CHAPTER VIII

THE MODERN LITERATURE OF TRAVEL - about Seas and Islands.

General Introduction:

The modern literature of travel about seas and islands has a number of trends, and there are stages of growth, of full blossoming and decline of the different schools that deal with the sea and the islands. Melville was undoubtedly the greatest high priest of the sea, a mystic, a dreamer, a magician, a great symbolist; his words, weave a magic web which is shot with many colours; he has force, and grandeur and "Moby Dick" still stands unique as a book of the sea. Conrad saw the force and sublimity of the sea, its cruelty and ferocity, he too saw in it great symbols of good and evil, and like some old Mephistophlese, he presided over the dark mysteries of the ocean; The Mirror of the Sea, is yet unsurpassed as a great homage to the sea. This old tradition ended with Conrad, today there is none who should bend before this secret altar to the god of the high seas. None can equal their narrative powers, their use of words, and powerful phrases, and their rhythmic highly poetic prose.

R.L. Stevenson represents the romantic travel writer, deeply in love with the people and the seas and islands, he is a hunter of the hills, and a sailor of the seas, and yet he does this all from his sick bed. "In the South Seas", is one of the most charming books about South Seas, it is serene calm, and charming; its prose has a liquid beauty, with great simplicity and artlessness he creates vivid pictures of beautiful scenes and innocent people. It is the maturest book of travel that he wrote. Rupert Brooke is an incorrigible
romanticist speaking of the beauties of the seas, and islands with a silver tongue; he sings with joy, there is perpetual spring in what he writes. Somerset Maugham too must be classed as a romantic lover of the South Seas inspite of the fact that he always poses as a cynic and a snob which he is not. His prose is really fine, he follows Stevenson in his narrative method, he is more restrained in expressing his exultation over lovely scenes, and less restrained in showing the weaknesses of the human heart. But this tradition too is disappearing, men do not feel romantic, they are becoming more matter of fact realists.

Jack London represents the group of the primitive writers, primitivism is a return to the basic realities of blood, death and passion; it is a cruel picture of cruel nature and wild humanity; there is something crazy about it, but he gave vigour and force to literature which was getting soft and effiminate. This tradition too is no more followed.

The oldest and the healthiest group of writers described the sea naturally and simply as affecting human life and human affairs; Cooper, Marryat and Henry Dana represent this tradition. They write the clearest, simplest and gentlest prose; and they are most natural; the sea for them, is a real sea, and they describe it in a realistic manner. Their prose has a simple gentle charm, and it is devoid of all literary tricks, there is no artificiality in it.

James Norman Hall and James Michener represent the latest development in the travel literature about seas and islands. Their work is journalistic in style; they collect material and give it shape, they aim at information and enlightenment, and hence their prose completely lacks the
lacks the imaginative powers of Melville and Stevenson. On the whole they mark a decline, a falling of standards, imagination gives place to sensationalism, poetic beauty of prose is wholly missing.

Considered as a whole seas and islands encourage, a simplicity of style, and directness of expression. Imagination works within limits - the limits of the sea and the sky and the palm groves; it cannot fly into the regions of history or antiquity; even the mind of the native is most often a closed book.

A. The Beginners-Cooper, Marryat, Henry Dana.

Fenimore Cooper (1789-1858) and Marryat (1792-1948), wrote novels, and no real books of travel, but even then their influence is a mighty force that cannot be denied. For more than a century they have influenced the minds of young readers, and had such great admirers as Conrad; they must be acknowledged as the originators of modern literature of seas and islands. They have irresistible power to reach the adventurous in the character of all nations; they are the enslavers of youth by the glamour of their temperament. Nature is an essential part of existence for them, they can hear its voice, and can understand its silence, and in both forms, it is interpreted with poetical conception. Yet Cooper differed, he had roughness, rudeness, and genius; he flourishes the banner of the wilderness and the prairie; he is for the desert more than the sown, for the adventurous primitive virtue than cultured provincial acquiescence in custom and fashion. In The Pilot he did not discover the sea for fiction, but he was the first to use the setting for full effectiveness, and thus ..
prepared the way for Melville and Conrad. Marryat brought ripe experience and unimpaired vivacity to his work when he began to write novels; and he opened to the imagination a new fresh field of adventure, it is full of vivid lights and shadows, light hearted fun, grinding hardship, stirring adventures, heroic action, warm friendship and bitter hatreds. It presented a contrast to the world of the historical romance and the fashionable novelist. Moreover, Marryat had an admirable gift of lucid direct narrative, and an unfailing fund of incident and humour. But it is Henry Dana who must be given the honour of writing the first truly modern travel book concerning the sea.

110. Henry Dana (1815-1882) Two Years Before The Mast (1840)

Richard Henry Dana stands alone as a writer of a true book of sea travel. Two Years Before the Mast, is a classic and a model for all modern accounts of sea journeys; it is sober, gentle, restrained, it shows maturity of style in a writer yet 25 years old; he has already mastered simplicity, which is hardest to find till Stevenson comes along with his book 'In the South Sea'.

He shipped in August, 1834, and returned home in September, 1836. This voyage was really a turning point in his career, renewing his health and turning him into a self-reliant energetic man with broad interests and keen sympathies. Two Years Before the Mast also has historic significance, it created interest in California prior to the gold rush, and with Melville's White Jacket in 1850, it led to reforms in the service conditions of the sailors; the book vividly preserves a bygone epoch. Dana has great descriptive powers, simple, gentle, calm description of life on the ship and over
the seas - somehow acquires an imperishable quality; with simple means he works a magic that endures, his sympathies are wide, his heart revolts at the sight of pain and cruelty, and he is a lover of the simple joys of existence; the air, the wind, the sunlight, and solitude are enough to intoxicate him; he is a sensitive man, a dreamer, and a poet in his narration and description. Two Years Before the Mast is the most truthful, and graphic account of life at sea.

"Something of the same kind befell me a few days after the cook had just made for us a mess of hot scouse—that is biscuit pounded fine, salt beef cut into small pieces, and a few potatoes, boiled up together and seasoned with pepper. This was a rare treat, and I being the last at the gallery had it put in my charge, to carry down for the mess. I got along very well as far as the hatchway, and was just down the steps when a heavy sea lifting the stern out of water and passing forward, dropping it down again, threw the steps from their place, and I came down into the steerage a little faster than I meant to, with the lid on top of me, and the whole precious mess scattered over the floor". 1

Pathos and sorrow are described with restraint which gives it more poignancy. A man is drowned, and he describes how his memory is completely wiped out within a few hours.

"Accordingly we had no sooner got the ship before the wind than his chest was brought up upon the forecastle and sale began. The jackets and trousers in which we had seen him but a few days before were exposed and bid off while the life was hardly out of his body, and his chest was taken aft, and used as a store chest so that there was nothing left which could be called his". 2

The book gives a detailed account of trading in California, and dignity and pride of the people living there and speaking like ambassadors. 3 His love of free life in the open, away from the tyranny of the captain, is described with true delight, and he makes an appeal for the betterment of the

1. Two Years Before The Mast - London-Blackie, p.26
2. Ibid., p.30
3. Ibid., p.53
sailor's lot.

"I shall never forget the delightful sensation of being in the open air, with the birds singing around, and escaped from the confinement, labour, and strict rules of a vessel, of being once more in my life, though only for a day my own master. A sailor's liberty is but for a day, yet while it lasts it is perfect. He is under no one's eye and can do whatever and go wherever he pleases. This day for the last time, I may truly say, in my whole life, I felt the meaning of a term which I had often heard, the sweets of liberty". 1

Dana's prose is clear and simple, devoid of all artificiality, and ornamentation, natural, poised and calmly moving; it is a model for others to follow, and an amazingly fine specimen coming at the very beginning of the modern age in the literature of travel.

B. Writers of Imagination and Symbolism.

Herman Melville and Joseph Conrad

Herman Melville (1819-1891) may be called the Prince Hamlet of the travellers; melancholy imaginative, proud and bitterly vain, he is the most intriguing character, among the writers of the travel books. His vision of the sea and sky is presented with tremendous artistry, with force and dignity, grace and beauty. Like Prospero he calls all elves of hills, and brooks, and sets them to the task of scouring the seas in search of the White Whale. He calls up memories of warmly cool, clear, ringing, perfumed, overflung, redundant days. The Pacific touches some deep chords within him, and he calls to life millions of

1. Two Years Before the Mast - London - Blackie p.102.
shadows and drowned dreams, reveries of slumbering souls, and
the waves that roll, and roll, and touch the unknown shores.
His imagination looks into the depth of a thing until its
outer semblance yields, melts, dissolves and reveals its
secrets, his imagination is a really potent magic. His symbol-
isms, his pessimism, his gargantuan mysticism, are great forces
in the literature of travel.

MOBY DICK (1851)

The greatest book of the sea is undoubtedly Moby Dick,
leaving aside its symbolism, its fictional character, its
psychological significance, the book is a great book of sea
travel. It is here that the soul within unfolds as it never
did before. He describes the sea and the sky with great beauty
and with the force and powers of a master of the elements.

"The warmly cool, clear ringing perfumed, overflowing
redundant, days, were as crystal goblets of Persian sherbet,
heaped up, flaked up, with rose water snow. The starred and
stately nights seemed haughty dames in jewelled velvets,
nursing at home in lonely pride the memory of their absent
conquering Earls; the golden helmed suns". 1

The Pacific touches the inmost corners of this soul.

"When gliding upon the Bashee isles we emerged at last
upon the great South Sea; were not for other things, I could
have greeted my dear Pacific with uncounted thanks, for now
the long supplication of my youth was answered, that serene
ocean rolled eastwards from me, a thousand leagues of blue.
There is one knows not what sweet mystery about this sea,
whose gently awful, stirrings seem to speak of some hidden
soul beneath, like those fabled undulations of the Ephesian
god over the buried Evangelist St. John. And meet it is, that
over these sea pastures, wide rolling, watery prairies, and
Potters Fields of all our continents the wave should rise and
fall, and ebb and flow unceasingly, for here millions of mixed
shades and shadows, drowned dreams, somnambulisms, reveries,
all that we call lives and souls lie dreaming, dreaming still,
tossing like slumberers in their beds; the ever rolling waves,
but made so by their restlessness. To any meditative -Magian
rover this serene pacific is beheld must ever after be the
sea of his adoption. It rolls the mmost waters of the world,
the Indian ocean and Atlantic being but its arms". 2

2. Ibid., p.296,
The imaginative treatment of the scenes around him gives a new charm to the sea and the sky.

"It was a clear steel blue day. The firmaments of air and sea were hardly separable in that all pervading azure, only the pensive air was transparently pure and soft, with a woman's look, and the robust and the man-like sea heaved with long strong lingering smells, as Samson's chest in his sleep. Hither and thither, on the high glided the snow white wings of small unspeckled birds; these were the gentle thoughts of the feminine air, but to and fro in the deeps, far down in the bottomless blue, rushed mighty leviathans, sword fish, and sharks and these were the strong troubled, murderous thinkings, of the masculine sea".

Compared with Moby Dick both Typee - the narrative of a Four Months residence among the natives of a valley of the Marquesas Islands, and Omoo, Narrative of Adventures in the South seas are characteristic and original productions, but hardly 'immortal works of art'. But an immortal work of art, in the purist sense is Moby Dick.

Moby Dick is a great book - a unique book written by a man with unique powers of imagination. It is rare in the history of travel that a book should touch the heights gained by Shakespeare and Coleridge, Shelley, and the Hebrew prophets, and when a man does it our critics say that he is a maniac. Ahab stands on the decks and utters this monologue.

"Yonder by the ever brimming goblet's rim, the warm waves blush like wine. The gold brow plumbs the blue. The diver sun slow dived from moon goes down, my soul mounts up, she wearies with her endless hill. Is then the crown too heavy that I wear, this iron crown of Lombardy".

Even Starbuck is influenced by that atmosphere.

"Oh, God, to sail with such a heathen crew that have small touch of human mothers in them. Hark the infernal orgies, that revelry is forward. He thinks it is life... Oh, life is, in an hour like this, with soul beat down and held to knowledge - as wild untutored things are forced to feed. Oh, life tis now that I do feel the latent horror in thee".

2. Ibid.,p.140.
3. Ibid., pp.142-43.
His imagination is both mystic and realistic, monstrous and grotesque; he enters the sea bottom of sub-human feelings, it is most penetrating and most thrilling. Every word, every metaphor sinks into the soul, not silently but with a silvery sound, not unconsciously but with our full awareness.

"Imagination of this sort looks down into the depths of the thing upon which it is concentrating until the thing's outer resemblance yields, melts, dissolves, only to gather again its dispersed lineaments of a broken reflection in water, into a larger, grander, more diffused image, and one that carries with it hints, glimpses, memories, revolutions that have hitherto floated in and out of our human consciousness without leaving, any definite or lasting impression upon the retina of the mind". 1

"Oh life. Here I am proud as a Greek god, and yet standing debtor to this blockhead for a bone to stand on. Cursed be that mental interdebtedness which will not do away with ledgers. I would be free as air, and I am down in the whole world's books". 2

"Ahab is for ever Ahab, man. This whole act's immutably decreed, 'Tis rehearsed by thee and me, a million years before this ocean rolled. Fool I am the Fate's lieutenant, I act under orders". 3

It is a book of deep pessimism a dark gloom that overpower the forces of light. Ahab and Starbuck talk like Roman Generals, faced with defeat and voluntary death.

"Some ships sail from their points, and ever afterwards are missing, Starbuck".

"Truth Sir, saddest truth", Some men die at ebb tide; some at low water, some at the full of the flood, and I feel now like a billow that is all one crested comb, Starbuck I am old *Shake hands with me*. 4

The sharks follow Ahab like the vultures following the Roman armies.

"It is a thing not uncommonly happening to the whale-boat in the swarming seas; the sharks at times apparently following them in the same prescient way that vultures hover, the banners of marching regiments in the East". 5

"For when three days flow together in one continuous intense, be sure the first is the morning, the second the noon and the third is evening, and the end of that thing be that end what it may". 6

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3. Ibid.p.383
4. Ibid.p.383
5. Ibid.p.389
6. Ibid.p.389
It is connected with uncanny phenomena of nature which are weird rather than beautiful, long arms curling and twisting furlongs in length, the brit under the water and the monstrous sea bottom squid. The truth is the pessimism of Melville actually does resemble what one may suppose to be the attitude of life of the Father of all Devil Fish as it lies at the bottom of the bottomless. It is an inarticulate pessimism, enormous, sluggish, titanic such as the first children of Uranus, and Gaia, may well have had as they pondered on the gulf of existence.

A gargantuan mysticism colours his titanic pessimism.

"Be think thee of the albatross, whence come those clouds of spiritual wondement and pale dread in which that white phantom sails in all imagination. Not Coleridge first threw that spell, but God's great unflattering laureate Nature". 1

"There in his other moods, symbolise whatever grand or gracious things he will by whiteness, no man can deny that in its profoundest idealised significance, it calls up a peculiar apparition to the soul". 2

"A sky hawk that tauntingly had followed the main truck downward from its natural home among the stars, pecking at the flag and in commoding Tshitego there; this bird now chanced to intercept its broad fluttering wing between the hammer and the wood, and simultaneously feeling that ethereal thrill, the submerged savage beneath, in his death gasp, kept his hammer frozen there, and so the bird of heaven with archangelic shrieks, and his imperial beak thrust upwards, and his whole captive form folded in the flag of Ahab, went down with his ship, which like Satan would not sink to hell till she had dragged a living part of heaven along with her and helmeted herself with it". 3

This brooding and sombre journey of a deep pessimist after the white whale, this elemental mystery is made much more uncanny by the unusual type of humour. To the average mind it is not humour at all, but on the contrary it is malicious and satanic jesting, it alienates instead of attracting. The heathenish crew indulge in saturnine jesting;

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2. Ibid.,p.158
3. Ibid.,p.398
That mortal man should feed upon the creature that feeds his lamps, and like Stubb eat him by his own light, as you say, this seems so outlandish a thing that one must needs go a little into the history and philosophy of it". 1.

"Bone is rather dusty, sir, "Take the hint then, and when thou art dead, never bury thyself under living people's noses". 2

"Some game some wights will tell you that they have to plant weeds, they don't grow naturally, that they import Canada thistles, that they have to send beyond seas for spile to stop a leak in an oil cask, that pieces of wood, in Nantucket are carried about like bits of true cross in Rome, that people there plant toadstools before their houses, to get under the shade in summer time; that one blade of grass makes an Oasis, three blades in a day's walk a prairie; that they wear quicksand shoes, something like Laplander's snow shoes". 3

Hawthorne and Whitman reviewed Typee, Long-fellow read it aloud at home as Irving had had the manuscript read to him, while Thoreau and Emerson referred to it in their journals. All read the book but they did not believe it till Toby Greene turned up and confirmed the story. Kory Kory the servant, Fayaway, the island beauty, Mahevi the Chief and many other characters are skilfully described and incidents and adventures are handled with ease and facility. He praised the savages of Typee Valley and brutally condemned whiteman.

"The fiend like skill we display in the invention of all manner of death dealing engines, the vindictiveness with which we carry on our wars, and the misery and desolation that follow in their train, are enough in themselves to distinguish the white civilised man as the most ferocious animal on the face of the earth". 4

"As I extended my wanderings in the valley, and grew more familiar with the habits of its inmates, I was fain to confess that despite the disadvantages of his condition the Polynesian savage, surrounded by all the luxurious provision of nature enjoyed an infinitely, though certainly a less intellectual existence, than the European". 5

2. Ibid. p.284
3. Ibid. p.71
5. Ibid. p.170
He shocked the prudish and propriety loving ladies of the forties by his frank description of the nude bathing beauties.

"People may say what they will about the interest evinced by our fashionable ladies in dress. Their jewels their feathers, their silk, and their furbelows would have sunk into utter insignificance beside the exquisite simplicity of attire adopted by the nymphs of the vale on festive occasions. I should have liked to have seen a gallery of coronation beauties at West Minster Abbey, confronted for a moment by this band of island girls, their stiffness, formality, and affectation contrasted with the artless vivacity, and unconcealed natural graces of these savage maidens. It would be the Venus de Medici placed beside a millionaire's doll". 1

Most probably Melville spent only a month on the island of Nukuhiva, and not four as he asserts, and his adventures on his way to the valley of Typees were not so startling as he makes out, nor the dangers he ran from their supposed predilection for human flesh so great and the story of this escape as he gives it is highly improbable. Typee in fact appears to be a compilation of matter which Melville found in contemporary travel books - combined with a highly coloured version of his own experiences. The industrious Mr.Anderson in his book Melville and South Seas, has shown that on occasion he not only repeated the errors these travel books contained but in various instances used the very words of their authors.

**JOURNAL UP THE STRAITS (1856-1857)**

The Journal marks the end of his literary period, and the beginning of his enigmatic silence of 35 years, years of Laokoon like tortures of the soul, some aridity of the coming sorrow of his Timon like misanthropy is reflected in the Journal up the Strait, which is itself a disappointing affair. The Journal up the Strait appears to throw no

light on the previous crisis and displays no particular gift for observation. The manuscript we are assured is almost illegible, and the record may be best described as a long series of shorthand notes to refresh the author's memory. They were used copiously in the construction of the long narrative poem Clarel, which was published twenty years later. Hawthorne who was consul at Liverpool and met Melville again at the beginning of the voyage described in this journal (October, 1856 to May, 1857) diagnosed his condition.

"He can neither believe nor be comfortable in his unbelief, and he is too honest and courageous not to try to do one or the other". 1

His gloomy mood found a full and free scope for expression in a gloomy land; but it is strange that the glorious associations of history made no effect on his mind, after all no cultured man can deny the Hebrew charm of this land of old prophets.

"Had Jerusalem no peculiar historic associations still would it, by its physical aspect evoke peculiar emotions in the traveller. As the sight of the haunted Haddon Hall suggested to Mr. Radcliffe her curdling romances, so I have little doubt, the diabolical landscape of Judaea must have suggested to the Jewish prophets, their ghastly theology". 2

Judaea fares no better.

"We read a good deal about stones in scriptures. Monuments and memorials are set up of stones; the figurative seed falls in stony places. And no wonder that stones should so largely figure in the Bible. Judaea is one accumulation of stones - stony mountains and stony plains, stony torrents and stony roads, stony vales and stony fields; stony homes and stony tombs, stony eyes and stony hearts". 3

The Pyramids and the Nile fare a little better.

Melville wrote Moby Dick in 1851, and he died in 1891.

The Journal up the Straits appeared in 1856-57, Billy Budd

4. Ibid., p. 576.
appeared in 1838-1891. Thus for almost thirty-five years he kept silent, it was a silence similar to that of Shakespeare after writing King Lear.

"For Moby Dick belongs to the same order as Macbeth and King Lear, it is inspired by the same knowledge and disturbed by the same tremors, it is as they are super-human. It contains, as they do, the terrible and tremendous, discovery made by a man big enough to take the risks and pay the price of man's final lore". 1

He struggled with his silence for thirty-five years, he had something at the back of his mind. With the mere fact of the long silence in our minds we cannot help regarding Billy Budd as the last will and the spiritual testament of a man of genius.

112. JOSEPH CONRAD (1857-1923)


This discoverer of the realm of gold, this wanderer and homeless dreamer, this lover of the sea and the sailors, travelled with the eyes of a poet, and wrote with the pen of a magician. He created by some mysterious method, some occult form of mesmerism - worlds unknown, unimaginable, monstrous and perilous and having created them he sits in a corner throwing out tentacles into the darkness. His work is a tapestry richly dark, figures and the scenes are woven into the very thread of it; the memories are formless vivid, ragged, incoherent, and revealing. In his books there is breathless zest for life, throbbing vitality, vividness and turbulance of real existence; his storm tossed seas rise and swell, and touch the shores of mystery; his storms have sublimity; when a ship fails the whole world seems to fail, and souls of men, lonely pitiable creatures are left floating over an Abyss. Thought love, belief, hate, conviction

and fidelity - all become ship-wrecked. His vision is great and great too is his artistry; his prose has clarity, force, and grandeur.

