available. (1)

The revival of Gothic taste in England was a sudden awakening of a germ long dormant within the country. It was a bud from the heart of England, but, not alone in England did it grow and flourish. There were influences from the Continent. A Frenchman, a professor in the University of Copenhagen aroused interest in things of the North by a work published in 1756. This Frenchman was Paul Henri Ballet, who, in his introduction "A l'Histoire de Danemarck", included several runic poems

(1) "A History of English Romanticism in the 19th Cent."
by H. A. Beers ch. 6.

in translation, among which, were extracts from the 'Elder Edda' and the 'Younger Edda'. This work was translated into English by Thomas Percy in 1770. Thomas Gray read the French translation in 1758. Just about this time there swept over Germany a flood of literature in the German language, and of Germanic theme. About the middle of the eighteenth century there grew up in Germany, what was known as the Swiss School, under Zuricher and Bodmer. In this school was commenced an attack on the influence of Gallic criticism. Such a decided movement against foreign elements meant a development of native interests. Professor Beers notes the influence of the English literature on the German, as early as 1732, (1) when Bodmer, in his translation of 'Paradise Lost', in the introduction, praised Shakespeare, as the English Sophocles. In 1740, in his "Treatise on the Marvellous", (Abhandlung von dem Wunderbaren), makes a plea for freedom, nature, and the nourishment of inspired imagination against the bondage of the French critics. In England we see this same tendency in the writings of the Warton, Sir William Temple and Bishop Hurd.

Sir William Temple, in his remarks on 'The Death Song of Ragnar' and other translations from the Icelandic, shows by his spirit and thought, that he would vindicate

(1) "A History of English Romanticism in the 18th Cent."
By H. A. Beers Ch. 6.

"the right of Gothic nations to share in the Humanities".
(1) This plea for the revival of the Gothic affected two classes of people. It gave the thrill seekers new fields in which to indulge their hunger for the novel and the amazing, and it gave to those who were interested from curiosity of the past, food for meditation, and an insight into the various fashions of thought. Temple had to go to Scandinavian scholars for his authority. They were more easily available than were the works of the English of the same period. (2)

Thomas Gray became much interested in antiquarian studies, and he translated from the Icelandic two fine poems, 'The Fatal Sisters' and 'The Descent of Odin', in 1761, but he did not publish them until '65. But it was not until Bishop Hurd, that the argument came for the revival of Gothicism, on a basis of reason. Richard Hurd, was a friend of Gray, and shared with him a taste for things of the North.

In 1762, Bishop Hurd published his "Letters on Chivalry and Romance," and this little volume is but an argument for a resuscitation of the things of the North. He does not set forth a case of a pleasing fashion, but rather appeals to the reason of the critics and sets out to prove the pre-eminence of Gothic manners and fictions as adapted to the ends of poetry as superior to the Classic. He felt, and he strove to

- (1) "Cambridge History of English Literature" Vol.X.
- (2) Ibid.

make others feel that experiences of one race could not be expressed in the manner of an entirely different race, the feelings of the two were of different intensity, and therefore each required the medium of its own heart to tell the experiences peculiar to it.

Miss Morley, in her introduction to Hurd's 'Letters on Chivalry and Romance' gives us some valuable information. "Hurd has written enough to show that he possesses real scholarship and critical acumen. But his editions of Addison, and his various 'Critical Dissertations', though they prove his learning, do not secure his fame".(1) When considering and weighing the value of a work like 'Letters on Chivalry and Romance', it is of a man's learning we desire most to know. We want to know his right to pass judgment, and it would seem from the above quotation that Hurd was well enough acquainted with both the classical and the neo-classical to be able to judge of it. Miss Morley goes on to say: "Perhaps most important of all is the stress he lays on the value of early writings as a true representation of the life and ideas of past ages, without some knowledge of which they cannot be judged". (2) And indeed, it was on ignorance that the movement of revival of things Gothic was almost wrecked. "The zeal of the first romantics was not always a zeal

(1) "Introduction to 'Letters on Chivalry and Romance' edited by Edith Morley.

(2) Ibid.

according to knowledge, and the picture of the Middle Age was more of a caricature than a portrait. ... A large share of mediæval literature was inaccessible to the general reader," (1) This lack of knowledge is most apparent in the writings of the early Gothic Romanticists, and it is not until we reach Scott that we find among the novelists anyone who has really made a serious study of the past, from records of the past.

Professor Phelps sums the work of Bishop Hurd very neatly: "He (Hurd) came just at the time to accelerate the speed of the Romantic movement. Hurd's learning and authoritative position count for much; and the emphasis with which he spoke is remarkable, coming so early as 1762. The critical judgments on poetry made by Matthew Arnold are really a simple re-statement of what Joseph Warton and Hurd laid down a hundred years before."

"From this time everything with a Gothic flavor rose rapidly in public esteem. The love of chivalry and the revival of Gothic architecture on the one hand, and the tremendous impetus which Percy gave to ballad literature on the other, formed two streams that flowed with increasing size and speed until they finally united in Walter Scott."

- (1) "A History of English Romanticism in the 18th Cent."
by H. A. Beers Chapter 5.
- (2) "The Beginnings of the English Romantic Movement"
by W. L. Phelps Chapter 6.

CHAPTER 4.

WALPOLE AND HIS IMITATORS.

Summary of 'Castle of Otranto' showing
Gothic Elements.

'The Mysterious Mother'.

Clara Reeve, 'The Old English Baron'

'The Progress of Romance'.

Thomas Leland, 'Longsword.'

CHAPTER 4.

WALPOLE AND HIS IMITATORS.

As was said before, the movement first found the germ of new life from within England, and one of the names to be first associated with it was that of Horace Walpole. Horace Walpole was the son of the great statesman, Sir Robert Walpole, and although a man of much versatility, he had keen ability. At Eton he became a friend of Thomas Gray, and on leaving college, travelled ^{on the} and Continent with him, but later they quarrelled, and separating, continued their own ways. In after years, this breach was healed, and a brisk correspondence was carried on between them. (1) Professor Beers describes Walpole as an 'insidious courtier, a keen and spiteful observer, a busy gossip, and a retailer of social gossip with a feminine turn of mind' this latter characteristic, the same commentator thinks, was an asset towards making him the illustrious letter writer he was. His correspondence with Sir Horace Mann, was particularly noteworthy, and has been called the 'running history of back door diplomacy.'(2)

In 1750, he bought a villa at Twickenham, and went straight to work to fashion it after the manner of a Gothic Castle as he imagined it, and for twenty years he tried all experiments of architecture upon this residence which came to be called Strawberry Hill.

(1) "Horace Walpole's World" by A. D. Greenwood, Ch. 2.

(2) "A History of English Romanticism in the 18th. Cent." by H. A. Beers, Ch. 7.

It has been criticised as nothing but a hodge-podge, but it holds an important position in the history of English literature, and also in the history of English architecture. His interest in the building of Strawberry Hill was not without its fruit, for "by reviving public interest in Gothic" he was a means of saving for England a number of historical buildings which had fallen to decay. (1) Professor Deane quotes Sir Leslie Stephen as saying: "Walpole is almost the first modern Englishman who found out that our old cathedrals were really beautiful". (2) When Sir Christopher Wren, after the Great Fire, rebuilt St. Pauls, he introduced the domes of the Latins to take the place of the towering spires of the Gothic, and this style had prevailed. The architecture of the Gothic had left monuments, but the literature was only available to scholars of perseverance and untiring energy; so much was beyond the efforts of many casual authors.

One night, Walpole, while inhabiting his Gothic Castle, had a dream of an arm in armour on the bannister of one of his stair-cases, and from this grew the idea of writing a novel of the old chivalrous age. "The Castle of Otranto" was the result. This novel was the progenitor of those of Mrs. Radcliffe, and even Walter Scott. At this time to write a truly Gothic novel, a man must have been somewhat of an antiquarian, and no little of a scholar.

(1) "A History of English Romanticism in the 18th Cent."
by H. A. Deane Ch. 7

(2) Ibid.

Walpole was something of a superficial antiquarian, in that he had a bent for by-gone things, but he hardly had the fibre of a diligent scholar. Miss Greenwood claims him as the progenitor of the souvenir mongers, who do not see that in making their own collections, they are robbing, often robbing a nation of what belongs to the nation as a whole. "In this fashion of vulgar robbery, still so terribly prevalent among the half-educated wealthy, Horace Walpole occupies a sad and bad pre-eminence". (1) He rather jumped at things on hearsay without careful investigation. "Walpole did not arrive at his Gothicism by the gate of literature. It was merely a specialized development of his tastes as a virtuoso and collector". (2) His romanticism was not seated in the depths of his being; "Walpole was at heart very much of an Augustan; his Romanticism was mainly a taste for novelties. To the last his favorite poet was apparently Pope". (3)

But, whatever it was that prompted Walpole's interest in things of the past, the outgrowth of it was of no little importance in the history of English literature. In 1765, appeared 'The Castle of Otranto', and of this book, the first of its kind, we shall

- (1) "Horace Walpole's World" by A. D. Greenwood. Ch. 3
- (2) "A History of English Romanticism in the 18th Cent." by H. A. Beers Ch. 7.
- (3) "The Beginnings of the English Romantic Movement" by W. L. Phelps Ch. 6.

treat rather fully, to show the new elements of Gothicism on the first re-awakening. It was published as, from an old Italian manuscript by Onuphrio Muralti, translated by W. Marshall, Gent. It was not until the second edition that Walpole admitted the authorship.

In a somewhat wordy preface to the first edition, Walpole claims to have found the manuscript in the possession of an ancient Catholic family, living in the North of England. He says: "It was printed at Naples, in the black letter, in the year 1529. How soon it was written does not appear. The principal incidents are such as were believed in the darkest ages of Christianity; but the language and conduct have nothing that savors of barbarism. The style is of the purest Italian. If the story was written near the time it was supposed to have happened, it must have been between 1095, the era of the first crusade, and 1243, the date of the last, or not long afterwards". (1) Such is his story of the origin of the book, but he goes on to remark on the marvellous in it: "Miracles, visions, necromancy, dreams and other preternatural events, are exploded now, even from romances. That was not the case when our author wrote; much less when the story is supposed to

(1) Preface to first edition of "Castle of Otranto" as reprinted in "British Novelist Series" by Mrs. Barbauld.

"have happened. Belief in every kind of prodigy was so established in those dark ages, that an author would not be faithful to the manners of the times, who should omit to mention them. He is not bound to believe them himself, but he must represent his actors as believing them". (1) This elaborate apology is rather amusing in light of the cool manner in which the authors, who came after Walpole, called upon their readers to believe anything that fancy could devise, but it goes to show that Walpole realized the utter novelty of the step he was taking, and his doubts as to its reception. Walpole was often accused of vanity, and his comments on the virtues of his book, though at the time anonymous, seem to show that he felt a certain satisfaction with himself. "If this air of the miraculous is excused, the reader will find nothing else unworthy of his perusal. ... "Never is the reader's attention relaxed The characters are well drawn and still better maintained". (2) and speaking of the supposedly unknown author he goes on to say: "It is a pity that he did not apply his talents to what they seemed proper for, the theatre". (3) Is this an inner feeling of Walpole's own, in light of another work of his pen, which we shall touch upon later, namely his drama "The Mysterious Mother"?

- (1) Preface to first edition of "Castle of Otranto", as reprinted in British Novelist Series. (Barbould)
- (2) Ibid.
- (3) Ibid.

The preface to the second edition opens with a paragraph, which, is rather well read directly after the extracts from the first edition. "The favorable manner in which this little piece has been received by the public, calls upon the author to explain the grounds on which he composed it. But before he opens these motives, it is fit that he should ask pardon of his readers for having offered his work to them under the borrowed personage of a translator. As diffidence of his own abilities, and novelty of the attempt, were his sole inducement to assume that disguise, he flatters himself he shall appear excusable".⁽¹⁾ We might well accept^{that} the novelty of the work might be viewed with some question, and credit Walpole with reticence on that score, but it was not one of his characteristics to be unduly modest, and we may with justice wonder at the first reason given for concealment, as to its sincerity. He closes this preface in the same tone: "The result of all I have said, is, to shelter my own daring under the cannon of the brightest genius this country has produced. (Shakespeare) I might have pleaded, that, having created a new species of romance, I was at liberty to lay down what rules I thought fit for the conduct of it: but I should have been more proud of having imitated, however faintly, weakly, and at a distance, so masterly a pattern, than to enjoy

(1) Preface to second edition of "Castle of Otranto"
as reprinted in British Novelist Series. (Barbauld)

"the entire merit of invention, unless I could have marked my work with genius, as well as originality. Such as it is, the public have honored it sufficiently, whatever rank their suffrages allot to it". (1)

These two prefaces speak for the book in many ways far better than could any commentators. They show just how very new the style was, and how very dubious the author was of its acceptance. They also throw little glimmerings of light upon the man, and especially the first preface which came out with the anonymous publication, and from it we get some idea of the way the writer hoped the book would be received, and also his attempt to place his readers in a favorable attitude of mind before their perusal of it. As has been pointed out, Walpole was not a true romanticist, and the romance is somewhat underdeveloped, but the very novelty of the work, and the movement of which it was the forerunner, claim a place for it in the history of literature. The novel is very short, and indeed this brevity in itself was not an insignificant factor in its popularity. That which can be enjoyed for a space cannot please indefinitely, and perhaps it would have been well if some of the imitators of Walpole had followed this excellent characteristic.

And now the substance of the novel. It has been

(1) Preface to second edition of "Castle of Otranto", reprinted in "British Novelist Series." (Barbauld)

said by many critics that the real hero of the novel, is not Theodore, but rather the Gothic Castle. The action is laid in a great Gothic Castle with an abbey attached. The opening scene is the preparation for the wedding of the heir of the Principality of Otranto. The characters, of whom Walpole thinks so highly are: Manfred, Prince of Otranto; his gentle wife, Hippolita; a beautiful daughter, Matilda; a weakly son, Conrad; Isabella, the daughter of Frederick and the betrothed of Conrad; and Theodore, the hero. There is also the cleric and confessor of the family, Jerome, Matilda's waiting woman and confident, Bianca, and the lesser figures.

The plot centers around an ancient prophecy, "That the Castle and the Lordship of Otranto should pass from the present family whenever the real owner should be grown too large to inhabit it". (1) For the unravelling of this prophecy the story takes its being. Almost at once, during the preparations for the wedding, the first supernatural appears in the form of a huge helmet, having great black plumes waving upon it, which drops into the courtyard. It is discovered that the helmet has fallen on Conrad, the only heir to Otranto, and killed him. Isabella, who was at the castle for the nuptials, remains with the family in their mourning. A strange youth in the excited throng notices that the gigantic helmet is like the one which is upon the head of the statue of Alphonsus the Good, which stands in the chapel of St. Nicholas. Alphonsus the Good was a former prince of

(1) "The Castle of Otranto". Ch. 1.

Otranto, who had been killed in the crusades. Upon running to the chapel it is discovered that the helmet of the statue is gone. Manfred, enraged at this youth for his discovery confines him under the huge helmet, without food. So overcome with fear of dying without an heir, Manfred sends for Isabella, and proposes to divorce Hippolita and marry her. The girl is terrified, and as she turns to escape from the picture gallery, the plumes of the helmet rise up to the window and wave, making a hollow sound in so doing. The picture of a grandsire quits its frame, beckons Manfred to follow, which he does until a door, at the end of the apartment, slamming in his face, deters Manfred. He is unable to open it. Isabella seeks to fly to the chapel by means of an underground passage, wherein she is beset by odd sounds, and as her fear is at its height, her light is extinguished; she is left alone in the dark, with the unknown. She fortifies herself with prayer, and seeing a figure advancing towards her, thinks that it is the ghost of her betrothed. But the figure proves to be none other than the peasant, who, entombed under the helmet, escapes through a trap door into this passage. Isabella implores him to help her to find a certain other trap door which leads to the chapel, and of which she knows the secret of the spring. As she is about to descend, they hear the voices of Manfred and his servants, she gets down with safety, but the door slips from the fingers of the peasant and not knowing the secret, he is

are heralds of The Knight of the Gigantic Sabre, and have come to speak with the usurper of the Castle of Otranto. The forces are under the leadership of a descendent of Alphonse the Good, and they force Manfred to surrender.

There follows a long account of the revelation of the crime to Frederick, while he was on pilgrimage in the Holy Land. The story unweaves itself, and it is discovered that Manuel, grandfather to Manfred, and a servant of Alphonse, had murdered his master, and returning with a fictitious will laid claim to the State. There is much confusion in the closing of the book, for Isabella's father is furious because she cannot be found, but becoming enamoured of Matilda seeks her hand of Manfred, but Manfred makes it a condition of Frederick's marriage that he shall have Isabella. Theodore finds Isabella and brings her to her father. Matilda is in love with Theodore, and he with her, but Isabella also loves Theodore. While the plans for the weddings of the older men with the girls are going forward, three drops of blood issue from the nose of the statue, and this Jerome takes as a sign that the blood of Manfred can never mingle with that of Alphonse. Frederick, impatient to wed Matilda is warned against it by the apparition of the skeleton hermit of the wood of Joppa, the same who directed him to the sabre.

Manfred, learning of the changed attitude of Frederick, and suspecting a secret amour between Isabella and Theodore, hastens to follow Theodore and, as he thinks, Isabella to the chapel. In the dusk there, he plunges his dagger into the girl, only to find that it is Matilda. Thus, the whole tragedy resolves itself, and with the entrance of Theodore into the court-yard there is the final manifestation of the supernatural. The castle walls are thrown to the ground, and an immense form of Alphonse appears among the ruins, which proclaims: "Behold in Theodore the true heir of Alphonse". Amid great thunderings, the vision is borne heavenward, and "enfolded in a blaze of glory". The relationship of Theodore is cleared up by Jerome, who tells that his wife Victoria was the daughter of Alphonso, who had married on the way to the Holy Land.

Manfred and Hippolita retire to religious houses, and Frederick offers Isabella to Theodore, but his grief for Matilda is too fresh, "and it was not until frequent discourses with Isabella of his dear Matilda, that he was persuaded that he could know no happiness but in the society of one with whom he could forever indulge the melancholy that had taken possession of his soul".

