

THE NOVEL IN THE NETHERLANDS :

A COMPARATIVE STUDY

By

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"It is, indeed, in relation to national character that the study of foreign literatures is most illuminating."

-Salvador de Madariaga.

"There is no impression of life, no manner of seeing it and feeling it, to which the plan of the novelist may not offer a place."

-Henry James.

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## PREFACE

Strictly speaking, the term "Netherlands" has application now only to Holland. But the official title of that country, "Nederland", has little currency elsewhere; one does not seem free to speak of a single Pays Bas, but only of Les Pays Bas; and even this conjoint term has no standing outside of history, geography and geology text-books; a man from London or Edinburgh who makes a tour of the treasure-houses of Holland and Belgium no longer goes to "The Netherlands", as his countrymen Goldsmith, Fielding and Southey did. In this study, however, I wish to make use of the title in the historic concept of both Low Countries, and for such usage many sanctions can still be found. Since the sixteenth century their respective histories have been widely divergent, from a religious and economic as well as from a political point of view, but between the countries there are ethnographical, linguistic and cultural affinities that no legislation, no creed, can dissolve. Far too much are these indubitable affinities overlooked; we "look at what divides," says Professor Geyl, "not at what unites the North and South."

On the surface, literature in Holland and Belgium seems far from making common cause, since there is apparently no mutual or interchangeable linguistic medium; the visitor may well be pardoned for imagining that Antwerp speaks a vastly different language from Rotterdam. But he does not need even to make the short journey between the countries to note dissimilarities in the speech of the people of the Netherlands; so subtly divided are all local dialects that there are words which a man of Bruges will use to a man of Poperinghe and not be understood, and most natives of Amsterdam pronounce the very name of their city differently from Hague folk. Nevertheless, there is literary homogeneity between Flemish and Dutch, the twin half-sisters of our own English tongue. If it were possible to overrule local requirements, the same newspapers could be circulated in Utrecht and in Ghent, for the literary historians, who have not the journalist's obsession, are quite unable to arrange a national apportionment of the written proceeds of "de Nederlandsche taal" (the Netherlands' language).

So much for the Dutch-Flemish language. A more striking anomaly arises from the presence in Belgium, not of many dialects, but of two main languages; the opposition to Flemish is not Dutch after all, but French,

and though speech-demarcations are generally capricious, the linguistic boundary between Flemish and French is still very exactly defined. Flemish, though it can boast no great numerical advantage, would seem to have more obvious rights to speak for the people of Belgium; indeed, an old saying has it that "wat walsch is, valsch is" (what is foreign, i.e. French, is false). It is part of my purpose to show that French cannot be ousted from its claim for an egalitarian national status in Belgium, that it deserves in this respect a place alongside Flemish, with which, officially, it shares the responsibility, as street and place names, public notices and a hundred other signs inform (often by confusing) the visitor.

Until we reach "Belgium-a Nation", however, it is right that French should rank as a foreign importation, for that old and peculiar Belgian sub-division of French, Walloon, cannot be regarded as a qualification; as Professor Saintsbury says; "Walloon is hardly as literary even as Romansch." Only when Belgians began to write French with a national bias did their writings cease to belong to France. The French justly claim Froissart for their own, although he was an inhabitant, a native, of an erstwhile part of the province of Hainault; we cannot believe that a change from Paris to Valenciennes

created the same sensation in him that it did in Verhaeren when he left the capital for his "happy valley" in the Hainault of to-day. Otherwise, "Belgium-a Nation" is a misused, if not meaningless, formula. On the other hand, it surely assumes a double signification when it is possible to convey what is basically Belgian-dare I say Netherlandish?- in French as adequately as in Flemish.

It is, at any rate, on the view that the literature that will have substance and savour must have its roots in a vigorous native soil that I seek here to coalesce the workings throughout the "United" Netherlands of one literary form, the novel. By licence of the deliberately-chosen "in" (instead of "of") in the title I also try to indicate how this literature draws breath and sustenance from a Pan-European culture, for even in Dutch there exists no co-ordinated study or a comparative evaluation of the Novel in the Netherlands.

The material used can claim to have been derived at first-hand. During lengthy visits to Holland and Belgium in 1925 and in 1927 (January to June), I enjoyed the facilities of the Koninklijke Bibliotheek at The Hague, the Bibliothèque Royale at Brussels and the University Library at Amsterdam, and was also privileged to make the acquaintance of many prominent writers, in-



cluding Mr. Willem Kloos, Dr. Frederik van Eeden, Mr. Herman Robbers. Part of the work contained here has appeared in "De Nieuwe Gids" review, and the editors have accepted the entire thesis for publication.

The method I have followed out calls perhaps for an explanation. It is based on that of M. Brunetière in his famous "Manual of the History of French Literature". I have made slight modifications, but these are conditioned by the nature of the subject, and are far from being an attempt at improving on his admirably-conceived arrangement. With M. Brunetière the continuous Notes are designed as outlines for making complete studies of individual authors; here they are to be regarded as "notes" in the more usual sense of the term. They are still continuous, but since it was not to be expected that a work on such a little-known literature as Dutch-and a work on a single form in that literature- could compete with a complete manual of French literature, I have blended with the Discourse general criticisms of the writers included in the Notes. In view of the lesser celebrity of the people dealt with, I have tried to meet this displacement by including in the Notes short biographical sketches of each novelist, instead of merely citing the sources for such information, which is all that is necessary where Balzacs and Hugos are concerned.

## CHAPTER 1

### THE FOUNDATION IN ROMANCE

Professor Phelps tends somewhat to exaggerate in saying, "The men of Queen Anne brought prose fiction from heaven or hell to earth, and gave us the novel." ["The Advance of the English Novel", p. 27] Although the novel proper was necessarily a late development in the literary history of Western Europe, its origin was both more remote and less miraculous than this. As far as mundane courses can conduct us to it, we must allow ourselves to be taken, until, knowing something of the shaded by-paths, we can at last join the broad and smooth high-way of the eighteenth century novel-writers. To find the first original prose novel written in Europe, not in "Pamela" or in "Robinson Crusoe," but in "Jack Wilton" or "Euphues", or outside the range of M. Jus-

### THE AUTHORS AND THEIR WORKS

#### 1. JOHAN van HEEMSKERK (1597-1656)

A. The Sources.-W. Jonckbloet, "Nederlandsche Letterkunde in de Zeventiende Eeuw," Vol. 2, Groningen, 1890; -J. ten Brink, "Geschiedenis der Nederlandsche Letterkunde," Amsterdam, 1897; -G. Kalff, "Geschiedenis der

serand altogether ["The English Novel in the Time of Shakespeare"] in the rediscovered works of Thomas Deloney [A. Chevalley, "Thomas Deloney; le roman des métiers au temps de Shakespeare"] is, of course, to overlook the insistence inherent in the modern conception of the novel-the interpretation, by means of fictitious narrative, of episodes or aspects of real life- and to get back to something that is not yet the novel. But the process involved is less fantastic than it seems on the surface; it is, as Dr. E. A. Baker well says, "what we would expect in a study of the antecedents of any form of art." ["A History of the English Novel," p. 12]

Professor Saintsbury has attacked successfully the position that Romance and the novel proper are widely separated in essence from each other, and that the historian of the novel is really straying out of his ground if he meddles with Romance ["The English Novel", p. 7] It was assuredly in Romance-the story of inci-

Nederlandsche Letterkunde", Vol. 5, Groningen, 1910; -J. te Winkel, "De Ontwikkelingsgang der Nederlandsche Letterkunde", Vol. 2, Haarlem, 1920; -J. Vlies, "Le roman picaresque hollandais des 17e. et 18e. siècles et ses modèles espagnols et français", Den Haag, 1926.

B. The Novelist.-Van Heemskerk born at Amsterdam in 1597-Educated first at Bayonne, France-In 1617 entered Leyden as a student of law-In 1621 went abroad on the grand tour-Remained absent from Holland for four years-

dent, that the novel, the story of character and motive, took its beginnings. Romance there was in plenty, both in prose and verse, long even before the advent of the Elizabethans; every country had writers helping its advance, writers who took from the raw material of Romance and manufactured tales to the requirements of the genre; never were the poets of Europe so dependent upon a single source of supply, and never did they produce to such strict pattern; "Nothing," says M. Brunetière, "is so similar to a Chanson de geste as another Chanson de geste." ["Manual of the History of French Literature", p. 2] So inter-related, indeed, were the mediaeval romance-writers-so similar was their style, so uniform their subject-matter, so denationalised their application of it- that in Romance lies the history of the novel for every country of West Europe. This may account for the fact that, in the eighteenth century, when the novel -taking it in its exclusive definition-

In 1623 was made master of arts at the University of Bourges-Had published his first volume of poems, "Minnekunst" the previous year-Visited Hugo de Groot in Paris in 1624-Sustained thesis of doctor at Bourges in 1625-On return published "Minnepligt", further Ovidian love-songs-Began to practise as an advocate in The Hague-In 1628 sent to England in legal capacity by Dutch East India Company to settle dispute regarding Amboyna-In same year published "Minnekunde"-In 1640 married Alida, sister of Van Beuningen the statesman-

could no longer be retarded, its appearance in the literature of Europe, through the impressive weight of that common heritage, concurred. Yet, though the superb development of many of these early novels shows how ripe Europe was to admit the genre, especial credit must be given the accepted claimants for priority, whether of France or England, for, despite the rapidity with which the novel was everywhere taken over, other countries but followed these; and if to France and England, we add the classical countries, we can say that these were likewise the pioneers in the forming of a romantic tradition for the whole of Europe; for we must regard the Carolingian cycle of France, the Arthuriad of Britain, and the cycles of Troy, of Alexander, and of all antiquity as the most important portions of the common stock of Romance, while not neglecting the subsidiary Teutonic tradition. Of these great divisions of Romance, with their immense fringes of miscellaneous epopées, it is hardly possible to say which gave most

Published his most famous work, "De Batavische Arcadia", in 1647, though it was written ten years earlier-For the last twelve years of his life, he sat in the Upper Chamber of the States-General-Died at Amsterdam in 1656.

C. The Works.-"De Batavische Arcadia", 1647.

"De Batavische Arcadia" relates how a company of romantic youths and maidens journey from The Hague to Katwijk-aan-Zee. Posing as shepherds and shepherdesses, they wander by the shore, and, after the manner of

to the making of the novel; and only where outstanding personalities like Chrestien de Troyes or Sir Thomas Malory attest, for a time, to national superiority is it possible to trace anything like a direct line in the development of fiction in a particular literature.

The Netherlands, though they shared to the full in the diffusion of Romance, and returned proportionate contributions, must be included among those countries that were carried along in the general stream of Romance without distinctively colouring that stream. Literature there was the creation of the first national movement in Flanders, Brabant, Holland and Zeeland at the end of the twelfth century, and almost entirely it was a literature of translation from and imitation of the French (for Willems' claims for an original Flemish version of "Reinaert de Vos" were not substantiated).

It would be idle to try to mark out points of contact

the time, indulge in polite discourse and pastoral song.

## 2. NICOLAAS HEINSIUS (1656- ? )

A. The Sources.-J. van Vloten, "Bloemlezing uit de Nederlandsche Prozaschrijver der 17e. Eeuw", Arnhem, 1870;-J. te Winkel, "De Invloed der Spaansche Letterkunde op de Nederlandsche in de Zeventiende Eeuw" in "Tijdschrift voor Nederlandsche Taal en Letterkunde",

between the second-hand romances of adventure and the dull hagiology of the time and the modern novel, as it is possible to do -on still slender deduction, admittedly- with the great stories of Arthurian romance and "Troilus and Cressida" as premises. No more can be said for Hendrik van Veldeke, the founder of the court-epic "in tiutescher zungen" (in the Dutch, or Deutsch, tongue) and Jacob van Maerlant (1235-1300), the best-known of these early adapters, than that, thus early, they were faithful to the Northern spirit in their didactic deepening of the character-study of the mediaeval chivalric tales: the introduction of this serious and sombre tone has held to Holland more than to neighbouring countries, as if impressed by her unexciting yet precarious configuration

Until the fourteenth century the writers of the Netherlands stood also in the direct line of descent from the French contributors to the Bestiary of Reynard,<sup>1</sup> and

Vol. 1, Leiden, 1881;-J. ten Brink, "Dr. Nicolaas Heinsius Junior: eene Studie over den Hollandschen Schelmenroman der Zeventiende Eeuw", Rotterdam, 1885;-W. Jonckbloet, "Nederlandsche Letterkunde in de Zeventiende Eeuw", Vol. 2, Groningen, 1890;-J. ten Brink, "Geschiedenis der Nederlandsche Letterkunde", Amsterdam, 1897;-G. Kalff, "Geschiedenis der Nederlandsche Letterkunde", Groningen, 1910;-J. te Winkel, "De Ontwikkelingsgang der Nederlandsche Letterkunde", Haarlem, 1920;-J. Vlies, "Le roman picaresque hollandais des 17e. et 18e. si-

<sup>1</sup> See W. Jonckbloet, "Etude sur le Roman de Renaut", Groningen, 1863.

characteristics more national and democratic are displayed here in the style of the translators; but the side of the Netherlander's nature that was turned forth most noticeably by them is that quality of "slimness" (to give it its Dutch name) which was to strike de Coster in the Fleming, and of which the Boers gave remarkable evidence in the South African War; it imparted a realistic touch to the fabulous matter that makes one link with the novel discernible. <sup>1</sup> It was not much, but the Rederijkers, the nuclei of literature in the two succeeding centuries did not even maintain the infinitesimal gain; their poetry is formal and unoriginal, and of prose they were yet guiltless. Yet, this was the inaugural period for the age of Vondel, Hooft, Huygens, Cats, the golden age of Dutch literature, despite the fact that Spinoza, Grotius and Daniel Heinsius, like

*écles et ses modèles espagnols et français*", Den Haag, 1926.

B. The Novelist.-Heinsius was born at The Hague in 1656, "the vagabond descendant of a line of scholars"-was a natural son of Nicolaas Heinsius, the Dutch humanist.-His life was almost as eventful as that of his own Mirador.-Early years were spent at The Hague.-Later he was

<sup>1</sup> It is interesting to note that folk-lore still flourishes more in Flanders than elsewhere. But though a Fleming so modern as Stijn Streuvels has re-written Reynard the Fox and kept the old shape, modern thought is too direct to be placed in the mouths of animals, and other modern Belgian writers interpret the legend as a satire against religious hypocrisy.



Erasmus before them, made their contributions to the belles-lettres of humanism.

It was an age of poetry, in England the age of Shakespeare and Milton. But Elizabethan England inherited also much that was best in mediaeval fiction, including the Italian novella, and with feverish energy now welcomed a fresh, creative impetus from Southern Europe, particularly from Spain, the result being a group of prose-romances of chivalry standing in immediate relationship to that great efflorescence of romances which found its norm in the "Amadis de Gaula". But the spread of romancing and story-telling still left Holland untouched, just as they departed from English literature when, in the next century, England in turn became involved in a struggle for political freedom. Even had there been a demand in Holland for fiction, there would have been no Lyly, no Sidney, no Nashe, to supply it. The nearer influence of the long line of

taken to Sweden by his mother, the daughter of a Lutheran preacher of Stockholm-Proceeded afterwards to Germany, where he studied medicine-Returned to Holland with the degree of Doctor Medicinae et Philosophiae-In 1677 he was obliged to flee the country for committing a murder in the streets of The Hague-Sentence of death was passed upon him in his absence-Settled in Sweden, becoming doctor-in-ordinary to Queen Christine-After residing for a time at Cleves, returned to Sweden-Established himself at the Free City of Kuilenburg-Here in 1695 he

French romances that passed down the seventeenth century and the "Argenis" of the Franco-Scot, John Barclay, even translated into Dutch, seemed also about to sweep over the Netherlands, but in 1647 Holland was at last stirred into activity and interest by the appearance of Johan's van Heemskerck's "Batavische Arcadia", which can claim to be the first original Dutch prose romance. This fugitive work marks the commencement of prose fiction in the Netherlands, and it had to do for them what the work of Lyly, Sidney and Nashe had done for England. But though most allied to Sidney's "Arcadia", its inspiration did not arise from Zutphen field, but from Honoré d' Urfé's heroic-pastoral romance, "Astrée". The book ranks Van Heemskerck among the Euphuists, but though language is first and matter secondary, it satisfies one or two of the usual terms in the modern definition of the novel, in being at least of reasonable length and in possessing a structure of a kind. Its

wrote "Mirandor" and in 1697 his adaptation of Dr. Verlier's "Chevalier Hypochondriaque" with the title of "Don Clarazel de Coutarnos"-Both works were published under the initials "N. H."-In 1704 Heinsius sought, unsuccessfully, to have his sentence raised-Thereafter nothing of him is known-He is thought to have died in Vienna, but the matter is buried in obscurity.

C. The Works.-"Den Vermakelijken Avonturier, ofte de Wispelturige, en niet min Wonderlijke Levensloop van Mirandor", 1695.

vogue was extensive, naturally, and though the subsequent "Arcadians" of Saanland, Dordrecht, Rotterdam, failed to impart to their work the brightness and the variety of Van Heemskerck's, it was important that a start had been made with the writing of prose romances, the pastoral form, indeed, continuing right to the opening of the nineteenth century.

In direct antithesis to her Arcadias, Elizabethan England made hasty studies of robbers and highwaymen. This was another form of fiction taken over from Spain, and from the translation in 1586 of "Lazarillo de Tormes" - "the Pickwick of the sixteenth century" - it was turned to excellent account, notably, of course, in "Jack Wilton". But though Gerbrand Bredero took the plot of his "Spaansche Brabander" largely from the first Spanish picaresque novel, it was not until 1695 that the Netherlands saw fit to acquire a schelmenroman for themselves. It appeared under the unwieldy title of "Den

"Mirandor" relates in entertaining fashion the adventures from birth to marriage of a Dutch picaroon. Young Mirandor, after a youth <sup>that was</sup> ~~that~~ the abrogation of all that it should have been, takes service with a nobleman's family, and goes to attend his son Belindor during his studenthood at Louvain, where, by their excesses of gallantry, they create for themselves a notorious reputation in the university town. But like "Gil Blas", "Mirandor" is decidedly episodic, and for a long spell Mirandor's companion-rogue, his brother

Vermakelijken Avonturier, ofte de Wispelturige, en niet min Wonderlijke Levensloop van Mirandor" (The Sporting Adventurer, or the Surprising and not less Wonderful Life of Mirandor), and was the work of Nicolaas Heinsius. <sup>1</sup> Like "De Batavische Arcadia", "Mirandor" arrived in fugitive fashion; there was and is nothing in Dutch literature to put alongside it (for de Coster's masterpiece is more than a picaresque novel). In the first place, it marks the first departure from the purely romantic tradition, for Van Heemskerk would have been the last to pretend that his herders could be taken seriously; by drawing characters from the bourgeoisie, it took an appreciable step for the first time towards the portrayal of actual life.

For the class of story to which "Mirandor" belongs, it is perhaps a defect that the central rogue is much less of an anti-hero than usual; or it may be that

Florimind -the Pantagruel of the book- monopolises the interest, though it concludes with the marriage of Mirandor to Clarice. This in itself may be said to

<sup>1</sup> F. W. Chandler writes in "Romances of Roguery" Part 1, p. 1 : "But after a career of vagabondage at home, the Spanish rogue who took his birth in the bed of the river Tormes was naturalized abroad, in France, in Germany, in Holland, and in England," and *ibid.*, p. 2 : "The Dutch, on French example and through political contact, brought forth a Nicolaas Heinsius, Junior".

for the best results in this literary vagabondage, the southern sun and the easy southern temperament were required. With Heinsius, however, the novel can be said to be in sight in the Netherlands, because his work is a reflection of at least a section of ordinary society; it was not yet transferred into a distinct species; it hovered still on the borderland of reality and romance, for the farcical situation, the licence of speech, the low humour and the cynicism of this picaresque literature must first be deposed, to make way for a much closer observation of that famous "law of probability", which, according to Brunetière, governs the novel.

mark a degree of definiteness in construction that the Spanish novels were very slow to secure. In the main its subject-matter is both less preposterous and less gross, though it is far from being "Gil Blas with a touch of Bunyan".

## CHAPTER 11

### RICHARDSONISM IN HOLLAND

In the growth of the novel, as has been already shown, one form springs from another. By the end of the seventeenth century the pseudo-pastoral and pseudo-chivalric romances of La Calprenède, Mlle. de Scudéry, and Mme. de la Fayette had had their day. At its lowest stage this heroic novel but clipped slightly the wings of Romance; only at its completest evolution did it approach the definite aim of making itself a reflection of real life. Periodicals like "The Tatler" and "The Spectator", partly designed to take the place of this novel with a steadily-increasing reading public, began in this respect where it left off. As they stand, of course, the character-sketches of Addison and Steele

### THE AUTHORS AND THEIR WORKS

1. ELISABETH WOLFF (1738-1804) and  
AGATHA DEKEN (1741-1804)

The Sources.-H. Frijlink, "Elisabeth Wolff, geb. Bekker, en Agatha Deken", Amsterdam, 1862-1863;-W. J. Hofdijk, "Geschiedenis der Nederlandsche Letterkunde", Amsterdam, 1867;-J. van Vloten, "Elisabeth Wolff", Haarlem, 1880;-R. H. J. Gallandat Huet, "Van en over Betje

cannot be called a novel, even on the loosest conception and construction of the term; but it is incontrovertible that they contain most of its essentials, in their dialogue and description, and above all in their characterisation. What they lack is the paramount element of plot, the sustained evolution of character: nor do they "minister to the inextinguishable interest in affairs of the heart." [F. S. Boas in "Essays and Studies", Vol. 11, p. 47] Neither did Defoe gratify this interest, though meeting that of story interest, and making use of every device at his command to invest his narrative with a sense of actuality.

But the novel in every strict sense still lingered, for though the process was there to make the novel a reflection of society, the Augustan writers had obviously no definite idea of what a novel should be as an independent literary species. The further intervention of Samuel Richardson was necessary to provide

Betje Wolff", Haarlem, 1884;-C. Busken Huet in "Literarische Fantasien", Haarlem, 1888;-J. ten Brink, "De Roman in Brieven 1740-1840", Amsterdam, 1889;-W. Jonckbloet, "Nederlandsche Letterkunde in de Twee Laatste Eeuwen", Vol. 1, Groningen, 1891;-C. J. Luzac, "De Nederlandsche Sentimenteele Roman", Amersfoort, 1890;-J. ten Brink, "Geschiedenis der Nederlandsche Letterkunde", Amsterdam, 1897;-H. C. H. Moquette, "Over de Romans van Wolff en Deken beschouwd in Verband met de Romantische Scheppingen van Richardson", Rotterdam, 1898;-G. Kalff,

the first complete novel; and appearing under these circumstances "Pamela" was exactly suited to take Europe by storm; Richardsonism immediately grew to immense vogue -with the exceptions of Byron and Scott, it can be said that the work of no English writer ever swept over the continent with such tempestuous force.

It may be that the long-winded novels that followed "Pamela", "Clarissa Harlowe" and "Sir Charles Grandison", were only a reversion of the romances de longue haleine of the preceding century in a soil that happened to suit them, but it can also be urged that they grafted upon the sentimental interest of the heroic tale accurate delineation of the way of living and thinking of society at large, instead of merely an aristocratic minority. Henceforth the novel must be allowed to be a distinct kind in literature, for despite the subsequent claims of various schools of novelists -romantic, realist and naturalist- the material and moral con-

"Geschiedenis der Nederlandsche Letterkunde", Vol. 6, Groningen, 1910;-A. Naber, "Betje Wolff en Aagje Deken", Amsterdam, 1913;-A. de Vletter, "De Opvoedkundige Denkbeelden van B. Wolff en A. Deken", Groningen, 1915;-J. Prinsen, "Het Sentimenteele bij Feith, Wolff, Deken en Post" in "De Gids", March, 1915;-J. te Winkel, "De Ontwikkelingsgang der Nederlandsche Letterkunde", Vol. 3, Haarlem, 1920;-J. Prinsen, "De Roman in de 18e. Eeuw in W. Europa, Den Haag, 1925.

B. The Novelists.-Elisabeth Wolff or Bekker was born at Flushing-She was the youngest of a family of seven,



ditions were already fulfilled in this century; beneath its regular social life the secret of exciting contemporary historians was discovered.

In the Netherlands, as has been noticed, the writing of prose fiction had made a start. But the work of Van Heemskerk and Heinsius had been but poorly sustained; delivered over as Dutch literature was to French classicism, the eighteenth century -elsewhere the century of beginnings- dawned there blank and dull. At least, so it might have appeared to the undiscerning mind. But all the while much unspectacular but profitable industry was proceeding; Holland, with her independence now secured, required<sup>only</sup> a period of experimenting, such as France and England had enjoyed in the seventeenth century. The first effort to redeem Dutch literature from outward desolation, in comparison with France and England, was still of an imitative nature; even in this respect Holland had a considerable lee-way to make up, and it is worthy of note that throughout this entire

who lost their mother early-She was brought up in an old-fashioned, Calvinistic way, against which her lively spirit struggled-Had an elopement when she was seventeen-Of this little is known-~~In~~ 1759 she married 'dominie' Adriaan Wolff, a man of fifty- She had previously corresponded with him on philology and poetry-On the death of her husband in 1777, she settled at Rijp, with Agatha Deken-The two had become friends the previous year-In 1788 their political faith obliged them to take re-

century every fresh development in the history of the novel found a full reflection there. Though the French and Spanish writers had been the models for Van Heemskerck and for Heinsius, their works had paralleled what had taken place in England; and now English forms began to play a direct part in Holland. First, there was the influence of "The Spectator", which Justus van Effen (1684-1735)<sup>1</sup> carried from the coffee-houses of London to those of Amsterdam, by publishing a "Hollandsche Spectator"; on its own scale this did exactly for Holland what "The Spectator" and "The Tatler" did for England, and provided a much-needed renovation of Dutch prose. A veritable Spectatoriale literature soon arose, the influence of which is perhaps still revealed by the Dutch writer's partiality for the sketch. Defoe's classic, translated by the Dutch "Spectator", resulted, too, in "Robinsons" arising everywhere, on

fuge in France-Settled at Trevoux in the department of the Aisne-Lived on there during the early Revolutionary period-Betje was almost in danger of the guillotine, being looked on as an aristocrat by the Republicans of Trevoux-In 1798 the loss of their money in a banking failure caused them to return to Holland-Lived thereafter in comparative poverty at The Hague-Six years later, in 1804, Elisabeth Wolff died-Agatha Deken, born at Amstelveen in 1741 and brought up in the Amsterdam "Weehuis", survived her friends, but died nine

<sup>1</sup> W. Bisschop, "Justus van Effen", Utrecht, 1859.

Walcheren island, in The Hague city, and across in Friesland, <sup>1</sup> corresponding to the 'Robinsonaden' phase in Germany. But Richardson who was to exert an influence far greater than these was not reproduced until 1782, so that since "Mirandor" almost a century went by without a fresh start in novel-writing having been made in Holland.

The Dutch equivalent of "Pamela" was "Sara Burgerhart", and it was the product of two cultured ladies, Elisabeth Wolff and Agatha Deken, to whom, in its beginnings, the novel of the Netherlands owes most. First and foremost they were the disciples of Richardson; from him they took over the somewhat repellant epistolary form, from him they gave the Dutch novel ideals of character that neither it nor its English model has ever lost, from him they brushed aside much of the frippery of pure romance and attained verisimilitude with unvarnished detail and the unadorned language of every-

days after her friend-A monument at Flushing now commemorates the inseparable friendship of the two writers.

C. The Works.-"De Historie van Sara Burgerhart", 1782;  
 -"De Historie van dan Heer Willem Leevend", 1784-1785;  
 -"De Historie van Mejuffrouw Cornelia Wildschut, op de Gevolgen der Opvoeding", 1793-1796.

The history of Sara Burgerhart is that of a young lady who, stultified socially rather than educated by a

<sup>1</sup> W. H. Staverman, "Robinson Crusoe in Nederland", Groningen, 1907.

day life; from him they fixed common-sense in Dutch fiction, a genially humorous conception of even the serious side of life- all traits, admittedly, that lie as near to the Dutch nature as to the English, and proving merely the easy assimilation of the same ideals on the part of both peoples. In their three novels there are complete characters to correspond with Richardson's -the sentimental young lady, the villain- and the bases of scenes that feature scenes of his -the appeal of virtue, the abduction- all of which, on the professional and commercial view, may surely be allowed as Richardson's contribution to the novel. Mejuuffrouw Naber's contention that with the ladies the letter-form is improved may be allowed, for it in no way affects the fact that they have nothing that he has not. Just as "La Nouvelle Héloïse" would have taken a different form if Rousseau had not been acquainted with "Clarissa", so "Sara Burgerhart" would

trivial-minded aunt, quits her house, Further trials, however, await her, and in spite of her steadfastness and innocence, she falls into the clutches of a debauchee. But her spirited nature stands her in good part, and by a piece of providential good-fortune- construed in maudlin Richardsonian fashion- she enters, like Pamela, into the haven of a happy marriage.