**The Mirror of the Sea** (1906).

It is a unique book, most original, and most eloquent, it reveals him better than any other biography or critical study; it is dictated by no sense of precedent, no form, nor fashion; it is a book of its own kind, even more than his novels. *Some Reminiscences* has *Tristram Shandy* for a rival, but the *Mirror of the Sea* has no rival at all. It has breathless incoherence, a wild zest for life, throbbing vitality, vividness, disorder, and turbulence. The description of the sea, and the sea storms, gales and ships surpasses anything written by the English writers of the sea: it is a vision of the sea which embraces not only the sea’s limits but also the seas infinities, which are Hell’s most dire infinities; the invisible restless waves, and booming winds, the shifting floor of the sea, and changing background are a grand drama, for the great tragedy of the ship-wreck of life.

The **Mirror of the Sea** is his finest book; the best phase of his manner can be studied in it to perfection. The imagery of the **Mirror of the Sea** is as typical of the earlier Conrad as the faint and rounded iron of *Some Reminiscences* is typical of the later Conrad. This book is his testament. His attitude to the sea in this book is of lyrical and passionate worship. He sees with all the vivid accuracy of his realism her deceits, her cruelties, and her inhuman disregard of the lives of men; but her glory is enough for him. It is a confirmation of his faith and devotion.
"Landfall and departure mark the rhythmical swing of a sea-man's life, and of a ship's career. From land to land is the most concise description of the ship's early fate." 1

This land fall and departure soon take on new dimensions when he describes the death of a captain in the hospital.

"Was he looking out for a strange land fall or taking with an untroubled mind the bearings for his last departure? It is hard to say, for in that voyage from which no man returns land-fall and departure are instantaneous, merging together into one moment of supreme and final attention. Certainly I do not remember observing any sign of faltering in the set expression of his wasted face, no hint of the nervous anxiety of a young commander about to make land on an uncharted shore. He had had too much experience of Departure and Land-falls." 2

He admires the ship's routine as 'a good doctor for sore hearts, and sore heads' and discusses the truth about the casting of anchor which is the final word of a ship's ended journey. He discusses the treatment of ships with a tenderness.

"There may be a rule of conduct, there is no rule of human relationship. To deal with ships is as fine an art as it is to deal with men. Both men and ships live in an unstable element, are subject to subtle and powerful influences and want to have their merits understood rather than their faults found out." 3

The tragedy of a sinking ship is most often the topic for discussion in a novel of the sea.

"No body ever comes back from a missing ship to tell how hard was the death of the craft, and how sudden and over-whelming the last anguish of her men. No body can say with what thoughts, with what regrets, with what words on their lips they died. But there is something fine in the sudden passing away of these hearts from the extremity of struggle and stress and tremendous uproar, from the vast unrestful rage of the surface to the profound peace of the depths, sleeping untroubled since the beginning of the ages." 4

He compares the steamers and sailing ships, and describes the stranding of ships. He gives a poetic study of gales and winds.

1. The Mirror of the Sea London - 1928, p.1
2. Ibid., p. 13.
3. Ibid., p. 31.
4. Ibid., p. 73.
5. Ibid., p. 179.
"Gales have their personalities, and after all, perhaps it is not strange, for when all is said and done, they are adversaries whose wiles you must defeat, whose violence you must resist and yet with whom you must live in the intimacies of nights and days". 1

The Mirror of the Sea may be described as a sort of prose poem about the sea and a poem founded not alone upon flights of imagination, but upon profound realism, and knowledge of detail. Its basis of personal reminiscences expands in the rare qualities of poetry and romance. The Mirror of the Sea is most eloquent of all Conrad's books. It has something of the grave and exalted eloquence of Paradise Lost. The scheme of the Mirror of the Sea apparently simple, in fact subtle with cross currents of fact and fancy, and moves at once in two realms like those of Lewis Carroll. The sea also affected his writing, Mary Austin who had a talk with Conrad says,

"I seemed to feel the rhythm of the sea in torment with an intensity that implied a more or less conscious feeling for it on the part of the author. Pressed upon this point Mr. Conrad admitted that most of his stories began in sea mood, an aspect or motion of the sea in which somehow the sea participated, if not governing, at least subtending the spirit and action of the piece". 2

The sea has been the most powerful and the most urgent influence in Conrad's life. It has tinged his art with brilliance, with the sombre glory of its moods; it has fired his imagination with its fickle repose, and mighty upheavals. And Conrad's chief faith in humanity seems to have arisen from contact with the sea.

THE TOPICS:

His second love after the sea are the tropics. The tropics and the tropical islands and jungles fire his imagination.

"The islands are very quiet. One sees them lying about, clothed in their garments of leaves, in a great hush of silver and azure, where the sea without murmur meets the sky in a ring of magic stillness. A sort of smiling somnolence broods over them, the very voices of their people are soft and subdued, as if afraid to break some protecting spell". 3

1. The Mirror of the Sea-London-1928, p.86
3. Conrad- Victory-London-1928, p.52
Tropical nature is an agent in the stories.

"Tropical nature had been kind to the failure of the commercial enterprise. The desolation of the headquarters of the Tropical Belt Coal Company had been screened from the side of the sea; from the side where prying eyes, if any, were sufficiently interested, either in malice or in sorrow, could have noted the decaying bones of that once sanguine enterprise". 1

Conrad's love of the sun gives colour to his language which heightens the drama which he always has in hand. He loves the calm of the tropical nights, and the stillness of those jungles; one feels that Conrad can only be at his best when dealing with tropical islands, and tropical seas, there where life is primitive and issues more direct, there where the trivial complexities of Europeans life do not exist, then and then only Conrad is supremely great.

"A marvellous stillness pervaded the world, and the stars together with the serenity of their rays, seemed to shed upon the earth the assurance of everlasting security. The young moon recurved and shining in the West, was like a slender shaving thrown up from a bar of gold, and the Arabian sea, smooth and cool to the eye like a sheet of ice, extended its perfect level to the perfect circle of a dark horizon". 2

Sir Hugh Clifford who had been Governor of Malaya told Conrad that he knew nothing about Malaya, and Conrad agreed ironically. Nevertheless seamen recognised the places and many of the characters described in the Malayan tales when they came to read them.

The dream like beauty of the islands and seas finds a place in almost every story. It is here that he differs with Kipling. Kipling's view of the East is that of a cockney, Conrad's view is that of a philosopher. He resembles Pierre Loti more than any body else though they stand poles apart.

2. Conrad - Lord Jim - London - 1928, p.15
"Mr. Burns, my Chief Mate*, made out the land first, and very soon I became entranced by this blue, pinnacled apparition, almost transparent against the light of the sky, a mere emanation, the astral body of an island risen to greet me from afar. It is a rare phenomenon such a sight of the Pearl at sixty miles off. And I wondered half seriously whether it was good omen, whether what would meet me in that island would be as luckily exceptional as this beautiful dream-like vision so very few sea-men have been privileged to behold*. 1

The elements of adventure and romance which are found in every travel book are also found in his work of fiction. There is adventure by sea, by the banks of tropical rivers, and by the shore of tropical islands. The very fact that he so frequently deals with life removed from the western shores, constitutes a sense of adventure, and to this fact are added Conrad's easy flow of descriptive language, and his high minded search for that alone which matters in life; we have romance of a very noble order. The Victory, The Rover, The Rescue, are full of romance and adventure.

To Conrad the word romance means something sacred, so sacred that life cannot be called life without it. To him romance knows no age and no station in life; it is no respecter of person, and it means both exquisite joys and exquisite sufferings; it is sunshine and deep shadow, calm and storm, rest and fatigue, elation and despair, the fullness of the joy of life and the limit of endurance. He combines romance and realism to create his effects, both reason and imagination are employed in the study and portrayal of life.

SOME REMINISCENCES (1912)

It reveals the extent to which all his books are based on his travels, his personal experiences and his half sunken memories of distant lands, and strange nations. He was midway 1. Conrad -Twist Land and Sea Tales -Penguin Books, p. 9.
in his sixteenth year when he first caught sight of the sea as he stood with his tutor on the Lido at Venice, in that look over the Adriatic was settled the question of a career, the sea symbolised to him, that freedom towards which he was being driven by an irresistible impulse.

"Her head swung little to the west, pointing towards the immature lighthouse of the Jolliette break-water for away there, hardly distinguishable against the land. The dinghy danced a splashy, squaasy jig in the wash of the wake, and turning my seat I followed James Westoll with my eyes. Before she had gone a quarter of a mile she hoisted her flag as the harbour regulations prescribe for arriving and departing ships. I saw it suddenly flicker and stream out on the flag staff. The Red Ensign! ....... The Red Ensign—the symbolic protecting warm bit of bunting flung wide upon the sea, and destined for so many years to be the only roof over my head".

A detailed description of his voyages can be seen in M. Jean Aubry's Life and Letters - London-1922 and Mr. George Keating's - A Conrad Memorial Library-New York-1929. It was these years of sea-manship from 1874 to 1894 that provided all the scenes, characters and incidents. His immediate experiences and expressions have gone very directly to the making of his art. They again deliberately evoke the power of personal reminiscence charging it with the burden of his philosophy and the creation of his character. There is hardly a single invented character in the whole of his wide output and it is the same with situations, yet this material made available to him by his travels is used with great care.

"Even before the most seductive reveries I have remained mindful of that sobriety of interior life, that asceticism of sentiments in which alone the naked form of truth, such as one feels it, can be rendered without shame".

2. Ibid.p.194
C. The Romantic Travellers.

Stevenson, Rupert Brooke, Frederick O’Brien, and Somerset Maugham.

113. R. L. Stevenson. *In the South Seas* (1900). Vailima Letters (1895), Ballads (1890), Songs of Travel (1895)

Then these islands of slumbering dreams were visited by dreamers, romantic dreamers, men who had visions of beauty and tongues of silver. Stevenson was loved by the islands, loved, and possessed, as her own, Frederick O’Brien, came from the States, attracted by the sunny beauty of these atolls, Rupert Brooke’s sojourn was too short to write a regular book of travel, but his letters written just a short time before his death have importance of their own. Maugham alone visited and revisited these islands, took notes, wove them into novels, and film stories, and has survived long enough to see this romance vanishing in the light of the common day.

Stevenson is Ariel himself, and Hamlet and Antony too; by strange pathways, he is led to Smoa, and in strange webs of Fortune he is caught. The Kosmos is his abode, and the open road his mistress, he is a wilful stranger walking in the bright eye of danger. He looks at life with love and simplicity, beauty and understanding emotional warmth, and the fullness of heart. This congenial vagrant, at last finds a way of life with which he can identify himself, and he brings a trained power of visual description to this last labour of love, this dream of his life, at least he is face to face with Beauty and Romance, and he is not awed by her majesty.

*In the South Seas* (1900).

In the *South Seas* is probably his maturest work of
travel, there is simplicity and beauty, understanding and love, and it is devoid of all tricks of style and expression. And yet there is deep emotional warmth colouring the whole account. He was enchanted by the islands.

"Few men who come to islands leave them, they grow grey where they alighted, the palm shades and the trade wind fans them till they die, perhaps cherishing to the last the fancy of a visit home, which is rarely made, more rarely enjoyed, and yet more rarely repeated. No part of the world exerts the same attractive power upon the visitors, and the task before me is to communicate to fireside travellers some sense of its seduction, and to describe the life, at sea and ashore, of many hundred thousand persons, some of our own blood and language all our contemporaries, and yet as remote in thought and habit as Rob Roy or Barbarossa, the Apostles or the Caesars". 1

The first experience of the sight of the South Seas enslaved his heart.

"The first experience can never be repeated. The first love the first sunrise, the first South Sea Island are memories apart and touched a virginity of sense". 2

"The Anchor plunged. It was a small sound, a great event, my soul went down with these moorings whence no wind may extract nor any diver fish it up, and I and some part of my ships company were from that hour the bondslaves of the isles of Vivien". 3

The high death rate and depopulation, the chiefs and the Tapus, the missionary schools and cannibalism all interested him. Again and again the spell of the islands enchanted him; on the Fakarava atoll he becomes ecstatic with joy.

"The moon was down. The harbour lantern and two of the greater planets drew varicoloured wakes on the lagoon. From shore the cheerful cry of cocks rang out at intervals above the organ point surf. And thought of this de-populated capital, this protracted thread of island with its crest of coco palms, and fringe of breakers, and that tranquil inland sea that stretched before me till it touched the stars, ran in my head for hours with delight". 4

The book has a sober beauty and charm, and it is wrongly condemned by some as a dull log book. 5

1. In the South Seas - London - 1912 p.2
2. Ibid., p.2
3. Ibid., p.5
4. Ibid., p.152,153
If it is a log book, it is a log of real enterprise and adventures in a marvellous part of the world. Stevenson heroically tries to penetrate to the heart of the South Seas, he is caught up by the islands and their people, and is bent upon making them known to those who live apart...... It is full of observation and feeling, it is the wisest of his travel books. The Smoan period had its fluctuations of talent, it was upon the whole a restorer of his boyish earnestness and enthusiasm. It also marks a decline in his romantic travel style, and opens the path for sober realism.

"My favourite haunt was opposite the hamlet, where was a landing in a cover under a lianaed cliff. The beach was lined with palms, and a tree called the purao, something between the fig and mulberry in growth, and bearing a flower like a great, yellow poppy with a maroon heart. In places rocks, approached upon the sand; the beach would be all submerged, and the surf would bubble warmly as high to my knees, and play with coconut husks as our more homely ocean plays with wreck and wrack, and bottles". 1

In the South Seas, is without any affectation and egoism; he wants to see things, and not to be seen among them. For this congenial vagrant had at last found a way of life with which he could identify himself. Everywhere else in Europe as in America, even in the country of his fathers, friends had seen him pass a wilful stranger, here where all was transient he inclined to take root. Stevenson in travelling for his pleasure and his curiosity found European customs and beliefs over laying a whole network of paganism, so that every influence was checked and thwarted by the presence of something alien and irreconcilable. The most that he could do was to make his readers aware of the complications. He brought to the work his strained power of visual description. He continued to have this simplicity in spite of the pressing demands of anthropology and mythology.

1. In the South Seas-London - 1912, p.20.
The Vailima Letters form the correspondence addressed by Robert Louis Stevenson to Sidney Colvin from November 1890 to October 1894. These letters rank higher than the bulk of his correspondence as literature, but for that very reason they cease to be good letters which must be natural and conversational. It appears that he had before his mind not his friend Sidney Colvin, but the reading public at large; the sentences are needlessly long, and the tone unsuitable for private correspondence.

"My long, silent, contests, in the forest have had a strange effect on me. The unconscious vitality of these vegetables, their exuberant number and strength, the attempts, I can use no other word, of lianas to enwrap and capture the intruder, the awful silence, the knowledge that all my efforts are only like the performance of an actor, the thing of a moment, and the wood will silently and swiftly heal them up with fresh effervescence, the cunning sense of the tutful, suffering itself to be touched with wind swayed grasses and not minding, but let the grass be moved by a man, and it shuts up, the whole silent battle, murder and slow death of the contesting forest, weigh upon the imagination".

Thus they form, a brilliant auto-biographical fragment. They are a varied record, perfectly frank and familiar, of the writer's every day moods, thoughts and doings during his Samoan exile. They tell of the pleasure and troubles of a planter founding his home in the virgin soil of a tropical island; the pleasure of an invalid beginning after many years to resume habits of out-door life and exercise, the toils and satisfactions, failures and successes of a creative artist, but they have nothing to do with his travels.

The Ballads contain some studies in South Sea life - 'The Song of Roharo', is a legend of Tahiti, and 'The Feast of Famine' is a study of Marquean Life. Both show his effort...
to dig deep into the life and spirit of the pacific people.

"Hark away in the woods - for ears of love are sharp, stealthily, quietly, touched, the note of the one-stringed harp,
In the lighted house of her father, why should Taheia start,
Taheia heavy of hair, Taheia tender of heart". 1

_Songs of Travel (1896)_.

The Songs of Travel were written at various times and places, principally after the author's final departure from England in 1887, and were sent home to Sidney Colvin for publication some months before his death. Some of them were definitely inspired by his sojourn in the South Sea Islands.

"I heard the pulse of the besieging sea,
Throb far away all night, I heard the wind,
Fly crying and convulse tumultous palms,
I rose and strolled, the isle was all bright sand,
And flailing fans and shadows of the palm". 2

Rupert Brooke. (1887-1915).

Rupert Brooke lived a short romantic life, of love, friendship, literature and beauty; his death was still more romantic, this ill-starred genius blazed on English skies for a short while, but he left a golden trail behind. He dreams of becoming an artist in some eastern land of romance, he breathes the warm perfumes wafted from the fairy land, and drifting down the paths of darkness. He wanders in the lands of imagination, peopled with unearthly folk that attract one from the ends of the earth. His letters written in the heat of the moment and included in the collected edition of his poems, have freshness of dew upon them, moonlight peers through them, and the island girls smile and titter with rapture; all that he conveys without restraint. Here he discloses his boyish heart, his lust for life in his unchecked ecstatic description of the beauty of islands.

2. _Songs of Travel_ - London - 1911, p.58.
Had he lived long enough to give regular shape to these first impressions he would have certainly written the finest book on the South Sea Islands but soon these dreams were buried on the island of Scyros. In a letter to Mr. Geoffrey Fry, he recounts his dreams of the East in general.

"I may see you yet in England, but I don't go till January or so, but when I do go, aha, England will never see me more. I shall grow my red whiskers, and take to Art. In a few years you may come and stay with me in my villa at Pyharis, or my tent at Kandhar, or my Yacht off the Cyclades. But you will be a respectable lawyer, you will waggle your mustache and lecture me on my harem. Then a large one-eyed negro eunuch will come, and tie you up, and pitch you into the sea. And I shall continue to paint sea scapes, in scarlet and umber*."

But these dreams of travels in the Eastern lands did not come true. On the other hand he found an opportunity to go to San Francisco and from there he sailed to Hawaii, and the romantic Pacific islands. The days he passed in Samoa, Tahiti, and Fiji were too short to fully satisfy his lust for life, and if he had lived longer he might have returned to the South Seas like Stevenson; and they have much in common - the first impressions are almost similar. He wrote to Mr. Marsh from the steamer, sometime in October 1913.

"It is all true about the South Seas. I get a little tired of it at moments, because I am just too old for Romance (he was only 26 years then). But there it is there wonderfully is, heaven on earth, the ideal life, little work, dancing and singing and eating, naked people of incredible loveliness, perfect manners, and immense kindliness, a divine tropic climate, and intoxicating beauty of scenery, I wandered with an interpreter, entirely genial, and quite incapable of English - through Samoan villages. The last few days, I stopped in one where a big marriage feast was going on. The Samoan girls have extra-ordinarily beautiful bodies, and walk like goddesses. There is a lovely brown colour, without any black Melanesian mixture*. 2

The beauty of Fiji and Samoa forms the subject of a letter to Miss Asquith (Lady Bonham Carter) written in December 1913.


2. Ibid. LXXIX.
"Fiji in moon-light is like nothing else in this world, or the next. It is all dim colours, and all scents. And here where it is high up the most fantastically shaped mountains in the world tower up all round and little silver clouds and wisps of mist run blazing up and down the valley and hill sides like lamps looking for their mother. There is only one thing on earth askw beautiful, and that is Samoa by moonlight. That is utterly different, merely heavenly sheer loveliness. You lie on a mat in a cool Samoan hut, and look out on the white and under the high palms, and a gentle sea, and the black line of the reef, a mile out, and moonlight over everything, floods and floods of it, not sticky like Honolulu moon-light, not to be eaten with a spoon, but flat and abundant."

The departure from the South Seas brings back to his sad heart memories of different lands - the true regrets of a traveller always roaming with a hungry heart - and yet never satisfied. Rupert Brooke, was not spared by fate otherwise he would have created a new tradition, and would have written matchless books about the South Seas Islands.

115. Frederick C.pear - Atolls of the Sun - 1922.

The author of the Mystic Isles of the South Seas, and White shadows in the South Seas - sets out to the distant atolls, spots of beauty scattered in the midst of the Pacific ocean. He is romantic head and heart, and that too an American romantic, legends, and myths, sailors and fishers tales, stories of Pearl hunters, traders, the poor whites and the white eccentrics like Paul Gauguin - all find a place in his book. In a way he is a precursor of Munchener by virtue of his admirable method of giving prose narratives and real fiction in the same book; an essay is followed by a story, a story that gives blood and flesh to the otherwise admirable description of the people and the land. Atolls of Sun is a book of experiences, impressions, and dreams in the strange and lovely islands of the South Seas; it is not a literal

or sequential account of his travels, yet every-thing in it is
the result of his wanderings in the far and mysterious recesses
of the South Seas. He makes the reader see and feel the sad
and beautiful guises of life, and the secrets of a few unusual
souls. The thrills of adventure upon the sea, and in shadowy
glens, the odours of rare and sweet flowers, the memories
of loving friends, are all preserved within these pages.
His sympathies, are as wide as those of Stevenson, but he
lacks his grace and charm, his themes are shared by Jack
London and Somerset Maugham, but he does not arrive at the
same conclusions; he never loves the sea like Conrad or
Melville, he loves the scenes of the atolls and studies the
life of the natives. His style has charm and skill, clarity
and simplicity, but there is an under-current of some dis­
turbing restlessness, some faintness of will, some lack of
faith in what he holds up to our appreciation. Like a seer
he is already aware of the end of this romance and beauty,
he can read the writing on the wall. His descriptive powers
are best observed in his fine studies of the beauties of

"If one must say farewell to Tahiti let it be in the
evening, in the tender hues of the sunset, the effacing shadows
of the sinking orb in sympathy with the days task done, the
screen of night being drawn, and flaming dying lights across
a work a day world, the dream picture of the supreme artist
appearing and fainting in the purpling heavens." 1

It is the beauty of the land that wins his heart and
not the beauty of women and men, and he gives all the ardour
of the heart to the lovely sights of these lonely atolls.