Such is the story of the first Gothic Romance, but Walpole took Latins for his characters, and the only Gothic elements are the castle and machinery. It is a fair example of what the first writers during this

revival did; the works were filled with incongruities, which were the result of writing upon a subject of which the authors had little accurate knowledge. The supernatural abounds throughout the book, and most of the action is brought about by this method. Witness, the first calamity was the dropping of the helmet, the revelation in the wood of Joppa, the warning of the blood from the nose of the statue, and the final proclamation. Whiteford says: "The plot of Walpole's "Castle Of Otranto" is a hodge-podge of shudders." (1) It will be noticed that the book is full of the elements that have already been drawn to attention in chapter I of this paper. The features of the building, the character of Theodore, ignorant of his birth, and such like. If unacquainted with other novels of the movement, this one indeed seems extravagant, but when compared with those to which it gave impetus, it is as a fairy tale to a story of ghouls. It was the novelty of it which took the people by storm, and Gray wrote to Walpole: "I have received 'The Castle of Otranto', and return my thanks for it. It engages our attention here (is at Cambridge), makes some of us cry a little; and all, in general afraid to go to bed o' nights. We take it for a translation; and should believe it to be a true story if it were not for St. Nicholas." (2)

(1) "Motives in English Fiction" by R. N. Whiteford, ch. 6

(2) "Lives of the Novelists" by Sir Walter Scott
("Life of Walpole.")

Sir Walter Scott, in making his own commentary on it in his "Life of Walpole", says: "This romance has been justly considered not only as the original and model of a peculiar species of composition, attempted and successfully executed by a man of great genius, but as one of the standard works of our lighter literature." (1) But Miss Birkhead tells us just what it is we want to know of this work, that is why it is important. "The 'Castle of Otranto' is significant, not because of its intrinsic merit, but because of its power in shaping the destiny of the novel." (2)

In the first preface to 'The Castle of Otranto', Walpole, in praising the 'unknown author' said; "It is a pity that he did not ^sply his talents to what they were evidently proper for, the theatre." (3) Later, the author did this very thing, and produced a drama woven on a Gothic warp. 'The Mysterious Mother', Walpole claimed was not meant, of course, for publication, nor yet for production. He had, however, a few copies struck off for his friends, and it was passed about in certain circles, more or less furtively. Sir Walter Scott speaks of it as "the horribly impressive but disgusting drama" (4) and not without reason. It is a play centering around

- (1) "Lives of the Novelists" by Sir Walter Scott.
- (2) "The Tale of Terror" by Edith Birkhead, Ch. 2.
- (3) "Preface to First Edition of 'Castle of Otranto'.
- (4) "Lives of the Novelists" by Sir Walter Scott.

the tragedy of incest. It was unfortunate that Walpole was so unhappy in his subject matter, for it would have been interesting to see if he could do with the stage as he had done with novel-readers.

There is an old adage to the effect that 'Imitation is the sincerest flattery'. Walpole had many imitators, and the offspring resembled him sufficiently that he could not but be conscious of the fact. He had truly invented a new style of literature, as he himself seems to realize in his second preface. One of the first to follow in his lead was Clara Reeve, who in 1777, published 'The Champion of Virtue' or 'The Old English Baron'. Clara Reeve was the daughter of a clergyman, and lived and died at Ipswich (1725-1803). Walter Scott thought sufficiently of her to include her in his 'Lives', but at the same time he defended Walpole against her criticisms. She acknowledged her work as a literary descendant of 'Otranto'. In her first preface Miss Reeve said: "This story is the literary offspring of 'The Castle of Otranto' written upon the same plan, with a design to unite the most attractive and interesting circumstances of ancient romance and modern novel: at the same time it assumes a character of its own, that differs from both; it is distinguished by the appellation of a Gothic Story, being a picture of Gothic times and manners". (1)

(1) Preface to "The Old English Baron" by Clara Reeve, as reprinted in 'British Novelist Series' (Barbauld)

"times and manners". Clara Reeve seeks to point out the weak spots in 'The Castle of Otranto' and to assure her readers she has escaped these weaknesses, she says: "...a work which has already been observed, as an attempt to unite the various merits and graces of the ancient Romance and modern Novel. To attain this end, there is required a sufficient degree of the marvellous, to excite attention; enough of the manners of real life, to give an air of probability to the work; and enough of the pathetic to engage the heart in its behalf.

"The book we have mentioned is excellent in the last two points, but has a redundancy in the first. The opening excites the attention very strongly; the conduct of the story is artful and judicious; the characters are admirably drawn and supported; diction polished and elegant; yet with all these brilliant advantages, it falls upon the mind (though not upon the ear); and the reason is obvious -- the machinery is so violent, that it destroys the effect it intends to excite. Had the story been kept within the utmost 'verge' of probability, the effect would have been preserved without losing the least circumstance that excites or detains the attention".

"For instance we can conceive and allow for the appearance of a ghost; we can dispense with the enchanted

helmet and sword; but then they must keep within certain limits of credibility. A sword so large as to require an hundred men to lift it; a helmet that by its own weight forces a way through a court yard into an arched vault big enough for a man to go through; a picture that walks out of its frame; a skeleton ghost in a hermit's cowl -- When your expectation is wound to the highest pitch, these circumstances take it down with a witness, destroy the work of imagination, and, instead of attention excite laughter. ... The beauties are so numerous, that we cannot bear the defects, but want it perfect in all respects".

(1)

This preface seems so important that I have quoted from it at some length. It shows many things to us; Miss Reeve had read and enjoyed 'The Castle of Otranto', and admitted to it being her inspiration. But she saw, what seemed to her, to be great defects in the work, and with these in view, she set herself a definite goal. Her task is to "compose a work on the same plan, wherein these defects might be avoided; and the keeping as in painting preserved". (2)

Mrs. Barbauld included this work in her edition of 'British Novelist Series' which she published in 1810, a second edition appearing in 1820. She introduced it thus: "The Old English Baron", though a novel of but moderate merit, has always been a great favorite with the novel-reading public, and as such is here introduced". (3)

(1) Preface to 'Old English Baron' by Clara Reeve.

(2) Ibid.

(3) Introduction by Mrs. Barbauld.

Mrs. Barbauld, on the use of the supernatural in the novel said: "The appearances she has introduced are therefore such as, till lately, coincided with the belief, perhaps, of the generality of readers; haunted rooms, presaging dreams, groans, clanking of chains, and apparitions of murdered persons; such ornaments as the author seems to think, come within the verge -- the utmost verge of probability; and to those whose minds are thus properly imbued, the story will be striking. At present we should require these appearances to be more artful or more singular. That Clara Reeve was conscientious in her work is found in a letter to a friend, 'I have been all my life straightened in circumstances, and used my pen to support a scanty establishment; yet, to the best of my knowledge, I have drawn it on the side of truth, virtue, and morality.' " (1)

The first part of Miss Reeves story moves with a certain speed, and she does follow her plan in her supernatural theme. Her ghosts are of normal size and appearance, and they appear only once. There is a difference here to be noticed as compared with Walpole. The ghosts of Miss Reeve seem to start the action of the plot, but thereafter it depends on the characters to keep it up. The hero, Edmund, does more for himself than does anyone in 'The Castle of 'tranto', 'The Old English Baron' would well fit into the plan of Coleridge.

(1) Introduction to 'The Old English Baron' by Mrs. Barbauld.

There is the noble youth, ignorant of his birth and in a dependent state, the usurped estate, the ghosts, and in fact all the Gothic machinery. Miss Reeve does not confine herself to one villain, but rather has four, the murderer and usurper, two sons of the man to whom he has sold the estate, and a cousin of the young man. There is the beautiful heroine, who is nothing more or less than a figure-head, the kind and good friends of the wronged Edmund, the faithful servant, and the old priest.

After the discovery of the identity of Edmund the resolution is much too long drawn out, and it becomes most tedious. Miss Reeve tries in this resolution to introduce one other mediæval feature, and that is a duel between the usurper and the supporters of Edmund. Professor Beers thinks: "The tale is infinitely tiresome, and is full of that edifying morality, fine sentiment and stilted dialogue . . . which abound in *Evelina*".

(1)

Even though a great part of *'The Old English Baron'* becomes too long drawn out, and there is too little smoothness to the action, too many details, too frequent digressions, still it holds a definite place in the history of the novel. She employed to the limit the elements of romance of her time; much sentimentality, great strength of virtue in Edmund, Sir Philip Harclay, and the Fitzowen 'père, the utter villainess of the

(1) "A History of English Romanticism in the 18th Cent".

by H. A. Beers ch. 7.

Usurper of Lovell and the two elder Fitz-Owen brothers, the faithfulness of the servant Joseph and the priest Oswald, the delicacy of the lady, Emma Fitz-Owen, all true figures of romance of this period.

The virtue rewarded theme, so popular in these romances, is strongly evident in this book. The last paragraph of the work states clearly the goal to which Miss Reeve wished to lead her readers: "sir Philip Harclay caused the papers relating to his son's history to be collected together: the first part of it was written under his own eye in Yorkshire; the subsequent parts by Father Oswald at the Castle Level. All these, when together, furnish a striking lesson to posterity, of the overruling hand of Providence, and the certainty of RETRIBUTION." (1)

Clara Reeve cannot be passed over without a look into another of her works; 'The Progress of Romance' published in 1785. This book gives a resume' of the history of fiction leading to a strong plea for a place for prose romance along side of the verse epic. One work which Miss Reeve reviewed in this work was 'Longsword, Earl of Salisbury' by Thomas Leland. This novel of little value now, is not without significance. It was published two years before 'The Castle of Otranto' but it never enjoyed the popularity of that book, nor yet that of 'The Old English Baron'. It was advertised as 'an Historical Romance' but it contained little

(1) "The Old English Baron" by Clara Reeve

history. It was rather a long series of adventures of lukewarm interest, of temptations of a beautiful lady, with a hint of Gothic elements such as, monasteries and the death of a father at a son's hand, but on the whole very ragged. Phelps, however, thinks that 'Longsword' "is more of a forerunner of Scott than the other(Otranto)"(1) for the book contains more of chivalric adventures than 'Otranto' does. But Professor Beers thinks it worth mention 'not for its intrinsic importance, but for its early date'. (2)

Thus, with the works of Walpole and Miss Reeve, the Gothic Romance was safely launched, and it then remained to be seen how well this style of tale would weather the journey. Professor Phelps said: "Clara Reeve's 'Old English Baron' professedly imitated in its general manner Walpole's story, and the works of Mrs. Radcliffe (1764-1823) are in direct line of succession." (3) But, before we turn to consider Mrs. Radcliffe, we must look into an influence which came from without, that is the influence from Germany.

- (1) "The English Romantic Movement" by W. L. Phelps chapter 6.
- (2) "A History of English Romanticism in the 18th Cent." by H. A. Beers chapter 7.
- (3) "The English Romantic Movement" by W. L. Phelps chapter 6.

CHAPTER 6.

THE GERMAN INFLUENCE.

**German Romantic Literature.
Advent into England.**

Chapter 5.

THE GERMAN INFLUENCE.

In Chapter 3, it was remarked that the 'Revival of the Gothic Romance' in England was an internal movement, but that it did not find all nourishment in English soil. About the same time as English critics began to evince an aversion to the Gallic influence on their writings, the Germans also turned away from the beaten way. The Germans turned to look to their old folk lore for their inspiration for modern literature, and there sprang up in Germany a movement away from things foreign towards things native. But English and German are shoots from the same root and much of the old lore is common to both countries. Professor Beers notes that the Germans found something in English writings that sounded the depths they were seeking. "When the founders of the truly national literature in Germany cut loose from French moorings, they had an English pilot aboard." (1) Percy's 'Reliques' had been translated into German at Göttingen in 1767. Shakespeare had been known to the Germans since 1741 and has ever since maintained a firm root in Germany. But up until about 1760, little was known in England of German literature, for the reason that English scholars did not know German, and at that time French was the popular foreign language. Pierce

(1) "A History of English Romanticism of the 13th. Cent."

attributes this condition to the fact that England's economic and political interests were drawn more toward "centralized and cosmopolitan France rather than toward provincial and disorganized Germany". (1) When, however, England did turn to see what there was in Germany in the way of letters, the result was not at first of the best. Owing to the ignorance of the German language in England the early translations were very indifferent; and for the same reason the selection of German works was of indiscriminating choice. The masterpieces for a great part escaped the English translators, and fiction of sensational repute got into English with amazing rapidity. The German and English national literature is a web, woven from threads drawn from both countries. First of all, there was an English influence on German writings through Percy's 'Reliques' and Shakespeare, and then the English turn and draw from Germany. The stimulant received in Germany from English writers gave rise to literature that in turn came to give inspiration to English authors, and this influence extended from Mrs. Radcliffe and Lewis to Scott.

Between 1760 and 1790 there were eleven German works found in popular translation in England. Some of these were dramas, but a goodly number were novels and tales. After 1790, translations from the German became a craze.

(1) "Currents and Eddies in the English Romantic Generation"

Among the early translations were: 'The Sorcerer' and 'The Black Valley' from Veit Weber's 'Sagen der Vorzeit', 'The Ghostseer' from Schiller, 'The Necromancer' or 'A Tale of the Black Forest' by Friedrich Kslert, (1) 'The Horrid Mysteries' by the Marquis of Grosse, all of which were novels. The ballads and dramas translated from the German at this time were also of such import in relation to the English novel. The most noteworthy of these were: Burger's ballad 'Lenore' and the dramas, 'Stella' and 'Goetz von Berlichingen' by Goethe, 'Robbers' and 'Kabale und Liebe' by Schiller. These works are all of an extravagant nature, and in them the Gothic elements are found in profusion.

In the German 'Terror Novels', ruined castles and religious houses are almost a part of the plot, for it is often the machinations of villainy to which these lend themselves which go to make up the story. As in the English novels of the early stage of the movement, these works consist largely of series of marvellous incidents strung together by a narrator, who tells a friend of his adventures, or else leaves them in memoirs. Another favorite, but less exploited method, was that of a manuscript in which wondrous adventures had been recorded by some unknown hand. It seemed more to the taste of the writers,

(1) "Currents and Eddies in the English Romantic Generation" by F. Pierce Chapter I.

however, to have the hero of the situations relate them to a friend in order that there could be the opportunity of a 'come-back' story from the auditor. A new element introduced into these stories was that of the Inquisition, and from this grew the idea of a 'secret society' both exploiting cunning and skill in the perpetration of cruelties.

Two very representative novels from the German which found their way into English at this time were, 'The Necromancer' or 'A Tale of the Black Forest' by Friedrich Kalert, (nom de plume, Lawrence Flaumenberg) translated in 1794, and 'The Horrid Mysteries' by the Marquis of Grosse, translated in 1797. 'The Necromancer' is a tale, or a series of tales, of necromancy woven in with the history of a great robber band in the Black Forest, and centering around a haunted castle, which is properly deserted and gone to ruin. The story is told by one friend to another, and parts of it are given in the form of a narrative letter. The action in each case is the appearance of the supernatural with the resultant determination of an adventurer to unravel the mystery. The narrator is an officer whose curiosity is aroused by ghostly visitants to a village lying on the outskirts of the Black Forest, in the neighborhood of a castle, long deserted through its fame as a haunted abode. The castle is supposed to have become haunted by reason of ghastly murders and cruelties

perpetrated there by the last inhabitant. There are also other haunted dwellings entering into the story and of course the necromancer with his black art. The part the necromancer plays is to call forth the troubled spirits to find out why they cannot rest in peace, and then to interpret the message to the inquirer. The descriptions of the workings of the necromancer are composed of all the horrible detail that can be imagined. Let us look at the following by way of example. The scene of the conjuration takes place in the haunted castle and the adventurers have sought the necromancer's aid to find out why the castle is haunted. They await him there at twelve mid-night, and through the old ruins he leads them to a burying vault which is underground beneath the castle.

"The old man entered, uncovering his reverend head, and we did the same, standing by his side in trembling expectation, awed by the solemnity that reigned around us; a dreadful chilliness seized us, we felt the grasp of the icy fangs of horror, being in a burying vault surrounded by rotten coffins. Skulls and mouldered bones rattled beneath our feet, the grisly phantom of death stared in our faces from every side, with a grim ghastly aspect. In the centre of the vault we beheld a black marble coffin, supported by a pedestal of stone, over it was suspended to the ceiling a lamp spreading a

"dismal, dying glimmering around. The air was heavy and of a musty smell, we could hardly respire, the objects around seemed to be wrapped in a bluish mist, the hollow sound of our footsteps re-echoed through the dreary abode of horror as we walked nigher.

"The old man stopped at a small distance from the marble coffin, beckoning to us to come nigher; we moved slowly on, and he made a sign not to advance further than he could reach with extended arms. The lieutenant placed himself at his right, I took my station at his left, and the Baron opposite him.

"He put the lamp on the ground before him, taking his book, an ebony wand, and a box of white plate out of his wallet. Out of the latter he strewed a reddish sand around him, drew a circle with his wand, and folded his hands across his breast, then he pronounced, amid terrible convulsions, some mysterious words, opened the book and began to read, whilst his face was distorted in a ghastly manner; his convulsions grew more horrible as he went on reading; all his limbs seemed to be contracted by a convulsive fit. His eyebrows shrunk up, his forehead was covered with wrinkles, and large drops of sweat were running down his cheeks -- at once he threw down his book, and gazing with a staring look, and his hands lifted up, at the marble coffin.

"We soon perceived that mid-night had set in; the

"trampling of horses and the sound of horns was heard, the Necromancer did not move a limb, still staring at the coffin with a haggard look. Now the noise was on the staircase of the cellar and still he was motionless, his eyes being immovable directed towards the coffin. But now the noise was in the cellar, he brandished his wand and all around was buried in awful silence. He pronounced again three times an unintelligible word with a horrible thundering voice. A flash of lightning hissed suddenly through the dreary vault, licking the damp walls, and a hollow clap of thunder roared through the subterraneous abode of chilly horror. The light in the lamp was now extinguished, silence and darkness swayed all around; soon after we heard a gentle rustling just before us, and a faint glimmering was spreading through the gloomy vault. It grew lighter and lighter, and we soon perceived the rays of dazzling lights shooting from the marble coffin, the lid of which began to rise higher and higher; at once the whole vault was illuminated, and a grisly human figure rose slow and awful from the coffin. The phantom which was wrapped in a shroud, bore a dying aspect, it trembled violently as it rose and emitted a hollow groan, looking around with chilly horror. Now the spectre descended from the pedestal, and moved with trembling steps and haggard looks towards the circle where we were standing.

" 'Who dares', groaned it, in a faltering hollow accent;

'Who dares to disturb the rest of the dead?'

'And who art thou?' replied our leader, with threaten-
ing frowning aspect, 'Who art thou, that thou darrest to
disturb the stillness of this castle, and the nocturnal
slumber of those who inhabit its environs?'