"Willem Leevend" is again a novel of domestic life, but it has no characters so famous as Cornelia Slimp-slamp and Brother Benjamin, and he himself is no Wer-

have taken another shape if Wolff and Deken had not been familiar with "Pamela".

At the same time, their work can claim real originality by reason of the unmistakable Dutch scenes and portraits with which it presents us. But it is surely no small praise in itself that they should be able to find a high place in the school of Richardson -in which, be it remembered, are comprehended works so celebrated as "La Nouvelle Héloïse" and "Sophiens Reisen von Memel nach Sachsen." They shared, as was only to be expected, in the current etiolated sentimentalism, but because they tended to laugh at the little rather than at the great, common-sense was never beyond recall; in creating pathetic scenes as such, and in degrading tears and hysterics into a manner, they were without a doubt more restrained than the vast majority of their contemporaries. They were fortunate in taking Richardson for their preceptor, amid the contending and fluctuating influences of the poetry of Thomson, Young and

ther. But though Willem Leevend is anything save a true hero, his sister Alida is made to possess much of the spirit of Elisabeth Wolff herself.

"Cornelia Wildschut" is much inferior to both of these. In design it comes nearer "Clarissa Harlowe", but it has not the tragic intensity and pathos of that book, and is tiresome in its leisurely explanitoriness, a remark, of course, that applies to "Willem Leevend".

Macpherson and the prose of Horace Walpole, Mrs. Radcliffe and 'Fonthill' Beckford. But he did not claim their undivided allegiance. According to Professor Prinsen, there was a deliberate imitation of Rousseau in their second novel, "Willem Leevend". Yet even here the Rousseauism of the "Confessions" is tempered at all points by the Richardsonism of "Clarissa", a novel which Jean-Jacques himself declared was not equalled or even approached by any novel in any language; like "Sara Burgerhart" and "Cornelia Wildschut", it is infiltrated with moral and religious instruction, and little manifests the tremendous latent force which lay hidden in Rousseau's emotionalism, when cut adrift from moral and religious restraint; Wolff and Deken were assuredly too much the servants of common-sense to seek to discard the rational framework of society.

The pleasant gossiping novels of Wolff and Deken served their day and generation well, and they have kept

## 2. RHIJNVIS FEITH (1753-1824)

A. The Sources.-W. J. Hofdijk, "Geschiedenis der Nederlandsche Letterkunde", Amsterdam, 1867;-W. Jonckbloet, "Geschiedenis der Nederlandsche Letterkunde in de Twee Laatste Eeuwen", Vol. 1, Groningen, 1891;-J. ten Brink, "Geschiedenis der Nederlandsche Letterkunde", Amsterdam, 1897;-G. Kalff, "Geschiedenis der Nederlandsche Letterkunde", Vol. 6, Groningen, 1910;-H. G. ten Bruggencate, "Mr. Rhijnvis Feith", Wageningen,

their place in the forefront of Dutch literature. Despite their contingency upon Richardson, it is difficult to overestimate their historical position, for never did any writers emerge in more opportune fashion. Of the period previous to their entry into Dutch literature, Dr. Inklaar writes: "Jamais imitation des modèles laissés par un grand siècle n' a été plus faible et plus incolore." ["François-Thomas de Baculard d' Arnaud, ses imitateurs en Hollande et dans d' autres pays", p. 177] Whether Mrs. Behn or Defoe, Marivaux or Richardson gave the novel to Europe, it is not too much to say that they brought it to Holland; and if it did not lead off with immortal masterpieces like "Pamela", "Marianne", "Tom Jones", there was no early development from crudity, for as high a degree of perfection was at once attained as has ever obtained throughout its progression in the Netherlands. The letter form was a handicap that their successors have

1911;-J. Prinsen, "Het Sentimenteele bij Feith, Wolff, Deken and Post", in "De Gids" (Amsterdam), February, 1915;-J. Prinsen, "De Roman in de 18e. Eeuw in W. Europa", Den Haag, 1925;-D. Inklaar, "François-Thomas de Baculard d' Arnaud, ses imitateurs en Hollande et dans d' autres pays", Den Haag, 1925.

B. The Novelist.-Feith was born at Zwolle in 1753-He belonged to an aristocratic family-Was educated at first at the University of Harderwijk, since suppressed-Afterwards went to Leyden to study law-In 1772 he mar-

not had to contend with. In their case it meant satisfying very artificially the demand that the novel should possess an orderly structure, but they contrived to make their work a careful study of some phase of real life, not indeed historically true, but which might easily be so; and it is this realistic art -of which Van Effen and the Reisjournalen, alone of their predecessors, gave any inkling- that has predominated ever since in Dutch literature.

Richardson could claim other disciples in Holland, though none so constant as Wolff and Deken. But sometimes his influence was almost vitiated by the counter-forces of French and German romanticism. Professor <sup>Phelps</sup> is again guilty of some "pictorialness" when he declares that "Richardson had got all Europe into tears." ["The Advance of the English Novel", p. 75] Those were, indeed, "golden days for the sentimentalists," but Richardson's was not all the blame; Goethe,

ried and settled in his native town-Declined the legal profession for the study of polite letters and poetry-In 1780 he became burgomaster of Zwolle-The year previously he had gained the first of a number of prizes for poetic compositions-Feith was a fervent "patriot", and in 1787 lost his civic position on account of the political troubles of the time-During the remainder of his life he was able to cultivate to the full his literary tastes-In 1824 he died at his country seat of Boschwijk near Zwolle.



Klopstock, Miller, Wieland, Rousseau must shoulder a good part of it. There was also a Dutch apostle of this "weeping" cult, Rhijnvis Feith, and on his work Richardson exerted but a very indirect influence.

The sentiment of the century was pushed by Feith to the point of extreme sensibility; he filled his compositions with a Weltschmerz more lachrymose than "Siegwart" and "Die Leiden des Jungen Werthers". It has been customary to account for the intensity of the melancholy under which Feith's characters affect to labour by adducing a Richardson-cum-German influence; but this does not wholly account for the unrelieved blackness. Richardson and the German writers may have imparted the didactic flavour in Feith, but neither in their work nor in any other Dutch writings of the time are the morbidity -the sheer tedium vitae- and the artificiality of Feith to be found. Dr. Inklaar's recent treatise goes to prove that the French

C. The Works. - "Julia", 1783; - "Ferdinand en Constantia", 1785.

"Julia" recounts the thwarted love of the heroine and a young gentleman, Eduard. Their marriage has been opposed by Julia's father. A conflict follows in which love and religion are in opposition, and the necessity to separate arises. The book ends with the death of Julia, Eduard realizing a sorrowful peace beside her tomb.

"Ferdinand en Constantia" is slightly more complicat-

model of Baculard d' Arnaud was always present, and that Feith servilely copied the superficial romances of this writer. It is well known, of course, that d' Arnaud exploited Richardson in France as far as he was able; and the echolalious Feith is no more than the Dutch d' Arnaud, an emasculated writer wholly outside the Dutch spirit of energy and robustness of character.

For the advance of the novel in the Netherlands Feith can be said to have done scarcely anything; compared with "Sara Burgerhart", "Julia" is as poor an example of the genre as Mackenzie's "Man of Feeling" alongside "Tristram Shandy". As Sir Edmund Gosse has remarked of the German novelists of this time, he "wrote like a poet deprived of the discipline of verse;" and certainly his themes -reveries chiefly, embracing in a Platonic love, the whole of nature-seem far better matched for treatment by pastoral poetry than by the more robust canons demanded by the

ed in plot, but just as unreal. The hero believes himself, <sup>betrayed</sup> by a series of circumstances a little forced, and retires disconsolately to an obscure village. Here he is loved by Cecilia (a figure borrowed from Miller). Thereupon he is spurned by Constantia. Cecilia dies, and Ferdinand is about to kill himself, when Constantia arrives and saves him.

### 3. ADRIAAN LOOSJES (1761-1818)

A. The Sources.-W. J. Hofdijk, "Geschiedenis der Ne-

novel; their sentimentality and their complete detachment from reality of themselves limited the d' Arnaud-ian to a mere sickly phase in Dutch literature, for, as Coleridge says, "on such meagre diet as feelings, evaporated embryos in their progress to birth, no moral being ever becomes healthy." The healthier form given to Richardsonism by Wolff and Deken was scarcely disturbed, and until sentimentalism was virtually absorbed in the approaching Romantic Revival, it was adapted with spirit by a novelist of the next generation, Adriaan Loosjes.

Loosjes' novels are of the long "life-story" pattern, and have the pronounced didactic and ethical qualities of the Richardsonians. They are lacking, however, in unity of construction and in breadth of treatment; their chief importance in the march of the Netherlands' novel is that their author sensed that something more than the atrabilious moodiness

derlandsche Letterkunde", Amsterdam, 1867;-W. Jonckbloet, "Geschiedenis der Nederlandsche Letterkunde in de Twee Laatste Eeuwen", Vol. 1, Groningen, 1891;-J. ten Brink, "Geschiedenis der Nederlandsche Letterkunde", Amsterdam, 1897;-G. Kalff, "Geschiedenis der Nederlandsche Letterkunde", Vol. 6, Groningen, 1910;-H. Vis-sink, "Scott and his Influence on Dutch Literature", Zwolle, 1922.

B. The Novelist.-Born in Texel in 1761-Was destined by his father for the Church-Studied at the Apprentices'

of Feith was needed, something at once more true and more localised, and had the notion to try to depict the past glories of his fatherland. For Holland this is the embryo of the historical novel, but Loosjes himself lacked the originality to be the herald of romanticism in the Netherlands; it required the further operation of the genius of Scott to develop the real possibilities of a novel based upon national history. Yet, though we have in the work of this diligent bookseller of Haarlem but the faintest of shadows cast forward by the Waverley novels, he deserves credit for conceiving this plan of the past at all, and for steadily maintaining the aims of the <sup>ladies</sup> Wolff and Deken.

With Loosjes we come to the end of the direct influence of Richardson in Holland. The concerted influence of the English book-man is far more noteworthy than the merits or defects of his art; his novels were soon translated into German, French, Italian, Dutch,

School of the Athenaeum at Amsterdam-Altered his plans for his career-In 1783 became a publisher and bookseller at Haarlem-Expended his literary energies in writing poetry, drama, novels in dialogue and in letters, and didactic prose-Spent a life of ceaseless activity in writing-Belonged to the fervid "patriots" of 1795-In 1808 he took his seat in the Provincial Assembly of Holland-Died in 1818 at Haarlem, where most of his life had been spent.

C. The Works.-"De Historie van Mejuffrouw Susanna

and his imitators in France and Germany could be counted by the score. Even in so small a country as Holland the vogue was far from a negligible one; the sensibility of the century, conveyed most sensibly by him, gave birth there to works that command a high place in Dutch literature for their intrinsic worth. Literature was invested by Wolff and Deken and by Loosjes, who departed like Richardson from the external, with that art of love, homely sympathy and quiet humour which the Dutch novel has never ceased to incorporate.

If novelistic preferences count for anything at all, a good deal could already be told of Holland. Even in the brief history of the novel to this date she had remained outside some of the most powerful movements and had been but lightly touched by others; for picaresquerie she had found very little use, she had displayed a mild interest in the seventeenth century romances of

Bronkhurst", 1806-1807;-"De Leven van Maurits Lijnslager", 1808;-"De Lotgevallen van den Heere Reinout Jan van Goldstein tot Scherpenzeel", 1809-1810;-"De Lotgevallen van Robbert Helleman", 1810-1815;-"Het Leven van Johannes Wouter Blommestein", 1816.

"Mejuffrouw Susanna Bronkhurst" may be taken as typical of his work, which, with their epistolary manner and many resemblances in characterisation stamp him as a reflection of Richardson and of Wolff and Deken.

"Maurits Lijnslager" has been described as an "historical" novel, but it hardly merits such a description.

France, had not been entirely immersed in the erotic bath of the "Arcadians", had remained aloof from the workings of the Schauer-romantik, and had regarded even Fielding and Smollett somewhat coldly. But since selection was inevitable where there were so few to embrace such an immensity of literary wealth, the wisdom that prompted the choice of Richardson's art above all was probably the most fortunate thing that could have happened to Holland. To it she owes the novel-in-letters -and hence the novel of psychology and of manners- and this quiet-moving form was one admirably-suited to the display of the unostentatious Dutch genius.

The Lijnslanders are certainly a good Amsterdam family, endowed through commerce with solid bourgeois comfort, but they do not belong so specifically to the seventeenth century. They live, but in the nineteenth century, the hero being the mouth-piece of Loosjes himself.

## CHAPTER 111

### THE 'SCHOOL' OF SCOTT

The closing decades of the eighteenth century and the opening one of the nineteenth were notable everywhere for the absence of good fiction. In those years the classical methods that had ruled for so long were fanatically assailed; everything that savoured of the mediaeval and "Gothic" was advanced against them, the reaction as it gathered propulsion being guilty of many ludicrous and "horrid" excesses. But though the more real Reign of Terror broke in upon the period-transitionary and unsettled as it was in all respects-the contemporary fiction, vested in the Tale of Terror, failed to escape the general condemnation of mediocrity. Yet, it was with this self-same "Gothic" novel that the

### THE AUTHORS AND THEIR WORKS

#### 1. JACOB VAN LENNEP (1802-1868)

A. The Sources.-H. J. Polak, "C. Busken Huet en Klaasje Zevenster door J. van Lennep", Arnhem, 1866;-A. V. Brussel (A. Vischer), "Een Schandelijk Boek. Bestraf-fend Woord aan J. van Lennep over de Zedelooze Streking van Klaasje Zevenster", Amsterdam, 1866;-W. J. Hofdijk, "Geschiedenis der Nederlandsche Letterkunde", Am-

Romantic Revival, in so far as it affects fiction, opened; for in the work of Sir Walter Scott -the new force in fiction-writing and the greatest one to date-the great streams of "Gothicism", chivalry and mystery were all united.

Scott's success is partly to be explained by the mood of Europe in the critical days of the first quarter of the nineteenth century; in him was reflected something of the militarism of the time and of that conservative recoil from the levelism which the philosophies of the French Revolution sought to impose. But the roots of his triumph, so amazing as it was, lay in something deeper than an aristocratic revolt; that led him to take the story of adventure and the saner elements of the "Gothic" romance and to place them in an historical background, but it was his own powerful genius that inspired him to blend with these the realistic sketch of manners, which was then cul-

sterdam, 1867;-A. Beeloo, "Levensbericht van J. van Lennep", Leiden, 1868;-W. Jonckbloet, "Geschiedenis der Nederlandsche Letterkunde in de Twee Laatste Eeuwen", Vol. 2, Groningen, 1892;-J. ten Brink, "Geschiedenis der Nederlandsche Letterkunde", Amsterdam, 1897;-J. ten Brink, "Geschiedenis der Noord Nederlandsche Letteren in de 19e. Eeuw", Vol. 1, Rotterdam, 1904;-M. F. van Lennep, "Het Leven van Mr. J. van Lennep", Amsterdam, 1909;-G. Kalff, "Geschiedenis der Nederlandsche Letter-



minating in the refined comedy of Jane Austen. By subsuming these varieties of romance and by augmenting them with a good deal of the methods of the pure novel itself, he hit upon a kind of hybrid, elastic enough to contain almost everything in fiction that pleases. Thus was born the historical novel in its truest sense, and the new product, the striking style of which rendered it comparatively easy of imitation, attracted universal attention and served to maintain Scott in immense vogue for thirty or more years.

The Netherlands, though set alongside the nations most concerned in reviving romance, lagged behind the strong literary life of this time; and there, during the first quarter of the century, romanticism made little headway. For this state of affairs the miscegenation of the two peoples under William I of Orange need not be stressed too much, for the inter-

kunde", Vol. 7, Groningen, 1912;-H. Vissink, "Scott and his Influence on Dutch Literature", Zwolle, 1922.

B. The Novelist.-Van Lennep was born at Amsterdam-His father was professor of eloquence and the classical languages in the *Athenaeum* of the city-Received his education partly in Amsterdam and partly at Leyden-At the latter place he studied jurisprudence-Received the degree of doctor of laws-Settled then as an advocate at Amsterdam-Was more attracted by literature than by law-His first literary efforts were translations from Byron-Only attained real popularity with his "*Nederlandsche Legenden*", produced after the manner of Scott-His life

national arbitrariness apparent in the "congressional" attempt to manufacture a political United Netherlands acted neither as a special deterrent nor as a momentary spur. As regards Holland at least, it only served to maintain the stagnation that had prevailed since the close of the previous century; and if no spark of intellectual life glimmered in Flanders in those years, there had been no real literary response there for two hundred years. When Holland's somnolence was at length shaken off -in prose, that is, for in poetry Bilderdijk, Tollens and Da Costa were very active- the art of Scott was soon discovered through an organized national force -a manner of literary resuscitation that has been resorted to with success on more than one occasion. <sup>1</sup>

The agent in this was the Amsterdam scholar, D. J. van Lennep. He was the first to sight the possibil-

bears many direct comparisons with the life of Scott- His legal training, his writing of tales in verse and a history-book for children, his acting in a judicial capacity-From 1853 to 1856 Van Lennep was a member of the Second Chamber in the States-General-In his last years he was involved in a controversy with Douwes Dekker, whom he had first assisted to publish "Max Havelaar"-The criticism directed against his own "Klaasje Zevenster" is one of the causes célèbres of Dutch literature-From 1829 until his death he was a Royal Advocate (K. C.)-He died at Oosterbeek near Arnhem in 1868.

<sup>1</sup> Compare 1840 ("De Gids") and 1885 ("De Nieuwe Gids").

ities of his country's history and pictorial beauties for fictional contrivance in the manner of Scott. In 1827 he stated his views in an important dissertation, "Verhandeling over het Belangrijke van Hollands Grond en Oudheden voor Gevoel en Verbeelding" (Dissertation on the Importance of the Soil and Antiquities of Holland for the Cultivation of Feeling and Imagination). In this form, the purport suggests Wordsworth rather than Scott, but Van Lennep sought directly to reflect the methods of Scott in his interweaving of history and the scenery of the Highlands and the Borders.

This plan to encourage national historical research proved an immediate stimulus, for the first historical novel in Dutch was written by one of his hearers, Margaretha Jacoba de Neufville (1775-1856). A disciple of Wolff and Deken, she had already written "De Kleine Pligten" (Little Duties), a domestic-social novel of

C. The Works.-"De Pleegezoon", 1833;- "De Lotgevallen van Ferdinand Huyck", 1840;- "De Roos van Dekama", 1836;- "Elizabeth Musch", 1850;- "De Lotgevallen van Klaasje Zevenster", 1865.

The action of "De Pleegezoon" falls chiefly in the year 1621. After a twelve years' truce, the Spaniards are busying strengthening their position in Holland. The romantic element is supplied by Joan, the adopted son of Count Sonheuvel, and that of intrigue by Eugenio, a Jesuit priest. Until the closing stages Joan lives under the suspicion of being the son of a Spanish grandee, but learns then that he is the descendant of a Ger-

the tendenz order popularised by Mrs. Opie. The powers of imagination and scholarship displayed in "De Schildknaap" had shortcomings too flagrant to give it more than a historical position in Dutch fiction; but this well-intended effort facilitated and certainly accelerated the reproduction of Scott in the Netherlands. More promising was the "Hermingard van de Eikenterpen" (Hermingard of the Oak-hills) of Aernout Drost,<sup>1</sup> and still more successful was his "Pestilentie te Katwijk" (Pestilence at Katwijk), in which he shows a greater emancipation from self-imposed moral and religious teaching. But his early death gave him little chance to exhibit his latent powers, quickening under a deep passion for the past, and found a national historical novel, which, as Dr. Vis-sink suggests, might here have ended the influence of Scott and won Holland for a national romanticism.

Not inappropriately, it was the son of the disserta-

-man nobleman. The story concludes with Joan's marriage to the daughter of his foster-father, Ulrica van Reede.

"De Roos van Dekama" takes us back to the middle of the fourteenth century, when William IV of Holland undertook expeditions against Utrecht and Frisia in turn, the freedom-loving Frisians being then accounted semi-barbarians. These events are linked up with the story of a beautiful Frisian heiress, Madzy Dekama. She marries a nobleman, who had figured as of unknown birth, but who turns out to be her guardian's son, the Lord of Aylva. As a whole, the book bears a resemblance to

<sup>1</sup> See J. M. de Waal, "Aernout Drost", Utrecht, 1918.

tionist Van Lennep who, on the death of Drost, was destined to lead the Dutch romantic school. Like Scott himself, Jacob van Lennep made his debut in poetry, and likewise abandoned the composition of poetic romances for the novel. In this, it must be confessed, his work falls far off the standard set by even the lesser romances of Scott. In Van Lennep's work history is no more than the binding of the story, but there is a jejune unevenness about it all; the characterisation is not impressive, the humour not very bright, and the style at times is tediously verbose, at other times inadequate when detailed treatment is called for. Many incidents of tournaments and ceremonials reveal his dependence in the matter of externals, but the general treatment is usually uninspired; the incongruity between the story and its period and scene is nearly always so marked as to suggest that Van Lennep

to "Anne of Geierstein", the Frisians' fight for independence being reminiscent of that of the Swiss people.

"Ferdinand Huyck" opens with an account of the hero's adventures on returning to Amsterdam after two years spent abroad. He is attacked by a party of brigands, but is rescued by the Count of Talavera, who is living in exile. Later Ferdinand escorts the Count's daughter to a place of safety in the city, and thereby comes under the ban of his father, a magistrate, for his supposed complicity in the Count's affairs. Previously he had met and fallen in love with Henriette Black, and after securing a pardon for the Count, they are

had extracted little from his imperfect studies of Scott's unique historical method and treatment in this all-important respect.

Even his accounted masterpiece, "De Lotgevallen van Ferdinand Huyck" (The Adventures of Ferdinand Huyck), is not an historical novel in the strictest sense, but merely a novel of the proximate past. It has not freed itself wholly from the picaresque style (Professor ten Brink has aptly described it as "a very respectable picaresque novel"). The local colour is still much less striking than in Scott, but we do at last find some of his inner qualities; except for the needless nimety of horror piled up in the closing pages, there are few glaring weaknesses constructionally, and the characters, if still occasionally rather puppet-like, are now defined less by description than by their own words and actions. "Ferdinand Huyck" does

married. The book is most reminiscent of "Guy Manner-  
ing", both being pictures of the eighteenth century and having heroines who suffer loss of fortune, only to be happily indemnified. Even the famous piratical character Dick Hatterick is off-set by a predatory band under the leadership of an ex-pirate, Sanders.

"Elisabeth Musch" treats of the second war between England and Holland, the hey-day of John de Witt, and centres round the correspondence carried on by Buat, a member of the Orange party, with friends in England. Elisabeth Musch is the wife of Buat, the discovery of whose treasonable intrigue results in his death. The

realize something of the dramatic ripeness of Scott; it does not belong to the order of great fiction, but in its increasing freedom from artifice and merely ingratiating humour, it stands as far above the work of its author's immaturity as "The Heart of Midlothian" and "The Talisman" above "The Surgeon's Daughter" and "The Pirate".

Van Lennep's last novel, "De Lotgevallen van Klaasje Zevenster", shows few traces of Scott's direct influence; it is a roman-de-moeurs of the author's own century, his "St. Ronan's Well"; but its place in Dutch literary criticism is rather a curious one. It is a fairly tedious elaboration of the successive phases of a somewhat nugatory career, but from this insipid material has arisen a controversy that has tended to obscure the merits of the book. A section of the third volume witnesses a divagation from the uniformity imparted to the Dutch novel by Wolff and Deken,

The picture of the heroine is thoroughly unsatisfactory, history has so much the upper hand that the book is only very nominally a novel at all.

"De Lotgevallen van Klaasje Zevenster" relates the life-adventures of a foundling girl, adopted collectively by a group of Leyden students known as the Pleiades. They give her the name of "Zevenster" (Sevenstars) and agree to be responsible for her welfare. Her education is completed only after they themselves have long terminated their respective studies. It is then arranged that she should enter the service of one of the seven, Van Zirik, at The Hague. Through no fault of her own she

and because of certain incidents which figure there, the charge of immorality was laid at the author's door. So vexed did the matter become that a little literature soon came to surround the work, though it is not easy now to understand how the point in question ever came to be a main issue for the critics. To ethical standards of an entirely hypercritical order must the unnecessary contretemps be attributed. Van Lennep's heroine, it can be said, is as conspicuously virtuous as Clarissa Harlowe or Sara Burgerhart, and in no way does the book impugn the respectability of the ~~the~~ Dutch share of the novel. The happenings at Mont-Athos, indeed, afford a vivacity, lacking which "Klaasje Zevenster" would resemble "Pericles" without the scenes which, artistically if not in a purist sense, are most worthy of the genius of Shakespeare; after all, as Professor ten Brink has done well to note, Van Lennep only treated, with great re-

falls into disgrace with her guardians and for a time is estranged from them. While in Amsterdam she discovers herself to be the daughter of a Mme. Wayland Flinck. She is loved by Maurice d' Eylar, but she fails to recover from the blows of scandal and dies prematurely.

## 2. JAN FREDERIK OLTMANS (1806-1854)

A. The Sources.- W. Jonckbloet, *Geschiedenis der Nederlandsche Letterkunde in de Twee Laatste Eeuwen*, Vol. 2, Groningen, 1892;-J. ten Brink, *Geschiedenis*



straint and tact, what Guy de Maupassant has treated of in "La Maison Tellier" and over which he has been much commended.

If the critics fail to agree where to place "Klaasje Zevenster", it is not a difficult matter to fit Van Lennep himself to his part in the evolution of the novel in the Netherlands. Assuredly he has no place in European literature, and even in Holland the infinitely greater talent shown by the later historical writers, Bosboom-Toussaint, Schimmel, Wallis, tend to dwarf him. If he is given the title of the leader of the Dutch romantic school, it must be because of his historical position there despite his vast labours on the versatile lines of Scott. His plagiarism from the latter went to notorious lengths, and his careless eclecticism in the use of his material, his tricks of style and his false sublimities, make his net con-

der Nederlandsche Letterkunde", Amsterdam, 1897;-J. ten Brink, "Geschiedenis der Noord Nederlandsche Letteren in de 19e. Eeuw", Vol. 1, Rotterdam, 1904;-G. Kalff, "Geschiedenis der Nederlandsche Letterkunde", Vol. 7, Groningen, 1912;-H. Vissink, "The Influence of Scott on Dutch Literature", Zwolle, 1922.

B. The Novelist.-J. F. Oltmans was born at The Hague, from which he took his nom-de-plume, J. van den Hage-Family soon removed to Amsterdam-His father was a government official in that city-Oltmans received his education there-Afterwards he entered his father's office-

tribution of little positive value; a negligible result when the fortunate chance of the great romanticist's example is kept in mind. If he is styled the Walter Scott of the country north of the Moerdijk, the description, by all trustworthy standards, must be thought of almost completely as a tribute to Scott's influence than as attempted inflation of Van Lennep's own mediocre abilities.

A truer disciple of Scott was Jan Frederik Oltmans, who, on an extremely narrow foundation, has built for himself a firm place in the prose literature of his country. His approach to the romantic field differed fundamentally from that of his contemporary, Van Lennep. The latter, though he served a long apprenticeship to Scott, never succeeded in executing an entire work in the manner of his master; emulation was his ostensible aim, yet at no time did he give intensive study to his

Devoted all his spare-time to history, archaeology, architecture, armoury, folk-lore-Both of his famous novels were completed before his father's death in 1839-Was disappointed in his hopes of filling his father's place, and this affected his health adversely-From 1839 he gave himself up entirely to letters-Potgieter took pity on him, and he was enabled to write for "De Gids"-After 1847 weak-health necessitated his residence in the quiet village of Steenderen in Guelderland-For six years more he devoted himself to writing-He died in 1854, obscure and unnoticed.

G. The Works.-"Het Slot Loevenstein in 1570", 1834;

task; and in default of original genius, such tergiversation was fatal to the production of authentic historical novels. From the first Oltmans devoted himself conscientiously to the task of the illimitable storage of historical data so essential to the romanticist, and, well-equipped through this systematic preparation, he delivered in his first novel a work that already almost recorded the high water-mark of his plodding capability. He was thoroughly the disciple of the Wizard, quite incapable apparently of developing further than this admirable pastiche could render him; for with his second romance there was not retardation but sheer exhaustion of art.

It cannot be pretended that Oltmans' work equals even the lesser novels of Scott, to whom he was in all respects indebted. He had not his astonishing creative energy, for though in both of his books there

- "De Schapherder", 1838.

"Slot Loevenstein" conducts us back to the gallant warfare of the Dutch against the Spanish in the sixteenth century. Fort Loevenstein, which will be better remembered as the prison from which Hugo Grotius made his dramatic escape, and for the part it is made to play in "La Tulipe Noire", was then the scene of a heroic episode at the commencement of the prolonged struggle, and it is this incident that Oltmans has turned to good account in his book. He retains Herman van den Bosch, the celebrated Gueux who blew up part of the fortress, himself, his friends, and a large number of the enemy,

are incidents recounted with the epic skill of his literary progenitor, he was in the main less artistic, and not infrequently he was deficient in the delineation of character. Nor had he "the genius of history" of Scott, for his inerrancy was primarily due to the meticulous nature of his scholarship, a scholarship that inclined him towards a romanticism too unswervingly objective to enthrall, a danger that Scott instinctively avoided.