"Here was I in the arcanum of romance, the promised
land of Chimera, after years of faint expectation, I was
almost stunned by the reality, and I felt sensibly the need
of some-one to share the pathos that oppressed me. I did not

for the sake of my love for Tahiti, that was fixed, but this atoll was not the same. Tahiti was an adored mistress, this a light of love, a dazzling alien siren, with whom one could not rest in safety, a fanciful abode for a brief period as incomparable to Tahiti, as an ice-field to a garden. 1

It is tropical grandeur that appeals to his heart, thick forests and lofty mountains appeal to him.

Magnificent forests of many kinds of trees, a hundred vines and flowers, a tangled mass of grasses and creepers, lined the banks of the little river, and filled the rising confines of the dell, which as it climbed grew narrower and darker, and more melancholy: of aspect, the poignant melancholy of a sad loneliness past telling or analysing. 2

Frederick O'Brien really never loved these atolls with a full heart, the white shadows always haunted him. 3

His style too is uncertain and wavering, uneven and often laboured. Americanisms appear quite often. He rarely gives a good character sketch, and descriptions too have a certain monotony.

116. Somerset Maugham (1874 - ).

Somerset Maugham has written no regular book of travel about the South Seas, but these seas and islands, colour all his important stories and some novels; China, Burma, Spain, described in his _On a Chinese Screen, 'Gentleman in the Parlour'. and _Don Fernando_, never wielded such great influence over his heart as these lovely islands, the vast green ocean, and charming men and women of this earthly paradise. The South Seas captured his head and heart, possessed his soul, and the brief notes of this journey given in The Writers Note Book were woven into many lovely stories, in many different shades and hues. He is a sight-seer although he disclaims it, and he is a student of human nature, he travels to collect material to get the sensation of freedom, to see Time spreading before him spaciously. He acquires a spirit of independence and learns

to go his way without being distressed at human weaknesses. Travel marked a stage of literary freedom, he writes to please himself, and he can afford to tell the world to go to hell. Thus he gains naturalness, and purity of style which is hard to attain in a drama or a novel written for a public that wants to suck the very blood of an author. It is a fine study in the creative activity of a writer to compare the original notes with the stories and novels that have been constructed over them. The notes given in the Writer's Note Book are brief, concise, simple, but they have within them the seeds of strange flowers and gorgeous trees, and when they grow and blossom the creative powers of the author look superhuman. His description of charming scenes in words that work like magic, his characterisation that lays bare the very heart of a person, his fine tricks of surprise ending, his wide and various interests hinted at in his stories and novels, and his fine pure prose with restraint and dignity of Elizabethan prose - make his work based on South Sea Travels a aesthetic feast.

The visit to the South Seas is faithfully recorded in the Writer's Note Book: The Moon and the Sixpence (1919) and his famous stories 'Rain', 'The Fall of Edward Barnard', Honolulu', 'The Pool', and 'Mackintosh' - are all clearly based upon these brief notes in his diary. He begins with Honolulu.

"Honolulu, The Union Saloon. You get to it by a narrow passage - from King street, and in the passage are offices so that thirsty souls may be supposed bound for one of these just as well as for the bar. It is a large square room with three entrances and opposite the bar two corners have been partitioned off into little cubicles . . . . The place has a vaguely mysterious air, and you can imagine that it would be a fit scene for shady transactions. In the day time, the light is dim, and at night the electric is cold and sinister". 1

From the very beginning he begins finding mystery in places, and contradiction in persons, he seems to be studying things from a certain lofty seat, and with a new outlook on life. It is to be remembered that when he made these notes he was a secret agent on his way to Russia - but had secured six months leave to improve his health in the Pacific islands. He visited a number of islands of the Smoan group, and then Fiji, Tonga, and Tahiti. Tahiti he was especially interested in, because Paul Gauguin had lived there, and he had long contemplated a novel based on the painter's life. Following his usual practice, Maugham made extensive notes of people and places in and around Papeete, and these so accurately and unflatteringly reflect their originals that after the novel was published, Maugham was never again very welcome in Tahiti. Then he describes the Chinese quarter, the Red Light district of Iwelei, and Haula. The Hula Hula, and Kilanea are described simply and accurately, and these descriptions are later used in many stories. The Pacific excited his imagination in a romantic way.

"The Pacific. On some day it offers all your fancy pictured. The sea is calm, and under the blue sky brilliantly blue. On the horizon are fleecy clouds, and at sunset they take strange shapes, so that it is almost impossible not to believe you see a range of mountains. But more often than you would have expected the sea is rough, capped with white crests, and sometimes it is as grey as the Atlantic. The most wonderful thing about the Pacific is its solitariness. You pass day after day without seeing a ship. Now and then a few sea-gulls suggest that land is not far distant, one of these islands lost in a wilderness of waters, but not a tramp, not a sailing vessel, not a fishing boat . . . . . There is something frightening about the vast silent emptiness." 1

Exactly similar description is given at several other places.

1. The Writers' Note Book - Partial View - London - 1954, p.82.
The description of the Passengers on page 82 is certainly the source of "Mr. Know All".

"Passengers. Gray: A tall Jew, powerfully built and very strong, but ungraceful and clumsy of gesture; he has a sallow face, long and thin, a big nose, and dark eyes. His voice is loud and strident. He is aggressive and a bully, and he always wants to have his own way. He is not above having a look at the cards of the person sitting next to him if he gets the chance. He constantly abuses his cards, and curses his luck, but almost every time he plays he rises a winner". 1

"King George has many strange subjects. Mr. Kelada was short and of a sturdy build, clean shaven and dark skinned, with fleshy hooked nose and very large lustrous and liquid eyes..... There is nothing more exasperating when you are playing patience than to be told where to put the card you have turned up before you have had a chance to look for yourself". 2

The characters like Elfenbein and Melville come next, and then he describes Pago Pago and the natives. The missionaries and Miss Thompson and the lodging house are good examples of how the hints in a diary may have great consequences both literary and financial.

"Miss Thompson, Plump, pretty in a coarse fashion perhaps, not more than twenty-seven, she wore a white dress and a large white hat, and long white boots from which her calves, in white cotton stockings, bulged. She had left Iwelie after the raid, and was on her way to Apia, where she hoped to get a job in the bar of a hotel. She was brought to the house by the quarter-master, a little very wrinkled man indescribably dirty." 3

"They passed Miss Thompson on the road. The Doctor took off his hat, and she gave him a 'Good Morning doc' in a loud cheerful voice. She was dressed as on the day before, in a white frock, and her shiny white boots with the high heels, her fat legs bulging over the tops of them, were strange things on the exotic scene." 4

This story 'Rain' later on became a world famous picture, and according to Pfeiffer it brought him at least one million dollars. Next he describes Red-a-sailor, Mamua, a schooner of seventy tons, the skipper, the super-cargo, a Clerk, Apia, the Central Hotels, the owner of the Hotel, the banana leaves and the frivolous elegance of the palm trees. The Administrator 

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he describes is certainly the hero of the story 'Mackintosh' - that is Walker.

"He is a tall man and his small thin face is tanned by years of exposure to the tropical sun. A small moustache barely conceals the weakness of his mouth. ... He likes silly jokes practical chiefly and is fond of chaffing people. He has the utmost contempt for the whites of Apia. One can guess he runs his islands competently but with an exaggerated insistence on insignificant details. He regards the natives as wilful children, unreasonable and only just human, who must be treated without any nonsense, but not unkindly." 1

While dying, Mr. Walker wants that no action should be taken against the natives, to avenge his death.

L. is lawson - the unfortunate hero of 'the Pool'; the story is not much changed.

"He was an estate agent in London and came to Smoa originally for his health. He is a little thin man, with long face and a narrow weak chin, a prominent nose, large and bony, and good dark brown eyes. He is married to a half caste, and has a small son, but she lives with her parents and he at the hotel". 3

Gardner the German is presented as Miller in the same story; the description on p.97 'The Writer's Note Book' has much similarity with the description on p.108, 'All the World Over'.

Then he comes across D.T.A. Scot, Sharp, an engineer, C. a trainer of horses, Swan an old Swede trader appears in the story 'The Pool' as Ethel's father, Brevald, the old Norwegian. Gus the half caste merchant employing white men is presented as Pedresen in the same story.

Then come brief passages giving account of Salologa, the preparation of Kava, the Lagoon, Wins - an Irishman, R.a thin weedy youth, Savai, Suva, the Grand Pacific hotel, Blue - a young man from Oxford, the School Master, the Insurance Agent, Riva, the Priest, Ban, the Talune and Tonga. The notes on Papeete, 'Hotel Tiare, the chiefes' 4 were utilised when writing the 'Moon and Six Pence'.

"She told me there were pictures by Gauguin in a house not far from hers, and when I said I would like to see them, called for a boy to show the way. We drove along the road for a couple of miles, and then turning off it, went down a swampy grass path, till we came to a very shabby frame house, grey and dilapidated. There was no furniture in it beyond a few mats, and the veranda was swarming with dirty children. A young-man was lying on the veranda smoking cigarettes and a young woman was seated idly. The master of the house, a flat nosed smiling dark native came, and talked to us. We asked us to go in, and the first thing I saw was Gauguin painted on the door. I thought I had better take the picture before he changed his mind, so we got the tools from the car in which I had come, unscrewed the hinges and carried the door away". 1

Then he describes fish spearing, beauty of the reef, and the fishing nets, Christianity in the islands, Tetiaroa, the Reef, fishing and catching sharks, colour of the sea and varo-the sea centipedes. All these points give him the correct background for all his stories. These scenes and sights of authentic beauty and truth are utilised successfully. If Somerset Maugham, had used all this material for a regular travel books it would have been one of the finest ever-written on these seas and islands.

D. PRIMITIVE WRITERS.


Jack London moves in a world far from the paths of nineteenth century authorship. Into literature dominated by standards of genteel refinement he brought the raw brutality of the primitive struggle for existence. In a literature written by and for the bourgeoisie he sounded the battle cry for the uplift of the proletariat. Into a literature devoted, to a spiritual interpretation of man's experience he emphasised physical basis of life, and appealed with a vigour as fresh as that of an ocean gale to man's primitive love of adventure. Jack London had seen misery, terrible misery, and he had no scruples about anything,

he wanted success and he wanted revenge, for the first he was ready to become an unashamed hack, and for the second he was willing to use slogans of socialism and Marxism. He loved money and condemned capitalism, he wrote romances, and turned a terrible cynic. He is a muck raker and a Dick Dare, he is confusion incarnate and a grandiloquent farce; he is a visionary and an adventurer, and he believed none of these things at heart. He is the hero of his own stories.

He is a struggling youth in *Martin Eden*, the lovely siren of the heavens in *The Sea Wolf*, the triumphal natural man in *The Call of The Wild*, the avenging angel of his own class in *Iron Heel*, and a reprobate drunkard in *John Barley Corn*. His tour of *The South Sea Islands* was also a form of compensation, he was trying to show himself off to a society, which had ignored him in early youth.

"His boat the Snark, to which he gave so many thousands, and so valuable a part of his life, he conceived as grandly as many of his books, it was to be the medium in which he could assert himself as he had failed fully to assert himself in his books. Instead it became London's Folly, and as characteristically mismanaged as his wealth and his loves".1

The harvest he gathered in the South Seas is a poor harvest indeed; *'The Seed of Mā'ōi'* , *'The House of Mapuhi'* , *'The Whale Tooth'* , *'Yah Yah Yah'* , *'Mauki'* , *'The Heathen'* , *'Terrible Solomans'* , *'The Inevitable Whitman'* - cannot be considered good stories, and they are not original. The old themes of cannibalism, the violence of sea and storm, and the cruelty of the white-man are dealt with - with the indifference of a hack; their only quality is their violence and their wild vigour, and brutality. In the history of literature this may have an important place, because he shook people out of their genteel love of the man in nature, and the romantic love of

seas and islands. This natural son of Flora Wellman and Professor M.H. Ghanay - a qujffeck, an itinerant astrologer, and an all round muddler - possessed the fiery and violent characteristics inherited from his parents. His stories present stormy character, wild back ground of nature and horrible incidents which give a primitive picture of the islands.

"From his eyrie he waved his hand to Captain Lynch, and that doughty patriarch waved back. Raoul was appalled at the sky - It had approached much nearer in fact, it seemed just over his head, and it had turned from lead to black. Many people were still on the ground grouped about the bases of the trees and holding on. He chanced to be looking in Captain Lynch's direction when it happened. He saw the trunk of the tree half way up splinter and part without noise. The head of the tree, with three sailors of the Aorai, and the old Captain, sailed off over the Lagoon. It did not fall to the ground, but drove through the air like a piece of chaff. For a hundred yards he followed its flight, when it struck the water. He strained his eye, and he was sure he saw, Captain in Lynch wave farewell". 1

The horror of the storm and the sea again form the subject of the 'Seed of McCoy' wherein Captain Davenport goes to the Pitcairn island with a burning ship, but is led north, thousands of miles to find a suitable beach. 'The Whale Tooth' is based on the well-known incident of Mr. Baker's Boots. The cannibals ate not only the feet of the unfortunate victim, but also boiled and ate his boots, considering them to be a part of his body.

"Then and for the first time John Starhurst knew that his death was at hand. He made no attempt to run. Bareheaded he stood in the sun, and prayed aloud - the mysterious figure of the inevitable white-man, who with Bible, bullet, or rum bottle has confronted the amazed savage in his every stronghold. Even so stood John Starhurst in the rock fortress of the Bull of Gatoka". 2

Mauki is a revengeful savage, and the mate in 'Yah, Yah, Yah', is a more revengeful white-man, and Saxtorph in 'The Inevitable White Man', knows nothing except shooting the niggers.

1. South Sea Tales - New York - 1961 \Pyramid Books\ p.51,53 ,
2. Ibid, p.74.
James Norman Hall - and James Michener represent the modern literature of travel about the South Seas. It is a sorry spectacle indeed. The grand symbolism of Melville and lofty imagination of Conrad are long forgotten things, the waves and storms and seas cannot be fathomed anymore, and the tropics don't yield their secrets to anyone. Prose is no more graceful and supple, it is nohandled with love and joy, journalism and the democratisation of tastes has encouraged vulgarisation of literature. James Norman Hall and Michener have earned much more, and won greater fame than all the writers of such eminence as Stevenson, but their work will not have a place in the history of literature.

JAMES NORMAN HALL.

The Last Island - 1945.

The author of The Lost Island and co-author with Charles Nordhoff, of Botany Bay, The Bounty Trilogy and other books is popular but not profound, poetic but not precise, his style verges on journalism, and his prose loses in power in proportion to his love of winning the common reader. He lacks Conrad's force and power, Melville's mysticism and mystery, Stevenson's serenity, and Gauguin's sensuousness, and above all there is no spirit of adventure or discovery; yet he stands for the modern age of air travel, and jet-fighters, navies and naval bases, and he represents the age of modern civilised savages; and multi-million tourists. The pilot's eye-view of islands is different, and is important because of this very new-ness and strangeness.

"At one moment it is a faint bluish blur against the empty sea, scarcely to be distinguished from the sea itself. The
next moment, there it is beneath you, outlined in the most exquisite detail, mountains, deep shallow filled gorges, reef enclosed lagoons, with every shoal in them a splotch of vivid colour. You have not had time to prepare yourself for the incredible sight. A wafer like film of cloud hung over the very centre of this island with the peaks of the highest mountains thrust through into the clear air above them. They gave the impression of floating detached in a sea of golden light, above the greater island beneath. We passed directly above, and I had a picture of lovely beauty, of unsullied primitive wildness, that I shall treasure in my memory to the end of my days*. 1

But soon the illusion of the beauty of air travel is dispelled by the dull reality of the earth. He had gone there to make a naval base by blowing up a small island, no other than Boa Boa which figures so prominently in James Michener's book Hawaii (1960). As a result his high praise for the natives and rapturous description of the beauty of the island sounds rather ironical. He laments that modern children have no sense of wonder, and he praises the sleeping babes of the natives whose island he is going to blow up.

"None of the children stirred as I walked quietly around them. It is curious how the picture they made lingers in the memory. Perhaps it was because of the setting, so strange and new to my Northern eyes, with nothing any where to remind me of the twentieth century, I had the feeling of having strayed by accident into some last lost remnant of the Golden age that time had overlooked*. 2

His description of the natives, of the old Kanaka who is deeply read in the ancient lore of the island, the turtles and the mystery of their hatching (given by many other authors especially F.D.Ommann), and his denunciation of machinery, and modern man-sustains the interest of the reader in a book which has not much literary merit.

1. Lost Island -London-1945, p.14
2. Ibid., p.40
3. Ibid., p.126
James Michener’s book *Return to Paradise* is both a travel book and a book of fiction; he wants to have the best of both worlds, and he does have. *Hawaii* and *Rascals in Paradise* don’t qualify as travel books, *Hawaii* is a novel, giving the whole history of Polynesian people, and *Rascals in Paradise* is a collection of stories of bad white men who have done much harm to these lovely islands. The method of treatment in *Return to Paradise*, which may be styled popular and meant for the wide audience, has advantages as well as disadvantages. Polynesia loses its old untouched charm, and in his hands, it becomes (in fact the war did it) a hand-maiden of the American Navy, and the play-ground of the G.I.s, partially due to his own naval career. Imagination is no more at rest, and the minds of men he paints have new physical and moral problems. Time seems to have run its full course, and he is at liberty to talk of O’Brien, and Frisbie, Alain Gerbault, and Gauguin as if they lived before the Flood. Paradise is really dead. Stevenson wanted only to travel, he did not have any destination before him that happy loafing is ended.

“We understand the basic motivations of Europe, what takes place there may or may not please us, but at least we know how to interpret what does happen, and how to build bulwarks, against calamity. But in Asia most of what occurs we don’t even vaguely understand, and what happens in Asia is vital”.1

This is a poor object, and stated in the dullest language of journalism. He deals with Polynesia, Melanesia, and even New Zealand and Australia. Somehow his mind reacts in a self-contradictory manner - the islands are ugly and foul places and yet sweet and paradisal in another chapter.

"They are dreadful places really. They house disease you have never heard of. They are lonely and desolate. If the white-men who live there told the truth they would admit the islands are hellish. I have watched such men go crazy. What is worse, I have seen them die on their feet. There is not one who would not leave if he had the money, and the chance." 1

"You watch, in the darkness and realise with a shock that you have seen all this before. But where? Then you remember, Gauguin. He saw these massive forms, this sombre beauty, the mysteriousness of this race. There is no single way to prepare yourself for Polynesia comparable to memorising Gauguin. In Tahiti today, on this hot Christmas you will see every colour he used, every model he studied." 2

The story of Dean Friere, the novelist dying at Tongareva, 3 the story of Batters—by all whose invitees to a feast are dead, 4 and the assertion that every one who write about Tahiti from Pierre Loti to Frederick O'Brien is a liar—make a dismal effect. He is truly a popular writer, and he never has the courage to tell the truth and nothing but the truth. On page 62 he condemn the stupid and ferocious administrative machine, the reign of mediocrity, the sailors who debauch the girls, the tourists who bring only the gospel of gold. And in the same breath he defends the Americans who blew up the island of Bora Bora, and also sired a large number of fair-haired babies.

In the end he becomes inspired, and in a way he compensates for unpleasant passages in the rest of the book.

"The tropics taught me something almost every day .... Here nature is so awesome that it compels attention. Other things being equal man lives most keenly who lives in closest harmony with nature. To be wholly alive a man must know storms, he must feel the ocean as his home or the air as his habitation. He must smell the smells of the earth, and hear the sounds of living things, and taste the rich abundance of the soil and the sea." 5

2.  Ibid., p. 53.
4.  Ibid., p. 18.
5.  Ibid., p. 431.
CHAPTER IX

The Modern Literature of Travel About Latin America.

"What made the change? The Hills and Towers, Stand otherwise than they should stand, And without fear the lawless roads, Ran wrong through all the land". (Edwin Muir)

Latin America is much more interesting and fascinating than Africa, and yet it is disappointing that many good books have not been written about this land; her grand scenes of nature - seen only by W.H. Hudson with the poetic eye, her fiery characters - who live in the pages of Conrad, her history and politics - a theme that only Lord Bryce handles successfully and her natural science wonders - never again well treated since W.H. Bates went there a century back - have not attracted many gifted chroniclers. The reasons for this phenomena of literary vacuum must be political, distances are another factor; language may be another hurdle. Only in the thirties eminent literary figures - Huxley, Graham Greene, Waugh and Peter Fleming visited these lands with the object of writing literary travel books, but somehow their attitude is excessively patronising, or openly derisive; sympathy and understanding would have been the saving grace of their books.

There is a scarcity of literary travel books not only in English, but even in other languages, even Portuguese and Spanish books are written by specialists dealing with technical problems of their subjects; none of them travelled like Stevenson or W.H. Hudson. Even Burton, that Knight-errant of travel complained of this fact in 1869.

