Prose Literature of the Twentieth Century

NOTE—

The prose literature of the 20th Century is wide and varied. The prose of this period can broadly be divided under the following heads:—

1. Prose used in novels.
2. Essays.
4. Travel Books.
5. Historical Writings.
6. Philosophical Writings.
7. Scientific Literature.
8. Literary Criticism.

We have already dealt with the history of the English novel during the 20th century and the prose employed by novelists in their works in the history of the English novel. In the subsequent pages an attempt will be made to deal with the remaining branches of literature in which prose has been used effectively by literary artists.

Q. 96. Give an account of the English Essay and Essayists during the 20th Century.

Ans. During the 20th Century there has been a revival of the periodical essay, and the personal essay which had been cultivated earlier by the 18th and 19th century essayists. The prominent essay writers of the 20th century are the following. We shall deal with their works and their contribution in some detail.

G. K. Chesterton (1874—1936).

G. K. Chesterton was a critic, a novelist and a poet of rank but he was also an essayist of great repute. Richard Church called
him "the greatest essayist of his time."* He began his career as a journalist, turning out weekly articles for newspapers and magazines. It was in *The Daily News*, when that paper was edited by A. G. Gardiner, that Chesterton made his earliest reputation. He used to write in its columns upon all manner of books and upon nearly every subject under the sun. A single sentence would be enough to set him at work with an antithesis or proposition that brought the stars into Fleet Street and light into many dark places. But his method was primarily that of a busy journalist—rapid, nervous and clear. He used to sit and write his articles and essays in a Fleet Street cafe. There he would sit, a figure of vast bulk, talking, gurgling with a sort of internal combustion of humour, emitting little groans of sheer pleasure as he scattered the flowers of his fancy. It was characteristic of Chesterton that he should be amused by what he wrote, and by what he said in public.

Chesterton was a serious writer and he had no faith in art for art's sake. He was a satirist and spent his life in vigorously attacking the conclusions arrived at by intellectuals. There was an engaging pugnacity even in his lighter essays. He subjected like Shaw the shams and hypocrisies of the modern age to the hammer blows of his epigrams and witty sayings. "Chesterton caught the infection of satire and epigram during the nineties, but he used these weapons not, like most of his contemporaries for destructive criticism, but for the defence of constructive principles, old faiths and venerable institutions especially the Catholic Church, and for laughing down the sweeping pretensions of science and modern thought."** Chesterton's chief weapons are wit and paradox and these he employed with dexterity and ease. "To those out of contact with the fundamental beliefs which inspired his joyous argumentativeness, he might appear a buffoon intoxicated by his own flow of wit and paradox, and he did develop so marked a style of paradox as to invite parody, but his dazzling fancy and play of words was the sword-play of a sincere and single-hearted

* Richard Church—British Authors—A Twentieth Century Gallery.

** Moody Lovett: A History of English Literature.
fighter for his faith."* His strength as a writer does not lie in the profundity of his thoughts or in the presentation of any original point of view, but in the clear and witty way in which he expresses commonplace truths."† In short, "the quizzical humour, the scintillating wit, the delight in mental gymnastics, in paradox and epigram, and the whole hearted defence of whatever is old, or gay or romantic, are things which distinguish his writings from that of any of his contemporaries."‡

Style:

Chesterton had a great skill in dialectical writing. He possessed the gift of writing with peculiar simplicity and beauty, and with utmost clearness. Anti-thesis was his governing passion. He had also a genius for paradox. "Chesterton revels in antithesis, distinctions, identities, and absurdities. He argues usually by analogies and examples, though there is likely to be a real idea behind his display of fireworks, and often he is talking the plainest kind of sense. He has a gift for illustration worthy of a great poet; the world is constantly alive for him, and images occur to him naturally from the farthest end of it. He writes with a perpetual relish for facts, he knows the habits of man and women as a reporter knows them, and he does not forget whatever has once engaged his eyes and ears. He is positive, dogmatic, and sudden in his statements, and seems to find a great deal of fun in speaking extravagantly to an age which has been trained to accept only qualified judgments, to be skeptical about everything." People were not only skeptical about his judgments but also denounced his antithetical and paradoxical style. Dean Inge was vociferous in this respect. Richard Church says, "his literary device of antithesis and startling metaphor became a bad habit." But we should not forget that he had a style of his own which has pleased hundreds of thousands of affectionate readers.

Hilaire Belloc (1870—1953).

Chesterton and Belloc were friends and these two ran in harness together on many occasions. It was a popular joke of the

* A. S. Collins : English Literature of the 20th Century.
† Compton Rickett : A History of English Literature.
‡ E. Albert : A History of English Literature.
comes to refer to them as a hybrid creature, 'The Chesterbelloc.'

belloc was an essayist, critic, poet, journalist and a writer of travel
books. The collection of his essays is to be found in April (1904)
Till on the Sea (1906), On Nothing (1908), On Everything (1910)
and On Something (1911). His essays are satirical and witty and
owe their attractiveness to the graceful ease and simplicity of
his prose style, and the imagination and insight of the poet which
often underlie them.” The most unpleasant feature of his prose
style is his habit of expressing himself at the top of his voice. In
the essay on Getting Respected at Inns and Hotels he advised:

“As you come into the place go straight for the smoking
room, and begin talking of the local sport, and do not talk humbly
and tentatively as many do, but in a loud authoritative tone.”

Edward Verrall Lucas (1868—1938)

E. V. Lucas, a journalist of wide learning, is recognised as
the pre-eminent editor of Charles Lamb's works and
toographer of Lamb. His editions of the life and letters of
Charles Lamb was the result of lifelong sympathy and
devoted research. It goes to his credit that he popularised the
lore of Charles Lamb in the twentieth century. Though he
wore the mantle of Lamb, yet there are a few dissimilarities
between the two writers. In the words of A. C. Ward, “The
robust urbanity and sophistication of Lucas made him unlike
Lamb, who, though he knew, ‘more about what books are worth
reading than any one living,’ wore all his knowledge with a
deceptive air of innocence: he was ‘all for quietness and not
being seen, and having his own thoughts and his own jokes.”

The essays of Lucas are found in Character and Comedy
(1907), Old Lamps for New (1911) Loiterer's Harvest, Cloud and
Silver (1916). His essays enjoyed immense popularity. They
are marked by fancy, literary artifice, common sense, lightness
of touch, ease and humour. His humour, though generally kind
and humane, is sometimes almost harsh and savage as in 'Those
Thirty Minutes' in which he rails against those people who
agonize their friends by seeing them off on railway journeys. His
essays are mainly characterized by his urbanity, ruthlessness of
observation and fancy. “In his thoughts,” remarks Frank
Swinnerton, “he has no superficiality; but his essays and fictions
are written with his fancy and his playful mind, and it is only at times, as in the Swinburne sketch, that one glimpses a judgment to which the facile enthusiasms of his fellow-creatures are as the idle howlings of tomcats on urban rooftops.” His essays reveal that he had a great liking for the curious, the human and the ridiculous. “Offer him a story, an incident, or an absurdity, and his mind will instantly shape it with wit and form. He can read a character with wisdom, and gravely turn it to fun. He will versify a fancy, or concentrate in an anecdote or insistence all that a vulgar mind might stagger for an hour to express. But his is the mind of a critic and a commentator; and the hideous sustained labour of the ambitious novelist would be abhorrent to him.”

Robert Lynd (1879 - 1949)

Robert Lynd was one of the most outstanding essayists of the 20th century. He began his career as a journalist and for nearly twenty years under the name of “YY” appeared his weekly essay in The New Statesman and Nation. Like Chesterton he had the Fleet Street for his background, and though he was out and out a journalist, his prose is not vitiated by the defects of journalism. His sentences are flawless, his diction is chaste and show by a fine taste and even his subject is not of temporary interest. In the words of J. B. Priestley, “He has marched into literature by way of journalism, the day’s round, the common task. It is not everybody’s way; it is especially suitable for writers with well stored, sane and masculine minds, men who can take hold of experience and translate it freely, who can ransack their own minds and plunder the outside world with an equal measure of success; and when once a man does enter literature by this road, there can be no doubt as to his capacity; he is worth hearing.” Indeed, he is worth reading for his urbanity, wit and humour, engaging style and his passive philosophy of life which we can gather from his weekly commentary upon passing events for nearly twenty years.

The essays of Robert Lynd are to be found in The Pleasure of Ignorance (1921), Collected Essays (1923), The Money Box (1925), The Green Man (1928), It is Fine World (1930). His essays are personal in character and reveal his likes and dislikes on
variety of subjects. They are marked with a note of sincerity. "Those who knew him," remarks A. S. Collins, "have testified to the natural sincerity and sterling worth of the man, and his essays are the man." He knew himself well and there was no conflict in his personality. "At ease with the world and himself" says A. S. Collins, "he wrote with a detachment that gives a timeless wisdom to his commentary on life. Unlike so many of his contemporaries, he did not want to change the world, but only to encourage it to live, sanely, decently and happily." He wrote about his memoirs and experiences, but his essays are not disfigured by egotism. He writes with modesty and as though he has infinite leisure.

It is a characteristic of Robert Lynd to be timeless. He has the same broad and enduring appeal which he enjoyed in his life time. The charm of his essays lies in his twinkling humour which is not away from irony. Though he was humane and tolerant, yet he had an ironic whip for cant and humbug, bunkum and brutality, malice and intolerance. His reflections on flotsam and jetsam of life are sometimes grave, though often they are marked with gaiety and gusto.

Lynd is a writer of fine, critical prose, and his essay on Modern Poetry exhibits his insight into modern poetry and poetic trends. His observations on poets also seem to be convincing because he has a way of saying that is very convincing. His estimate of Walter De la Mare is a specimen of sound judgment and charming style. "Of all contemporary poets, there is none who is so obviously the poet of homesickness as Mr. De la Mare. He is the poet of love shackled with vain longing for lovely things that pass, for love that passes. He draws consolation, however from the fact that, though things pass, they pass in a perpetuity of beauty."

It is not easy to label Robert Lynd for he will be sure to mislay it. In the words of Richard Church, "Examine his essays, and you will see how he builds up an argument by a skilful illustration of exceptions; how he reabsorbs those exceptions, and closes down with a neat, swift stroke that shows no temporizing hand. With all his tolerance, Lynd is implacable in his detestation of bunkum and brutality. His taste is unerring. As a critic of
morals and art he is stable because he knows his own instinct and their foundations in a tradition which he can defend full and consciously. Sanity, a deep penetrating humour born from a love of his fellowmen, a quick appreciation of nature, these are faculties of an essayist who perhaps pleases himself in being deceptive. His depth, like that of a clear pool into which the sun is shining, is greater than it seems. Such is Robert Lynd still eluding the critic."