On the whole, Oltmans deserves to rank above Van Lennep. A finer student of historical records, he was also sufficiently sure of his local colour to weave into his documentary matter an inspiring story. No less patriotic than Van Lennep, he turned the portions of history upon which his mind operated to better account, and if the novel-guise but too lightly veiled the history behind, it was a fault that went far to reveal the

when the capture of the castle was inevitable, but the love-story centres round Van Doorn and the ward of the castellan.

The historical subject-matter of "De Schaapherder" is the internecine wars in the Bishopric of Utrecht at the close of the fifteenth century, though the hero is a fictitious character, Ralph the Shepherd. He is not a specially outstanding character, but holds the balance between Hooks and Kabbeljaws, the conflicting parties, by moving about unrestrictedly in the different scenes of war. The central points in the narrative are the enmity between Schaffelaar and Perrol and the prowess dis-

alluring possibilities for romanticising on Holland's storied record, when there would be conjoined the exactness of the historian and the nimbler skill of the novelist of manners.

So far the literary history of Belgium, the complementary part of the Netherlands, has perforce been mentioned but incidentally. During mediaeval times the contributions made to French and Dutch literatures by writers in what is now Belgium were of great positive value, and were proportionate from the numerical standpoint. But since the sixteenth century utter intellectual stagnation had reigned in the southern half of the Netherlands. Diverse reasons have been assigned for this unique national silence. Van Hasselt, the poet, traced the "sleep" of Belgium to evil agitations and religious wars; Potvin, the critic, considered it due to Catholic persecution or to the absence of Flemish influence; Francis Nautet insisted on the comparative-

played by the Shepherd's grandson, Frank, on behalf of the Bishop, David of Burgundy.

### 3. HENDRIK CONSCIENCE (1812-1883)

A. The Sources.-W. J. Hofdijk, "Geschiedenis der Nederlandsche Letterkunde", Amsterdam, 1867;-G. Eekhoud, "La Vie de Hendrik Conscience", Brussels, 1881;-Paul de Mont, "Hendrik Conscience: sa vie et ses travaux", Antwerp, 1883;-J. Stecher, "Histoire de la littérature néerlandaise en Belgique", Brussels, 1886;-J. Boucherij,

ly taciturn character of his race, whose natural medium of expression was plastic rather than literary. These explanations all seem to have reason on their side, but here it will suffice to note that, after Waterloo, when the people of the Netherlands' south provinces were free to resume an interest in their native speech, the emergence all at once of a set of writers with fully-developed romantic principles was an event that was neither vaticinated nor yet miraculously realized. Even for a people possessed of such a great past as the Belgians a <sup>leaving</sup>leavening interval was required. The formation of a national modern literature was not even co-incidental with the decisive actions of 1830, when "Belgium-a Nation" became history, for, as Mr. Chesterton has wittily worded it, to insist that a "young" nation must needs produce a literature is like saying a nation "must soon grow a moustache." In any

"Korte Levenschets van H. Conscience", Ghent, 1906; -J. Bernaerts, "Conscience-Litteratuur", Louvain, 1910; -M. Antheunis (née Conscience), "Hendrik Conscience", Leiden, 1912; -L. Waelbers and M. Alofs, "Het Leven en het Werk van Hendrik Conscience", Tongres, 1912; -E. de Bock, "Hendrik Conscience", Amsterdam, 1912; -F. Jostes, "H. Conscience", Gladbach, 1917; -E. de Bock, "Opkomst van de Vlaamsche Romantiek", Antwerp, 1920; -P. Hamelius, "Introduction a la littérature française et flamande de Belgique", Brussels, 1921; -J. A. Russell in "The Catholic Parish Magazine" (Glasgow), April, 1926 and September, 1926.

case, the litterati of the time expended their energies in trying to settle between French and Flemish as the natural ideal for the expression of the newly-discovered national spirit. Close by, across the Scheldt, the Dutch possessed a rich and honoured literature, written in a language scarcely to be distinguished from Flemish, but consciousness of political autonomy, in conjunction with religious prejudice, had engendered among them a feeling of contempt for the language of the two Flanders, Antwerp and Brabant, as well as for their inhabitants. Until the sponsors of the Flemish Movement in Belgium, the flamingants, were themselves strong enough to carry the day, there was no administration to Belgian's long-deferred literary aspirations.

The novel then proved the rebirth of Belgian literature, due in some measure to the appearance on the continent of "Quentin Durward", which has a right to regard itself as the first Belgian novel. But the

The Novelist.-Hendrik Conscience was born at Antwerp in 1812-Was the son of a Frenchman from Besançon, Pierre Conscience-On his mother's side he was Flemish-In 1811 his father had been appointed under-harbour-master at Antwerp, when the port was in the possession of the French-On the abandonment of the city by the French, after the Congress of Vienna, his father took up the business of ship-breaker-The child Hendrik grew up in an old shop stocked with marine stores-To these was added a collection of old books, which gave him an insatiable taste for reading-His father, a most eccen-

first historical novel written in Belgium was, curiously enough, the work of an Irishman, Thomas Colley Grattan, who, while the Brabantan Revolution was still at its height in 1831, published simultaneously in English and in French "L' héritière de Bruges: histoire de l' année 1600". Though this work, which ranks as the first evocation of local history and geography, has long lost interest, it ought to be regarded as a land-mark in Belgian literature. But Belgium was infinitely more roused when the first novel written in Flemish was produced by Hendrik Conscience.

The position of this writer in his country's literature is an assured one, due to the fact that he restored the Vernacular to general favour at a time when even the government tried, as Professor Geyl says, "to relegate it to the kitchen and the back-streets." ["Holland and Belgium: their Common History and their Re-

tric individual, took a violent dislike to town-life on the death of his wife-Remarried and retired with his children to the 'hinterland' of the Campine-Conscience, left much to his own devices, acquired a tremendous attachment for this lonely territory-When only sixteen, he left home to become a tutor in Antwerp, and to prosecute his studies there-This life was soon broken in upon by the Révolution of 1830-On the first rumour of war he abandoned his mastership at the college where he was engaged-Volunteered for service in the new Belgian army-Was made a sergeant and continued to serve in the army until 1836-On returning to civilian life, he gave him-



lations", p. 32] Yet it is hard to see how he can be acclaimed as a great writer in any sense, however unpleasant this verdict, brought in by Time, may be to many of his countrymen. His historical importance can be readily conceded, but the immense volume of his writings in moralitarian and patriotic vein ought to blind no critic to his irrefragable literary mediocrity. It is high time, after the lapse of nearly fifty years, that the eponymous proliferation of make-belief that has been responsible for creating a Conscience-legend should be disposed of, in only in fairness to truly great compatriots like de Coster, Lemonnier, Maeterlinck, Verhaeren, with whom Conscience may no more sustain comparison than Van Lennep with Bosboom-Toussaint or Couperus.

Conscience is considered essentially as a novelist, but here we immediately <sup>encounter</sup> a difficulty in logomachy. His

self up to writing his first book-This was "In 't Wonderjaar 1566"-It was written in the then-despised idiom of Flanders-His father considered ~~considered~~ this form to be so vulgar and uncouth that he was practically forced to leave the house-In Antwerp again, the painter Wappers interested himself in the unfortunate writer-He took him to his own house-Later he had him presented to the king-His second book appeared under the patronage of Leopold I himself-A small appointment in the provincial archives followed-In 1845 he was knighted-In the same year he became instructor to the royal children, teaching them Flemish-In 1857 he was appointed to

productivity was so enormous as to run to a hundred volumes, but this is not to say that he achieved what Balzac's endless labours, with their definite orientation, never looked like realizing. After an exhaustive examination of his complete works, I have found that only a comparatively small number of these can with any sense of propriety be labelled novels at all. By far the greater number rule themselves out by their brevity - as a matter of fact, it would be truer to say that Conscience specialized not in the novel but in the short story - more accurately, the "tale", as written a hundred years ago; others, though extending to the length of somewhat short novels, do not really deserve to rank as serious novels by reason of triteness of subject-matter and almost childish simplicity of treatment. The result is that, of the imposing centurian array of "novels", not a large proportion have any reasonable claim

the little town of Kortrijk, the "Darlingen" of the novel, as arrondissement-commissary - Until 1868 he remained in the neighbourhood of Courtrai - Was then appointed custodian of the Wiertz Museum at Brussels - Took part in the national elections, but failed narrowly to gain election - Was offered the professorship of Flemish literature at Ghent University, but declined it - In 1881, on the appearance of his hundredth work, he was decorated with the order of the Grand Cross of Leopold - Many public festivities were held in his honour on the occasion of his seventieth birthday the following year - In 1883 he died at Antwerp, where a statue before the

to consideration here as such, and even those saved from rejection have a precarious hold on mature opinion.

Conscience's work falls naturally into two divisions, the first part containing his novels describing the heroic past of the Flemish people, and the second part those describing contemporary Flemish life. Among his own people his immense popularity rests mainly on his romans-de-moeurs rather than on his historical romances, a preference that in itself is a virtual condemnation of popular opinion in Belgium to keep "this side idolatry" where Conscience is concerned. His chef-d'oeuvre, "De Leeuw van Vlaanderen" (The **Lion** of Flanders), was modelled definitely on Scott, and it is so incomparably his finest work as almost literally to outweigh the other ninety-and-nine. Next in order of merit—again indisputably so—is "De Boerenkrijg" (The War of the Peasants), also an historical tale. It is near-

municipal library now stands to his memory.

C. The Works.—"De Leeuw van Vlaanderen", 1838;—"Jacob van Artevelde", 1849;—"De Arme Edelman", 1851;—"De Boerenkrijg", 1853;—"Hlodwig en Clotildes", 1854;—"Batavia", 1858;—"De Burgers van Darlingen", 1861;—"De Koopman van Antwerpen", 1863;—"De Burgemeester van Luik", 1866;—"De Kerels van Vlaanderen", 1870;—"Everard t Serclaes", 1874;—"De Oom van Felix Roobeck", 1877;—"De Schat van Felix Roobeck", 1878.

"De Leeuw van Vlaanderen" has for its sub-title "The Battle of the Spurs". Mediaeval life in Bruges, with its well-organized trade-guilds and their leaders, its

ly safe to assert that his reputation would be no less had he written only these!

"De Leeuw van Vlaanderen" has been grandiosely called "the Flemish bible", but that this single work should ever have idealized the aspirations of the whole Flemish race is surely a striking reflection on the state of political and intellectual backwardness in which the Victorian era found it. It ranks certainly as the epic of the battle of the Spurs, but how far behind the work of Scott or "Thyl Ulenspiegel", a Belgian historical novel of international reputation! Aesthetically, "De Boerenkrijg" is probably his best novel, for usually, to quote M. Sabbe, "in the art of Conscience it is difficult to separate the aesthetic point of view from the educational." ["Histoire de la littérature flamande", p. 79] But his Francophobia is dispersed far too freely for the book to be accepted as an en-

prosperity and wealth that the constant danger of French domination rather than the receding sea may wrest away are picturesquely suggested. The aged Count of Flanders and his son "The Lion", Robbrecht van Bethune, are languishing in French prisons when Flanders is invaded by French armies. The Flemings are rallied by the heroic guild-leaders, Deconinck and Breydel, and the two armies <sup>meet</sup> beneath the walls of Courtrai. Through the incredible substitution of Adolf van Nieuwland for "The Lion", Van Bethune is made to be present at the battle, and to inspire his people to victory. After the fight (in which Van Nieuwland, the lover of Robbrecht's daughter,

tirely admissible interpretation of history. Conscience lacked the vivacity, the imagination, and above all the verisimilitude of his much-admired master, and **never** carried through successfully an entire book in his manner. He marred his approaches to his acknowledged guide **by** incredible climaxes, incongruous readings of history, pseudo-archaism, and unimpressive bathos. By the superficiality of his characterisation his historical personages are generally mere martinets; suffice it is to say that **not** with all his historical writings has he so adequately treated the heroic story of Belgium as the foreigner Scott in his unique "Quentin Durward". Out of the grand material of the bourgeois-dictator, Jacob van Artevelde, he has given us a piece of downright, uninspired dulness, a bald chronicle that is ill-conceived history instead of romance; his "Burgemeester van Luik" is just as haphazard historically, and, novelistically, just as insipid. As inaptly, therefore,

takes part also) "The Lion" returns to captivity, but by means of a "Historical Continuation" his final liberation and triumphant return, on further defeats of the French, are described.

"Jacob van Artevelde" is the story of the great "tribune" of Ghent. It revolves round the jealousies and plotting of Van Artevelde's arch-enemy, Gerard Denis to encompass his downfall. The Ghentian demagogue's meeting with Edward III and his forming of the alliance of the three chief cities of Flanders, Ghent, Bruges and Ypres, are unfolded, along with the love-story of Van Artevelde's daughter and Denis' son. The best scene is

as Van Lennep in Holland does he deserve to be established as the Belgian Scott -that is, in no more than in the historic concept.

Turning now to the other side of his work, it can be said right away that Conscience took over an ultra-romantic view of contemporary Flemish life, in the same way as he saw an ideal past-time. Within his beloved Flanders his favourite locale was the Kempen, the desolate heath-lands, reminiscent of sombre Egdon, that extend between Antwerp and Venlo. This little-visited pays Conscience again and again portrayed vividly, but his idyllic pictures of life as lived there are at utter variance with those given by later writers. His images of reality are too beautiful, too virtuous, and in every way too sentimentalised to be at all convincing. Even the best of these studies, "De Arme Edelman" (The Poor Nobleman), is a thoroughly conventional

perhaps the final one, which describes the attack upon Van Artevelde's house and his brutal assassination.

"De Arme Edelman" is a slight tale of a noble Belgian family that has fallen on evil days. The chief interest is in the devices adopted by the head of the family to preserve appearances, until fortune again favours it.

"De Boerenkrijg" describes the events that happened when the Revolutionary armies overran Flanders in 1793. It is a dark and gloomy account of the fearful hardships suffered by the Flemish patriots, compelled to take refuge wherever they can. Most attention is bestowed on the family of the village notary, whose son

piece of work -it is, infact, in the writings of Conscience, impossible to escape the leit-motif. While we can give him unbounded credit for his gifts of heart, for his aims to unify his country, for his proudest boast ~~that~~ there is not a line in his multifarious works to be wished away on ethical grounds, we must at the same time take an unbiassed perspective of his place in literature.

The lenitive treatment meted out to Conscience appears in such a description of him as "the most famous novelist on the continent before Zola and Tolstoy came." [J. Persyn, "A Glance at the Soul of the Low Countries", p. 93] Such hyperbole would occasion astonishment were it not so amusing, for was he not contemporaneous with Hugo, Balzac, Dumas, Thackeray, Dickens! With the ~~imaginatively~~-endowed Hugo, it is certain, he has nothing ~~in~~ common, while his unreflecting Catholic optimism

is in love with Geneveva, the schoolmaster's daughter. In Simon Meulemans they have an implacable enemy. He treacherously leads the French investment of the village. But despite his machinations, the young people survive the war, and their marriage concludes the story.

"Hlodwig en Clotildes" is a Frankish tale. Hlodwig's bravery avenges the death of Clotildes, a Burgundian king's daughter. "De Burgers van Darlingen" and "De Koopman van Antwerpen" are simply conventional love-stories. "De Burgemeester van Luik" tells the history of the popular mayor of Liège, who was finally murdered at his son's marriage ceremony by the trea-

is wholly opposed to Thackeray's satiric subtlety; Dumas, it is true, based his "Dieu et Diable" on "Wat eene Moeder Lijden Kan", honouring his hero with the name of Conscience, but <sup>the</sup> inter-relationship goes little further; with Balzac we may compare him in respect of output, and a titular affinity is suggested by such books as "De Burgers van Darlingen", "De Jonge Dokter", "De Koopman van Antwerpen", but the penetrating analysis of the great Frenchman is nowhere to be found-Conscience's mind was not capable of a "Père Goriot" or a "Eugénie Grandet"; his simplicity and tenderness have perhaps most in common with Dickens, but his compositions are steeped in a sentimentality to which Dickens at his most maudlin never descends. The conclusion is reluctantly forced upon us that he has no place in European literature (the textbooks' indices alone are evidential in this connection) and no high one in that of the Netherlands; even there

chery of the bride's father, the Count of Warfuzee.

#### 4. ANNA L. G. BOSBOOM-TOUSSAINT (1812-1886)

The Sources.-W. J. Hofdijk, "Geschiedenis der Nederlandsche Letterkunde", Amsterdam, 1867;-W. Jonckbloet, "Geschiedenis der Nederlandsche Letterkunde in de Twee Laatste Eeuwen", Vol. 2, Groningen, 1892;-J. ten Brink, "Geschiedenis der Nederlandsche Letterkunde", Amsterdam, 1897;-J. ten Brink, "Geschiedenis der Nederlandsche (Noord) Letteren in de 19e. Eeuw", Vol. 1, Rotterdam, 1904;-J. Dyserinck, "Anna Louisa Gertruida Bosboom-



his hold is on the popular mind; every Flemish village book-shop stocks his tales, while the works of Lemonnier and Demolder may be sought for in vain in pretentious city book-sellers. It is always so: Mr. Hardy's books are more oftener "shelved" in the public libraries than are Miss Dell's, and the second-hand stalls beneath the railway viaduct at Rotterdam and along the University "close" at Amsterdam more often display the writings of Vondel and Bosboom-Toussaint than do many library collections. Yet, though Conscience's work may not possess enduring literary qualities, it was a great achievement that "hij leerde zijn volk lezen" (he taught his folk to read), when Flemish was in disrepute and desuetude.

It is hardly possible to say more of him than that he initiated the writing of the novel in Belgium. Beyond this he did nothing to ensure its continuance; he prescribed no directions for his fellows to follow, but by

Toussaint", Den Haag, 1911;-G. Kalff, "Geschiedenis der Nederlandsche Letterkunde", Vol. 7, Groningen, 1912; H. Vissink, "The Influence of Scott on Dutch Literature", Zwolle, 1922.

B. The Novelist.-Anna Louisa Gertruida Toussaint belonged to a family of French that had settled in the Netherlands-She was born at Alkmaar in 1812-Received a careful education-Applied herself especially to literature-The course of her life was calm and even-Acted for a time as a governess at Hoorn-Delicate health soon forced her to relinquish this work-Returned to Alkmaar and devoted herself to writing-In the year 1851 she married the

<sup>1</sup> In his "Philosophie de l' Art", Book 1, p. 35, H. Taine writes: "Leur seul romancier, Conscience, quoique assez bon observateur, nous paraît bien pesant et bien vulgaire."

his provinciality and pedestrianism, he left<sup>it</sup> just as it was in the beginning. All was yet to do to make it representative of the Belgian people and to make it a reflection of those elements of character the Netherlands' peoples have in common; at this empirical stage he did not even try to wrest from his Dutch neighbours the secret of the success that they, through Holland's freely developed political ideas, had more quickly attained in the hierarchy of Scott. His failure to found the national novel in the history of Belgium meant that when the novel came irrevocably to **fructify**, it was too late for it to yield the best romantic flavour; this was a distinct loss to the Belgian side of the novel, oversating it with naturalism. The small extent to which he affected subsequent literary styles is shown by the way in which his successors had to seek new media for themselves. His influence was so ephemeral that the

genial painter Jan Bosboom-Lived thereafter at The Hague-  
In this city a statue was raised to her in 1887 and  
another at Alkmaar in 1912.

C. The Works.-"De Graaf van Devonshire", 1839;-"Engelschen te Rome", 1839;-"Het Huis Lauernesse", 1840;-"Een Kroon voor Karel den Stoute", 1841;-"De Graaf van Leycester in Nederland", 1847;-"Mejonkvrouw de Mauléon", 1847;-"Het Huis Honselaardijk in 1631", 1849;-"De Vrouwen uit het Leycestersche Tijdvak", 1849-1850;-"Don Abbondio II", 1853;-"Gideon Florenzoon", 1854-1855;-"Een Leidsche Student in 1593", 1858;-"Graaf Popoli", 1860;-"De Delftsche Wonderdokter", 1870;-"Ma-

so-called 'school' developed from his work was no more than a number of undistinguished followers, prepared to sacrifice to the same forced optimism. Even his historical novels were bettered by August Snieders, without very noteworthy having been accomplished. The inevitable reaction set in in the '80's, when, deprived of his pleasing personality, Belgium looked in vain for something behind the name that for so long had been supposed to carry her literary burdens.

Holland's case was more fortunate, for though the nonage and novitiate of the romantic art applied to the novel had even there but a modest beginning, it was through the work accomplished by Van Lennep and Oltmans, in seeking to render imaginatively Dutch national history that Scott was able to remain for fifty years the paramount force in the prose literature of Holland. In this long period of influence, Scott himself was never in danger of being vanquished, yet neither

Joor Frans", 1874;-"Langs een Omweg", 1874;-"Raymond de Schrijnwerker", 1879.-

"De Graaf van Devonshire" is "a romantic episode from the youth of Elizabeth Tudor", the hero being loved by Mary of England and himself being in love with her royal sister. The story concludes with the marriage of Mary to Philip of Spain, and the sacrificing death of Devon by poison self-administered. In respect of historical periodicity, "De Engelschen te Rome" is practically a continuation. The Eternal City under Sixtus V is revived, but topography is subordinated to the central love-interest.

were his later disciples unworthy or contemptible. Indeed, in Mev. Bosboom-Toussaint and Hendrik Schimmel, the two greatest Dutch <sup>novelists</sup> to date made their appearance; and their achievements brought the novel into line with the most recent Anglo-French developments.

Towards acquiring the Scott-method, Mev. Bosboom-Toussaint gave almost as much application as Oltmans had done, but from the outset her aim was somewhat opposed to Scott's and that of his most-formally-fit Dutch disciple. Her obsessions for history and archaeology were not professed to adapt her specifically as a historical novelist; her major concern was not history but psychology. In the preface to "De Graaf van Devonshire" she made clear her conscious purpose. "The writer of Ivanhoe, of Waverley, of Woodstock," she wrote, "personifies a sect, a class, a party in an individual, I myself use only parties and sects as I saw my personages

"De Graaf van Devonshire" dealt with English history. "De Graaf van Leycester", the first of the 'Leycester' cycle, combines Dutch and English history. The historical elements take precedence of the fictitious, for besides the old, ambitious and crafty statesman in his Netherlands' adventures, we meet such great figures as Sir Philip Sidney, Marnix the poet, Coornhert and Oldenbarnevelt. The other 'Leycesters' do not maintain this standard.

"Het Huis Lauernesse" has its scene in 1521-1525, the conflict-time of Catholic and Protestant. Human inter-

implicated in them." In spite of this declaration she was more under the sway of the king of romanticists than she was aware, for, though the idea of safe-guarding herself from "many an offence against history" was present, she certainly tended, as she advanced in her art, to write more in his manner. Adherence to her own plan could only result, at least while her artistic development was immature, in a loss of pictorial beauty, not compensated for by the complexity of her characterisation. But if at first her work was neither in typical Scott-fashion nor on the psychological model of Madame de Staël, she soon showed how admirably she had assimilated Scott's conception of the novel of the past. She was far in advance of Van Lennep and Oltmans, in disdaining the reproduction, with slight emendations and adaptations, of particular scenes, incidents and types from Scott, and may well claim to

est is lent it by throwing the hero and heroine, Aernoud Reinierszoon Bakelze and Ottelijne van Lauernesse, into circumstances that lead them to embrace different sides in the all-absorbing controversy of the time. Ottelijne's conversion to Lutheranism imparts greatest poignancy to the story by creating a breach between her and Aernoud. The latter in bitter disappointment turns inquisitor, and in dispersing a "hedge-sermon" is wounded, and dies supported by Ottelijne.

"Don Abbondio II" deals with the political and social life of the Netherlands in the first part of the nineteenth century. "Een Kroon voor Karel den Stoute" re-

have written the first absolutely original novels in his manner. What she took over from him of method, device and general factor in the art of the romanticist, she made her own, and any modifications they wrought upon her work were the result of skilful and intelligent manipulation; she took over the mechanism of the Scott-novel, but the technique she used ultimately was her own, for her manner and style remained at all times essentially Dutch.

This writer possessed a real talent for evoking the spirits of vastly-differing epochs, and whether it was that she was dealing with the time of Charles the Bold, middle-class life<sup>in</sup> Leyden, the Reformation, the fortunes of patrician houses, she always contrived to make her characters live again in her pages. But, neither possessed<sup>of</sup> nor seeking to cultivate Scott's precise pictorial art, she endeavoured to subordinate

verts to mediaeval Burgundy, "Een Leidsche Student in 1593" pictures the manners of the middle-class of the time, "Het Huis Honselaardijk" is a romance of that historic house in the seventeenth century, "De Delftsche Wonderdokter" describes the "pottery" city in Maurice's day, and "Mejonkvrouw de Mauléon" is the theme of "Lauer-nesse" rehandled and applied to France.

Of the books of the last period, the masterpiece, "Majoor Frans" is the story of a wild, impassioned girl, who has been brought up, in a rough and boyish fashion, and whose misfortunes and those of her family tend to disillusionment in man. The arrival of

topography and history alike to the central love-interest of imaginary characters.

By the critic Busken Huet she was charged with weakness of fancy in being addicted to the repetition of similar ideas and types under the influence of her ideal -self-abnegation through fear of God- and following on his attack she resolved to get away altogether from the demands of history and write in an entirely altered style. In the fruits of this resolve, she shows a surprising sympathy with modern ideas, especially in "Majoor Frans" (Major Frank), which is a Dutch "Wuthering Heights" in its colourful delineations of wild, lonely, heathy Gelderland, and in its portrayal of elemental passion. In a broader sense, she showed in this new order of prose that the novel in the Netherlands had now, as elsewhere, reached a period of transition, that it had become a "human document", and

her cousin Leopold at the decayed, ancestral seat gradually effects a change. Complications there still are in plenty through outbreaks of Frans' old nature, but the firm yet tactful methods of Leopold finally transform the hitherto rebellious and untameable "Major" Frank.

##### 5. HENDRIK JAN SCHIMMEL (1824-1906)

A. The Sources.-J. ten Brink in "Nieuwe Romans", Haarlem, 1883;-J. ten Brink in "De Oude Garde en de Jongste School", Amsterdam, 1891;-W. Jonckbloet, "Geschiedenis der Nederlandsche Letterkunde in de Twee

that a more effective talent was about to follow from the influx of the rationalistic into the sentimental.

While, everything considered, the vast yield of Mev. Bosboom-Toussaint was a notable advance on anything yet achieved for Dutch letters, it was not without patent defects. Most of her novels, like most of Scott's, suffer from their excessive longueurs; there is altogether too much talk to too little action (though in their own time, perhaps, this was not felt as a disadvantage). Her personages are living beings, and their hearts are compounded of real human passions, but she tended to be tediously<sup>fastidious</sup> in her descriptions of their faintest peculiarities; "she constantly sins," in other words, "against Lessing's cardinal law, and forgets the due demands between painting and writing." [H. and A. Zimmern, "Half-Hours with Foreign Novelists", p.314] Her perversion of the novelistic art in this overwhelming word-

Laatste Eeuwen", Vol. 2, Groningen, 1892;-J. ten Brink, "Geschiedenis der Nederlandsche Letterkunde", Amsterdam, 1897;-J. ten Brink, "Geschiedenis der Noord Nederlandsche Letteren in de 19e. Eeuw", Vol.2, Rotterdam, 1904;-H. Robbers, "H. J. Schimmel" in "Mannen en Vrouwen van Beteekenis", Amsterdam, 1907;-G. Kalff, "Geschiedenis der Nederlandsche Letterkunde", Vol. 7, Groningen, 1912;-H. Vissink, "The Influence of Scott on Dutch Literature", Zwolle, 1922.

B. The Novelist.-Hendrik Jan Schimmel was a native of The Hague, where his father was burgomaster-It was intended that he should become a notary-The death of his



puzzle is one that is not eradicated among writers of the Netherlands, though they have not the mitigation that the necessary descriptive phases of the historical oftentimes afforded.

Impossible as it is to put literary valuations on a "percentage" basis, the critics are infinitely more in order with their lavish praises of Mev. Bosboom-Toussaint than with those that were bestowed upon her predecessor Van Lennep. But after the lapse of forty years, it seems safe to say that her final place is not so high as at one time she appeared destined to fill. In each of her novels there is something that remains after reading, but there is always a vitiation of something else by her overdone metaphor, her fearsome neologisms, her interwoof of abstruse speculations dictated by an aggressive Calvinism. When all is said, however, she remains one of the most gifted of Dutch writers.

father obliged him to give up his studies-He went into business in Amsterdam-Many years passed before his circumstances materially improved-He rose at length to the position of <sup>director of</sup> the Netherlands Credit Company-In 1879 he settled in the country at Bussum-Devoted himself to belles-lettres-From 1854 to 1867 he took part in editing "De Gids"-After 1892 he became much occupied with spiritualism-He died at Bussum in 1906.