"Brazilian authors have also been mostly specialists, each bound to his specific end. Then the Annalists of the Jesuits and the Franciscans had their day, the old travellers preceding the Savans who were charged with the ......

of explorers pure and simple, who if they wrote at all wrote only Roteiros or Itineraries. Among the Portuguese may be mentioned the celebrated naturalist Alexander Rodrigues Ferreira sent in 1785-86 on a scientific expedition to the River of the Amazons, the active and intrepid, Paulista, Dr. de Lacerda (1790) who by the way, was forbidden to use instruments by a certain Dr. Bernardo José de Lorena, Captain General of the province of São Paulo - a veritable Sultan of the Nadi - and who died at the capital of the African Cazembe, was a mathematician and astronomer. Dr. José Vieira Conto (1800-01) of Tejuco, now Diamantina, was a mineralogist; so was the Peter Patras, the Venerable José Bonifácio, de Andrade e Silva, of Santos (1820). Major Contingho, the experienced Amazonian traveller is an officer of engineers.1

Things do not look much better even after all that has been written in the recent years; still Latin America is waiting for a Stevenson to travel thither with another Modestine. It is a pity that men like Somerset Maugham who love Spain do not love the Spanish lands; atleast it is not evident from their books - Lord Bryce by some strange method of his own is the only modern traveller who may be supposed to be well-versed in the mysteries of South American soul; where others err he goes straight to the core of the problem and his descriptions of natural scenes are excellent. Another political figure - President Theodore Roosevelt is not at all a brilliant writer, he neither goes deep nor is sweet as the gifted English political thinker. Huxley Graham Greene, Waugh, and even Peter Fleming breathe the same spirit of intellectual snobbery. Lucas Bridge's intimate account of his family history and the story of their great Saga of the colonisation of Terra del Fuego is probably the most charming book on the subject. When all is said and considered it must be conceded that W.H. Hudson alone is a great traveller - though he never travelled, he alone has a permanent place in the history of literature and English prose style.


- London - 1869 > B.1, V.1.
120. JAMES BRYCE - SOUTH AMERICA - 1912.

The Empire absorbed so much interest and demanded so much time that British statesmen had little or no time for leisurely political suicide of other countries, their problems and their ways of life. The Empire was an anaconda that sucked all that was best in English cultural and intellectual life; the best men were handling the backward races, and were dying violent and heroic deaths in distant lands. It is a miracle that still England produced political thinkers; but it must be conceded that the palm of political thought contest, must go to men without homes, without nations, and without empires. With due consideration of all difference of approach Karl Marx, Engels, and others were certainly far greater political giants than Mill or Benham. Nations that act have little energy for thought; but they have a receptive susceptibility towards the contagious influence and example of other nations. That in a way makes Bryce a unique figure, a profound and astute judge of affairs, and a shrewd reader of human nature.

Bryce is a guardian of democracy, a lover of the people, a preserver of morals, and a gentle inquisitor of corruption and the corrupt; he is never a dull theorist, his politics has life, more life than many travel books exhibit. He observes Latin America like a child living his dreams, a romantic feeling delighted at the sight of rivers, mountains and plains; he is a poet who sings of the joys of existence in organised societies, and he is a wise physician who knows that it "ails here and nowhere else". He is never oratorical like Burke, his words though simple have genuine power and force of persuasion, everything is orderly. He is a coiner
of phrases, many of his passages are often quoted, he in a few words, clearly and forcefully puts the very core of the problem; his praise is often elevated, but never pompous. His language rises to beauty and charm, with the natural loftiness of his mind he calls up wide prospects, and the breadth of his outlook is simply amazing.

Bryce is a fine stylist, and this style is at its best when he is describing nature, life for him is not such a dull affair as Das Kapital would make it, and he colours his politics with the shimmering beauty of the rain-drenched rainbow coloured flowers of the Panama, and other Latin American lands. The dreary Andes have a beauty of their own. He communicates with nature, not because he cannot understand the people or their language, he knows them better than they know themselves. Nature here is a fine setting for the political drama. Every scene shuts out one political scene, and opens before us the glorious world of nature, it is a journey from one Forest island, to another, men are truly all marooned, on an island. A comparison of the Suez and the Panama makes this point clear.

"At Suez the passage from sea to sea is through a dreary and monotonous waste of shifting sand, and barren clay. Here one is for a few hours in the centre of a verdant continent, floating on smooth waters, shut off from the sight of the ocean behind, and the ocean before, a short sweet present of tranquillity between a stormy past and a stormy future".

His love of culture has something of Greek dignity in it, thus it is that the Greek poets and artists delighted in correct and exact description of sights without indulging in their own emotional moods, joys and sorrows, recalled by the ministry of nature.

"What redeems the scenery of the high Andes is the richness and delicacy of colours which the brilliant desert light gives to distant objects. A black peak becomes deep purple, a slope of dry, grey earth takes a tender lilac, and evening as it falls transfigures the stones that strew the sides of a valley with a soft glow. The snow sparkles and glitters at moonday and flushes in the sunset with a radiance unknown to our climates. This is what replaces for these regions the dearth of the thick woods and the marshy pools of New England, of the deep grassed river meadows of France. 1

But he has much the same approach and the same spirit which Toynbee has displayed in the modern times in his book 'East to West', he is a great scholar and when left alone he calls to life the ghosts of the past, thus it is a journey both through time and space. His style when describing the ancient buried cities takes on a pathetic beauty, a loneliness of death, a charm that ruined places possess.

"Cuzco belongs to that class of historic cities which have once been capitals of Kingdoms, and retain traces of their ancient glory, a class which includes Moscow and Kraken, Thromdjem and Upsala, Dublin and Edinburgh and Winchester, a class from which Imperial Delhi has just now emerged to recover its former rank. And Cuzco was the capital of an empire vaster than was ruled from any of those famous seats of power, the centre of a religion and a dominion which stretched southward from the Equator for two thousand miles, and embraced nearly all that there was of whatever approached civilisation in the South American continent. 2

Brice is not a traveller in little things like W.H. Hudson, he is a traveller in big things, he watches lands and peoples from a certain heights, and never comes down to little personal likes and dislikes, or the way-side comforts and discomforts. He is never aggressive like Carlyle, but there is never any doubt even when he talks most humbly that he is a chief, a leader of thinkers, a seeker of Commandments, a man whose gentle voice echoes round the whole globe. He never wishes to occupy a high place in the moral history of mankind, but he always stands on a pedestal, he is an apostle of common sense, tolerance, wisdom and creative conservatism.

1. South America -London-1912, p.274
2. Ibid, p.95
Caspar Whitney, the North American author, still thinks and writes in the style and spirit of the explorers and desperados of the bygone days, they had an eye for the new and the unexplored, the hard and the uncomfortable, and their stylish beauty if any was suffocated by the sheer burden of existence in the inclement jungles, and unfriendly aborigine lands; in those days even to return alive was a great achievement, these trail blazers paved the way for modern literary travellers. It appears that South America has yet to wait for a real narrator of the story of her soul. Casper Whitney tells the tale of the surface of that land only, and that too in an insipid and dull note-book style. It is an account of five separate over land and river expeditions into South America, beginning in 1902. These journeys were largely made by canoe, and chiefly on streams more or less connected; that explains the title - The Flowing Road. The book gives authentic information about the courses of many rivers, but the land on the whole makes a dismal effect. There is nothing to relieve the ugly and untidy impression of all towns and hamlets on the way; it is a Godforsaken land peopled by lazy men with no spirit of decent citizenship. His bitterness is not forcefully voiced because he did not always expect anything better.

"When you have pictured a Mecca it is not easy to be reconciled to a Gehenna. And as I looked upon the bedraggled settlement we had now come to, I could scarce believe it to be the San Carlos to which my eyes for so long had been directed. Standing on a clear comparatively high bank, the settlement had appeared quite imposing from the river, but after we landed it developed into a woebegone collection of houses squatting dejectedly around a large flag staff bearing plaza, grass grown and equally neglected."
Theodore Roosevelt was an incorrigible traveller and tourist, an indefatigable trekker, but a poor travel writer. His politics was that of a man of action and hard-headed commonsense, but he lacked the fine gifts necessary for literary work. Anyway, Through the Brazilian Wilderness is an account of a scientific expedition, it shows the versatility of this renowned statesman who could dabble in every subject under the sun. Theodore Roosevelt was never a stylist, he had no love of words, or phrases, and he could not properly construct a well-balanced sentence, every where he seems to judge prose by the information it supplies, that is the way in which he looks at the fine work done by T.H. Hudson.

"Hudson was a capital observer and writer when he dealt with the ordinary birds, and mammals of the well-settled districts near Buenos Aires, and at the mouth of the Rio Negro, but he knew nothing of the wilderness, this is no reflection on him, his books are great favourites of mine, and are to a large degree models of what such books should be, only I wish there were hundreds of such writers and observers who would give me similar books of all parts of America". 1

Through the Brazilian Wilderness is an account of an expedicao scientifica concerned primarily with mammalogy and ornithology; he had an excellent opportunity for the study of flora and fauna, but it was never properly utilised. The book is important only because it throws light on a great American. 2

1. A. H. Hudson - (1841 - 1922)
1. Far Away and Long Ago - 1918.
4. Idle Days in Patagonia - 1893, Green Mansions - 1904

To look at Hudson as one of the figures in an historical panorama is to miss both the man and the writer. He was too individualistic to commit himself to any streams of tendency. His writings illustrate little more than himself which the readers find a continent of sufficiently varied landscape. He is not a

1. Through the Brazilian Wilderness - London - 1914, pp.81-82.
traveller but naturalist, it is the study of nature, romantic, mystic and unusual that gives his books a new charm and unearthly beauty. In his nearness to and oneness with nature, resulting from his mystical faculty, and in the quick response of the organism to every outward change, he is like the animals. Whatever is rare, or strange, or outside of nature's usual order and opposed to experience, affects him powerfully, and excites the sense of mystery. The main thing was the eternal and amazing mystery of life itself, it is the very light of his books, it shines through everything.

"To be specific there are three W. H. Hudsons present and active in his books, and they may be clumsily denominated as the field naturalist pure and simple, the human naturalist and the supernaturalist". 1

He looks at toads and worms and birds and spiders, and finds that the proper study of mankind is spiders. He covers all these creatures with the sunny light of human imagination, his human beings are never normal, only W. H. Davies could look at humanity in that way, and his supernatural creatures like Rima in Green Mansions are like Ariel in Shakespeare. It is a marvellous world that he creates with his lucid, lucent, clear and simple style; we are in a small paradise of his creation. His fine style and the heightened moments go together. Conrad remarks that Hudson writes just as the grass grows; it has a grassy green-ness which will last through all the seasons.

Whitehead said "Nature gets credit which in truth should be reserved for ourselves, the rose for its scent, the nightingale for its song, the sun for its radiance. The poets are entirely mistaken. They should address their lyrics to themselves and should turn them into odes of self congratulation on the excellence of the human mind. Nature is a dull affair, soundless, scentless, colourless, merely the hurrying of material endlessly and meaninglessly". 2

And that means even greater glory for W. H. Hudson. That explains why there are many picturesque toographers and guides

1. Walter de la Mare - Pleasures and Speculations - London - Faber and Faber, p.55.
to famous places, but discoverers and born naturalists, like W.H. Hudson, able to make a country new and wonderful even to the people who have lived in it all their lives are few at the best of times.

"His feeling for them was that of a country-man who was yet, a far traveller, a great naturalist, an artist in wild life. To him any scene where there was room, open sky and plenty of wing space, was heaven enough, though to others it seemed treeless and uninviting. He took a place like Winterbourne Bishop - the village without any ivied relic or new hotel to attract the tourist, and made it into the mirror of that place memory which haunts us like a repeated dream. He could take a tree, as in il Ombu, and make it reveal life upon life, generation after generation in the story it tells. The result is only attained by an uncommon conjunction of the right subject, and the fit man to deal with it".

Hudson is the rarest spirit among the modern writers, and has the clearest gift of conveying the nature of that spirit. He is a little new world to his readers, he is a prophet in that his voice is prophetic.

"Without apparent effort he takes you with him into a rare-free natural world, and always you are refreshed, stimulated, enlarged by going there. This spoilt unity with nature pervades all his writings, they are remote from the fret and dust and pettiness of town life, they are large, direct free. It is not quite simplicity for the mind of this writer is subtle and fastidious, sensitive to each emotion of natural and human life, but his sensitiveness is somehow different from, almost inimical to that of us others who sit in-doors and dip our pens in shades of feelings".

"He was at any rate in England, a writers' writer. For as a writer he was a magician. He used such simple means to give such gorgeous illusions. It was that that made him the great imaginative writer that he was".

Far Away and Long Ago (1918).

It is a book of recollections and memories of early days in South America, the book was written during an illness of six weeks; it explains many things and yet much is concealed. These are the reflections of an old-man nearing eighty, but he does not in any way embellish or retouch what he perceived then, the boy, the gifted unusual boy, of the fifties
clearly revealed in these pages, it is as good as Wordsworth's Tintern Abbey and other poems where he confesses his early love of nature; it is a spiritual biography of a simple sensitive heart. His animism, his love of nature, and his gloomy views about life and death are most naturally and vividly presented in these pages. Frank Swinnerton gave the view that this autobiography was influenced by Aksakoff's *History of My Childhood.* Whatever similarity may be there must be accidental; such an original writer could not be supposed to imitate while describing his own life; and as he was nearing the sunset of his life he had no need of making another man's life - the pattern of his own life-sketch. This much must be conceded that he had some unhappy experiences in the years between 15 and 29, and it is these that he has concealed. These years he wishes to be traced from his books.

"When my friends have asked me in recent years why I did not write a history of my early life on the pampas, my answer was that I had already told all that was worth telling in these books (the Naturalist in La Plata, Birds and men, Adventures among birds), and I really believed it was so, for when a person endeavours to recall his early life in its entirety he finds it is not possible; he is like one who ascends a hill to survey the prospect before him on a day of heavy cloud, and shadow, who sees at a distance, now here now there some feature in the landscape - hill or wood, or tower or spire-touched and made conspicuous by a transitory sun-beam while all else remains in obscurity." 2

It is a beautiful account of the Ombu trees near the house, the plantation full of trees, and birds and the simple scenery of the plain and the beauty of the birds which he admired and which formed such a large part of his later literary work.

"I was amazed and enchanted at the sight, and my delight was intensified when the leading bird stood still, and raising his head and long-neck aloft, opened and shook his wings. For wings when open were of a glorious crimson colour and the bird was to me most angel like creature on the earth." 3

3. Ibid., p.67.
The birds for him even then, were symbols of freedom, and spiritual bliss like Shelley's Skylark.

"If I could only get off the ground like that heavy bird and rise as high, then the blue air would make me as buoyant, and let me float all day without pain or effort like a bird. This desire has continued with me through my life, yet I have never wished to fly in a balloon or air-ship since I should then be tied to a machine, and have no will or soul of my own. The desire has only been gratified a very few times in that kind of dream called levitation when one rises and floats above the earth without effort, and is like a balloon of thistle down carried by the wind".1

But he was even as a boy thinking of the problem of death. Life and death are the two underlying themes of all his stories, they run together and rarely become merged in spite of all his mystic beliefs.2 The book also contains his clear and definite views on animism.3

"And my animism I don't mean the theory of a soul in nature, but the tendency or impulse or instinct in which all myth originates toanimate all things; the projection of ourselves with nature, the sense and apprehension of an intelligence like our own but more powerful in all visible things. It persists and lives in many of us, I imagine, more than we like to think, or more than we know, especially in those born and bred amidst rural surroundings, where there are hills and woods and rocks and streams and water-falls - these being the conditions which are most favourable to it, the scenes which have inherited associations for us, as Herbert Spencer has said".4

The book cannot be considered a great book of travel in spite of all the importance given to it. The truth is that he was really a traveller in little things5. It is in these little essays written on the simple familiar scenes seen during his walks, that show his great literary gifts. The Commercial traveller whom he meets in an inn gives the right judgement.

"I perceive that you know a good deal more about the matter than I do, and I will tell you why you know more. You are a traveller in little things - in something very small which takes you into the villages and hamlets where you meet and converse with small farmers, in-keepers, labourers and their wives, with other persons who live on the land".5

2. Ibid., p.232, 233.
3. Ibid., p.194-203.
4. Ibid., p.194.
The Romances which he wrote in his early period have a curiously artificial quality at times, and are laboured by contrast with the essays. Here he is queerly primitive, emotional, passionate cynical, pessimistic and self-absorbed. The erotic element does not ring true. The characters are taken from his real experiences during his travels, it is a creation of fantasy, it is a strange and haunting world of imagination.

The essay was a perfect medium for his rich and observant mind, the essays contain the clearest impression of his outlook, his finest conceptions, and the most sustained inspiration. They are spacious balanced and serene, rich in imagination and fertile in ideas. Their emotional range is wide, and the moments of intensity are far more effective by contrast with their serene background of observation and description. But the trouble is that with the exception of three the essays are set in England — and even these essays: *The Purple Land that England Lost - A Naturalist in La Plata-Idle Days in Patagonia*, cannot be strictly considered books of travel — though they have great beauty of style which all travel books should have.


The book has already been discussed along with the other books of the author concerning his travels in Europe. The author who finds peasant Russia a lovely romantic world, has not much to admire in South America. It is a question that should be made a subject of a psychological study; there are regions which certain minds — literary minds, find most suitable as hunting grounds for their imagination. Firstly Stephen Graham never enters real South America, and secondly he is not satisfied with trees and forests and wild places; men and women, cultured and civilised, though extremely poor must be there to stir his imagination. He
presents a good contrast with V.H. Hudson. Hudson is a homeless wanderer of hills and dales, and a brother to the toad and the spider though he lived in London for forty years; Stephen Graham is a city-man: a lover of civilized ways of life - though he rarely stopped wandering on the lonely roads. Literature of travel has its mysteries and surprises.

125. Aldous Huxley - Beyond the Mexique Bay - 1934.

Aldous Huxley represents the age of unrest in English literature, an intellectual dis-satisfaction which has spiritual problems at the back of it, in his own satirical way he seems to be seeking new values and philosophical consolations. Beyond the Mexique Bay represents only the second stage of his career when from his primitivism, he turned to intellectualism. In the Jesting Pilate he is bitterly satirical, everything offends him, he has little to admire in the whole oriental system of thought, and by the time he journeys beyond Mexique Bay - he is a little softened, and the book makes a better reading. Moreover there is greater unity of interest, he does not move over a wide range, Mexico and the surrounding areas including the West Indies from the subject of this study.

The satirical quality of this book is a welcome change; Latin America deserves it, Don Quixote is still marching in that land with or without Sancho Panza, and they still fight their imaginary battles, revolutions come like an epidemic, but little blood is shed, and yet he is kind to the human heart and has sympathy for the poor and the miserable.

"Our road wound across vast hills, bare and utterly dry, the grandiose emblems of a perfect hopelessness. A magnificent landscape but one looks at it with a sinking of the heart; there is something profoundly horrifying in this immense indefinite
But this sad and gloomy picture of life is redeemed by his brilliant humour, he really laughs, he does not merely knock at all things Mexican.

"The six Miss Atlas were all of this type. Their beauty would have won all the prizes at any cattle-show. Such thickness of beef".2

There is a man in business as a hotel-keeper, draper, and undertaker, he remarks: "I feed them, I clothe them, and I bury them".3

Huxley is rarely romantic in his appreciation of literature and art, he mostly looks to the social and cultural background of every artistic creation: he finds Maya decoration exhilarating; but he pays a full throated homage to Antigua.

"To those who like myself have been de-conditioned or who have never undergone the Ruskinian training, Antigua must seem one of the most romantic towns in the world. I will not pretend that it contains any great master-pieces of architecture, that would be absurd, there is nothing grand at Antigua, but there is much that is charming, much that is surprising and queer, much indeed everything that is picturesque and romantic in the most extravagantly eighteenth century style".5

His philosophic and sociological views peep out often at the wrong time and unnecessarily; all that he has to say about time is really absorbing and interesting6, it is a simple and clear presentation of the views about Time that were quite popularly discussed by the writers in the early thirties; Wells, Priestley, and others were experimenting with time, even in their novels and plays. The intellectual element in this book adds to its force and power; his style is clear and razor sharp; he hits and kicks and smiles quite

2. Ibid., p. 200.
3. Ibid., p. 12.
4. Ibid., p. 40.
5. Ibid., p. 91.
6. Ibid., p.150-156.
methodically. He never loses sight of his main theme, slowly
by steps big and small, by quick hits and blows he hacks his
way triumphantly. His mysticism never mystifies anything; like
Voltaire he kills with clarity, and hits with his humour, his
own physical limitations, he may be unaware of it, are responsible
for what his travel books lack; nature is never presented as scenes,
colours and majestic forms; his terribly myopic eyes make it a dull
drab world, mahogany only reminds him of human habits, and fur-
niture fashions. A traveller with a weak eye-sight is only
half a traveller, that is why he takes refuge in thought and
discussion. His style is coloured with intellectualism; his
prose has neither the warmth of emotional richness, nor the
beauty of poetic rhythm and construction.

126. Evelyn Waugh (1903 - ) Ninety Two Days - ( A Journey to
Brazil-1932) (Then the Going was Good).

Ninety Two Days is probably the finest book written by
Evelyn Waugh; the Labels (1929) shows the happy exalted mood
of a young man newly let loose in the world; this pleasure cruise
is certainly a pleasant affair, his style is gentle and simple,
but it lacks that force and ferocity, and his piercing spirit of
satire which we find in his journey to Brazil. The Remote People-
1930, is the work of a man dis-illusioned. Abyssinia holds no
attractions for him, it was never the proper subject for this
highly cultured soul and his Waugh in Abyssinia makes no secret
of this disgust; the treatment is cruel and callous and there
is nothing to redeem it. Thus in a way Ninety Two Days is the
only properly balanced book, scenes of nature, interesting
characters, information and general details of good and bad things—all have a place in it, and his treatment of all this

2. Ibid. p.29.
variety of life is most satisfactory.

"The route of Remote People was easy going, the Ninety Two days, was more arduous. We have most of us marched and made camp since then, gone angry and thirsty, lived where pistols are flourished and fired. At that time it seemed an ordeal an invitation to manhood.1

Thus the book has something of the spirit of Burton and Doughty, whom he aspires to copy, and whom he commands to the coming generations as models for travellers. This book is beautiful because the painful and arduous journey has something of earthy life, and risky adventurousness. The men move in an uncivilised world, and the solitude of the lonely forest gives them some new importance; he wants to move on the border line of civilisation. Every visit to these original habitats of man gives him back his primitive strength, and a freshness that strengthens culture and civilisation which would otherwise wither away and die of anaemic existence.