The phantom shuddered back, groaning in a most lamentable
accent,

'Not I, my cursed husband disturbs the peace around and
mine.'

Old Man -- 'For what reason?'

Ghost -- 'I was assassinated, and he who judges men has
thrown my sins upon the murderer.'

Old Man -- 'I comprehend thee, unhappy spirit, betake thy-
self again to rest; by my power, which every spirit dreads,
he shall disturb thee no more -- begone --'

The phantom bowed respectfully, staggered towards the ped-
estal, climbed up, got into the coffin, and disappeared;
the lid sunk slowly down, and the light which had illumined
the dismal mansion of mortality died away by degrees. A
flash of lightning hissed again through the vault, licking
the damp walls, the hollow sound of thunder roared through
the subterraneous shade of horror, the lamp began to burn,
and the awful silence of the grave swayed all around." (1)

"The Necromancer" is a long parade of such scenes and the
description is just as full and complete for each one.

(1) "The Necromancer" by Friedrich Kalert, translated
by Peter Feuthold.

The element of suspense is used generously in the foregoing passage. Note the length of time for preparation, and the interruption of the spirits speech and that of the old man, by breaking it with a description of the aspect of the speaker while speaking.

At the end of the story the supernatural is torn from the whole fabrication, and it is found that the castle is not haunted, but it is the abode of robbers, and they have spread the idea of the supernatural in order to keep people away from it. The necromancer is a self confessed imposter, and tells in the closing pages how the appearances were effected, and how the whole series of incidents were machinations of the robbers to further their own ends. This unmasking we shall find quite a common practice with Mrs. Radcliffe, who seems to like the idea of robbing the reader of all illusion before leaving the book. In Lewis, conjurations form a great part of his novel, 'The Monk', but he spares us the unmasking, and leaves us the story of commerce with the powers of evil for what it may be worth to the reader.

In 'The Horrid Mysteries' we come upon the element borrowed from Spain, that of a secret society, which works with amazing deftness to further the ends of the lodge and its friends. Here again, the story is told by one who has been a victim of the cult, and although there is an unmasking the whole leaves a feeling of

query on the reader. Is the society for good or just purely selfish ends? This is not made quite clear, but there seems to be no limit that the members will not go, in order to effect the ends they have in view. Murder is considered a gentle expedient to remove enemies, and not as a crime. The life of desired members is harrassed without mercy in order to get them into the power. The opening chapter of 'The Horrid Mysteries' introduces well the stuff such stories were made of.

"The invisible web, which encompassed my fate, is now, perhaps, torn asunder; and, perhaps, not. While I fancy to be free, the fetters which I imagine to have shaken off, are, perhaps, forged stronger, and may soon enthral me again. Be this as it may, I will meet futurity with cheerful confidence; and I expand my hands peacefully towards you, ye fields of higher knowledge and experience! no matter whether you be strewed with the roses of sweet tranquility, or the thorns of sorrow. I suffer myself, impelled by stern necessity, and too weak for resistance, to be hurried onward, without anxiety, by a torrent which is limited and directed by a Superior Power.

"The history of my eventful life proves how little all human strength, and a well tried and circumspect experience, can prevail over the secret plans of cer-

"-tain unknown persons, who, behind the impenetrable veil of mystic concealment, invisibly watch over a great part of the world. Their plans and proceedings frequently have been closely observed; however I seem to have been doomed exclusively to penetrate to the centre of their code. Every action of my life seems to me to have been computed and arranged in their dreadful archives before I was born; they are all directed, in a pre-concerted manner, towards the most horrid crime, to the perpetration of which they wanted to seduce me; and their whole train proves the incontestible truth, that not the application of individual capacities, but only a prudent improvement of reason, can insure an uncontrolled sway over the minds of men." (1)

'The Horrid Mysteries' is a case pool of sentimentality, and the narrator and his friends go through the most appalling ecstasies at the sight of every beautiful female they happen to find in their way of life. The thread running through out the story is the foiling of the narrator by the secret society, and how these 'Unknown' ruin every love affair he has, and he finds himself in not a few. The instrument by which they try to win him to them is a beautiful woman, and for a time she does ensnare him. Another feature of this story is the servant, who is in league with the evil influence, and appears continually in the form of a spirit as a warning from the society, but at the close of the

(1) 'The Horrid Mysteries' by the Marquis of Grosse translated by P. Will Chapter 1.

story it is discovered that the servant of the narrator is a high member of the order and has devoted his life to service in the hope of winning this coveted man to the membership, and is in reality the uncle of his 'master'.

The whole tale is rather disgusting from the frequency of the love affairs and the minute descriptions of the amorous transports of the 'hero'. Marital infidelity is a part of the very 'plot' and in the closing of the story there is a little touch which is not without significance as a breath of what came to be an important factor in literature of a later period. This touch is, that the great love of a faithful woman saves the object of this love from overpowering disaster. The 'hero' has gone to Venice for a holiday after shutting his wife up in a convent to aid spiritually the wife of a friend who has been accused by her husband of an indiscretion. The friend accompanies him and there are a series of love affairs there, with the usual warnings from the society, and just as this episode reaches the climax and the friends are about to be overpowered and done to death, two unknown defenders arrive and save them. Disclosure shows them to be the faithful wives of the men, who, fearing evil for their husbands, have followed to watch, and even after being acquainted with their conduct in Venice, save them at the peril of their own lives.

The sensual sentimentality of 'The Horrid Mysteries' is a phase more evident in Lewis's 'Monk' and not in Mrs. Radcliffe, for the latter, with all her emotionalism keeps within the bounds of decorum. The descriptions of amorous scenes in this German work call to mind, by the minuteness of detail, like scenes in the 'Monk'. Look at the following extract and note if there is not a notable similarity to Lewis's episodes of illicit love.

"The charms of her incomparable form disengaged themselves gradually from the invidious concealment of her garments; her little feet grew visible; an alabaster knee, whose lilies were intermixed with the blushes of the vernal rose, unfolded itself from the cloud of her vestments, beautifuller, rounder, and more perfect, than ever painter could have delineated, or the most luxuriant imagination conceived. She extended at length her downy arms; I felt myself closely encircled; my eyes were dazzled by the overpowering fire of her looks; a quivering, balsamic lip burned on my languishing mouth; my breast heaved against a panting bosom; all my senses were intranced; my blood fermented; my face sank on her knee; but she raised me violently up to her bosom; her garments gave way, and -- I fell. Our mutual trance of sensual gratification was of a pretty long endurance, and I recovered first the use of my enraptured senses". (1)

(1) "The Horrid Mysteries" by Marquis of Grosse translated by P. Will.

Such a depiction cannot but disgust, for intimate detail is repulsive to the more discriminating reader. The claim that Lewis's book sold to a morbid public can easily be understood when it is found that he employed just such description. (See 'The Monk' in Ambrosio's early relations with Matilda, and later with Antonia in the catacombs of the Nunnery.) But from this German work it is seen that Lewis was not the first to plumb this particular depth of the reading public.

Using these two novels, 'The Necromancer' and 'The Horrid Mysteries', simply as examples, we are able to find in each some of the same characteristics of our English movement, and in so doing we must recall the dates of translation of these two books. 'The Necromancer' was in translation in 1794, and 'The Horrid Mysteries' in 1797. It is difficult to attach any direct influence on English writings from the novels of the period for they were more or less furtively read, but in turning to German poetry and drama of the period we find avowed influence, and Scott acknowledges his debt to it.

"Though the final arrival of German romanticism in its fullness, was postponed too late to modify the English movement, before the latter had spent its first strength, yet the prelude was heard in England and found echo there".

(1) "A History of English Romanticism in the 18th Cent."
by H. A. Beers Chapter II.

Sir Walter Scott was a scholar of no mean ability, and also one of accurate knowledge. During his youth he had thoroughly steeped himself in the lore of the North. But, Scott did not confine himself to the legends of his own country and became interested in all European literature and history. The German poem which came to be most popular in England was 'Lenore' by Burger, first printed in Germany in 1773 and later widely imitated in England. The story is of a dead soldier who returns in the spirit to claim his bride and carries her off on his spectral steed; with the cock-crow the phantom lover's armour drops from him, and the maiden finds him a skeleton, with all the marks of the grave upon him. The story ends abruptly and leaves the reader wondering what the 'point' of it may be. It is 'mystery', but through this very wondering may not many subsequent works have sprung up, each writer attempting to end the story a little more completely? This poem made such an impression on Scott, that in spite of the translation existent by Taylor, he also rendered it, and his work became the popular translation. Scott, was also much intrigued by Goethe, and translated some of his works, but to go into this takes us too far afield.

Sir Walter Raleigh, in 'The English Novel' says:

"Some years before she (Clara Reeve) wrote, Burger had marked out, in his poem of 'Lenore'(1773), the path that English romanticism was to follow". (1)

(1) "The English Novel" by Sir Walter Raleigh ch. 8

Sir Walter Raleigh finds a decided influence from the German on the works of Lewis. "Lewis's acquaintance with literature, and especially with the German resuscitations of feudalism, monasticism, ghosts and hob-goblins, enabled him to fill his museums of atrocities with a large variety of articles of vertu, including the Inquisition, the Wandering Jew and the Bleeding Nun." (1) This German influence is manifested in yet another writer, Mrs. Mary Shelley, who in her preface to 'Frankenstein' said: "Some volumes of ghost stories, translated from the German into French fell into our hands. ... 'we will each write a ghost story', said Lord Byron; and his proposition was acceded to. ... I busied myself to think of a story, a story to rival those which had excited us to this task". (2) Could any influence be more plainly avowed?

I think, owing to the above statement by Mrs. Shelley, that it would be well to glance at Frankenstein in this chapter. The lady set about to write a story to rival the German ghost stories she had been reading, and so it was to exude horror in every page. There was much talk of Darwin at this time, and Mrs. Shelley tells us that Lord Byron and Shelley were discussing much the possibilities of re-animating a corpse, and "perhaps the component parts of a creature, might be manufactured, brought together,

- (1) "The English Novel" by Sir Walter Raleigh ch. 8.
- (2) Preface to revised edition of 1831 of "Frankenstein," by Mrs. Mary Shelley.

"and endued with vital warmth". (1) This idea took possession of Mrs. Shelley, and along with Lord Byron's suggestion gave birth to her 'ghost story', 'Frankenstein'. It is interesting to note that Lewis was also of the party during the perusal of these German ghost stories.

Mrs. Shelley sought to get away from the ever felicitous scenes of domestic happiness that prevailed in so many of the works of this period, and for this we have her own words, in the preface to the 1817 edition, dated at Marlow. "My chief aim in this respect has been limited to avoiding the enervating effects of the novels of the present day and to the exhibition of the amiableness of domestic affection, and the excellence of universal virtue". Apart from the date and the avowal of German influence, the story of 'Frankenstein' calls for little comment in this paper, for in it we find none of the professed Gothic machinery. It was a series of mishaps which followed in the wake of a student of science, who, grown ever curious, sought to find the secret of life. Having found it, he created a monster, something like a man, but finding man too fine to work upon he was forced to make his 'man' much larger. When the structure was made and life infused into it, the creature turned on its creator and his life was disaster. The horrible is well proportioned through the book. Sometimes it is when the creator comes in

(1) Preface to revised edition of 1831 of 'Frankenstein' by Mrs. Shelley.

contact with the monster, and sometimes it is the terrible crimes committed by it. One example is when the monster is structurally complete and the student is just ready to give to it the life spark. "It was on a dreary night of November that I beheld the accomplishment of my toils. With an anxiety that almost amounted to agony, I collected the instruments of life around me, that I might infuse a spark of being into the lifeless thing that lay at my feet. It was already one in the morning; the rain pattered dismally against the panes and my candle was nearly burnt out, when, by the glimmer of the half extinguished light, I saw the dull yellow eye of the creature open; it breathed hard, and a convulsive motion agitated its limbs". (1) Even in this one short example it will be seen that Mrs. Shelley was no stranger to the art of suspense, nor yet was she without sense of 'stage setting'.

and, now, from this somewhat wandering chapter we must look to the English writers who came about the same time as did the German translations, and there we shall see in more detail many similarities of the two movements, and how they overlapped each other. How each country gave to the other, and at the same time took that which seemed to have a novel appeal.

(1) "Frankenstein" by Mrs. Mary Shelley. Ch. 5.

CHAPTER 6.

MRS. ANN RADCLIFFE.

**Mrs. Radcliffe.
Mrs. Smith.**

Chapter 5.6.

MRS. ANN RADCLIFFE.

When one mentions 'Gothic Romance', to the casual student of literature, the almost invariable reply is, 'Oh, that is Mrs. Radcliffe', and indeed her name seems to be the best known of all the writers of this school. Scott, by most people, is not considered of the Gothic. Mrs. Radcliffe is known to many as a name, to others as the authoress of 'The Mysteries of Udolpho', but in the 'Revival of the Gothic Romance' she holds a very important place. It is worthy of comment just here, that little is known of her life, and unlike many authors she kept her literary career entirely separate from her private life. There was a report after the publication of 'The Italian' in 1797, that Mrs. Radcliffe was dead. This was owing to her long silence of twenty years and the seclusion of her life. Another current report was that she had become insane from her wild imaginings and was spending her last days in an asylum. Miss McIntyre quotes a contemporary literary report from the 'British Critic' of August 1812. The report deals with a book published under the title of 'The Memoirs of Mrs. M. A. Radcliffe in familiar letters to her female friend'. (1)

(1) "Ann Radcliffe in Relation to her Time"
by C. F. McIntyre Chapter 1.

The report is as follows:

"We at first sight promised ourselves and our readers also, much satisfaction from presenting Memoirs of the very ingenious and much lamented Mrs. Radcliffe, compiled by herself, but it seems that the lady here commemorated is, or rather was, a very different personage."

Ann Radcliffe did not die until February 1823.

From the few facts that are known of Mrs. Radcliffe's life there is much of significance in connection with her novels. At the age of twenty three she married an editor, William Radcliffe, who Miss McIntyre tells us encouraged her with her writings, and on their trips she always had note books and wrote her impressions because her husband enjoyed reading them.(1) Marriage to Mrs. Radcliffe did not mean a cessation of a career, but the beginning. When she commenced to write she had not travelled, and it was during her literary period that she visited the continent.

The works of Mrs. Radcliffe support all the characteristic elements of the 'Revival of the Gothic Romance', and were indeed most popular reading in her time. In 1789 she published her first book 'The Castles of Athlin and Dunbayne' anonymously. In 1791 in like manner she published 'A Sicilian Romance', and 1792 'The Romance of the Forest'. In the second edition of 'The Romance

(1) "Ann Radcliffe in Relation to her Time"
by C. F. McIntyre Chapter 1.

of the Forest' Mrs. Radcliffe's name was attached, and by the 'Sicilian Romance' and 'The Romance of the Forest' her fame was established. (1)

In 1794 the most popular of her works was published, 'The Mysteries of Udolpho', and the next year appeared her first real travelogue, 'A Journey Made in the Summer of 1794, through Holland and the Western Frontier of Germany, with a Return down the Rhine: to which are added Observations during a Tour to the Lakes of Lancashire, Westmoreland and Cumberland.' In 1796 'The Italian' was published, and then followed a silence of twenty years. After her death (1823) another romance was published, 'Gaston de Blondenville' (1826), which "Seems to owe its inspiration almost entirely to one of her expeditions, her visit to Kenilworth in 1802". (2) There has been much conjecture about the influence of German literature on her writings, and also if her travels had any. Sir Walter Raleigh says: "The landscapes for which she is so justly famous are pictures of countries she never saw.The essence of Mrs. Radcliffe's scenery is that it is fictitious, lending the richness and fulness of harmony to the harmony of the thin weaving melody of the plot." (3)

(1) "Ann Radcliff in Relation to her Time"
by C. F. McIntyre Chapter 2.

(2) Ibid

(3) "The English Novel"
by Sir Walter Raleigh Chapter 3.

What we know of her life we certainly know that she never visited either Italy or the South of France, and that her travels consisted of a trip through Holland and the valley of the Rhine, and all about the lake country of England. Miss McIntyre thinks that her travels came too late to influence her earlier books, and that "Gaston de Blondville" is the only one over which they had any influence, with the exception of her description of her trip on the continent and to the Lake region. (1) Sir Walter Scott says of this phase: "In 1793, Mrs. Radcliffe had the advantage of visiting the scenery of the Rhine, and, although we are not positive of the fact, we are strongly inclined to suppose that 'The Mysteries of Udolpho' were written, or at least corrected, after the date of this journey; for the mouldering castles of the robber-chivalry of Germany situated on the wild and romantic banks of that celebrated stream, seem to have given a bolder flight to her imagination, and a more glowing character to her colouring, than are exhibited in 'The Romance of the Forest'." (2) As to the influence of German literature, Edith Birkhead in her book tells us that: "Much of her leisure, we are told, was spent in reading the literary productions of the day, especially

(1) "Ann Radcliffe in Relation to her Time"
by C. F. McIntyre Chapter 2.

(2) "The Lives of the Novelists"
by Sir Walter Scott

("Mrs. Ann Radcliffe")

poetry and novels". (1) Again she suggests that perhaps Mrs. Radcliffe's delight in disillusioning her readers as to the supernatural "may have occurred to Mrs. Radcliffe after reading Schiller's popular romance 'Der Geistersehler' (1799) in which the elaborately contrived marvels of the Armenian, who was modelled on Cagliostro, are but the feats of a juggler and have a physical cause". (2) Pierce in speaking of the influx of German literature into England between the years of 1760 and 1790 says: "The German invader triumphed not only on the bookseller's shelf, but also on the boards of the theatre". (3) Might it not be quite within bounds to put this statement of Pierce along side of the one quoted from Miss Birkhead with regard to her reading? It would not take much power of deduction to arrive at the possibility that Mrs. Radcliffe was well acquainted with the German works which were so popular in her day.

But, as to the works themselves; they are much too long to review in this paper, and in Chapter 1, the elements of the Gothic Romance have been pointed out with some fulness, and in Chapter 4, 'The Castle of Otranto' and the first part of "The Old English Baron" have been somewhat synopsisized to show the

- (1) "The Tale of Terror"
by Edith Birkhead Chapter 3.
- (2) Ibid
- (3) "Currents and Eddies in the English Romantic Generation" by F. E. Pierce Chapter 1.

Gothic characteristics in operation. In Mrs. Radcliffe we find all of the Gothic elements of terror and suspense, as well as the stock characters deemed suitable to a romance at this period.