Prose Style:

"Very early in his career Robert Lynd cultivated the qualities that stood him in good stead as an author. He cultivated and disciplined his language and he is never careless in writing even a single sentence. The chief fault of journalism, the 'slip-shod' writing, is never the fault of Lynd. His sentences are all neatly turned out and evenly balanced. Lynd belongs to Ireland and it will not be out of place to mention that some of the purest prose writers of English have been Irish by birth—Swift and Shaw—to name only two of a crowded galaxy—have given to English Literature a prose the like of which is hard to find in English". J. B. Priestly says, "Mr. Lynd's prose has variety, modulation, like all good prose, it has a rhythm of its own. Occasionally it descends into "snip-snaps", but, generally beneath its quite ease and gentle "hurry of the spirit", there is some very delicate modulation, and a certain characteristic rhythm that turns his prose into a voice."

The style of Robert Lynd is thoroughly conversational pleasing and not unmixed with humour and irony. His love of epigrammatic sentences, his clarity and lucidity, his sense of balance, the use of similes, the phrase-making gift are the outstanding qualities of his prose style.

A. G. Gardiner (1865—1946)

Popularly known as Alpha of the Plough, A. G. Gardiner was a journalist and an essayist of great repute and wide appeal. He was the editor of the Daily News from 1902 to 1919. He wrote a book on the prominent personalities of the time and called it 'Prophets, Priests and Kings.' His typical collection of essays such as Pebbles on the Shore (1916) and Leaves in the Wind (1920) are the light easy talk of an ordinarily thoughtful man.
As an essayist Gardiner assumed the role of a preacher and a moralist. As Addison wrote for the correction of 18th century manners and society, Gardiner wrote for uplifting the manners and morals of the war-ridden English society. It was a delicate task because people are not prepared to listen to sermons. Fortunately Gardiner could claim a cheerful disposition, a facile pen, a style that could win the confidence of his readers. He never tried to impose his views upon the reader. He did not show that he was preaching. He simply suggested in his own sly manner what he wanted his readers to practise. He was teaching when he was trying to delight and entertain his readers. He won the confidence of his readers by using many simple anecdotes, incidents and stories. In his essay ‘On Courage’ he emphasised upon well-calculated sacrifice for the sake of the nation by narrating the story of the sailor, who in cold blood, accepted death for the sake of another sailor. His was an example of marvellous courage and through this incident the writer taught the lesson of sacrifice for others.

A. G. Gardiner is one of the most lovable and pleasant writers of English essays. Each essay of Gardiner is a source of pure pleasure. For Gardiner any subject was good enough for writing and he wrote with perfect ease, confidence and grace. The subject-matter of his essays may be trifling but the attention of the reader never flags. He engages the attention of the reader from the beginning to the end of his essay, and this he does by the charm of his intimate, confessional style. To quote W. L. Phelps, “It is an intimate, confessional style of composition, where the writer takes the reader into confidence, and talks as if to only one listener talks too, about thing often essentially trivial, and yet making them for the moment interesting by the charm of the speaker’s manner.”

The essays of Gardiner are marked with a note of pleasant humour. His humour is not away from satire. His pen was dipped in gall. He criticised the system of justice in his country. In the essay On Rumour’ the school master was the prey of “the lying tongue of rumour.” His wife committed suicide. “And the jury did not say ‘killed by slander’ they said, ‘Suicide while of unsound mind’. Oh! Cautious jurymen!” Only three words
they are but they speak volumes of the legal system of England. His pen did not spare, when a question of principles was involved, even the biggest person living or dead. His sarcasm in the words 'I love the subtleties of the ingenious Mr. Belloc' is noteworthy.

Gardiner's descriptive vein finds an equally good exposition in his essays. He is particularly interested in describing the sights and scenes of nature in his essays, and his descriptions are exquisitely beautiful. Here is a sample of his descriptive power—"The far horizon was still-stained wine-red with the last embers of the day; northward over the shoulder of the hill the yellow moon was rising full-orbed into the night sky and the firmament glittered with a thousand lamps."

**Prose Style:**

Gardiner's prose style is the secret of his charm. The charm of his essays lies in the choice of words, the happy phrasing and the simple sentence construction. He uses very simple vocabulary and the reader moves on from word to word, from sentence to sentence without the slightest effort. This effortless ease is the first quality of Gardiner's style. He makes use of simple words. In his essay 'On Big Words' he has explained his attitude to the choice of words. "It is an excellent thing," says he, "to have a good vocabulary, but one ought not to lard one's common speech or every day letters with long words.............We do not make a thing more impressive by clothing it in grand words any more than we crack a nut more neatly by using a sledge hammer; we only distract attention from the thought to the clothes it wears. If we are wise our wisdom will gain from the simplicity of our speech, and if we are foolish our folly will only shout the louder through big words." "A fine use ot words," he remarks a little latter, "does not necessarily mean the use of fine words.............Quite ordinary words employed with a certain novelty and freshness can wear distinction that gives them not only significance but a strange and haunting beauty."

Gardiner writes with great charm and ease and his prose has the qualities of a good talk. He enlivens his essays by using stories and anecdotes and by his subtle use of humour and light satire. He also makes a wonderful use of adjectives—'A world of gigantic wisphe's 'a frenzy of rejoicing,' the lying
tongue of rumour' have vividness and clarity that impress the reader. Above all, his sentence structure is very simple—"What we have to guard against in this matter of rumours is the natural tendency to believe what we want to believe." It is so clear and so telling. The reader feels that he has often thought of it but never could express it so well. Simple words, simple phrases, and simple sentences have a magic of their own. And in this lies the wide appeal of A. G. Gardiner.

Max Beerbohm (1872–1956).

Max Beerbohm, the Oxford man who won thundering popularity by his Zuleika Dobson (1911) which shook Oxford, was a delightful essayist, an entertaining parodist and a dramatic critic. In his Christmas Garland he has parodied the styles and writings of A. C. Benson, Wells, Conrad, Bennett, Shaw and a dozen other writers. He had the art of picture painting and could portray the mind of a contemporary in a phrase. He had the vision of a penetrating critic. He excelled in wit, irony and exposure of the foibles of his own times and that of the Victorian age. "In an age of hurry he never hurried; in a machine age he preserved in his writings and drawings the delicate craftsmanship of a more leisureed and less strenuous time; in an age when most people could write moderately well, but few had anything to write about, he was perfect both in manner and matter."

"He holds a high place among twentieth century essayists: he is completely original, whereas others carried on the tradition of the early nineteenth century periodical essayists. He is a creative critic of literature and life, with a generous streak of special genius; a philosophic jester bursting bubbles of snobbery and pretence with wit and irony and satire. He played little if any part in the social and political turmoil of his time; but little escaped his notice. He could portray the mind of a contemporary in a phrase and with a few strokes of the pencil fix both body and soul upon paper."

Style:

Simplicity, economy, rhythm and balance are the hallmarks of Max Beerbohm's prose style. His diction is as simple

* A. C. Ward—Twentieth Century Literature.

** Ibid.
as the Bible. He has the power to captivate the eye of the reader by the very first word of his essay and holds it to the last. He knows the art of placing each word in its place, a secret known to only the greatest of English prose-writers. "His prose is as precise and pure as any in the language, and his wit belongs with the rarest—with that of Shakespeare, Congreve, Sterne and Oscar Wilde."*

"Max Beerbohm brushes lightly, delicately, wittily, over the surface of life, with great tenderness for all that he has enjoyed, and unfailing humour." Max Beerbohm is nothing if not a humorist. He was a humorist Par excellence. He laughed at the foibles and freaks of human beings but his pen was not dipped in gall. He was piercingly critical without ever-being unkindly. He laughed pointedly and without cruelty at the foibles of men. He laughed where he loved; and loved where he laughed; but he neither beamed nor sniggered. He was a sympathetic critic of human foibles. "In his observations, and in his style, there is 'nothing too much', but there is always just enough.......His is the kind of writing which English literature is supposed not to have; though in fact there is every kind of writing in English."†

J. B. Priestley (1894—)

Priestley, the critic, is also a fine essayist. His essays find a place in I for One (1923), Open House (1927), Apes and Angles (1928), The Balcony and other Essays (1929), and Self-Selected Essays (1932). "Priestley had a good deal of the essayist in his make up as a novelist, and in the essay itself the broad humanity, the shrewd sense of true values of living, the knowledge of men, the power of narrative and the humour that were his strength as a novelist appeared in attractive condensation."‡ His essays are literary and critical and his studies on T. L. Peacock and Meredith (E. M. L.) are penetrating and sharp. In The English Comic Characters, he "produced a very happy variation of the essay in evoking some of the great comic

* C. A. Doren and M. V. Doren—American And British Literature since 1890.
† R. A. Scott-James—Fifty years of English Literature.
‡ Dr. A. S. Collins : English Literature of the 20th Century.
figures like Toby Belch and his associates and Jane Austin's Mr. Collins and discussing them as though they were living people. Indeed nearly all his essays are enriched by allusions drawn from his wide reading in a manner resembling Hazlitt's.*

Priestley writes a familiar and a simple style. His avowed object is to be simple. "Deliberately I aim at simplicity and not complexity in my writing. No matter what the subject in hand might be, I want to write something that at a pinch I could read aloud in bar-parlour. (And the time came when I was heard and understood in a thousand bar-parlours). I do not pretend to be subtle and profound, but when I am at work I try to appear simpler than I am. Perhaps I make it too easy for the reader, do too much of the toiling and sweating myself."

"As a verbal craftsman he is admirable, for he loves his medium of words and uses them with imagination."** His choice of words is happy. His use of epithets, adjectives and participles has been very happy and his words create humour and provide an ironical flavour to the whole sentence. Mark the boisterous humour produced by the word 'bellowed' in the sentence—"But motor cars and aeroplanes are quite impossible, allowing nothing but a grim frozen silence occasionally shattered by a bellowed remark." His adjectives are very graphic and vivid and sometimes help the reader to form clear, vivid mental images. But "when his writing glistens with a brilliant aptness of adjective and felicity of metaphor it is not because he has retired to a chalet in the mountains of a florentine villa. He has not tied a scented towel round his head or sat fiddling for a whole morning with the cut of a sentence or the cadence of a line. He has simply been smoking a pipe and tapping on a type-writer; no exquisite, museum-worthy manuscripts emerge from Priestley; his hand writing is bad enough to be unusable and he rarely uses it. He a worker who employs the machinery of his trade and has a friendly feeling for those clickety-clack contraptions which others regards as odious utilities."