"For myself and many better than me there is fascination in distant and barbarous places, and particularly in the border lands of conflicting cultures and states of development, where ideas uprooted from their traditions, become oddly changed in transplantation. It is there that I find the experiences vivid enough to demand translation into literary form". 2

Wild nature with all its grandeur and beauty finds fine description in this book, and these scenes evoke the smells and scents, odours and colours of that land with all the force and charm of poetry. He is never romantic like Hudson, never philosophic like Thoreau, never rhetorical or sentimental, his style has little scope for dreamy charm of Stephen Graham, and yet the simple unembellished description has a vivid quality.

1. When the Going was Good -Penguin London-1959, p.8
2. Ibid.p.204
"The ride remains one of the most vivid memories of the cattle trail, checked and annoyed as I was, the splendour of the evening compensated for every thing. Out on the Savannah there is no twilight, the sun goes down blazing on the horizon, affording five or ten minutes of gold crimson glory, then darkness. In the forest the night opened slowly like a yawn. The colours gradually deepened, the greens pure and intense to the point of saturation, the tree trunks and the bare earth glowing brown, the half shades the broken and refracted fragments of light, all disappeared and left only fathomless depths of pure colour. Then dusk spread, distances became in calculable and obstacles detached themselves unexpectedly and came suddenly near, and while it was almost night in the trail the tops of the trees were still ablaze with sunlight, till eventually they too darkened, and then flowers were lost". 1

Nature there is not always kind, it is a cruel force of fate killing living creatures in heaps, and Melville would have found here the vulturism of the forest, but Evelyn Waugh never overdoes it. 2

The book abounds in characters sketched with the skill and ease of Dickens; they have something in common with Barkis and Sam, and even Micawber, and there is something of the type of history and subjects taught in Alice in Wonderland. Yetto is a life size sketch of a lovable negro, he has weaknesses common to all mankind, but he has good points of his own.

"He was a large middle aged black of unusual ugliness. He was comic; huge feet and hands, huge mouth, and an absurd little Hitler moustache". 3

He is a boastful man who bets that he can carry hundred pounds for fifty miles, he is proud of having shaken hands; with the Prince of Wales when he visited George town, he formed one of the police guard of honour. He has had the distinction of being robbed of 20 dollars by one black man named Adams. He has been married, but has not liked it. He has seen the George town riots. But the summit of his experience has been a lucky strike as a pork knocker;

1. When the Going was Good -Penguin Books-London-1955
3. Ibid.p.219.
he comes back to George town with 800 dollars and spends the amount in six weeks.

"Why chief, we took an automobile, and drove round and round the town with three girls, and we give them gold bangles and went to all the best rum shops, and hotels. But we didn't drink no rum, no chief, nor beer either. It was gin and whisky all de time. We didn't get no sleep for days, driving round all night with the girls". 1

Now that he is old he is much wiser, if he again gets an equal amount of money he would spend it all on himself, he would again invite girls but give them nothing. He is a romantic old fool, and remembers Mrs. Mc Dougall who with her husband travelled this way attended by Yetto, yet her memory is still fresh in his old lecherous heart.

"Dis is where Mrs. Mc Dougall, had a bath ......Yetto has not missed a detail of her habits or idiosyncrasies, Mrs. Mc Dougall had a great fancy for me. Her took my snap shot". 2

Mr. Christie is somewhat like Miss Betsy Trotwood crazy friend who is suffering from the head of Charles I. He knows the character of his visitors by the visions he has of them 3. Mr. Bain the Administrator, Father Mather, the kind priest of St. Ignatius, Mr. Steingler, the homeless German at Boa Vista, Mr. Yerwood the black rancher, are some of the other memorable characters described with great power and depth. The type of history which Mr. Yerwood is taught by Mr. Bain, is a specimen of colonial learning, it is a piece of burlesque, a rare bit of finest humour.

"Then there was Napoleon. He was only a little corporal, but he divorced his wife and married the daughter of an Emperor. Mark my words, Mr. Yerwood all dose Bolshevists will be doing that soon". 4

Waugh does not indulge in useless philosophising, and he is rarely bitter. His language has a crispness and a neatness, and his sentences have a sparkling force, he has certainly contributed a fine book to the literature of travel.

1. When the Going was Good-Penguin Books-London-1955 p.134
2. Ibid p.325
3. Ibid p.221
Whatever the critics may say 'The Lawless Roads' inspite of its frankly propagandist object is a true and deep picture of the Mexico that he saw in the late thirties. The spiritual vacancy of that land, pain and piety of the peasants, the despairing atmosphere of cities and towns and deserted churches, the cruel love of ugliness, and that of frustration and failure, the beauty of poverty and ignorant faith and all round anonymity of life - are made to live before our mind's eye, and the spirit of the land is presented truly and authentically. If there is any propaganda it comes in small bits after long chapters of fine and beautiful delineation of life, inner and outer. His fascination with failure, his obsession with seediness and sin - are given a full play in these pages; he digs slowly and slowly under the unconscious self of mankind, and reveals what blundering fools they are.

The beauty of nature that he likes - like that in Egdon Heath of Hardy - is a prickly barren waterless beauty of cacti; Cactus stands for the whole spirit of Mexico.

"The cacti has no beauty - they were like some simple shorthand sign for such words as barrenness, and draught you felt they were less the product than the cause of this dryness, that they had absorbed all water there was in the land, and held it, as camels do, in their green aged tubular bellies. Sometimes they flowered at the tip like a glowing Cigar end, but they had no more beauty even then, an unhealthy pink, like the icing in cheap pastry cooks, the kind of sugar cake you leave upon the plate". 1

His catholicism is not a positive cheerful, and jolly optimism as that of G. K. Chesterton, it is only a religious bent of mind which gives a spiritual flavour to his otherwise morbidly gloomy view of life.

Even in this book written about the Catholic problem in Mexico — it is the religious situation and not religion which interests him. And what he finds in that much troubled world of clerical conflict is only the outward reality — the religious life of the poor Indian which border on black magic. That he gives it a certain mystic air is mostly due to his style and not his faith; that is the general vein of his thoughts, and is not anything new.

"And then you go into the cathedral for Mass — the peasants kneel in their blue dungarees, and hold out their arms, minute after minute in the attitude of crucifixion, an old woman struggles on her knees up the stone floor towards the altar; another lies full length with her fore-head on the stones. A long days work is behind, but the mortification goes on. This is the atmosphere of the stigmata and you realise suddenly that perhaps this is the population of heaven — these aged painful and ignorant faces; they are human goodness". 1

He understands the true character of the poor Indian.

"And there was an even older world beyond the ridge, the ground sloped up again to where a group of tall black crosses stood at all angles like wind blown trees against the blackened sky. This was the Indian religion — a dark tormented magic cult. The old ladies might swing back and forth in the rocking chairs of villaharmoza, the Catholics might be dying out like dogs, but here in the mountainous, strange world of Father Las Casas Christianity went on its own frightening way. Magic, yes, but we are too apt to minimise the magicelement in Christianity". 2

His love of ugliness is fully satisfied in this ugly land 3, and he thinks of the ugliness that he has seen in England 4 but there are pure spots of land here and there which in a way save the picture from utter gloom; Peubla is a city with wounded beauty, and also a French grace 5, and they have sight of paradise when they see the house of the German with his beautiful daughter. 6

3. Ibid., p.29.
4. Ibid., p.41.
5. Ibid., p.257.
6. Ibid., p.178.
Greene is certainly a great stylist, the sleepy sweetness of his sentences, the charming vagueness of what he says, the spiritual colouring of expression, and the quaint similes make him a fine writer of travel. It is a pity that he did not devote more time to travel books.

128. Peter Filming (1907) Brazilian Adventure - 1933.

"It had been great fun, and very funny. Reality is a commodity hard to come by, and when found not always easily recognisable. One gropes for it through a fog of pre-conceptions, misled by other people's labels, the highest authorities have perhaps pondered over the subject, too deeply to be of service here". 1

The above conclusion gives a true judgement of the spirit of this book, adventurous, funny, satiric, comic, it successfully debunks much sentimental rubbish about distant lands, the terror of Indians, and wild animals; he does not spare even the travellers who behave in the guide books spirit. The author is a generous hearted, truth-loving, well-informed, jolly traveller and explorer, and he look at life in a sunny spirit. He does not have Huxley's intellectuality, and love of philosophy, he has not the knack of Evelyn Waugh to see through men, and read their character; his love of nature is just elementary, and his style is that of a good weekly magazine. All the same his books are popular and readable. Humour, satire, an wit-make it a very lively account; his humour is the broad humour of sailors, seamen, and traveller, it is not refined soft humour of London literary circles; it is the exaggerated fun born of open air and sunlight. The Brazilian Navy gets a hit below the belt.

"And now we were almost alongside, we had edged our way round two or three warships, the nucleus of the Brazilian Navy. It is so long since these craft left their moorings that they are said not to be afloat at all, but fast aground on the accumulation of their daily refuse". 2

2. Ibid., p.55.
And the revolutions in Brazil get another well-aimed hit.

"They were dull days. I suppose one's first revolution like one's first experience of anything to which one brings preconceptions coloured by literature and the drama - is always rather disappointing. From the point of view of local colour, first of the five was easily the best, on that day there were at least to be observed lorry loads of citizens clearly in a state of excitement, who careered through the streets at eight or ten miles an hour, shouting ..............................
There was also best of all, a real machine gun". 1

The tourists are not spared by him, he condemns all travellers.2

There are many well-known frauds which he tears to pieces in a few sentences, that way it is the most veracious account of Brazil.

"But the alligator, at any rate, the alligator of Central Brazil is a fraud. For two months we saw him every day, we slept within reach of him, we swam in his water. He was content to look malignant and live on his reputation. If he is not a fool and a coward, he might just as well be, so assiduously hidden are his cunning and his courage. I am sorry to expose him, because such frauds, colour life and do no harm".3

The journey into the interior is sufficiently hard and risky, but he understates the dangers which they have to face on the way. In fact he complains that there is no more scope for adventure.4 He does not describe beautiful scenes of nature; nature, and that includes wild men, has to be conquered, but they retire after seeing the smoke signal raised by the Indians. He does not describe the character of individuals, but of the Brazilian people as a whole, their procrastination5, their bluff (particularly that of Major Pingle) and the terrible poverty of the people all along the banks of river Para - give a picture of life which is essentially true.

"This book is all truth and no facts. It is probably the most veracious travel book ever written, and it is certainly the least instructive".6

1. Brazilian Adventure - London - 1956 - p.78
2. Ibid.,p.122.
3. Ibid.,p.152.
4. Ibid.,p.33-33.
5. Ibid.,p.54.
6. Ibid.,p.140.
The book has the heat and brightness of the tropics, not only in the scenes and sights, but also in the souls of men that this book depicts. The realistic colouring of the book, its smells and odours and flavours, colours, shadows, and glooms are truly transcribed from life. He is out to see how the life in the wide world influences him, and he comes back with impressions of beauty and ugliness, trash and rotten-ness; he looks at life like a journalist sending reports and he misses nothing that may have sensational value. He has no poetry, and little poetic imagination except when he directly describes nature, but that he does very rarely, he is an adept in understanding natural life, he is no imitator of Bryce; he is no mystic following in the wake of W. H. Hudson, and does not study characters of an original type like Evelyn Waugh. The world that he knows intimately is that of sailors and wandering homeless sightseers, it is a world situated just on the brink of 'hotel-dom', it is a neighbour to the sea port swindlers and night club-lechers, he is interested in the philandering consuls and broken marriages and other scandals. His style is journalistic, he writes without much care for balance or rhythm, there is a certain force that saves it from becoming dull and boring. Beauty of nature moves him deeply, but he is too busy otherwise to give it the proper attention.

"Trinidad - save the mark - is marred by no such vulgarity. And for me it will always remain as the last place in the tropics where colour did not hurt. For one whole luscious day - and I am not ordinarily a gushing person - I wallowed in the colours of the tropical paradise, the gold Saman tree, large as a royal oak, with flaming candelabra on the tip of every branch. Splashes in the green jungle of mountain-rose. The riot of scarlet, purple, orange, and rose, bougainvilla that drapes every yellow wall on the outskirts of Port of Spain. Seen against the pale blues of Trinidad's jungle hills, these colours are intoxicating."3

1. Transgressor In the Tropics - London - 1937 p.150
2. Ibid., p.152
3. Ibid., p. 39
Marriage and procreation are the two main interests of the people, and he has no respect for the way they choose, mates or bear children even in the old age. He is a cynic with no sentimental romanticism, and love and marriage get a good hit or two.

"I could look through the partition to where a peacock parade was taking place in the Lobby. With the rain spattering the mud, and bowing the scarlet poinsettias, I watched this promenade inside the hotel of well-dressed young girls, and men in smart white - quite consciously stalking each other. It was like the beginning of a cock fight."

The shameful way in which old couples go on bearing children becomes the object of his satire. The journey ends in Chile. The book has much variety, and width of subjects, but judged as literature it is only a book of mediocre importance.


"And ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem and unto the uttermost part of the earth."

It is a unique book, a great story that shall live in history, the history of a brave family that settled in Terra del Fuego, and waged an incessant war with nature. It is a simple book without any pretence as regards style; he never hesitates in forming his simple sentences or choosing his phrases, and yet it is a saga, a great story of man's bravery, a lovely study of the Terradel Fuego Indians, and the training of young men in the surroundings of nature, 'the stars of mid-night, and the mute insensate things, the murmuring sound of rivulets dancing their way-ward round, the rocks and plains' - all make their blissful influence on these children of Ushuaia - the most southerly settlement in the world. The loyalty and love of the family, their common joys and sorrows, their tears and laughter - give it a grace and a charm of its own.

2. Ibid, p.88.
The book dedicated to his wife is a fine study of the spirit that Tennyson expresses.

"And O'er, the hills and far away
Beyond their utmost purple rim,
Beyond the night, across the day,
Through all the world she followed him. (Dedication).

The world in which Bridges moves is far different from that of Hudson, it is book of sweet memories and not an ecstatic expression of animism, it is real life which fascinates, the real life of man and animal, and the dull problems of existence and income, it has greater human appeal - than any other book of that type.

"It was my destiny to be born at Ushuaia. Even as a child I was obsessed by a passionate longing to explore those ranges of mountains, that hemmed us in, and join the wild tribe of which I had heard such fantastic tales from our Yaghan Playmates. Later in these pages, it shall be told how I achieved that ambition." 1

There are many tense moments of quarrels with natives and pursuit of wild bulls, and there are his Montaigne like observations 'that the cow is more intelligent than the horse' 2, there is Capelo, the Ona, who goes to Buenos Aires and returns to find that his wife has disappeared, and then he goes wife-hunting. 3 His father and mother are the real king and queen of the story, everything moves round them, they enter the story in a really dramatic manner.

"Two of the ship's three passengers, a man and woman, came from the cabin, and stood in silence side by side on the otherwise deserted deck. They were about twenty-eight years of age. The woman was fair with blue grey eyes, of moderate build, and her height was barely five feet three. After weeks of seasickness she had lost the healthy colour acquired as a girl in the orchards of Devonshire yet in spite of her pallor there was a glow on her face that neither suffering nor age would ever extinguish. The man to whose arm she clung - for she was too weak to stand without support - was four inches taller than she, lean, upright and square-shouldered. In every line of his figure, there was evidence of staunchness and reliability." 4

1. Uttermost Part of the Earth - London - 1948 - p.66
2. Ibid, p. 168
3. Ibid, p. 33
4. Ibid, p. 23
The Uttermost Part of the Earth is a unique and valuable work. Apart from its ethnological and other information it contains more real romance than a hundred novels. This is an authentic document about Indian tribes which have practically disappeared. Bridges' mastery of Terra del Fuegian dialects of many tribes makes him a great authority on their life. His book is a great treasury of old legends and stories and folk lore of these people who are already almost extinct.


"I believe Colonel Clark's book, which is about the true inner vast areas of darkness, will become a classic. It is an authentic adventure of exploration and worth while discovery. This North American has accomplished his journey almost without funds. He was forced to live by the jungle, nearly impossible feat even for a wild Indian. These risks and the calculated danger accent the extreme readability, and permanent value of his book."

Leonard Clark worked in the Army, as an intelligence officer, he did espionage work in China, Mongolia, and other countries; he was private secretary to the Arab League in Egypt and then leader of the Chinese Nationalist expedition into Tibet. On June 10th, 1946 he landed at Lima airport in Peru, and reached La Merced from where the jungle started and civilisation came to an end, he was entering the territory rarely entered by white men, going is difficult in that muddy land, full of snakes and thorny bushes, brutality of nature is soon realised.

"The jungle is your enemy, it will destroy you if it can and it never sleeps. Even a wild Indian cannot find food in it." 2

The book is a study of wild nature and wilder men, and the language he uses conveys this effect very successfully. He is able to give it the freshness of fear and horror by giving real, unadorned pictures of priestly rites and savage deeds on

2. Ibid., p.41
the way. A girl whose three husbands die within a year is killed by orders of Iye Marangni (Brother of the Snake); the breast of an unfaithful wife is cut off, burnt in the fire and eaten, the ancient pagan lives again in these pages.

"A thin slice of an orange moon rose with equatorial swiftness over a tall hedge of jungle standing ragged along the opposite bank, and fixed its straight shafts of light into the yellow river. Scattered bell bird calls of varying tolls and intensities began ringing out on our north side. I counted their locations, five or six, possibly Indians were signalling each other, slowly converging on us".1

Nature and cruelty go together and this scene of primitive man-hunting in the surroundings of nature is powerfully conveyed by the author.

"The braves were incredibly evil looking, howling, leaping up and down, and brandishing war clubs, stone skull crushers, fitted with long wooden handles, and wicked daggers set with bony edges. "Moyeri, Moyeri (Kill, Kill)" they cried over and over again".2

The book is full of such other adventures as recall the ancient days of exploration; with him we itch from the hellish bites of strange bugs, we sweat and are blinded under a glaring equatorial sun; we taste the feeling of despair from starvation, or the effect of the strange drugs like the Soul Vine. We feel the terrible sense of the explorer's uncertainty—the question of going forward into the eerie, living, creeping silence of the great bush or retreating to safety when the maps prove all wrong. The book breathes the true spirit of adventure.


It is a scientist's account, a botanical trip into the land of Wai Wai; in so far as he makes use of the aeroplane he heralds the new age of travel in that land of the savages; the book also indicates in a great measure the type of books to be written in the future. Now that people are thinking of going to the

2. Ibid., p.132.
planets - a journey into the wild regions of Latin America will be undertaken only with a purpose and not simply for the sake of pleasure or adventure; suputniks have a greater appeal to adventurous men than the head hunting Indians of the Amazonian region. It marks the beginning of a new-epoch. How far will intellectual inquiry be stirred by rapture of sense and feeling is a different matter; it is here that the literature of travel will face a crucial test. But if not scientists, others will continue to sail the seas in search of the white-whale, and the hunters will come back from the hills with lovely tales to tell. The Heart is not affected by astronautics.

Nicholas Guppy is a lover of words and beauty of style, he has ear for music and sweet sounds, and his imagination roams beyond the text book laws of Botany.

From the Wai Wai encampment behind the mission came the sound of wild flutings and the barking of dogs. Dawn was at hand. Life was stirring. The flute wove its silver arabesques in the air, Arcadian ripplings of rising and falling scales, a warbling pastrole, then a savage irresponsible burst or a clear delicate wavering note sustained for several seconds, music of great beauty played with masterly lightness of touch."!

THE MODERN LITERATURE OF TRAVEL ABOUT AFRICA.

A. Some Important Books of Travel upto 1920.

Mango Park (1771-1806) Sir Henry Morton Stanley, Mary Henrietta Kingsley, A. St. H. Gibbons, Captain Stigand, H. Hamilton - Fyfe, Francis Brett Young,

"I speak of Africa and golden joys", Henry IV. Part II. Shakespeare.

"A Damsel with a dulcimer
In vision once I saw,
It was an Abyssinian maid,
And on her dulcimer she played". (Coleridge).

Inspite of all the romantic appeal of dusky Africa - the land of Sheba and Pharoahs - good literature of travel, what is really literature, is scarce. There are numberless books and diaries of explorers, colonisers, adventurers, there are books of hunters with guns and cameras, fictitious accounts of he-men like Tarzan, and unreal adventures like those of the seekers of Soloman's mines, modern Safari books, and political books—but all these are not really literature. Gifted writers like Julian Huxley and Hemingway lose some of their powers and poetic spirit when they try to depict Africa. The Africa View is certainly not as good as From an Antique Land, Graham Greene's Journey Without Maps is not equally as good as his Lawless Roads. Somehow the best travel books are written only about Egypt, Ethiopia and other civilised regions in Africa.