As we found that the terror element meant so much in the 'Revival of the Gothic Romance', perhaps it would be well to look first at that element in Mrs. Radcliffe's works. In these novels we find a little new phase put upon the supernatural, for here it becomes the apparent-supernatural. Mrs. Radcliffe does not let the reader realize this until almost the end of the book, and her art of suspense is of moment. Occasionally, but only very occasionally does Mrs. Radcliffe break the spell almost at once. Two splendid incidents of this type of horror can be seen in 'The Mysteries of Udolpho'. The prolonged suspense occurs with the famous black veil; Emily's curiosity is aroused by the story of a picture in the gallery which is always covered with a black veil, and when opportunity presents itself she goes to the gallery to look for herself.

"Emily passed on with faltering steps and, having paused a moment at the door before she attempted to open it, she then hastily entered the

"chamber and went towards the picture, which appeared to be enclosed in a frame of uncommon size, that hung in a dark part of the room. She paused again and then, with a timid hand, lifted the veil, but she instantly let it fall--- perceiving that, what it concealed was a picture, and, before she could leave the chamber, she dropped senseless on the floor." (1) Thus Mrs. Radcliffe leaves her, and for five hundred and ninety eight pages we do not know what it was that Emily saw behind the veil. At the close of the third volume we find: "for on lifting it, there appeared, instead of the picture she had expected within a recess of the wall a human figure, of ghastly paleness, stretched at its length, and dressed in the habiliments of the grave. What added to the horror of the spectacle, was, that the face appeared partly decayed and disfigured by worms, which were visible on the features and hands..... Had she dared to look again, her delusion and her fears would have vanished together, and she would have perceived that the figure before her was not human, but formed of wax." (2) Thus, with one stroke, Mrs. Radcliffe reveals the horror behind the veil, and tears away the mystery, and lets us feel that we have been 'taken in'. The example of quick denouement which I referred to is found in the second volume. The travellers have arrived at Udolpho to take up their abode, and Annette, the garrulous servant is talking to Emily of the traditions of the castle, when:

- (1) "The Mysteries of Udolpho" by Mrs. Radcliffe Vol. IX 1.
(2) Ibid Vol. 3.

"Hush! said Emily, trembling. They listened, and continuing to sit quite still, Emily heard a slow knocking against the wall. It came repeatedly. Annette then screamed loudly, and the chamber door slowly opened. -- It was Caterina, come to tell Annette that her lady wanted her." Here the quick revelation is not without great dramatic effect. There is another example of this latter sort of thing in the "Romance of the Forest;" the La Motte family with Peter, the servant, have entered the ruins of the Abbey to see if they might rest there until the carriage can be mended. They hear an uncommon noise at the end of a long corridor, and all are frightened, but the curiosity of the servant is aroused, and he goes to see what it may be. "and Peter soon after appeared, breathless, and pale with fear. When he came within hearing of La Motte, he called out, 'an please your honor, I've done for them, I believe, but I've had a hard bout. I thought I was fighting with the devil.--' 'What are you speaking of?' said La Motte. 'They was nothing but owls and rooks after all'." (1) Mrs. Radcliffe takes care to place all of her stories in places which are conducive of horror. Even the scenery is made to foreshadow something dire. The very situation of the Abbey, of the "Romance of the Forest", and the Castle of Udolpho, also the house which in

(1) "A Romance of the Forest" by Mrs. Radcliffe Vol. 1.

'The Italian' was selected for the murder of Eliena. All are situated among one or another phase of nature of violet aspect. The mysterious windings of these abodes, the secret chambers, the sliding doors and pannels, all part of the Gothic machinery, make up the scenes of action. In Mrs. Radcliffe, as in Walpole, it will be observed that much action is set afoot by the appearance of the supernatural. Of this, we shall touch upon more fully in looking²⁶ her characterization. Other favorite appearances of the supernatural, which Mrs. Radcliffe employed, were gliding forms upon ramparts, and ghostly music issuing from dark woods. The horror instruments used by this writer are found in a neat list by Professor Beers. "But her real machinery is prevaillingly Gothic, and the real hero of the story is commonly, as in Walpole, some haunted building. In "The Mysteries of Udolpho", it is a castle in the Appennines; in 'A Romance of the Forest', a deserted abbey in the depth of the woods; in 'The Italian', the cloister of the Black Penitents. The moldering battlements, the worm-eaten tapestries, the turret staircases, secret chambers, underground passages, long, dark corridors where the wind howls dismally, and distant doors which slam at midnight all derive from 'Otranto'. So do the supernatural fears which haunt these abodes of desolation; the strains of mysterious music, the apparitions which glide through the shadowy apartments, the hollow voices that warn the tyrant to beware. But her method is quite different

"from Malpote's; she tracks a natural explanation to every unearthly sight or sound."(1)

But, we also find something else. Mrs. Radcliffe claims much notice for her use of scenery as a background for her characters, and to play upon the reader's imagination in preparation for coming events. Sir Walter Raleigh says: "She never forgets the whole in the parts; details are sparingly introduced, and generally with telling effect. Her landscapes might be named after the particular emotions they are built to house -- terror, regret, security, or melancholy -- and they would be in perfect keeping." (2) This observation of Sir Walter Raleigh's is well borne out in her works, and perhaps there is no more striking example than where in 'The Mysteries of Udolpho', the cruel Montoni has forced his wife and niece, against their wishes, to leave Venice, and to repair with him to a castle, long deserted, in the Appennines. The whole scenery along the way is dark, austere, and treacherous. On arrival at the castle, the picture immediately suggests to the reader that anything ghastly might happen in such a place. "Towards the close of day, the road wound into a deep valley. Mountains, whose shaggy steeps appeared to be inaccessible, almost surrounded it. To the east, a vista opened, and exhibited

(1) "A History of English Romanticism in the 18th. Cent."
by H. A. Beers Ch. 7.

(2) "The English Novel" by Sir Walter Raleigh Ch. 8.

"the apenices in their darkest horrors; and the long perspective of retiring summits rising over each other, their ridges clothed with pines, exhibited a stronger image of grandeur than any that Emily had yet seen. The sun had just sunk below the top of the mountains she was descending, whose long shadow stretched athwart the valley; but his sloping rays, shooting through an opening of the cliffs, touched with a yellow gleam the summits of the forest that hung upon the opposite steeps, and streamed in full splendour upon the towers and battlements of a castle that spread its extensive ramparts along the brow of a precipice above. The splendour of these illumined objects was heightened by the contrasted shade which involved the valley below." (1) and from here, as Emily gazed, the light of the setting sun died away, and there was nothing but gloom. Miss Birkhead remarks about her scenery, "Her descriptions of scenery are elaborate, and often prolix, but it is often difficult to form a clear image of the scene. In her novels, she cares for landscape only as an effective background, and paints with the broad, careless sweep of the theatrical scene-painter." (1) There can be no doubt that to the modern reader, elaborateness of description, and profusion is a bit wearisome, and indeed, one reading these novels in these days of action, is apt to skip over these 'pictures' in order to follow the action with all speed. On occasion of the

(1) "The Tale of Terror", by Edith Birkhead, Ch. 3.

sudden departure to Udolpho, Mrs. Radcliffe takes something over five pages to describe the scenery through which they are passing. As description, it is marvellous, but as a part in the story, it seems a little too long to sustain the interest of the reader. No journey is taken in which every bit of the road is not put on canvass, and no dwelling approached which is not described in the minutest of detail. In "The Romance of the Forest", when La Motte descends from the carriage to see what the ruins are, which appear among the trees, the whole is described, while Madame La Motte and Emily are left in suspense in the carriage.

Closely linked with the scenery of Mrs. Radcliffe's novels are her characters. We have already noted Sir Walter Raleigh's remark on the effective use of her scenery in portraying the mood of the characters. On the whole the characters are colorless and conventional. And with these characters comes a flood of sentimentalism, so much so, that Professor Beers says (and all readers of Mrs. Radcliffe can second his observation) "Every page is bedewed with the tear of sensibility; the whole volume is damped with it, and ever and anon a chorus of sobs goes up from the whole company."

(1) "This is most strongly felt in connection with the heroines and the heroes. Both these 'virtuous' characters are equally prone to tears, and not alone the heroes, but all the 'good' men of the works show more than a becoming amount of sensibility. In 'ARomance of the Forest', when

(1) "A History of English Romanticism in the 18th. Cent."
by H. A. Beers, Ch. 7.

M. La Luc visits Theodore in prison during the period of his reprieve, "He embraced Theodore, and remembering the anguish of his last embrace, tears of thankfulness flowed to the contrast." (1) Of the trials all of Mrs. Radcliffe's heroines are forced to pass through, Miss Birkhead says; "Their sorrows never rise to tragic heights, because they are only passive sufferers, and the sympathy they would win as pathetic figures, is obliterated by their unflinching consciousness of their own rectitude." (2) Ellena, Emily, and Adeline, the three best known of Mrs. Radcliffe's heroines are all tarred with the same brush. The only mark by which they are known one from the other, is by their names, and their persecutors vary their experiences a little. The villains of the works are by far the best of the characters, although the servants approach the 'man of mould' somewhat. In the characters of her villains Mrs. Radcliffe almost rises to character delineation. Miss Birkhead says; "The character of Schedoni is undeniably Mrs. Radcliffe's masterpiece. No one would claim that his character is subtle study, but in his interviews with the Marchesa, Mrs. Radcliffe reveals unexpected gifts for probing into human motives." (3) It might be well to notice that this masterpiece appears in the last of the novels published in her life time, and just as Scott thinks that she shows a bolder hand in her scenery after her visit to the Rhine, might not also time,

(1) "A Romance of the Forest" by Mrs. Radcliffe. Vol. 2.
(2) & (3) "The Tale of Terror" by Edith Birkhead. Ch. 3.

have lent her a more certain deftness to her characterization. The question is, had she continued her writing would she have become somewhat more psychological in her characters?

Mrs. Radcliffe does not confine herself to male villains, but in two of her best novels introduces the female villain in the personage of an abbess. ('A Romance of the Forest' and 'The Italian'). But it is because of the characters that Mrs. Radcliffe, once so popular, is now scarcely known; there is no one among her characters, whom we return to her novels, to live over again with. The heroines are all too good, and have no power of initiation, but are hurled about in turn by cruel fate, and super virtue. The machinations carry them into the trials; virtue, and chance, in the form of an equally fate-driven hero, rescue them from sorrow and death. The good women of the books are subject to the wills of the villainous men, and for the most part the good men are widowers, either at the commencement, or soon become so. In the end, as Miss Reeve points out to her readers, there is a day of retribution. So there persists, even in Mrs. Radcliffe's work, the punishment of evil, and the reward of virtue.

This lack of characterization leads us into another phase of the work. Miss McIntyre shows us this idea tritely: "Then, too, the lack of characterization leads to lack of motivation. When people have no individuality, there is no reason

why they should do one thing more than another... There is usually no logical relation of action to character."

(1) Here is where Mrs. Radcliffe's machinations come to the rescue. There are various ways of starting action, because the characters are unable to start themselves.

There is much to be said, however, of the structure of Mrs. Radcliffe's works over those of her predecessors. One point which seems to weaken the structure greatly is the constant throwing broadcast of verse, which is always put in to show extreme emotion of the aesthetic, in the anaemic heroines. Readers of novels, if interested in the story, scarcely feel inclined to stop and wade through poems of many many stanzas to discover how the beautiful landscape affects the heroine. What Mrs. Radcliffe did do better than had ever been done before, and which has remained a goal for authors ever since, was to introduce the principle of suspense. Miss McIntyre says: "and it is to this method, probably, that she owed not only her immediate popularity, but much of her importance in literary history." (2) There is a noticeable acquisition of skill in handling this, as we found in her handling of scenery, as she progresses from one novel to the next. 'The Mysteries of Udolpho' perhaps, crowns the summit of her popularity in this field, for by the time the Italian appeared the reading public was somewhat accustomed to

(1) "Ann Radcliffe in Relation to her Time" by C.F. McIntyre
(2) Ibid Ch. 3.

be 'taken in' by her creation of suspense, and a contemporary writer in the "English Review" 1796 accounts for this:

"It was impossible to raise curiosity and expectation to a higher pitch than she has done in her 'Mysteries of Udolpho'; yet these mysteries she accounted for in a natural manner. The reader of "The Italian" now before us sits down with this conviction. As children who have been frightened, by an ideal bugbear, and afterwards convinced that there is nothing in it, will cry 'No, no! we know what it is; you cannot frighten us again'; so, we acknowledge, does the perusal of the present romance affect us."

(1) This points very strongly to the senseless in all of Mrs. Radcliffe's works, but the critic is too close to see that there might have been something in 'The Italian' that was not in the others, and this is to be found in the embryo of characterization which appears here. Again, Mrs. Radcliffe is not without appreciation of dramatic effect and some of her interruptions, to heighten the dramatic moment, are worthy to be placed among the things she bequeathed to writers who followed.

As to her subject matter, in relation to those who followed her, we can do no better than to turn to one who was to become a giant in the field where she labored. Sir Walter Scott says: "It may be true, that Mrs. Radcliffe rather walks in fairyland than in the region of realities, and that she has neither displayed the command

(1) Quoted by C. F. McIntyre

of the human passions, nor the insight into the human heart, nor the observation of life and manners, which recommend other authors of the same line. But she has taken the lead in a line of composition, appealing to those powerful and general sources of interest, a latent sense of supernatural awe, and curiosity concerning whatever is hidden and mysterious; and if she has been ever approached in this walk, which we should hesitate to affirm, it is at least certain that she has never been excelled or equalled. (1)

That Mrs. Radcliffe had a near-rival cannot be denied. Mrs. Charlotte Smith was not entirely eclipsed by Mrs. Radcliffe, though she never enjoyed the fame of the former lady. Her literary efforts were not the offspring of leisure hours, but were born of hardship and dire necessity. Mrs. Smith, in her life time was better known for her sonnets, which are praised by many of her contemporaries. Miss McIntyre draws our attention to the fact that Mrs. Smith employed two of Mrs. Radcliffe's properties, "The so-called 'Gothic' element, and the interest in natural scenery" (2) Mrs. Smith produced a great number of works, among them translations from the French, but her masterpiece is 'The Old Manor House'. It was surprising to me to find how many commentators pass Mrs. Smith over with the mention that 'Mrs. Smith was also present'.

(1) "Lives of the Novelists" by Sir Walter Scott.

(2) "Ann Radcliffe in relation to her time" by C.F. McIntyre.
Ch. 3.

On reading 'The Old Manor House', one cannot help recalling alongside of her master-character, Mrs. Rayland, Miss Havisham given us by Dickens. Where Mrs. Radcliffe was extremely weak, namely in her characterization, Mrs. Smith seems to have shown in this one work, more insight into human characteristics. This may be explained by a comparison of the two women's lives. Mrs. Radcliffe lived in so secluded a manner, that biographers despair when collecting facts; but Mrs. Smith from her earliest childhood was in contact with people, and she had viewed life from the standpoint of luxury and indulgence, even down to the dregs of prison life. Her married life was a tragedy, and enough evils beset her path to have even satisfied Mrs. Radcliffe in her fervour of extracting damsels from tragic situations, but then Mrs. Smith was not one of the 'innocents', and she was already married. We should indeed be most grateful to Sir Walter Scott for his detailed 'life' of Mrs. Smith. Sir Walter Scott went to her sister for the facts of her life, but the comments on her work are from her own pen.

(1) "The chef d'oeuvre of Mrs. Smith's works is, according to our recollections, 'The Old Manor House', especially the first part of the story, where the scene lies about the ancient mansion and its vicinity. Old Mrs. Rayland is without a rival; a Queen Elizabeth in private life, jealous of her immediate dignities and possessions, and still more jealous of the power of bequeathing them. Her letter to

(1) "Lives of the Novelists" by Sir Walter Scott.

Mr. Somerive, in which she intimates rather than expresses her desire to keep young Orlando at the Hall, while she is so careful to avoid committing herself by any direct expression of her intentions with respect to him, is a masterpiece of diplomacy, equal to what she of Tudor could have composed on a similar occasion. The love of the young people thrown together so naturally, its innocence and purity, and the sort of perils with which they are beset, cannot fail deeply to interest all those who are interested by this peculiar species of literature. The unexpected interview with Jonas, the smuggler, furnishes an opportunity for varying the tale, with a fine scene of terror drawn with a masterly hand." (1)

Mrs. Smith seems to have given little thought to the plot, for the story just rambles on to the tune of who, the old lady is going to leave her property to. There are, however, some excellent bits in it, where one can see and even feel the situations. Miss McIntyre points out that on scenes of England Mrs. Smith did very well, but when it came to foreign landscapes she did not have the patience of Mrs. Radcliffe in 'steading' her imagination by books of travel. (2).

But placing the legacy of Mrs. Radcliffe alongside that of Mrs. Smith, we can I think, see that these two ladies did not write 'in vain'. Mrs. Radcliffe left to her successors the story of suspense, already made popular, as well as her contribution in reviving the public taste for a

(1) "Lives of the Novelists" by Sir Walter Scott.

(2) "Ann Radcliffe in Relation to her Time" by C.F. McIntyre, Ch. 5.

literature that threatened to die an early death. Mrs. Smith, with her improvement on characterization seems to be complimentary to Mrs. Radcliffe, and from the excellencies of these two ladies grew the subsequent literature of like nature, and from the pioneering in the field of structure and characterization they left the fruits of their efforts to novelists of other schools. Just as in a new country, the path makers have but crude accommodation, it is, on this first crude accommodation, that the future fineness is built.

CHAPTER 7.

MATHEW GREGORY LEWIS.

**Lewis's Novel,
German Motives present in Lewis.**

Chapter 7.

MATTHEW GREGORY LEWIS.

One of the direct descendants of Mrs. Radcliffe and Horace Walpole is Matthew Gregory Lewis, perhaps better known as 'Monk' Lewis, which appellation he received after the publication of his most famous work. Lewis's early life had much bearing on his literary productions. Unusually bright, and brought up in the 'lap of luxury', he soon developed into a most precocious child. Mrs. Oliphant tells us, that as a child, he was present at his mother's drawing-rooms, where, there were met the fashionable people of the day. She goes on to say, that he was not in the least like a child, and joined, without the slightest embarrassment, in the conversation of the company. (1) Born just fourteen years before the first publications of Mrs. Radcliffe, he grew up in an atmosphere filled with enthusiasm for Gothic romance. When he was yet a child, his father and mother separated, and he became the constant companion of his mother. This tended to encourage and emphasize his early tendencies towards precocity. At the age of seventeen, he went to Weimar, Germany, and there he glutted himself on German literature. Such writings as those of Schiller, Kalert, Goethe, Kotzebue, Veit Weber and Burger were then the centre of the German literary arena. Of all these, like

(1) "A Literary History of England" 1790-1825
by Mrs. Oliphant.

many of our writers of this period, only one can be said to really still live, Goethe, and perhaps Schiller is not so far in the limbo as the others.