C. The Works.-"De Eerste Dag eens Nieuwen Levens", 1855;- "Eene Haagsche Joffer", 1856;- "Twee Vrienden", 1858;- "Mary Hollis", 1860;- "Mylady Carlisle", 1864;- "Het Gezin van Baas van Ommeren", 1870;- "Sinjeur Se-

And here, in passing, the important part women have taken in developing the novel in Holland might be referred to. The first Dutch novels were written by the ladies Wolff and Deken, the first attempt at a novel à la Scott was made by Mejuffrouw de Neufville, and in Mev. Bosboom-Toussaint it reached its zenith in Holland. To-day their share is no less adequate.

Holland was the citadel that maintained the romantic phase directed from Scott longer than any other, but even in the land of Rembrandt it might have passed away but for the advent of Hendrik Schimmel, for in the final period of Mev. Bosboom-Toussaint it was visibly waning, and in England and France "the movement back to uneasy introspection" had commenced. Schimmel, a whole-hearted romantic if there was one, proved a tremendous re-inforcement for the declining Scott cause; he brought back the objectivity inherent in the his-

meysn", 1875;-"Verzoend", 1882;-"De Kaptein van de Lijf-garde", 1888;-"Het Zonde Kind", 1898.

"De Eerste Dag eens Nieuwen Levens" is an account of the municipal revolution that occurred in 1572 at the "dead city" of Enkhuizen, a repudiation of the harsh rule of Alva that Schimmel turned into a localised picture of the genesis of the great struggle of All-Holland against Spain. "Een Haagsche Joffer" has its scene in the South Netherlands-Brussels- in 1624. It tells how the sagacity of the heroine, a daughter of The Hague, frustrates the designs of the Cardinal de la Cueva for the subjugation of the United Provinces.

torical form, and maintained it throughout his long career against the Russia-borne psychology of the new self-conscious, self-questioning schools. Far from Scott becoming a spent power, his hold on Holland was even strengthened by Schimmel, who was one of his most complete disciples and, who, though not the last of the historical novelists, was the last to be influenced by Scott-directly.

His early work gave little fore-taste of what was to come; simply good, patriotic Dutch history, written not without an eye to the picturesque, but containing roughnesses, stylistically, not found in the corresponding part of Scott's work -exaggerated romanticism scoring off literalism on the historical side. But soon the fruits of a patient study of Scott began to be apparent, and it is again pleasing to record that the author found a congenial field in British history. He copied Scott's plan of making his central character non-histor-

"Mary Hollis" is the first of a series of studies of the seventeenth century in British history. Mary Hollis, the daughter of a Puritan preacher of Yorkshire, is abducted from her home by the Duke of Buckingham, and the scene is shifted from Digby Castle to London. After many miseries she is rescued by her lover, Charles Digby. Most interesting perhaps is the description of the court-life of the time, in which figure "the Merry Monarch", the courtiers Buckingham and Monmouth, James moody and aloof, the youthful Prince of Orange, the Cabal ministers, singly and in conclave, the Duchess of

ical, but was more reliant upon actual history, and tended to force the factual part to embrace prominent dramatic material at every turn. In theory he was well aware that literature should not be subordinate to history, that those great ones who have lived and those crises that have taken place should not obtrude immoderately on the imaginative interest involving the public services and the domestic affairs of more ordinary figures. But the high promise of the intention was sometimes belied by the actual performance; a fascinating if faulty form of art. Like Oltmans, he was first and foremost Scott's disciple, and though in psychologizing he displayed a profounder knowledge of human nature than did his compatriot, he could do little without a historical background. The rarer phenomenon of the influence of Dickens is seen at work in his non-historical books, but these are in no way comparable with his Scott-

Portsmouth and Lady Castlemaine. In Mr. King, the family chaplain of the Digbys and a gentle but uncouth figure, we have a character fit to set alongside Dominie Samson.

"Mylady Carlisle" goes back to the Charles 1's reign and his unsuccessful attempt to subjugate his people is dealt with. The central character is not historical, but the factual portions of the book embrace such dramatic material as the king's appearance in the House of Commons to arrest Pym and also the celebrated siege of Petworth Castle.

"Sinjeur Semeyns" belongs to the period of William

formed output. As a painter of contemporary manners he ranks far below Bosboom-Toussaint, but in his more characteristic historical productions virtual equality is established with her. Of what he loses in this one-sidedness, he gains back something in his simpler, more direct style, and -in the broad sense- his more humorous conception of life.

With Schimmel the long and honourable reign of Scott in Holland comes practically to an end. His influence, indeed, never knew any definite passing, but in its full extension threw open fresh possibilities for fiction-writing. His inception in the Low Countries was slower than in most other countries, for by 1824 excellent imitatory work had been produced in Germany by Wilhelm Haring and in Italy by Alessandro Manzoni, while in France Alfred de Vigny's "Cinq-Mars" had been ready but two years later. But it would be difficult to speak of a 'school' of Scott in these countries, to

III, when he was still Stadtholder of Holland. It opens with the critical year 1672; but above the international conflicts of the time, above the Orange and de Witt factions, above even Schimmel's favourite hero, William, rises the sturdy figure of Semeyns, in the service of the Republican army. But interesting as are his adventures here, they are increasingly so in the sequel, "De Kaptein van de Lijfgarde". Through the personal experiences of the Lifeguardsman Semeyns are illustrated the memorable transactions of 1688 and

maintain, for example, that writers like Hugo and Balzac laid themselves under a very heavy burden of debt to Scott. In Holland it was quite otherwise. No considerable novelist of the mid-period of the nineteenth century remained outside of his direct influence-Beets,<sup>1</sup> though termed "the Dickens of Holland", was in reality a sketch-writer- and nowhere had he such a succession of close and obvious followers, novelists who could claim his particular form of art as their definite momentum.

Elsewhere there was, even in Scott's own time, a reaction against romance, with its stress on astounding prowess and its suggestion of enchantment, that led to a rehabilitation of other forms of fiction; but in Holland, save for the classical novels of so unrepresentative a writer as Professor Petrus van Limburg-Brouwer, a romantic treatment of real life continued its sway -a domination of all fiction forms- even after 1850, when the stand for beauty minus strangeness was maintained by Thackeray and George Eliot. This thread, so much less golden, Holland only caught up later, but develop-

the two years that followed-the arrival of William in England, the settlement of the new reign, and finally the king's campaign in Ireland. In the dramatis personae there also figure James II, Sunderland, Churchill, Judge Jeffreys. A defect is the "appeal" device in the matter of Semeyns' wife's presence in London. Following

<sup>1</sup> See G. van Rijn and J. J. Deetman, "Nicolaas Beets", 3 Parts, Rotterdam, 1910-1919.

ments within the historical form on the part of the posthumous devotees of Scott did something to bridge the gap; even so ardent a historiographer as Bosboom-Toussaint early sensed the necessarily-neglected elements of psychological and social effects in Scott, and Schimmel gave glimpses at times of escaping from the romantic spell of the Wizard's wand to cross the border-line into the colder kingdom of realism. Perhaps by this slight "reform from within" as by new treatments was the prospect for the novel shown to be practically boundless, that it would take, as Henry James says, "about all we bring in good faith to the dock."

upon that in "Mary Hollis" -herself a second Jeanie Deans- the idea seems overworked.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE LATER ROMANTICS

It has been noted that even before the middle of the nineteenth century the novel had begun to acquire that quality of realistic transcription now grown to such immense vogue. But though the people of Holland have always desiderated for "something craggy" (to use Byron's phrase) upon which to break their minds, they were almost the last to release the pleasant forms of romanticism. The explanation is that it was not the temptation to the grotesque, so potent in Hugo, Dickens and Collins, that fascinated them, but the simpler romance of Scott. Even in the third quarter of the century the main body of Dutch novelists gave no more than spas-

### THE AUTHORS AND THEIR WORKS

#### 1. EDUARD DOUWES DEKKER (1820-1887)

A. The Sources.-C. Busken Huet, "Multatuli", Amsterdam, 1868;-J. Versluys, "Een en ander over Multatuli", Amsterdam, 1889;-G. Jonckbloet, "Multatuli", Amsterdam, 1894;-H. Evans, "Who is Mutatuli", New York, 1906;-J. Prinsen, "Multatuli en de Romantiek", Rotterdam, 1909;-G. Kalff, "Geschiedenis der Nederlandsche Letterkunde", Vol. 7, Groningen, 1912;-W. H. W. de Kock, "Waarom de Max Havelaar Geschreven Werd", Den Haag, 1913;-J. de Gruy-



modic indications of outgrowing his influence, for who can be put alongside those writers we have ventured to name the 'school' of Scott? Van Koetsveld with his "Pastorij te Mastland" (Manse of Mastland) or Johan Gram with his "Familie Schaffels? A sense of humour, admittedly, is made to play round the village folk of such books, falling most genially upon the minister and the 'domin<sup>i</sup>e' -as happens in Scots literature of the same kind, a genre-painting in which Jean Paul himself excelled- but for us to-day it cannot truthfully be said that they satisfy "the only obligation to which . . . we may hold a novel . . . that it be interesting." [H. James, "The Art of Fiction" in "Partial Portraits", p. 384]

Worst of all these books maintain the "heresy of in-  
instruction", that absoluteness of opinion, that fetish  
to "improve", which Dutch writers have likewise in con-  
junction with Scottish. Even the work of Dr. M. P. Lin-  
do, transporting to Holland the more superficial char-

ter, "Het Leven en het Werk van Eduard Douwes Dekker", Amsterdam, 1920;-H. Padberg, "Multatuli: de Mensch, de Denker, de Liberator", Nijmegen, 1920;-K. J. L. Alberdingk Thijm, "Multatuli enz.", Rotterdam, 1922;-A. Werner, "The Humour of Holland", London, no date.

B. The Novelist.-Eduard Douwes Deker was born at Amsterdam in 1820-Was meant by his father, a ship's captain, to enter trade-This humdrum prospect made little appeal to his romantic nature-In 1838 he went out to Java-Obtained a post in the Inland Revenue-Filled various po-

acteristics of Thackeray, and that of the most accomplished exponent of the Netherlands-Indian literature, "Melati van Java", was decidedly but "for an age"; and if Busken Huet's "Lidewijde" was an antidote where plati-tudinarianism was concerned, it was also sufficient to demonstrate that he could never hope to become a great novelist. "Art", said Henry James, "is essentially selective, but it is a selection whose main care is to be typical, to be inclusive." ["The Art of Fiction" in "Partial Portraits", p. 398] In the novels of the minor Dutch authors of this time we find characters that are familiar types; their saliences are not hilariously exaggerated as so often in the creations of Dickens and Hugo. But if a man is not made into a vice (as Pecksniff, for example is rendered) or into something at once less and more than human (like Jean Valjean), these characters fall far short of being "inclusive", of gaining permanence as universal types.

sitions until 1851-Became then Assistant-Resident at Amboyna in the Moluccas-In 1846 he had married Everdine van Wijnbergen, who figures as the heroine of "Max Havelaar"-In 1856 he was appointed Assistant-Resident at Labak in the Bantam Residency of Java-Knowing now all the secrets of the Dutch colonial administration, he began to protest, in his official capacity, against the abuses of the system-In indignation at failing to receive the slightest satisfaction he resigned his position and returned to Holland-The publication of "Max Have-

But there was one towering exception to mediocrity among these 'uitlanders', Eduard Douwes Dekker, who more than any of his contemporaries has given to this period in Dutch literature a European significance. He was still a romantic, but an independent in art as in everything else; he was, indeed, a novelist not by intention at all, but merely by chance, since his greatest book was given forth in social protestation and his other novel had to be posthumously extracted from his miscellaneous "Ideën".

The appearance in 1860 of "Max Havelaar of de Koffij-  
Veilingen der Nederlandsche Handelmaatschappij" (Max Havelaar, or the Coffee Auctions of the Dutch Trading Company) was the signal for an eruption in Dutch literary circles. The name, or rather pseudonym, of "Multatuli", under which it appeared, might suggest an exotic isle or vegetable rather than an author, were it glimpsed on a shelf or in the pages of a catalogue.

laar" in 1860 brought him into prominence-Public<sup>opinion</sup> was aroused, but criticism also poured in upon him-Van Lennep who had at first assisted him wrote denying his right to publish such a book-A law-suit followed, which Dekker lost-For ten years he struggled with poverty, during which time he led a Bohemian life-In 1861 he published his "Love Letters" and between 1862 and 1877 seven volumes of "Ideas"-He decided to leave Holland-Went to live in Germany, at Wiesbaden-Later he removed to Nieder-Ingelheim on the Rhine, where he died in 1887.

As every Dutch schoolboy knows, the author possessed the good Dutch name of Dekker (Thomas of that ilk, the Elizabethan dramatist, it will be remembered, was of Dutch extraction). Since nonage, however, he had been connected with the Dutch Indies. In "Max Havelaar", therefore, we have but thinly-veiled autobiography; Max Havelaar is none other than Dekker himself, who imposed on his own story only a few external happenings, such as the episode about Saïdyah and Adinda, for purposes of effect. So definitely-framed an arraignment of colonial administration could hardly be a novel in the strict sense. It is Holland's "Uncle Tom's Cabin", but even as a roman-a-thèse it lacks the coherent charm of Harriet Beecher Stow's work. Its satire is too mordant, though often brilliant and telling, as when, after a horrible massacre of natives by regular troops, the author sums up the report of the responsible governor with the words, "Tranquillity had been re-

C. The Works.-"Max Havelaar of de Koffij-Veilingen der Nederlandsche Handelmaatschappij", 1860;-"De Geschiedenis van Woutertje Pieterse", 1890.

"Max Havelaar" is ostensibly the story of an assistant-resident in Java, who labours heroically to rectify flagrant abuses to which the native-population is subjected-Only after his protests have been slighted does he resign his post to plead his cause at the bar of European justice. Other characters are easily identifiable, especially Dekker's first wife as Tine. There

stored in the Lampoons"; and there is the sting of a Swift in his comment on the governor-general who was resolved to grant him no audience before he himself quitted the Batavian stage: "Another excellency had retired to the mother country to rest." But the climax especially, in which Dekker declares that if he is denied a hearing he will proclaim through Europe that "there is a band of robbers between Germany and the Scheldt," suggests by its complete lack of ~~of~~ restraint the hysteria of parts of the book, when sentimentality turns the edge of the satire.

"Max Havelaar" was certainly a tremendous auxiliary in the breaking up of conventional illusions and forcing reflection on vital problems, and it still retains its place as the most-read novel in the language, and one of the few known outside of it (even in the present year, 1927, a new English translation of it has appeared). But the truth seems to be that, though Dekker showed himself well-endowed with such appropriate talents as

is little plot complication, but the long episode concerning Saïdyah and Adinda forms in itself a tragically-imagined idyll.

"Woutertje Pieterse" portrays the agonies of isolated childhood much as does "The Story of an African Farm". "Wouter" belongs to a narrow-minded Amsterdam family, and sins at an early age against its conventions by selling his Bible to obtain money to buy a sensational story-book about a brigand. Later he comes into daily con-

fertility of imagination, spontaneity in description, a sense of humour, if of an ironic order, the aberrations of the book are too numerous and glaring, through the ill-balance of purpose, content, style and construction, to enable it to rank with the work of the greatest masters of fiction. It has been described as "one of the most exasperatingly inartistic books ever written,"

[A. Werner, "The Humour of Holland", Introduction, XX]

a fact recognized by the author when he heralded it:

"The book is a medley; there is no order, nothing but a desire to make a sensation." There is life in everything in it -and that counts for more than dead correctness of form- but had its vitality been embodied in a more perfect form, its powers of attraction would in the long run have been enhanced. As it is, it must count as a potent satire, not so great a novel, and not at all the work of art Professor ten Brink's summing up finds for it ["Geschiedenis der Nederlandsche

flict with various dull neighbours, with his mother and with his pedantic schoolmaster brother; and though he promises finally to renounce his romantic follies this is the result of beginning in business, not because of any radical change of heart.

## 2. CHARLES de COSTER (1827-1879)

A. The Sources.-C. Potvin, "Charles de Coster", Brussels, 1894;-L. Monteyne, "Charles de Coster", Antwerp,

Letterkunde", p. 653]

By Anatole France Dekker has been rather grandiloquently styled the "Voltaire of the Netherlands". His pen certainly "aroused a sleeping world" there, but it scarcely "shook a far mightier empire than that of Charlemagne, the European empire of a theocracy." He too was a preacher of revolt, but it was a revolt often blind, illogical, inconsistent with itself, and which from our point of view, seems curiously out of date. His views were almost entirely negative, for he was seldom a preacher of anything save revolt. But something a little Voltairian does emerge in his satiric wit and subtle humour, and stamps him as Holland's greatest humourist as well as her greatest iconoclast.

His finest fund of humour is to be found, unquestionably, in "De Geschiedenis van Woutertje Pieterse", also a kind of autobiographical novel. But this time the treatment is as refreshing and as joyous as that of "Max

1907;-E. Verhaeren, "Les Lettres françaises en Belgique", Brussels, 1907;-P. Hamelius, "La genèse de l' Ulenpiegel de Charles de Coster" in "Art et Littérature" (Brussels), August, 1908;-H. Liebrecht, "Histoire de la Littérature belge d' expression française", Brussels, 1912; P. Hamelius, "Introduction a la littérature française et flamande de Belgique", Brussels, 1921;-H. Liebrecht, "La vie et le rêve de Charles de Coster", Brussels, 1927; "M. des Ombiaux, "Les premiers romanciers nationaux de Belgique", Paris, no date;-J. A. Russell in "The Educat-

Havelaar" is severe and astringent; it is, in fact, brightier, freer, wittier, than any other book in Dutch fiction. The writing itself, as inevitable in a work so amassed, is decidedly uneven. but is at all points indicative of mental alacrity; although, it is certain, beneath its apparent artlessness many a stinging implication lurks. But it is essentially a joyous book- or rather torso- as full of life as "Pallieter" or "Huckleberry Finn". It is hardly too much to say that in this character-study, inchoate though it is, "Multatuli", the penner of the most acrimonious satire in Dutch, is almost Barrie-esque in his pathos and pawky humour, for the humour of the Netherlands seems to have, in common with that of Scotland, a certain canniness and practical shrewdness (characteristic of men and of nations that have bought their experience at first<sup>hand</sup> and at a heavy price).

It is forty years since Dekker's death, and now that a final criticism may be attempted, it is possible to

ional Journal" (Edinburgh), 19 August, 1927.

B. The Novelist.-Charles Theodore Henri de Coster was born at Munich in 1827-His father, Augustin de Coster, was attached to the household of the papal nuncio there-Soon after his son's birth he returned to Belgium-On leaving school de Coster was for a time a bank clerk-In 1850 he entered the Free University-Completed his studies at the University in 1855, taking the bachelor's degree-For several years thereafter he devoted himself to writing for various periodicals-In 1860 he was appoint-



say that he hardly justified the hopes awakened by his first, great, revolutionary work. In some ways he was a writer cast in as un-Dutch, or even anti-Dutch, a mould as it would be possible to imagine, ignoring for the moment the fact that he was chiefly the product of reaction. He was too haphazard, too unstudied, a force to give permanency to his literary modes, which were adjuncts of a volatile temperament; but by his moral lashing of plodding contemporary letters and current conventions and shams, he cut into a deep-set complacency with spoliatory incisions. He may have put little in place of this comfortable self-satisfaction-though his own positive contribution is never likely to be forgotten- but by rousing Holland from lethargy he became a fore-runner of the great renaissance of 1885; the latent activity so released was undoubtedly instrumental in itself in ensuring the culmination of this formative period in reasoned revolution.

ed to the Royal Commission to study old legal documents-Worked at this for four years and acquired a reputation as a mediaevalist-For the supreme achievement of his life he did not stint his preparations-To "Thyl Ulenspiegel" the author devoted ten years of his life-Its publication on the last day of 1868 afforded him little financial assistance, of which he stood in much need-In 1870 he was glad to accept the professorship of general history and French literature at the Military School in Brussels-This he held until his death-Harried

The immobility of Dutch letters in the beginning of the third quarter of the century was never so low as the synchronous state of Belgian letters, in which for thirty years so trite a novelist as Conscience was able to hold premier place. But in Belgium the conditions necessary for the cultivation of the experimental novel had not yet been reached; she had not yet undergone the violent breach in the continuity of her popular habits that had been inflicted upon Great Britain in the abruptness of the Industrial Revolution. Belgium knew little yet of Verhaeren's "Villes tentaculaires"; that huge agglomeration of working-class suburbs that makes up Charleroi and that dreary congeries of colliery-towns in the Borinage, "le pays noir par excellence," were only being projected; she still subsisted by her patient agriculture and a sense of beauty bequeathed by her old landscape painters. Any opposition to Conscience's work, therefore, meant a change within the historical

by debts and creditors, he died at Ixelles, Brussels, obscure and unnoticed-A monument to him was erected in the chief square of this quarter in 1911.

C. The Works.-"La légende et les aventures héroïques, joyeuses et glorieuses d'Ulenspiegel et de Lamme Goedzak au pays de Flandres et ailleurs", 1868.

"Thyl Ulenspiegel" opens with idylls of childhood. The hero continues to live an easy, idle life until the burning of his father at the stake for alleged heresies. Later his mother is put to the rack by the Inquisition.

form, taking it apart from his religious exaltation, and making it reflect the pondering, plodding, practical nature of the Netherlander, while establishing it in accordance with the aesthetic principles of romance, by awakening a sense of "largeness, remoteness and mystery." This was the accomplishment of Charles de Coster who, in the masterpiece of his life, epitomized the deathless spirit of the Flemish race in the most salient piece of romanticism ever offered to the Netherlands. The sources of his inspiration were multiple, but though handling well-worn material and borrowing freely de Coster adapted whatever he took over to his Flemish setting -even to the bold transference of the hero's birth-place from Germany to Damme in West Flanders- and formed a work without rival in this well-tilled field, an epic novel, an inexhaustible hymn "au coeur de la Mère Flandre".

The style of his "Thyl Ulenspiegel" is frankly Rabelaisian, but under the disreputable guise of the old-time

The martyrdom of Claes and Soetkin resolves him to a mission of vengeance. He enters the crusade to redeem his native land, with apparent lightness of heart, and along with Lamme Goedzak, roams the Netherlands, fomenting rebellion, recruiting as a spy and messenger, singing his songs continually, but never his last one. The book closes with the vision of Thyl and Nele of the glory in store for Flanders. There are many episodes, by the most important of which Thyl and Philip of Spain are contrasted in nature and action from the cradle onwards.

joyous vagabond who wandered from city to city and lived by his wits, de Coster has changed his hero from a Flemish Figaro or Scapin into a representative of the modern spirit, by insinuating for the flamboyant jollity of Rabelais a calculating intellect and a subtle wit that are truly Flemish. A hero of the Panurge pattern was not consonant with his exalted aim, but neither was one of the aloof and proud Egmont example wholly appropriate. Accordingly, while Thyl's ingenuity and waggishness are made responsible for the espiègeries of the book, he himself represents the brain of Flanders, the grosser side, the capacity for animalism, is represented by his constant companion, Lamme Goedzak, making the hero through this duality a combination of Sancho Panza, Don Quixote and noble-hearted Gueux. The symbolical treatment dispenses with unified history, but unmistakable in Belgium's destiny. are characters like Claes, the trusty fatherhood, Soetkin, the valiant motherhood, of Flanders, and Nele, her true heart, and Thyl her soul,

### 3. A. S. C. WALLIS (1856-1925)

A. The Sources.-J. ten Brink, "A. S. C. Wallis" in "Causerien over Moderne Romans", Leiden, 1885;-W. Jonckbloet, "Geschiedenis der Nederlandsche Letterkunde in de Twee Laatste Eeuwen", Vol. 2, Groningen, 1892;-J. ten Brink, "Geschiedenis der Nederlandsche Letterkunde", Amsterdam, 1897;-J. ten Brink, "Geschiedenis der Noord Nederlandsche Letteren", Vol. 3, Rotterdam, 1904;-Jo-

that after the last and greatest resurrection of Belgium we see to be as deathless as ever.

In many ways "Thyl Ulenspiegel" is the most remarkable thing in Belgian literature -it is certain that it carries off the major honours of Belgian romanticism. It is not free from barbarities and it is decidedly episodic, but in its vitality and concealed passionate force, in its unusual hold over both satire and pathos, without a touch of moral indignation, in its maintenance of historical accuracy, it is likely to sing on through Flemish literature and life as long as these continue to be cultivated and liberty is sought for its own sake.

It is almost amusing to find this great patriotic work interpreted by Catholics as the work of the devil, and it is just as amusing to see the work of so ardent a free-thinker annexed as a Protestant tract spurring Calvinistic bias. The truth all the time is that de

hanna Snellen in "Handelingen van de Maatschappij der Nederlandsche Letterkunde", Leiden, 1926; -P. H. Ritter, Jr., in "Letterkundige Kroniek" (Utrecht), 8 January, 1926.

B. The Novelist.-Adèle Sophia Cornelia Opzoomer, the real name of A. S. C. Wallis, was born at Utrecht in 1856. Her father was the well-known professor, Cornelius Willem Opzoomer, and himself a distinguished writer. Her entire youth was spent at Utrecht. Later her education was at a boarding-school in Germany. At a very early age

Coster conceived in a spirit of generosity, far too unusual, to merit either the approbrium or the plaudits of mere sectarians; his enthusiasm for national liberty was stronger than for any creed. He was, indeed, the first of the great French-writing Belgians who made Flanders their province, but his vision of All-Flanders separates his work from that of compatriots like Georges Rodenbach, who have treated from a local or personal standpoint. He came too near the tail-end of the romantic period for him to have any real imitators in the matter of specifics, but though he did not found a 'school', he set an ideal for future writers; he made it the fashion to be Flemish. As he said of his own Thyl, "A Fleming am I from the pleasant land of Flanders, workingman, nobleman, all in one-and I go wandering through the world, praising things beautiful and good, but boldly making fun of foolishness."

In every country at this time there were writers

she devoted herself to literature-In 1888 she married Geza von Antal, who had been a student of theology at Utrecht University-Went to live in Hungary, her husband's country-Von Antal was appointed professor at the Protestant Seminary at Pápa-The death of her father in 1892 affected her deeply-In 1910 Von Antal was elected a member of the Hungarian Parliament and journeyed backwards and forwards to Buda-Pest-The outbreak of the war, the calling of her son to the front in 1914 and the confusion of the subsequent years affected her profoundly-

who remained outside the main stream of romanticism, but the strength of the movement is shown decisively by the fact that it drew many whose natural tastes, inclinations and temperaments were realist, and forced them to produce romances. George Eliot was such a writer, so was Lord Lytton, and later Stanley Weyman, and within the compass of this study, Douwes Dekker and Charles de Coster may be referred to; these had the cause of humanity rather than that of romance at heart-but at heart they were romantics. It was different with a third novelist in this isolated Belgo-Dutch group, A. S. C. Wallis. She was less rich in natural endowment than either of her confrères, and wrote with more soberness of mind than they. Yet her style was not realistic, but classical. She did not, however, fashion Gothic-romance material to modern purposes as Lord Lytton did; she had merely renounced much of the picturesqueness of Scott (although through the comprehensiveness of her

In April, 1919 her husband was seized by the Communists, and after his release had to report daily to the Red police-In 1920 she journeyed to Holland, which she had not seen since 1906-There her old friends saw her "as one broken by life"-In 1924 her husband returned to his own country, there to be chosen Protestant Bishop-After a long illness she herself died at Rotterdam in December, 1925.

G. The Works.-"In Dagen van Strijd", 1878;-"Vorsten-gunst", 1883;-"Een Liefdesdroom in 1795", 1906;-"Ziele-

historical researches and her verisimilitude in displaying the results of these she was not entirely outside the limits of the novel as so largely formulated by him).

For a time the place of Mev. Bosboom-Toussaint in popular esteem was taken by this young writer. She was meticulous in her reading of externals, but though, like Schimmel, she was concerned, theoretically, to indicate these past times for more than the official few of the history-texts, she was, unfortunately, not always happy in her execution of this intention. The fault of nearly all her work is that it bears too much the impress of recorded history-the last of her three long novels, "De Koning van een Vreugderijk" (The King of a Happy Realm), is visibly sinking beneath the surface of literature. Her disposing of the accessories was more skilful in her stupendous conceptions, "In Dagen van Strijd" (In Days of Strife) and "Vorstengunst" (Royal Favour), but even in them her style is still so

strijd", 1908;- "De Koning van een Vreugderijk", 1913.