These are exceptions no doubt - Andre Gide is one of them, the sand dunes give him an unearthly inspiration. Hemingway is another, even Conrad is successful in catching the darkness of Congo. But the truth is that Africa is a rich mine for writers of books giving journalistic information; Inside Africa, is certainly Gunther's finest work, in his pages it looks really like a dream-land, but literary description and narration finds Africa too big; imagination staggers, the body fails under
the combined attacks of heat, dust, vermin, and bad psychological effects. Poetry and even prose can be written best with at least the minimum comforts of life. The greater run of poets and writers never go to Africa, it requires a special physical and mental condition to be successful in the wildest regions of Africa. Civilization attracts more literary travellers, old associations of history and antiquity make a definite appeal to the writers. Imagination roams freely in these vistas of the past, these gardens of memory are always fresh and charming, but a hot burning desert is no place for roaming of fancy, there it is a simple question of survival, mere existence is a victory. Moreover the mind of the blackman is a closed book. Somerset Maugham who delights in reading the frailties of character and secrets of conduct from the faces of men whom he meets in Asia and Europe would be able to see nothing in the phalanxed faces of dark Africans. Thus the study of character of men and women, merits and demerits of a certain culture and civilisation study of present day life and past history - are never a part of travel books about Africa. So what is left is nature, missionary life, war and conquest, and these form the main themes of these books about Africa.


Mungo Park was a veritable martyr to exploration and the opening up of the dark continent; this Scottish explorer of Niger was born in Selkirkshire; in 1794 he offered his services to the African Association, and reached the British station of Pisania, and from there he journeyed into the interior, he was imprisoned at Luda-war by a Moorish Chief, he escaped after four months and reached Segu. He traced the river Niger.
for 300 miles, his book *Travels In the Interior of Africa* appeared in 1799. He again went in 1805 into the wild interior; he was attacked while sailing in the river; he and his companions jumped into the river, and all were drowned except one native slave. His son who went many years later to find if he was a prisoner anywhere died of fever, and his widow died a few years later. The story of his travels in the interior is written in the form of a diary, it is extremely simple, and beauty of style is never aimed at, the facts are so sensational that no literary deficiency can hinder its popularity. There are horrible facts stated with no calmness, and without sentimentality.

"With the returning day commenced the same round of insult and irritation - the boys assembled to beat the hog, and men and women to plague the Christian. It is impossible for me to describe the behaviour of a people who study mischief as a Science, and exult in the miseries and misfortune of their fellow creatures". 1

Even ordinary details give it a colour of realism. The true muddy rain drenched atmosphere of West Africa gives it a gloomy beauty and charm.

"August 1. I departed from Modiboo driving my horse before me, and in the afternoon reached Nyamee, where I remained three days during which time it rained without intermission, and with such violence that no person could venture out of doors". 2

Mungo Park is not a modern writer, but his shadow still falls on all literature of travel about Africa. Very few persons can escape that violent contact with titanic nature which makes them careful of dates and details; without dates they would be lost in the morass of time, even Graham Greene gives dates to his *Journey Without Maps*. It is not a journey without dates, that is the only link by which they hold themselves to civilisation.

1. *Travels In the Interior of Africa* - London - 1887, Cassell, Vol. I, p.120.

This great journalist and explorer was a strange plaything of fortune; fate spared him no cruelty in his early life, and no honour in his later life. He went to search Dr. Livingstone and met him at Ujiji, and after that he did exploration in his own right. Through Darkest Africa (1878) describes his second journey, and In the Darkest Africa (1890) is an account of his third journey. Through South Africa, is an account of his last journey in South Africa. Stanley is a stylist, and gives a more regular account of his travels than Mungo Park, but the element of information still predominates. His description of the scenes of nature has the elements of poetry in it. He is a mystic and his mysticism is the outcome of the cruel things of nature and human-life death is a subject to which he turns again and again. He possesses great ability to visualise, his pictures are vivid, with strong colours, unfading and his imagination gives him a peep into the heart of things. His effusions have a tenderness inspite of the fact that he leads a harsh life; though he has not much space for his feelings yet - he touches deep chords and there is a genuine ring in whatever he says. There are primitive men who figure in his pages, they are real living men even when they talk merely by gestures; although they are never analysed like the characters in a novel yet they have a quality, they live and move, and forever hunt the imagination. These books have little or nothing to discuss as regards the cultural level of the West, it is the land of the Ancient Mariner, values are all different, and men die and live for unimportant regions. A view of the Lake Albert Edward is given thus:
...It reached perfectly the description that in the beginning the earth was without form and void, and darkness was upon the face of the deep. This idea was strengthened when we looked up to examine the composition of this vaporous mist, and to ascertain whether we might call it haze, mist or fog. The eyes were fascinated with the clouds of fantastic and formless phantasms, the eerie figures, flakes, films, globules, and frayed or wormlike threads, swimming and floating and drifting in such numberless multitudes that one fancied he could catch a handful. In the delirium of fevers I have seen such $\infty$ shapes*. 1

On the whole the book is an old time affair, and abounds in facts, figures, rebel officers, measurements of pigmies, trees and rivers, but at unexpected places he rises to poetic heights.

"As I have already said the forest is typical of the life of humanity. No single glance can be taken of it without becoming conscious that decay and death and life are at work there as with us. I never could cast a leisurely look at it but I found myself unconsciously wondering at some feature which reminded of some scene in the civilised world. It has suggested a morning when I went to see the human tide flowing into the city over London Bridge, between half past seven and half past eight, where I saw the pale over worked, dwarfed, stoop shouldered on their way to their dismal struggle for existence. They were represented here faithfully in all their youth, vigour and decrepitude; one is prematurely aged and blanched, another is goitrous, another is a hunchback, another suffers from poor nutrition, many are pallid from want of air and sunshine, many are supported by their neighbour because of constitutional infirmity; many of them are toppling one over another, as though they were the incurables of the hospital and you wonder how they exist at all". 2

Stanley is a modernist in spirit, but the burden of Africa is so heavy that it cannot be carried lightly, soon the style becomes laboured and cramped.

135. Mary Henrietta Kingsley (1862-1900) Travels in West Africa-1897.

This famous explorer was the daughter of George Henry Kingsley, brother of Charles Kingsley, she was the most popular woman among the travellers of her time, most daring and stubborn too. Freya Stark possesses her courage and capability, and Rosita Forbes has got full share of her  

2. Ibid, p.79.
stubborn tenacity. Her language is not always a strong point, the sentences are constructed in a loose way, and she entirely lacks the poetic sentiment or the lyrical qualities in judging words and sentences. Beauty of nature, scenes and sights are all described successfully, not with a pen, or with a brush, but with a hammer or an axe; she cuts her way through the jungle of ideas, authenticity is her best point; all experiences are real and personal, yet she has to hack her way through the experiences, and the trail she cuts though poor is like a road into a land of mystery. Hardships and real danger of death - give it a reckless beauty, she lives in the old world of heroes and adventurers, but unlike heroes she is not morose or gloomy, she can laugh right in the jaws of death. Her spirit is truly, shockingly romantic and adventurous like that of true English women; she can enjoy scenes of nature - even in the hellish swamps of the interior of Congo.

"My man having all reported themselves safe I went to my comfortable rooms but could not turn in, so beautiful was the warmth and beauty down here, and as I sat on the verandah over looking Victoria and the sea, in the dim soft light of the stars, with the fireflies round me, and the light of Victoria away below, and heard the soft rush of the Lukola River, and the sound of the sea surf on the rocks, and the tom-toming and the singing of the natives all matching and mingling together, 'why did I come to Africa thought I! Why who would not come to its twin brother Hell itself for all the beauty and the charm of it'.

Hardships can never suppress her love of nature; accidents on the way, canoes crashing and turning turtle can never make her forget that nature if cruel to her is still beautiful and soothing. She has no philosophy of nature, no special message of life, but the world that she surveys would have deeply overwhelmed the older and younger

romantics; Coleridge at least would have read and mentioned this all in his private diary where he collected material for his fine poems of the supernatural world.

"The beauty of the night on Kondo Kondo was superb, the sky was crimson, purple and gold, leaving it a deep violet purple, with the great stars hanging in it like moons, until the moon herself arose lighting the sky long before she sent her beams down on us in this valley. As she rose the mountains hiding her face, grew harder and harder, and deeper and deeper black". 1

What she observes most are sights and sounds; smell comes in rarely, touch and taste almost never; it is a world for eyes in the day, and ears in the night, it is the world of the beasts, other senses are not necessary in that beastly world.

"But the mangrove swamp follows the general rule for West Africa, and night in it is noisier than the day. After dark if is full of noises, grunts from I know not what, splashes from jumping fish, the peculiar whine of rushing crabs, and quaint creaking and groaning sounds from the trees, and above all ineriness the strange whine and sighing cough of crocodiles". 2

It is a book describing the charm and fascination of Africa, the simple ways of the dark sons of the tropics, and various other aspects of a strange life. Her quaint womanly humour is a delightful trait, the tedium of the journey through mud and through rivers overgrown with trees on the banks, branches and roots barring the way is relieved with this girlish humour, it is something like Barrie's study of island life in Admirable Crichton.

"Dr. Pelessier then insists on banging down monkey breadfruit with stick to show me their inside. Of course they burst over his beautiful white clothes. I said they would, but men will be men". 6 immortal

The book is an artless, rough hewn, piece of literature.

2. Ibid.p.75.
3. Ibid.p.49.
4. Ibid.p.199.
5. Ibid.p.119.

It is an account of travels in the district bordering the Zambesi; it only presents a contrast with the modern literature of travel, it has information, authentic and reliable first-hand information, but little or no literary beauty, only rarely does he feel inspired enough to give imaginative treatment to his subject, and that inspiration is always awakened by the beauties of nature.

"It is in fact one of those scenes which could be more effectively dealt with by the pen of the poet than by painter's art. A noble expanse of transparent water, studded here and there with treeless islands, a fringe of tall matted river reeds, and about a mile of plain beyond, with a background of tree clad undulations, make up the view to right and left".1

The book has no sensational element, no hairbreadth escapes, it has honesty of statement, and a simple clear descriptive style.


This too is a simple book with no literary importance, he seems to have no interest in anything except the places which he wants to reach, and reaching there he notes nothing, he is only a restless man moving from place to place, nowhere finding the land of his heart; if at all he comes to love anything it is the wilderness, but he gives no profound reasons for it.

"There was a time when I felt strange and lonely in the bush, a want of confidence in my ability to find my way about and a feeling of insecurity if I should get out of sight of native guides. Now even when utterly alone I feel a strange exultant confidence in myself, whether the country is known or unknown to me all seems familiar. The bush now wears a friendly aspect and welcomes me to its bosom. It is only when I meet with roads and houses that the feeling of insecurity returns".2

1. Exploration and Hunting in Central Africa - London - 1898, Methuen, p.3.

Me starts in April, 1908 from Nairobi and passes through Gilgil, Laikipia, Sambur country, Barta Steppe, Rendile country, Borana, Lake Rudolf, Beshiat, Omo River and Meri Desert. The book is interesting for a historian of that land, it is written in a simple clear language, and has not got much literary importance.


With Hamilton Fyfe should begin the modern literature of travel about Africa, he possesses all the graces that a writer of travel should have, but he too cannot escape the limitations that Africa places upon him, he gives fine pictures of the beauty of Nature, but he cannot probe into the dark mind of the African people, there is no culture or history to fall back upon, so he has only one refuge his own poetic imagination.

"Everybody can understand the appeal of an ancient city like Athens, Cairo or Damascus. Here Pericles walked, here was civilisation while Titons ran naked in the woods, there the last gorgeous in colour and romance flowered before the West was yet in bud. It needs small imagination to realise in some degree their interest and charm. But to be thrilled by a new settlement, a fresh centre of man's activities, a village that may some day grow into a city, as great as those of old - this is only given to the imaginative, to those who minds can wander, freed from today's trammiis trammels, picturing the days that are to be".

He is a lover of nature, and he gives vent to all his somnolent epicurean tastes more than he himself wanted to and describes with a charming felicity the pleasures of a care-free nature, there is ample lyrical unfolding of the theme, it has great richness and colour. Nature holds the first place in this book though his real aim was to study the conditions of life in South Africa. Simple scenes of sunrise and moon-rise find the finest description through images and words that give flawless pictures, and extremely vivid impressions.

I remember very well a moonrise at Gwel's. The silver disc shone with marvellous clearness, as it mounted up, while daylight lingered above a pink glow. Below the pink the sky was limpid blue, against it the dark hill-tops stood out black and wonderful. A few minutes later the western sky was all reds and yellows, like an October sunset in England, while eastward the lamp of the moon hung brilliant in the already darkened sky.1

He looks at life like a mystic, and the simple sights and scenes of villages remind him of the mystery and glory of life, its joys and sorrows.

"The hills are smoky blue, mysterious, poetical. The sky above them is at first a marvel of crimson; imperceptibly this fades to pink, and then to a warm yellow. A little breeze springs. Along the track that runs away across the veld to the mountains labours an ox wagon with ten of noble beasts. It is just at the end of the day's journey; looking at it you feel a sudden vivid understanding of life, a sympathy with all who welcome the hours of rest, a fresh conception, of the contentment that is born of existence in the open, on the wide stretching rain washed sun dried spaces of the world".2

He deals with all the problems of black races and white races, diamond mining and agriculture, and other political, social and economic problems of the day in a wise and clear manner, but he never forgets the central thread that runs through it and ties it all like a golden chain, that is the beauty of the countryside, the trees and birds, animals and men.3 It is clear brilliant, and briskly moving prose, it rings and shines and spreads a halo of grace and dignity around what it treats, it is lovely prose, devoid of all mannerisms, and other artificial tricks.

1. Francis Brett Young - (1884) - Marching on Tanganyka - 1917.
3. Ibid., p. 90.
and yet they sang and wrote with courage and dignity, they were different from the group of people consisting of Caudwell, Orwell, and others who deliberately took part in the Spanish Civil War to make an experiment of a creed. The older group had greater simplicity, and more direct appeal than these controversial figures of later times. Francis Brett Young does not try to make a grand saga out of what he saw or did, he just relates his sad and happy experiences, his moments of poetic delight, and eye-witness accounts of tactical blunders, deaths, and human suffering.

It is a simple, gentle, calm and poised narrative, it has something of Churchill's early account of his part in the Boer War; somehow their descriptions of wild nature have similarity. There is a certain sorrowful grace, and a rainbow of memories which give strange colours to this story.

"I had a feeling that the spirit of man is never so magnificently the master of his body as when he is facing death. And still we struggled on. The silver grasses became amber in the mellow evening light. That was our hope, our greatest hope of escape, the falling of darkness. Never was darkness so long in coming. I remembered a poem of the lover Meleager in which he prays for night. And I thought of my wife and our home in Devon, a drowsy afternoon of Summer in a garden ravished with the spicy odour of pinks."

Like Rupert Brooke they carried England in their hearts, it is a sincere humble patriotism with little or no modern snobbery.

"All through Pangani trek I carried in my haversack one book, a thin paper copy of the Oxford Book of Verse, but what I read more often, in the little light that was left for reading, was a small scale Bartholomew map of England finely coloured with mountains and meadowland and seas, and there I would travel magical roads, crossing the Pennines or lazing through the blossomy vale of Evesham or facing the salt breeze on the flat top of Mendip at will. In these rapt moments the whole campaign would seem to me nothing but a sort of penance by means of which I might attain to those blue, remembered hills.

2. Ibid. pp. 83, 84.
In that terrible hot place he describes the cool brightness of the stars at night, and titanic force of the sun in daytime.

"A wonderful night beneath misty stars, over the lands beneath us the southern cross hung as though it were pointing the path of our invasion. Voiced and milky nebulae it hung and as the labouring earth rolled over swung, as a ship with the change of time'.

"The sun rose triumphantly as though he were conscious of the intolerable strength which would enable him to climb to the very centre of the sky in the space of six hours - it has been said before and incomparably, 'rejoicing as a giant to run his course'. But here where the sky was cloudless and bordered by the black-rim of the Pare, over which he lifted, one was particularly conscious of the titanic awm energy. So he must have risen. I thought upon the first dawn of the world, before ever there was an astronomer to find spots on his face, or a philosopher to question the eternity of his dominion'.

Somehow Africa is not present in the book, it is a war between the Muslim soldiers under the Germans, and Sikh and Punjabi soldiers under the British, and their leader is a Voer-General Smuts; the natives play practically no part in the story, the scenes of Kilimanjaro, and the vast plains of Pangani - are seen only as reminders of home.

3. Literature of Travel about Africa Between 1920-1940.

The age changes, the war ushers in the modern age; the map of Africa also changes; business and industry develop rapidly; missionaries have already awakened the sleeping Blackman from his centuries long slumber of ignorance, and he is already thinking of becoming independent. Albert Schweitzer has turned into a world famous mission the little missionary station of Lamberene visited by Mary Kingsley towards the last years of the 19th century, all this has certainly

2. Ibid. p.43.
3. Ibid. p.263.
happened - but the literature of travel about Africa is not much changed. Africa is African, geography, inclemency of weather, difficulties, sheer physical discomforts are still there, and the larger number of books written are still those of un-imaginative men. On the whole Africa attracts better-men, scholars, writers, journalists and literary figures; safety and security of life, and comparative comforts of travelling are an essential necessity for such literature. Even then they must have something to suspend the imagination, to keep it up, and so even in darkest Africa they think of Asia and Europe.

Africa does not seem to have won the hearts of men, literary men in particular, and they seem to be jeering at her except some gifted Frenchmen like Andre Gide.

"Evening comes, the flocks return, what one had thought to be stillness was really numbness and torpor; the wondering oasis for an instant quivers and aspires to life, an infinitely light breath stirs the palm, blue smoke rises from each earthen house and etharilises the village which once the flocks returned, prepares for sleep, and sinks into a night as soft as death".2

But Africa has not yet produced anything to redeem her honour, if others laugh at her there is no remedy for it, Africa, poor Africa, has no sympathisers.

"And so I entered Kenya fully resolved to add all I could to the already extensive body of abusive literature that has grown up round that much misunderstood dependency".3

Hemingway and William Charles Scully alone give a romantic view of Africa, Rosita Forbes, Lady Dorothy Mills, H.H. Princess Marie Louise represent the modern women who are travel writers in their own right - though it is rarely

1. The Ridge of White Waters-London-1912,p.263
2. From Red Sea to Blue Nile-London-1925,p.280
3. Africa View-London-1931,p.165
that they achieve any remarkable success. Evelyn Waugh is a modern journalist ready to mock at every thing, but he has a very fine literary style and his narrative has life and force. Julian Huxley has a truly modern approach, he combines scientific and social interests with remarkable literary skill.

140. William Charles Scully -
The Ridge of the White Waters-1912.

It is a book of memories, sweet remembrances of forty years back, memories of childhood days in South Africa, and the distance of time gives it a serene and fatalistic touch. In poetic prose he describes the sweet and painful recollections of this land of youth visited in old age, sorrow is made beautiful. His highly sensitive disposition lays him open to all the tremors of the heart, and his work is a varied meditation on the sad mystery of time and change. His nature is attuned to the most pathetic chords of colonial life, and he writes in the vein of Omartkayam. A herd of mules and donkeys in charge of a small native are grazing near the spot. A call sounds from a cottage nearby, and the boy drives the animals down over the very site of the grave of his friend.

The words of Omartkayam come to his mind "They say the lion and the lizard keep The Courts where Jamschid drank deep, And Bahram, that great hunter, the wild ass, Stamps over his head, but may not break his sleep". 1

His mind is mystical, in fact poetry of romance and mysticism have much in common; he thinks of the ultimate end of the human race, and all their fretful efforts, and struggles shall come to nothing.

"Man with his ravaging engines his tragic futility his greed; and his self inflicted pain will end like a dream, and Peace will resume her sway. The dewfall and rain shed alike on the just and the unjust - on the wild lily of the

veld, and the livid dump - shall lave thy scars and recreate beauty, 
out of the ruin. When thy ( earth's ) travail is at an end the 
faithful sky will assoil thee, and the unbridled winds of heaven 
bring thee balm".1

Scenes of nature are not described for their beauty but for 
their evocative powers, old associations, and sweet remembrances 
of forgotten faces; men of today rarely come into the picture, 
it is only the dead-friends who are made to live again.

"To me this is a haunted land, but the haunting spirits are 
gentle and gracious if ineffably sad".2

His mood is such that he rarely comes down the pedestal 
of lyricism, his prose is sweet, charming and has a soothing 
sleepiness in it.

141. H. H. Princess Marie Louise - Letters from the Gold Coast - 1926

These are letters written by H. H. Princess Marie Louise 
to her sister Thora - Princess Helena Victoria, from Gold Coast 
is the course of her tour attended by Alice Harrington Stuart 
her lady in waiting, Annie Picknett her maid and others. It is 
an account of a series of routine visits to places of importance, 
and her meetings with different tribal chiefs. She herself has 
given a good judgement of the book to which there is nothing to add.

"This book does not claim for itself any literary merit or 
distinction. It is a plain narrative of my tour in the Gold coast, 
written in a series of letters to my sister during that time." 3

The book has simplicity, clarity, but nothing original or 
imaginative.

142. Rosita Forbes (1893 - ) - From Red Sea to Blue Nile - 1925.

It is certainly the odyssey of a brave woman, it is a story 
of an impossible, rather, a mad trip through Abyssinia; she comes 
across maddening experiences, the mules slip and break their legs, 
the guides take panic when opposed by customs staff, she weeps 
and uses tears in a diplomatic spirit, the book is highly interes-
ting and certainly something to compare with Freya Stark's adventures 
in Arabia. Her other books are 'The Secret of the ... ...

1. The Ridge of White Waters - London - 1912 
2. Ibid, p.218.
Sahara, Kufara Raisuni, the Sultan of the Mountains, and if the Gods laugh. It is certainly an odyssey, but without much literary beauty; where the body wanders and gets wearied the imagination simply does not work. There are some good passages here and there; and she deals with the beauty of nature; while voyaging on a dirty boat from Aden she admires the beauty of stars but ends by condemning the colourless fish served for dinner. Being truly a woman she is interested in customs and manners, women’s ways and birth of children, hospitality and home-life; but she does not study men like Somerset Maugham and she never describes the scenes like Stevenson. All the same where-ever scenes of nature win her heart she breaks into fairly poetic descriptions, and her style is automatically lifted to a much higher level.