This year was not without a pronounced effect on Lewis, and Miss Birkhead thinks that his sojourn there left 'more obvious marks on his literary career' (1), than his education received at Westminster and Christ Church. He studied German with such energy, and became familiar with the German productions of the day. (2) Schiller seems to have made his most marked impression on him as the author of 'Robbers'. He met Goethe, but he also lived for Lewis through his work, and especially his 'Sorrows of Werther'. On his return from Germany he visited Scotland, but in the summer of 1794, he went to The Hague as an attache' of the British Embassy. It was while at this place that his most famous work 'The Monk' was completed.

That Lewis was a descendant of Walpole and Mrs. Radcliffe does not say that he resembled either exactly; indeed he did not. Mrs. Radcliffe, in all her searching for horrors, never left the path strictly marked out by a nice decorum. Walpole did stray off once, to wit, in his drama 'The Mysterious Mother'. Lewis' resemblance to Mrs. Radcliffe ends with his ambition to quicken the pulse of the reader. Miss Birkhead expressed herself thus:

- (1) "The Tale of Terror" by Miss Birkhead ch. 4.
- (2) See preface to 'The Monk' Gibbings 1913 edition.

"The moments in her novels which Lewis admired and strove to emulate, were those during which the reader with quickened pulse breathlessly awaits some startling development".

(1) Miss Birkhead goes on to say that his debt to Mrs. Radcliffe is "comparatively insignificant", while Beers says that it is "a lineal descendant". (2) Beyond a doubt, except for his early perusal of Walpole, and the first works of Mrs. Radcliffe, he found more to his taste in the German literature. Lewis credited the finishing of 'The Monk' to his reading 'The Mysteries of Udolpho', on its publication in 1794. "I was induced to go on with it by reading 'The Mysteries of Udolpho' which is, in my opinion, one of the most interesting books that has ever been published. (3) 'The Monk' was published in 1795.

There is yet another factor which points to a German influence, and it is found in the very theme of 'The Monk'. It was a common theme of the literature of the day in Germany, that the seducer had to rid himself, one way or another, of a guardian or parent, before he could accomplish his designs. This appears in Goethe's 'Faust', where Gretchen gives her mother a sleeping potion, which unfortunately proves fatal; her brother also is a menace and is killed. We find that Ambrosio, the monk, carries a charmed sprig to the chamber of Antonia, but her mother

- (1) "The Tale of Terror" by Edith Birkhead ch. 4.
- (2) "A History of English Romanticism in the 18th Cent." by H. A. Beers ch. 11.
- (3) "Introduction to 'The Monk' Gibbings & Co. 1913 ed.

becomes dangerous to his plans, and so Ambrosio kills her; but even then, not to be robbed of Antonia, his schemes for the possession of her continue. Another German theme, which has already been pointed out in chapter 5, is, that of communion with the powers of evil. Professor Beers, speaking of German influence on Lewis tells us: "For years Lewis was one of the most active intermediaries between the German purveyors of the terrible and the English literary market. He fed the stage with melodramas and operas, and stuffed the closet reader with ballads and prose romances." (1) Miss Birkhead quotes from 'The Monthly Review' of June 1797, that: "A cold-blooded reviewer, in whom the ^{te}doctive instinct was strong, indicated the sources of 'The Monk' so mercilessly, that Lewis appears in his critique rather as the perpetrator of a series of ingenuous thefts than as the creator of a novel". (2) Quoting, she continues: "The outline of 'The Monk', Ambrosio's story was suggested by that of the 'Santon Barissa' (Barissa) in 'Die Entführung: the form of temptation is borrowed from 'The Devil in Love' of Canzotte (Cazotte), and the catastrophe is taken from 'The Sorcerer'. The adventures of Raymond and Agnes are less obviously imitations, yet the forest scene near Strasburg brings to mind an incident in Smollett's 'Count Fathom'; the

(1) "A History of English Romanticism in the 18th Cent."

by H. A. Beers ch. 11.

(2) "The Tale of Terror" by Elith Birkhead ch. 4.

"bleeding nun is described by the author as a popular tale of the Germans, and the convent prison resembles the convent inflictions of Mrs. Radcliffe". (1) Miss Birkhead points out that "The industrious reviewer overlooks the legend of the 'wandering Jew' which might have been added to the list of Lewis's 'Borrowings'. It must be admitted that Lewis transforms, or at least remodels what he borrows". (2)

Although Lewis did not publish his translations from the German until after he had published 'The Monk' still from his acquaintances, and from his letters at the time of his sojourn in Weimar, it is evident that he was conversant with them, and the list of his chief translations is interesting in showing the kind of German literature which made an appeal to him. Beers gives us such a list: 'The Minister' from 'Kabale und Liebe' of Schiller, (The translation of the German title gives the fascinating one of 'Intrigue and Love'.) 'Rella' (1799) from Kotzebue's 'Spaniards in Peru', 'Aldemorn' or 'The Outlaw' (1800), 'Tales of Terror' and 'Tales of Wonder' (1801), 'The Brave of Venice' (1804), 'The Feudal Tyrants', (1807), 'Romantic Tales', (1808), which is made up of tales from both German and French. (3)

- (1) & (2) "The Tale of Terror" by Edith Birkhead ch. 4.
(3) "A History of English Romanticism in the 18th Cent."
by H. A. Beers ch. 11.

Where ever Lewis got his material and inspiration, he made it his own before he passed it on. The publication of 'The Monk' in 1795, took England by storm. "It is not too much to say that no writer, by a maiden production, ever obtained such rapid and extensive celebrity. That the book was at once severely assailed by reviewers, on the ground of its immorality, naturally deprived it of none of its popularity". (1) This latter remark makes us pause to wonder, when reviewers will realize that the best advertisement and the best stimulus to the sale of a book, is just such a charge; or maybe it is one of the age old 'combines', critic and publisher. Pierce makes the psychological remark on this for us: "Of Mrs. Radcliffe's sentimental appeal 'The Monk' has little but replaces this by an equally salable ingredient, to wit, immorality". (2)

Of 'The Monk' itself: let us look to see what the novel element was which gave yet again, a hold on life for the Gothic Romance. Critics are prone to debate as to whether it belongs to the same school as do the novels of Mrs. Radcliffe. Miss Birkhead says: "Their purposes of achievement are so different that it is hardly accurate to speak of them as belonging to the same school". (3) But in the chapter just preceding the one in which she makes the

- (1) "Introduction to 'The Monk' published by Gibbins & Co. 1915.
- (2) "Currents & Eddies in the English Romantic Generation" by F. S. Pierce ch. 1.
- (3) "The Tale of Terror" by Ruth Birkhead ch. 4.

the above remarks she notes: "Her (Mrs. Radcliffe's) influence was potent on Lewis and Katurin, as well as a host of forgotten writers." (1) I think, that as with Mrs. Radcliffe, the method of gaining and holding the interest of the reader by a portrayal of the unusual, is worthy of first notice. It has been pointed out that Mrs. Radcliffe retained the interest of the reader by creating a feeling of suspense, Walpole by the marvellous, but in Lewis we find something more intense; Lewis uses sheer terror. Miss Birkhead divides them thus; Mrs Radcliffe appeals to the instinct of curiosity, but Lewis strikes a more basic instinct -- fear. The latter, in no way, tries to explain away the unearthly, in fact he closes his book with it. After Ambrosio, the monk, has run the gamut of all the human sins, and makes the final and last break with grace by selling his soul to the devil in order to escape the decree of the Inquisition, Lewis paints the last scene in full color. The devil arrives to claim his own just as Ambrosio is about to pray to heaven:

" 'What?' he cried, darting at him a look of fury: 'Dare you still implore the Eternal's mercy? Would you feign penitence and again act a penitent's part? Villain, resign your hopes of pardon. Thus I secure my prey'.

(1) "The Tale of Terror" by Edith Birkhead ch. 3.

"As he said this, darting his talons into the monk's shaven crown, he sprang with him from the rock. The caves and the mountains rang with Ambrosio's shrieks. The demon continued to soar aloft till reaching a dreadful height he released the sufferer. Headlong fell the monk through the airy waste; the sharp point of a rock received him; and he rolled from precipice to precipice till, bruised and mangled, he rested on the river's banks. Instantly a violent storm arose: the winds in fury rent up rocks and forests; the sky was now black with clouds, now sheeted with fire: the rain fell in torrents: it swelled the stream: the waves overflowed their banks: they reached the spot where Ambrosio lay, and when they abated, carried with them into the river the ^Pcorse of the despairing monk". (1) How very different this is to Mrs. Radcliffe, who leaving the lovers happy, leaves no thought of the supernatural to linger with the reader. This closing scene is just as it is all through the book, Lewis does not release the tension at which he keeps the situations, in any of the three volumes. In Mrs. Radcliffe's works there are 'safty islands', for although the difficulties of the heroine are without number, still there are breathing spaces. Mrs. Radcliffe refused to call upon the 'Arch Fiend'

(1) "The Monk" by M. G. Lewis Vol. 3.

to create terror in her novels, but Lewis hails him as a familiar acquaintance. He, the devil, rolls through all the volumes and does his will with all, not even sparing the innocent, for all that is left Antonia, is the hope of reward in heaven. Her life was made one of sadness and persecution, and in the catacombs under the convent, she dies a terrible death by a dagger in the hand of Ambrosio. Used along with the conjurations of the evil powers, are the familiar expedients, a sleeping potion and a talisman.

Pierce points out the 'equally salable ingredient' immorality. This is to be found nowhere in Mrs. Radcliffe's novels, but in Walpole's 'Mysterious Mother' the substratum of the plot is such the same as that of the main plot in 'The Monk'. The underlying current of both is that of incest. The illicit cravings of Ambrosio are too much like the movies of the twentieth century, they both have too many close-ups. Miss Birkhead says of this phase of 'The Monk': 'Mrs. Radcliffe's skeletons are decently concealed in the family cupboard, Lewis's stalk abroad in shameless publicity.' (1) In Walpole's 'The Mysterious Mother', the son is saved from murdering the mother, only because she is quicker than he is and commits suicide. In 'The Monk' we do not know until the end, that Elvira, whom Ambrosio has murdered, is his own

(1) "The Tale of Terror" by Edith Birkhead ch. 4.

mother, and that Antonia is his sister; but such are the further horrors of Lewis's story. In keeping these facts from the reader for so long, Lewis showed an insight into a reader's re-action: all the shocks must not come at once but must rather be spread out to spur flagging interest. Byron in his Journal of December 6, 1813 said of these parts:

"It is many years since I looked into a novel, till I looked yesterday at the worst parts of 'The Monk'. These descriptions ought to have been written by Tiberius at Caprea -- they are forced -- the philtered ideas of a jaded voluptuary. It is to me inconceivable how they could have been composed by a man only twenty -- his age when he wrote them. They have no nature -- all the sour cream of cantherides ... I had never read this edition, and merely looked at them from curiosity and recollection of the noise they made, and the name they left to Lewis". (1) But here, I think, Byron draws our attention, in his very wonder, for a man of twenty would write a thing that a man of forty would have learned too much of the world to risk. It was owing to the immorality rampant in it, that the book was ordered to be either suppressed or expurgated. Little force was brought to bear on this order. (2)

(1) Quoted from Byron's Journal in Introduction to 'The Monk' Gibbings & Co. 1913 edition.

(2) Ibid.

The plan of the book is one trunk line, with a tributary line almost as large as the main. There is a double story running through. Lewis takes us from the machinations of the devil, through Matilda and Ambrosio, to the love story of Agnes and Raymond. This sub-story tells of the cruelties of a convent, the horrors of living 'offenders' being interred with the dead, and the utter inhumanity of the clergy; Christian institutions governed by more horrible regulations than can be conceived of, even for hell. It is a bit of a master stroke where Ambrosio, hearing the confessions of the nuns, and impatient to be away to the perpetration of his own crime, delivers up the nun Agnes to the prioress, on discovering her plan of elopement. Lewis makes this even more poignant, for Agnes is carrying a child, and we know that when such is discovered, 'hope' in a nunnery is extinguished. So we see that both the main plot and the sub-plot deal with the then popular theme in Germany, and taken up somewhat by Mrs. Radcliffe in 'The Italian', the barbarities of religious houses, and the frailties of some of their illustrious inmates. Both stories of 'The Monk' with fewer 'close-ups' would be good in themselves, but they are too complete to be woven into one book. It is only in the sub-plot that happiness is allotted to anyone; in the main plot, death to the maiden, and annihilation to Ambrosio. The youth Lorenzo, who had loved Antonia, comforted himself

with the sister of Raymond as a wife. Miss Birkhead draws attention to the fact that the story of Raymond and Agnes, with the legends of the Wandering Jew and the Bleeding Nun, has been published as a separate story more than once. (1)

Lewis's characters are very different from most that have been met so far in this movement. Speaking of the characterization Beers notices: "And though it partakes of the stilted dialogue that abound in Mrs. Radcliffe's romances, it has neither the excess of scenery nor of sentiment which distinguishes that very prolix narrator".

(2) Miss McIntyre differs from Professor Beers on the point of characterization: "In his psychological treatment of character he has probably surpassed her (Mrs. Radcliffe); some real power of analysis is shown in the monk's struggle between religion and passion". (3) This same writer thinks that 'The Monk' of Lewis may have given Mrs. Radcliffe some ideas of Schedoni, and it seems very probable, for Schedoni is the first character of this lady's creation that shows any vitality. Matilda, in the first part of 'The Monk', makes a strong impression on the reader, probably because she has so much energy and initiative. Had Lewis left her but an impassioned Counsel, he might have made a great character out of her, but after she has

- (1) "The Tale of Terror" by Edith Birkhead ch. 4.
- (2) "A History of English Romanticism in the 18th Cent."
By H. A. Beers ch. 11.
- (3) "Ann Radcliffe in Relation to Her Time"
by C. F. McIntyre ch. 3.

shown what she might be, he changes her into an instrument of the devil, and makes her a tool instead of a power. On this character, we must note Miss Birkhead again: "The figure of Matilda has more vitality, though Lewis changes his mind about her character during the course of the book, and fails to make her early history consistent with the ending of his story". (1) This may be further brought into relief: Matilda, as a human, is a great sinner and should lie in the way of retribution, but Matilda escapes the fate which overtakes Ambrosio, and the tragedy of Antonia; she does not die either, but simply withdraws with the devil. Antonia, as a character is nil; she is but the means of Ambrosio's crime, and through no fault of her own, her sufferings are manifold. Agnes, on the other hand, was a party of her own afflictions but she pulled through her punishment and 'lived happy ever after'. As with some of the authors who went before, Lewis shows some skill in handling lesser characters. He seems to feel that in such, he can let his youthful spirits have play, and he puts Louella, Antonia's aunt into a common comedy mask. Her chatter is a little sudden in such a melodramatic work, but she is also refreshing, and seems to give us the idea that we are watching a teasing youth caricaturing some old soul of meaner degree. Miss Birkhead thinks: "This and other puerile jests are more tolerable than Lewis's attempts to depict passion or describe character." (2)

(1) "The Tale of Terror" by Edith Birkhead ch. 4.

(2) Ibid.

But what was the effect of this unusual book on literature and on literary people? One of the most startling results was that in 1798 Sir Walter Scott was quite flattered to meet Lewis. The latter was preparing his 'Tales of Terror' and asked Scott's permission to print with them some of his ballads; Scott was only too willing and there sprung up quite a friendship. Lewis, odd as it seems now, undertook to correct some of Scott's poetry and to aid him with his versification. The man of the North says of Lewis: "He was a child and a spoiled child, but a child of high imagination; and so he wasted himself on ghost stories and German romances. He had the finest ear for rhythm I ever met with, finer than Byron's". (1) In 1816, Lewis visited Byron and Shelley in Switzerland and set the whole company to writing ghost stories, of which 'Frankenstein' by Mrs. Shelley was the only one which was completed.

In considering Lewis and his contribution to the novel, we can at least say, he brought a faint fore-shadowing of vital characters, introduced a plainness of speech, which in later novels came to be quite accepted. But, Lewis did not use his plain speech as a revolt against prudery, but rather as a shock element. Perhaps, the greatest of his achievements was that he held the backwash from carrying out the corpses of this romantic literature until Scott arrived to salvage the wreckage.

(1) "A History of English Romanticism in the 18th Cent."
by H. A. Beers ch. 11.

CHAPTER 3.

CHARLES ROBERT MATURIN & THE ROSCRUCIANS.

**Maturin,
Godwin,
Shelley.**

Chapter 8.

CHARLES ROBERT MATURIN AND THE ROSCRUICIAN.

We have now come upon a transition stage, in theory though not in date; the link between Lewis and Scott in the interesting figure of Charles Robert Maturin. So far, the chief exponents of this movement, have been Englishmen but now we find an Irishman grouped along with two Englishmen, Maturin with Godwin and Shelley. This grouping is chosen, for among the works of each the story of the Wandering Jew had a prominent place. In Maturin's work we find it in 'Melmoth the Wanderer'; in Godwin, as the chief character in 'St. Leon'; and Shelley attempted him in 'St. Irvyne' or 'The Roscrucian'. The two English books do not measure up to that of the Irishman, for neither of them seem to be able to put the conviction into the theme that Maturin does. That Maturin was really fantastic in his every day life, must have some bearing on his being able to carry his reader into the land of fancy so completely. He loved to write with a room full of people milling about him, and he was just as full of other whims. He became a curate, for it offered him a living, but his reception by Scott and Byron did more for him along that line, as well as on the road to fame.

Although 'Melmoth the Wanderer' is some thirteen hundred pages in length, it holds. One wanders on and on, just as the 'Wanderer' does, and one feels the thrall of the mysterious, even as those who came in contact with him did. But, with 'St. Leon' and 'St. Irvyne' one is apt to feel the fatigue of travel somewhat more. Shelley's work was indeed most immature, and in this, Miss Birkhead expresses herself in comparing him to Lewis and his immaturity: "It is much less youthful than Shelley's 'Zastrozzi' and 'St. Irvyne'." (1)

Maturin was started on the road to fame as a novelist, by a favorable review that Sir Walter Scott gave his first book, 'The Fatal Revenger' or 'The Family of Montorio'. (1807) When Scott attempted a review of this book he found the plot so intricate that he only attacked it in a very brief manner. Raleigh also comments on the intricacy of it: "The plot can barely be untangled." (2) But the avowed objective of Maturin explains why he paid so little attention to structure: "I have presumed to found the interest of a romance on the passion of supernatural fear, and on that alone." (4) It is thus seen that Maturin lost view of action in his ardour for 'stage effects'. 'The Family of Montorio' was selected from a great collection of novels of this school, by Scott, as one worthy of review. It

(1) "The Tale of Terror" by Edith Birkhead ch. 4.