The plan of the first of these books is a grandiose one - "the days of strife" are those of the political and religious crises of the two Netherlands in 1566. Despite the length of the book, the period covered by it is not long. The scene is laid chiefly in Brussels, whence, in the phrase of the time, "Granvelle is gone", and where Margaret of Parma acts as regent for Philip ††. The other historical characters are Egmont, Hoorn,



concentrated as to suggest that she wrote in shadow. This lack of brightness and humour, however, sprang from no drily-advanced thesis, but simply from a natural earnestness of disposition decidedly Dutch. from a depth of mental life that combated Scott's romantic colouring and also the pointed Gallic genius with the dignity of suffering and the fine melancholy of the Scandinavian sagas of old.

The title of "the Dutch George Eliot" has been somewhat loosely applied to Mev. Bosboom-Toussaint, but the far closer analogies between the work of the English writer and that of Mejuffrouw Wallis seem to make the title more appropriately a reservation for her. The detail of the invented part of "In Dagen van Strijd" especially is strikingly reminiscent of "Romola"; we have in Van Vredenburg the same scholarly nature that we have in Bardi, in the intellectual, apparently unimpassioned, heroine who "had reflected, not experienced", we have another Romola, and in the cynical and intriguing, though

William of Orange. But these are hardly living creations. Of the imaginary characters only Edward is a little too perfect, despite his apostasy.

"Vorstengunst" is an even more stupendous piece of work. It takes us back to Sweden in the period 1554-1568, to the completion of Gustavus Vasa's great reign, and the assumption of the crown by his son Eric. But the interest is centred in Göran Person, at first Melanchthon's favourite student, and then chancellor to Eric. Upon this minister-of-state history heaps obloquy. Miss

far from utterly bad, character of Reynold, we find a lesser Tito. For a counterpart to Macciavelli we have only to turn to Göran Person in "Vorstengunst", who takes his place beside the great Florentine for the cupidity attributed to him. The plot of neither of these books is so interesting or so well-knit as that of "Romola", and the psychology generally is on a lower level -there is nothing so touching as Tito's discovery in the cottage of the domestic felicity denied him in the palace of the Bardi— but, all over, they are pervaded by a more gentle spirit.

The novelistic stock of A. S. C. Wallis shows a romanière gifted differently from the main group of historical writers in Holland, her inspirers having been, not Van Lennep and Oltmans, nor even so much ~~as~~ her admired Bosboom-Toussaint, but Aeschylus, Dante, Shakespeare, Lessing, Schiller, Goethe. Above all, she was an intellectual, with much of the mental vigour associated with George Eliot and with the same faculty for anal-

Wallis attempts his vindication by representing <sup>him</sup> as the high-souled idealist he undoubtedly was during the first stage of his public life; in the end he is broken on the wheel by the vindictive party of the nobles, but his unpopularity has arisen by his championing of the fickle king's cause. The thesis of the book is the recurring one of the tragedy arising from misunderstanding, and on the basis of Person, misunderstood and misunderstanding in turn, the novelist attempts to reverse the verdict of

ysing moods and emotions, while her heavy style, inclining to Germanism, is decidedly allied. But she remained a peculiarly inconclusive and unplaced sort of writer; in a traditional period possessing neither the power to improve what had been done nor to anticipate what was to come. Her fiction belongs to the subjective-historical order, but the blend is imperfect.

Her lack of humour was a severe drawback in the way of humanising her work, for if Dekker and de Coster showed that it is hardly possible to be lyrical without being romantic, they also showed that wherever there is humour and satire, there is, if not reality, at least a sense of reality. It can be said of all three of them that they "suffered much", but only in Mev. von Antal's case was there no predisposition towards humour, even of the satiric kind, as is seen by looking at her twin-masterpieces, written before the innumerable sorrows of life had touched her at all. Pathos and pity relieve those works, but how we long for those lively flashes that do more to raise the curtain on character than whole chap-

history. Since the book is not history, it is immaterial whether or not she has been successful in this. The effect is, naturally, heightened for the central figure with his Roman virtues, and it is enough to say that he is fit to take his stand beside Adam Bede for the actual austerity of his character.

"De Koning van een Vreugderijk" is a closely detailed

ters of packed description! If an authoress of such genuine talent had sought to impose on the dry bones of official history Scott's brightness in dialogue and picturesqueness in detail, what fresh lustre she would have shed upon his genius, dispersed through the Netherlands!

The humour she lacked -that indefinable native strain, that ironie narquoise- is found abundantly in Dekker and de Coster; and its presence improves their work as much as its absence detracts from hers. It may be that this nimbleness of mind was derived from that French influence so potent in de Coster, and which Dekker seems also to have shared. De Coster was first and last a Fleming, with a different kind of tradition to draw upon from that of literary France. But though he must for ever stand apart from the pure lineage of French literature, it cannot be overlooked that it was to the art and civilisation of France that he deliberately turned for models to stimulate and refine his talent. Dekker, of course, did not make his cultural approach through the French classical spirit, but his mental calibre was in some

study of the reign of Gustavus III, "the last of the great Swedish princes who belong rather to Europe than to Sweden." But it lags far behind her brilliant early work. The veneration felt by all Dutch people for Wil-

ways initially allied to the perspicacity of the French. The effect of the new French naturalism was soon to provide Dutchmen with their first opportunity to exercise their natural gifts, but Dekker was first to possess that sincerity, the direct intuition of nature, that, with the faculty of plastic creation, the first naturalists had. But both Dekker and de Coster were still sufficiently romantic to make their personalities shine through everything they wrote; they were incapable of purely objective work, in which their audiences would be glanced at occasionally with a look of superior irony. Energy is the best word to use to define the essential quality of their temperaments, an energy of individualism, that led to the same impatience of all that was formal, and measured, and restrained. And if this did not make them great novelists in the strict sense, it meant they were great men-who wrote novels.

William the Silent is transferred here for the time being to one of the most truly enlightened of eighteenth century despots, cut off prematurely, like Holland's national hero, by the hand of the assassin.

## CHAPTER V

### BELGIAN REALISTS AND SYMBOLISTS

By the middle of last century Scott's legacy to Europe was definitely under challenge, and though he was not dispossessed, other novelistic aims made themselves felt, especially the portrayal of contemporary manners. According to present standards the new novel-writers were not realists, for they commonly recombined the matter of actual life for instruction or satire, but their efforts certainly made for realism. It was the age of Science, the age of material things, the age of what we must call "progress", and soon even words, with that facile elasticity that is in them, came to perform miracles in the exact reproduction of everything that visibly existed exactly as it existed. Yet, only in the case of a Dickens was the product of the new artistic

### THE AUTHORS AND THEIR WORKS

#### 1. CAMILLE LEMONNIER (1844-1913)

A. The Sources.-J. ten Brink, "Causerien over Moderne Romans", Leiden, 1885;-F. Nautet, "Histoire des lettres belges d' expression française", Brussels, 1892;-F. Nève, "La renaissance des lettres en Belgique", Louvain, 1890;

principles, to begin with, of the first grade.

In Holland the renaissance of feeling, as expressed in the humanitarian novel of Dickens continuing the policy of Richardson, was apparent chiefly in the modifications wrought on the historical mould by meliorist writers like Mev. Bosboom-Toussaint. In the Belgium of the '50's, however, there occurred a definite break-away from Conscience's romantic narrative, and realists and humorists like Thackeray and Dickens became the great protagonists for the interpretation of daily life with fidelity. These first attempts at writing the roman de mœurs, as we have seen, were not conspicuously successful; the new English novel, with its philanthropic motive, could not be imported to Belgian soil, for it was the result of specifically English conditions, bearing the impress of specifically English ideas, and it was little comprehended by the foreigner. Yet, as a counter-stroke to Conscience's puerile conception of

L. Delmer, in "L'art en cour d' assises", Brussels, 1893; -A. Mockel, in the "Mercure de France", April-May, 1897; -J. Destree, "Les écrivains belges contemporains", Brussels, 1897; -L. Bazalgette, in "Les Célébrités d'aujourd'hui", Paris, 1904; -D. Horrent, "Ecrivains belges d'aujourd'hui", Brussels, 1904; -H. Liebrecht, "Histoire de la littérature belge d'expression française", Brussels, 1912; -J. Bithell, "Contemporary Belgian Literature", London, 1915; -G. Turquet-Milnes, "Some Modern Belgian Writers", London, 1916; -M. des Ombiaux, in "Col-

novel-writing, the work of D. Sleeckx, R. Snieders and Emile Greyson was of some importance, though they cannot be said to have acclimatised what was to be the true novel of manners of their country. To annex that a more extraordinary circumstance was required, and this was supplied by the spreading naturalism of France.

A rapid change, undoubtedly, occurred in the Belgian novel when the help of French realism, or naturalism, as it came to be known in its later stages, was sought. At first realism acted as though a spring had been released for the photographic reproduction of ordinary things, but, though the development of the novel in Belgium was largely determined by the course of events in France, the note of the new realism never deteriorated at Brussels and Antwerp into a scientific reproduction of fact; it was pre-eminently observation à travers un tempérament. In general there was also less preference for the purely disagreeable; the Belgian novel has nev-

lection des écrivains français de Belgique", Paris, 1910; -P. Hamelius, "Introduction à la littérature française et flamande de Belgique", Brussels, 1921; -G. Rency, "Camille Lemonnier", Brussels, 1922.

B. The Novelist.-Antoine Louis Camille Lemonnier was Flemish on both sides of his parentage-His father was a lawyer of Louvain-He was born in the Ixelles quarter of Brussels-Attended the Athénée of the city-Showed little aptitude for study-Took up a clerical post in a government office, but resigned after three years-Entered



er been in the same sense as its neighbour of France "the fruit of maturity addressed to maturity", perhaps because it had not the morals of the Second Empire to draw upon, and certainly because it reflects the vivid, pictorial energy of the race.

A profoundly national character disengaged itself only gradually, but since 1880 it has been strikingly evident. It had been contended that Belgian writers ought to take their direction from Paris and so keep their French free from all provincial disfiguration; but against that view, which would have denationalised literature in Belgium, there was opposed the creed of "La Jeune Belgique", expressing sympathy with the Latin genius but declaring that language in itself matters little if the writing but smacked of the soil. Because of their selection of the French language for their expression, the founders of "La Jeune Belgique" were somewhat unfairly attacked by "L' Art Moderne", the supporters of which, through their social theories, held that a Bel-

the world of literature by writing art criticism-When he was twenty-five his father died-Went then to live at the Chateau of Burnot, in the hills near Namur-For some years lived a free and open-air life there-Only financial inability to maintain it made him return to the town-The Franco-Prussian War was the next formative event in his life-The rejection of his "Un Mâle" by the judges of the Quinquennial Prize of Literature in 1883 made him the centre of a school, inaugurated at a banquet given in his

gian should think and write as a Belgian. How little irreconcilable the doctrines of the rival forces have turned out is shown by the fact that it is these same writers, no matter in what camp enlisted, who have given their small country such a remarkable place in the recent literature of Europe.

For this happy consummation of an undeniably national literature, Belgium owes most to Camille Lemonnier, who, though he had written a number of books prior to 1880, really belongs to the period beginning then. Though no one was ever more opposed to the French traditions of sobriety and restraint in matter and style, Flaubert and Baudelaire were his first exemplars. Zola came later when the naturalist school was at the height of its power in Paris. Of none of them, however, was <sup>he</sup> a complete disciple; but in his mystico-sensual leanings, in his pious materialism, in his Rubens-like fertility and love of colour, emphatically Flemish. He was by turns and compositely naturalist, lyricist and symbolist, and

honour in May of the same year-In 1888 the Quinquennial Prize was awarded him for "La Belgique"-The same year he was ~~was~~ tried and fined in Paris for one of his short stories-At Brussels and again at Bruges he was persecuted for immoral writing, but on both occasions was triumphantly acquitted-Was for a time the editor of "Gil Blas" in Paris-In 1911 he delivered the oration on the occasion of the unveiling of the de Coster memorial at Ixelles-He died at Brussels in 1913, his own statue now

though he may be accounted a realist to some extent, his realism was not French, but Belgian.

Belgian critics sometimes complain that while everyone notes the historical precedence of "Germinal" (1885) over "Happe-Chair" (1886), no one is concerned to point out the long start "Les Charniers"<sup>(1871)</sup> can give "La Débâcle" (1892). This captiousness proceeds from a misunderstanding of the greatest of French and Belgian realists, from the belief that they had everything in common, and that even their faults proceeded from an analogous method. It is unlikely that "Les Charniers" made the least difference to Zola when he came to write of Sedan, but it can be said that "Happe-Chair" would probably not have been written at all if Zola's epic of the coalmine had not been present to serve as a model for that of the rolling-mill. Recognizing this, we can at once arrive at the salient difference in the characteristic of each.

rising before the entrance to the Cambre wood, within sight of the forest of Soignes he loved so well.

C. The Works.-"Les Charniers", 1871;-Un Coign de Village", 1879;"Un Mâle", 1881;-Le Mort", 1882;-Thérèse Monique", 1882;-L' Hystérique", 1885;-Happe-Chair", 1886;-Madame Lupar", 1888;-Le Possédé", 1890;-La Fin des Bourgeois", 1892;-Claudine Lamour", 1893;-L' Arche", 1894;-La Faute de Madame Charvet", 1895;-L' Homme en Amour", 1897;-L' Ile Vierge", 1897;-Adam et Eve" 1899;-Le Bon Amour", 1900;-Une Femme", 1900;-Au Coeur Frais

In "Les Charniers" -an immature but typical piece of work- where Zola's guidance was scarcely available, we do not have impressions of the huge investment noted with the exactitude of the analyst, as in "La Débâcle"; no probing interest in points of strategy carried out by Von Moltke and Macmahon, in documentary evidence, in topographical features around Bazeilles, Le Calvaire d' Illy or the peninsula of Iges, but simply a threnode of overwhelming pity for the victims of the colossal slaughter. In Zola there is as much implied regret for their frightful sacrifice, but it is never unrelated to the political and social implications of warfare nor to recorded history. In a word, then, Lemonnier's is not the descriptive novel; Science is not his ignis fatuus, as it is Zola's. He really inclines to the sensitivists, for like them he paints his imagination in the form of ever-sensitive emotions and reactions; he is too overladen with emotions and feelings to see things steadily and in their scientific

de la Forêt", 1900;-"Les Vent dans les Moulins", 1901; "Le Sang et les Roses", 1901;-"Le Petit Homme de Dieu", 1902;-"Les Deux Consciences", 1902;-"Comme va le Ruiseau", 1903;-"L' Amant Passionné", 1905;-"Le Droit au Bonheur", 1904;-"L' Hallali", 1906;-"Tante Amy", 1906;-"La Chanson du Carillon", 1911.

"Le Mâle" is the fine flower of Lemonnier's first creative period. The "male" is a notorious poacher, Cachapès (Search After), who snares animals at night, and makes daring excursions to the neighbouring town to

whole.

Though just as little as the much-maligned Emile Zola was he a mere pornographer, he did not like that reforming zealot, preach a precise evangel for all the major ailments of mankind. His ideas are akin, not to the logical conclusions of a systematic thinker, but to the imaginations speculations of a visionary, for whom the larger problems of his time have become genuine sources of inspiration. The result is a vast lyricism, a disarray of tremendous feelings, but an incapacity to apply abstract principles, an abnegation of all critical outlook, and hence the absence from his work of doctrines and metaphysics. Yet in this Lemonnier is seemingly true to racial type, for the same inferiority in the logic of action characterises all Belgians.

He has been admirably described as "un terrien conscient"; nature is his great theme, and, plunging into

dispose of the game he has killed; having hairbreadth escapes from gamekeepers and gendarmes. This defiant but fascinating character falls in love with Germaine, the daughter of the farmer of Hulotte, on the edge of the forest. A little foundling girl, Gadelette, comes under the poacher's care, and he becomes for her almost a hero. Germaine continues her friendship with Cachapprès, though her father wishes her to marry Hubert, the son of his friend Hayot. The two are seen by the poacher, when parting from each other during a visit; the outlaw then

fantasies of art, he reformulates, from a naïve and superficial naturalism, the theories of Rousseau. He is one of the first of the painter-poets who so largely fill the record of fiction in Belgium; the poet gains the day, in seeking to blend the real and the ideal. Can Lemonnier, then, be described as a realist? Except in one or two of his thirty novels, in a Zola-esque sense, no! Work mellowed by such poetry as we have in "Un Mâle" and "Le Vent dans les Moulins" is not even the modified realism that is found in Arnold Bennett, George Moore and Louis Couperus. But it probably comes as near to realism as the Belgian mind can ever hope to approach. It is not the stark, unsparing collation of the Balzac of the Second Empire, but how far advanced from the trite romanticisation of Conscience! Plenty of frank, Flemish sensuality, but not the rigorous, logically-pursued, reformatory zeal of "L' Assommoir" or the feeble, temperance-tract moralising of "De Plaaig

creates some terrible scenes; first with Hubert and then with Germaine herself. A fearful quarrel also ensues between her three brothers and the three sons of Hayot. Cachaprès at last meets his fate in a gendarme's bullet, and dies, attended by Gadelette, who has loved him from the first.

"Le Mort" is a masterpiece of terror; it is the long drawn-out agony and remorse of two brothers, the Bar-aques, whom avarice has driven to murder. But despite all their efforts, the victim always reappears on the

der Dorpen": ever the vehement and mystical tendencies proper to a Belgian of the Belgians, aware that men are more likely to be moved by a sentiment than by a formula.

Lemonnier, it need hardly be said, is not a novelist of European magnitude; only a foolhardy worshipper would contend seriously that his work has the great qualities of the dominating literary quartette of his own period in the nineteenth century, Nietzsche, Ibsen, Tolstoi, Zola. To his sensitive and sensual love of nature and his minimum of reflection, there is coupled a voluptuous feeling for words, which sometimes renders him unnecessarily arcane; like most other Belgians he was a person of extremes (as if unbalance were part of the national heritage). Yet, in the final analysis, he must be looked on as the novelist of Flanders, much as Verhaeren is the poet of Flanders. Magnificently, with that great patriot, would he have echoed:

"Hommes de Bruges et de Courtrai, hommes de Gand,

surface of the pond into which he has been thrown. The three brothers, Balt, Bast and Nol, are Dickens-like in their idiosyncrasies.

The second -the psychological- series opens with "L' Hystérique". It is the lurid story of -a the love of a priest for one of his parishioners, the theme being worked out as in Zola's "La Faute de l' Abbé Mouret". "Happe-Chair" (Torment) is a documented study of the life of workers in the rolling-mills of Charleroi. In order to write it, the author lived for many weeks

Avec mon vouloir âpre, avec mon coeur vorace,  
Certes suis-je profondément de votre race."

Within his own country he had but two precursors in literature, Conscience and de Coster. The low romantic tendencies of the former he was obliged to reject, nor could he accept, despite his admiration, the allegorical and preternatural elements in the work of the latter. But if he turned to France for inspiration, he certainly made his acquisitions Belgian more than by mere adoption; his worship at the altar of the goddess of Science was neither so adulatory nor so regular as to make the epithet, "the Zola of Belgium", one of reliable application, and he could really claim, after much toil and initial extravagance, that he had fashioned his own medium for the expression of his ideas, that he <sup>was</sup> "one of the first to cross the frontier with literature that was not contraband." [C. Lemonnier, "La Vie Belge", p. 261]

Keats has said that poetry should surprise by a fine excess; Lemonnier, it might seem, applied this dictum to prose as well, for with him excess becomes a consci-

in the dreary dependencies of Charleroi, Couillet and Marcinelle, observing the existence of the mill-workers. He was accompanied by the artist, Constantin Meunier, who supplied the illustrations for "Happe-Chair". In particular it is the story of Huriaux, an honest worker, and the sordid unhappiness of his marriage with the faithless Clarinette, who finally deserts him and their daughter, Melie.

"La Fin des Bourgeois" announces the downfall of the



ous aesthetic principle, the basis of a new dynamic force. It has led him, like Carlyle and Emerson, to perceive heroism in everyday life and employment, and to discover an aesthetic of modernity. With Verhaeren, his early friend, he proclaims,

"Le Rêve ancien est mort et le nouveau se forge," and he too faces the degrading and ugly aspects of the struggle for existence in "the Octopus city", with its tentacles of roadways and railways. And though he lacks Verhaeren's epic solutions, he has acquired, through the insight of enthusiasm, an unphilosophical share in his apocalyptic vision of a new course of beauty in the trend of human effort.

From the death of de Coster until the revival in the early '80's, Lemonnier remained a solitary figure in Belgian letters. But from de Coster's dying grasp he had seized the flag of reaction, and during those years he was working away quietly but steadily, and was, in truth,

bourgeoisie and the triumph of democracy, while "L' Homme en Amour" is a variation of the theme of "Le Possédé", but less universal in its application; it is a modern "Measure for Measure".

Of the novels of the third period, "Au Coeur Frais de la Forêt" tells how two city-waifs find their way to the heart of a mythical forest, where they learn to use their hands and their brains, and set forth to found the ideal city of the future. But the best of them, "Le Vent dans les Moulins", tells the story of an aris-

the advance-guard of the new writers - "the Awakener" he has been well named. The ebullition of that time was due proximately to the fermentation in the minds of Max Waller and his comrades, but that in turn was in large measure due to Lemonnier's pioneering endeavours. Admittedly, it was in poetry that the new school - as in Holland - made its most pronounced successes, but in prose there were higher individual triumphs, if we except Verhaeren. Not every Belgian man of letters went over to Baudelairianism and the Parnassiens of Paris; the naturalist deities of France claimed the worship of Lemonnier for one, and he was soon joined by Georges Eekhoud, though the two never came exactly into step with one another.

Like Zola, like Lemonnier, Eekhoud is a rebel, but his revolt takes neither the reasoned form of that of the father of the Rougon-Macquart nor the healthily exultant of Lemonnier's. His books teem with prurient and brutal, often revolting, images, but it is passion-

ocratic dreamer, Drees Abeels. He is the son of a flax-merchant, but renounces his life of ease and comfort, and apprentices himself to a carpenter and becomes engaged to Mamie, a village girl; in his spare-time he preaches Socialism, and comes into conflict with the authorities, while he fails to gain the sympathy of the workers, who are suspicious of his motives.

"Le Petit Homme de Dieu" is a companion-study to this. It centres in the quaint, old "dead" city of the dunes, Furnes, and the main action is provided by the annual festival of the Ommeegang, which changes the good Flem-

ate admiration, not corrective hope or boundless commiseration, that he offers characters drawn from the wantonly depraved, the outcasts of society and the abnormal. With such determined zeal are these patibulary heroes exploited that, in order to treat life artistically, it seems necessary for him to go to the criminal classes; ordinary<sup>life</sup> is so flat and vulgar that he abandons himself to resurgent instincts; Eekhoud's is the intransigent utterance of one who is the greatest enemy of tradition and convention among the novelists of Belgium, making him share Verhaeren's motto: "Je hais les précédents!" But the very violence of this temperament, which reason so little subdues, prevents our giving ourselves up freely to the emotions of such outrageous art. In Zola subject and treatment are usually in equilibrium, in Lemonnier we obtain plenteous relief from lust and blood in fragments of dream and visions of sylvan beauty; but to Eekhoud life seems wholly tragic, febrile, exterminative of weakness, so

ish city into the ancient Jerusalem. It falls to the lot of a young rope-maker, Ivo Mabbe, to play the part of Jesús in the procession, and it is the complete identification of himself with the part that gives rise to the title. Through this form of religious mania, he ceases for a time to see his sweetheart, Cordula, the daughter of a farmer of the dunes, because she had played the part of Mary Magdalene. But the ridicule of the townspeople and his own humility succeed in bringing them together again.

that, possessed of hope neither in God nor in Nature nor in Man, a pessimist he is bound to be, "like every ego-tist who writes his work with his own blood."

But this creature of unbalance and morbid extremes is only part of Eekhoud. There is also the man who has a passionate love for his country, its customs and its ways of living, who revered the Kempen peasant, not corrupted, but as he is, with his familiar characteristics of prudence and tenacity. And the combination is a writer, in some ways, the most fundamentally Flemish of the whole group. Even in his avowed partiality for the excesses of language and imagination in the plays of Webster, Otway, Marlowe, Fletcher, he shows himself more Flemish than English, for they, like himself, have only done in literary art what Jordaens and Rubens have bacchanalised on canvas. A race which has always well liked eating and drinking can let itself go in this forced, exaggerated work, which has been fittingly called

"Les Deux Consciences" is an avowedly autobiographical novel, in which Lemonnier pleads his own case against his judges, and justifies his literary methods. Lighter in texture is "Claudine Lamour", the history of a Parisian music-hall star. "L' Arche is a domestic idyll, a glorification of family life (pointing towards the novels of the final, serene period). "L' Hallali" is the story of the end of a race, the psychology of a noble family, the Quevauquants, the last members of a stock exhausted by misalliances and perversions.

the kermesse of literature. So much does Eekhoud belong to this rude, plebeian race, that it is known he has sought additionally to consecrate his work to it by adopting a style harsh and heavy that the guttural sonorities of Flemish may be reproduced in French.

Eekhoud has sustained the pioneer work accomplished by Lemonnier, and if he has not augmented it in method and style, it must be remembered that for Lemonnier the claim has been made that the germ of all the later developments in Belgian letters may be traced in his work. In the first place, the source of Eekhoud's inspiration is more concentrated; he has not Lemonnier's crowded psychological domain, not that writer's joy in his creations; and, secondly, in his greater vigour of style, he has carried his formlessness to ridiculous lengths. Yet these two have fashioned the prose of modern Belgium, a prose-form so highly coloured and so fitful as to be essentially a poetisation of pictures. Both

"La Chanson du Carillon" has its scene in another "dead" city, Bruges, but it is very sentimentally told in the first person.

## 2. GEORGES EEKHOUD (1854- )

A. The Sources.-J. Destrée, "Les écrivains belges contemporains", Brussels, 1897;-D. Horrent, "Ecrivains belges d'aujourd'hui", Brussels, 1904;-H. Krains in "La Belgique Art et Littérature" (Brussels), May, 1907;

are realists, but theirs is nearly always a dream-realism, in which filth itself ferments with poetry; dreamers and colourists they are, with the art of description taught them, not by French scintillation and precision of thought, but by the kindred arts of painting and sculpture (a feature that lingers in the Netherlands' novels, for Streuvels, Timmermans, Van Looy and others indulge it almost as assiduously as ever).

In no sense is Eekhoud a constructionist; he is, in fact, like so many Belgian writers, both on the Flemish and on the Walloon side, incapable of writing anything but short stories, so that what appear to be intended as novels are no more than collections of independent impressions. This remark applies even to his finest piece of work, "La Nouvelle Carthage", which is a series of descriptive essays on modern Antwerp, leavened by autobiography. Yet, this does not indicate that the novel in Belgium is in decay, for it is no mere expansion of the short story, but a new, impressionist form

-H. Liebrecht, "Histoire de la littérature de Belgique d'expression française", Brussels, 1912; -H. van Puymbrouck, "Georges Eekhoud en zijn Werk", Antwerp, 1914; -J. Bithell, "Contemporary Belgian Literature", London, 1915; -G. Turquet-Milnes, "Some Modern Belgian Writers", London, 1916; -P. Hamelius, "Introduction à la littérature française et flamande de Belgique", Brussels, 1921; -M. Bladel, "L'œuvre de Georges Eekhoud", Brussels, 1922.

B. The Novelist.-Georges Eekhoud was born at Antwerp in 1854. An official in the insurance profession, his father

of art that is involved, an art in which the sensations are increased to the point of paroxysm, until the artist shares the frenzy of Dionysus, throbbing with the pulsations of the forest or quivering with the tender sadness of humanity.

It has been noted that realism in Belgium has assumed a form different from that in France, that it is not marked by the French love of clearness and order, but shows, by its mystic philosophy and its taste for the strange and horrific, the other side, the Germanic, of the Belgian nature. The Belgian poets, indeed, never put into practice at all the principles of realism, but by bringing to light all that was obscure and inexpressible in the life of their souls, created the true symbolism, that reflects and repercusses every vision, in which, as Carlyle has said, "there is concealment and yet revelation." The prose-writers were only a shade less lyrical when, under the influence of inward or external excitement, thought was eliminated; even the most

died when he was eleven years old-He was sent to school in Switzerland, where he acquired a good knowledge of German, English and Italian-On completing his schooling he returned to Belgium to live with an uncle at Borgerhout, now a suburb of Antwerp, but of which his uncle was then mayor-This uncle, a candle-manufacturer, intended him to become an engineer-But this plan failed, and he was sent to the Military School at Brussels-After half a year there he ran away-This act put him

"realistic" of them, Lemonnier and Eekhoud, but dabbled in objectivity, while in Georges Rodenbach the affective faculties became almost as predominant as when given rein by the will of the poet, making it impossible to criticise his prose apart from his poetry.