E. V. Knox.

He was the editor of the Punch for several years from * Richard Church—British Authors.

** Ibid.
1932. He was a verse parodist but his essays in prose are his lasting contribution to literature. His essays are witty and wise and embody his observation on life.

A. Milne

His two volumes of essays are *Not That It Matters* (1919), *If I May* (1920). "In comparison with Priestley's, the essays of A. A. Milne are considerably slighter, but their whimsical humour and agreeable sentiment are conveyed by a durable grace of style and may well make them outwear the years."*

Here is a typical example of his humorous style—

"Of the fruits of the year I give my vote to the orange......

One wonders why? The answer is convincing enough—

"It is well that the commonest fruit should be also the best. Of the virtues of the orange I have not room fully to speak."— and then he proceeds to enumerate the virtues of the orange.

Alice Meynell (1847—1922).

She was a poetess, a critic and an essayist. Her essays are reflective and quiet in tone and belong to the Edwardian period. "The collected Essays of Alice Meynell show that whether she wrote of Andromeda and Arcturus, of laughter or colours, children or sleep, her touch was and delicate her vision clear."**

She was an essayist of an austere and reticent type and her emotions were well disciplined and expressed in a chiselled language.

Dean Inge—(1890—)

Dean Inge has to his credit *Lay Thoughts of a Dean* and *Outspoken Essays* 1919 and 1922. Inge began as a journalist and his articles in the London *Evening Standard* "were a journalistic adaptation of the Baconian essay, being serious thoughts on serious subjects seen in the light of current events."† His finest work is to be found in his *Outspoken Essays*. In these essays W. R. Inge wrote fearlessly without fear or favour and each essay bears the stamp of his strong mind. He had an argumentative way of putting things and advocated emigration to decrease over population and the study of eugenics

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* A. S. Collins—*English Literature of the 20th Century.*

** A. C. Ward—*Twentieth Century Literature.*

† A. S. Collins—*English Literature of the 20th Century.*
to improve the racial stock. He attacked vigorously war-mongers and militarists and expressed his opinions in a forceful and

categoric manner. Here are a few opinions of Inge which exhibit

his confidence in himself and the surety of touch with which he

expressed them. His views on politics are radical.

(1) "A nation which gives itself to immoral aggrandizement is far on the road to disintegration. (2) By any national

standard of morality few greater scoundrels have lived than

Fredrick the Great and Napoleon I. (3) The apotheosis of the

state, whether in the interest of war or of revolution is an

anachronism and an absurdity. (4) To worship the state is to

worship a demon who has not even the redeeming quality of

being intelligent. (5) The freedom of the individual is sacred

and ought to be maintained."

The statements of Inge quoted above exhibit his fearless

nature and his ability to give blows to accepted notions of history

and politics. But when he wrote about religion he wrote from

the heart and exhibited a tender and humble spirit. In judging

the progress of the world he adopted the attitude of a cynic

and in the essay Idea of Progress he refused to believe that there

has been any progress in the present. He saw a gloomy future

for humanity. He was nicknamed "the gloomy Dean" because of

his pessimistic attitude towards life.

R. A. Scott James nicely sums up the position of Inge as

an Essayist in the following words—"Dean Inge was occupied

mainly in academic studies and the writing of books the most

notable of which were concerned with various aspects of the

history and practice of mysticism. He entered upon a new phase

of activity and descended into the arena of controversial essay-

writing, and in the third and fourth decades of the century

poured forth series of brilliant, combative essays in the best

Edwardian manner proving that no style is out of date when it is

backed by learning, sense for language and sympathy with the

living. His conservatism, his respect for tradition, his dislike

of demagogy, were expressed with a dour frankness that won for

him the sobriquet of the gloomy Dean."*

* R. A. Scott James: Fifty Years of English Literature.
Charles Morgan.

Morgan is an essayist of the artistic and philosophic school, and his belief is that the world of the spirit means more than the world of action. His style is, “dreamlike in its slow majestic movement. It is a confident style without modernism or striving; very personal in an abstract sort of way; classic, resourceful diction, searched out images: a Platonic turn of thought and speech.”

Rebecca West.

Her essays are psychological and deal delicately with problems of psychological affinities and human institutions. She is also a satirist and her satire is directed against man and his affairs. She exhibits a general susceptibility. Her style is “smooth-flowing, rounded outlines, periodic accomplished: witty and tastefully wrapped up: but wanton, full of fresh, charming concerts: full of apt thoughts verging on the epigrammatic.”

Ernest Hemingway.

He is a realist and his perception of reality is marked with a note of grimness. His writings suggest despair and casualness. His style has a clear metallic ring. It is vivid though there is careful word economy. His style is as stark as his outlook on life.

E. E. Cummings.

He is a whimsical type of essayist. “His mind lies open to catch all chance fancies that hang about the fringes of conscious-ness.” He has a scrupulous respect for all the odds and ends of mind content. His style is impressionistic. “It is a medley of objective and subjective: much that is clear and graphic, but interlarded with personal reactions and allusions that are often obscure to the reader. Imagist i.e. he tends to use words as a painter uses colour as a plastic material. There is much poetry here, too. There is much pretence at simplicity, but it is not really simple, but highly sophisticated, with a complicated background showing through, leaving an impression of precocity by amusing and stimulating work reading like an interesting dairy.

C. E. Montague.

He is an optimist and his essays reveal his love for life. He
inspires us to enjoy life to the full. His essays exhibit his think
fulness for the goodness of life. "He writes as one who has good
news: no limitations or narrowness and few doubts." His style
is "Full flavoured, brilliant, matured." He is vigorous, scholarly,
rhetorical, cadenced, well-balanced in his writings.

Edmund Blunden.

He is an essayist of the countryside. His essays reveal his
feeling for all objects of the countryside whether beautiful or ugly,
rare or humdrum. His style is partly heavy, suddenly light. He
wrote with deliberation and some of his sentences are ponderous.
He "makes his own thought about the object rather than the
object itself clear to the reader, and yet he takes the reader
along with him."

Maurice Baring.

His essays are reminiscent in character and are written in
a leisurely fashion. There are anecdotes and gossips turned out
with an air of detachment. His style is "desiccated and effortless.
It is easy reading, easily digested as it was meant to be: has the
exaggeration and approximation common to most gossip."

Aldous Huxley (1894—1963)

Aldous Huxley is well-known for his novels. Besides his
novels, he has written quite a good number of essays, short and
witty. Huxley is primarily a writer of satire and irony. One
gets tired of reading his philosophico-satirical novels since they
sting and bite too much. They are based on, what Miss Neill calls
an anti-humanitarian Philosophy. But his essays are much more
interesting and pleasing to read, inspite of the fact that the
satirical element is never absent from them. His essays are
collected in the volumes called Music at Night and Do What You
Will.

Q. 97. Write a note on Twentieth Century Biography, and
Autobiography and evaluate the work of the prominent Biographers
and Autobiographers of the present age.

Ans. Biography and Autobiography have been very
popular during the 20th century. Till the year 1918 there were
few biographies of distinction and those biographies, which were
also pieces of literature, were few and far between. It was Lytton Strachey (1880—1932) who gave to English biography a new form and shade. His *Eminent Victorians* (1918) was warmly received and six reprints were called for in seven months. It was highly praised and a host of imitators sought to shine in the new field in which Strachey could break a new ground and achieved rare success.

What was Lytton Strachey’s method as a biographer? He was the first biographer who “broke away from the heavy laudatory biographical monuments which had become the rule from Victorian days.” Instead of praising sky-high the heroes of his biographies as gods of the earth, he examined them critically and found that they were ordinary men of flesh and blood, and shared the common foibles and weaknesses of erring human beings. The eminent Victorians of whom Strachey wrote were Cardinal Newman, Dr. Arnold of Rugby, General Gordon and Florence Nightingale. These were Victorian idols of worship and were then the object of public veneration. They had been idolised by the Victorians. It was Strachey’s job to examine their work critically and bring them out in their true colours. He took them off their pedestals. He made statements about his figures which staggered and shook the people of his times. ‘He had salutary things to says; he said them provocatively and without romantic embroidery.’ “He saw them instead as very human figures with amusing weaknesses, with comedy in their grandeur. He shone a strong searchlight on them, which caught them off their guard and revealed details that he sober conventional biographers had thought unworthy of notice or better, omitted.”

So viewed the *Eminent Victorians* ceased to be V. I. Ps. For example Florence Nightingale had been idolised as the Lady of the Lamp, who had been extremely kind and generous to the soldiers. But Strachey showed that “She was the Lady of the Lamp in her spare moments. At other times she was an Angel of Wrath armed with thunderbolts, which she never hesitated to throw.” Thus, what signalises the work of Strachey is the *ironic art* and the Stracheyan irony became famous during the 20th century. Men of the older

* A. S. Collins: *English Literature of the 20th Century.*
† A C. Ward: *Twentieth Century Literature.*
generation denounced Strachey's ironical portraiture of idolised Victorian characters but their denunciation could have no effect on Strachey and his followers. The success that greeted Strachey in his first venture inspired him to write another biography, this time of the popular Queen Victoria [The picture of Queen Victoria is sympathetically drawn. Queen Victoria is, "a movingly human revelation of the queen and the woman, leaving her, for all his ironic manner, a figure to be liked and admired, and presenting his portrait in far fewer pages than had formerly been considered necessary for serious biographical work."* Elizabeth and Essex (1928) followed Queen Victoria. Here he seems "rather out of his depth historically." His Portraits in Miniature (1931) is a collection "of relatively slight sketches incuding brief studies of some of the older English historians." Strachey's style is sweeping and the sentences are winding. His style may appear a little teasing because of his longwinded sentences, but "if the winding sentences were made straight by reducing the number of adjectives and qualifying phrases, the 'superfluous' word would often carry away with them that pervasive irony which runs through every line and is the spirit of Lytton Strachey's prose."**

Strachey's great achievement had been to give to Biographical Literature a new life and a new form. He reinstated biography as a literary art and presented truth from a personal perspective in a dazzling style full of colour and contrast. His followers could not be very successful for they "aped his irreverence of approach and his dazzle of style without sharing his power of penetrating and illuminating the subject."