(2) "The English Novel" by Sir Walter Raleigh. ch. 9.

contained many of the extravagances that Scott so strongly condemned in such writings, but the power of conviction and the analysis of human emotion drew forth Scott's favorable comment. "His insane extravagances have at least the virtue that they come flaming hot from an excited imagination. (1)

Of Maturin's works, perhaps the best is 'Melmoth the Wanderer', and Raleigh thinks that it is his masterpiece. "The favorite Roscrucian idea ... is here turned into the best imaginative use." (2) In 'The Family of Montorio', the author carefully explains away all the supernatural in quite a Radcliffian manner. In 'Melmoth' there is no such explanation, for the theme is that of the Wandering Jew, and no one has ever attempted to rationalize this story. This novel in spite of its great length was enthusiastically received. Miss Birkhead lists among its admirers Rossetti and Thackeray; and Balzac wrote a satirical sequel. (3) While Pierce considers that Maturin did not represent an eddy in the Romantic generation in England, (4) Miss Birkhead thinks that he was worth devoting thirteen pages to in her work "The Tale of Terror". She says: "With all his faults, Maturin was

- (1) Quoted in "The Tale of Terror" by Edith Birkhead
(2) "The English Novel" by Sir Walter Raleigh, Ch. 9.
(3) "The Tale of Terror" by Edith Birkhead, Ch. 4.
(4) "Currents and Eddies in the English Romantic Generation by F. E. Pierce, Ch. 11.

the greatest as well as the last of the Goths." (1) However, in discussing 'Melmoth the Wanderer', Pierce says that it was "at once one of the most worthless and most ingenious books." (2) This same commentator goes on to say that the plot is curiously involved, "story within story, a little like the bizarre plays of Tieck and Werner among the German "Romantiker". (3) But although Pierce has little use for Maturin in his work, in this comment we find something of value to us; here again, the pointing toward the German influence. But, Pierce further draws an analogy for us in the theme of the Inquisition: "Once more, as Radcliffe's 'Italian' and Lewis "Monk" , the reader treads the dungeons of the Inquisition, and hears the whistle through the ruined vaults." (4) Miss Birkhead credits Maturin with having embodied into his story of 'Melmoth the Wanderer' the Gothic elements of three of his predecessors: "This extraordinary romance, like 'Montorio', clearly owes much to the novels of Mrs. Radcliffe, and 'Monk' Lewis.... Ignales.... is but a glorified Emily ... The Monastic horrors are obviously a heritage from 'The Monk'. The Roserucian legend as handled in 'St. Leon', may have offered hints to Maturin, whose

(1) "The Tale of Terror" by Edith Birkhead, Ch. 4

(2) "Currents and Eddies in the English Romantic Generation," by F. E. Pierce, Ch. 11.

(3) Ibid

(4) Ibid

treatment is, however, far more imaginative and impressive than that of Godwin." (1) Thus, we see that Maturin was a great borrower, but, like Lewis, he borrowed, but, before he passed his borrowings on to his readers, he made them thoroughly his own, and treated them with a master hand. His vivid imagination could not read these previous novels without seeing the happenings of them so clearly in his mind's eye, that they would go out the same as they went in. "It is the outpouring of a morbid imagination that has long brooded on the fearful and the terrific." (2) But it is often the things that Maturin leaves unsaid that make the reader 'creep', more than the actual things he describes. He has a way of creating a suspense, there is a feeling that so much could happen. The evening that Helmoth made the promise to marry Isadore, and has promised to get her out of her parents' house by the same means that he enters there, he says to her " 'speak, shall I be here at this hour to-morrow night to conduct you to liberty and'-- Safety he would have added, but his voice faltered." Thus ends the third volume, with the promise of safety even choking the terrible Helmoth. Then after some forty pages in the fourth volume Maturin describes the departure for the wedding the next night. Isadore is led to a thicket in the woods, where there is a crumpled and ruined abbey.

(1) "The Tale of Terror" by Edith Birkhead, Ch. 4.

(2) Ibid.

and there she is left alone for a while, and waiting for Melmoth to return she sees the spirit of a servant pass a shattered window of the abbey, "He seemed to regard her with a look, first with a look of intent contemplation, -- then of compassion, -- the figure then passed from before the ruined window, and a faint and wailing cry rung in the ears of Isidore as it disappeared." And in this atmosphere, Melmoth returned, and she saw no one with him, but heard a faint rustling as someone approaching, but she saw nothing, the words of the ceremony she could not catch, but she felt that the hand that united them, and clasped their palms in his own, was as 'cold as that of death'. " (1) What a world of suggestion in this horrible marriage.

The Inquisition scene, though probably suggested by Lewis, reaches greater intensity in 'Melmoth the Wanderer' than it does in 'The Monk'. Moncada has been forced into a Monastery, and Maturin tells of all the fiendishness of a Spanish religious house, and takes Moncada on the way to escape through a subterraneous passage, guided by a parricide, and this horrible person regales Moncada with the story of two lovers who were imprisoned without food, until they started to eat each other. At the end of this

(1) "Melmoth the Wanderer" by C.R.Maturin, Vol. 4.

terrible existence, the prisoner finds that he has been betrayed, and that this escape was simply planned to give him hope only to be taken away again. Further horror!

Maturin came too late to have any effect on Scott, but he brought into the English Novel collection one of the best portrayals of The Wandering Jew story. He showed in the horrors he reveals in this book, the heights to which a flaming imagination can soar. He gave to this period one of the last of the real horror stories, and, perhaps, it is not too much to say, he did give the last 'good' horror story. Such red hot writings are scarcely to be found again until we cross the water to Poe, Hawthorne, and Charles Brockden Brown.

But Maturin had two English colleagues in the writing of the Rôserucian theme, and we must now glance at William Godwin.

William Godwin, like Browning, suffered much veering about in the matter of finding a belief that was acceptable to him. Unlike Browning, however, he did not find a mate to point to him a way, and to anchor him to it. Godwin was the son of a dissenting minister, growing up in "a hot-bed of piety". (1) His school years were influenced by

(1) "The French Revolution and the English Novel "
by Allene Gregory, Ch. 3.

one of his teachers, who was a follower of Sandeman, but later he became a friend of Joseph Fawcett; one of whose favorite topics was a declamation against domestic affections," (1) which influence becomes evident in one of his philosophical books. He went to London as a political writer, where in 1793 he published his "Political Justice". "In 1794, Godwin ever on the look out for quick money turned to novel writing, (2) Allene Gregory classes him as a philosophical novelist, but that is only half of it (3) Godwin was shrewd enough to see what the public wanted, and in 1794 published 'Caleb Williams' or 'Things as they Are', and in 1799, his Roscrucian novel 'St. Leon'. It is these works that bring him into the field of the Gothic Romance, although Miss Gregory's claim to him is also correct, for "as he was a political philosopher by nature, and a novelist only by profession, he artfully inveighed into his romances the theories he wished to promote." (4)

In considering his novel 'Caleb Williams' or 'Things as They Are', Miss Birkhead finds the second title significant. "Things As They Are" to Godwin's mind was synonymous with "things as they ought not to be". In a preface that was prepared for the first edition, but which had to be

- (1) "The French Revolution and the English Novel"
by Allene Gregory, Ch. 3
- (2) "The Tale of Terror" by Edith Birkhead, Ch. 6.
- (3) "The French Revolution and the English Novel"
by Allene Gregory, Ch. 3.
- (4) "The Tale of Terror" by Edith Birkhead, Ch. 6.

withdrawn because booksellers thought it would injure the sale of the book, Godwin says: "What is now presented to the public is no refined and abstract speculation; it is a study and delineation of things passing in the moral world." (1) It is easy to conceive, how such a statement in the preface of a work published when the public is rabid for romance, would startle booksellers. Although Godwin wrote this preface in order to show that his novel had a purpose, yet he was careful to introduce enough mystery into the work to make it acceptable for the fashion of the day, "and we read it, if we so desire, purely for the excitement of the plot, and quietly ignore the underlying theories." (2) Raleigh says of this dual novel, "of what use are talents and sentiments in the corrupt wilderness of human society." The tale is meant to enforce this reflection, but in point of fact it denies to the reader much opportunity for reflections of any kind, and keeps his sporting instincts excited by the pleasures and hazards of the chase. The professed moral is as irrelevant as a philosopher in a hunting field." (3) The true value of 'Caleb Williams' in the history of romance does not lie in how well Godwin brought his moral out, but on the fact that here was a book with another purpose besides that of being amusing to novel-readers.

(1) Preface to the First Edition of 'Caleb Williams'
by William Godwin. (1794)

(2) "The Tale of Terror" by Edith Birkhead, Ch. 6.

(3) "The English Novel" by Sir Walter Raleigh, Ch. 9.

Allene Gregory points out that the best part of the work is where the hero gets thrown in prison, and this gives Godwin a chance to rage against 'Things As They Are'. In this section "The philosopher and the novelist are forgotten for the time; the man Godwin writes simply and understandingly of the lives of men in prison." (1) The mystery in 'Caleb Williams', instead of partaking of the supernatural, is quite natural, and is a concealed crime on the part of an aristocrat, Faulkner, who is high in the esteem of his community. It is this form of mystery element, that furnishes Godwin with his material for his philosophical observations, and his review of the suppression of the weaker men by the influential. Thus in his choice of plot and matter, Godwin shows rather keen ability, that up to this stage of the growth of the novel in England, had not been attempted. That Godwin did not intend to solely amuse, we have his own words in the preface of November 1832: "I shall write a tale that shall constitute an epoch in the mind of the reader, that no one, after he has read it, shall ever be exactly the same man that he was before." (2)

In this novel, we see a greater attempt at

(1) "The French Revolution and the English Novel"
by Allene Gregory, Ch. 3.

(2) Preface to 'Caleb Williams' by Wm. Godwin (1832)

characterization than in the other Gothic romances up to this time. "Godwin's originality in his dissection of human motive has hardly yet been sufficiently emphasized, perhaps because he is so scrupulous in acknowledgement of literary debts."

(1) Godwin, from his philosophical turn of mind showed great interest in the reaction of one mind on another, and this is pointed out by Miss Birkhead: "he concentrates on the dramatic conflict between the murderer and the detective." (2) The characters are exaggerations, but, on the other hand, they have more springs for action within themselves than those of Mrs. Radcliffe, and the other writers of this period. Ernest A. Baker says of them: "They are lofty idealizations of certain virtues and powers of mind." (3) Even so, such characters go to show more vitality than do the sort that are imbued with an over amount of sentimentality.

Allene Gregory says that: "He searches laboriously for original plots," and this we must admit is a refreshing characteristic after the deluge of novels where the plot consisted of a couple of characters to whom could be affixed a number of hair raising incidents. Though a first flight into the field of

(1) "The Tale of Terror" by Edith Birkhead, Ch. 6.

(2) Ibid.

(3) Introduction to 'Caleb Williams' by Ernest A. Baker (1903)

romance, 'Caleb Williams' is the best of Godwin's novels, and this may be partly accounted for by the fact that Godwin took a theme where he was entirely at home: he sought to work into a popular story the tenets that he preached in his philosophy, and tried to show by story how sordid certain conditions were.

Turning to the Resurrection novel, 'St. Leon', there is little to recommend it, except that when Godwin wrote it, it was the first of its kind in England. Lewis's 'Monk' did not contain the Wandering Jew as the hero of the story; he was merely introduced in a digression, and for that reason did not make the impression on the reader that the later stories of like nature did. Allene Gregory gives Godwin credit of treating the subject with enough life to furnish material for Shelley's Resurrection novel, and for others who wrote in the same strain. (1) The calamities which overtake 'St. Leon' could all have been avoided by a truly strong man, and as we wade through the pages of his early manhood of dissipation, and his later life of disaster, we become bored, and feel that the novel could almost end at any time. In commenting on the ending of the book, Allene Gregory says "Here the book ends for no particular reason. But we are too much relieved to care for that." (2)

(1) "The French Revolution and the English Novel"
by Allene Gregory, Ch. 3.

(2) Ibid.

But even 'St. Leon', Godwin did not write without a purpose. He had in his "Political Justice" scored the idea of domestic affection, but after writing that book, he married, and far from scorning domestic affection, repeated the experience shortly after the death of his first wife. Godwin in his preface to 'St. Leon' adheres to his usual practice of putting his object before the readers, and does so in the following words: "Some readers of my graver productions will perhaps, in perusing these little volumes, accuse me of inconsistency; the affections and charities of private life being everywhere in this publication a topic of the warmest eulogium, while in the 'Inquiry concerning Political Justice' they seemed to be treated with no degree of indulgence and favour. In answer to this objection, all I think it necessary to say on the present occasion is, that, for more than four years, I have been anxious for opportunity and leisure to modify some of my earlier chapters of that work in conformity to the sentiments inculcated in this." (1)

The Inquisition scenes of St. Leon, meant to be horrible, lose much of their purpose in that, instead of subtle effects we are taken through them by long arguments between St. Leon and the Inquisitor. The transference of the gift-secret from the old man to St. Leon did not have mystery about it, nor was the

(1) Preface to 'St. Leon' by Wm. Godwin (1831) edition.

atmosphere of it in keeping with the theme. Godwin was unable to draw a thin veil over things, and so tantalize the readers with the half revealed. Everything that Godwin sought to work into his novels had to be in the full light, (1) and St. Leon with all his 'powers' is tossed about from calamity to calamity. But it is, with the last calamity, that we meet the strongest figure that Godwin created in this book. St Leon feels the need of a friend, and so chooses Bethlam Gabor, a monster who, like St. Leon, can call no man a friend. This is just another disaster, for Gabor imprisons St. Leon, and there follows some more of Godwin's 'sermonizing'. Miss Birkhead thinks that "Beside this personage the other characters pale into insignificance." (2) He is more like the monsters of 'The Monk' and 'The Italian', Ambrosio, and Schedoni than any other characters so far found in this period of writings. Miss Birkhead thinks that he is the only one of all Godwin's characters who would have felt at home in the writings of Mrs. Radcliffe and her followers. (3)

But withall, Godwin was not without his influence on the novel, and even as the supernatural left him "cold" (4) his direct imitator, the youthful Shelley, treated it with more zest, and by this put more

- (1) "The Tale of Terror" by Edith Birkhead, Ch. 6.
- (2) Ibid.
- (3) Ibid.
- (4) Ibid.

conviction into his work. To Shelley, " 'Fiend mongering was a thrilling diversion" (1) Shelley early became a correspondent of Godwin (1811) and later strengthened his tie with the family by marrying Mary Godwin. Miss Birkhead says: "The 'novel of terror' has found few more ardent admirers than the youthful Shelley, who saw in it a way of escape from the harsh realities and dull routine of ordinary existence." (2) In writing to Godwin, Shelley says, in speaking of his two novels, 'St. Irvyne' and 'Zastrozzi': "I was haunted with a passion for the wildest and most extravagant romances... From a reader, I became a writer of romances; before the age of seventeen, I had published two, 'St. Irvyne' and 'Zastrozzi', each of which, though quite uncharacteristic of me as I now am, yet serves to mark the state of my mind at the period of their composition." (3) Another letter of Shelley's to Godwin shows that he had no thought of theorizing in his novels, and had just written them in the spirit of romance as all the true devotees of this school before him had done. After Shelley had read 'Political Justice' by Godwin, he again wrote to him, and this letter also points out that it was romance and romance only that prompted Shelley's two

(1) "Tale of Terror" by Edith Birkhead, Ch. 6.

(2) Ibid.

(3) "The French Revolution and the English Novel"
By Allene Gregory, Ch. 5.

novels. "I was no longer a votary of romance; till then, I had existed in an ideal world, -- now, I feel that in this universe of ours was enough to excite the interest of the heart, enough to employ the discussion of reason... You will perceive that 'Zastrozzi' and 'St. Irvyne' were written prior to my acquaintance with your writings. I had indeed read 'St. Leon' before I wrote 'St. Irvyne', but the reasonings had then made little impression." (1) Allene Gregory says of the novels of Shelley: 'Zastrozzi' is the work of a precocious boy, disliking restraint, whose imagination has been captured by a certain type of titanism in the romantic literature of the time. With 'St. Irvyne' the influence of Godwin through 'St. Leon', if not through 'Political Justice', has begun." (2) Pierce also draws our attention to the early Gothic tendencies in Shelley; "His boyhood love in literature was for the novels of Ann Radcliffe or similar pabulum; and his practice work in both poetry and prose was at times an orgy of the crudest, most hair-raising Gothic romance." (3) In these two novels of Shelley, we find distinct traces of both Mrs. Radcliffe, and Godwin. "They are an outcome of a boyish ambition to practice the art of freezing the blood," (4) and what more was this than the same

(1) Quoted by Allene Gregory.

(2) "The French Revolution and the English Novel" by Allene Gregory, Ch. 3.

(3) "Currents and Eddies of the English Romantic Generation," By F. E. Pierce, Ch. 3.

(4) "The Tale of Terror" by Edith Birkhead, Ch. 6.

incentive that prompted the writers of this period, that we have considered so far. So far as Godwin influenced the later novel of Shelley, we can only see it in the hazy construction and the ever changing scene of action. The sermonizing and theorizing had not penetrated the enthusiastic romantic spirit of Shelley.

Although Maturin wrote several years after Godwin and Shelley, still he is worthy of the first consideration in this chapter, because he gave us a better and a greater work than his two predecessors in the Rosencranz novel. He had, as was pointed out, the honor of having Scott select one of his novels from a whole hamper of romance, as worthy of a review. He had also seized upon the terror idea for its own sake. Maturin was purely a terrorist; Godwin a moralist with a flavor of terror as an inducement to read; but Shelley wrote with youthful enthusiasm for the love of romance.

CHAPTER 2.

CONTEMPORARY CRITICAL WORKS.

Jane Austen.

Barrett.

Stages passed through and the fruits.

Chapter 9.

CONTEMPORARY CRITICAL WORKS.