"From Hatbro the grass land rolls gradually downward, though here and there parapets of rock break its rounded lines. We started early while the downs were heaps of rose petals cupped in mist. The mimoses were a fluff of yellow, and marsh mallows, gumps purple and orange, grew besides the water holes. Huge red winged locusts spun through the grass forest on either side of the path and birds flashed over it with the sheen of jewelled metal. We occasionally passed gorgu trees with gray gnarled bark, and a mass of flame coloured flowers unfurled like parasols, or the colossal varka which covers half an acre with its widespread branches." 2

The ancient palaces of Gondar, 3 and the ancient city of Axum - capital of the Queen of Sheba - and other hidden churches - excite her interest, and link the story of the barbaric forest with the civilised world. She finds Addis Ababa, a problematic city.

"If every city in the world has some different and essential spirit, surely Addis Ababa’s is most elusive, for it is neither barbaric nor conventional, lawless or tamed, but something sturdily independent, proud of a tradition which it takes for granted, unassuming beneath a warning of self-consciousness. I did not stay long enough in the forest to realise more than in her violent contrasts, and in her gentle violence Addis Ababa is typical of her people." 4

Rosita Forbes is a remarkable traveller, a brave and tenacious woman, what she lacks in style she makes up in interest. Simple, straight, unadorned narration is enough to win the heart of many readers.

1. From Red Sea to Blue Nile - London - 1925, p.2
2. Ibid., p. 97.
3. Ibid., p-293.
4. Ibid. p. 129-130.
143. Lady Dorothy Mills - Through Liberia - 1926.

This book again is a woman's account of an African country exclusively inhabited by slaves returning from America, and she gives a detailed account of conditions in Monrovia\(^1\), the secret Societies\(^2\), the palm wine and the market at Naarma\(^3\), Cannibalism\(^4\), and many other interesting things. She starts the book in a highly romantic spirit but somehow her power of expression cannot match with her aspirations, she quotes Gerald Gould on the first page.

"beyond the East the sunrise, beyond the West the Sea, And East and West the wander thirst that will not let me be."

The trouble is that she deals neither with the East nor with the West; Africa is a different affair, and even a conscientiously written book is bound to have a boring effect; she barely escapes that effect.


Julian Huxley has had always been interesting in social and economic problems although his special field is Zoology; when a scientist with the habit of studying animals in their habitat applies the same methods to men - we are sure to get an interesting study of men in nature, and of nature as related to men. Science widens a man's sympathies and makes him peculiarly suitable for travel. It gives him exactness, clarity, precision, he notes scenes and sights from a different point of view, plants and animals become characters and forces in the story, the traveller instead of looking to the drawing-room and busy streets watches the open spaces and solitary scenes. Even when Julian Huxley is working/

2. Ibid., p. 34.
3. Ibid., p. 91.
4. Ibid., p.107.
problem of native education it is cocoanut and flamingo, hippo
and heron that attract his attention. He confesses that the
problem of Africa is too colossal to be studied in a single
book by a single man during a four months visit.

"Into those months I have crammed whole cargoes of vital
experience. I have convinced myself very speedily of the utter
inadequacy of my knowledge and ideas about Africa. I have
marvelled at her variety and the variety of her peoples. I have
had problem after problem thrust forcibly upon my attention.
From witchcraft to the latest refinement of applied science,
from prehistoric archaeology to modern politics and I feel that
anything which I may be able to do to interest people at
home, in the variety of Africa and the interest of her problems
will be worthwhile".1

It is one of the finest books written about Africa; beauty
of style, poetic nature of his approach to nature, his wide
sympathies, and his humanism make him a highly suitable author
for the study of Africa. Being a naturalist he gives a place
of privilege to animals and birds; he treats them like a romantic
poet gazing at his dream maiden.

"A little bay, charming in the extreme, irregular with
promonotories and rock knolls, crowned with scattered trees
ran in towards us. It might have been transplanted from windermere
after having been commemorated by Wordsworth in one of his
innumerable in-numerous sonnets. But the final touch was most
un-Wordsworthian. Not daffodils bordered it, but flamin goes.
At first sight they too had a flower like air, as of enormous,
lotuses and lilies thrusting themselves out of water to burst
into bloom. But then the lotuses raised sinuous necks from their
subaqueous browsing; they looked at us with suspicion, they
began to walk. Flamingoes supreme combination of the grotesque
and the beautiful, with its shores bordered by
great rosy birds. Then suddenly I saw that the far-shore four or
five miles away was bordered with pink. Surely this could not be
birds, it must be some geological deposit, some incrustation.
But the glasses insisted on the fantastic truth - it was all birds,
battalions of birds, massed in a continuous army."2

He has great admiration for the native system of irrigation3
and for forests and animal parks4, he has high praise for the
missionaries who opened up the continent and made a great con-
tribution towards education and enlightenment. The Epilogue ends

2. Ibid p. 245
3. Ibid, Chapter IV
4. Ibid, Chapter XVIII.
Evelyn Waugh has the gift of satire, he mocks at everything African; he starts with the coronation in Abyssinia and carries his bitterness and mockery flaming through Zanzibar, Kenya, and Congo, he laughs, he mocks, he ridicules, he jeers, and then bursts into Jeremiah like cursing. But everywhere he is pleasant, there is a beauty in his outburst; he chooses his facts, prepares us for the hit, and when it is delivered neatly and sharply we feel delighted. The way he presents his case our sympathy is never with the victim, there is nothing to redeem the victim except perhaps this impossibility of redemption. There are all shades of humour and irony, in some cases it takes on the farcical form of Pickwickian humour, and soon he laughs even at white men and women staying there in the tropics. His sense of humour is so jovial, mischievous and delightful that his criticism never jars; he is not a misanthrope, and does not put forward any special philosophy of life. He is not employing language of puns and jokes, he writes naturally, and the situations
are such that they cannot help provoking laughter, life itself is full of the spirit of comedy.

"In fact it is to Alice in Wonderland, that my thoughts recur in seeking some historical parallel for life in Addis Ababa. There are others - Israel in the Time of Saul, the Scotland of Shakespeare's Macbeth, the country of the Sublime Porte as one sees it revealed in the despatches of the late eighteenth century, but it is in Alice only that one finds, the peculiar form of galvanised and translated reality where animals carry watches in their waistcoat pockets, royalty paces the croquet lawns beside the chief executioner, and litigation ends in a flutter of playing cards. How to recapture, how retail the crazy enchantment of these Ethiopian days."  

He spares nothing; private life, food and ways of eating churches, roads and means of transport, bad women, and lepers, customs officers and newly wedded whitepeople - all are the targets of his satire, his treatment of Christianity in this ancient land of Christiantdom is rather shocking, but truth is truth. His visit to the sanctuary of the holiest church reveals what rot has set in, in the life of Ethiopia.  

Even the priests are heartless and cruel, religion for them is only a profession.

"Four or five sleep in each hut, an arrangement which the old priest explained in what seemed to me a very terrible phrase." You understand, monieur, that it takes several lepers to make one man."  

Sex, immorality and marriage are taken in a peculiar business like spirit, such depravity is shocking in an eastern land.  

"In the restaurant car that evening I sat opposite a young lady who was on her way to be married, she told me that she had worked for two years in Scotland-yard, and that had coarsened her mind, but since then she had refined it again in

2. Ibid. - p.86.
3. Ibid. - p.102.
a bank at Dar-es-Salaam. She was glad to be getting married as it was impossible to get fresh butter in Dar-es-Salaam." 1

The food which they are served is so dirty that they pretend to be sick, 2 the road is so badly untraceable that a boy sits on the mudguard, examines the hoofmarks and thus directs the driver. 3 This account is brisk, clear, full of acute observations, and is sharply clear-sighted. His language is modern, and he uses every word with a flowing ease, style is the soul of this book.

WAUGH IN AYSSINIA-1935.

If in the Remote People Abyssinia appears like Alice's Wonderland; in the Waugh in Abyssinia, the Abyssinian Army and Government seem to be rehearsing the role of Don Quixote - for some international drama festival. No doubt later on things get very serious, but at this initial stage every thing looks highly ridiculous. Waugh with his satiric sense, his literary skill, his mastery of irony and humour and his love of the ludicrous and the grotesque makes his account of the War preparation in Abyssinia of 1935 - a highly delightful affair. Within the four years that elapsed since he wrote his first book his style seems to have become more forceful, clear, sharp, and mature in every way possible. Probably his worst targets are the European press-men themselves, the different types of creatures who come for war reporting, the stupid and clever spies they employ, their efforts to get to the front, their imaginary reports, their flamboyant style, often their crooked ways of seeing men fighting a sham fight with real bullets - because they bribe the colonel who does not mind if one section of his army massacres the other - and the poor butchered soldiers

2. Ibid, p.83.
are presented as patriotic martyrs—all this and much more is fully debunked.

"On our return to Addis Ababa we found the temporary white population still further increased. Before the out-break of war the number of accredited journalists and photographers was rather more than a hundred. They showed almost every diversity which the human species produces. There was a simian Sudanese who travelled under a Brazilian Passport and worked for an Egyptian paper, there was a monocled Latvian colonel, who was said at an earlier stage of his life to have worked as a ring-master in a German Circus there was a German who travelled under the name of Harounral - Raschid, a title, he said, which had been conferred on him during the Dardanelles campaign by the Late Sultan of Turkey. His head was completely hairless, his wife shaved it for him, emphasising the frequent slips of her razor with tufts of cotton wool. There was a venerable American clothed always in dingy black, who seemed to have strayed from the pulpit of a religious conventicle; he wrote imaginative despatches of great length and flamboyancy.* 1

The variety of visitors, reporters and the spies and news-agents whom they employ is endless; some of them are members of some international gangs; Mata Hari is one of them. And the style of newsletter which he forwards to them is really entertaining.

"Soldiers, flights, near Bazara doors. Some of the Soldiers entered Bazara house as some break heads; bloods come out. Truck passed on to leg of one Somalee. Somali merchant Mahmood Warofaih made trench in his garden, and put his money few day; repeat, to see his money and not found, atonce come made." 2

The type of reporting which they do is an abominable fraud; he debunks the whole modern stunt photography, and fictitious news system in a fearless manner; the examples he gives are so hilarious and comical that they look like fiction; his criticism makes one sceptical of everything journalistic, and therein lies the worth of this book." 3

2. Ibid., p. 300.
3. Ibid., p. 308.
In the *Remote People* he laughs at the cost of the people, and here one finds Abyssinian government, army and officials being derided for their quixotic actions, and at times there is really laughter.

"In order to show the equipment of the hospital at its best advantage the doctors staged an operation - the amputation of a *guaranta* gangrened stump of arm. Emperor, Court, and journalists crowded into the Theatre, and the photographers and cinema-men took their shots. The Emperor asked 'And where did this gallant man lose his hand? "Here in Dessye. The Dedjasmach had it cut off for stealing two besas worth of corn.""

*Remote People*, *Labels*, *Ninety Two Days*, *Waugh in Abyssinia* and *Robbery under Law* show the growth and development of Evelyn as a traveller and a literary artist. From 1928-1937 he travelled continuously each book has a distinct air, somehow life and experience added more and more bitterness to each succeeding book, and the early freshness of youth disappears, till in the end he feels bored because there is nothing more to see on the earth.


Ernest Hemingway is a wizard of words, monosyllabic, simple, primitive words are put together with such skill that an amazing structure rises; it is as hard as granite, as natural as earth, and as powerful as life and death. His style is succinct, precise, accurate, exact and yet cruel forceful, moving and sincere. He begins gently, calmly, softly and soon the hammer blows fall, and cut and shape expression into new fiery forms, he needs not Blake's bow of molten gold; his sentences fall like stones out of David's sling, and crush and smooth the way through an untraversed territory. His prose style is primitive, natural, it has hidden strength and power, and in *The Green Hills of Africa* - man, animals, and the shape and form of the country are described with a unique literary beauty.

Ernest Hemingway is a lover of life, and he is always with a primitive instinct discovering places where he would like to live. His earliest interest in Africa may be traced to the afterwar years when with the recovery from war-time injuries he also regained his interest in shooting and wandering and hence the logical destination was East Africa. His earliest review of a book on Africa appeared in Toronto Star Weekly - 25th March, 1922 - the book 'Batouala' is a novel by the Negro author 'Rene Maran, on the life and death of a native chieftain, it won him the Government Academy prize of 5000 francs. It is a scathing condemnation of the French colonial policy; but Hemingway praised it for its realism and its local colouring, and authenticity of details.

"You smell the smells of the village. You eat its food. You see the white-man as the black-man sees him, and after you have lived in the village you die there. That is all there is to the story, but when you have read it, you have been Batouala, the native Chief, and that means that it is a great novel." 1

His four months trip to Africa began when he embarked from Marseille in November 1933, and it would end in April, 1934, but he caught dysentry, and had to fly to Arusha in January, 1934, and from there he flew to Nairobi over Kilimanjaro; after recovery he again joined his Safari hunters. The composition of the 'Green Hills of Africa' began in April, 1934, and was finished by 16th November; it was serialised in Scribner's magazine and later published in book-form in October, 1935. 'Snows of Kilimanjaro, appeared in the Squire in August, 1936, and the Short Happy Life of Francis Macomber appeared in the Cosmopolitan in September, 1936.

The book deals primarily with hunting, scenes of Africa, sketches of natives, description of camp events, and views

about European life, and literature come in of necessity, all these things are arranged according to a pattern, but the pattern and design was not his main object as some would like to assert. It is a book of travel and hunting, and contains all that is required in a good book of travel, he himself rightly asserts that he wrote whatever he saw and whatever he enjoyed.

"And what do you want?"
"To write as well as I can, and learn as I go along. At the same time, I have my life which I enjoy and which is a damned good thing". 1

The animals of Africa find a description in this book that is matched only by his description of bulls in the Death in the Afternoon, succinct, precise, primitive, sympathetic, and yet cruel, forceful, moving, sincere and accurate; every brief passage on the life and character of animals is an epitome of a study, and observation; it is life and death of animals that attracts him most; somehow this death has a satisfying spiritual influence.

"Fisi, the hyena, hermaphrodite, self-eating, devourer of the dead, trailer of calving cows, hamstringer, potential biter off of your face at night, while you slept, and yowler, camp follower, stinking, foul, with jaws that crack the bones, that lion leaves, belly dragging, loping away on the brown plain, looking back, mongrel dog, smart in the face, whack from the little Maunlicher, and then the horrid circle starting." 2

His similar moving account of the rhino is given in very forceful language 3. His second interest is the land itself with its problems and poverty, the barren and rocky face of Africa moves him more than the fertility and plenty of a well-looked after land; here too it is the death of the land that interests him.

1. Green Hills of Africa - London - 1956, p.31
2. Ibid. p.44
3. Ibid. p.82
"A continent ages quickly once we come. The natives live in harmony with it. But the foreigner destroys, cuts down the trees, drains the water, so that the water supply is altered, and in a short time the soil, once the sod is turned under - is cropped out, and next it starts to blow away as it has blown away in every old country, and as I had seen it start to blow away in Canada. The earth gets tired of being exploited. I suppose they all end up like Mongolia."

So, if you have loved some woman and some country you are very fortunate, and if you die afterwards, it makes no difference. Now, being in Africa, I was hungry for more of it, the changes of the seasons, the rains with no need of travel, the discomforts that you paid for make it real, the names of the trees, of the small animals, and all the birds, to know the language, and have time to be in it, and to move slowly."

Here his art is simply a neat and simple description of the surface. There is a sense of place and the sense of immediacy, and the palpability of experience. It has a tight structure, the mountains and plains are contrasted, there is a careful planning design to enable the truth to compete with fiction; there is suspense, as well as conflict with other hunters, there are idyllic scenes on Lake Manyara, and hot perspiring dusty scenes of shooting in the thick bushes. The book has great literary beauty, his remarks about other American authors and writers have significance, and his views about women are provocative these are contrasted with the physical sensation of action.

The other two stories - Snows of Kilimanjaro and the Short Happy Life of Francis Macomber have thematic similarity; they deal with the corrupting power of women and money; the emotional intensity rises to very great heights. In Francis Macomber he presents the case of the moral manhood. In The Snows of Kilimanjaro he displays the deep sense of the loss of artistic integrity.

2. Ibid., p. 76.
"But more than shame he felt cold hollow fear in him. The fear was still there like a cold shiny hollow in all the emptiness where once his confidence had been and it made him feel sick. It was still there with him now. It had started the night before when he had wakened and heard the lion roaring somewhere upon the river. It was a deep sound, and at the end there was sort of coughing grunts that made him seem just outside the tent, and when Francis Macombre woke in the day-time to hear it he was afraid."

The material which he gathered during the African journey is most beautifully dramatised in *Snows of Kilimanjaro* - it is one of his most remarkable stories. There is a wonderful piece of writing at the end when the reader is made to realise that it is only the dream of a dying man. Fiction certainly proves superior to narrative.


"Then through the crumbling of some bread I'll ponder
I'll ponder through the scraping of a plate,
How love which should have been a blaze of wonder,
Has been a dusty and untended grate,
With crooked grimy bars twisted as under,
Because its servant rose from sleep too late."

( Poem - 1930, by Graham Greene ).

Graham Greene, inspite of his fervent Catholicism is pre-occupied not with hope and faith, but despair and pessimism, not with the ultimate victory of the human soul but the futility of all human efforts, seediness, and sin; he presents a spectacle not of spiritual health, but neurosis and morbidity of the typical modern fatalists. *The Journey Without Maps* leads him nowhere; it only reinforces a sense of disappointment. It is a journey into his own interior and Liberia - is somewhere within the dark Africa of his heart. He remarks aptly somewhere else - "Congo is a region of the mind". This journey to Liberia and Monrovia, too is limited to the region of the mind; it is his most self revealing book.

Green's journey is prefaced with quotations from W.H. Auden appearing to cast doubt on the idea that any one can ever really find his way anywhere - and from Oliver Wendell Holmes - asserting that one's life has a plan, but many of the pieces will not fit until late in the game. Greene was certainly looking for something when he set sail from Liver-pool, he was aware of a deep feeling of dissatisfaction, and Liberia might precipitate a solution of his inner problem.

"But there are times of impatience, when one is less content to rest at the urban stage, when one is willing to suffer some discomfort for the chance of finding - there are a thousand names of it - King Solomon's Mines, the Heart of Darkness, if one is romantically inclined, or more simply as Herr Henser put it in his African novel - 'The Inner Journey, one's Place in Time', based on a knowledge, not only of one's present but of the past from which one has emerged. There are others of course who prefer to look one stage ahead, for whom Intourist provides cheap tickets into a plausible future but my journey represented a distrust of any future, based on what we are." 1

He did not want the Africa of the white settler, he was looking for a quality of darkness that is inexplicable. He hoped that his personal problem would be answered in the jungle. Once he was there he realised that his search was based partly on fear. He looked for the primitive because he was half afraid of what he would find. Once he got to Dnogobmai his fears vanished, he could not sink lower into the heart of the mystery. Here he reveals the same neurosis at work which takes Orwell to the dirt and despair of Paris and London.

"And suddenly I felt curiously happy and careless and relieved. One could not I was sure get lower than Dnogobmai. I had been afraid of the primitive, had wanted it broken gently, but here it came on us in a breath, as we stumbled up through the dung, and the cramped and stinking huts to our lampless sleeping place among the rats. It was the worst one need fear and it was bearable because it was inescapable." 2

2. Ibid - p. 150
It is a return, a psychological return to the primitive element in man's own mine; Freud did the same; Mungo Park, and Livingstone acted similarly but in a more expensive way.

"One was back or if you will, one had advanced again to the seedy level. This journey if it had done nothing else, had reinforced a sense of disappointment with what man had made out of the primitive, what he had made out of childhood. Oh, one wanted to protest, one does not believe of course, in the visionary gleam, in the trailing glory, but there was something in that early terror, and the barrenness of one's needs." 1

What fascinates the reader of this travel book is the sickly self-centred attitude of the writer, he looks at every thing from his distorted point of view, nature is rarely described without a melancholy coating; man and women are funny creatures, with inferiority complex or ugliness; even his religion is a nasty, malicious, impatient affair. Graham Greene is a fine stylist, his long experience as a Journalist has given him a racy style, and a simplicity of construction. It has the elements of a distinguished originality; he works by some deep instinct, and with repetitions, various touches, indirect hints and philosophical points he succeeds in creating a vivid, palpable, emotionally drenched atmosphere - though it is the emotion of despair dullness, sin, futility, fear and ugliness that he employs most often. He has gifts which are not granted to all, characters are just so many pieces put together to create some primitive piece of mosaic work, and colours are so many shades of black. His style is not easy to handle, and the language has to be pulled, turned inside out and stretched and strained in many ways to meet the required demand, often he is as direct and audacious and cruel in his statement as Hemingway but he is too sentimental to sustain

that effect for long.

"Love was an arm round the neck, a cramped embrace in the smoke, wealth a little pile of palm nuts, old age sores and leprosy, religion a few stones in the centre of the village where the dead chiefs lay*. 1

Besides the beauty of language it has the beauty of form, a pattern, a psychological pattern; it is a journey to the dark regions of the mind, it has a beginning, a dabbling in old incorrect American maps, and letters of introductions. Soon time comes to a stop and he finds himself within the heart of darkness. For a while he seems to have discovered something, "it did reawaken a kind of hope in human nature*, but soon he reaches the seediness from where he started, and the journey is over. The rest of it is only a formal leave taking, though here too he does not desist having a fling or two.