Phillip Guedalla (1889—1944)

He was considerably influenced by the example of Strachey, and though not actually his disciple, at least shared some of his principles. Strachey had stated that biography is "the most delicate and humane of all the branches of the art of writing". Guedalla said, "Biography is the painting of portraits and it is impossible to paint them without a touch of art."

The biographical sketches of Guadella are wittily drawn and they startle us by their continual glitter of wit. In his Supers and

* A. S. Collins: English Literature of the 20th Century
** A. C. Ward: Twentieth Century Literature
Supermen (1920), Masters and Men (1922) and A Gallery, there are fine sketches of Victorians and their contemporaries. We have pictures of Disraeli, Lord Asquith, Hardy and Wells. What makes these pictures and portraits somewhat unsatisfactory is the witty way of the author. Strachey had combined matter with manner, but Guedalla was all for manner of expression rather than for substance. "His subjects deserved something better than the manner of a brilliant undergraduate, irresponsibly scoring point after point in a tone of super amusement." Guedalla was "capable of sense and brilliance together, but he played about with words recalling the worst mannerisms of Oscar Wilde, Chesterton and Lytton Strachey. "These defects were mitigated to some extent in his full studies of Palmerston (1926) and The Duke of Wellington in (1931). In these works Guedalla had toned down his witticism. He became sober and his treatment "preserving only the merits of the new approach, admirably matched his subjects."

Sir Osbert Sitwell (1892—).

Osbert Sitwell brought out the history of his own family in five volumes, Left Hand. Right Hand, (1945), The Scarlet Tree (1946), Great Morning (1948), Laughter in the Next Room (1949). In 1950 Sitwell added the fifth volume Noble Essence which was not in the original plan. In these volumes we have portraits of Sitwell's father, friends and relatives. These works of Sitwell reveal his love for the past and his disgust for the present. He seems to be writing an elegy upon "that halcyon age in which he grew up" in contrast to the present age which seems to him "this cruel and meaningless epoch." He is all for Victorianism and states, "I should like to emphasise that I want my memories to be old-fashioned and extravagant—as they are." In his vision of the Victorians there is none of the irreverence of Strachey. He has rather a great reverence for the old Victorians and is a pleasant contrast to Strachey.

Among the other important biographical works of the 20th century place must be given to Lord David Cecil's The Stricken Deer which deals with the life of the poet Cowper and the Two Quiet Lives (1948) dealing with Gray and his contemporary, Collins, Virginia Woolf's Life of Roger Fry (1940), Peter Quennell's Byron Italy (1940) and Four Portraits (1945), Sean
( 433 )

Ocasey's *I Knock at the Door* (1939); Duff Cooper's *Talleyrand* (1932); St. John Erwline's *Parnell*, Edmund Gosse's *Father and Son* (1907); Oscar Wilde's *De Profundis* (1905); George Gissing's *The Private Papers of Henry Ryecroft* (1903); Sasson's *The Memoirs of a Fox-Hunting Man* (1928) and *The Memoirs of an Infantry Officer* (1930); H. G. Wells's *Experiment in Autobiography* (1934); J. B. Barrie's *The Greenwood Hat* (1937); Rudyard Kipling's *Something of Myself* (1937); Havelock Ellis's *My Life* (1940); Arthur Bryant's *Charles II* (1921) and *Samuel Pepys*; Michael Sadleir's *Trollope* (1927); P. P. Aowe's *Hazlitt* (1922); John Buchan's *Montrose* (1918); Oliver Cromwell (1938) and *Augusts* (1937); Robert Grave's *Goodbye To all That* (1929).

Q 98 Write a note on the Literature of Travel during the 20th Century

Ans "No language is richer than English in the literature of travel, and its reputation has been well sustained in the last thirty years."* The Arab countries of the Middle East have exercised a fascination on the minds of English travellers who have enriched literature by their accounts of the Arabian people. "The desert scene, the Arab temperament, the enduring monuments of ancient civilizations, the survival of patriarchal habits which seem familiar to all versed in the Old Testament" are brought out in the works of these English travellers to the east in whom the love of practical adventure is combined with the love for the romantic and the mystical conspicuously present in the East. To this class belong Burton's *Pilgrimage to Mecca*, Doughty's *Travels in Arabia Deserta* Gertrude Lowthian Bell's *The Desert and the Sun* and T. E. Lawrence's *The Seven Pillars of Wisdom* (1935), together with the fine writings of Freya Stark, Bertram Sidney Thomas.

**T. E. Lawrence ( 888—193 )**

Lawrence's work is the most significant of the travel literature of the 20th century. Lawrence became a legend and a man of mystery in Arabia and round his name many rumours were woven. He was loved and admired by the Arabs whom he greatly

* R. A. Scott-James: Fifty Years of English Literature.
helped in organising against the mighty forces of the Turks.

*The Seven Pillars of Wisdom* is a historic book and is an epic in prose recounting vividly and enthusiastically the glorious fights of the Arabs against the Turks, and the primitive manners and customs of the Arabs which remind one of the details of *Odyssey* and *Beowulf*. The author succeeds eminently in presenting subtle analysis of the characters of the chiefs and the generals of the Arabs such as Feisal, the conscious artist among leaders. Auba, a Diomede of the Arabs, and Abdulla the soul of the warriors marching by devious ways towards Damascus. The epic theme of the book has been well handled, and it is full of heroes of the *Iliad*, the author himself being the Achilles of the Arabs. The book is extremely egotistical in character and reveals considerably the author who succeeded in the unification of the Arabs against the Turks and in guiding them to their triumph. In this book the man and the matter are interlinked and it reveals as much of Lawrence as the sandy desert of Arabia. “The ultimate source of the distinction of the book is the impact upon one of the most complex and problematical of personalities of a great heroic experience. The result may best be regarded as a modern prose epic, unique example of the appearance of a heroic narrative in an era disinclined to the grand style.”* The style of the author is vivid and graphic and is marked with a note of grandeur rarely to be found in travel literature. Lawerence’s book is “probably the greatest non-imaginative narrative to appear in the interval between the two world wars.”

H. M Tomilson (187 —),

Tomilson is another great contributor to the travel literature of the 20th century. He made a name for himself by his *The Sea and the Jungle* (1912) in which he recounted his voyage to South America right up into the heart of the jungle. *London River* (1921) gives a vivid and appreciative account of a port whose ships sailed to the Seven Seas. *Tidemarks* (1924) has its subtitle, “some records of a journey to the beaches of the Mobicas and the forest of Malaya.” In *Face of the Earth*
(1950) Tomilson describes vividly his trip from England to Spain in a small vessel in the company of a few friends. *Malaya Waters* (1951) is an enthralling work in which the courage and endurance of sailors in the second world war who had gone out to fight in exotic land has been vividly and heroically presented. "In these and all his books Tomilson writes as a born traveller, who might have been bred in the traditions of the sea, as one who knows all the technicalities of seamanship and who is moreover a most observant man of all the encounters. He never overwrites, but his style is the man, original, philosophical, humorous."

Sacheverell Sitwell (1897—).

Sitwell, the poet, is a writer of many travel books of literature. His books include *Southern Baroque Art* (1924), *The Gothic North* (1929—30), *Toucing the Orient* (1934), *Prime Scenes and Festivals* (1935). The spirit of Sacheverell Sitwell is very much different from that of Tomilson. Whereas Tomilson loved travel and sea voyage for its own sake and for the joy of adventure, Sitwell loves not so much the journey and the adventure, as the people and the scenery of foreign countries. He is interested in the art, architecture, music, literature, festivals of the countries visited by him. He identifies himself with the countries he visited and becomes one of them. "He likes to slip from the present into the remote past, and loves especially those places and those peoples where the past can still be felt below the surface, and even on the surface of the present. Then his spirit broods in enchanted contemplation, his prose takes on music, while the scene rises before our eyes in all its sensuous detail in a shimmering tapestry of words."

His selection of his own prose writing in *The Homing of the Winds* (1942) forms a fine introduction to his general works. Sitwell's style is poetic in character and he writes in the following manner—"Where, then, is wisdom? In the arts, and not in war. In the cold and not in the heat. In this music and its lilies. In the arts and in the senses. In the bright wing and in the golden leaf."

Hilaire Belloc (1870—9)

Belloc's two works *Path To Rome* and *Cruise of the Nona*

Dr. A. S Collins: English Literature of the 20th Century.
belong to the literature of travel. *The Path to Rome*, "is a rambling gossipy book, written in unornamented but pictorial prose; without much set or formal descriptive comment, yet clearly suggesting the widely differing appearance and character of places and people."* The book describes the author's journey on foot from Toul, down the valley of the Moselle, to Italy. It brings in a graphic manner the hills and valleys, rivers and trees and churches, of the countries that come in the way of Belloc's journey to Rome.

**Cunninghame Graham (1852—1936)**

The travel accounts of Cunninghame Graham are about Scottish life and character. "His pages are vigorous as life itself. While Hudson is placid and meditative, with passages sweet as birdsong, Graham is turbulent and acrid and explosive, restless as the broken waters of a mountain stream falling over jagged rocks."** He has presented the East in *Mogreb-el Acksa*, and *From the Mouth of the Sahara*, and his descriptions in these two books are poetic and illuminating. Here is an example of Cunninghame Graham's descriptive vein in his eastern tales of travel.

"The night descended on the town and the last gleams of sunlight flickering on the walls turned paler, changed to violet and grey, and the pearl-coloured mist creeping up from the palm woods outside the walls enshrouded everything."

The travel records of Joseph Conrad, D. H. Lawrence and Graham Greene have already been discussed in the section of modern Fiction. Among other writers who have contributed to Travel Literature of the 20th century, reference ought to be made to Norman Douglas's *Old Calabria* (1915) and his other books about the Mediterranean area, Freya Stark who wrote about Arabia, Rosita Forbes whose accounts of Egypt and the East are picturesque and entertaining. H. V. Morton in his *Steps Of The Master* (1934) and *In the Steps of St. Paul* (1936) also added to the travel literature of our times and his works

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* A. C. Ward—Twentieth Century Literature.
** Ibid.
together with the novels of Evelyn Wange make an interesting reading.

Q. 99. Who are the prominent writers of Nature and country life in prose during the 20th Century? Give a brief account of any two of the prominent figures of this species of literature.