There were a number of writers who sprang up to criticise the school of Gothic Romance in its extravagances. In 1897, Jane Austen finished 'Northanger Abbey'. This was supposed to be a ridicule of "the 'horrid' School of fiction". (1) For ten years this book lay in the publishers' desk, and the family of Miss Austen bought it back for the same sum as they had been given for it, £10. It was just three years before this, that Mrs. Radcliffe had received £500 for 'The Mysteries of Udolpho'. Miss Birkhead remarks "The publisher, ... probably realized that if the mock romance were successful, its tendency would be to endanger the popularity of the prevailing mode of fiction." (2) Miss Austen makes her young female characters ridiculous by detailing their ecstasies over 'The Mysteries of Udolpho', and a list of horrid stories which they were anxious to read. The heroine of 'Northanger Abbey' goes on a visit to a country house of this name, and on arriving there she expects to find all sorts of 'Gothic' properties about the place, and is constantly placing herself in awkward positions

(1) "The Tale of Terror" by Edith Birkhead, Ch. 7

(2) Ibid.

by trying to discover something akin to the tales of Mrs. Radcliffe. This satire was so gentle that it had little effect at the time. Miss Birchhead thinks that it took a much stronger criticism "and this was supplied by Eaton Stannard Barrett," who published 'The Heroine' in 1813. This book, though written after 'Northanger Abbey' was published five years before the gentler book. "Sometimes indeed his farce verges on brutality."

Although these novels have been highly amusing, it was not for them to have the honor of revigorating the romance. Miss Austen in her novels of manners did far more toward getting the novel to a sane basis, and coming along a little later the works of Scott formed a powerful ally to Miss Austen. Miss Austen and the Bronte sisters viewed the life they wrote about, from so different an angle than had been hitherto attempted, that although the years overlap, they belong to an entirely different school than the 'Gothic' writers. But in spite of these critical works and their accusations, great strides had been made during this period in the art of novel writing.

We have noticed that the Gothic movement in England did not hold the stage entirely, for there entered hand in hand with it, the fashion for the Oriental tale,

and it looked as though, judging from popularity, there was to be a struggle for the survival of the fittest. The Oriental Tale brought with it, stories of Magic and black art, the extravagances of the Orient, the fantastic imaginings of fairyland and the splendour of unlimited wealth, but it did not have the virility to compete with the movement that was afoot in native soil. Shortly after its advent it fell by the wayside, leaving only one collection of tales which have come down through the hundred and fifty years that separate that age of romanticism from this age of ours. 'The Arabian Nights' is still to be found on library shelves, but mostly in expurgated copies for the amusement of children.

That the Gothic movement survived its sister style may be accredited to the fact, that in spite of the exaggerations rampant in it, there was more of the kind of people English readers might be able to picture to themselves, than the odd characters from the East. To be sure, the characterization of these early romances was most weak, and the plot in many cases just accident, still there was not too much of the marvelous to rob the readers of interest, and it could be sustained by only a fair elasticity of imagination.

In 1763 there were two publications which hold a place in the movement; the hybrid 'Longsword, Earl of

Salisbury' by Thomas Leland, and which advertised itself as an historical romance but which fell short of its boast; the second was the plea for things Gothic, by Bishop Hurd in his 'Letters on Chivalry and Romance'. But the first true Gothic novel made its bow to the public in 'The Castle of Otranto' by Horace Walpole, and met with such an acclamation that it was quickly followed by others from other pens. Miss Reeve thinking to see where she could improve on the production of Walpole sought to give a romance in which the reader might accept with more dignity the wondrous element, and cut down the proportions of the supernatural to those of natural sized ghosts. Also she introduced a little more of the natural into her love theme. This novel lost one virtue of Walpole, for it tended towards the longer novels such as had been written by Fielding and Richardson. Of course we have no Gothic romance running through any eight volumes, but they did in time assume the gigantic proportions of four, as the supernatural element came to be handled with more dexterity. Mrs Radcliffe reached the number of three volumes and does not seem to have a qualm of conscience with regard to the endurance of the heroine through so many pages, nor yet for the reader. But with Mrs. Radcliffe we found a new feature

of much moment, that was the careful explaining away of all that seemed to be supernatural. By the time of the publication of the 'Italian' in 1796, the public were pretty well sated with her style of literature, and some think that 'The Italian' showed a distinct falling off of interest in this style of work. 'St. Leon', in 1799 introduced a new idea that for a while held the novel of the marvellous from dropping entirely out of favor, and in 1801 Lewis made his master stroke with 'The Monk' with the introduction of actual devils, and unveiled immorality. Thus, the novel climbed to fame from 1765 to 1796, and then from that date on was kept alive by the application of novel stimulants such as the Resurrection idea, and the immoral element, until the production of Waverley in 1814 by Sir Walter Scott.

The reading public had been exhausted by themes of horror, by machinations of evil, by obliging storms, warping ghosts, active devils and puppet characters. They had thrilled and thrilled until they could feel such excitement no longer, and it seemed that unless some new and stable element came into the novel, it was to fall into the limbo of forgotten things. This element came, as succour should in Gothic Romance, just in the nick of time. For this new element we must turn to the study of Sir Walter Scott.

CHAPTER 10.

SIR WALTER SCOTT.

Chapter 10

SIR WALTER SCOTT

Sir Walter Scott, the saviour of the romantic novel! Professor Beers says "Towards him all lines of the romantic revival converge".⁽¹⁾ Scott passed through all the stages of growth of the Gothic Romance and perhaps, because he was the first real scholar among these writers, may be attributed the reason that he was able to resuscitate the corpse. Scott was a true antiquarian, and had studied well before he wrote his novels. He did not experience the glamour of writing something of a moment's fame at twenty years of age, and then having it die out same to be mentioned in histories of romance. He wrote when he had matured somewhat, and his writing is alive after a hundred years.

Lockhart gives us an account of the ardour with which Scott pursued such studies;⁽²⁾ "From the first assumption of the gown, he had been accustomed to spend many of his hours in the low gloomy vaults under the Parliament House, which then, formed the only receptacle for their literary and antiquarian collections. This habit, it may be supposed, grew by what it was fed on. MSS can only be consulted within the library, and his highland and border raids were constantly suggesting

- (1) "A History of English Romanticism in the 19th Cent"
by H. A. Beers Chapter 1.
- (2) "The Life of Sir Walter Scott"
by J. G. Lockhart p.86.

inquiries as to ancient local history and legends, which could nowhere else have been pursued with equal advantage. He became an adept in deciphering old deeds; His reputation for such skill reached George Chalmers, the celebrated antiquary, then engaged in the preparation of his Caledonia.The border ballads, as they were gradually collected, and numberless quotations from MSS in illustration were eagerly placed at his disposal."

(1) It was in the summer of 1795, Scott heard, at Mrs. Barbauld's, the reading of Taylor's translation of Burger's 'Lenore' and became so enthusiastic over the theme that he immediately set about to get it in the German, and straightway translated it in verse. (2) Scott's interest in German romance continued and he pursued his translations for some time. It is notable that he admired Mrs. Radcliffe, Mrs. Smith, and really became most enthusiastic over 'Monk' Lewis. So much so in fact that he was delighted to contribute to the volume of 'Tales of Wonder' when Lewis asked him for a contribution. In 1801 he met Lewis, and Lockhart tells us that Scott said that "he had never felt such elation as when the "Monk" asked him to dine with him for the first time at his hotel." (3) Professor Beers finds it very amusing that Lewis should have been instructing Scott in versifying.(4)

(1) "The Life of Sir Walter Scott" by J. G. Lockhart, p. 36.

(2) See Lockhart's "Life of Sir Walter Scott" p. 36.

(3) Ibid. p. 106.

(4) "A History of English Romanticism in the 18th Cent".
by H. A. Beers Chapter II.

Scott went from translations to ballads, and "The step from ballad to ballad-epic is an easy one, and it was by a natural evolution that the one passed into the other in Scott's hands. "The literary form, under which Scott made the deepest impression upon the consciousness of his own generation and influenced most permanently the literature of Europe, was prose fiction." (1) For many years Scott feared prose romance, perhaps because he saw the decay into which the Gothic novels were falling, and especially he tried to veer away from antiquity. "The swarming crowd of his imitators had temporarily frightened him away from remote ages without destroying in him that love for an antique atmosphere, which was part of his being." (2) When in 1814 Scott published his first novel, 'Waverley' he declaimed in the preface the air of antiquity; "By fixing, then, the date of my story Sixty Years before the present 1st of November 1805, I would have my readers understand, that they will meet in the following pages neither a romance of chivalry, nor a tale of modern manners; that my hero will neither have iron on his shoulders, as of yore, nor on the heels of his boots, as is the present fashion of Bond Street; and that my damsels will neither be clothed 'in purple and pall' like the Lady Alice of an old ballad, nor reduced to modern

- (1) "A History of English Romanticism in the 19th Cent".
by H. A. Beers Chapter 1.
- (2) "Currents and Eddies in the English Romantic Generation" by F. E. Pierce Chapter 7.

nakedness of a modern fashionable rout." (1) But for a scholar like Scott, who had delved with some enthusiasm into the history of his country, as well as into the histories of other countries, the glamour of past times was not so easily laid aside and from the years 1814-1819 "come novels which are located in comparatively modern times, but over which the spirit of a remote past hangs often like a transforming maze". (2) Scott had, before he attempted a novel himself, reviewed many such works, and in his "Lives of the Novelists" we are able to see that he could take from each writer that which was best, and emphasize it. He gave credit wherever he could.

When then, Scott turned to novel writing, it is natural that we should look to him for something that should far outreach anything that had yet been done in this line. Gothicism tended towards medievalism, towards times of past history, but the writers up to the time of Scott seemed to have lost sight of 'fitness' and concentrated almost entirely on thrills, the froth of the novel. But Scott the true antiquarian came to his work with good tools, he had accurate knowledge of the past, good acquaintance with the novels that had been popular for he tells us himself: "In the mean while my acquaintance with English literature was gradually

(1) Introduction to "Waverley"
by Sir Walter Scott

(2) "Currents and Eddies in the English Romantic Generation" by F. E. Pierce Chapter 7.

extending itself. In the intervals of my school hours I had always perused with avidity such books of history, or poetry or voyages and travels as chance presented to me, not forgetting the usual, or rather ten times as usual, quantity of fairy tales, eastern stories, romances etc." (3)

Scott commenced his venture in novel writing, not bound fast to any one element. He constructed a plan of his own. Beers says: "Scott's formula for the construction of a historical romance was original with himself and it has been followed by all his successors. His story is fictitious, his hero imaginary. ...Shakespeare dramatized history; Scott romanticised it." (1) It is wonderful to consider that Scott should use his knowledge of history to give realistic background to fictitious characters, and not as was done in 'Longsword' to try and drag the historical characters into the first places. Pierce draws our attention to the fact that for historical background Scott did not confine himself to his own country. He wanders about Europe, " 'The Abbot' is in Scotland, 'The Betrothed' on the edge of Wales, 'Ivanhoe' in England, 'Quentin Durward' in France, 'Anne of Cierstein' leads into Switzerland, 'Count Robert' to Byzantium, and 'The Talisman' to Palestine." (2)

- (1) "A History of English Romanticism in the 19th Cent" by H. A. Beers Chapter 1.
- (2) "Currents and Eddies in the English Romantic Generation" by F. E. Pierce Chapter 7.
- (3) Autobiography included in Lockhart's 'Life of Sir Walter Scott'.

But Scott did not neglect the elements so truly Gothic, and of this so many commentators take cognizance. "In 'Waverly' there is Gothicism all the way from the Highlands to the prison in Carlisle." (1) But the Gothicism of Scott is of a moderate kind, in fact in his dealings with the supernatural Miss Birkhead says that he seems to have followed the rules he laid down in his 'Lives' on the parts dealing with Mrs. Radcliffe, Clara Reeve, and Maturin. "Ghosts should not appear too often or become too chatty. ...The chord which vibrates and sounds at a touch remains in silent tension under continued pressure". (2) The idea of banditti, which played so prominent a part in the novels of the Gothic revival, came into Scott's works, but with what a different effect may be gathered from Whiteford; "These actual, romantic banditti in realistic detail of dialogue and environment act far differently from those infesting the Appenines around Udolpho's turrets..... Scott makes us feel that the extraordinary, the Gothic, is true." (3)

The subtlety with which Scott uses the supernatural is evident in all of his works wherein it appears. "Scott's interest in popular superstitions was constant. As a young man--in his German ballad period--they affected his imagination with a 'pleasing horror'. But as he grew

- (1) "Motives in English Fiction"
by R. N. Whiteford. Chapter 9.
- (2) "Tale of Terror"
by Edith Birkhead Chapter 3.
- (3) "Motives in English Fiction"
by R. N. Whiteford Chapter 9.

older they engaged him less as a poet than as a student of 'Cultur Geschichte'. A wistful sense of the beauty of these old beliefs--a rational smile at their absurdity". (1) In 'Waverly' Bodach Glas, an apparition just stays on the stage long enough for us to be accustomed to him; Fergus in telling Waverly of the spectre says: "I felt an anxious throbbing at my heart; and to ascertain what I dreaded, I stood still and turned myself on the same spot successively to the four points of the compass--By Heaven, Edward, turn where I would, the figure was instantly before my eyes, at precisely the same distance. I was then convinced it was Bodach Glas. My hair bristled and my knees shook. I manned myself and decided to return to my quarters. My ghastly visitant glided before me, for I cannot say he walked, until he reached the foot bridge: there he stopped and turned full around. I must either wade the river or pass him as close as I am to you. A desperate courage, founded on the belief that my death was near, made me resolve to make my way in spite of him. I made the sign of the cross and uttered 'In the name of God Evil Spirit give place! 'Vich Ian Vohr', it said in a voice that made my blood curdle, beware of to-morrow! It seemed at that moment not half a yard from my sword's point; but the words were no sooner spoken than it was

(1) "A History of English Romanticism in the 19th Cent"
by H. A. Beers Chapter 1.

gone and nothing further appeared to obstruct my passage. (1) This spectre appeared only once more in the book and that was in the same quiet way in the prison the night before Fergus' execution.

In 'The Monastery', however we see more of the supernatural. The white Lady of Avenel appears much oftener, and here Scott seems to have forgotten that he thought that spectres should only appear once. Scott gives the 'raison d'etre' for her appearance and behaviour in the introduction to the book. He tells of families who seem to have some connection with spirits of the other world, who would warn them of approaching danger, and generally guide them. We find the White Lady of Avenel, not to confine herself to the family of Avenel, but takes her fun from tormenting others, as the Sacristan and the Border Robber. 'The White Lady', is scarcely supposed, however, to have possessed either the power or the inclination to do more than to inflict terror or create embarrassment, and is also subjected by those mortals, who, by virtuous resolution and mental energy, could assert superiority over her. "In the "Pirate" Scott gives us yet another figure, thought to have supernatural powers, by those about her, Norna. Norna, is a demented being, who tries to impress the simple folk about her with her supernatural powers, and succeeds

(1) "Waverly" by Sir Walter Scott Chapter 49

to some degree. They sin never to anger her, and it is nearing the close of the story that the reader learns her story. Scott says of her in the introduction: "nor can I yet think, that any person who will take the trouble to read 'The Pirate' with some attention, can fail to trace in Horno,—the victim of remorse and insanity, and the dupe of her own imposture, her mind, too, flooded with all the wild literature and extravagant superstitions of the North". (1)

Scott did not approve of explaining away the supernatural, and in the introduction to 'The Pirate' says: "Indeed, as I have often observed elsewhere, the professed explanation of a tale, where appearances or incidents of a supernatural character are explained on natural causes, has often, in the winding up of the story, a degree of improbability almost equal to an absolute goblin tale. Even the genius of Mrs. Radcliffe could not always surmount this difficulty". (2) But as is easily seen from the foregoing examples, when Scott did resort to use of supernatural or supposed supernatural, he did not confine himself to any one type of 'Bogle'. More often than the spirits really appearing there comes into the story the fears of the simple folk with regard to them, as in 'Rob Roy', the old gardiner reads a passage in a book of sermons and

- (1) Introduction to "The Pirate"
by Sir Walter Scott.
(2) Ibid.

remarks: "Always, I crave your pardon for keeping ye standing at the door, but having been mistrusted (gude preserve us!) wi' ae bogle the night already, I was dubious of opening the yett till I had gaen through the e'ening worship; and I had just finished the fifth chapter of Nehemiah,--if that winna gar them keep their distance, I wotna what will". (1)

Scott seemed rather to be inclined to introduce quaint figures for the effect of the terror element, as is seen in *Meg Merrilies*, *Norna*, and *Madge Wildfire*. In the introductions to the novels, Scott justifies these figures, and says that he has known of their originals through story and tale, and that as they were really a factor in the lives of the people at the time when they lived he thinks that they are representative. Whiteford says that '*Madge Wildfire*' is Scott's pathological masterpiece. (2)

Although we can see employed a certain amount of terror elements and varied them, yet Miss Birkhead thinks that only one of his novels can be truly called a terror novel. "In '*The Bride of Lammermoor*'--the only one of Scott's novels which might fitly be called a '*tale of terror*'--the atmosphere of horror and the sense of overhanging calamity effectually prepare our minds for the supernatural, and the wraith of old Alice

(1) "*Rob Roy*" by Sir Walter Scott Chapter 18.

(2) "*Motives in English Fiction*"
by R. N. Whiteford Chapter 9.

who appears to the master of Ravenswood is strangely solemn and impressive". (1)

It is this very spirit of moderation, coming after an age of extravagance, that helped to make the novels of Sir Walter Scott of such enduring quality. "He had an almost unmatched combination of common sense with poetic imagination, of knowledge of the world with knowledge of letters. ...Last of all he had seen what to avoid....in his reading of the failures of his predecessors and contemporaries." (2)

The spirit of chivalry, so yearningly reached after by the novelists of the later eighteenth century came into the grasp of Scott. Professor Beers says that "In 'The Talisman' he praised in terms only less eloquent than Burke's famous words, "that wild spirit of chivalry which, amid its most extravagant and fantastic flights, was still pure from all selfish alloy --generous, devoted, and perhaps only thus far censurable, that it proposed objects and courses of action inconsistent with the frailties and imperfections of men". (3) Whiteford says: " 'Waverley' at first glance seems to be a romance of chivalry inimical to a tale of manners, but this is not true. It is rather a clever blending of the two". (4)

- (1) "Tales of Terror" by Edith Birkhead Chap. 3.
- (2) "The English Novel" by Saintsbury Chap. 5.
- (3) "A History of English Romanticism in the 18th Cent" by H. A. Beers Chapter 1.
- (4) "Motives in English Fiction" by R. N. Whiteford Chapter 9.