C. Literature of Travel about Africa since 1940.

For writers - men with imagination and love of culture, dreamers of history and chroniclers of beautiful women - for poets and philosophers - even today Africa has little or no special attraction, the winds of freedom are blowing over the continent, the black men are making new governments, but things that stir the mind - that renovate the soul - things that are made of a spiritual stuff - are not there to appeal to the mind. Africa today is best described by journalists who are generally short sighted, scientists - who are devoted to certain aspects of the matter only, and war veterans who saw an African through the smoke of guns; this is exactly what a poet would not see and describe. There is nothing

1. Journey without Maps -London-1953, p.86. 2. Ibid. p.44. 3. Ibid. p.43. 4. Ibid. p.69. 5. Ibid. p.150. 6. Ibid. p.234. 7. Ibid. p.278.
written today to match the immortal words of a Gide, a Coleridge or a Hugo.

"What have I wanted until today, for what was I toiling? Oh, now I recognise the garden, outside time, where time rests. Cloistered realm, serene, Arcadia .... I have found the land of repose". 1

The cars and aeroplanes have connected Africa with the rest of the world more intimately, from Cairo to Cape - a distance of 5000 miles is open to adventurers and seekers of the African mystery, but the truth, a bitter truth, is that there is no mystery.

"But what had astonished me about Africa was that it had never been strange". 2

And the beauty of Africa too is a thing of the past; the black men herded in city slums live a hellish life; their happy days in the forests are over, and beauty is hard to seek in the whole continent inspite of what Andre Gide said:

"Moins La Blanc est intelligent,
Plus Le Noir lui parait bete".

'The white man is intelligent and the black is beautiful'. Even hunting is losing its lure; poor animals are disappearing, and steps must be taken to save the species that are facing extinction in the near future. With no past and no future Africa at present has nothing to appeal to the traveller of the imaginative type.


It is a story of travel - rather forced travel but even Seven Pillars of Wisdom belongs to that category) during the Second World War when a group of intrepid British soldiers hit far off enemy holds in the Libyan desert; Shaw was their

Intelligence and Topographical officer. They helped the
Eighth Army by operating behind the enemy lines, their
adventures at Murzak, Kufra, Jaghbub the holy city of Senussi,
and Alameir - are a bright chapter in the annals of war;
but what surprises is the fact that ordinary British soldiers
had such sensitive reactions to the beauty of the desert,
and they enjoyed and expressed it beautifully inspite of all
the dangers in the way. Shaw does not rise to great heights,
he is neither like T.E.Lawrence, nor like Brett Young, he did
not have much contact with the natives, and hence no studies
of these sons of the sands are found in this otherwise moving
account of the desert fighting. He has no time to observe
the complexities of human character; in fact the Second World
War was too hasty an affair, the old leisurely ways of
fighting are a story of the past.

It is a spiritual and literary triumph, a victory
of mind over matter, a victory of beauty over dullness, with
simple clear, and vivid pharases he presents the life-like
picture of the desert; he uses no tricks like those of
Kinglake; he does not give a free rein to his imagination;
that he manages to give a clear powerful moving picture is a
triumph of his mind which enjoys and perceives every thing
clearly.

*Also because it was quiet, at times so silent that
you found yourself listening for something to hear. And it
was beautiful too, not at mid-day when the hills look flat
and lifeless, but in the early morning or late evening when
they throw cool dark shadows, and the low sun makes you
marvel at the splendid symmetry of the yellow dunes. A
psychologist would say perhaps, that to take pleasure in
deserts is a form of escapism, a surrender to the same
impulses which made hermits of early Christians, a refusal to
face the unpleasant realities, of modern life. He may be
right, there are a lot of things in this life worth escaping
from*. 1

It is a speedily composed book, it has no humour, and no random thoughts; he uses no devices to relieve this account of the military action in this unknown place, the veritable Shangri-la of the desert. There is no variety, the soldier and the desert are the only two entities, even God does not preside over the open vast heavens, the desert is the centre, and all else moves round it.

"There are no two ways about the desert - either you dislike intensely being in them or you find there attraction hard to resist. I belong to the latter class, and since 1927 the Libyan desert, its history, exploration and archaeology, its politics and everything that concerns it has been one of my chief interests in life. In it at various times I have spent about three and a half years, and travelled by camel, car, and aircraft at least forty-five thousand miles."

The story of the Long Range Desert Group is a stirring story, and Kennedy Shaw makes it an unforgettable account with simple, mild, softly stirring, and silently charming account of the days in the desert.


In this book, there are sweet and charming memories of his military service in Africa with the K.A.R. in 1926-27, and of his other duties till 1931, and again his service in Rhodesia in 1946. It also gives his childhood dreams and aspirations which life fulfilled in its mysterious ways by giving an opportunity to serve and hunt in Africa: he believes that such good times shall never return.

"How the times have changed in these few years, and how grateful I am to have had the experience and enjoyed the adventures that service with King's African Rifles provided. It will not be so long before those seeking adventure will have to look to visits to another planet." 2

It has little or no importance as regards style but it is one of the last testaments of the old guard - the men who served the empire, and also loved the empire, and who sought an escape from Europe, they are simple souls doing great deeds, and by instinct they turned to the virgin forests to refresh their spirits; it is such noble souls that keep the stream of life fresh.


It is a typical modern book of travel - if W. N. Scientific surveys, and journeys in the foot-steps of Moses in a taxi or station wagon - can mean anything modern; it is this absurd union of the past and the present which is presented in this book.

"It seems absurd to walk out of hotel, slip in a taxi, and drive off into the Sinai desert, to follow the foot-steps of Moses and the children of Israel. But that is how it happened."

It is a book of travel, history, science, and the beauties of nature - but all these different elements are presented in a harmonious manner, it is a journey into the past and the present. The spirit animating these pages is that of a traveller, a lover of life, a seeker of the beauty and secrets of existence, the UN. is certainly the sponsoring body, but he retains his opinions, his temperament, and natural bent of his imagination; the vast horizons of sands and time kindle his fantasy, and the pages show his incomparable charm, and youthful appreciation of sights immortal; it has a happy touch and an easy facility, it is enriched by the assimilative play of memory. He calls up the past in its original setting, he knows the present and tries to mould the future. The associations

the past called up early, never leave the reader alone in the desert, in all the Biblical sites the past stares in the face, but it is the desert that inspires the most charming description.

"We started at dawn. Over-night there had been a shower of rain. As the sun rose above the horizon I experienced the still ecstasy of the desert. The whole landscape was suffused in a green blush as delicate as a maiden's modesty, the sudden growth of plants in response to the rain gives not so much a cover as complexion to the sands of the desert. As the day advanced we saw the miracle of the desert flowers in vivid contrast to lichenous grey of the persistent bushes and shrubs with which I had grown familiar throughout the journey. There were square miles of flaming reds triumphant yellow, and strident blues. It was no longer the coy greenery of the dawn. This was the fickle desert, dressed up like Carmen Miranda in Technicoloured sashes."

But style has no splendour and brilliance of the old times, the Biblical lands now appeal to the intellect, and only a little to the heart. Modern descriptions of these ancient sites do not stir the mind, life does not throb more forcefully through the veins of the reader, "appeal to the emotions is faint, very faint. His language too is that of a modern clear-sighted scientist or investigator; clarity, simplicity, and gentle charming personal touches are there - but the methods of the titans are no more practised; it does not move like the scimitar of Kinglake, or the lance of the Bedouin, it is good prose but has little of poetic element.


This is an example of a purely scientific book of travel in a naturalists paradise of birds, animals and reptiles, it is an account of a naturalists collecting expedition in the Cameroons. He gives an interesting account of the forest by

2. *The Overloaded Ark* - London - 1954, p. 89,
The primeval forest abounds with life. Fossils that bite, dances and drums, snakes and sun-birds, and other interesting things. But specimen collection is not the only motive, the real motive force is the true traveller's itch, the wanderlust, the gipsy spirit of the Anglo Saxon people who escape from civilization, and by this retreat into the bosom of virgin nature, enrich and refresh the spectacle of life.

"Secondly we both had long cherished a dream to see Africa, not the white man's Africa with its Macadam roads, its cocktail bars, its express trains roaring through landscape denuded of its flora and fauna by the beneficial influence of civilization. We wanted to see one of those few remaining parts of the continent that had escaped this fate more or less, and remained more or less as it was when Africa was first discovered."

It requires great skill to make a book of scientific travel a satisfactory piece of prose narrative, modern science has very few good prose stylists. Julian Huxley and Haldane, Bronowsky and Russell, James Jeans and others possess beauty of style, but they are at their best when moving on the border line of science and sociology; Durrell too excels in style when he forgets his professional duties, and delights in the beauties of nature.

"The ship nosed its way through the morning mist across a sea as smooth as milk. A faint and exciting smell came to us from the invisible shore, the smell of flowers, damp vegetation, palm oil, and a thousand other intoxicating scents drawn up from the earth by the rising sun, a pale moist looking nimbus of light seen dimly through the mists. As it rose higher and higher the heat of its rays penetrated and loosened the hold the mist had on land and sea."

Over-loaded Ark, and other books by Durrell only mark a decline in the standard of purely scientific travel books, the days of fresh discovery and virgin charms of forests are over.

2. Ibid., p.70.
3. Ibid., p.90.
4. Ibid., p.125.
5. Ibid., p.143.
6. Ibid., p.15.
7. Ibid., Prelude.
Douglas Reed who is highly eloquent in a satirical way when he goes to U.S.A. and other places - has not seen much in Africa on which to give vent to his satire or his romanticism; he tries to laugh at his own cost; if there is any charm it is of his home and hearth, and if there is pathos it is that of Europe under the shadow of Nazis. He deals mainly with the problems of South Africa, and the beauty that he presents is that of Southern part of that continent; he is a journalist, a political reporter, but by his personal touch he saves it from becoming mere reportage; it stands for that stage when journalism was not much willing to become merely a dry and boring collection of political and social problems.

He somehow can see the very spirit of certain cities, and read the future - not only the past of those lonely towns which somehow communicate with his spirit; it is an arcana which only an intuitive seer like him can read. The European cities just on the verge of the war inspired happy and sad feelings alike, somehow he knew that they were all doomed.

"I sometimes think that cities do become fey, and unless this was only in the eye of the beholder, I believed I saw in the nineteen thirties a wistful twilight loneliness in ancient cities over which great tribulation hung, like Vienna, Dresden, and Cologne, today they are razed or sunken in sad oblivion, captive or half-free. I felt it in Prague and in Paris before the German invasion. To me the very stones of those cities, the air in their streets, the looks and voices of their people joined in a symphony of presentiment." 1

These places bring to his mind the memories of soldiers who died for the British Empire in distant fields, their tombs are forever 'England'2, he admires the godly grandeur and

2. Ibid., p.79.
Homeric beauty of the table mountain at Cape Hope, and Durban is a city of suspense and a multi-coloured human drama. He watches things from a poetic altitude, and his style has a dignity and an uplifting quality, which is the result of an enriched imagination sweetened with the long years of literary till. It has the quality of a moral triumph when viewed with the background of the dark problems around it, and it is expressed in a language of perfect ease and naturalness, in spite of the bitter satire of which he is capable, he is amiable, simple and sincerely affectionate.

"The little town has a hallowed air. I had not known that the dust of the old wars is so fragrant or the gentle spirit of brave-men so tangible in the place where they died. In South Africa I gained a deep respect for the British soldiers who fought all over this hard country for a hundred years, what a staunch-man he must have been, what hardships he must have endured, and what obstacles have overcome." 1.

But it is fun and laughter which gives light and cheerfulness to the book, with humour he makes the dull figures and facts palatable, he laughs at the air hostesses, he makes fun of himself when he enters like a hero the little town of Ky Kuysna with the motor horn blowing constantly because he cannot stop it, and mentions the story of the chief who wished Queen Victoria to let his people be the lice in her blanket. 3


A study of modern travel books is mainly a study in decline, and David Buxton in spite of his fine photographs and interesting and authentic information is not a writer of

2. Ibid., p. 203.
3. Ibid., p. 3.
literature; imagination, personal touch, descriptive and narrative powers are conspicuous by their absence. Somehow this phenomenon is due to the purely technical background of modern scientists, science divorced from humanities in the new universities has lost much of its human quality, its emotional appeal, and its beauty of form. During his stay in Ethiopia he was officially concerned with locusts, and unofficially with archaeology, and these two pursuits took him through many parts of Ethiopia, ironically the paths of ancient Kings are now the paths of locusts. Again as has already been observed it is ancient history that saves travellers from getting bored in the wilderness of that antique land.

"But the fascination of Ethiopia is due to much more than her physical configuration. Here is an ancient, independent Christian state set in the midst of the wilderness. Her people, surrounded by primitive tribes, claim a recorded history of 2000 years, an unbroken line of kings descended as they believe from Solomon and Queen of Sheba. Moreover this extraordinary country still preserves in some measure, the appeal of the mysterious and the unknown."

Inspite of all its general information it is devoid of all literary beauty, the language he uses is that of official reports on locusts, there is no grace to save it from oblivion.


It is a journey in West Africa in the company of the famous African dancer Benga, his earlier interest was mainly aesthetic, but later on he made a scientific study of group life in those western lands of the dark continent. But it has neither aesthetics nor science, it has little literary or artistic importance, nor does it give a scientific collection of facts and figures.

The two things that form the real theme of the book are the dirt of towns and the beauty of nature; this would form a pattern, beauty and dirt come each after the other, and here it is that his descriptive style rises to a tolerable acceptability.

"The scenery on the road to Ouidah was most lovely the vegetation was very thick and tangled, and more flowery than any other stretch I saw in Africa ......... Ouidah is a nasty little town, jerry built, ramshackled, and very ugly." 1

Geoffrey Gorer has nothing or almost nothing to say about dances, it is strange that men who set out to study art and beauty soon forget it in the tropical lands of lassitude.

155. Pearce Gervis - Sierra Leone Story - 1952.

This is the land to which slaves were sent when slavery was abolished in England, the Plymouth prostitutes too were sent along with them, so it is a colony with a definitely ignoble origin, it would be a fine piece of study for a man like Prof. Myrdal, but Pearce Gervis gives it a fictitious colouring. He gives an intimate study of the secret Poro school, the circumcision dances, the initiation and Christening, and many other customs and ceremonies of these freed slaves. The beginning where he describes the rain-storm and the banana-leaf bower which is the black governor's property is very well written, but soon Africa with its overpowering dullness makes him forget his literary standards.


1. The author of the Parts of Barbary (1944) has a look at the Magreb or the North-West Africa mainly occupied by the

3. Ibid., Chapt. VII.
4. Ibid., Chapt. X.
5. Ibid., p. 25.
French with whom he sympathises in general. He goes in search of black beauty, he looks into many wild caves and ancient hidden caverns, almost prehistoric, showing the art and beauty of Africa, and then the passes on to man and his actions but it is man's creative effort, his expression and language, and the beauty of the desert that allures him most. Thus the real theme is Africa and creative effort, and his style, after all its torturous efforts to express the dilemma of life, almost approaches that of Graham Greene, there is the same earthy and gritty quality, same mystification, and the same return to man's self from where he starts; only Greene's pessimism is missing.

"Our invention is our salvation which comes not only from informed intelligence, but also from informed imagination".

"When men learned to speak they learned at the same time to create the world in which they lived, and in which we ever since have lived. Conception was added to perception. Not for nothing did the ancient Egyptians (together with other peoples) believe that by pronouncing a Name they did not only control but create."

His style takes on a mystic touch when he describes the desert and man's life in the desert, there is a clash of dreams and reality, and here it is that the mirage of Africa is truly presented. He has great restraint over his words, his sentences move into one another with a sleepiness, or they stand alone with singular jerkiness depicting the aridity of soil and tragedy of life. Thus his style too has the quality of a mirage, it changes with the light and shades of emotions.

1. Mirage of Africa-London-1953, p.46n
2. Ibid., p.57
3. Ibid., p.209
4. Ibid., p.97
"The desert is a theatre of designs and contours shifting with every change of light, with every variation of luminosity, one thing is a hundred, a hundred different objects merge into one. You just have to dream in the desert, you must welcome phantoms, you must rejoice in the word made flesh, at the play of imagination, of a waking vision, the formless takes on form, and the shapeless shape". 1

He describes all the different sites where pieces of ancient art have been unearthed, and then describes the Roman ruins in Northern Africa. Besides his critical views, and his rather provocative originality, it is his style that makes appeal to the reader, it is a cross between Hemingway's primitive earthiness, Greene's mystic pessimism, and Andre Gide's romanticism, and sometimes he knowingly distorts and tortures his sentences to make them yield the very essence of expression, then he resembles Osbert Sitwell.

"The sky is high, luminous, friendly, reassuring. To the West the ocean of sands. To the east the rocky wilderness. Under you an arid fossil basin, on this arena the French manoeuvred before they engaged the crestfallen Italians and flung them out of Ghadames". 2


Time has turned a full circle, darkest Africa of Stanley has become the lightest Africa of Chapman, and what inspired horror and fear is now a thing of beauty, a perennial joy, a lovely miracle, a sunlit spot in a world which is morally dark. The forests and wild animals, uninhabited wild regions, and inclement mountains - now refresh the wounded heart of man, and big cities - once the bourn of every journey in Africa are now merely ugly heaps of all that is dirty in that dark continent.

2. Ibid. p.38
This is why I called this book *Lightest Africa*; when Stanley chose the title "In Darkest Africa" for the account of his marvellous travels, he was thinking of the pygmies in the Ituri forest, and the immense heads of the wild elephants and buffaloes in the limitless green Savannah. Now a days the emphasis has been reversed and the darkest Africa implies the over crowding and crime, in the slums, Johannesburg Shanty Town, and the tragic plight of the cape coloureds; where as *Lightest Africa* is concerned with the primitive unspoiled tribes in remote Karamoja, the snows of Kilimanjaro, and the wonderful game reserves*. 1

He possesses no literary beauty. It is a simple account of a journey with his wife and three little sons from Cape Town to Kilimanjaro with detours to all the states and sites on the way.

Probably the only excuse for the inclusion and consideration of this book is the new way of doing Africa; it is a simple family travelling through lands where heroes feared to tread; little babes of three or four years push their way through the forest where many stout hearts trembled. The family gives it a certain simple loveliness, it becomes a domestic affair, we enjoy it like a T.V.Show, an American T.V.show at that. Most of the stories begin with dreams, but this one ends with dreams.

*The children still some times dream of the swamp in Uganda, and so does their mother*. 2


Mrs.Kearton’s book represents another type of the family travel book - a book of sweet memories of early life, of men and women born and bred in Africa, and of things lovely and sad, yet memorable things that will be seen no more. It is a story of a brave woman and her braver husband, she is a singer, and he a photographer of wild life; this book is written in old age - after all these

2. Ibid.p.283.
things have ended and when her husband has gone to the Happy Hunting Grounds; she remembers all things bravely and thankfully. It has something of the spirit of Lucas Bridges' account of their family in Terra Del Fuego. What the book proves is that Africa has nothing to offer to an imaginative writer except personal memories and the beauties of wild nature. In simple graceful gentle prose, he rememrs the colours and contours of the Sahara, her prose is simple, dignified devoid of any literary tricks, a proper vehicle for a family account of joys and sorrows experienced in distant lands.

"There seemed to be some thing more than, something deeper than mystery, about the great silences of the desert, and I did feel the elementary grandeur of the Sahara more vividly than when the day slowly turned to night. I have gazed on sunset in most parts of the world, but never have I seen such vivid loveliness, as when the sun sinks to rest beneath the golden sands of Sahara. Then the dunes seem to be carved in gold, and like living frescoes the lines of camels, silhouetted against the sky, pass slowly down to the oasis wells, their forms clear cut and black, a pageant in ebony."

The book has the sweetness of her generous and noble spirit, she has little to complain of, and much to be thankful for, it is nobility of mind and mellowness that gives the book a rare quality; books about Africa, are generally bitter, men go with great hopes, and come back disgusted, but Mrs.Kearton has the heart by which men live.

"Meanwhile I am deeply conscious of the unusually varied pattern of my journey, through life. Sitting on balcony garden and listening to dawns symphony of bird song which seems to epitomise both my love of music, and my love of nature, I can truly say as I lay aside my pen that life has been very good to me."

1. On a Safari -London-1956 ;p.62
2. Ibid. p.187
It is a highly interesting book giving a provocative account of a search for pure bred bushmen of Kalahari who have literally disappeared as a race. The author has some affinity of blood with them; some early ancestors migrating to this part of the country married some yellow blood persons, he in a sentimental way feels proud of this yellow tinge in his ancestry and he searches these wild people as if he were searching his own self; it would make a lovely story of blood, and its racial, and cultural significance. Memories of early days in South Africa, the fascinating lore of the vanishing yellow man, the wild animals and fantastic trees, and the sensational meetings with true bushmen - form the subject of this book. It is his enthusiasm and his strange journey to find his own original stock - that makes his book a highly delightful thing.

No one knew where he came from or who his people had been, whether he knew himself, no one could tell. I stood there stirred to the heart, watching his progress across the burning water deeper into the papyrus, standing so erect before the night. In that mythological light of the dying day he seemed to me, the complete symbol of the silent fate of his race. 1

That is how he met the first bushman, but he was probably dumb and deaf, but another he meets he somehow finds as beautiful as Mona Lisa. And the Second appeal of Africa is that of nature, beautiful, fantastic, and royally dangerous. Nature is too aggressive to be ignored. It is the story of a life long love, but in truth it is not Africa, but his own ancestry which fascinates him; in that respect it is a rare book. This sentimental touch has an implicit eloquence, what he records are the signs and symbols of an absent reality.

1. Lost World of Kalahari -London-1958, pp. 131-132
2. Ibid., p. 107
3. Ibid., p. 115