Ans. The writers who have chosen to glorify Nature and country life in their works are many in number, the prominent of them being W. H. Hudson, Edward Thomas, Siegfried Sasson, H. J. Massingham, Sir William Beach Thomas, A. G. Steer, George Sturt, Alison Uttley, Robert Gibbings, Eric Parker, Biluned Lewis and Henry Williamson. We will deal with the work of W. H. Hudson, the great naturalist and Henry Williamson, the writer of wild life in some detail.

William Henry Hudson (1841—1922)

William Henry Hudson, the eminent naturalist and romancer and also an essayist was born in the Pampas of La Plata. The remarkable variety of his work makes it difficult to buckle Hudson on the belt of conventional classifications. Yet his endowments have entitled him to a place among the front rank writers of English prose. This unobtrusive and contemplative writer who shunned the drums of publicity and kept a noiseless tenor of his way in the hospitable recesses of the countryside and Nature, which was his ‘element’, did not produce that popular type of literature that takes a reading world by storm. His recognition was, no wonder, late in coming. But once his works had been read by the public, he found his place in English Literature because he was not only a naturalist and romancer but also a stylist of the first water. His passionate sense of devotion to truth, with his absorption in noting natural phenomena, joined to a supreme power of self-expression, is what enlarges and enriches his special contribution to English Literature. To convey this ecstasy of living, the appreciation of visible beauty in earth, sea and sky, is the finest gift of God to man. It is Hudson’s endowment as a writer that he is able to communicate part of his delight and inspiration to lesser men and women,
in a language as moving and pellucid as a crystal stream.

W. H. Hudson has given a vivid account of his life in the Pampas in *Far Away and Long ago* (1918). His love for Nature is seen at his best in *The Naturalist in La Plata* (1892), *Idle Days in Patagonia* (1893) and in *Green Mansions* (1904) which is a beautiful account of South American life. Hudson specialised in the study of birds and several of his books deal with birds. Among these books on birds three are significant—*British Birds* (1895), *Birds in London* (1898), *Birds and Man* (1901). Hudson's other works dealing with Nature and countryside are *The Land's End* (1908), *A Shepherd's Life* (1910), *A Traveller In Little Things* (1921) and *A Hind in Richmond Park* (1922).

Hudson was a keen and observant lover of nature. He was 'a patient and solitary watcher of Nature.' He took keen interest in the observation and appreciation of wild life, especially of birds, but in his view, all wild life "was a part of the human scene, and, as his writing advanced, birds, animals, and insects were only one strand on his very detailed picture of English life." His *A Shepherd's Life* is the best of his nature books, and here he takes us to the heart of nature and country life. Hudson took keen delight in everything lovely and beautiful in nature. His delight in life was not "an occasional impulse, but a conviction declared in his works from first to last."

**Style:**

Hudson's writings cast such a spell on men of letters that they found him the most enchanting of modern prose writers. "As a stylist he (Hudson) has few, if any living equals," remarked Galsworthy.* A. S. Collins also says, "He writes the purest English prose style of the century scientifically precise without jargon, sensitive without aestheticism, concrete and detailed without loss of colour and ease."**

There is a majestic maturity about Hudson's style, which is apparent in almost every book he wrote with the unmistakable seal of his distinctive genius. *Afoot in England is perhaps the perfect book to choose as an epitome of that style, and to study*

* Foreword to Hudson's *Far Away And Long Ago* (1918).
** A. S Collins—English Literature of the Twentieth century.
its attributes of effortless simplicity, piercing insight and imaginative majesty. He has a descriptive charm. He is also a master of delicate, concise and clear style especially in recording his observations. Galsworthy says, "To use words so true and simple, that they oppose no obstacle to the flow of thought and feeling from mind to mind, and yet by juxtaposition of word sounds set up in the recipient continuing emotion or gratification—this is the essence of style; and Hudson's writing has pre-eminently this double quality."

Conrad once remarked that Hudson "writes down his words as the good God makes the green grass to grow, and that is all you will ever find to say about it if you try for ever." His style appears like a slowly attained acquisition as the pigments of a chaffinch or a sun beetle or the grace with which a harp-bell grows. Hudson had, of course, the great advantage of being the possessor of an astonishingly uniform style; it is difficult to trace any marked development or decline in the literary craftsmanship of the author. Date of composition means little in any critical consideration of the quality of Hudson's prose. With him there are no object failures to be considerately dismissed from examination with the explanation "apprentice work." Who would be presumptuous enough to pass such a sentence on 'The Purple Land' (1885). And certainly he never afforded that most melancholy of all literary spectacles—the unwitting exhibition of powers in evident decay and decline. The posthumous volume 'A Hind in Richmond Park' (1922) is perhaps the most profound in its philosophy and psychology of the entire series, and it was the work of a man in the eighties.

To sum up in the words of Kessler, "I have been reading Hudson with growing delight. Much as I admire Conrad, Yeats, Hardy and some others, he is to me the greatest living master of noble English. In his simplicity, directness and grace he reminds me of the great Attic writers of prose narrative; his phrase flows with the same exquisite limpidity, every image surging up in its right place and perfect in proportion. Everybody else's style sounds affected in comparison; he does not seem to care how he writes, but to be like the Greeks, naturally
perfect.*

Henry Williamson (1897—).

Williamson is another great lover of the countryside and wild life. He wrote a number of books on wild life and the countryside. The chief of his works are The Love Swallows (1922), The Old Stage and Tarka the Other. The last named book is "an unrivalled book of its kind." Williamson was an artist and whatever emerged from his pen was fastidiously written. His observation of nature was careful and his expression of the charms of nature was sincere. He was strongly opposed to materialism and machine life. He, "felt the disease of modern civilization and was especially conscious of the urban materialism which was antagonistic to the former and therefore to the heart of England."

Q. 100. Write a note on the Historical prose and the works of the historians of the 20th Century

Ans. During the twentieth century there has been a rapid growth of historical writing, and many famous historians of the age have brought this kind of prose writing to a very high standard. Some writers have brought a fusion of biography and history in their works. Lytton Strachey's historical biographies of Queen Victoria and the Eminent Victorians enter the province of history. Arthur Bryant in his Charles II portrayed not only the king but also the age in which gaiety and saillery had reached a high water mark. In his English Stage he made a comprehensive survey of English life and history from 1840 to 1890. In his The Years of Endurance and Years of Victory, he presented the conflict between England and France from 1793 to 1812. G. M. Trevelyan is a great historian of the 20th century and his two remarkable achievements are History of England (1926) and English Social History (1943). He completed the history of Queen Anne which Macaulay, his great relative, could not complete. G. G. Coulton (1853—1947 was the historian of the Middle Ages and his two remarkable works are Chaucer and his England and Five Centuries of Religion. He presented a new view of the Middle

* Quoted by Samuel J. Looker in Worthing Cavalcade, p. 40.
Ages and “with his vast learning robustly countered the idealising Catholic interpretation of the Middle Ages as presented by festerton.” A. L. Rowe (1903-) is an academic historian of the modern age and his *The Spirit Of English History* (1943) is good work in historical writing. He achieved distinction by producing *The England of Elizabeth* in (1851) “in which, apart from his defective understanding of the religious spirit in individuals, he shows that masterly power of handling history which rings historical writing within the sphere of literature.” H. A. Fisher’s *History of Europe* (1935), H. Butter Field’s *Christianity and History* (1949), Deins Brogan’s *The Development of Modern France* (1870—1939) and *The American Problem* are examples of comprehensive historical portrayal of the men and events of these countries.

Among economic historians R. H. Tawney and Barbara Hammond stand out prominently. Constitutional history has been attempted by Sir Maurice Powiche and J. E. Neale.

H. G. Wells and Winston Churchill have been professional academic historians. Sir James Frazer and A. J. Toynbee are remarkable historians of the modern age and they have been endowed with originality and brilliance. Frazer was scientific and Toynbee is philosophical in his approach to history. Frazer’s (1854—1931) *The Golden Bough* is a great work of history. It is stupendous in its scope. It presents “a massive accumulation of well sifted knowledge of ancient civilizations and primitive societies, their religions, myths and legends, from which theologians, philosophers, psychologists, anthropologists, and the classics and creative writers could all draw valuable material.” Toynbee in his *A Study of History* in six volumes studied the entire history of ancient civilizations and by study of the rise and fall of previous civilizations he sought to deduce a comprehensive philosophy of history. Toynbee’s outlook is religious and he gives us the warning that if the forces of militarism and materialism continue to advance with the stupendous speed with which they are going, the day is not far off when the whole fabric of civilization will topple down and once again man will relapse to the old days of barbarism and nihilism. “We must listen to the voice of these great historians...”
and formulate our lives in the light of their observation about civilization and human society.

Q. 101. Give a brief account of the Scientific and philosophic Literature of the 20th Century.

Ans. There has been a phenomenal growth of scientific and philosophic literature during the 20th century. Many scientists of our times can favourably be compared with such Victorian giants as Huxley, Darwin and Tyndall. The impact of modern science has been palpably felt in all branches of life and learning. "The impact of the new science fell particularly on religion and ethics, but its effects extended to every sphere, especially in the rapidly developing study of sociology, and the practical bearing of the new science upon society demanded consideration."

Among the modern scientists A. N. Whitehead (1861—1947) occupies a distinctive place. He was a mathematician and a leading exponent of the philosophic approach. His main works are The Concept of Nature (1920), The Principle of Relativity (1922), Science and the Modern World (1926), Process and Reality (1929), Sir James Jeans (1877—1946) attracted attention by his widely read books The Universe Around Us (1929) and The Mysterious Universe (1930). In these books Jeans has given an interesting view of the heavens and the planets and his style of presentation is lucid and clear. He can be easily followed for he seeks to unfold the picture of the sun, and the universe in an interesting manner. Sir Arthur Eddington (1882—1944), mathematician, physicist and astronomer, produced great works like The Nature of Physical World (1928), Science and the Unseen World (1929) and The Expanding Universe (1933). Julian Huxley (1877—) the great biologist, wrote fine essays on scientific subjects and he is rightly popular by his Essays of a Biologist (1923), Essays in a Popular Science (1926), Man in the Modern World (1947). He also collaborated with H. G. Wells and his son G. P. Wells in the production of The Science of Life (1929) Soviet Genetics and World Science (1949). Huxley is a thoroughgoing materialist and does not believe in God as the controller.