Rodenbach is, of course, "the Singer of Bruges"; his work is almost all an evocation of silence and solitude related to the grey beauty of the capital of West Flanders; no other writer has apotheosized so matchlessly any city. A pre-established harmony seemed to exist between his soul and the city of his youth; haunted by Flemish images -of a land drowned in mists, of creeping canals with swans gliding noiselessly along, of quaint houses with crow-stepped gables and red-tiled roofs- he so read himself into the Stimmung of the town that he aimed at evoking it as a living being associated with the mood of the spirit, and by this supreme genius loci he was kept Flemish to the end.

outside the pale of his relations-Joined the staff of an Antwerp newspaper-Later he was enabled to join the household of his grandmother, a rich woman-He was thus put in touch with painters and poets-Had also the necessary leisure to read of and to see life-On his grandmother's death in 1878 he found himself the possessor of a considerable fortune-He now set about to realise his ambition-At Cappellen near the Dutch frontier, he purchased an estate-Thereafter he lived the true squire's life as a gentleman farmer-But his farming schemes failed and



The writing of Rodenbach is in no sense descriptive; he paints for us neither the moeurs nor the paysages of Flanders; the world to which he introduces us is not so much Bruges and WestFlanders as abstractions of them that his horror of prosaic realism presents to the imagination; he makes a work of art out of a visionary interpretation of fact, he creates a symbol. When it is reflected on that in this city Rodenbach saw only its silence and its mystery, we have a striking revelation on the working of a poet's mind. Actually, as most tourists even know, Bruges-la-Morte is often Bruges-la-Vivante -sometimes Bruges-la-Bruyante when clumsy market-carts rumble across the Grand'Place- for Rodenbach it was perpetually (to use his own words) the "grand catéchisme du calme;" he was a poet living in a world of dreams.

Truth to tell, Rodenbach's work bears the taint of the decadent. His "wooing of sorrow as a bride" is a primary distinction of his literary individuality, but it

he was once again in Antwerp without means-Soon left for Brussels, and joined the staff of "L'Etoile Belge" as musical and literary critic-This was in 1881-Became a firm friend of Camille Lemonnier-With the latter and other young writers like himself he launched "La Jeune Belgique"-In 1893 he was awarded the Quinquennial Prize for Literature for "La Nouvelle Carthage"-Was fêted at a banquet as Lemonnier had been ten years previously-In 1899 Eekhoud had to appear before the Belgian law-

displays a morbid being, frightened of life, that consoles itself with morose dreams and nostalgias and sterilises thought in the search for vain subtleties. Anatole France has well said of him: "Ce ne sont pas les choses, c' est l' âme des choses qui l' occupe et l' émeut." Mood and imagination often play so great a part in the perception of a thing that the picture it inspires seems to be about something strangely different from the object we know, reminiscent of it, yet more than half fictitious; the constant exercise of this arbitrary power tended to become a form of hallucination, blinding him to our more commonplace view. This want of robustness is his main defect; even "Le Carillonneur", which of his novels is the one where topography is least sentimentalised, there are portrayed the promptings to action of an environment more melancholy than in "Jude the Obscure" or "Dr. Adriaan": always the absorption with impending fatality.

courts to answer for his novel, "Escal-Vigor"- his defence was undertaken by Edmond Picard, the famous lawyer-author, and Eekhoud had the support of E. Zola and A. France, and was acquitted-He was nominated an officer of the order of Leopold-The war affected him deeply-In his later years has devoted himself to travel.

C. The Works.-"Kees Doorik", 1883;- "La Nouvelle Carthage", 1888;- "Escal-Vigor", 1899;- "Les Fusillés de Malines", 1891;- "La Faneuse d' Amour", 1900;- "Voyous de Velours" ou "L' Autre Vue", 1904;- "Le Terroir Incarné",

Rodenbach belonged to no literary group, but was an independent symbolist, writing admirable prose-poems. Though he was a greater artist than Lemonnier or Eekhoud, he cannot be said, however, to have advanced the cause of the novel in the Netherlands as they did, and chiefly because he turned his eyes on death instead of turning them on life. Nevertheless, this complete dreamer and sensitivist, dissociating himself from living, triumphant or suffering society, is representative of a main current of Flemish art and literature.

The Belgian temperament, as interpreted in the traditional art of painting, is found in dual varieties in the new literature of the Belgian renaissance, and reveals the Flemish side of the race at least as at once the most religious and the most material of peoples. For Verhaeren the proof of this is that he can name together Bruges and Antwerp, Van Eyck and Rubens. Of no writer can it be said that he represents entirely the one aspect or the other, but it is obvious that although, as

1923.

"Kees Doorik" is the story of a foundling, who is hired by a rich farmer near Antwerp. He feels around him the aversion of the other villagers, due to the misfortune of his birth, and takes refuge in solitude. The farmer dies and Kees falls in love with his widow. He is supplanted in his affections by a scapegrace from the neighbourhood, but at a degrading country festival, during a fight, Kees stabs his rival to death.

"La Nouvelle Carthage" is largely autobiographical. Laurent Paridael on the death of his father goes to live

generally happens, the two characteristics may exist side by side in the same personality, one of them will always predominate over the others. This applies with less force to the Dutch, who are at once less gross and less spiritual, who have more of the poise that Rembrandt had. But among Flemish artists there have always been pure naturalists like Jordaens, displaying their national quality in boisterous vigour, breadth and expansiveness, and pure mystics like Memlinc, evidencing an intensity of spiritual and imaginative feeling. Rodenbach's work is clearly related to that of Memlinc and Van Eyck, and in this way he is a thoroughly representative Fleming.

The truculent and fatalistic sides of Belgian character are found in Lemonnier's and Eekhoud's work, its reserved and mystical side in the filigree work of Rodenbach. In that of Eugène Demolder we now come to that material joie-de-vivre, rather coarse and unruly, that inhabits in that same character. Demolder is the last of the

with his uncle, a rich manufacturer of Antwerp. His cousins look down on him because of his country manners. Laurent goes abroad to complete his studies, and when he comes home he is attracted by his cousin Regina. But she rejects him and soon afterwards marries a wealthy libertine. Paradael takes up his residence in the maritime quarter of the city, to which he becomes profoundly attached. An explosion occurs at the cartridge factory of Béjard, Regina's husband, and Paradael, meeting Béjard, grapples with him for the insults he has heaped upon him, and both perish in the terrible conflagration.

four great symbolists of Belgium. Like the others he is above all a painter, by far the most lavish of the four, his style from first to last consisting in a cunning transposition of pictures. He produces not merely the outlines and colours of a picture, but the very soul of its meaning; he is truly a colourist working in verbal pigments and plastic images; he has studied the methods of the Dutch and Flemish masters and has found the secret of their art. His boisterous love of all forms of life and his special excellence in scenes of ripaille are remarkably reminiscent of Jan Steen and of Rubens' "Kermesse"; but though here the shaded paths of symbolic drama, haunted by perpetual fear, seem very far away, his work as a whole, despite the multiplicity of these descriptions of the diableries immondes, is saved from vulgarity, thanks to something youthful and genial in his strength.

Flemish art is full of the subtle modernisation, by

In "Escal-Vigor" Kehlmark, the hereditary "count of the dike" in an imaginary island off the west coast of Flanders, shows himself to possess "mens ~~f~~emina in corpore virile", and his abnormality results in a terrible revenge being exacted upon him. "Les Fusillés de Malines" describes how the peasants of the Campine rose in rebellion, when the Jacobins introduced conscription in 1798, and marched on Malines, which they took by a lucky chance. But the town is recaptured immediately by the French, and they are shot down as rebels.

means of a delicate symbolism, of the gross realism of mediaeval ignorance. Demolder, "the last of the Gothic Flemings" as he has been called, is in literature a synthesis of this method. His historical reconstructions are full of the quaintest contortions, especially in "La Légende d' Yperdamme", where the events narrated in the Gospels are transferred in a series of grotesque and naïve anachronisms to an unreal, yet realistic, Flemish city. In his later reconstitutions of historical periods, he is more skilful at hiding the process of his labour, but aims still at producing a kind of clair-obscur, in which life's external appearances appear with the monotony of the contemporary world veiled. There is little else in Demolder's conception of the novel than in this coupling of patriotic and religious symbolism with Rabelaisian imagination. But in making whatever his pen touched assume the colour and aspect of a Rubens' picture, he was keeping alive the heart of "Mère Flandre"

### 3. GEORGES RODENBACH (1855-1898)

A. The Sources.-C. Guérin, "Georges Rodenbach", Nancy, 1895;-A. Daxhelet, "Georges Rodenbach", Brussels, 1899;-E. Verhaeren in "La Revue Encyclopédique" (Paris), Jan. 28, 1899;-V. M. Crawford in "Studies in Foreign Literature", London, 1899;-F. Duncan in the Critical Introduction to "Bruges-la-Morte", London, 1903;-D. Horrent, "Ecrivains belges d' aujourd'hui", Brussels, 1904;-E. Revil, "Georges Rodenbach", Brussels, 1909;-J. Bithell, "Contemporary Belgian Literature", London, 1915;-H. Liebrecht, "Histoire de la Littérature belge d' expression

to the glory of her greatest artists.

In the work of the writers just considered we have the first completed part of the novel in Belgium. Of these "Four Wheels of the Novel Wain" only Georges Eekhoud survives, and actively as he is of the present in some ways, <sup>1</sup> his age and the definitive nature of his work make him really a writer of the last generation. Of the four Lemonnier is probably the greatest, but in proving the inception of a national literature -above all, in showing that the diathesis of renaissance was nationwide- they need not be discriminated. All four happened to write in French, but that dualism of natural and spiritual qualities which is held to be the birth-right of every true Fleming was theirs in full degree; to one and all may be applied the words Lemonnier used of himself, "Ni Flamand, ni Wallon, toute la terre belge est ma terre."

française", Brussels, 1912;-G. Turquet-Milnes, "Some Modern Belgian Writers", London, 1916;-P. Hamelius, "Introduction à la littérature française et flamande de Belgique", Brussels, 1921;-J. A. Russell in "The Educational" (Edinburgh), 30 September, 1927.

B. The Novelist.-Georges Rodenbach was born at Tournai in 1855-The family hailed originally from Bruges-Was brought up in Bruges and Ghent- Attended the college of Sainte-Barbe at Ghent, where one of his school-companions was Emile Verhaeren-At Ghent University he took his doctor's degree in jurisprudence-In 1887 he left Belgium and set-

<sup>1</sup> In 1923 he published "Le Terroir Incarné", the first novel of a trilogy, the second and third parts of which are "La Patrie Ambiguë" and "L' Humanité Intégrale".

All the characteristics ~~determined~~ in the Belgian novel to date have been <sup>imparted</sup> to it by these four, even if M. Liebrecht's comprehensive definition is taken as the test. Speaking of the novel of his country, M. Liebrecht says that it is first of all "un roman terrien, un roman qui vient de la nature, et qui y retourne sans cesse, c' est un roman large, puissant, lourd parfois et qui se refuse aux analyses subtiles de finesse psychologique; il est plein d' une force neuve qui fleure bon la vie et qui regorge d' une sève ardente. Roman souvent triste, donc la rare gaieté se voile de mélancholie, c' est l' oeuvre d' un peuple du Nord qui a beau avoir emprunté une forme latine pour exprimer sa pensée ["Histoire de la littérature belge d' expression française", p. 269]

The Belgians novelists reveal a serious and thorough

tled in Paris-Devoted himself to literary work-Contributed to "Figaro" and "Journal" assiduously-Was correspondent for various journals of Brussels-Was the intimate friend of Edmond de Goncourt-Died in 1898 in Paris.

C. The Works.-"Bruges-la-Morte", 1892;-"Le Carillonneur", 1897;-"L'Arbre", 1898;-"La Vocation", 1896.

The theme of "Bruges-the-Dead" is negligible. Following the death of his wife, Hughes Viane retires to Bruges as a "fastness of melancholy". For five years he lives on there, looking daily at the long plaits of his wife's hair, preserved in a glass case. One day in the town he sees a young woman, the very image of his dead wife, and makes her acquaintance at once. But she has not the soul he seeks. One day she takes the plaits from the case, and Viane, in a passion, strangles her for what he deems her desecration.



attitude, derived from a theory of socialism, based on natural culture, hostile to all ecclesiasticism. Yet, in practice they rely on a sort of religious exaltation that gives a warmth to their work, a phenomenon of which Victor Hugo's couplet does well to remind us:

"Noble Flandre ou le nord se réchauffe engourdi  
Au soleil de Castille et s' accouple au midi."

They do not, like Haeckel, pin their faith to a rational solution of the riddle of the universe, nor, like Zola, support themselves with the positive science of Darwin and Comte, but, buoyed up with an inspired sense of colour, they give to life as much adoration as the old Dutch and Flemish masters. Like them they pass from

The scene of "Le Carillonneur" is likewise in Bruges. The hero is Jean Borluut, an architect, whose life is devoted to restoring the crumbling masonry of the city. In his love for its great traditions he also acts as bell-ringer. Borluut visits often at the house of Van Hulle, another supporter of the Gothic revival. He marries his elder daughter, Barbe, but is loved by her younger sister, Godelieve. The latter, under the influence of religious suggestion, yields to her passion. The rest of the book describes her repentance at the "holy city" of Furnes. Borluut's downfall is rapid and ends with his suicide in the Belfry.

#### 4. EUGÈNE De MOLDER (1862-1919)

A. The Sources.-D. Horrent, "Ecrivains belges d' aujourd' hui", Brussels, 1904;-A. Fontainas in "Mercure de France" (Paris), August, 1904;-G. Ramaekers, "Eugène Demolder", Brussels, 1909;-H. Liebrecht, "Histoire de la littérature belge d' expression française", Brussels, 1912; J. Bithell, "Contemporary Belgian Literature", London, 1915; P. Hamelius, "Introduction de la littérature française et

one mood to another, the doctrine of individualism forbidding them to erect their **petty** iconoclasm into new dogmas, in which respect **they** resemble their neighbours of the North Netherlands (who are thought of erroneously as a Calvinist unit).

All the resources of verbal orchestration were at the command of these writers, and if they oversounded very often, it was in attempted escape from **the** ugliness and insipidity of life in an overpopulated, industrial country. But for the most part, in an epoch the most

flamande de Belgique", Brussels, 1921.

B. The Novelist.-Demolder was born at Molenbeek St. Jean, Brussels in 1862.-Studied law at Brussels University-On completing his course, he contributed to "**Jeune Belgique**" and "**Société Nouvelle**"-In 1895 he gave up his judiciary career and settled at Paris-Lived at Essonnes-Corbeil in the department of Seine-et-Oise-Was visited there by Maeterlinck-Wrote a pamphlet against Britain during the South African War, "**L' Agonie d' Albion**"-Devoted himself chiefly to literature and art-criticisms-Died at Corbeil.

C. The Works.-"**La Légende d' Yperdamme**", 1897;-"**La Route d' Emeraude**", 1899;-"**Les Patins de la Reine d' Hollande**", 1901;-"**Le Jardinier de la Pompadour**", 1904.

The scene of "**La Route d' Emeraude**" is in Holland in the seventeenth century. Kobus Barent, the son of the miller of Vrydarn, near Dordrecht, is a born painter. He becomes apprenticed to Frantz Krul, modelled on Jan Steen, at Haarlem. He falls in love with Siska, Krul's model, and goes with her to Amsterdam. Siska, of Spanish origin, deserts him for a Spanish captain, and Kobus in disappointment returns to his village, where he assists in his father's business. He resumes his painting, and later marries Gesina, the daughter of a rich bailiff, and finds "the emerald way" of hope, ambition and success.

"**Les Patins de la Reine d' Hollande**" opens with a description of Walburge, orphaned daughter of Comte de Rupelmonde, who has grown up in solitude and ignorance

unlovely, in a relative sense, that has ever been, they refused to let it be thought that deprivation of beauty is in the nature of things. At times the consciousness of the tragedy of beauty around them laid a deposit on their imagination, but far more often were they struck by the beauty of that tragedy, even to the point of conquering revulsion and loathing for outwardly-dismal streets, smoke-enveloped stations and grime-coated factories and accepting an artistic mission "to depict their own black furies and inherent wretchedness." Truly,

"Le rêve, il est plus haut que les fumées! . . ."

And this attitude to the special activities, the clashing interests, the strident discords, of their time, they carried into the most modern conception of the novel, marking it as definitely as the classical or romantic writers:

"Un sillage nouveau vers la vieille beauté."

in a castle by the Scheldt. Now she longs to see the world. On day when the river is frozen hard, she sets off over the ice on a pair of skates that the Queen of Holland used to wear, and accompanied by her faithful serving-woman, Bertrane. They survive the Dance of Death, and Walburge as Passion skates on to meet the Fairy Prince, while Bertrane as Resignation, which Passion must abandon, is left behind. Walburge finds her Prince, and they go to his castle in the Land of Spring.

"Le Jardinier de la Pompadour" is the book of the soul of a gardener, who loves Madame de Pompadour, and raises the flowers, which help her own bloom to ensnare the heart of King Louis.

## CHAPTER VI

### NEW GUIDES IN HOLLAND

By 1880 Dutch letters, as clearly as Belgian, stood in need of some revivifying force, for they had again lapsed in to the pedestrian gait that had characterised them in the very orthodox 'forties. The novel of the time was at once petty and provincial, with the crass sentimentalities and undistinguished banalities of the "Kailyard" school; it merely perpetuated the easy-going tradition of "De Pastorij te Mastland". Even in Professor Prinsen's comment on Vosmaer's erstwhile classic, "Amazone" as "een goed boek voor het Holland van 1880," there is a wealth of implied depreciation. ["De Oude en de Nieuwe Historische Roman in Nederland", p. 49] Under these ambling conditions a new canon of art was so

### THE AUTHORS AND THEIR WORKS

#### 1. LOUIS COUPERUS (1863-1923)

A. The Sources.-J. ten Brink, "Geschiedenis der Noord Nederlandsche Letteren in de 19e. Eeuw", Vol. 3, Rotterdam, 1904;-I. Querido in "Studien", Amsterdam, 1908;-L. Couperus, "Van en over Myzelf en Anderen", Amsterdam, 1910;-B. Wielenga in "Moderne Letterkunde", Kampen, 1917;-W. E. J. Kuiper in "De Nieuwe Gids" (The Hague), January,

urgent a necessity that Dutch literature now witnessed the remarkable phenomenon of an aesthetic revolution, cleverly engineered by a group of young and daring innovators. The natural style of "Multatuli" and the critical insight of Busken Huet were probably the great influences in this alarm-bell awakening, but the instrument by which the transmogrification was wrought was "De Nieuwe Gids" (The New Gids), a review that still flourishes under Mr. Willem Kloos, then the revolutionary and to-day the doyen of Dutch poets.

This well-defined renaissance was the outcome of a passionate desire for beauty -hitherto not very conspicuous in either Dutch prose or poetry- for beauty not merely as the highest, but as the only aim of art. Like the corresponding movement in Belgium, it was primarily a revival in poetry, but, as there, the new literature did not leave the novel neglected. At first, however,

1917;-J. L. Walch, "Louis Couperus", Baarn, 1921;-A. de Ridder in "De Gulden Winckel" (Baarn), 2 July, 1917;-H. Robbers, "De Nederlandsche Litteratuur na 1880", Amsterdam, 1922;-J. L. Walch in "Mercure de France" (Paris), 1 October, 1923;-D. Hallett in "The London Mercury", September, 1923;-E. Gosse in "Silhouettes", London, 1925;-J. A. Russell in "De Nieuwe Gids" (The Hague), May, 1927.

B. The Novelist.-Louis Marie Anne Couperus was born at the Mauritskade, The Hague, in 1863-He was the fourth son of Jan Ricus Couperus and Gertruida Johanna Reynst, the daughter of a former governor-general of Java-In

this was an avid reproduction of French naturalism, "very violent, heady and bewildering." Frans Netscher-whom Sir E. Gosse has called "the George Moore of Holland"- and Marcellus Emants at least marched deliberately in step with the naturalists, in satisfying an ardent and voluptuous curiosity and making their pictures out of an infinity of detail: but extremism reached a climax in Lodewyk van Deyssel's "Een Liefde" (A Love).<sup>1</sup> Like Netscher and Emants Van Deyssel was, to begin with at least, in sympathy with naturalism, but in his case Zola's influence was to shed some light on the road; the mixture of Grecian classicism and lush sensuousness, which was the result of their interpretation of Zola's attachment to supposed fact, was not a potion for him. He saw that in its objectivity Zola's method often came nearer to science than to art, and

1873 he was taken to the Dutch Indies where his father was a prominent governor official-At Batavia he attended the King William III Gymnasium-In 1878 he returned to The Hague and studies at the High Borough School there-His first literary ventures came soon after leaving school-But what attention they managed to attract was generally unfavourable-He turned to prose soon afterwards, and never looked back until he was Holland's most outstanding modern prose-writer-He visited England for the first time in 1898-Travelled much abroad, and lived for protracted periods on the Riviera and in Italy-In the course of his life visited most of the countries of Eur-

<sup>1</sup> A. Verwey, "Mijn Meening over L. van Deyssels Roman, "Een Liefde", Amsterdam, 1888.

sought for his painstaking, factual fidelity an "inward-seeking" phase, to which he gave the name "sensitivism". It may be described as a development of impressionism, grafted upon naturalism, but seeking to obviate the vagaries of the former and escape the brutalities of the latter. One of the greatest exponents of the method in criticism and fiction is, of course, Henry James, who says that "a novel is in its broadest definition a perception, a direct impression of life: that, to begin with, constitutes its value, which is greater or less according to the intensity of the impression." ["The Art of Fiction" in "Partial Portraits", p. 265] Dutch sensitivism, it will thus be seen, is not at all unlike Belgian symbolism,<sup>1</sup> and in considerable measure it was also a reaction to naturalism, a reaction that has operated even in France, in the novel

ope and Asia-During the war he gave much-appreciated readings from his own work-After an interval of more than twenty years, Couperus and his wife visited England again-During their visit they were entertained much privately and publicly-At dinners given in the House of Commons and by the Anglo-Batavian Society he was the guest of honour-The novelist was greatly touched by the cordiality of his reception-After a short stay in Holland, he set out for Dutch India, whence he passed to China and Japan-During this tour he acted as correspondent of the "Haagsche Post"-In Japan it was his

<sup>1</sup> In the Preface to his "The Symbolist Movement in Literature", Arthur Symonds writes, "I am told of a group of Symbolists in Russian literature, there is another in Dutch literature."

of manners of Anatole France, the sociological novel of Barrès, the psychological novel of Bourget. A certain amount of fatigue had been created alike in the artistic and the public mind by the exaggerations of the naturalistic and ultra-scientific schools; as George Ebers wrote at the time: "We might call Realism the headache which has followed the intoxication of Romanticism."

["Introduction to "The Amazon"]

Strictly speaking, the realist is like a photographer, who can make no distinction between one detail and another and gives a crude impression of all; the impressionist, on the other hand, does not describe all that he sees, though only what he sees, which is art. As original adherents of the impressionist school, we must couple the names of Ary Prins and Jac. van Looy, though their respective chefs-d' oeuvre, "De Heilige Tocht" (The Miraculous Draught) and "Jaapje", were not ready until 1913 and 1917. The work of these writers, though not borne

misfortune to become seriously ill through having been bitten by a tropical insect-He returned to Holland in 1922 but never regained his old strength-In 1896 he had been made a member of the order of Orange Nassau-He was now made the recipient of the much-coveted honour of membership of the order of the Netherlands Lion-The occasion of his sixtieth birthday was marked by the presentation to him from the Dutch nation of a charming cottage at De Steeg-But he was hardly able to enjoy this, for he died the next month.

C. The Works.-"Eline Vere", 1889;- "Noodloot", 1890; "Extase", 1892;- "Majesteit", 1894;- "Wereldvrede", 1895; "Hooge Troeven", 1896;- "Metamorfoze", 1897;- "Psyche",



of even plausibly romantic imagination, is yet too much aglow with poetic fire and too richly endowed in the plastic art so emphatically of the Netherlands, to be held rigidly to realism. But it was in Louis Couperus that the new novel fructified most immediately and most lavishly, though he had not been one of the official "Nieuwe Gidsers" during the actual maelstrom.

In his work there is also an obvious conflict between the real and the romantic. He is named a realist, but he was, like Balzac, "a realist haunted or attacked by phantasms and nightmares of romance." [E. Dowden, "French Literature", p. 404] At bottom his style was that of the romanticist, and shows through his most realistic works; his realism was the result of external circumstances, the outcome simply of the utilitarian age in which he lived. Couperus followed in the direct tradition of Flaubert and Zola, dallying constantly between his literary progenitors. Or it may be that his Scottish descent (borne out by the first syllables of

1898;- "Fidessa", 1899;- "Langs Lijnen van Geleidelijkheid", "De Stille Kracht", 1900;- "Babel", 1901;- "De Boeken der Kleine Zielen":-1. "Kleine Zielen"; 2. "Het Late Leven"; 3. "Zieleschemering"; 4. "Het Heilige Weten"; 1901-1903; "Dionyzos", 1904;- "De Berg van Licht", 1905-1906;- "Van Oude Menschen. De Dingen di Voorbijgaan", 1906;- "Aan den Weg der Vreugde", 1908;- "Antiek Toerisme", 1911;- "Herkules", 1913;- "De Ongelukkige", 1916;- "De Komedianten", 1917;- "De Verliefde Ezel", 1918;- "Xerxes op de Hoogmoed", 1919;- "Iskander", 1920;- "Het Zwevende Schaakbord", 1922.

his name) had given him the wanderlust of that race,<sup>1</sup> leading him continually to tread new paths. But because Couperus -dandiacal nature though he was- was above all things interested in contemporary life -however much he tried to disguise such interest, and by fancy and by travel to get away from a "close-up" contemplation of modern civilisation; it is the realistic part of his work, his social studies, that composes his finest achievement, greater far than what may be called the archaic-pagan-mythic-romantic group, expressing the other side of his genius.

These books are faithful pictures of society life in The Hague. It is a fairly banal life, a life of tea-parties and flirtations, of little rivalries and reconciliations, but a mode of life to which Couperus, if he had no illusions about it, was not unsympathetic; he recognized that life is compounded of trivial happenings within the cosmic flux; accordingly, his work in this genre is an offshoot of works like "Les Rivalités",

"Eline Vere" presents a picture of society in The Hague. Eline Vere, a beautiful but extremely temperamental girl, is engaged to one of her own set, Otto van Erlevoort, but falls in love with a famous operatic singer, about whom she is gradually disillusioned. Through the breaking off of her engagement, matters become so unpleasant at her sister's house where she stays that she leaves it during a night of storm. After she has travelled for a time abroad, she meets Lawrence St. Clare, an American,

<sup>1</sup> Couperus was a member of a family of Scottish origin, banished from Scotland for political reasons in the sixteenth century.

in which Balzac's patient Dutch painting is seen at its best. It is precisely as a chronicler of "kleine zielen" (small souls) that Couperus has won a similar fame in the Netherlands. Yet, on the idea of revealing the hearts and minds of those moving on the lower spiritual levels he had assuredly no copyright-it is, in fact, one that has concerned most great novelists. With him, however, the expressive phrase seems to have acquired all the force of a happily-conceived trade-mark.

In each case the subject is treated on the grand scale, yet set forth with a minute particularity that is never wearisome. They are hardly cheerful or agreeable pieces of work, these undeviating studies of souls so pitiably small-each contains countless unhappy and unsatisfactory epigoni; yet, they are not depressing stories. As the author's most comprehensive survey of life in his native-town, of people as solidly Dutch as the Forsytes or the Clayhangers are sturdily British,

who is attracted by her. But the morbidity of the heroine, her "soul-disturbing unrest", has reached such a pitch that it results soon afterwards in her death by suicide.

"Noodloft" introduces London, Norway and Holland. It is the theme of "Othello" in a modern setting. Robert van Maeren is befriended by his countryman in London, Frank Westhove. He accompanies the latter and his fiancée and her father on various continental trips. Jealousy intensifies in Frank, and in a passion he kills

they are as true to life as lived anywhere. Time and again he applies to the social atmosphere of The Hague the term "kleinstädtisch" and when the fine distinction between this and "provincial" is understood, comparisons with such a typical English realist as Mr. Arnold Bennett simply leap out of his pages.

Couperus, it is true, writes of one of the pleasantest of European <sup>cities</sup>, The Hague, with its charming "nabob" residences, its delightful sea-front, its sylvan walks, a town where even a factory frontage is given an air of chic, and moreover he writes of a high stratum of society in this attractive place; Bennett, on the other hand, describes the life without amenity lived by the lower-middle class in "the Potteries", one of the grimmest regions in the whole world. But both write of life as they see it (rather than as they understand it) and the final effect is much the same; through their common

Robert. His remorse is unbearable, but Eye's constancy supports him, and they resolve on a death-pact.

"Extasy" is a novel of violent tragedy, in which two souls that have worked one another into a franzy of passion, fall apart after a short period of extravagant romance, and fail to recover their former rapture.

"Majesty", "World Peace" and "High Trumps" form a series in which is introduced the Court of the imaginary kingdom of Liparia, in a semi-Slav, semi-Italian atmosphere. The Crown Prince, Othomar, is sceptical of his rights, but fails in all his objects of reform.