Another powerful element of the Gothic romance that Scott uses with more skill than did his predecessors is that of scenery. But the scenery that enters into his works does not reach the degree of prominence that it becomes boring. It is just entered as a medium for the characters to hold them to a semblance of reality.

Long says of this characteristic: "Scott was the first novelist in any language to make the scene an essential element in the action. He knew Scotland and he loved it; and there is hardly an event in any of his Scottish novels in which we do not breathe the very atmosphere of the place, and feel the presence of its moors and its mountains. The place, moreover, is usually so well chosen and described that the action seems almost to be the result of natural environment"⁽¹⁾....In all his work, Scott tries to preserve perfect harmony between his scene and the action". Although Mrs. Radcliffe had attempted this, it has been shown in Chapter 6, how her scenes came to be scenes for pictorial sake and on that account rather too prolix.

But, along with the great achievement of recalling the past in colors that lived, came Scott's characterization. Here again he gained greatly on his predecessors. He knew the people of Scotland from the cottagers to the highest ranks. He knew them in legend, in

(1) "English Literature" by William J. Long Chapter 10.

history, and in real life. Much of Scott's childhood and youth were spent in the country, where he lived the country life. Perhaps, because Scott was such an unselfish and generous man, is one reason why he was able to see people as they were, and to observe human characteristics uncolored by prejudice. Scott shows that he could study human nature, by his defense of his use of the supernatural; he knew that human nature acts and reacts to stimuli as is shown in the following words of his own: "My object is not to excite fear of supernatural things in my reader, but to show the effect of such fear upon the agents of the story--one a man in sense and firmness, one a man unhinged by remorse, one a stupid, uninquiring clown, one a learned and worthy but superstitious divine". (1) Again, in his introductions to his novels, Scott helps us in this field. He does not hesitate to point out, where he found the prototypes for many of his characters, and sketches a bit of their history as a background. In "Gentleman's Magazine" of July 1840 there appeared suggestions for 'Guy Mannering', taking from the actual case and some of the real characters around which he wove the romance of Guy Mannering. This extract is to be found appended to the introduction of 'Guy Mannering', and goes far to show, just how adept Scott

(1) "Journal of Sir Walter Scott" February 23, 1826.

was, in creating his stories from reality.

In the different novels we find that the versatility of Scott was not confined to a variation of the supernatural, nor yet of place. Unlike Mrs. Radcliffe, he did not have a stock of puppets, which he dressed differently for each book. He took people, and from these he wrote his books. The women of Scott, are as varied as the screen of life. In 'Waverly' we have a blending of a bit of Radcliffianism and staunch Scotch fortitude in Flora Mac-Ivor. Whiteford draws our attention to the 'Emily' characteristic: "The Frenchified, Catholicized Flora Mac-Ivor bids us look at a waterfall to listen not only to its music but to that of her harp; and when sweeter music is heard it is that of her own tongue reciting Ariosto's page." (1) But the adherence to the cause of the Stuarts, which her brother has embraced, far removes Flora Mac-Ivor from the heroines of Mrs. Radcliffe. Another example of a striking female figure is that of Jeanie Deans, from 'The Heart of Midlothian', who is as far from the usual type of heroine of romance as one can imagine for that time and age. Of this girl, Miss Birkhead says: "Jeanie Deans, the most admirably and skilfully drawn of Scott's women, is a daring contrast to the traditional heroine of romance." (2) This character is a mixture of simplicity and stern justice, and in her we find a more powerful

(1) "Motives in English Fiction" by R. N. Whiteford, ch.9.
(2) "The Tale of Terror" by Edith Birkhead, ch. 8.

character than in any of the men even, in the novels which appeared before this time. The main female characters are never clinging vines, they are never known to faint at a crucial moment. "Indeed all of Scott's women, even the aged ones help the man they like ... Very few of Scott's women are not on the firing line when the situation is life or death for the man loved". (1) Neither do the women of Scott pine away for love; true Flora Mac-Ivor retired into a convent, but it was not for love of a man, but rather for loss of a cause, and her deeply rooted Catholicism. Whiteford says: "if they have cause for action against those who have abandoned them, they cling close and long to climb to vengeance." (2)

Just as Scott has a wealth of women in his novels, so also he shows a world of men. There are princes, lords, soldiers, gentlemen and simple folk. The crafty Rashleigh of 'Rob Roy', the Knight-like Ivanhoe, the warring Fergus Mac-Ivor, the dotting Baron of Bradwardine, and a host of others all came from the same pen. They are all the human passions analyzed. "An acute French critic, well acquainted with both literatures, once went so far as to say that there were a good many professed 'philosophical' novels which did not contain such keen psychology as Scott's:" (3)

- (1) "Motives in English Fiction" by R. N. Whiteford, ch9.
- (2) Ibid.
- (3) "The English Novel" by George Saintsbury, ch. 5.

David Deans, in 'The Heart of Midlothian', is certainly a type not found in the novels before Scott. But, there is yet another string to the bow of Scott's characters: we have the inimitable Andrew Fairservice and 'Old Mortality'. Simple men who speak in the dialect and give expression to the simple beliefs of the day.

Scott's novels are not without their clerics, and here, as everywhere else in these works we have variety. There are the scheming priests, such as Father Vaughn and Father Philip, and the worthy, but stuffy protestant divines in Rueben Butler and Dominic Sampson.

It is just Scott's intimate knowledge of history, literature and life that give to him such a wealth of material for his genius to make real for his readers. "The 'delicate distresses' of persecuted Emilies shrink into insignificance amid the tragedy and comedy of actual life portrayed in the 'Waverly Novels'. The tyrannical marquises, vindictive stepmothers, dark browed villains, scheming monks, chattering domestics and fierce banditti are thrust aside by a motely crowd of living beings -- soldiers, lawyers, smugglers, gypsies, shepherds, outlaws and beggars. The wax-work figures guaranteed to thrill with nervous suspense or overflow with sensibility at appropriate moments, are replaced by real folk like 'Old Mortality' Andrew Fairservice and Dugald Dalgetty, whose humour and pathos are those of our own world. ... The grave, artificial dialogue in which Mrs. Radcliffe's

"characters habitually discourse descends to some of Scott's personages, but it is often exchanged for the natural idiom of simple people. ... He creates romance out of the stuff of real life." (1)

As to the quantity of Scott's work affecting the quality, there has been much said, but for the most part such hostile criticisms are from pens which do not understand the woof and warp of these great novels. Scott was without a doubt the crowning triumph of both pure romance and historical romance. Professor Saintsbury gives us a delightful bit on this subject:

"Another of the common errors about Scott is to represent--perhaps really to regard him as a hit-or-miss and hand-to-mouth improvisatore, who bundled out his creations anyhow, and did not himself know how he created them. The fallacy is worse than a fallacy. It is down-right false witness". (2) Scott had profited by the very things, that had caused the novels which preceded his, to fall into disrepute, and had avoided them with consummate skill. To have done this, at least shows, that he did know what he was striving for. Heine strikes a true note in appraising the Scotch novels of Scott: "Their theme...is the mighty sorrow for the loss of national peculiarities swallowed up in the universality of the newer culture--a sorrow which is

(1) "The Tale of Terror" by Edith Birkhead Chapter 3.

(2) "The English Novel"
by George Saintsbury Chapter 2.

now throbbing in the hearts of all peoples. For national memories lie deeper in the human breast than is generally thought'. (1) This same writer goes on to further credit Scott with definite aim and attainment: "It is an error not to recognize Walter Scott as the founder of the so-called historical romance, and to endeavour to trace it to German imitation." (2) Beers in a previous chapter concerning the Gothic romance points out to us: "Walpole knew little about the middle ages and was not in touch with their spirit". (3) Thomas Leland advertised his novel as an historical romance, but "But no further advantage is taken of the historic background" (than the mention of the Baron's War in the reign of Henry III) "afforded by this civil conflict, nor is Simon de Montfort so much as named in the whole course of the book". (4) Clara Reeve described her novel as 'Gothic', "but in spite of its sub title, the fiction is much less 'Gothic' than its model ('Otranto'), and its modernness of sentiment and manners is hardly covered with the faintest wash of mediævalism". (5) Of Mrs. Radcliffe we find that she attempted to portray the mediæval, but she had not the knowledge to create the atmosphere. Of "The Castles of Athlin and Dunbayne", "The period of action is but

- (1) Quoted from "A History of English Romanticism in the 19th Cent." by H. A. Beers Chapter I.
- (2) Ibid.
- (3) "A History of English Romanticism in the 19th Cent." by H. A. Beers Chapter 7.
- (4) Ibid.
- (5) Ibid.

vaguely indicated; but as the weapons used in the attack on the castle are bows and arrows, we may regard the book as mediaeval in intention." Again: Mrs. Radcliffe's fictions are romantic, but not usually mediaeval in subject." (1) Thus, Scott seems to be the first of this school who attempted to bring into his novels things of the past, who had really a knowledge of what he was trying to work out. Of Scott, Pierce says: "But the 'air of antiquity' was precisely what Scott did not desire to give up;" ... "This atmosphere appears often in even the most realistic of Scott's early novels.

"(2) Had Scott accomplished no other advances in novel writing it would seem as though as an historical romancer his title can scarcely be disputed.

But we have seen that Scott did more than this. He humanized his characters, and gave them qualities that are recognizable in people of every day life, and with every day sentiments. That, he founded so many of his stories on fact, and the characters were taken from life, showed shrewdness that the other writers of this period did not seem to possess. There were never characters like the pawns of Mrs. Radcliffe, and this gives a life-like touch to the work that makes the reader feel of the same

- (1) "A History of English Romanticism in the 18th. Cent."
by H. A. Beers, Ch. 7.
(2) "Currents and Eddies in the English Romantic
Generation" by F. E. Pierce, Ch. 7.

species as the actors of the pages.

The fact that Scott's novels still live with all the freshness of youth is so well put forward by Saintsbury: "That he knew what he was doing, and what he had to do was thus certain; that he did it to an astounding extent is still more certain; "Professor Beers tells us: "Scott's preparation for the work which he had to do was more than adequate. His reading along certain lines was probably more extensive and minute than any man's of his generation." Scott's introductions to all of his novels are histories in themselves, and the tales contained in them might be well gathered together to form short story volume. To miss reading an introduction to Scott's novels, is to miss a word of interesting fact fable. Beers thinks "The introductions and notes to his poems and novels are even overburdened with learning." But, as has been pointed out many times, it was this very learning that gave Scott the means of resuscitating the prose romance so thoroughly and so enduringly.

Scott sloughed all the superfluous from the early Gothic attempts, and the Gothic Abbey, dropped down in an uncertain, haphazard fashion, in some foreign land, is deserted for huts, barns, inns, cottages, and castles,

solidly built on Scottish soil. We leave the mouldy air of the subterranean vault for the keen winds of the moorland. The terrors of the invisible world only fill the stray corners of his huge scene." (1)

Of the advance in characterization, Gifford, the editor of the Quarterly said: "The characters of Shakespeare are not more exclusively human, not more perfect men and women as they live and move, than are those of this mysterious author. ('Author of Waterley')

"The picture of the Middle ages which Scott painted was not complete. Still, it was more nearly complete than has been given by any other hand; and the artist remains, in Stevenson's phrase, "The King of the Romantics."

(1) "The Tale of Terror" by Edith Birkhead, Ch. 8.

Chapter 11.

FINALE.

From Horace Walpole to Sir Walter Scott is a far cry. Romance, as old as the race of man, has from time to time threatened to die out. Such is the effect of artificialities on the mind of the people. Too much conventionality threatens the creative powers of the mind, and it is through such channels that we get into what is commonly known as a 'rut' **CHAPTER 11.** is very bad, whether it be in thinking or **FINALE.** It leaves everything to habit, and habit makes for 'dead wood'. During the Neo-Classical Age, there was a tendency toward a fixity in the field of literature, and a complete shutting off of man's experimental genius. This habit had become so accepted, that it is no wonder, that Walpole felt as though he were skating on thin ice, when he attempted a re-creation of literary material and method. In Walpole's second preface to the Castle of Otranto, he explained that he did not want to claim the child of his logical ty and invention, for he did not know how such an innovation in the novel would meet the reading public. But, it is primarily to his curiosity to see that we see the revival of the romance. What Walpole did by example, Bishop Hurd had done by precept. Bishop Hurd advanced a new idea by his plea, that two very different things could

Chapter 11.

FINALE.

From Horace Walpole to Sir Walter Scott is a far cry. Romance, as old as the races of man, has from time to time threatened to die out. Such is the effect of artificialities on the mind of the people. Too much conventionality threatens the creative powers of the mind, and it is through such channels that we get into what is commonly known as a 'rut'. A 'rut' is very bad, whether it be in thinking or acting. It leaves everything to habit, and habit makes for 'dead wood'. During the Neo-Classic Age, there was a tendency toward a fixity in the field of literature, and a complete shutting off of man's experimental genius. This habit had become so accepted, that it is no wonder, that Walpole felt as though he were skating on thin ice, when he attempted a renovation of literary material and method. In Walpole's second preface to the Castle of Otranto, he explained that he did not want to claim the child of his ingenuity and invention, for he did not know how such an innovation in the novel would meet the reading public. But, it is primarily to his curiosity to see that we owe the revival of the romance. What Walpole did by example, Bishop Hurd had done by precept. Bishop Hurd awakened a new idea by his plea, that two very different things could

not be measured by the same measure, and that for each substance there must be a measure in accordance with the substance. So with Bishop Hurd setting forth new standards, whereby literary merit was to be judged, and Walpole placing material for judgment, there sprang up a movement which can scarcely now be measured. The influence from these early experiments is so far reaching, that it is difficult to think and guess just how far it has reached, and will reach.

Walpole in 1765 showed a glimmering of possible material, it was merely the raw material, but it did not take long for refiners to come along, see the possibility in such stuff, and experiment with its manufacture. Clara Reeve deliberately set about to improve Walpole's material by means of a new method. Whiteford gives her the credit of taking a very important step. "Clara Reeve did away with Walpole's shivers and moulded into shape an orderly plot." (1)

Even as Walpole was a stepping stone for Miss Reeve, so she was in turn a stepping stone for those to follow. Miss Reeve reduced the supernatural to dimensions that fitted human understanding more nearly, she oiled the Gothic properties, and thenceforth they ran with greater acceleration. "Clara Reeve made it possible for Mrs. Radcliffe to create on the borderland of the supernatural the many groans that make the reader stand by in expectancy

(1) "Notions in English Fiction" by R. G. Whiteford

(2) "Lives of the Novelists" by Sir Walter Scott
(Mrs. Radcliffe)

(3) "The Tale of Terror" by Edith Sitwell

of apparitions destined never to disturb the stage of action". (1)

"Mrs. Radcliffe, as an author, has the most decided claim to take her place among the favored few, who have been distinguished as the founders of a class or school. She led the way in a peculiar style of composition, affecting powerfully the mind of the reader, which has since been attempted by many, but in no one has attained or approached the excellencies of the original inventor, unless perhaps the author of "The Family of Montorio". (2) But even though Scott praises Mrs. Radcliffe so strongly, there is yet another phase of the question. 'Enough is as good as a feast' is a fine old saying, and in the style of Mrs. Radcliffe, the reading soon had more than enough, the taste became jaded. Miss Birkhead quotes Sir Walter Scott as saying, and very aptly, "The chord which vibrates and sounds at a touch remains in silent tension under continued pressure". (3) But even though perhaps Mrs. Radcliffe overdid her peculiar style, she did not pass on without leaving a very marked influence on those who were to follow. Whiteford thinks that perhaps the characterization of La Motte, in 'The Romance of the Forest' was not without its influence on the character of St. Leon in Williams' novel of that name.

(1) "Motives in English Fiction" by R. N. Whiteford
Chapter 5.

(2) "Lives of the Novelists" by Sir Walter Scott
("Mrs. Radcliffe")

(3) "The Tale of Terror" by Edith Birkhead Ch. 8.

Miss McIntyre remarks on the dearth of human companionship in the life of Mrs. Radcliffe. She seems to have had no strong personal friendships, but she had great gifts nevertheless. "They made it possible for her to influence men and women who possessed the one precious gift which she lacked, and, by her influence upon them, to affect the whole development of the novel." (1)

Lewis caught the dying ember, fanned it, and it burst into a lurid light. Where Mrs. Radcliffe had kept everything that savored of the supernatural discreetly screened, and had tired her readers by explaining everything, Lewis brought his monstrosities into full light. Miss Birkhead says that the skeletons of Lewis 'stalk abroad in shameless publicity'. (2) But Lewis was not of the school of suspense, he was of a more violent one, that of horror. The reading public had become wearied of being held in suspense through page, after page, and chapter after chapter, and even sometimes through the greater part of two or three volumes, only to find that they had been fooled out of their ghost, and so it was with joy that they received a book wherein the supernatural left nothing to be desired.

And then, came more terror novels, the Roscrucians, with the horror of seeing men who could sell their souls for gold, remarking what veritable devils they became. Maturin was probably the supreme artist of

- (1) "Ann Radcliffe in Relation to her Time"
by C. P. McIntyre Chapter 3.
(2) "The Tale of Terror"
by Edith Birkhead Chapter 4.

this element, and Whiteford thinks that 'The Monk' of Lewis was not without its influence on him. "If it had not been for 'The Monk', Maturin in all probability would never have written 'Melmoth', in which was converted Lewis' idea that in extremity every mortal would sell his soul to the devil". (1)

But with Scott came the great ⁱⁿnovation of the novel. Scott knew men and life as none of his predecessors did. He had looked on his fellow creatures with a more discerning perception, he saw each in his own environment, and the reaction to that environment. Where the others had turned to the unreal and the supernatural for the material for romance, Scott created "romance out of the stuff of real life". (2) He had read for purposes of both criticism and amusement the novels of the day, and perhaps, it was his critical reading along with his intimate knowledge of the human passions, that made him avoid the pitfalls of those who went before him. Whiteford sums up the movement: "Scott took Clara Reeve's cold body, and breathed the breath of life into it; and lo! it leaped up to fold its moonlight wings crosswise on its breast to do obeisance before the "Wizard of the North" as a full grown, genuine Gothic historical romance." (3)

- (1) "Motives in English Fiction" by R. N. Whiteford, C. 7.
(2) "The Tale of Terror" by Edith Birkhead Chapter 3.
(3) "Motives in English Fiction" by R. N. Whiteford Chapter 5.

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