Dr. A. S. Collins—English Literature of the 20th Century.
and rulers of the world. He also has little faith in the immortality of the soul and religious salvation through Nirvana. J. B. S. Haldane (1892—) made a notable contribution to the world of scientific literature by writing, Possible Worlds (1927), Science and Ethics (1928), The Causes of Evolution (1933) and Science and Everyday Life (1939), Lancelot Hogben (1895) a biologist like Huxley and Haldane produced two great works Mathematics for the Million (1936), and Science for the Citizen (1939). Besides these prominent writers on the subject of science, we have in the 20th century a host of other scientific writers, the chief of them being F. Hoyle, Sir Oliver Lodge, Sir Richard Gregory, Sir Arthur Keith and J. D. Bernal.

Among the philosophical and scientific writers of the 20th century, Bertrand Russell (1872—) occupies a very high place. He is a scientist, mathematician, philosopher and political thinker of the highest order. He is the author of a number of valuable works, the chief of them being:

1. Philosophical Essays (1910).
2. Problems of Philosophy (1911).
5. Roads to Freedom (1918).
8. The Practice and Theory of Bolshevism (1920).
10. The Problem of China (1922).
11. The Prospects of Industrial Civilization (1923).
17. The Scientific Outlook (1931).

Russell is one of those writers who has not yet been properly understood. His unorthodox opinions have been acclaimed by free thinkers as a great advance in modern thought, while the same opinions have been condemned by others as the
result of his confused thinking on vital and important issues of life. Hence, while in certain quarters his books have been hailed as a valuable contribution to the solution of the world's complex problems, in others they have been received with utmost protest and indignation. Inspite of all these differences about his works it has been agreed among critics that Russell has always been inspired by the love of truth in his investigations. As the Times Literary Supplement once said, he has "a way of asking right question and making the people think hard about them, whether they accept his solutions of these questions or not." It will be interesting, therefore, to examine his views a little critically and see what panacea he offers for the ills of this troubled passionate planet.

Russell is dissatisfied with the present state of our society. He has found that there is something radically wrong with modern life. He has been deeply afflicted to note the hypocrisy, falsehood, and injustice prevailing in our society. The capitalistic system of society with its complete hold on the labourers, who have been denied all leisure and happiness by the capitalists, has mortified Russell. War and violence in modern international life have equally touched the heart of this great thinker. The system of modern education with numerous defects in our university life has equally stirred the thoughts of Russell. He has given considerate thought to the solution of these various maladies of our social and economic life. He is primarily concerned with the destruction and elimination of these evils.

Russell equally advocates Socialism, as the panacea of all our economic and political maladies. His ideas about socialism are not very clear, but we can derive some of his ideas about socialism by reading the essay "The world as it could be made." He is against communism with its plan and programme of wholesale change in society.

The style and manner of expression in Russell's essays evoke our applause. This is a prose extraordinarily logical and effortless, marked by constant flashes of wit and insight. It is at the same time characterised by "an almost native simplicity, crystal clarity, a calm Olympian irony and a gift for compressed epigrammatic statement." He has the gift of summing up a very
complex situation in a few, clear and simple words and sentences. Mr. Dilip Kumar Roy* expressed great appreciation for Russell's power in expressing his thought economically with restraint. Russell learnt this art with great effort, and he told Mr. Roy in his talks with him that when he was a boy he used to "toy with different ideas to see in how few words I could express them." But with his terseness, there is no dryness as we notice in Bacon's writings. He gives a touch of sprightliness and gaiety to his treatment of even abstruse subjects. His early essays have a lyrical grace, which we do not find in his later works.

Q. 102. Write a note on the Literary Critics of the 20th Century and their works.

Ans. Twentieth century is rich in literary criticism. There are many celebrated and reputed critics of our times and some of them at least such as T. S. Eliot, George Saintsbury, Walter Raleigh, Oliver Elton, Courthope will be recognised by posterity as the most remarkable figures of twentieth century criticism. "If none has the stature of a Dryden or a Jonson, a Lamb or a Hazlitt, several have done invaluable work for their contemporaries by advancing the understanding and appreciation of literature."**

The following are the main literary critics of our age:

Arthur Symons.

Symons, the poet, is a literary critic of repute and his studies in the poetry of Blake and Dante Gabriel Rossetti have done much to popularise the works of these two poets. Symons's *The Romantic Movement in English Poetry* (1910) is a valuable contribution to the understanding of the Romantic poets. His other famous books of criticism are *Baudelaire* (1920), *Hardy* (1927) and *Walter Pater* (1932). Symons popularised the French symbolist movement in English poetry by his famous work *Symbolist Movement in Literature* (1899).

Arthur Symons is an impressionistic critic. His works of criticism seem to be prose poems. T. S. Eliot considers him to be an imperfect critic. Symons continues the tradition of Walter

* Dilip K. Roy: Among the Great.
** Dr. A. S. Collins: English Literature of the Twentieth Century.
Pater. He is not a very scientific critic yet he has rare capacity of losing himself in a work of art. He is also remarkable for his extremely poetical style. His remarks about Shelley are better worth-reading than some of Shelley's own poems. His criticism has all the defects of impressionistic criticism. But it has its own virtues; it is most interesting to read and it is more creative than critical.

A. C. Bradley (1851—1935).

Bradley will be known to posterity for his famous Shakespearean Tragedy (1904) and Oxford Lectures on Poetry (1909). In Shakespearean Tragedy he makes a scholarly and critical survey of the principal tragedies of Shakespeare, and in the Oxford Lectures on Poetry he gives us his views on poetry and much illuminating information on poets like Robert Bridges. Bradley is an authority on Shakespeare's tragedies and if Shakespeare was reborn, he would need the help of Bradley to understand his former works.

Dr. F. R. Leavis seems to criticise Dr. Bradley without much justification. Leavis has started almost a reaction against Dr. Bradley. The main objection of modern critics against him is that he does not precede with induction. Prof. Humphry House objects to his method of determining the character of a Shakespearean hero. Following the footsteps, Prof. L. C. Knight also seems to be reacting against the Bradley tradition. But it will have to be said that Dr. Bradley has his own charms and it would be difficult to surpass him in his Shakespearean criticism.

Sir Walter Raleigh (1861—1922).

Raleigh will be remembered by his English Novel (1898) Milton (1900), Wordsworth (1903), Shakespeare (1907) and Six Essays on Johnson (1910). Raleigh is a master of his subject and his manner of presentation is extremely lucid and clear. Raleigh continues the eclectic criticism of the Victorian Age. He has nothing of the charms of modern criticism and he is essentially a traditionalist. But he has none of the defects of modern criticism. He has no theory to propound; he does not belong to any group; he does not write any particular type of criticism; he is not very technical. His criticism is not analytical like that of T. S. Eliot or F. R. Leavis. He expresses his views with conviction and clarity.
W P. Ker (1855—1923).

Ker will go down in history as a scholarly critic. His famous works are *Epic and Romance* (1897), *The Dark Ages* (1904), *Essays on Medieval Literature* (1905), *The Art of Poetry* (1923) and *Form and Style in Poetry* (1928).

George Saintsbury (1845—1933).

Saintsbury is a great name in the world of literary criticism. He was a great scholar and a man of immense learning. He had two passions in life—love for wine and love for literature. His monumental works are *Elizabethan Literature* (1887), *History of English Prose* (1906—10), *History of English Criticism* (1911), *History of European Criticism* (1912), *The Peace of the Agustans* (1916), *History of English Prose Rhythm* and *English Novel*.

Prof. Saintsbury is not a scientific critic. His criticism is remarkable for its rare charm of scholarship and style. Dr. D. Daiches compares him with Mr. T. S. Eliot and says that Saintsbury concentrates on personal responses whereas Mr. Eliot concentrates on the text itself. Dr. Daiches says, "If we sat beside Saintsbury's discussion of prior one of T. S. Eliot's earlier critical essays.....We are struck at once with the complete difference in temper. Eliot is not concerned to talk with wit and urbanity about literary achievement on which his readers are largely in agreement...Eliot's object is to explore the literary work in order to show what goes on in it."

The most remarkable thing about Prof. Saintsbury is his confidence in his readers, a quality which Mr. Eliot does not possess. Prof. Saintsbury was a very great scholar and he knew almost all the European languages. His love of learning had a match only in his love of drinking. He read immensely and he had prolific memory. He read so much that words and sentences from other authors came up to his mind unconsciously. It has humorously been said that Prof. Saintsbury's prose style is like a fine pudding in which the material used is not his own. He was a man of very strong tastes and he could speak very authentically about things without injuring the sensibilities of his readers.

Criticising Arnold, he says:—

"With bricks of ignorance and mortar of assumption you
cannot build a critical house.”

Similarly when he praised an author, he praised him in the most forceful language. This is what he says of Shelley, “The worst utterance of Shelley is better worth-reading than the best panegyric of his commentators.”

Certain attempts have been made in the recent times to associate Prof. Saintsbury with the art for art’s sake movement. It is true that in the sphere of criticism, he falls nearer to Pater than to Arnold. But he has something of his own which can not be explained by a common place people.

G. K. Chesterton (1874—1936).

Chesterton is known by his Browning, The Victorian Age in Literature, Dickens and Chaucer. Often diffuse, he can be pointed and penetrating when he writes with force and fervour.

He is not at all a scientific critic and he is too subjective to be accurate. His Dickens is Chestertonian Dickens. Yet he is interesting to read he is never dull and you cannot but enjoy all that which he has to say.

Sir Arthur Quiller Couch (1863—1944)

Quiller Couch, Professor of English Literature at Cambridge in 1912 is a critic of distinction. He published many volumes of stimulating literary appreciation and criticism which were originally given in the form of lectures. His main works are Studies in Literature (Three Series 1918, 1922, 1929), Shakespeare’s Workmanship (1918), Or the Art of Reading (1920). “His pages talk to the reader just as their author spoke to his audiences, arousing interest in and liking for his subject by the genial humanity of his treatment and the free use of illustrative question. humanistic, insisting on the intimate connection between literature and life between books and their authors.”

Sir Edmund Gosse (1848—1928).

Gosse’s main works in criticism are From Shakespeare to Pope (1885), and A History of Eighteenth Century Literature (1889). His observation are sound and substantial.

J. Middleton Murry (1889—)

Murry is a romantic critic and represents the best contemporary example of the dithyrambic tendency in romantic criticism. He identifies himself with the subject of his criticism, and views
the work from the viewpoint of its creator. He is at his best in his famous work *Keats and Shakespeare* (1925). His study of D. H. Lawrence is well brought out in *Son of Woman* (1931).