"Langs Lijnen van Geleidelijkheid" opens with a de-

education in the French school, they have evolved in practice the same working methods. In Couperus there is not same scientific attention to topography, but the atmosphere of The Hague is impressed, by more subtle suggestion, as distinctly as the cruder one of Bursley. In each novelists we have identical fidelity in rendering the most commonplace things of life, the same intuitive flashes in explanation of the mixture of motives that prompt to action, so that in the patrician inhabitants of the Nassauplein and the Kerkhoflaan, as in those humbler folk of St. Luke's Square and Toft End and Bleak-ridge, we glimpse many citizens, not of The Hague and Stoke-upon-Trent, but of the wide world, with the same apprehensions and fears, the same hopes and aspirations, the same failures and frailties. And because in all this we have not philosophising but painting, detached observation without personal comment intruded, we have

scription of the occupants of the Belloni boarding-house in Rome. Of these Cornelia de Retz van Loo is singled out. She is a young, divorced Dutch lady. She is attracted by Duco van der Stael, a young Dutch artist, but is impelled by an "inevitable" force to return to her former husband.

"De Stille Kracht" is Couperus' one complete Javanese story. We have, as in "Almayer's Folly", the story of the seemingly-unavoidable degeneration of the white man in the "indolent, libidinous islands" of the East he ~~he~~ thinks to have been conquered. Powerful illustration is given of this remorseless moral disintegration in

views that can be accepted, in the main, as unswervingly true to the facts of life.

As Couperus advanced in his art, he tended to concentrate more on externals, discarding the imponderable and painting with a bigger brush. He ceased to think it worth while to probe deeply into the struggling soul, where (since his conception was the Sophoclean one of omnipotent destiny dogging the footsteps of helpless mankind) the issue is such a foregone conclusion. Only after several experiments did he reach what we have come to regard as peculiarly "the Universe of Thomas Hardy." The unfeelingness of nature, "that enfolding callousness which is the spiritual binding of a Hardy novel", inevitably kept tragic store for the heroes of "Jude the Obscure" and "The Major of Casterbridge"; but in books like "Noodloot" (Destiny) and "Langs Lijnen van Geleidelijkheid" (The Inevitable) the tragic motive

the case of Van Oudijck, the strong, resolute, hard-working Resident of Labuwangi, whom we see finally a finished man, living in retirement at Batavia.

The four "Boeken der Kleine Zielen" form an artistic entity just as much as the component volumes of "The Forsyte Saga", by which in design they are paralleled. The characters are confined to the members of a patrician family of The Hague, and the dominating idea is the fetishistic point to which the sense of family can reach. Much artifice is required to preserve appearances for the oldest and most conservative member, Mev. Van Lowe, and when the truth regarding the petty private and sectional

was worked out from within; Fate groped no longer in the background but became a living person, and that person the Self. But such a thesis did not permit of much variety being applied to the cosmic problem, and it was abandoned for one less rigid, approximating to Mr. Hardy's, in which the social and physical backgrounds became the media by which the forces of dissolution entered, and, thus, the question could continue to be put endlessly.

Like his friend and first English admirer, Sir Edmund Gosse, he seems to have realized that "the limits of realism had been reached." According to the critic-poet, he "thought that Dutch literature was overcrowded with bourgeois tragedies, and that he himself had been too passive under the influence of Flaubert. He began to revolt against social realism, and to lead a reaction in favour of individualism and romance." ["Silhouettes",

bickerings of the family penetrates to her at last, misfortunes have so altered the basis of the inter-relationship that self-preservation makes a real family compact imperative. In the first two volumes, where there is little actual trouble apart from a vexatious turpitude, the members of the family associate chiefly because it presents a fine front to Hague respectability; in the concluding books, where misfortunes press with tragic heaviness, it is obliged to withdraw into itself-at quiet Driebergen finally- that its innumerable woes may be palliated by its own members. The central figure of the story is Constance van der Welcke, and the measures of

p. 264] Most often, when he felt the need "to stare Reality out of its brassy countenance," he went to the pleasanter land of phantasmagoria, or reconstructed the romance of antiquity on the model of the new historical novel. The power of projecting himself enabled him to take the whole of the ancient world as his province, and formed an unusually important part in his psychology, "this conviction of metempsychosis," according to the opinion of another English friend, Mr. Stephen MacKenna, being, indeed, the secret of his inspiration. Since Pierre Loti provided a new exotic literature, by writing of passionate and mysterious Asia, the sunburnt Senegal, the vague, phosphorescent Polar spaces, there has been a multitude of descriptive volumes, but few with the colour, the luminous observation of Couperus' work. By this part of his writings he has become the greatest historical novelist of Holland, as well as the best Dutch

the souls of the others are taken by their reactions to her on her return to the family. With the possible exception of her son, Dr. Adriaan, they are collectively found wanting in the possession of a single degree of greatness.

"Oude Menschen" gives in more concentrated form the history of another patrician family of The Hague, the Derckszes. The book has little development, the characters are almost static. They are assembled-a quite exceptional group of human beings, all, in varying degrees, neurotic types- and to explain the shadow that hangs darkly over them and reveals them as such rather than renders them so, the author adopts the device, so beloved



writer of fairy-tales and mythical stories, all in addition to being the finest painter of Dutch interiors. Yet Rome under Domitian was never quite so familiar to him as Holland under Queen Wilhelmina.

The artist is not formed by the milieu and the race, but only by being true to himself, and Couperus was certainly most true to himself in his novels that deal with the upper strata of Hague society, which he knew so well. But even there he was not always absolutely so, being disposed to dally with this or that fancy, and to sacrifice verisimilitude in the process. He was inclined too much to play the part of the dilettante, reconciled to be baffled by the spectacle of life's processes, instead of heroically facing their implications, like Dostolevsky, Zola, Hardy; the cleverness of the construction may be admired, but it is impossible to guess for what object the structure has been raised. Had Couperus always

of Balzac, of 'throwing back' with a long retrospective survey. This is the record of a crime committed sixty years previously in the backwoods of Java, and which, though thought to be buried deep in the hearts of the aged pair of lovers who perpetrated it, is now oppressing the younger members of the family in only slightly less degree. Only with death can the crime be expiated, and the very old mother and her lover wait erect, majestic and with apparent calm for this deliverance from intolerable remorse and the dread of reproach.

In "De Berg van Licht" we have the life story of El-agabalus, a picture of the last days of pagan Rome.

been true to himself he might, indeed, have justified Arnold Mulder's prediction. "I had been priding myself", wrote this American admirer, "on the thought that I could pick the winner of a Nobel Prize some years before the judges found him. And I had picked Couperus." ["The Outlook" (New York), 28 November, 1923] The novelist himself had almost certainly no such high anticipations, but after "De Boeken der Kleine Zielen" and "Oude Menschen", the potentiality was undoubtedly a receding one.

It has been urged against Couperus that he is too effeminate, and it must be allowed that he is so to some extent, "even a little deliquescent", as Dr. Walch phrases it. Yet, this decadent strain, this ultra-refinement of detail, arose from the extreme sensitiveness of the aesthete; his prose was erected on the substructure of his poetry. And this is probably responsible for a definite and rather distressing stylistic

The hero, Elagabalus, rises from being priest of the Sun to occupy the Imperial throne, though the story of his reign and death is an incredible one.

"Antiek Toerisme" is based on a study of the Latin and Greek geographers, and describes the trip of a Roman patrician during the reign of Tiberius across the land of the Pharaohs in search of a favourite slave. "De Komedianten" is another ambitious historical reconstruction. It brings us back to the reign of the sombre Domitian, and relates the adventures of two youthful actors, Cecilius and Cecilianus, in a travelling

fault -the notorious length to which he carried the habit of verbal repetition. The result is a stock of hackneyed locutions, single words and tours de phrase, which have been repeated until they have deteriorated from trouvailles almost into clichés. Yet, despite such mannerisms, despite the fact that the epic note, that "high seriousness" which the supreme novelists as well as the supreme poets of the world possess, is absent, Couperus still ranks in his conscious art as the Henry James, in his classical fancy as the Flaubert, in "the air of reality" he lends to his work the Arnold Bennett, of Holland.

A more direct product of De Nieuwe Gids Beweging is Dr. Frederik van Eeden. From then until now he has been in the forefront of Dutch literature, though his versatile pen in prose, poetry and drama has long ceased to be at the disposal of any coterie, however much he may have been fostered by the group in the ascendant in the

company, and introduces us to the society of the stately Suetonius, the younger Pliny, Tacitus, Quintilian.

"Het Zwevende Schaakbord" was inspired by the Middle Dutch Arthurian poem, "De Roman van Walewein"; the subject is in the appearance of a magic chessboard one day at King Arthur's Court, and the King's desire to possess it. Walewein (Gawain) undertakes the search, and after various adventures, related to those of the Arthurian legends in general, succeeds in his mission.

## 2. FREDERIK van EEDEN (1860- )

A. The Sources.-A. Verwey in "Letterkundige Kritiek" (Utrecht), 1894;-W. G. van Nouhuys, "Letterkundige Op-

middle 'eighties. As he has given most of his time in recent years to dramatising and the last of his intermittent novels was published before the death of Couperus, his novelistic productivity may be considered in its entirety.

Right off it may be said that Dr. Van Eeden is more of a lyric poet than a philosopher, more of a philosopher than a novelist; he is neither a creator of characters nor an inventor of plots; he is an altruistic dreamer and thinker about life, and his personages are simply the reflections of his own ideas at different periods of his existence, with "vague mental gestures" for all narrational mobility. His novels are a personal allegory, co-terminous with the crises of the poet-soul. They represent his attempts at working out the enigma of life, "a series of practical tests, as it were, in casuistry," [M. Robinson, Introduction to "The Deeps

stellen", Amsterdam, 1894;-H. Borel in "Studien", Amsterdam, 1898;-M. A. P. C. Poelhekke in "Modernen", Nijmegen, 1899;-W. H. Dircks in Introduction to "The Deeps of Deliverance", London, 1902;-J. ten Brink, "Noord Nederlandsche Letteren in de 19e. Eeuw", Vol. 3, Rotterdam, 1904;-F. Van Eeden, "Happy Humanity", New York, 1912;-H. Robbers, "De Nederlandsche Litteratuur na 1880", Amsterdam, 1922;-L.J. M. Feber, "Frederik van Eedens Ontwikkelingsgang", 's Hertogenbosch, 1922;-P. Verschave in "Le Correspondant" (Paris), 25 July, 1924;-H. Padberg, "Frederik van Eeden", Roermond, 1925.

B. The Novelist.-Frederik van Eeden was born at Haar-

of Deliverance"] but their peculiar technique, deriving from their philosophic media, differentiates them even among romans-a-these.

As has been said of Tolstoi, "he went through life searching for truth," so Van Eeden is always the seeker; first of all at the threshold of life, asking Nature her secrets, by passing the data and forms of the child's imagination through the mature intellect, advancing to investigate the different systems, rejecting them all in turn, and taking temporary refuge in various sophistries; ending the search finally at the lamp of Catholic sanctuary. Well may we ask what part exactly the novel plays in this unravelment of personality, which appears to postulate definite antithesis to the admitted conception, with its divagation from the ordinary conditions of experience and its failure to sustain a story with a pretence at objectivity. It may be answered that the

lem in 1860-His father was a botanist and director of the Colonial Museum in that town-He studied medicine at Amsterdam and took his degree in 1886-On leaving the University, he went to Nancy to study the hypnotic method of treatment-Went on his return to reside at Bussum-From 1888 to 1895 he was one of the directors of the Psychotherapeutic Institute at Amsterdam, after which he again settled at Bussum-Though now he gave most of his attention to literary and social matters-Occasionally he went abroad, attending conferences in England and in America;In 1898 he made his chief social experiment in founding on his estate of "Walden" (named after Thoreau's

novel is newer in nothing more than in this occupation with the independent and inscrutable workings of the subconscious self, and that there is vitiation of value only if the author, in choosing to be "ego-centred", fails to give expression to ideas that are universal. It is just such failure that must be recorded here; the novelist ~~has~~ not become the striver after primal truth that is in all of us, but with the easy penetration of his disguise as the Kleines / Johannes, as Sirius, as Dr. Vico Muralto, stands revealed merely as Dr. Frederik van Eeden.

It is curious that so unimpassioned a novelist, whose ondriving to Catholic orthodoxy is rather unmotivatedly registered in his life's work, should have shaped his work into what may be regarded as the two fashionable philosophies, Bergson's metaphysics and Freud's psychology, unconsciously and independently, of course, for his own more hazy speculations can claim to have preceded both. But in Van Eeden these elements have never fused;

book) a productive society. But this attempt at a labour colony was not a successful affair, and after a few years it was abandoned-In North Carolina, however, where he later established a similar colony, the work still flourishes-For some years after the misfortune of his Bussum test, he was in America, and also passed a period in Germany before returning to Holland-He again established himself at Bussum-The death of his son Paul was a severe blow-But it drew him nearer to the Catholic faith, though hitherto he had been of an enquiring na-

his best novel, the melancholy but haunting "Van de Koele Meren des Doods" (From the Cold Pools of Death), reads like a case selected for illustration in a Freudian treatise, and though it commends itself to the modern mind—for the year 1900 it was decidedly "modern"—its medico-scientific nature requires the relief of more actual interests. Had one well-equipped like Dr. Van Eeden been more alive to realities than to unreality, his speculative<sup>mind</sup> might, indeed, have earned for him the title of "the Dutch Tolstoi" that is bestowed with the discrimination that counts for left-handed compliment than for guidance (unless the comparison is restricted to his social experiments). As it is, he must be looked upon as something of a "lost leader"; his power cannot be called intense or keen, and he lacks the steadfast force of will that goes to make a complete artist; he chooses characters unable to bear their own dramatic burden, and in substituting for the scène-à-faire

ture-Electioneering occupied his attention in 1917 and 1918, but he was not successful at the polls—Early in 1922 he was formally received into the Catholic Church, at the Benedictine monastery at Oosterhout near Breda—His conversion created something of a sensation in Holland—Dr. Van Eeden, who numbers many well-known English and American writers among his friends, lives on quietly at Bussum.

C. The Works.—"De Kleines Johannes", 1892;—"Johannes Viator", 1892;—"Van de Koele Meren des Doods", 1900;—"De Nachtbruid", 1909;—"Sirius en Siderius", 1912-1914;

revelatory records he sheds the objectivity that even the newer conceptions of the novel require. So much, in fact, is the artist obscured by the mystagogue that it is not unlikely that his best book will yet count for psycho-analysis and the others be claimed for Catholic theology.

Of the other products of the new novel whose work can be finally assessed, there are none so prominent as these two, Couperus and Van Eeden. Mention of Maarten Maartens, however, can hardly be avoided in such a study as this, however anomalous it would be to give some one writing in English a place in non-comparative Dutch literature. With very few exceptions the novels of this full-fledged count of Holland deal with aspects of Dutch life, and these are infinitely more faithful pictures than his accounts of English and Riviera modes. He was wise to keep close to his native soil,

"Het Roode Lampje", 1921.

"De Kleines Johannes" takes the form of the märchen, and is an immediate following of Hoffmann. It is an allegorical story of a child who begins to enquire of nature her secrets, on the discovery that things are not as he had imagined. "Joannes Viator" is Little John, now grown up, who continues to reflect on life a propos of the search for love, universal love, after which he vainly voyages.

"Van de Koele Meren des Doods" is the history of Hedwig, a morbidly sensitive young woman, and notes the mental crises of her early married life and her lat-



though I am aware that it is precisely these Dutch stories that are least acceptable to his own countrymen, who affect to find distasteful, even untrue, his often sordid details of peasant life and the contrasted rendering of crassly prosperous "Koopstad" burghers. Such criticism may be applicable to his more realistic short stories, but it is certainly unfair to his novels. These, where they introduce "unpleasant" elements, do so in no cynical or irresponsible vein; such things are but made the dark background against which the author throws into relief nobility and self-sacrifice; characters like Lis Doris, Joost Avelingh, Aunt Suzanne, can only go to re-inforce opinion of Dutch national character, for though not a very masterful writer, Maartens was at least a gracious and sincere one. After perusing his work, we feel no less than Thackeray "that a Dutchman is a man and a brother."

Like Joseph Conrad, Maartens is distinguished by his

er life on leaving her husband, to the sad ending of her unfortunate and pitiable career.

"De Nachtbruid" comprises the memoirs of Vico Muralto, a doctor, who regulates his life according to his dreams, and allows himself to be conducted by his traumaturgic hallucinations. But under the mysterious and deceptive phenomena that are revealed, he fails to discover the truth. "Sirius en Siderius" is a further "Kleine Johannes"-history, and in "Het Roode Lampje" the search is finally concluded at the red lamp of Catholic sanctuary.

cosmopolitanism. Both, again, are subjective writers. But Maartens has nothing like the intensity of imagination of the other. Nor has he Conrad's amazing mastery of English style, though he would have echoed with the Polish author: "The English seemed to me a part of my blood and culture." Conrad could be betrayed into linguistic gaucheries, but Maartens' English, stiff and staccato and far less adventuresome, is little more than that of the "correct" foreigner. Conrad, of course, can never be extradited from English literature, but Maartens is too complacently left to both English and Dutch claims, and he is not great enough to stand for division of value. It is in Dutch literature that he seems most to merit a place, for at heart he remained a true and loyal Hollander, never freeing himself from the idiom of his native tongue and not at all from his own people.

#### MAARTEN MAARTENS (1858-1915)

A. The Sources.-A. St John Adcock in "The Living Age" (Boston), 30 May, 1914;-Unsigned article in "The Bookman" (New York), September, 1915;-Unsigned article in "The Outlook" (New York), 18 August, 1915;-W. Gosler in "Den Gulden Winckel" (Baarn), September, 1915;-R. D. L. Magne in the "Amsterdamsche Weekblad", 29 August, 1915;-L. van Deyssel in the "Amsterdamsche Weekblad", 9 May, 1925.

B. The Novelist.-Joost Marius ~~Willen~~ van der Poorten-Schwartz, the real name of "Maarten Maartens", was born at Amsterdam in 1858-Passed his sixth to twelfth years in England-Attended then <sup>the</sup> Gymnasium at Amsterdam and Royal Gymnasium at Bonn-Then became a student of Utrecht University-Graduated in law-From 1883 to 1884 he was Saco lecturer-Had a house at Doorn, "Zonheuvel", but spent

Women-writers at this time also buttressed the new psychological novel, but, despite their greater numbers, scarcely so brilliantly as in the past. The feminist question occupied them chiefly, but no "Anne Veronica" was forthcoming. Yet, champions of women's rights like Mev. Goedkoop de Jong, Anna de Savornin Lohman <sup>1</sup> and the ill-starred Cornelia Huygens were the fore-runners of the host of ladies who to-day make the novel the vehicle for opiniating on every social and domestic matter. They showed a starker realism than Couperus, since more serious and didactic, and if ever their treatment of aspects of real life was romantic, it was so only in

much time in Paris, London and on the Riviera-Received the degree of L. L. D. from Aberdeen and from German and Dutch universities-He died at Doorn in 1915.

C. The Works.-"The Sin of Joost Avelingh", 1890;- "An Old Maid's Love", 1891;- "God's Fool", 1892;- "The Greater Glory", 1894;- "My Lady Nobody", 1895;- "Her Memory", 1898;- "Dorothea", 1904;- "The Healers", 1906;- "The New Religion", 1907;- "The Price of Lis Doris", 1909;- "Harmen Fols, Peasant", 1909;- "Eva", 1912.

"The Sin of Joost Avelingh" describes the effect of culpable neglect of an uncle upon the mind of his nephew. Joost Avelingh hates his wealthy uncle Van Trotsem for his humiliating treatment of him, and during a drive to the notary's, who is to change the will against him, his uncle has a seizure, but Joost lets matters take their course. On arrival Van Trotsem is dead. It transpires that no help could have saved him, but Joost holds himself morally his murderer. A long time passes and then Joost is tried for murder, but is acquitted. Later he is elected to Parliament, but on the day he takes his seat he announces to the assembly his renunciation of his uncle's wealth, and retires to live a secluded and humble

<sup>1</sup> G. Jonckbloet, "Anna de Savornin Lohman, in en uit hare Werken", Leiden, 1912.

the colloquial sense. Yet, Professor **Phelps'** somewhat misleading definition that "at its best realism was made up of afternoon teas; at its worst it was garbage," ["The Advance of the English Novel", p. 135] was never fulfilled to the letter in Holland; naturalism's orgy there was surprisingly mild. But, nevertheless, it served definitely to emancipate the novel, in the social and psychological effects to which it gave rise under Couperus and his co-workers. The mission of the novel, it was finally recognized, is the study of life, the interpretation of life, the one ~~ineluctable~~ law imposed upon the artist being "that he shall dominate the prodigal wastefulness of life."

mode of existence.

"An Old Maid's Love" is the story of the sacrifice and suffering of an aunt for a favourite nephew. "God's Fool" is Elias Lossell, who has received an injury in childhood & that has left him blind and semi-imbecile. But it is more a story of business life in Koopstand, though the tragic climax involves all the principal characters.

"The Healers" introduces the family of a professor of Leyden. Both he and his son are in advance of their time in their researches in pathology, especially in the successful treatment of the husband of the daughter of the family. "The New Religion" is a somewhat related study of curative treatment, but this time on the part of charlatans.

"The Price of Lis Doris" is the story of a painter who alternates between Amsterdam and his native village of Boldam. "Harmen Pols" is written on the theme of Job. The hero is a peasant-proprietor who, with his family, undergoes a series of unmerited misfortunes, but are saved from the worst by the discovery of some valuable china long in the possession of the family.

## CHAPTER VII

### THE NOVEL TO-DAY

"So now, and for a long time to come, it would seem, the novel is the preferred form of artistic utterance. In the novel the century has found that for which it passionately yearned." <sup>1</sup> This was written in 1894, and nothing has happened to invalidate the first statement. "The novel," says Meredith Starr, "has become an indispensable feature in the national life, and as such must inevitably survive." <sup>2</sup> But there are always some prepared to dissent from the view contained in the added comment, "In the novel the century has found that for which it passionately yearned," and to hold "that the books which live are the books which express, not the current ideas and attitudes, either positive or negative, but the personalities of the writers." <sup>3</sup> It may be conceded that it is not necessarily the function of the novel to furnish material for the social historian, yet the fact remains that most good novels make their time and place important, do invoke life and the outside world

<sup>1</sup> J. Gray, Introduction to "Ecstasy".

<sup>2</sup> "The Future of the Novel", Preface.

<sup>3</sup> Elizabeth A. Drew, "The Modern Novel", p. 27.

for their characters and situations. To imagine otherwise may appear to dispense with "trends" in literature. But does it really do so? We can aver, Maeterlinckian-wise, that "nothing happens to us which is not of the same nature as ourselves," but do we thus escape the shadow of the age in which we live? Personality is not a lesser thing than the Zeitgeist, but one must be expressed in terms of the other, no matter what subject is taken; the chief material of literature, human nature, never changes, but the fashion of expression does vary, implicit in changing conditions.

The important intellectual changes of last century did not occur apart from the successive and profound social, mechanical and economic changes of the time. In a broad sense, it is possible to trace them back to the Industrial Revolution and to the increasing exactness of science since Darwin's advent, when, through the failure of the century's triumphs to provide spiritual regeneration, men's thoughts were driven to concentrate upon Man. Eager for instruction, literature too has watched science, and has aimed at scientific exactness of perception, or at least, as Professor Cross puts,<sup>1</sup> "has by theory or practice or both, insisted that imagination should be subordinated to observation." <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> "The English Novel", p. 263.

Even Meredith, a somewhat unwilling product of science, declared that "art is the specific," which is precisely what Henry James detected in the new fiction: "An appetite for closer notation, a sharper specification of the signs of life, of the consciousness of the human scene, and the human object in general than the three or four generations before us had been at all moved to insist on." <sup>1</sup>

By the 'nineties the realistic reaction was in full swing, under the guise of Naturalism in France, of Psychology in England, of Impressionism in Holland, of Symbolism in Belgium, and it is to those crowded years that the novel owes the extraordinary mobility and variability it has to-day. Less may be heard of realism now than then, but it is not that there is so much less of it that it is negligible, but that there is so much more of it that the word has grown idle as a distinguishing term; "The Prisoner of Zenda" was not a great book for the England of the 'nineties, but it had become <sup>an</sup> impossible one for the next decade; the books that then supplanted it, novels like "The Old Wives' Tale" and "Tono-Bungay", are, however, good and typical books for the 'twenties.

By the Netherlands' novel of to-day is meant the novel of the younger generation and those older writers

<sup>1</sup> "Notes on Novelists", p. 254.

who have not so far been mentioned because they still count as active contemporaries. As only a very general survey of this latest period is possible, it must omit, obviously, many sections, deal scantily with many worthy names, and if an opinion more than tentative may be admitted, it is simply because the novel in the Netherlands is at that restraining stage or two behind which has always characterised it relative to Franco-British progress; Holland and Belgium have as yet no Chekhov, no James Joyce or Dorothy Richardson; the novel is not yet with any of their writers an effort involving too wide a departure from the vivid moments of the novelist's own consciousness.

Dutch literature began, so far as the novel is implicated in it, in a renaissance of feeling, it passed through a phase of adventure, in Dekker it reverted as in Dickens to a literature of feeling, it is again in the manner of Richardson, though there has been added the trained perception that comes with science. The novelists who dominate the novel to-day, Herman Robbers, Israel Querido, Johan de Meester and Jac. van Looy, and most of the others would be called realists; all are concerned with the great problems of human society, and interest rather than transport; they have abandoned cathedrals and ruined castles for Amsterdam and Rotterdam



slum-life and The Hague's middle-class apartment houses; they have let the novel down from the picturesque heroic to the matter of contemporary life. In the case of the painter-novelist, Jac. van Looy,<sup>1</sup> this interest has led, through his own early experiences, to a closer study of the child-mind; for De Meester it has come to mean an intense hatred of respectability and an ironical style of presentation, the object of his hostility being the bourgeoisie as the upholders of an effete economic and ethical system. "His 'rubriek'", says Mr. Robbers deservedly, "was the strongest bulwark of the new art."<sup>2</sup>

This 'rubriek' of De Meester's was made by Israel Querido more like the conspicuous moral marking of Zola, whose method has never captured Holland and England as it has France, Germany, Russia and Sweden. Even in Querido's case it seems unlikely that it was a conscious attempt to make literature proceed altogether by science, by experiment or "provoked observation". More probably it was simply the result of experiences in the impressionist years in the less salubrious quarters of Amsterdam, when he was in turn watch-maker's assistant, violinist and diamond-worker. In his novels "Levensgang" (The Course of Life)<sup>3</sup> and "De Jordaan" (The 'Jordan')<sup>4</sup> we

<sup>1</sup> In 1884 he was awarded the Prix de Rome.

<sup>2</sup> "De Nederlandsche Litteratuur na 1880", p. 63.

<sup>3</sup> 1900. <sup>4</sup> 1912-1914.

have certainly the most realistic descriptions ever penned of Dutch town-life, while in "Menschenwee" (Toil of Men) <sup>1</sup> we have the Dutch "La Terre", a vivid and terrible portrayal of a year in the lives of a set of peasants and small market-gardeners, a brutal picture of those who subsist in appalling, almost animal, fashion, though not more so than that of the diamond-workers' life in "Levensgang" or that of a typical quarter of Amsterdam in "De Jordaan". <sup>2</sup> These books all have the force of knowledge; their purpose is not to amuse but to reveal and so assist the cause of social progress. This is done simply by drawing what is there, but, paradoxically enough, because they have not Zola's added didacticism, a pessimism adheres to them that most of that author's writings escape; it is certainly Dutch to be serious in thought and thorough in deed, but it is un-Dutch to be morose and unhopeful. Yet, Dr. Persyn is able to pronounce on Querido's books that they "are perhaps too lyrical for being realistically true in their pictures of human misery." <sup>3</sup>

If we consider "Menschenwee" it will be apparent that the novelist has no interest in superficialities of coun-

<sup>1</sup> 1903.

<sup>2</sup> This is not the famous Jewish quarter, as its name and Querido's origin might betoken, but a mixed foreign quarter (literally, the 'Jardin').

<sup>3</sup> "A Glance at the Soul of the Low Countries", p. 88.

try life which for so long constituted country life in the urban mind, pretty milkmaids, buttercups, and ploughman plodding home their weary way; in his work there is little of pastoral loveliness; he is often brutally frank in description as in speeches. This recurring sentence may be taken to summarise the whole: "The workers, absorbed in their heavy toil, sang no more." There is lyric beauty in this, but it is a sad beauty, that accentuates the ugly contrast to nature of degrading human conditions. Such a spontaneous sentiment as

" . . . I have found  
That English fields are splendid in their growing,  
And night comes with a golden sunset crowned,"<sup>1</sup>

is a vain expectation from the brooding Querido. Nature can go unnoticed if "the course of life" does not permit man, amid his blind or half-blind but gigantic toilings, to reciprocate its beauty.

"His realism," says Professor Prinsen, "is initially allied to that of Zola," but adds that "the realistic observer becomes the visionary."<sup>2</sup> This is very true of the epic cycle, "De Oude Wereld" (The Old World),<sup>3</sup> a gorgeous dream-panorama after the fashion of "Salammbô"; yet, just as in his alternate frigidity and riot of fancy in his Dutch novels we have the misfit of an Oriental

<sup>1</sup> E. W. White, "By the Touch of Life".