E. A. Cheverell Sitwell (1897—)

He is an impressionistic critic. His impression "is more informed and less idiosyncratic than that of Murry." He spent much energy in studying baroque and neoclassical art. For this enterprise he had "a distinguished sensibility and sympathy and a style that is as responsible to the bush exuberance of the baroque as to the correctness and restraint of the classical." His main work is *Southern Baroque Art* (1924).

Lascelles Abercrombie won reputation by his *The Idea of Great Poetry* (1925), *Romanticism* (1926), *Thomas Hardy*. Oliver Elton is well known by his *English Muse* (1933) and his massive but readable work *Survey of English Literature from 1730 to 1880* in six volumes. Sir Herbert Grierson is famous for his *Cross Currents in the Literature of the Seventeenth Century*, *Milton and Wordsworth* and *Metaphysical Poetry*. R. W. Chambers produced his monumental work *Man’s Unconquerable Mind* (1942) in which he presents master minds from Shakespeare to A. E. Housman in a scholarly manner. This book is the fruit of years of loving scholarship. E. K. Chamber's *Shakespeare: A Survey* (1925), *The Medieval Stage* (1903) and *The Elizabethan Stage* (1923) are well known works of which the first on Shakespeare is noted for its scholarship and authoritative handling of the plays. The interest in Shakespearean criticism continued unabated and many critics came forward with their masterly studies of Shakespeare's plays. The chief among the Shakespearean critics are G. B. Harrison (1894) whose biographical and critical account of Shakespeare is commendable, John Palmer (1885—1944) whose criticism of Shakespeare and Ben Jonson is sound, W. M. Knight (1897—) who produced the *Wheel of Fire* and studied Shakespeare's tragedies; H. B. Charlton (1890—) whose study of *Shakespeare's Comedies* is an admirable work. To these works should be added the critical writings of Professor Edward Wilson who is noted for his *The Essential Shakespeare* (1532) *What Happens in Hamlet* (1935) and Moulton who is
known by his *Shakespeare as a Dramatic Artist*.

Tillyard's study of Milton opens a new chapter in Miltonic criticism. Sir Maurice Bowra appealed to the literary public by *The Heritage of Symbolism* (1943), *From Virgil to Milton* (1945) and *The Creative Experiment* (1949), Basil Willey in his *Seventeenth Century Background The Eighteenth Century Background* (1940) and *Nineteenth Century Studies* (1949), "traced the relationship between the currents of thought in the age and the creative writings of that age, and was luminous to scholars." Lord David Cecil is known by his admirable study of *Thomas Hardy*, and *Early Victorian Novelists and Poets and Story Tellers*. C K Ogden published *The Meaning of Meaning* (1923), *The Principle of Literary Criticism* (1924), *Poetry Criticism* (1929), and *Coleridge on Imagination* (1930). I. A. Richards is a great name in modern criticism and he is well known for his *Principles of Literary Criticism* (1924), and *Practical Criticism*, (1929). He advocated the psychological and analytical approach in the appreciation of a work of art. In his hands Pegasus became a dray-horse pulling a psychological load. "He was primarily concerned with analyzing the elements involved in the process of comprehending a work of art, and secondly, with relating aesthetic value to the theory of value generally."

His two followers are William Empson and F R Leavis. William Empson (1906— ) in *Seven Types of Ambiguity* (1930) advanced the analytical criticism of Richards and his book presents, "a subtle analysis of the various layers and shades of meaning which can exist in a statement and the appreciation of which is essential to the proper apprehension of the total statement, especially in poetry." F. R Leavis was the editor of the distinguished critical journal, *Scrutiny* to which a number of budding literary critics have made vital contribution. Leavis's main works are *New Bearings in English Poetry* (1932), *Revaluation* (1947), in which he vigorously pleaded for the rehabilitation of the literary reputation of Marvell, Pope and Emily Bronte, *The Great Tradition* (1948) in which he set out the excellence of George Eliot, Henry James and Joseph Conrad, *The Common Pursuit* (1952) which is a nice collection of the articles published from time to time in *Scrutiny*. 
Dr. Leavis is a man of very strong tastes. He loves clarity, solidity and hardness. He does not like the romantic vagueness in criticism or creation. He is an analytical critic and does not believe in making sweeping generalisations. Leaving perhaps Mr. T. S. Eliot, he is the greatest living critic. He is a man who would not yield since he is so sure of his being right. He has done as much to rehabilitate Pope and Marvell as any other critic. The strength of his convictions can be seen in his evaluation of Milton and Shelley. He criticises both these poets severely. You may disagree with Dr. Leavis but you cannot possibly afford to ignore him. He has done to literary criticism what Mr. Eliot has done to English poetry. Dr. Leavis wants matter of fact, precise and concrete criticism. He does not love mere jugglery of words. The criticism that indulges in such devices is likely to receive a severe blow from him. He considers Mr. Eliot to be a great critic, but he was not afraid of taking him to task when Mr. Eliot revised his opinion about Milton.

Among his followers may be named Prof. L. C. Knights and Dr. Daiches. Prof. L. C. Knights shows the same preciseness of expression and the same hard brilliance as Dr. Leavis. But he is not as great a critic as Dr. Leavis, nor does he have the depth and scholarship of that frustrated Cambridge scholar. Dr. Daiches has written quite a good number of books and in most of them he follows the Cambridge tradition headed by Dr. Leavis. His various publications include, An Introduction to Literature, Robert Burns, Milton, The Present Age, Literary Essays, Critical Approaches to Literature and A Critical History of English Literature. He is at his best in Milton and at his worst perhaps in his History of English Literature. In Milton the analytical bent is more pronounced and his statements have an air of strong conviction about them; whereas his History of English Literature is a collection of too many sweeping generalisations put forward in an artificially redundant language. Yet he is one of the major living critics and should be congratulated for restoring Yeats to his proper place.

Mention should also be made of the Marxist critics. Christopher Caudwell is the most outstanding Marxist critic. His Illusion and Reality is a remarkable study of English poetry from
the Marxian point of view. His other publication are Studies in a Dying Culture, and More Studies in a Dying Culture. He died at a very early age, yet his contribution is quite outstanding. Ralph Fox contributed much by writing a Marxian history of the English Novel in his The Novel and the People.

A strange mixture of Marxism and spiritualism is to be seen in Mr. D. S. Savage's books. His The Absolute Principle is a difficult book. He is almost savagian in his criticism of the modern novelists.

Among the critics who do not belong to any school or tradition, mention should be made of Mr. F. L. Lucas. Mr. Lucas wields a beautiful and charming style and his criticism is most interesting to read. He criticizes the ancients and the moderns, the romantics and the classicists in the same breath. An under-current of subtle and scholarly humour runs through all his critical works. His publications include, The Decline and Fall of the Romantic Ideal, Literature and Psychology, Tragedy and Ten Victorian Poets.

In the sphere of dramatic criticism, Professor Nicoll still stands unsurpassed. He is an authority in drama and his studies of English and European dramatic literature are most remarkable achievements. Professor Raymond Williams, William Archer and G. Barker are other contemporary dramatic critics.

Sir Herbert Read made a notable contribution to the psychological approach to literature in his study of Wordsworth in Collected Essays in Literary Criticism (1951) and The Voice of Feeling (1953). Read's role as a critic mainly lies in his attempt ‘to wed the psychological to the aesthetic in criticism.’ Cecil Day Lewis's The Poetic Image (1947) is a nice work on poetic imagery. Edmund Blunden's biographical studies of Charles Lamb and his Contemporaries The Life of Leigh Hunt and Shelley are nice works of art and criticism. Virginia Woolf's The Common Reader (1925), in two volumes, gives a new interpretation to the psychological novel and equally well sets out to recreate the literary figures from the fifteenth century to the twentieth century. Her The Death of the Moth (1944) shows her interlinking of life and literature. E. M. Forster's Aspects of the Novel (1927) is an outstanding work in understanding different aspects of the novel
such as plot and character, and their relative importance in works of fiction.

Mrs. Virginia Woolf and Mr. E. M. Forster belong to what is known as the Bloomsbury Group. It is doubtful if the Bloomsbury tradition still continues. Perhaps Mr. Cyril Connolly can be classed with them but he shows an altogether different trend of mind in his *The Enemies of Promise*. Courthope's *History of English Poetry* in six volumes is a monumental work in criticism, and to this criticism of English poets and poetry must be added Grierson and Smith's book *A Critical History of English Poetry*.

T. S. Eliot (1888—1965)

T. S. Eliot is one of the greatest figures in the history of literary criticism during the 20th century. His criticism of poetry, drama, art and society is based on a coherent series of principles evolved from time to time. "He has thought himself in a consistent view about literature; as a critic, he brings carefully sharpened tools to each fresh task of literary judgment."* Eliot owed his inspiration as a critic to the movement in American criticism called the movement of Humanism led by Professor Irving Babbit and Paul Elmer More. "This movement, a modern variety of neoclassicism hostile to both the romantic and the realistic movements in literature called for a return to classical standards in criticism and for the measurement for modern literature on the scale of the classics." Inspired by the protagonists of this new wave of Humanism, Eliot also modelled his critical principles and judgments on the line of the Humanists and his critical position in *The Sacred Wood* (1920) is practically the same as that of the humanists. Eliot was also for classicism and tradition, and stood against the tide of romantic criticism which he characterised as fragmentary, immature and chaotic. He felt that discipline, order, sanity, form were once again to be imposed and reintroduced in the field of literary criticism. Eliot went a few steps ahead of American humanism and advanced on fresh line of judging and evaluating works of art.

Eliot upheld 'tradition,' but he did not mean that tradition—

* R. A. Scott—Fifty Years of English Literature.
alists should slavishly imitate the ancients and have nothing new of their own. Eliot simply emphasised on the writers of his age to keep in view the past heritage of literature and literary criticism while composing their own works. The present should not cut itself off from all considerations of the past. In Eliot's view—

"The historical sense compels a man to write not merely with his own generation in his bones, but with a feeling that the whole of the literature of Europe from Homer, and within it the whole of the literature of his own country, has a simultaneous existence and composes a simultaneous order."

For T. S. Eliot Literature is a continuous process in which the past, present, and future are one whole. He expresses his faith in the continuity of time and literature. In _Burnt Norton_ he writes:

_**Time present and time past**_

_Are both perhaps present in time future_

_And time future contained in time past._

Thus Eliot's position as a critic is to synthesise the present with the past and to co-relate the future to the present and take a synoptic view of whole literary production. In his view, the function of the critic is to co-relate literature to the whole current of conscious creative effort. The critic has to keep in view the past 'tradition' and current 'convention.' Eliot failed to appreciate Blake for he found the eighteenth century mystic poet lacking "in a frame work of accepted and traditional ideas."

T. S. Eliot can be considered as a Classicist restating the claims of classicism in its demand for order, poise and right reason.

In general his conception of literature was a classical one placing a high value on tradition, on content and form.

It is one of the peculiar excellences of T. S. Eliot that his own work in the field of creation is governed by his principles. There is a conformity between what he preaches or professes and what he actually creates. His criticism is not divorced from his poetic activity. In his case the critic and the creative artist are frequently the same person. We can better appreciate his early
poetry by studying his remarks in The Metaphysical Poets.

T. S. Eliot is at his best when he is writing on Dryden, Dante, Metaphysical poets, Post-Elizabethan dramatists. His sympathies are with Dryden and Donne. His appreciation of Milton,* Blake and Shelley is at best reluctant and partial. Of the moderns, his criticism is less impressive. In After Strange Gods (1934) he is very severe on James Joyce, D. H. Lawrence, Virginia Woolf and Catherine Mansfield. "His spiritual position compelled them to denounce them as heretics."

Eliot co-related social and literary criticism. In this respect, he resembles Matthew Arnold who was a critic both of life and letters. He is of the view that arts are the by-products of society, and "that good prose cannot be written by a people without convictions."

His critical style resembles that of Matthew Arnold particularly in the use of analysis, definition and comparison. There is, however, a note of difference between Eliot and Arnold. While Eliot wields Arnold's tone of authority he does not suffer from the repetitions and mannered approach of Arnold.

The critical writings of T. S. Eliot are to be found in The Sacred Wood. (1920), Selected Essays (1932), The Use of Poetry and the Use of Criticism (1933) and After Strange Gods (1934). His two other important works are The Idea of a Christian Society (1939) and Notes on the Definition of a Culture (1948).

Q. 103. Write an Essay on the modern Short Story and Short Story writers.

Ans. The popularity of the short story in our times can be gauged by the publication of a number of short stories in books and magazines. Many authors have taken to short-story writing,

H. G. Wells defined the short story as "any piece of prose fiction that can be read in more than twenty minutes." Sedgewick said that a short story is like a horse race in which the beginning and the end count the most. But it will be seen that none of

* He charged Milton with bringing about "dissociation of sensibility" which weakened English poetry in times to come.
these definitions are adequate. H. G. Wells's definition applies to scores of short stories but it fails miserably when applied to, say, Tolstoy's *Family Happiness*. For Sedgwick, the editor, it is the beginning and the end only that count. They cancel each other out. Sir Walpole's demand that a short stort must be full of action is a perfect answer to those who like whisky, but if fails on application to the short stories of Turgenev or James. Mr. Bates suggests that a short story is what its author decides it to be.

The history of the short story is both very long and very short. From one point of view the story of Cain and Abel in the *Genesis* is a short story. From another point of view the story has no history prior to the nineteenth century. The short story, in fact, as we know it today, cannot be said to have begun with Gogol and Edgar Allen Poe. Among the other important nineteenth century short story writers, we may name Maupassant for France, Turgenev and Chekhov for Russia, O'Henry for America. No figure stands out from the nineteenth century English scene in the sphere of short story writing. The reason is not far to seek. Suggestion and subtleness are the most important and essential ingredients of a short story; whereas the nineteenth century English prose fiction is marked by a heavy style and a tendency to moralize everything. It was under such circumstances that the short story could not flourish in the nineteenth century England. It was only with the advent of 1880's that the short story proper came to be recognised and practised in England. The names that now stand out are those of R. L. Stevenson, Rudyard Kipling and Oscar Wilde. R. L. Stevenson is remarkable for his fine poetic moralism, and Oscar Wilde for his brilliant paradoxical style.

Kipling was primarily a journalist and he succeeded very well in this sphere since the short story demands speed and action above all. The belief that he was a great writer is a myth. But he did quite a lot to make the short story in England move faster than ever. His *Puck of Pook's Hill* was published in 1903. He, with H. G. Wells, remains the connecting link between the short story writers of the nineteenth and the present century.

H. G. Wells wrote scientific stories. The greatest achieve-
ment of Wells lies in the fact that he makes his readers believe all that he has to say. He is a romancer talking in the language of scientific power and reform. His genius can be defined as a combination of Dickens and Poe. It has been said that he lacks artistic finish, and the objection seems to be true.

The most outstanding work in this field was done by A. E. Coppard and Katherine Mansfield. They brought poetry to the English short story for the first time and their reputation rests mainly on their short stories. The short stories of A. E. Coppard have the flavour of poetry. His short stories are remarkable for their poetic realism. He became well known with his collection of stories called Adam and Eve and Pinch-ole. Coppard had a theory that a short story is something meant to be told; and he is a remarkable teller of tales. He had a strong sense of the comic and the tragic as can be seen in his stories like The Higgler and The Black Dog. He published numerous volumes of short stories The Black (1923), The Field Mustard (1926) and Dunky Fillow (1933) etc. Later on under the influence of Joyce, he became obsessed with his own voice and his art declined.

Katherine Mansfield stands apart among the English short story writers. Her reputation rests mainly on a single volume called The Garden Party. Mansfield writes like a poet, and feels intensely like a child. She was considerably influenced by J. Chekhov. She picks up a moment from the life of an ordinary man and writes about it in a very poetic language. Her short stories reveal stream of consciousness technique in its miniature form. She is not a moralist and she presents only that which she has seen herself. Her short stories have the delicacy of a rose and the charm of a lyric about them. She presents her characters sympathetically, but character building was never her job. She leaves much undone and we have to enjoy as much what is left in as what is left out. “Katherine Mansfield’s human scene is not a wide one.”† Her other collections are: Something Childish and The Dove’s Nest.

The success of these authors, the decline of poetry and the rise of various magazines and periodicals, encouraged various

† A. S. Collins: 20th Century Literature.
other short story writers. They were further encouraged by the success of Galsworthy and W. Somerset Maugham. Galsworthy's short stories are remarkable for their sympathetic rendering of the characters from the lower strata of society. Galsworthy is not a very great craftsman but he is remarkable for his compassion such as may be seen in stories like Quality. But, Somerset Maugham has nothing of that compassion. He writes like Maupassant, (whom he considers to be the greatest short story writer of the world). Maugham is like a lawyer, and his short stories are as objective as the report of a court case.

A major contribution has been made in this field by the Irish authors. Sean O'Flaherty did a great deal to popularize the short story. His The Untilled Field is a remarkable collection of short stories. His short stories are poetic and delicate. But he left short story writing very soon: so much a loss to the short story which he popularized as much as Maupassant. Among his followers are Mr. Sean O' Faolain and Mr. Frank O' Connor. Faolain has been influenced by J. Chekhov and Turgenev, and his collection called The Midsummer Night Madness contains stories of Irish life. Faolain derives much of his inspiration from the rich folk tradition of Ireland. Frank O' Connor's stories are not as those of Faolain, but they are remarkable in their own way. O' Connor is more objective than Faolain and shows an indebtedness to Maupassant.

Contemporaneous with the Irish Renaissance, we have the American Renaissance brought about by Sherwood Anderson. The American short story sank down after Stephen Crane. It was reduced to a mechanical formula. Sherwood Anderson revived it afresh and taught the American writers to come into a closer contact with the life of their own people.

Anderson's Winsbury Ohio is a remarkable achievement and it contains short stories that have a rare charm about them. Sherwood Anderson exercised almost an immediate influence. Earnest Hemingway came out with his In Our Time which is a collection of beautiful short stories. Hemingway cuts out a whole forest of virtuosity and makes the short story shorter still. The world of his short stories is a world of crime, lust, duels, passion and darkness. But he succeeds in depicting that world most
Coming back to England, we have D. H. Lawrence, Joseph Conrad and E. M. Forster. Joseph Conrad's short stories are remarkable for their fine, soft poetic realism and a certain sense of mystery. They are essentially the short stories of a romantic author. E. M. Forster's collection of six short stories, *The Celestial Omnibus* (1911) is another individual experiment.

More remarkable than both of them is D. H. Lawrence who published his *The Prussian Officer* in 1914. Lawrence was too much of an individualist. He eschewed technical limitations. He was bent upon breaking the rules when he wrote Novels. But he could, fortunately, control his insensible technique while writing short stories. His *Modern Lover* and *Love Among the Huystacks* are remarkable pieces. He is sensuous, poetic and charming. His stories smell of earth and the smell is a delightful one.

Now, we have various short story writers. It would be difficult to even mention all of them.

H. E. Bates is, however, the most outstanding name from the contemporary scene. By 1934, he had published two volumes, Day's *England, The Black Boxer*. He shows less originality and strength than A. E. Coppard. He is remarkable for his harmoniously poetic style. His stories have humour, no doubt; but it stops short of the truly comic. But as suggested by Dr. Collins even if there was nothing else, "his pictures of the novels and fields, farms and roads, would still show his mastery of setting: it is lively and loving in its details."

As has been said, many writers deserve to be named alongside Bates, but it must suffice to add the names of Henry Williamson for his achievement in this field with his stories of birds and beasts, T. F. Powys with his stories of the country side and Rhys Davies with his short stories of the Irish fishing coast. The name of Miss Elizabeth Bowen, however, deserves a special mention since she has popularized the short story, through her various illuminating articles on the art of short story. She generally writes about the lives of artists and painters, and her portraits are remarkable for their poetic realism.

Mention must also be made of the Indian Short Story writers writing in English. Since the death of the Kipling-myth,
Indian writers have come forward with the realistic pictures of the life of their own people. Dr. Mulk Raj Anand's short stories are remarkable for their sympathetic treatment of the underdogs. R.K. Narayan shows a rare-craftsmanship. The name of Bhabhani Bhattacharya and K. A. Abbas should also be mentioned. Among the younger writers, the name of Ruksin Bond deserves mention. We have no space to deal with them in detail, and so we must pass silently by.

Literary history is a warning against prophecies. Yet we can safely assert that the future of the short story is immense, without going to the extent of saying that it will oust the novel. But it is a fact that it has compelled the novel to its size. The numerous magazines and the rise of the film industry have gone a long way to help the short story flourish amazingly.