<sup>2</sup> "Geïllustreerde Nederlandsche Letterkunde", p. 273.

<sup>3</sup> "Het Land van Zarathustra", 1918; "Zonsopgang, 1920; "Morgenland", 1921.

genius with Occidental forms, we have now a Teuton's inability to wear with grace the borrowed robes of Oriental romanticism; he is more true to himself after all in these novels of the homeland, and Professor Prinsen is right in referring to him as "an artist of the true Dutch race" who is merely "modified by the Eastern nature."

Like many other modern writers, Querido is often branded as a disillusioned pessimist; but like so many of his time, he is agnostic rather than actually pessimistic, for the standpoint of the intellectual modern rests more on doubt than on a conviction of evil triumphant; it is simply that he questions profoundly the confident and glib assurances of the old standard truth, which, to him, enjoins poverty and acquiescence, and respects property and discredits revolt. Whether or not these opinions are accepted, we can ask no more of any artist than that he be sincere, and of the sincerity of the deep-feeling Querido -this "man van hartstocht" (passion), as Professor Prinsen calls him-<sup>2</sup> no one makes question.

Markedly different from Querido is the other central pillar of the Dutch novel to-day, Herman Robbers. He is distinctly more optimistic and humorous, and though not given over unduly to these attitudes, he might be

<sup>1</sup> "Geïllustreerde Nederlandsche Letterkunde", p. 273.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 273.

attached to the English school that comprehends Arnold Bennett, St. John Ervine, Sheila Kaye-Smith. If anything he tends, not to the sordid, but to the banal, descending too frequently to expressing commonplaces (if a fault is to be found with both Querido and Robbers it is in the prominence they allow to elementary ideas and humdrum conversation). Like Querido, Robbers writes principally of the city, <sup>1</sup> but whereas Querido is the chronicler of the lower-classes, Robbers stands in the same rôle to the middle-classes, and the British reader cannot fail to be struck with the approximations<sup>of</sup> his studies of domestic, business, student life to the corresponding phases of British society. Only in the greater freedom of his ideation -or perhaps merely of his expression, such being British diffidence- does he strike a note more distinctively of the Netherlands. There is nothing in his work that ought to offend; it is just that there is less aversion "to face the difficulties with which on every side the treatment of reality bristles," <sup>2</sup> than is shown by the usual English novelist. Zola's unshrinking fortitude in face of nightmare horrors is not necessarily a symptom of the moral passion, but neither is the absence of discussion.

<sup>1</sup> Mostly of Amsterdam; only in "De Bruidstijd van Annie de Boogh" (1901) is Rotterdam taken.

<sup>2</sup> Henry James, "The Art of Fiction" in "Partial Portraits", p. 405.

Most of Mr. Robbers' work is obviously "founded on fact". His greatest composition, the long novel, "De Roman van een Gezin", <sup>1</sup> is especially of an autobiographical nature. It is a closely-detailed study of the family of a well-to-do Amsterdam printer; all the incidents are well-devised and inevitable, and never have the suggestion of mere padding. "De Roman van een Gezin" (The Fortunes of a Household) is undoubtedly a contribution of the first magnitude to the Dutch novel. It was published, by an interesting co-incidence, in the same year as "Clayhanger", which is also "a history homely and rude" of a master-printer and his family. But it is not for its resemblance in subject-matter but for its similarity in treatment -really an unseizable difference between English and Dutch modes- that makes "De Roman van een Gezin" a relative of "Clayhanger" not to be despised. Since Dutch correspondences have been found for Richardson, Scott, Dickens, George Eliot, George, <sup>2</sup> we may go on and allot the title of "Bennett of Holland" to the genial editor of "Elsevier's Maandschrift". His achievement proves that at no time during the century and a half that the Dutch novel has been alongside the English has it come so near it in

<sup>1</sup> Part 1, "De Gelukkige Familie", 1909; Part 2, "Eén voor Eén", 1910.

<sup>2</sup> Wolff and Deken, Van Lennep, Beets, A. S. C. Wallis, Frans Netscher.

spirit, which, considering the insularity and racial prejudice of the English variety, is little short of marvellous. The Dutch novel has not yet winged its flight to the art of a Hardy -even in the English-speaking-world no one can possibly be accounted his rival- but in qualifying unmistakably to enter the company of representative writers of the next grade, it has taken a decided step towards a general levelling.

At no time has the standard of novelistic attainment been higher in Holland than it is to-day, with writers of the calibre of Querido, Robbers, Van Looy, De Meester. The number of women-novelists whose success is worthy of note has also never been so imposing before, even in this country where feminine achievement in literature has at all times been remarkable. Their prepossessions are generally along realistic lines, while several make a study of the psychology of their sex; but the emotional intensity is scarcely supported by a commensurate wealth of ideas.

"Een Huis voll Menschen" (A House full of People),<sup>1</sup> the accepted masterpiece of Margo Antink and Carel Schar-ten is without doubt a constituent of the emancipated modern novel, and their productions generally-whether written about Paris or Italy or Spain- convey a "Dutchness" by their restrained handling of the theme of sex-

<sup>1</sup> 1908.

Dutch seriousness being opposed to Belgian and French insouciance- and by their mixture of loftiness and lightness that yet fails to achieve the middle course of spacious humour. The tendency to a particularist parochialism is evident in the writings of Top Naeff, Ina Boudier-Bakker, Carry van Bruggen and Jo. van Ammers-Küller; they seem to command only single observations or sets of observations, though, if their thoughts do not "wander through eternity", they have their compensatory moments of sublimity. Of the first-named, Mr. Robbers is able to say, "Top Naeff, certainly no less than Johan de Meester, is a born literary artist." <sup>1</sup> "Carry van Bruggen", says Dr. Walch, "is inclined to indulge in one-sided argument," but adds that "her sketches . . . are mostly masterpieces of observation, full of subtle humour." <sup>2</sup> But most interesting perhaps among the contributions of these feminine writers is that of the "theatre"-novel of Jo. van Ammers-Küller, the product of useful experiences as a play-wright. <sup>3</sup>

Turning now to contemporary Belgian literature, the traditional dividing-line of French and Flemish confronts us as still the most difficult hurdle to be surmounted. For the first time since Conscience's day it is Flemish

<sup>1</sup> "De Nederlandsche Litteratuur na 1880", p. 91.

<sup>2</sup> "The Encyclopaedia Britannica", Supp. Vols. 1, p. 884.

<sup>3</sup> "Het Huis der Vreugden", 1922; "De Loopbaan van Jenny Heysten", 1923.



that is in the ascendant, for though there are more writers of French, the three novelists of most moment all compose in Flemish. During the nineteenth century Flanders had enjoyed but a mediocre literature, with the Snieders, Sleeckx and Conscience as very local and limited leaders. <sup>1</sup> The liberation of the Vernacular from antiquated traditions was brought about in much the same way as that of its French and Dutch associates; in 1893 a critical journal, "Van Nu en Straks" (Now and Anon), was founded, which became for the renaissance of Flemish letters, as André de Ridder says, "the foyer of light that "De Nieuwe Gids" was for the youth of Holland and "La Jeune Belgique" for our writers of French." <sup>2</sup>

With Cyriel Buysse, <sup>3</sup> the most distinguished of the early editors of the new review, the novel of Flanders soon commenced its more meritorious development. He actually began to write in 1893, when he published "Het Recht van den Sterkste" (The Right of the Strongest), but in this and the other novels of his first period-un-

<sup>1</sup> In 1868 Hyppolyte Taine could write in his "Philosophie de l' Art", Vol. I, p. 35, "To-day their literature is almost nil . . . They cannot cite any of those creative minds that impose great original views upon the world or enshrine their conceptions in beautiful forms capable of commanding universal admiration."

<sup>2</sup> "La Littérature Flamande Contemporaine", p. 39.

<sup>3</sup> See V. de Meyere, "Un Romancier Flamand: Cyriel Buysse", Paris, 1904; D. B. Steyns, "De Vlaamsche Schrijver Cyriel Buysse. Zij Wereld en zijn Kunst", Ghent, 1911; H. van Puymbrouck, "Cyriel Buysse en zijn Land", Amsterdam, 1911.

til 1905- <sup>1</sup> he was too violently swayed by indignation at the miserable, ignorant and brutalized condition of life in Flanders, "of peasants oppressed as much by the curé as by the patron or proprietor," <sup>2</sup> to do justice to his art.

His talent then lost a little of its outrageous force and its refractory pessimism; he railed less at "whatever brute and blackguard made the world"; <sup>3</sup> consolation he found in witnessing man toiling on indomitably, and serenity he acquired from contemplation of the quiet pasturages of Scheldt and Lys, where always

"Les villages songeaint au fond des avenues." <sup>4</sup>

To this period belong the masterpieces, "Het Leven van Rozeke van Daelen" <sup>5</sup> and "Het Ezelken" (The Ass's Colt).<sup>6</sup> And the resignation that came with his realization that "You cannot swerve the pulsion of the Byss," has continued into his latest work. <sup>7</sup>

With Buysse there has been, however, excessive productivity (and he ranks as a conteur as well as a novelist). It ought to have taken him three <sup>years</sup> instead of three

<sup>1</sup> "Op 't Blauwhuis", 1895; "Mea Culpa", 1896; -"Schoppenboer", 1898; "'n Leeuw van Vlaanderen", 1900; "Daarna", 1904; "Sursum Corda", 1894.

<sup>2</sup> A. de Ridder, "La Littérature Flamande Contemporaine", p. 64. *A.E. HOUSMAN, "LAST DOEMS."*

<sup>3</sup> ~~Quoted by W. Maeneile Dixon in "Tragedy", p. 168.~~

<sup>4</sup> E. Verhaeren, "Les Visages de la Vie: "L'Ivresse".

<sup>5</sup> 1905. <sup>6</sup> 1910.

<sup>7</sup> "Tantes", 1924.

months to write some of these books, and because this was all the time apparently that he could spare, there is a greater unevenness of style and a lesser depth of thought than one would expect to find in them, even allowing for the fact that Buysse belongs irrevocably to the vigorous but erratic Flemish race. His metier is the roman rural, but it is the rustic population that he sees first, and only incidentally the wide landscape that melts in a haze of beauty and mystery; the story is more his concern than the circumjacenties or the style. But sometimes his ostensibly noble object of shedding light on the lamentable lot of the Flemish peasants and workmen is defeated by the grim-faced sternness of the narration, when the artist's love for his story is consumed by his solicitations for the dispensations of even-handed Justice.

With Buysse it is impossible not to mention Stijn Streuvels.<sup>1</sup> Until 1906 he was a humble baker at the village of Avelghem; to-day he is the incontestable leader of the Flemish group; in especial he is the novelist of West Flanders, as Buysse is of East Flanders. He made his name in 1907 with the novel, "De Vlaaschard" (The Flax-Gatherer), which has the district of Courtrai, the Larne of Belgium, as its centre. This A. de Ridder

<sup>1</sup> The pen-name of Frank Lateur. See A. de Ridder, "Stijn Streuvels. Zijn Leven en zijn Werk," Amsterdam, 1908.

has described as "the rhythmical march of the seasons, the synthesis of the innumerable beauty of the natal earth." <sup>1</sup> Nature assuredly has the premier rôle in all Streuvels' work; he is emphatically the product of his milieu; with him the story is always slender, he is concerned merely with the impression, the reproduction of the mood. He himself has declared that he has "ni modèles, ni maîtres en dehors des peintres de l'école flamande." <sup>2</sup>

Yet, though he has chased away Buysse's "ferocious primitivism" for a judicious realism, in which his descriptions of the flat countryside, that seems to be leading to the edge of the earth, and the people that heroically inhabit it succeed in being poetic, he is not wholly free from pessimism. Life, he seems to think, is regulated by an obscure force, and he always makes the environment determine in some way the action. It is the view of Dostoevsky and Hardy before "the giant agony of the world", but though Streuvels is courageous, he has not the "heroic humanism" of these great philosophical realists; he compromises with approaching disillusion on the futility of existence by idealising his characters.

"Whence comes Solace? -Not from seeing

<sup>1</sup> "La Littérature Flamande Contemporaine", p. 57.

<sup>2</sup> Quoted by P. Hamelius in "Introduction à la Littérature Française et Flamande de Belgique", p. 294.

What is doing, suffering, being,  
 Not from noting Life's conditions,  
 Not from heeding Time's monitions;  
     But in cleaving to the Dream,  
     And in gazing at the gleam  
     Whereby gray things golden seem." <sup>1</sup>

Streuvelds, then, despite his powerful rhythms and his pictorial energy, does not get anywhere near to the epic note; he juxtaposes the types, but fails to unite them into a synthetic whole, a weakness much insisted upon by Mr. Querido at the very outset of Streuvelds' literary career.<sup>2</sup> He buries himself in a single kind, instead of following Balzac, Dickens, Tolstoi, Dostoievsky, and his novel, with more colour and less minutiae and precision, is no more than an embryo of their's. The essential difference between him and Buysse has been well summarised by Professor Vermeylen. "Streuvelds," he says, "is more lyrical, Buysse more dramatic. Streuvelds sees nature, with the men therein as parts of nature." <sup>3</sup> If it be their common fault that the sphere of their spiritual observation is not wide enough, their excuse must be that the alluring and indefinable distances of Flanders fields, of what Verhaeren calls "les au-delà mystérieux des plaines," are dearer to them than literature or even life itself.

<sup>1</sup> T. Hardy, "Poems of the Past and of the Present": "On a Fine Morning".

<sup>2</sup> In "Litteratuur en Kunst", Amsterdam, 1906.

<sup>3</sup> "Van Gezelle tot Timmermans", p. 99.

The third of the great Flemish trio of to-day is Felix Timmermans, the exuberant leader of the younger school, and the truest inheritor of them all of the spirit of "Van Nu en Straks". His "Pallieter" was hailed on its appearance <sup>1</sup> as a masterpiece, but it was in the explosion of the plenitude of youth after the war-period that "Pallieterism" became a regular cult, an irrepressible and irresponsible joie-de-vivre. <sup>2</sup> "It was," as André de Ridder so well says, "the revenge of life on death and sadness." <sup>3</sup>

Pallieter himself is a mixture of Tyl Ulenspiegel, Falstaff and John Bunclé; he lives as gaily and as carelessly as the animals on his farm, with no thought of the morrow; he is a child of the open fields and the broad skies. "Pallieter" is a book that soars above the tumults and anxieties of modern town life; we see the far-extending fields of Flanders, we smell the magic scents of evening and follow the mist rising from the river Nethe beside Lierre. But to the sophisticated mind so frankly jocund a life would seem to carry with it the abrogation of all intellectuality, and, "the first, fine, careless rapture over," we are constrained to demand if Pallieter's red countenance is really that of

<sup>1</sup> In "De Nieuwe Gids", November, 1912. It was published in 1916.

<sup>2</sup> Compare E. Claes, "De Witte", 1920, and H. Teirlinck, "De Nieuwe Uilenspiegel", 1920.

<sup>3</sup> "La Littérature Flamande Contemporaine", p. 185.

health and strength, and not the flush and febrile excitation of the kermesse. But even if we admit the probability of this being the reflection, not of shameless sensuality, but of youthful abandon, we do not remove "Pallieter" from the list of true Flemish writings. Here is no mere opportunist work; this freshness of spirit and this originality of tone, this "Rubens-like excess of sensual strength,"<sup>1</sup> and this mystical tenderness of the *béguinage*, is Flemish through and through; such a book need bring no 'message', simply to its author has it fallen to be identified with an essential task, "the great cause of cheering us all up," in which respect he is the greatest 'Card' of Flanders.

Even with Streuvels, Buysse and Timmermans, the Flemish genius in this latest period is far from exhausting itself, for these three are admirably supported by writers like H. Teirlinck, A. Vermeylen, M. Sabbe.<sup>2</sup> So abundantly, indeed, does it flow that it has burst beyond its linguistic boundaries, for many French-writing novelists of Belgium (not to mention the poets Maeterlinck and Verhaeren) are Flemish in every other important respect. The best-known perhaps is Georges Virrès,<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> D. Pissens and J. Festraets, "Vlaamsche Weeld", p. 51.

<sup>2</sup> Especially in their respective masterpieces, "Het Ivoren Aapje" (1909); "De Wandelende Jood" (1906); "t Pastorken van Schaerdijcke" (1919).

<sup>3</sup> The nom-de-plume of Henry Briers.

who really belongs to the older generation of Lemonnier, Eekhoud and Demolder, but who remains an active post-war writer. He is usually bracketed with Eekhoud as a novelist of the Kempen, and though he is not, like that forceful author, a rebel against all authority, but a pious Catholic, his conception of its primal race agrees surprisingly well with his. This is shown above all in "Les Gens de Tiest", <sup>1</sup> in which the little town of Tongres is painted with Balsacian precision and a delicate irony, realizing the ideal that "Literature is the expression of Society."

The work of the other French-writing Belgians is hardly so good as that of Virrès. The one of whom most was expected, Edmond Glesener, has not yet justified expectations, due perhaps to the poor opinion he holds of his countrymen, of whom he is quoted as saying, "To Belgians the finest idea in the world was never worth a crown piece." <sup>2</sup> His "Monsieur Honoré" and its sequel "Le Citoyen Colette" give us a sorry picture of Belgium. To these novels of Liège Glesener gives the secondary title of "Chronique d' un Petit Pays", but he is only one of numerous 'regional' writers; Leopold Courouble makes Brabant his province, and in his Brussels-dialect-

<sup>1</sup> 1903. Virrès was formerly burgomaster of Tongres.  
<sup>2</sup> Mentioned by J. Bithell, "Contemporary Belgian Literature", p. 311.



ical novels, the "Famille Kaekebroeck" series, he has shown that a national humour is possible; Maurice des Ombiaux and Louis Delattre write of Hainault and the country of Entre-Sambre-et-Meuse; and in "La Cité Ardente" <sup>1</sup> Henry Carton de Wiart has turned to the gallant past of Liège, "the Thermopylae of European civilization".

The black gulf of the years 1914 to 1918 yawns across the work of all Belgian writers of to-day -and of many Dutch ones too. The war, naturally, inspired a great amount of literature, but of satisfying novels very few. The invasion left Georges Eekhoud aghast; Streuvels, intellectually isolated in his village retreat at Ingoyghem, took to recording notes, banal and uncritical; <sup>2</sup> Buyse in Holland remained nearer the heart of his country, and produced one poignant novel in "De Strijd" (The Battle),<sup>3</sup> but subject like most others of its calamitously-inspired kind to the "emotional escape". No Belgian war-novel, then, has the unity of mood and the steady vision of Barbusse's "Le Feu" or Mottram's "Spanish Farm Trilogy"; all are tendencious, like the wonderful, Essex-written "Mr Britling". Accepting this as inevitable, much credit should go to Henri Davignon,<sup>4</sup> who, previous

<sup>1</sup> Awarded the Quinquennial Prize of literature for the period 1908-1912.

<sup>2</sup> "In Oorlogstijd", Amsterdam, 1915.

<sup>3</sup> 1918.

<sup>4</sup> As 'regional' novels his "L' Ardennaise" and "Un Pénitent de Furnes" (1925) may be singled out.

to the war, sought the reconciliation of the two races of his country,<sup>1</sup> and since then has done much to cement Anglo-Belgian friendship.<sup>2</sup>

It is hardly possible to proceed further in our trespass into present-day preserves. The novel itself is only a creation of modern times-foreshadowed perhaps in Italy, and approached in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, but not formed until the eighteenth- but already what a far cry it seems from Richardson to Wells, from Wolff and Deken to Scharten-Antink! Every generation has witnessed a wider and wider latitude in the genre, so that to-day it might seem that, as we started with something not yet the novel, we finish with something no longer the novel. But the acumen of Henry James sorted out this crux by his witticism. "There was," he said, "a comfortable, good-humoured feeling abroad that a novel is a novel, as a pudding is a pudding."<sup>3</sup> More so even than in his hey-day the novel has grown to be the epic of common life, so that now there is no study of human character, human motive, human action, there is nothing within reach of man's knowledge or of his imagination, that cannot be presented in this form. This "disorientation of the novel" Mr. Middleton Murry attributes

<sup>1</sup> In the much-discussed novel, "Un Belge", 1913.

<sup>2</sup> Chiefly in "Jan Swalue", published in English in 1918.

<sup>3</sup> "The Art of Fiction" in "Partial Portraits", p. 376.

to the great Russian writers of last century, but adds that, despite their impatience of "a minor perfection", the formal perfection of Flaubert and of James, they had a form of their own. <sup>1</sup> "The art of the novelist," says Mr. Eden Phillpotts, "embraces every sort of mental interest." <sup>2</sup> But these must still be built into it, not emptied from a cart; formlessness as such is never a virtue.

The Netherlands, with their immense vitality, have sprung tardily into activity with a great company of novel-writers. And if these for the major part are somewhat limited in scope and cannot be fairly compared with the masters of their art, the Netherlands can make answer that their poetry and drama have at all times been above the level of their novels. It may argue a weakness of the creative faculty on the part of their writers that the novel is still untouched by the artistic subjectivism of books like "Ulysses", "The World of William Clissold", but if the novel in the Netherlands does not share in this remarkable development of the species, they can again answer that they seek the same sense of proportion that governs the daily life of the twentieth century. In spite of its subjective moments it has largely "externalised" itself, by conscientious and careful pain-

<sup>1</sup> "The Break-up of the Novel" in "Discoveries", p.136.

<sup>2</sup> "The New York Times", 22 August, 1915.

ting of life; it may have provided no "War and Peace", no "Les Misérables", no "Vanity Fair" -even de Coster has not produced a "Don Quixote"-<sup>1</sup> but, though it has not captured the world's press as the drama of Ireland and Norway, for example, have done, it is enough that it has found its inspiration around it, in places where the average Britisher feels more at home than anywhere else on the continent, and among strata of society by which a nation's manners can be judged. How little reckons the tourist, who rushes by night past the roaring factories of Belgium or who casually surveys the green pastures of Holland from the arched back of a canal bridge, that the novel will enable him to penetrate to the secrets of these small but renowned nations! Here we have the work of a people like ourselves, who love their home and their country supremely -and, be it added, who also love smoking and the table-, a people whose perpetual struggle against the encroaching sea and against avid neighbours has given them their predominant characteristics of firmness, patience and high courage.

These Dutch and Belgian people I have considered, in view of their rapprochement on the basis of a common ci-

<sup>1</sup> Lest this opinion be thought too harsh, I would draw attention to the remark of De Hoog in his "Studien" that "even the best authors of Dutch literature, like Vondel, Bilderdijk, Cats, Tollens, Da Costa, Van Lennep and Beets do not belong to world literature."

vilisation, as one, realizing de Coster's great ideal:

"North, 'tis the Netherland:  
Belgium is the west;  
Girdle is alliance,  
Girdle is friendship." <sup>1</sup>

As cultured countries, the Netherlands remain at the front of Europe; Belgium, with her indestructible, heroically-held heritage of art, and Holland to whom, proportionately, most Nobel prizes are awarded. But however much we ought to be flattered at the amount of tutelage the novel there has received from Britain, the eminence of Holland and Belgium in other branches of art surely indicates a higher destiny yet for the genre. Lemonnier, Couperus and Streuvels were at one time or another held to be in the running for the much-coveted, if somewhat capricious, Swedish award, and, though no big enough novelist may at present be desirous for it, may we not hope that there is someone writing to-day in Bruges or Arnhem, in Malines or Breda who will bring the honour to the Netherlands, as Knut Hamsun and Ladislav Reymont have done to their small, co-lateral countries! It is impossible to overlook the chances of Belgium and Holland in Mr. Laurie Magnus' prophetic utterance, in viewing the prospect for post-war literature. "Possibly," he says, "the new renaissance will spring in one of the smaller countries, redeemed or restored in recent years." <sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> "Adventures of Tyl Ulenspiegel", p. 349.

<sup>2</sup> "A Dictionary of European Literature", Preface.

Nowhere would such a reviving touch be more deserved,  
nowhere would it be better received, than in quiet,  
plodding Holland, or on the smooth, green plains of  
Flanders, whose story is now so much our own.

## APPENDIX

### 1. ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS OF DUTCH NOVELS

Jo. van Ammers-Küller. "The House of Joy". Translated by H. van Wyhe. London: A. M. Philpot Ltd., 1925.

A. G. Bosboom-Toussaint. "Major Frank". Translated by James Akeroyd. London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1885.

Louis Couperus. "Eline Vere". Translated by J. T. Grein. London: Chapman and Hall, 1892.

"Footsteps of Fate". Translated by Clara Bell. London: W. Heinemann, 1891.

"Ecstasy". Translated by Alex. Teixeira de Mattos and John Gray. London: Henry and Co., 1892.

"Majesty". Translated by A. T. de Mattos and Ernest Dowson. T. Fisher Unwin, 1894.

"Psyche". Translated by B. S. Berrington. London: Alston Rivers, 1908.

"Small Souls". Translated by A. T. de Mattos. London: W. Heinemann, 1914.

"The Later Life". Translated by A. T. de Mattos. London: W. Heinemann, 1915.

"Twilight of the Souls". Translated by A. T. de Mattos. London: W. Heinemann, 1917.

"Dr. Adriaan". Translated by A. T. de Mattos. London: W. Heinemann, 1918.

"Old People and the Things that Pass". Translated by A. T. de Mattos. London: Thornton Butterworth Ltd., 1919.

"The Tour". Translated by A. T. de Mattos. London: Thornton Butterworth Ltd., 1920.

"The Law Inevitable". Translated by A. T. de Mattos. London: Thornton Butterworth Ltd., 1921.

"The Hidden Force". Translated by A. T. de Mattos. London: Jonathan Cape, 1921.

"The Comedians". Translated by J. Menzies Wilson. London: Jonathan Cape Ltd., 1926.

Eduard Douwes Dekker. "Max Havelaar". Translated by Baron Alphonse Nahdys. Edinburgh: Edmonston and Douglas, 1868.

"Walter Pieterse". Translated by H. Evans, Ph. D. New

York: Frederici and Gareis, 1904.

"Max Havelaar". Translated by W. Siebenhaar. London: A. Knopf, 1927.

Frederik van Eeden. "Little Johannes". Translated by Clara Bell. London: W. Heinemann, 1895.

"The Deepes of Deliverance". Translated by Margaret Robinson. London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1902.

"The Bride of Dreams". Translated by Mellie von Auw. New York: Mitchell Kennerley, 1913.

Nicolaas Heinsius. "The Life and Surprising Adventures of Mirandor". 2 vols. London: 1730.

Baroness Theresa van Hoog. "The Magnanimous Amazon". London, 1796.

Melati van Java. "The Resident's Daughter". London: Henry and Co., 1893.

Cornelis Elisa van Koetsveld. "The Manse of Mastland". London, 1860.

Jacob van Lennep. "The Adopted Son". Translated by E. W. Hoskin. New York: <sup>Burgess</sup>Springer and Co., 1847.

"The Rose of Dekama". Translated by F. Woodley. London: Bruce and Wyld, 1847.

"The Count of Talavera". Translated by A. Arnold. London: J. C. Nimmo and Bain, 1880.

J. Perelaer. "Baboe Delima, or the Opium Fiend". London: 1886.

Israel Querido. "Toil of Men". Translated by F. S. Arnold. London: Methuen and Co. Ltd., 1909.

Herman Robbers. "The Fortunes of a Household". Translated by Helen Chilton and Bernard Miall. G. Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1924.

C. and M. Scharten-Antink. "A House full of People". Translated by J. Menzies Wilson. Jonathan Cape, 1923.

H. J. Schimmel. "Mary Hollis". 3 vols. London: J. C. Hatten, 1872.

"The Lifeguardsman". London: A. and C. Black, 1896.

C. Vosmaer. "The Amazon". London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1882.



A. S. C. Wallis. "In Troubled Times". Translated by E. J. Irving. London: Swan, Sonnenschein and Co. Ltd., 1902.  
 "Royal Favour". Translated by E. J. Irving. Translated by E. J. Irving. London: Swan, Sonnenschein and Co., 1902.

Johanna van Woude. "A Dutch Household". London: 1902.

## 11. ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS OF BELGIAN NOVELS

Hendrik Conscience. "The Lion of Flanders". London, 1838.  
 "The Poor Nobleman". "Foreign Literature" Series, Vol.3. Edinburgh: T. Constable and Co., 1854.  
 "Veva, or the War with the Peasants". London, 1855.

Charles de Coster. "The Legend of the Glorious Adventures of Tyl Ulenspiegel in the Land of Flanders and Elsewhere." Translated by G. Whitworth. London: Chatto and Windus, 1918.

Henri Davignon. "The Two Crossings of Madge Swalue." Translated by Tita Brand Cammaerts. London: John Lane, 1918.

Georges Eekhoud. "Escal-Vigor". Brussels, undated.

G. Rodenbach. "Bruges-la-Morte". Translated by T. Duncan. London: Swan, Sonnenschein and Co. Ltd., 1903.

F. Timmermans. "Pallieter". Translated by C. B. Bodde. London and New York: Harper and Co., 1924.